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IS IS



VICTORIA GILICK★PEGASUS★COMPREHENSIVES  
CRAIG RAINE★GRAPHIC IMAGES★TESCO'S  
KOO STARK★PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION  
NO.2 MICHAELMAS 1985 ★ 20P.

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# LETTERS



# ISIS



Dear Editor,

Whilst I found parts of Frank Luntz's article on Solidarity highly informative, others were hyperbolic and misleading. To describe Warsaw as 'Orwell's 1984 brought to life' is misleading. The architecture of Warsaw is fairly uniform, but given that the devastated capital was rebuilt from the rubble left by the Nazis, why Mr Luntz should jump to the conclusion that this is '1984' escapes me altogether. Presumably he didn't find the old part of the city, painstakingly put back together after World War II.

Mr Luntz gives us a picture of an ailing Poland, dominated by the black market, inadequate hotel beds, no ice, toilets which don't flush etc. etc. ... yet during a three-week stay in Poland last summer my overwhelming impressions were of an independent, tough and friendly people with a cynical sense of political humour often living in modest (though hardly Orwellian) conditions.

Whilst it is true that the Zomo, for instance, are brutal and callous, I met charming (honestly!) customs officials on entering and leaving Poland by train who made the East German officials look like Gestapo members.

Mr Luntz feels, like so many, tremendous support for Solidarity, yet seems unable to appreciate the complexity of Polish history since 1945, nor of Polish politics now. Whilst one cannot deny the heroic struggle of so many Poles, to paint a picture of 'no democracy or freedom since 1939' is merely to reiterate Reaganite cold war propaganda. I would agree that most of Polish society is alienated from the authorities, that Solidarity is popular, that the state is inefficient and often callously brutal, but to ignore the background to the present situation, to whitewash history as 'us versus them', 'freedom versus communism', does both Mr Luntz and Solidarity a great disservice. Perhaps Mr Luntz should think about the vested interest of Western bankers in stabilising the regime which is in such debt - did I hear a sigh of relief in Wall Street and the City when the clamp-down came?

Perhaps it is unfair to imagine that Mr Luntz sees himself as a fellow hero of Solidarity, but perhaps he could save his preconceptions about Poland, which seem to miss the target somewhat, for the bar rather than the printer. If he really is interested in Solidarity perhaps he should learn more about Poland. It takes more than Jaruzelski to flatten Polish hopes - look at Polish history.

Yours sincerely,

**Tom Aston**  
Oriel College

Dear Ed.

Just a brief point concerning the review of fast food joints in Oxford (ISIS No. 1 Michaelmas '85). Despite the evident in-depth knowledge and expertise of Messrs Thwaites and Mopsy, I feel obliged to mention the criminal omission of Pepper's which in the opinion of many surpasses Brets for the quality of its burgers. So, if you're ever staggering out of Raoul's and fancy a bite you'll find Pepper's handily located a short crawl down Walton St.

Yours etc.

**Ben Hall**

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The Editors welcome  
comment on any Isis article.



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## ORIEL GIRLS



Andrew Hill

The Oriel spirit

A woman's place, for the past 660 years, has certainly not been in Oriel College. But this year's first intake of 22 female undergraduates threatens to undermine the boat-burning, beer-swilling heartiness which has for centuries characterised Oxford's last all-male college.

Oriel has appeared increasingly anachronistic amongst 24 mixed colleges, and over the past seven years, as numbers of applicants and Norrington ratings alike have decreased, the possibility of admitting women undergraduates has remained in the balance. This deliberation has enabled Oriel to go mixed with plenty of forethought - a 'Women's Adviser' has been officially appointed and last year saw the formation of a 'Women's Committee' (entirely male) to discuss potential security and accommodation problems. Their eventual recommendations were that no woman should be isolated on a staircase, no two women should share less than one shower and one toilet between them, and that no woman should have

a room on the ground floor. All this for what the Bursar termed 'obvious reasons' (presumably a euphemistic allusion to drunken Oriel louts).

Indeed, it is hard to conceive why any right-minded woman would apply to such a Mecca of machismo. It was generally assumed that the applicants were either innocent of Oriel's reputation or had chronic nymphomaniac tendencies. Contrary to expectation, many girls view the opportunity of penetrating Oriel as something of a challenge (although some frankly admitted that it was an easy admissions option). The new crop of Oriel women may be a disparate bunch but they are mostly remarkably self-confident - they are the dynamic handful you get in every college implanted here *en masse*. As yet, the women have encountered no sexual harassment or discrimination, and a very positive attitude pervades the college. The welcoming efforts of the second and third years have not gone amiss, and girls have been spotted singing boating songs in the Beer Cellar. What with 18 women rowing and a female football team in the pipeline, the 'Oriel spirit' seems irrepressible.

This initial female intake has been carefully stage-managed by the College as a 'non-event'. At least superficially, the smooth organisation and harmonious integration of this First Week would appear to bear this out. Yet it will take longer to determine whether age-old attitudes have really changed or if this is merely Oriel's token gesture to the 20th century.

Shauna Hawthorne

## GILLICK ASSAULT

'It was a peaceful protest organised by the Left Caucus at St Hugh's. What could be more passive than that?' asks Zoë Billingham, one of the demonstrators allegedly trodden on by Victoria Gillick and her husband at the Oxford Union on 17th October. She continues, 'We made it clear from the start that we weren't going to try and stop her speaking. But the Union heavies were set on us; they started dragging us out of the building by our necks and hair. They were very rough! We want an apology from Anthony Goodman for the behaviour of his employees!'

Goodman does not agree. 'They weren't peaceful. Their language was abusive and their behaviour threatening. They wouldn't listen, they wouldn't talk, they refused to have any sort of negotiation. One of them, I think it was Sarah Livingstone, said long before any scuffle: "We will deny Mrs Gillick a platform: she has denied the rights of young women."'

'I was concerned for the safety of my guests', he goes on. 'My employees asked them to leave, negotiators from the Ruskin asked them to move. They said that they were a collective demo with no representative and so they wouldn't reply. I tried to shout at them collectively but they still wouldn't move. I won't stand for a demo which tries to deny the right of free speech. They wanted to destroy the debate. They were pulled away by the arms, not necks or hair, but they screamed "Assault! Assault!" at the tops of their voices.'

After this debacle, the remaining protestors moved upstairs. While the guests were having pre-dinner drinks, the

demonstrators sat down in front of the dining room effectively blocking access. 'It was a spontaneous decision', says Zoë. 'We wanted to make our presence felt, but we would have let her through.'

According to Zoë, 'We were sitting quietly on the stairs waiting. There was a lot of shouting from inside. Suddenly the door flew open and Mr Gillick lunged out. He forced his way through by stamping on us, followed by Mrs Gillick in high-heeled black stiletto shoes. She trod on Sarah Livingstone's thigh, ripping her trousers, breaking the skin and causing severe bruising: we were terrified. We said to Mr Gillick, "You've hurt our Left Caucus!" He said, "It's about time they were hurt." We said, "This is disgusting - we'll get the police onto you", and his reply was that he didn't mind because he had just finished a suspended sentence.'

'I don't condone Gillick's actions', says Goodman. 'I think that they wanted a confrontation. But I think it is important to remember why they did it. That day they'd lost everything they'd been fighting for. Their children had been continuously physically assaulted throughout the year and they had had enough.'

Before the debate, Mrs Gillick changed into innocuous-looking flat sandals, and she spoke well and calmly at the despatch box. Before she was able to reply to reporters who asked if she had trodden on anyone, her husband butted in proudly: 'Yes, and I trod on them too!'

Georgia Metcalfe

## BROTHERS OF JAH

ISIS was taken by surprise. It was a case of intimidation on the part of the 'Brothers of Jah', authors of a particularly nasty poison-pen letter. No reason was supplied, but the grotesque image was graphic enough. The fresh-faced student from the Barclay's Bank advertisement had been removed from his mounting and was pictured dangling at the end of his college scarf. This was a reference to the execution on 19 October of the Black poet Benjamin Moloise.

ISIS also condemns South African injustice. But, though we sympathise with the emotion behind the Brothers' violent statement - tasteless as it may have been - it should be remem-

bered that the arguments for disinvestment are hardly irrefutable. It is fashionable among students to favour disinvestment, but ill-considered alignments are something they should avoid. The Brothers of Jah should also bear in mind that hanging students is not the best way of winning their support.

Even if you do believe in disinvestment, then intimidation betrays gross intolerance. The inherent violence of the Brothers' statement is not on a level with the oppressive methods used by South Africa's Whites, but it betrays a similar contempt for free expression.

## TESCO PICKET

As a warm-up to the football match on Saturday, 12 October, large numbers of police swooped on an Anti-Apartheid demonstration outside the Cowley Road Tesco's. Arrests were made and the generally cooperative atmosphere was soured. The following Friday, four times as many protesters were outside the supermarket and the picket is set to become a regular event. The growing numbers represent not merely a gesture of defiance directed at the police, but they also highlight an increased urgency on the part of anti-apartheid campaigners.

It may come as a surprise to many that Tesco's, rather than the old enemy Barclay's, should be the focus for protest. The reason is simply that, of all the supermarket chains, Tesco's is the most enthusiastic buyer of South African products. Relations between protesters and Tesco's local management remain cool rather than hostile as Anti-Apartheid stresses that it is not urging shoppers to boycott the supermarket, rather to buy anything but South African products. Obviously, branch management will have little say in the brands of food on the shelves, but local campaigning has led to a nationwide change of heart by Sainsbury's and definite action by the Co-Op, which now refuses to market South African goods.

It is worth pointing out that Tesco itself is not averse to taking action, having at one point refused to market Canadian fish products as a protest against seal culling. While this gesture is laudable, it does beg the question whether, in the eyes of Tesco management, the plight of seals in Canada is a greater cause for concern than the fate of Blacks in South Africa.

With the violence and unrest in South Africa on the increase, Anti-Apartheid sees economic sanctions as the last opportunity for peaceful change. Internationally, support for this view is almost unanimous, and very positive action has been taken, notably by France and the U.S.A. At a local level, supermarkets are being picketed and petitioned. Protesters draw their inspiration from the actions of the Dunn Stores cashiers in Ireland who refused to deal with South African goods and were consequently sacked. It is to be hoped that, if supermarkets will not respond to the persuasive arguments of the sanctions lobby, then at least the products of apartheid will become more trouble than they are worth.

Tom Linden

## OXFORD UNITED

Oxford United's disastrous start to the season runs against most people's impression of the club as a vibrant, ambitious organisation on its way to the top. The truth is that the Manor Ground can only seat 13,000. For all its Maxwell millions and ambitious schemes for diversification into leisure activities, the club's trump card is good football. Ray Houghton was recently signed on from Fulham for £125,000 - a record for Oxford. How many clubs could boast such economy, and combine it with the success of the past couple of seasons?

The Manor remains a problem. When Oxford Utd. finally gets into gear, the small capacity is going to rob them of big matches. But this summer the DoE quashed planning permission for a new ground at the Pear Tree roundabout in North Oxford, and since £1 million has been spent on refurbishments to the ground after Bradford, and sponsors Wang are set to computerise it, Manager Maurice Evans concedes that it might be self-defeating to move for another two or three years. This doesn't, however, deflect from Managing Director Brian Dalton's long-term aim to create a major leisure complex elsewhere.

This kind of emphasis on entertainment is characteristic of United, as those who remember pre-match Red Devil parachute landings on the pitch last year will confirm. It is also evident in their highly effective anti-hooligan measures.

Early in the summer Chairman Maxwell negotiated a sponsorship deal with Wang Computers for £3,000 a week over two years. An additional £3,000 is then spent on crowd control at each match, with closed-circuit TV and computerised turnstiles.

For Oxford, the future hangs on Manager Maurice Evans. Their former Chief Scout, his ten years in management previously at Reading and Shrewsbury made him the obvious successor to Jim Smith when he left for QPR in June. Evans can point to signs that John Aldridge, top goalscorer last season, is starting to regain his form, and he has promised that Jeremy Charles can revert to defence as soon as the gap up front caused by Billy Hamilton's injury is filled again. Most of all, fans can expect to see Evans, a self-confessed scout by nature, diverting sponsorship money into a search for new players to boost Oxford's upward progress.

Asked about student attendance, Dalton replies: 'Frankly, we don't care if they're students or bus conductors as long as they come to the match and enjoy themselves.' The confidence which such modesty implies does not seem complacent, given Oxford United's efforts to revitalise football.

Simon Howarth  
Michael Walker



## LETTER FROM L.S.E.



It was Bertrand Russell who said, 'I am firm, you are stubborn, and he is a pig-headed fool.' Twenty years later the *New Statesman* ran a competition to find modern-day equivalents to 'firm', 'stubborn' and 'pig-headed fool'. One of the winning entries was, 'I am Oxford, you are Cambridge, and he is the London School of Economics', the implication being not so much to establish a once-and-for-all pecking order of the universities but rather to show that the differences between them are essentially differences of *style*. Believe it or not, most people *choose* to come to this den of arrogance and aggression.

Being a university concerned solely with the social sciences makes for a strongly political atmosphere; be unpolitical and you will have little joy at LSE. Dammit, even the choice of where to eat or drink in college is a political decision. There is a bar for the Tories and a bar for the Trots. The Liberals eat their banana-flavoured yoghourts in the School canteen and further Trots can be found playing with their nutburgers in the Union-run coffee bar. Nobody bats an eyelid, therefore, when freshers are told that at LSE food is political - an interesting variation to Dale Spender's dictum that the personal is political.

Just because the socialists have two hang-outs doesn't automatically make LSE a leftist institution training international terrorists with a view to the export of revolution. (An American rips a yarn that when he told his father that he was going to study at the LSE, his father erupted: 'You can't go to the LSE - Karl Marx went there!') In fact, three of the past five Union sabbaticals have been Liberal or independent. The Left, however, remains the most organised political force; an instantly appreciable fact if the Union meetings are witnessed, and witnessed they must be. 600-plus turn up every Thursday for what is for most the high point of the week. Shouting, screaming, crying, fighting - it all happens there. There'll have to be a pretty good excuse if you miss one...

In terms of academe, the courses are less regimented than elsewhere; none of this compulsory two essays a week nonsense. The School prefers to take students with experience of the 'outside world'. Those who come fresh from A-levels think that they are on holiday for three years after which time they bomb out with a Third. Standards are exacting and marking is harsh. There is a story currently doing the rounds that the last person to get a First in Monetary Economics was Lipsey! Big names to watch out for in the academic staff include Fred Halliday in the International Relations Department and Patrick Dunleavy in the Government Department.

LSE may be set in a maze of concrete but it is far from dull. Oxbridge snobbery is laughed at and everyone seems to remember the sketch in 'Yes, Minister' where Hacker's

permanent secretary is discussing with the Cabinet secretary his minister's shortcomings:

*Permanent Secretary:* He went to the LSE, you know.

*Cabinet Secretary:* So did I.

*Permanent Secretary:* Oh, I am sorry.

There are about half a dozen toffs and snobs at LSE and they are generally made to feel as unwelcome as possible. If anyone is 18th in line to the throne here, it is much more likely that this refers to a person's position in the queue for the lavatory than anything to do with royalty. If the latter were the case the person concerned would keep it very quiet: it's not the place for that sort of thing. LSE is, if I may use the awful expression, *déclassé*. It is quite common, in fact, for people with public school accents to have something called 'de-elocution lessons'. Linton Kwesi Johnson, the Black poet, reputedly spoke the Queen's English when he first arrived, but left LSE not only with a degree in Sociology but also a street-cred accent.

One of the more shameful aspects of LSE is its rampant sexism. In terms of lecturers, only 10% of women get the top jobs. On the sexual harassment front, a survey conducted among women last year found that half the respondents felt that they had experienced some form of sexual harassment. However, the women students are not taking this lying down: through their own organisation they negotiated a Women's Centre through the Students' Union and have managed to persuade the School to appoint a special adviser to women students.

On the top floor of our Admin building sits the Director of the LSE who, for the next five years at least, is Dr I. G. Patel, an Indian economist and civil servant. The Director is what any other college would call a principal. His functions include such gargantuan tasks as attending the naming of a train 'The London School of Economics', which, I jest not, will have been the case by the time you read this article.

For many Americans, LSE stands for 'Let's See Europe'; they spend one term here before gallivanting off to some other country. Invariably they dislike the place, which is quite understandable. The seductive powers of LSE require a long time to take effect, but unlike most magic potions the charm never leaves.

**Iqbal Wahhab** is an undergraduate at LSE and was editor of 'The Beaver', the LSE weekly newspaper.

## OF CORSE

There's quite a funny story which no one tells in southern Corsica because it's actually very sad, and because it relates to a mode of social activity which is far from dead. It's about a lettuce. One fine day, this lettuce was eaten by a donkey which did not share the same owner and, as a result, was shot. The owner of the dead animal now came on the scene, and killed the owner of the former lettuce. He was in turn shot by the victim's brother, who suffered a similar fate from an avenging counterpart. The families became bitter enemies, and for more than a generation, in a village of no more than 300 inhabitants, they fought a bloody vendetta, and bricked up their offspring in fortress-like houses perched on the hillside. At the end of the affair, in 1954, thirty-five people were dead. This story is not unique.

Corsica is a stunning island. In the North there is fantastic mountain scenery, with roads skirting cliffs, and vast pine forests interrupted only by jutting rocks. In the South there are rolling hills, and just across from Sardinia is Bonifacio, an old town 400 feet up on an overhanging precipice, with a natural canal leading to an inland harbour, once visited by Ulysses, and now often full of yachts sheltering from a Mistral. Wherever you go there are few Corsicans, and even fewer tourists.

The island's history is a fascinating study in oppression, rebellion and mediocrity. The only famous Corsican was Napoleon, and he left as soon as he could, showing little desire ever to return. There has scarcely been a time when the indigenous population has not been dominated by an outside force, from the Romans to the Genoese, the Germans to the French. Villages inland consist of houses stacked on rocky outcrops for protection against invaders. All around the coast are the Napoleonic watchtowers found on every Corsican sunset photo, and inland there are the untended ruins of mediaeval castles - one superb one is at Corte, built on a precipitous rock in the valley. Best of all is the quiet, mystical prehistoric site of Filitosa, set in wooded glades about 30 miles south of Ajaccio (the capital), where the menhirs, discovered only 20 years ago, rise from the long grass.

Merimée once wrote 'Colomba', a short story set in Corsica about bandits and young girls. But, like Flaubert and Byron, the French author tended to spend his winters in the relatively civilised environs of Ajaccio and not to venture out into the countryside. He had no real appreciation of the social backwardness of the isolated mountain villages like Sartène in the South. Right through the nineteenth century and, in some places, even in the 1950s, touching a girl meant either a shotgun marriage or a shotgun death. Villages were oligarchal and effectively autonomous - politically, culturally, and linguistically.

Nowadays, all the bandits are in Sardinia (where kidnapping is the recognised number one national industry). Nevertheless, the island does not miss out much in the French crime figures. One town, in the South, about a thirtieth of the size of Oxford, was until the 1960s suspected of being a main entrepôt of the white slave trade. More recently, it has been a centre for heroin trafficking to the French mainland via Marseille. The town seems peaceful, but violent crime is high: a male between 18 and 50 stands about a 2-3% chance every year of being shot. Crimes are usually committed along family/faction lines, and are mostly committed before elections. They are rarely solved because most of the police are French and they are far too scared to confront the locals. Gun law is reality. As I walked down the main street with two friends, one was pushed up against a wall with a gun to his head because he had laughed at a dent in a man's Renault 5!

Corsica is still very much an island to itself, and French control is little matched by cultural or social rapprochement. The situation is in many ways analogous to that of Northern Ireland, a place with which the islanders show great empathy. Nationalist extremists have persecuted French property-owners by blowing up holiday villas, and tourism from the mainland is low. Industry and agriculture are not booming,



The isolated fortress town of Sartène

but there are always the Common Market subsidies. Conflict between the old and the new is never far from the surface, and was exemplified this year by deaths in the huge forest fires, often started deliberately by shepherds eager to replace trees with rough pastures. There are also intriguing cultural throwbacks - ghost stories about a headless woman on a white horse who causes cars to go off the road, and belief in magical powers is common amongst the old. The lifestyle is distinctive: the men often spend an entire day arguing earnestly in the shade of a café. They are unfriendly, even aggressive, at first, speaking fast and uncompromisingly in heavily accented French. But once the barriers are broken they are genuinely interested and acquaintances can be built up.

Go to Corsica, and you will be stunned by its emptiness, its beautiful, wild landscape, and the extraordinary untapped tourist potential of its coastline (a third of all France). It's best to go by ferry from Nice, arriving as the sun rises over the mountains. Hitching is easy, but it's better if you've got a car or a bike. Persevere with them and you will realise how friendly and lively the Corsicans are. And if you are Irish, tell them and they will welcome you without reservations.

**Alex Connock**



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## GRAPHIC IMAGES

So you want to be a modern Renaissance man. You want to work on the borderline between science and art. You want to make your own money and lose someone else's. You want to have private dreams in public. If this is your goal, computer animation and video is your business.

The annual meet of the industry is the Computer Graphics Conference held every October at Wembley. The industry is 'young, virile and brash' as the slightly older, but still virile and brash, pundit Robi Roncarelli says. His aspiration, like that of most of the other players in the game, is to make pictures which are unique. Most of the people involved in the trade really are enthusiastic about their work. And there is no room for that most English of diseases - self-doubt, although there are symptoms of the currently raging American epidemic - self-congratulation.

International it may be, but the cultural divide between the States and Europe is strong. 'In general the Americans like to produce pretty pictures, the Europeans want to tell a story', observes Xavier Nicholas of Sogitec, a very creative Parisian house. The companies from across the sea have the best hardware and are on the forefront of developing the most advanced software. Digital Productions, Los Angeles, is the only company with a Cray, a supercomputer that can shoot down a million spacerangers with a billion pixels in the production of sequences for movies such as 'The Last Starfighter'. What the Europeans lose in terms of technology, they make up for with creative design.

There are primarily two reasons for this. First, many of the Americans originally came from a technical background in NASA or the aerospace industry, whereas in Europe the majority of those involved were previously directors or designers. Secondly, one of the most important users of the medium in the States are the TV networks. An American TV network wants the newest effects for its programme titles now. Its European counterpart is at the moment less of a carnivore.

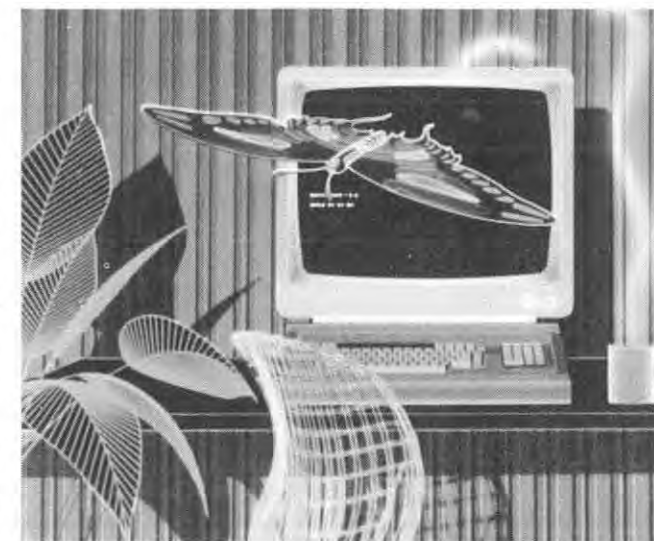
The industry is nevertheless still small enough for everybody to know not only everybody else but also who just got the contract which they just failed to obtain. There is intense rivalry between the companies and, at the same time, a feeling of being compatriots fighting side by side in a synchronised visual attack on the uncomprehending viewers' senses.

The two major consumers of computer animation historically have been the advertising world and the military. They both work on the 'need-to-know' principle - both decide what we do and don't need to know. The process starts with a storyboard. The designer/director draws a preliminary series of rough pictures. These initial sketches are then drafted in exact detail, ready to be digitized. The aim is to construct a numerical representation of each image by taking accurate measurements of the positions of all the facets, lines and surfaces in each picture and then feeding this information into the computer.

It is at this stage that the computer programmer comes into his own. An electronic model of the picture must be built, and programs must be devised to allow complete 3-D simulation of movement. Depending upon the amount of money and the hardware available for the project, further visual enhancements such as reflections, shadows and different surface textures may be added to each frame.

A line test of the end-product is now created. This is a shorthand version of the finished sequence where all the objects in a frame are seen in a primitive form as a series of vectors or lines. This allows the client to appreciate fairly fully what the final images will look like. If all is well, the computer is allowed to generate the whole sequence frame by frame - and this is where the major costs are incurred.

The final part of the production required before the sequence is actually shot is the careful colouring of each frame. The Quantel Paintbox is the indispensable machine specially manufactured for this purpose. Sixteen million colours are



stored in its memory, and it has the ability to add colour to pictures as though with chalk or with an airbrush, as well as with a standard paintbrush. You draw on a blank electronically sensitive slate while the picture (or frame) you are adapting changes on the screen in front of you.

The post-production phase of creating a sequence can be even more complicated than the computer simulation. Bob Auger, of the giant facilities company Molinare, provides an A-to-Z of video effects in which he is able to posterise any frame, put six frames onto each surface of an autocube and then eliminate the jaggies by the automatic anti-aliasing facility of the Bosch FGS 4000. This, with one hand tied behind his back.

For the novice, two books provide a good introduction to the area. *Computer Graphics* by John Lewell (Orbis Publishing, 1985) is a survey of the current techniques and applications. Those more concerned with visual and visionary aspects have no choice but to read *Creative Computer Graphics* by Annabel Jankel and Rocky Morton of Cucumber Studios (CUP, 1984).

At the film festival held during the conference, the new media philosopher who stole the show from Barry Norman was Max Headroom, a figure created by Cucumber Studios. Max is not the product of a computer but of a fecund imagination. Computers cannot yet think or dream - only people can. For the person who intends to be a modern Renaissance man or woman, computer animation and video is the field to be working in.

**Ruben Lee**

For further information about the Computer Graphics Conference, contact Jan Back, Online International Ltd., Pinner Green House, Ash Hill Drive, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 2AE.



# ADVICE TO CLEVER CHILDREN

Amongst the sleepy spires of Oxford one hardly finds the most unusual and avant-garde undergraduate courses in the country, but somewhere beyond the orthodox boundaries of the university, stranger things are going on.

From the outside, 118 Banbury Road looks just like another large Victorian North Oxford house. In fact, it is the home of the Institute of Psychophysical Research, an establishment set up to further the study of realms of experience unrecognised by conventional academic exploration. Phenomena such as lucid dreams, extra-sensory perception, and psychokinesis are treated here with rather more gravity than they are in horror movies, but some of the same excitement.

Sipping coffee in a shadowy drawing-room straight out of a children's adventure story, Celia Green, founder of the Institute, and Charles McCreery, a colleague of hers and author of the book *Lucid Dreams*, told me of the importance of their work. In their treatment of psychophysical phenomena, they are trying to find a sensible understanding somewhere between the spiritualists' and the academics'. While the former tend to regard unusual experiences as supernatural, weird and wonderful, the latter are frequently cynical, believing, for example, that occurrences such as hallucinations are simply symptoms of stress. In fact, says Celia Green, this need not be so: 'Recently there was a case of a woman just drying her hands on a tea towel when she saw a figure sitting on the sofa.'

It is worthwhile, she and Mr McCreery feel, to explore this area, partly because it is generally neglected and 'pursuing knowledge for its own sake is a good thing.' But there are also issues of wider relevance at stake - the avoidance, for example, of false diagnoses of unusual experiences. Individuals concerned can benefit greatly because they're made to 'imagine they're abnormal when in fact they're not.'

Some of the research is done through questionnaires which ask a tremendous variety of things, from the number of dreams remembered in colour, to the number of profoundly mystical or religious experiences (if any) undergone. Telepathy, clairvoyance and déjà vu are all of some relevance. Students are welcome to take part and anyone who feels he or she has something to contribute to the understanding of less than usual angles of human perception should get in touch with the Institute and take it from there.

Francesca Weisman



Celia Green

## OXFORD UNION ARTS FESTIVAL 85

### FRIDAY 1st NOVEMBER

At 3.00pm *The Novel Into Film*. A discussion led by Michael Radford ('1984') and Ken Taylor ('Jewel In The Crown').

At 8.00pm Micheal Radford talks about '1984' followed by a special showing of the film (at the ABC Cinema Magdalen Street).

### SATURDAY 2nd NOVEMBER

At 8.00pm a lively and stimulating talk on the pre-Raphaelite murals of the Union Old Library.

All day. Video Special: Woody Allen. 'All You Ever Wanted To Know About Sex', 'Play It Again Sam', 'Annie Hall', etc.

### ALL WEEK

### TWO MAJOR EXHIBITIONS

**Two Hundred years of Japanese print making.** A large selection of different aspects of Japanese life captured in a beautiful collection of fine prints.

**Assignment.** The National Association of Press Photographers present a large exhibition of their finest recent work. This award winning collection was first seen at the National Theatre.

ALL ENQUIRIES AND BOOKINGS TO THE UNION  
GENERAL OFFICE (9.30am-4.00pm) Tel: (0865) 241353 (After hours 723945)

Robert Spicer



## GILICK V. GREER

The fur was really going to fly when Gillick met Greer at the Union on the 17th. 'What! Shall the line stretch out till the crack o'doom!' cried MacGoodman, as he saw the queue of Freshers and members tailing back to Carfax. This debate was enough to convince even the most apathetic cynic that the Union is the place to go.

With Mrs Victoria Gillick came the husband she should have left at home, as well as an accompanying retinue of newspaper men and TV cameras. The reason? Mrs Gillick's six-year campaign to allow doctors no discretion in giving contraceptive advice to under-age patients was finally concluded by a 3:2 majority against in the House of Lords. The matter rests there, unless it goes to Strasbourg. Media attention centred on the Union, where she would voice her reaction. In fact, as she'd already spoken to ITV, news bulletins concentrated on her pugilistic tendencies as she battled her way through the mob of female protesters who always dog her movements.

Ostensibly, Mrs Gillick had come to debate the motion that 'The permissive society has enslaved women rather than liberated them', and to face the formidable Germaine Greer, a woman as unafraid of U-tubes as U-turns. Both women appeared in black, both have unkempt pre-Raphaelite hairstyles - the only difference being that Ms Greer wore red tights.

The difficulty in reviewing this potentially titanic confrontation is that Mrs Gillick was understandably more anxious to outline her response to the earlier ruling, whilst Ms Greer was more concerned with explaining her reactions to her earlier creed, and neither paid much attention to the motion. However, this was also the attitude of virtually every speaker, and debating seemed to be the last thing on anyone's mind. As no one really bothered to define what 'permissive' meant, it boiled down to a chance to talk about sex.

Tania Mathias declared that the permissive society has made prostitution 'unpaid community service'; Helen Griffiths countered with an espousal of *Cosmopolitan*-style feminism (unfortunately she neglected to explain how to achieve the ultimate orgasm in six easy stages). Stephen Kenny argued that sex is now wrongly seen as an end in itself, and Toby Young, who's only just reached the age of consent, thought he was terribly funny. Glenys Roberts, who has recently written a very good biography of Brigitte Bardot, spent twenty minutes talking about that; and the only coherent and relevant speech of the evening came at the very end. Sue Slipman, Director of the National Council for One-

Parent Families, stressed that permissiveness is not only about sexuality but means the freedom to create sanity out of sexual differences and tensions. The debate should have been about power: women's power and their right to shape a new society, an equal society developed from the permissive one.

As to the star speakers, Mrs Gillick conveyed her argument in an essentially sincere, humanitarian manner. She does speak as the caring mother of ten children about the dangers inherent in taking the Pill when you're young. Undeniably, hormone steroids given to undeveloped 12-year-olds are very dangerous. The increase in cervical cancer among 25-30 year-olds is the result of promiscuity at an early age. There is a rising tide of sexually transmitted diseases, and missed Pill pregnancies do generally mean late abortions. Mrs Gillick sees this as the legacy of the permissive society. Unfortunately, she was obviously in a distraught state and spent too much time discussing Victorian ethics, thereby devaluing the core of her argument. That is to say: the Pill enslaves women in many ways and is liberation only from pregnancy. Moreover, very young girls are not aware of these implications and it is therefore the parents' responsibility to help them.

Immediately after this speech, Ms Greer confidently strode up to the dispatch box and amazed everyone by defending Mrs Gillick. 'How can the Law Lords be responsible for our sexual destiny?' she asked. 'It is certainly not a victory for freedom!' What was most impressive about Ms Greer's speech was her insistence that sexuality is part of a woman's personality. Her interest now lies in the psychology of sex. She spoke bitterly of how the Pill, 'the viaticum of sexuality', upset the delicate female biological balance, and she even recanted her former beliefs. The Sixties, she argued, deified sex, while the Eighties have now absorbed it into the mechanism of marketing. 'The vagina has been made from a dangerous, mysterious place into a safe, sanitised one.' Society urges us to take our gratification, licenses sexual fantasy, and sees sex as catharsis. She borrowed a sixteenth century quote from Stubbs, 'Has the world grown cold?', to illustrate that the relentless pursuit of sexual gratification is a reaction to the fact that sex is 'pretty bloody banal'. It is psychic tension that makes sex interesting, and love that makes it worthwhile. In effect, Ms Greer advocated a return to the qualities that so concern her apparent opponent Mrs Gillick: love and care.

Anne-Marie Casey

Gabriela Sexton



# ABORTION



The rights and wrongs of abortion are never a simple matter because it is difficult to decide just what abortion is about. Life and death, you might be tempted to answer. But then I might reply, just what is life? - and we'd be well into the realms of existential definition. Many anti-abortionists have campaigned under religious banners, while feminists are often among their most ardent opponents, claiming that abortion is a matter concerning a woman and her body, and that the woman always has the right to choose. Medical science seems to have complicated the issue somewhat by creating new areas for dispute, such as genetic engineering and experimentation upon embryos created by in vitro fertilisation. This draws attention to that period of existence before physical birth, and makes us pause anew before allowing ourselves a free rein in dealing with the creature that is potentially human, yet hardly recognisably so. We may murmur vaguely, from the midst of this confusion, about the 'sanctity of life', but who would be brave enough to define unequivocally such a nebulous idea?

Nevertheless, from amongst all these theories there do emerge some hard facts. If abortion is the termination of the existence of an embryo or foetus during the nine months of gestation, then the Abortion Act of 1967 laid down terms under which such a procedure could be counted as legal or otherwise. In general terms, abortion is permitted if giving birth presents a risk to a woman's life; or to her mental or physical health; or if the new child might be a threat to the well-being of existing children; or if the child, once born, may suffer from severe mental and/or physical abnormalities.

The Act may have had some effect on the incidence of abortion. In 1968 the total number of terminations carried out was 22,000, but by 1973 this had risen to 168,000. Furthermore, the illegitimate birth-rate has remained constant, but the number of terminations has shot up to equal it. 55% of abortions are carried out privately, and as this can cost £100 or more it suggests that a significant number of women concerned are either wealthy enough to afford such an outlay, or sufficiently motivated by social pressure (private abortions can easily be kept secret) and by a low regard for the NHS to spend beyond their means. 27% of women who have one abortion go on to have a second, and roughly 60% are supposed to have used inadequate contraception. Little can be proved, but a great deal is implied.

There is wide scope for anti-abortionists to make incriminating deductions. It seems highly plausible that the wider legality and accessibility of abortion leads to a greater incidence of terminated pregnancies, and there are grounds for supposing that the operation is occasionally used as a sort of post-conception contraceptive. Yet to regard these factors as indications of a morally ailing society is to suppose that there is something inherently evil about abortion. Such a viewpoint in itself needs some justification.

Religious grounds are the only ones upon which an absolute opposition to the termination of pregnancy can be based. For if, indeed, there exists some god-given moral code which states that abortion is evil, then there is little human reasoning can say against it. If an individual begins by basing his or her opinions on a non-rational foundation, there is no room for rational argument. One can argue about the notion of God and question the motives behind any supposedly moral stance, but one cannot rationalise about faith itself. And yet Enoch Powell, who has twice voted against the extension of the legalisation of abortion, does not believe that religion allows us to definitely decide anything one way or another. On what grounds, then, can one object to abortion?

When I spoke to Mr Powell, he was keen to stress that, though he had recently been thrown into the limelight through matters relating to his Unborn Children (Protection) Bill, it was very much experimentation upon embryos with which he was concerned, and not abortion. Yet he did confess to being motivated by the general feeling that 'you can't trust people not to abuse their power over another person or crea-

ture'. Mr Powell is a strong believer in the force of gut instincts and revulsions in moulding people's attitudes. In response to the Warnock Reports and the proposition to legalise experimentation upon human embryos created by in vitro fertilisation, he claimed to have felt 'a sense of revulsion and repugnance, deep and instinctive'. Although extremely hesitant to apply his views specifically to abortion, for this is not an area 'to which I have applied my mind', he did suggest that people's political opinions are basically motivated by prejudice and emotion, and it is afterwards that one tries to rationalise. It would be fair to conclude that his opposition to the wider availability of abortion is directed essentially by instinct.

Does one, then, accept that any faintly emotive topic is bound to inspire strong and differing gut reactions in different individuals, and that one must simply act according to the gut reactions of the majority? If this were so medical staff in Oxford, who in 1983 had to deal with 1 in 6 deliveries being aborted, would have justifiable grounds on which to object to a significant proportion of their work. Gut reactions are one thing, and there is always a possibility of conflicting feelings, if one is in a position to impose one's will on others, then there is an obligation to sort out conflicting gut reactions. Careful analysis of people's opinions can often reveal an inconsistency of moral principles. For example, society is sometimes sympathetic to the woman who seeks abortion after rape, while censorious towards the woman who has slept with a man and been careless about contraception. Yet in terms of absolute ethical justice, the rights of the unborn child remain equal. Similarly, if one objects to all abortion because of the abhorrence of destroying human life, one must object to all killing in war, no matter what the circumstances of possible justification. As soon as a strain of inconsistency or hint of compromise is detectable, logic and reason can no longer be disregarded.

One feminist I spoke to said what she regards as really important are an understanding of people's real intentions and a sensitivity towards recognisable pain and suffering. Thus she believes that there is nothing at all wrong in the abortion of very immature foetuses which are incapable of feeling pain. But she is a feminist, too, and recognises also that certain feminist issues are at stake here.

If people say a foetus has a right to live, then it is no reply simply to say that a woman has a right to choose. Yet many feminists do feel that abortion is basically a matter of the rights of the mother as compared with those of the unborn child, and reject the idea that under normal circumstances the potential father may have equal or greater interest. This is not to say that after birth, or at any point during a child's upbringing, a woman should be more tightly held within the confines of parenthood than a man. But while agreement is always preferable, abortion is an all-or-nothing matter, with no possibility of compromise, and if only the parents' wishes are at issue, the mother, with her greater interest, must have the right to decide. It is, after all, the woman who carries, nourishes, and ultimately must give birth to the unborn child. And because the moral principles which oppose the termination of pregnancy can so often be revealed as inconsistent, there is reason to suppose at least that an attempt to limit a woman's freedom, inadvertently or not, is somehow bound up with them. So there is all the more reason for feminists to fight.

As for the idea that a wider acceptability of abortion leads to a society that is more morally lax, it is a complicated and largely subjective matter deciding just what sort of society is *not* morally lax. But I do think that bare statistics are uninformative and perhaps misleading. Anyone who has experienced an abortion herself or known someone who has, and has witnessed the emotional and physical trauma involved, quite apart from all the ethical and ideological confusion, is unlikely to believe that a woman would willingly undergo such a procedure were it at all avoidable.



1 in every 6 Oxford deliveries gets aborted

Perhaps, even more than the disguised hatred of women or fear of God, what really underlies an apparently fundamental aversion to abortion is the idea that it is bound up with death, and death remains something of a taboo subject. Just as murder is seen as a greater crime than the infliction of grievous bodily harm, irrespective of the criminal's intentions or the real quantity of pain and suffering resulting, so it remains a relatively new idea that the termination of potential life can be a good idea, except perhaps in order to save existing life. Maybe, then, most of us are haunted by some vague notion of the sanctity of life, but this alone cannot be enough to determine our moral judgements of others. Nor is there any real danger, as we try to make our feelings and beliefs consistent and perhaps change our attitudes, that just because of this we will become more abusive towards human life. 'Life's not a paragraph,' said the American poet e. e. Cummings, 'and death, I think, is no parenthesis.' But then who really needs reminding of that?

Francesca Weisman



# COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

The marketing campaign launched by the Labour Party to back the comprehensive system was a cunning one. It took as its slogan a promise made by the then Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. The catchphrase was 'Grammar schools for all'. It was sophisticated for it capitalised on the contradictions that were running around Joe Public's mind. In a nutshell, Joe Public's children were to gain everything and lose nothing by the new system. The exclusive brand of education doled out solely by the grammar schools was now to be opened up to all. There was to be no more once-and-for-all assessment at the tender age of eleven. Rumour has it that the eleven-plus examination cost the government nine pence a head. For nine pence, a child was tested and dispatched appropriately. With a system like that in operation, it's not surprising that an alternative was welcome. And welcome the comprehensive system was in the Seventies. Now in the Eighties some people are not so sure.

It's not too difficult to see just why the comprehensive system comes in for so much criticism. Its disciples hoped for too much and too soon. They imagined that the comprehensive schools would provide a common meeting-ground for children of every social class. They believed in equality of opportunity and meritocracy. They were in fact hopelessly idealistic.

Idealism does not account for the whole story, though. Shirley Williams reckons that the comprehensive move was less of an indulgence, more of a necessity. There was no great optimism that a new dawn would break. Everyone knew that the change would take time, patience and a surfeit of good will. But change there had to be. The grammar schools catered for a relatively small élite - an élite which covered as few as 12% of the children in some counties. With countries such as the U.S.A. and Japan educating up to 70% of their

children to the age of eighteen, Britain's educational system seemed badly in need of an overhaul.

It was no overnight transformation. Schools had to be altered or adapted: the change called for amalgamations and closures. Staunchly conservative local authorities resisted the change as much as they dared, and even if the political will was there, the administration and bureaucracy took time. Michael Howseman is headmaster at Fleetwood Hesketh High School in Lancashire. He pinpoints one solid advantage of the comprehensive school: The comprehensive system gives the opportunity to succeed to a lot more children. In effect, it represents the greater good for the greater number.

There are some who argue that the actual standard of education meted out by the comprehensive schools is inferior. Shirley Williams would disagree: The only really serious comparison of the comprehensive and the selective systems, which has not been politically coloured, was carried out by the National Children's Bureau in 1978. They took a cohort of 1,580 children from various comprehensive and selective schools dotted about the country and directly compared their academic results. What emerged was that there was almost no difference in achievement at all. The comprehensive school was actually better for the academically able.

That was back in the Seventies. What the Eighties brought along, no one could have forecast. Two factors hit the comprehensive schools: falling rolls and education cuts. The devastating effect of the two was in no way softened by the actions of the newly elected Conservative Government. Shirley Williams is fiercely critical of the part they played: What I would blame this Government for is that the money that had been set aside to offset the falling rolls - money to push on much faster with sixth-form colleges and tertiary colleges which would have overcome the problem of smaller individual sixth forms - has simply been done away with. The result is that the comprehensives have been blamed for a combination of things which have also hit grammar and secondary modern schools where they still exist.

More recently, the comprehensive system has come in for a further bashing at the hands of the Government. Their proposal to bring back the direct grant system is seen by many as a kick in the face to the comprehensive schools. Michael Howseman is one of those who feels that by their actions the Government have demonstrated covertly if not overtly that they really don't care about state education: It is appalling that any government could consider the reintroduction of the direct grant principle because it is in effect saying that this Government has no confidence in the form of education offered to 90% of the nation's children. This Government feels that those who 'matter' should be educated privately or semi-privately and the state system will do for the rest.

The problem boils down to money, then. As the Government is resolutely refusing to plough any money into the state school system - money which is badly needed for the maintenance of buildings, new equipment and teachers' salaries - the mood in the comprehensives is one of acute depression. What it is crying out for is an ego boost in the form of hard cash. And today that is exactly what it won't get.

Kate Davies



# OFF-TARGET



Robert Spicer

Class of '85

Last year's report by David Shepherd, Chairman of the Target School Committee, made gloomy reading. It condemned 'the lack of understanding of the admissions procedure, the general media image of Oxford and a false impression of Oxford's academic levels'. The report pointed out that 'this year there has been a marked drop in the number of applications from the comprehensive sector'. It went on to warn that this might become 'a self-perpetuating decline as each year more pupils are discouraged by the relatively small proportion of applicants from the comprehensive sector'. From this perspective, the admissions figures for this year are, to say the least, sobering.

The University authorities had been warning that this was going to be a 'freak year'. Independent schools were entering many more candidates, they said, because of the imminent abolition of Seventh Term entry. The recently released figures do indeed show a surge in private sector admissions. These went up by 4% - huge in Oxford terms. But entries from the maintained sector show a slump from the average of the six previous years of 45.4% to 42.7% this year.

Clearly this always was going to be a 'freak year', as claimed. But there are still worrying implications. The figures showing a downturn in state school admissions reinforce a trend over recent years, just when David Shepherd's Target School Committee were hoping for a turn for the better. How much further damage, OUSU and University officials are wondering, will the latest figures do to Oxford's image?

Oxford is still overwhelmingly middle class. Mrs Lonsdale, the University's Information Officer, admitted 'the near total failure to reach social classes D and E'. But the general climate in the University is, it is fair to say, very much pro-state education - look at OUSU elections! Election credibility depends on

having received a state education. Maybe we're on dubious ground here! But the Target School people believe they have widespread moral, if not yet material, support. They believe they can dispel the fiction put out by Russell Harty's recent broadcast on Oxford.

The University also sees that change is necessary. The proctors are alarmed, for instance, at the trend away from Science to Arts. The move towards Arts subjects is accounted for by the surge in private sector applications. But the authorities recognise that the problem - a shortage of Science applications - can only be solved by a rise in state sector applications.

Will this year's bulge become 'self-perpetuating'? OUSU officials hope not. Philippa Thomas, Education Officer, said: 'Only by visiting schools can students clearly present a balanced view of Oxford... The idea is not only to overcome elements of ignorance and prejudice but to encourage positive enthusiasm in the many sixth-formers who have the ability.' The Target Schools system which focuses on those schools with low numbers of applications to Oxford is to be strengthened by a Target teachers' campaign, which aims to influence those who most directly influence potential Oxbridge applicants.

Everyone concedes the task is enormous. When the application figures are released in a few weeks, when the University's computer has been mended, we will see if any progress has been made.

Matthew Pike



## WRITING PULP



If you have ever wondered why you are at Oxford, your doubts will be increased by reading about Candida Crewe. At nineteen she applied to Christ Church to read English, and failed. No crisis of confidence took place: she left her home in Headington (her stepfather is a don), bought a small flat in W.11 and started work for Naim Atallah at Quartet Books in Poland Street. The residual energy she possessed after an eight-hour day in the Quartet office went into studying for A-level retakes. At that point, a university degree seemed mandatory. She now realises that she is better off without one, resisting condescension from her Oxford friends with professional ease.

*Focus* (Fontana, £1.75), was the fruit of evenings of boredom over A-level retakes. It appeared in July, a glossy paperback with a cheesecake blonde on the cover, and it seems that the pulp-loving public can't get enough. And nor can Candida: the joys of being 'published' increase as the credits and byelines appear more and more often. Candida left Quartet last month, after being promoted to Junior Editor, to work for *The Standard*. She writes a weekly column in the coveted centre pages and contributes to *Harpers & Queen*. What does she write about, I asked. 'Life', she answered. 'Friends, work, jobs, things that annoy me. A column a week is a full-time job.'

As a 21-year-old hack, Candida is something of a Fleet Street novelty. She loves being lionised, and proudly displays invitations from Lord Gnome on the mantelpiece. Membership of the Groucho Club will only be a matter of time.

The response to *Focus* was beyond even her own private fantasies. She has been the subject of articles even in the magazines and journals she contributes to, as well as *Honey* and *The Tatler*. Candida's recipe for success in her novel is simple. All her characters are young, successful, and attractive. The heroine, Zara, is beautiful, as is her rival, and the hero is a My-Guy dream: 'In fact, Zara thought, he was endowed with the physical attributes of a Greek god, combined with a cool style in modern dress.' The settings of the love affair (which is any girl's wildest fantasy) are London, Venice and New York. The Greek god-like hero, Leo Fenwick-Yorke, is a film director, and Zara becomes a cover-girl.

Candida has followed in Jilly Cooper's footsteps by updating the classic Mills & Boon / Cartland formula. A perfect example of this is the latter's *The Marquess who Hated Women*, one of Cartland's bestselling titles. The hero is a 'romantic hero', which means he usually treats women badly. Our heroine overcomes him with her innocent beauty and makes his hard heart love her. This is the formula that has turned romance into big business. But even a magic formula can be doctored and improved; Misses Cooper and Crewe add a generous measure of consenting sex between characters as well as the compulsory attempted rape scene. Still, sex can never be explicit in the genre, and Candida found it agonising to write sex scenes. She admits it was easier to describe cosy bedtime and bathtime chats between Zara and twin sister Victoria: "'It's so difficult being in love'", Zara said.' The girls spend a lot of time wondering what to wear to various functions and you can tell by the quality of the clothes the characters wear, which class they were born to.

Despite the novel's preoccupation with material success and outward show, all the ingredients are there to nourish the romance reader with a three-hour binge. Fans of the genre will love this one and be delighted that Candida Crewe's second novel, *Romantic Hero*, will be available next year. 'Will it be more of the same?' I asked, fearful of the title, which, to the student, has echoes of lit. crit. 'It's a true story, and so was the last one. But I'm not going to tell you more; go and buy it when it comes out.' I think I will.

Rachel Johnson

## PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION



ISIS and the Oxford Photographic Society are pleased to present their first ever joint photographic competition, on the theme 'Made in Oxford'. The closing date for entries is Sunday the 17th of November. Judgement will be pronounced by Miss Koo Stark, author of *Contrasts*, her celebrated collection of photographs, with Mr Chris Jennings of the Ruskin School of Fine Art, a press photographer yet to be named, as well as one representative each from the O.U.P.S. and ISIS. The winning entry will be awarded £100 in cash, thanks to the generosity of the *Oxford Instruments Group Ltd.*, and the two runners-up will each receive £15 in vouchers kindly donated by *Jessop of Leicester Ltd.* So what are you waiting for? Now read on for the rules...

### Rules

- (1) There will be three sections in the competition: Colour Print, Black and White Print, and Colour Slide. The theme is 'Made in Oxford'.
- (2) Entrants must be amateur photographers.
- (3) Entry implies willingness to re-submit prints for subsequent exhibition.
- (4) Entrants may submit up to three entries per section and each entry must be clearly marked with a name and address. Failure to comply may result in the disqualification of that entry.

(5) Prints entered for either category must have a width of 8 inches or more. They may be presented mounted or unmounted. However, this will not be taken into consideration in the judging.

(6) The closing date for the competition is Sunday 17th November 1985. Entries should be handed either to Simon Corbett (Worcester) or to any other member of the O.U.P.S. Committee:

Dave Cosgrove (Exeter)  
Andrew Brown (University)  
Russell Eaton (Wadham)  
Clare Powles (Somerville)

If clearly labelled and appropriately packaged they may be left in the lodge of Worcester College.

(7) In matters arising outside these rules the decision of the O.U.P.S./ISIS joint competition committee will be final.

(8) The photographer retains the copyright over his entries.

(9) The winning entry will be printed in the fourth issue of ISIS of the Michaelmas term.

(10) Judging will take place on Wednesday 20th November and shall be performed by a panel of five.



## POETRY

Craig Raine explains why 'Peter the Great to his Courtesane', which he wrote as an undergraduate, is an awful poem.

All student contributions for this page are very welcome; they should be sent to Darius Guppy, Magdalen College.

### Peter the Great to his Courtesane

Away, go to the other women.  
So I have used your hips  
Without loving them. Weep not,  
Tears will rust my sword.  
Is it not enough, red lips,  
That you have held an Emperor  
Senseless in your arms, without  
Weeping for love I cannot give?  
I tell you again: go to;  
Peter is sold to history  
And must battle with destiny  
As a man. The ordeal is near,  
And I must not be weakened  
By any fatal tenderness which would make  
Me cry for mercy with the sword at my throat.  
An undignified scream would not  
Prevent death, only tarnish it.  
Do not weep, I forbid it:  
Death would always be in our bed,  
Fornicating unseen, begetting fear.  
Come, dry your eyes and fight me  
For I like a woman with spirit.  
Do not weep for Peter, or for yourself.  
I forbid it.

I find this poem painful to contemplate - and not only for aesthetic reasons, though there are plenty of those.

The other day at Faber & Faber, conversation drifted to the idea of an anthology of juvenilia - and drifted away again. But not before a colleague had mooted the idea that, along with the early poetic efforts of Eliot and Auden, my own juvenilia could be included. 'No good', another colleague chipped in, 'Craig hasn't finished writing his.' Be that as it may, 'Peter the Great to his Courtesane' is the only surviving example of juvenilia I am prepared to own up to. Nothing else managed to get into print for another ten years, by which time I was more or less thirty and more or less able to write. This poem, however, appeared in a new Oxford magazine round about 1964 or 1965, when I was still an undergraduate. The magazine, *Peacock*, never recovered, and Issue No. 1 was also the last. From Cambridge, *Granta* issued a brief dismissal - 'What can you expect from a magazine whose contributors have names like Q. Filius and Craig A. Raine?' Q. Filius's poem was called 'Sea Fret' and was a miracle of sophistication compared to mine. But I've not come across him since.

The reason for this shortage of authentic early Raine rubbish is that most Oxford undergraduate poetry editors could recognise egg-shells, bacon-rind and toe-nail clippings even when they were typed out with an unjustified right-hand margin. I only wish that Sebastian Brett and Crispin Hasler, the two old Etonians who wasted their time and money on *Peacock*, had shared the consensus. Or at least used a dictionary to check the spelling of 'courtesan'.

My English tutor, Jonathan Wordsworth, always refused to read any of my poetry - on the grounds that it was almost certainly bad. Then I wondered how he could know in advance that I wasn't a Keats or a Rimbaud. Now I am very grateful to him for his discouragement - without it, more

terrible stuff might have survived. When I myself taught, I always tried to avoid reading my undergraduates' poetry. But once, I was cornered and compelled to read two or three poems. They were about the successful seduction of a girl. The trouble was that their author had clearly never seduced anyone. I pointed this out, as tactfully as possible, and advised him to write about something he knew about - not sex: a tutorial, say. I was quick to see the hollowness of his poetry largely because I remembered 'Peter the Great to his Courtesane', which, stripped of its historical fancy-dress, is nothing more than a fraudulent account of a broken engagement.

Instead of telling my fiancée the truth - that I had fallen for someone else - I lied to her in a baffling and grandiose way which the poem accurately reflects. I thought, I suppose, that I was protecting her self-esteem. Actually, I was really protecting my own self-esteem. Though I wanted to be rid of her, I wasn't prepared to part with her good opinion of me: by withholding the truth, I somehow managed to imply that the fault was hers. 'Do not weep for Peter, or for yourself' hardly covers the case. And 'I forbid it' is a lofty imperative light years away from my increasing sense of desperation. It was four days before I could persuade her to go home. She cried most of that time, blamed herself, blew her nose, stared at me through puffy eyelids like someone just out of plastic surgery. She was beautiful but by the time she caught the train she looked ugly. Obviously, I felt a shit - calling her a 'courtesane' and making myself Peter the Great was a way of cheering myself up, of putting a brave face on a bit of abject cowardice. No wonder the poem is awful.

Craig A. Raine

## PEGASUS THEATRE

If once Pegasus was a vehicle of escape into the realms of the metaphysical, he may now be found with his hooves firmly on the ground halfway down the Iffley Road. Housed in an early 1970s example of breeze-block neo-brutalism, the 120-seat Pegasus Theatre is a forum for drama rarely seen elsewhere in Oxford.

When the current directors Tony Davis and Tony Mellor arrived two years ago, they found little more than a space that seemed massively under-used and run-down. Whilst young people in other parts of the country were queueing for membership to theatre projects, schemes at the Pegasus were under-populated, and full advantage had not been taken of its resources. But in the last eighteen months, under the untiring determination of its new directorship, things have begun to change: it is now a greatly developed youth theatre used extensively by schools and catering for a touring-theatre programme, concerts, workshops, seminars and films.

As a community venue, the situation of the Pegasus in the Magdalen Road, East Oxford, means that it draws on quite a different audience to the city centre theatres. It has achieved an extraordinary record of attendance due to popular and accessible shows that are carefully planned with particular audiences in mind. General publicity is complimented by a specific network of interested groups - from Black groups to gay and lesbian groups, from schools to women's groups, from the Trades Council to Social Youth Services. Thus, contained in one venue is an unusual, idiosyncratic and exciting repertoire ranging from 'Heroes y Martires' (from Nicaragua), Gay Sweatshop, The Black Theatre Company, 'The Trial of Dedan Kamathi' (denounced by the Kenyan Embassy and banned in Kenya itself) to the Japanese-American Toy Theatre of London and, on a regular basis, Théâtre de Complicité (winners of the Edinburgh Festival Perrier Award).

The commitment of this latter company to Pegasus is central to the success of the theatre's new artistic direction. Indeed, the future of Pegasus depends to a large extent on continuing work with residential companies whereby sustained contact with professionals steadily improves the quality of youth theatre work. In-between tours of Spain and Hong Kong, and headlining the London International Mime Festival, Théâtre de Complicité has directed a series of workshops which have influenced the enthusiastic output of youth members and school groups. Tony Davis admits that the policy of the Pegasus with schools is largely interventionist. Projects are set up and schools challenged to take advantage of them. Primary schools often provide more fertile possibilities because they are able to devote more all-round curricular attention to ongoing projects. Owing to the academic intensity of the curriculum at secondary school level, however, the possibility for a wide array of such projects is marginal. The gauntlet Pegasus has thrown down could potentially highlight some of the false models of education, and, by breaking down the conservatism of the teaching profession, build up a network of teachers willing to participate in the challenge. That Oxfordshire County Council have seconded a teacher to work at Pegasus for this academic year provides encouragement to teachers and schools not only to use the resources available at Pegasus, but also to consider more generally the ways in which drama can be integrated comprehensively into the curriculum.

If some people feel that the somewhat esoteric programme of events at the Pegasus - such as a gay/lesbian cabaret - is synonymous with washing dirty linen in public, they should at least be able to recognise that Pegasus is extremely cost-effective and continually attracts wide-ranging audiences. The pertinent fact is that anyone working such projects in an open environment must provide a disparate programme to satisfy the interests of local communities, and Pegasus has thereby developed a fundamental determinus of age, race and gender. On Sunday 24th November, for instance, a special performance of 'This is for you, Anna' is open to women only



'This is for you, Anna' playing at Pegasus 23rd and 24th November

(though it is showing generally on Saturday 23rd). It has played to wide acclaim in Toronto and Ottawa, as well as in a women's prison and in the kitchens of women's shelters, presenting a spectrum of revenge from the legendary to the hilarious to the emphatically personal. Members of the University are welcomed and encouraged to take the opportunity of seeing this kind of production, which our 'privileged' institution fails to provide.

That students are not, however, invited to become members of the Pegasus Theatre is simple enough: the range of theatrical facilities and possibilities at the disposal of Oxford University students is vast, and should any individual or group feel dispossessed of the opportunity to use this potential, for whatever reason, then it lies with them to adopt the Pegasus initiative.

Frances Stonor Saunders



# MUSIC

## PLAYING TO DEAF EARS

Composers today are writing music without the help of their ears. So maintains Mark Cromar, President of Oxford's Contemporary Music Group, who is not surprised that his society attracts very few members. What is generally known as 'contemporary music' is after all something which falls outside most people's frame of reference.

Mark Cromar is a contemporary composer who sees the lack of appeal of modern compositions and understands the reasons behind music's taking such an obscure turn: he feels that the state of music is inseparable from that of society. Since the Second World War there has been a tendency to reduce all art forms to the merely abstract and cerebral, perhaps reflecting the modern obsession with science. Post-war attempts to reject the past, led by Boulez and Stockhausen, seem to have resulted in an excessive disregard for overall musical appeal. The musical establishment these days is inclined to look favourably upon a composer who stresses the intellectual influence of a piece rather than its sound value. Astonishingly, attracting an audience of any kind no longer seems to be a priority, which prompts Mark Cromar to condemn much contemporary composition as 'intellectual masturbation'. Music, which should be a two-way emotional communication, has become a mere exercise in self-gratification. Whereas in the past the audience could base their critical judgements upon an understanding of classical harmony, which provided a lingua franca for all composers, now there can be no common criteria of interpretation.

It seems, then, that music can go no further. Perhaps originality is no longer feasible and composers will have to redefine their goals. In a world where music is composed around complex mathematical frameworks, producing musical pieces considerably harder on the ear than John Cage's notorious silent works, the only course open to music must be to return to more accessible forms. In the past ten years or so, the minimalist movement, for example, has attempted to set the reverse trend in motion. Composers such as Philip Glass and Steve Reich are re-emphasising sound as opposed to mathematics in the structure of a composition. Certainly, the favourable audience reaction to much of their work suggests that this concession is beginning once again to bridge the gap between listener and composer. The tendency is still more visible where contemporary composers are appealing to wider audiences through forms of mass entertainment such as stage and screen. A recent speaker at the Contemporary Music Group was Michael Nyman, who is perhaps best known for his soundtrack to the film 'The Draughtsman's Contract'. This term's programme includes a visit by David Bedford, who worked closely with Mike Oldfield on the score for 'The Killing Fields'.

For the composer, as Mark Cromar points out, there are disadvantages in pursuing this kind of wider acceptance. Writing for the stage can be frustrating when the director changes his mind so often that a score becomes distorted away from the composer's original conception. Yet perhaps the only way forward for music is to establish more such cooperation between artistic intention and popular appeal.

Paul Bajoria  
Tessa Lecomber

## ESTHER LAMANDIER

St Paul's Theatre, Wednesday 16 October

The audience for Esther Lamandier's performance of mediaeval monodic music was small. Those who missed it missed an event of which one can say, without exaggeration, that it was both enchanting and enlightening. And those put off by fears that early music is inaccessible, dry and difficult missed a performance which gave to unfamiliar and complex melodies direct appeal, drama and grace. Purists might argue that Lamandier's treatment is not always authentic, but, among so much that challenges ears accustomed to more modern harmonies and melodies, the occasional concession for the sake of communication is surely excusable.

Accompanying herself on the harp and vielle, Esther Lamandier performed music from France and Italy, associated with the troubadours and trouveres, German religious songs of the 14th century, and Sephardic Ballads. These last, collected from all parts of the Mediterranean basin, reflect the fascinating blend of Judaic and Hispanic culture achieved in the Iberian peninsula and spread throughout the area after the final expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. By contrast with the French and Italian, the Sephardic songs are more simple in their melodies, more exotic in their harmonies and more direct in their expression of that peculiarly melancholy sensuality which characterises so many songs of the period.

Lamandier did sing some bright and cheerful songs; her light and flexible voice is able to dance through the chattering rhythms of such pieces as fluently as it ripples along the elaborate lines of more sober melodies. But she concentrated on songs which express isolation, yearning, love-longing, often from the woman's point of view, as in the Lai, 'A vous, Tristan'.

Lamandier's characteristic style of performance suits such songs. She is a striking figure on stage - fragile, sitting alone, surrounded by a halo of curls, holding the audience's attention, yet placing them in the position, almost, of eavesdroppers on a private display of emotion. Her attention and gaze are directed at her instrument which she plays as if it were a part of herself, conducting an internal dialogue between singer and harp. Using the vielle for a few songs, she strummed almost absent-mindedly while singing to herself, or, in the melancholy Oriental lament 'Morenica Sos', bowed a single repeated note like a low cry of pain. For the German religious songs, she adopted a more formal style of performance, standing at the front of the stage, yet her attention still seemed to be directed elsewhere, dramatising the relationship of the human to the divine.

What underpins and sustains this variety of approach and style is a voice of remarkable beauty and subtlety. Essentially simple melodies, often ornamented with long melismatic passages, are given clear shape and progressive movement by Lamandier's intelligent treatment of rhythm and phrasing. She moves with seeming ease through the most complex passages, and her vivid range of tone and volume colours and moulds the plainer areas. The concentration and exercise of skill are unfailing, without ever conveying a sense of strain or artificiality.

Michèle Le Roux

# MULLIGAN'S MACBETH



Andrew Hill

Director Mulligan method acting

Andrew Mulligan is a man with a lot of contempt for Oxford's dramatic network and a confident knowledge of how to use it for his own purposes. Disregarding his scorn, OUDS has enthusiastically welcomed back this one-time Playhouse bigshot to direct 'Macbeth' in the Newman Rooms in Fourth Week.

Few who saw the plays he directed - shows like 'Marat/Sade', 'Romeo and Juliet', and 'Volpone' - can have forgotten them. But, he comments, 'The person who did "Marat/Sade" was window-dressing. He might as well have been doing a Selfridges window display.' Things have clearly changed since his departure over a year ago from 'the incredibly nice' world of Oxford. The real thing has been something like a cold shower, though he acknowledges the privilege of having seen groups like 'Lumière', 'Footsbar' and 'Théâtre de Complicité' at close hand. 'When you've seen something like that, you can't go back to Oxford and do another Playhouse extravaganza where you're going to get a bit of attention. Those groups said something to an audience that was positive and constructive.'

'It's all too easy to use theatre to exercise yourself. You get turned on by images. You lose sight of the final objective dazzling people with lights, showing them what an amazing visual sense you have.' There is no question that Mulligan does have a talent for dazzling: pulling rabbits out of hats is what he's famous for. For 'Macbeth', he mentioned a plan to invoke spirits with a ouija board, but he ditched it as unsuitable for the Catholic chaplaincy. I even remember rumours of an actor catapulted through one of the windows in Magdalen's Waynfleet Building during a rather energetic rehearsal. He responds to all this with characteristic modesty: 'I suppose I've got a knack for getting energy together and channelling it out.'

Can we expect physical stunts and mental high-kicks in 'Macbeth'? 'It's a play which deals with tyranny, degeneracy and ego. It's about a butcher who dies. In every scene, the atmosphere is amazingly concentrated. That's what Shakespeare's like: people throwing emotion around, surviving, falling in love, falling out of love, stabbing each other in the back, ripping their clothes off in thunder and lightning.' He seems to be running the risk of histrionics more than vaudeville. 'What is more likely', he says as if he's not about to believe it, 'is that people will be distracted by the over-visuals, the gimmicks, and lose sight of what the play is doing.' But Mulligan is not a cynic. He is passionate about retaining the play's integrity and message. I couldn't avoid asking him if there wasn't a political message behind all the integrity. 'Yes,

of course my attitude to theatre is political. And it has to be. That doesn't mean having to cram everything with urgent, very contemporary references. There has to be a political commitment in your work simply because there has to be a humanitarian commitment.'

'Macbeth' isn't a play about an Elizabethan society: it's about the society the actors are working in. You've got to consider contemporary issues and arguments if you're going to throw light on the human issues of the play. Otherwise you might as well do it in a glass case. In 'Macbeth', fear extends all over the country and people's lives are completely stifled by it. Everything that's loving and creative about Macbeth and Lady Macbeth just gets trodden into the ground. It's important to see that people lead their lives this way - they get killed, stifled and crazy.'

'Macbeth' has drawn the crème de la crème of Oxford's dramatic solar system. Names like Victoria Worsley, Wes Williams, Conrad Leister, Alex Hardy, Tamara Joffe, even Mr Mulligan himself promise the punter a good night out. Their considerable talents should not be underestimated.

'My particular style', he says, 'is to get people working physically as soon as possible. That imposes an equality on the cast.' Such equality is rarely found in the feudal world of Oxford theatre. As one who's been and gone, Mulligan knows what he's talking about. 'I think what will shock people when they leave here - it shocked me - is just how undominated theatre is by complacent, talentless bigots. What amazed me was the inspiring integrity. Oxford may be a mirror of what theatre has been in this country but it comes as a surprise that theatre might have a point to it outside putting on shows for your friends, finding a comfortable corner for yourself - a star network. It's wretched, competitive and almost entirely self-critical and it starts with Cuppers.'

'I don't care if "Macbeth" fails. It ought to fail, really. We're going to share our humanity with the audience. That's what we've got to do. So, on Tuesday night in Fourth Week when the show goes up the audience might not be moved at all. Or, if they are, it's because there are some remarkable effects in Act IV sc. i, and some dazzling lighting. Then we've failed. We can't put on the best "Macbeth" ever; we can only exploit the energy and youth of the group. I could just be turning out another "Marat/Sade", but if "Macbeth" does one thing, it will share amongst the cast a kind of approach. It could be hollow, but at the moment some of us are experiencing something a bit inspiring ...'

Annabel Lord



## PLAYS

### 'THE ASS'

by D. H. Lawrence  
St Paul's Theatre, Second Week

There is an unholy fascination in the words 'A Music-Theatre Entertainment': they tend to inspire a certain amount of apprehension and, in the event, one usually feels a mixture of horror and profound pity for the author who has become the victim of such an exercise. From the 17th to the 19th of October at the new St. Paul's Art Centre in Walton Street it was the turn of the poem 'The Ass' by D. H. Lawrence to be sacrificed on the altar of modern theatre. The priests presiding over the ritual, performed by the Foco Novo theatre company, were director Roland Rees and writers/composers Kate and Mike Westbrook.

The basic idea was that Lawrence, played by Stephen Boxer, sitting at a café in Taormina, Sicily, hears in the braying of an ass tethered nearby a symbol for the sexual tension, frustration and humiliation that permeates much of his work. This leads him to write and recite his poem on that theme, interspersed with passages from his prose describing his stay in Sicily. In accompaniment sat a group of musicians, who played a strident, braying jazz score by the Westbrooks, which dominated the show. The music was very good as a background to Boxer's readings. Unfortunately, however, the writers had attempted to set parts of Lawrence's poem as songs, for which they were ludicrously unsuitable. As the evening progressed, the main ideas of the poem were acted out (the Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem, the Flight into Egypt), reaching a grotesque climax, or anti-climax, where Lawrence as the Ass, with a huge multi-coloured phallus, tried to copulate with a hideous inflated female ass. This scene, together with a barrage of over-the-top histrionics in reply to the critical reaction to *Women in Love*, finished off this sacrificial beast.

The production was competent; the musicians generated a good deal of excitement in their vigorous performance, and the choreography by Richard Moffat made full use of the set. Stephen Boxer, when simply reciting, was a commanding presence, if perhaps a bit too casual in his delivery. But all in all, the evening was a disappointment, and it seems a pity to celebrate Lawrence's centenary with such a travesty of his work.

Richard Wood

### PYGMALION

The Oxford Playhouse

'The English have no respect for their language and will not teach their children to speak it', wrote Shaw. Henry Higgins, the phonetics professor, who takes on a bet to pass off a Covent Garden flower girl as a duchess within six months is thus Shaw's mouthpiece. 'Remember that you are a human being with the divine gift of articulate speech: that your native language is the language of Shakespeare and Milton and the Bible', he tells her.

It was to the company's credit that they resisted the temptation to go for easy laughs, choosing instead to bring out the play's more important themes. As a cast they were immensely lively and enthusiastic, but the principal reason for their success lay in the splendid performances by the two central characters. Richard Kay's Higgins was both robust and flamboyant and he captured well the professor's endearing impracticality; Helena Little as Eliza gave a performance of great depth and one in which aggression and vulnerability were balanced perfectly. They were aided throughout by the thoughtful direction of Philip Grout.

Tim Jotischky

## FILMS

Why are films about pain so often a pain to watch? Paul Cox's *'My First Wife'* is about infidelity - not a new subject, but one that has been more subtly dealt with in films like Coppola's *'One From The Heart'*. The plot is simple: John loses his wife and then his sanity. He smashes windows, drives his car fast, grunts lines like 'Your love is killing me', but fails to kill himself with an overdose. Wheel in a dying father, a sweet-looking child caught in the middle of mum and dad's slanging matches, add loud cymbals and even louder symbols, shove in a few arty cityscapes, cross-cut to water and flapping doves - you get the picture.

In fact, this picture won Cox the Australian Film Institute's Award for Best Director in 1984. Cox was responsible for the criminally tedious *'Man of Flowers'* a couple of years ago. This concerned a balding aesthete who hires a nubile female model to ogle at in the privacy of his own home. Both of these films have been deemed 'frank' and 'sensitive' for their honest portrayal of the darker aspects of human intercourse. What they really do is to tart up low feeling into high art (operatic soundtracks obligatory).

John's jealousy in *'My First Wife'* is really gross egotism. His gnashing and wailing is designed to inculcate guilt in his wife so that, while it is sad to see a grown man cry, we cannot sympathise with him as he's such a bore. Similarly, his wife, played by the dull Wendy Hughes, is just as unlikeable in her emotional frigidity. The entire film smacks of self-castigating autobiographical bitterness; it has no charm nor originality, lacking the warm schmaltz of a *'Kramer Versus Kramer'* or the analytical intelligence of Pinter's *'Betrayal'*. *'My First Wife'* has been heralded as a spearhead of the Australian Film Revival, but this is a blunt and clumsy tool for doing the job.

Another film of 'human interest', *'Insignificance'* is set in March 1954 where Albert Einstein, Marilyn Monroe, Joe DiMaggio and Senator Joseph McCarthy meet in a New York hotel bedroom. Monroe seeks herself, DiMaggio his wife, McCarthy a testimony, and Einstein wisdom. However, *'Insignificance'* does not so much examine its characters' declared concerns but rather the uncertain context of all our dilemmas.

Approaching this difficult and potentially pretentious subject with wit and considerable craft, Nicholas Roeg has managed to convey the spirit of a complex philosophical idea whilst also avoiding the usual pitfalls of 'profound' cinema. Roeg insists that we do not clutter our appreciation of the film with unnecessary preoccupations with the 'real' lives of Monroe, Einstein, McCarthy and DiMaggio. The film's title and its content do not seek to suggest the insignificance of life, but rather to show that nothing has any more significance than anything else. The famous, their identities lost in a multiplicity of equally meaningless realities, know or should know this better than anyone else. The film's characters are thus figurative creatures, repositories of the trauma, realised or potential, of us all.

The projected traumas of *'Pale Rider'* are inevitably more straightforward. Clint Eastwood, who regularly plays either an inner-city cop or an outcast drifter, elevates his art to a new level in *'Pale Rider'*. This is a Western set in a small mining camp in the Rocky Mountains during the gold rush. Villains ride through leaving destruction and despair in their wake; an attractive 14-year-old girl prays for a miracle; Clint Eastwood, 'the Preacher', arrives on a pale horse, and 'hell comes with him'.

The appeal of this film lies mainly in Eastwood's performance. A master of minimalism, he allows his character no superfluous dialogue or expression. The Preacher is far from the stock Western hero. The character assumes mythical proportions, inhabiting shadows and haunting the ghostly staging post. There are brawls and gunfights, of course, but there is little excess gore as foes are disarmed rather than dismembered. The climax - reminiscent of *'High Noon'* - is especially good because it incorporates more than the standard clichés.



The clichés of the sci-fi genre are still in the making. *Beyond Thunderdome*, the third visit to the post-holocaust Outback, sees Max not so much mad but bewildered. The more or less mindless violence of the first and second films is now refined for a wider audience. Mel Gibson comes across as the wanderer without a care buffeted by the winds of fortune and alternately doomed to death and rescued.

Bartertown, a wonderful creation ruled by 'Aunty' Tina Turner, is powered by pigshit. Master Blaster, the giant-dwarf combination and survivor from *Mad Max II*, controls the processing. Thereby hangs a tale as Max gets embroiled in affairs of a semi-political nature involving the town's arena, Thunderdome, where 'two men enter, one man leaves'.

The plot itself is significantly more complex than its predecessors, and includes the Feral Kids (remember the boomerang?), human Ewok equivalents, who bring a touch of sentimentality to a film that could be in danger of taking itself too seriously.

Max III is obviously going to be a box office hit as it's a professionally produced film. Couple this with the stunts, Mel Gibson's charisma and a stirring atmosphere, and out comes a softened version of the Max we all know and some of

us love. The only thing missing is the raw energy and starkness of its predecessors, but you can live without that.

There is something basically romantic about the post-apocalyptic setting of *Mad Max*. But in *'The Last Battle'* Luc Besson goes out of his way to present a genuinely dismal picture of what comes after the destruction of civilisation. The film presents absolute desolation: cities turned to sand without a soul in sight. When the lonely hero does come across other people contact is wordless, as the apocalypse has deprived humanity of the use of its vocal chords. It has also brought out man's animalistic traits, and most of the film's narrative is taken up with brutal, senseless fights between two tiny groups of humans.

Despite its fundamental nihilism, the film has a characteristically French charm to it. And, whilst possessing none of the kinetic energy of the *Mad Max* films, *'The Last Battle'* presents a futuristic vision infinitely more brutal for the utter boredom of its inhabitants.

Jason Kingsley  
Alex Connock

Patrick Marber  
Roger Thornham



# ORSON WELLES

'What does it matter what you say about someone?' This is Tanya's (Marlene Dietrich's) epitaph on Hank Quinlan (Orson Welles) at the end of Welles's 'A Touch of Evil'. The words are sadly appropriate to Welles's own life, for he was a man rarely spoken well of. Often even the most fulsome appreciation of his work had a begrudging quality to it. Even the obituary writers preferred to concentrate on what he hadn't achieved rather than what he had, which was more than considerable. In his later years, the genius was swallowed up in the public's perception of a gargantuan, sherry-quaffing voice-over fleshed out in farcical obesity.

As I listened to the news of Welles's death on a late-night radio news bulletin, my mind turned irresistibly to the famous 'War of the Worlds' broadcast of Hallowe'en 1938. Might not this too be a hoax? Welles the master magician, taught as a boy by Long Tack Sam (the Chinese card manipulator) and Harry Houdini himself, duping the world with dexterous sleight of hand into one more illusion? For Welles was vital, his eyes twinkling with the benign omniscience of a sportive god, as Cocteau described him: 'A kind of giant with the look of a child.'

It was this personality that he brought to his greatest roles, so that his damned, Manichean heroes came to life as human beings separate from their terrible deeds. This he described as the point of tension in his work. 'I don't detest them, I detest the way they act... I have sympathy for those characters - humanly, not morally.' Welles's characters are as clearly shaded as his chiaroscuro lighting effects. They are dark or light, good or bad, or, to use the famous image from 'Mr Arkadin', frogs or scorpions, but they never lie dully condemned on the screen. Evil and corrupt men like Kane, Quinlan and Arkadin, all abusers of fundamental liberties who trample on other people's lives, are coloured and made human by the force of Welles's personality. He had, like his favourite character, Falstaff, a candescent goodness, a flame of life, which was able to light up sympathetically even the most wicked of his characters, and it seems unthinkable that it should be snuffed out.

However, his immortality is ensured by his achievements as a director. His unique range of talents made him superbly qualified to direct films. He was initially and perhaps primarily a man of the theatre. He brought to the movies the ensemble of his trail-blazing Mercury Theatre, with actors of the calibre of Joseph Cotten and Agnes Moorehead. He also brought theatrical techniques such as his expertise in stage lighting and groupings, used to such geometric effect in 'Macbeth'. With his mastery of illusion and conjuring, he was able to create some of his most stunning effects, such as the famous sequence in 'Citizen Kane' when Kane appears to walk into the *Chronicle* staff photograph. His soundtracks, as François Truffaut has brilliantly illustrated, are masterpieces in their own right, and are a testament to Welles's command of literature, music and the spoken word.

With these skills, he fulfilled his own prerequisite for directing films: 'A film is never really good unless the camera is an eye in the head of a poet.' He had the poet's sense of nuance and rhythm, switching boldly in his first two films, as Cocteau points out, from the syncopation of 'Citizen Kane' to the calm beauty of 'The Magnificent Ambersons'. This was too great a volte-face for the inflexible public.

Above all, as director he brought to all his movies a sense of wonderment that stemmed from his belief that movies should be 'created out of innocence'. He didn't believe that a director had to be a student of film history, like a man hemmed into the corner of a room by film cans, unable to move or create. 'I don't love films', he said, 'I love making films.' Indeed, he once described a film as 'a ribbon of dreams'. His first masterpiece, 'Citizen Kane', was simply the unhampered (by moguls or money) adaptation of Welles's dreams to film. Sadly, he died with many movies - 'Homer', 'King Lear', 'Conrad' - dreamed but unfilmed.

Like Gatsby, Orson turned out all right at the end. What



'The Lady of Shanghai'

pointed the dreams of Orson Welles was the world's mediocrity. Inhuman hacks and gossip-writers after his dignity, Hollywood with its pitch-pine ethics and cash-crazy producers mutilating every film he made after 'Citizen Kane', and the evil queen bitch of American film criticism, Pauline Kael, whose mendacious accounts of Welles's contribution to 'Citizen Kane' are spilt like globs of vitriol on the celluloid roll of film history.

The films, of course, will endure long after his detractors are silent and dead. His life too will be remembered: a picaresque novel of a huge homeless talent by turns comic and tragic, but always colourful. The infant prodigy who met Ravel and Stravinsky, John Barrymore and the greatest magicians of the world before the age of ten. The teenage orphan who travelled the world from Budapest to Peking (the twin artistic capitals of the Twenties), and the prodigious boy actor of the Gate Theatre, Dublin. Again the traveller - picador in the bullfight in Spain, or at the dinner table of Adolf Hitler in Thirties Vienna.

'He was' - returning to Dietrich - 'some kind of a man.'

Quentin Curtis

# BOOKS

## PART OF MY SOUL

by Winnie Mandela  
Penguin, £2.95

At a time when world headlines provide a daily reminder that the problems of South Africa and the battle against apartheid have reached a point of no return, this part of Winnie Mandela's soul appears on the shelf. It is a fitting testimony to the long and determined struggle of Blacks and Coloureds in South Africa to achieve a dignified equality in their land.

What is striking, and yet most disappointing about this book, is that above all one gets the impression that the book has been written to fill a gap in the 'Who's Who of African Politicians'. It is a highly anecdotal account of the extraordinary life of the Mandela family. One learns how half the family china was broken as it was bundled into a van with Winnie and her daughter when they were banished to the Orange Free State; how, 'like the Queen of Africa', Winnie strode confidently into shops where previously no black foot had dared to tread; how the prison warder had to hide his tears as he watched the little girl banging on the window, pleading to sit on 'daddy's lap'. All fine stuff for a story of oppression, but shouldn't one expect more from a political autobiography?

Mrs Mandela says of her marriage: 'I knew when I married him that I married the struggle, the liberation of my people.' Many years her senior, Mandela's dedication never allowed him time for courtship. He did not ask her to marry him, but told her to visit a dressmaker about her wedding dress. *Part of My Soul* really fails to describe how this woman has come to terms with a public marriage that consists of rationed and censored letters, and a six-monthly conversation through a glass partition.

Nelson Mandela is a dominating presence in the book, and Winnie is shown in her traditional role as his political offshoot. It is a pity that *Part of My Soul* has not shown how Winnie Mandela may now stand in her own right, among the women of Africa who struggle to play their part in the recovery and reconstitution of their troubled continent.

Jessica Douglas



# A SLICE OF ROUGH

The experienced reader of jacket blurbs can scarcely fail to be impressed by the enthusiastic life of Dan Kavanagh. 'Young hopeful at Accrington Stanley F.C. ... deckhand on a Liberian tanker (jumped ship at Montevideo) ... roller-skating waiter at a Tucson drive-in eaterie ...', and now, amongst other mysteriously unspecified activities, 'writer of "low life" detective stories'. Yet in spite of a readiness to reveal tantalising details of his past career in jacket blurbs, Kavanagh remains a curiously elusive figure. On the rare occasions when his publishers pressure him into giving interviews, he remains uncommunicative. His alter ego, Julian Barnes, was commissioned to track himself down to do an interview for Jonathan Cape's in-house promotional magazine. Their meeting, a landmark in the history of literary schizophrenia, took place in a rough-trade pub in Archway. 'What do you think of Joyce?' asked Barnes, hoping to put himself into the wider context of Irish literary life (Kavanagh comes from County Sligo). 'Which one's she?' his other half replied, running an eye along the figures at the bar. It's hard to interview someone so shifty he can't use the word 'yes' in conversation, Barnes later complained. Kavanagh wasn't too impressed by Barnes, either. In a recent interview he spoke ungratefully of his creator as 'that smartyboots TV critic'. It's all very confusing.

Matters aren't helped by the fact that Kavanagh's hero Duffy seems to have been conceived of in an autobiographical mood. Duffy is short, stocky, moustachioed, hair *en brosse*, has a stud in one ear, is enthusiastically bisexual, and looks very shifty. Does Barnes see himself as Duffy? Or does Kavanagh see Duffy as himself, and Barnes himself as Kavanagh?

Kavanagh's books certainly display an intimate knowledge of London squalor. I was pleased to see that the reviewer for *Police World* agreed with me on this point, writing of Kavanagh's first book, *Duffy*, 'the most realistic picture of the sordid life that is Soho you are likely to read'. I note that Barnes's friend Martin Amis, surely a man with the right credentials to pronounce on unpleasantness, writes on the same book: 'refreshingly nasty'. One hopes that the raving write-ups are not as bogus as the biographical details to be found on the inside front cover.

Apart from the compelling insider's information that Kavanagh puts into his stories (*Fiddle City*, set in Heathrow, is full of useful tips for would-be smugglers), they are also distinguished by a dry, detached humour. The most recent, *Putting the Boot In*, set in the world of specifically football-oriented yobbery, kicks off with an opening paragraph that rivals the admirable opening line of *Metroland*: 'There are too many ways of breaking a footballer's leg. Too many, that is, from the footballer's point of view. Others may find the freedom of choice encouraging.'

In all three books the focus of much of this humour is the study of Duffy's neuroses. These are many and varied, ranging from why his clients always expect him to have a dog, to why he has to waste his time concocting absurd 'gumshoe plays' to keep them happy ('We'll make the change-over at Paddington ...'). Others relate more personally to the problems of his sex life: where are you lymph nodes? - and one for the reader: why is Duffy's ticking phobia so intense that his bed-partners have to leave their watches (even the quartz digital ones) in a Tupperware box in the bathroom? Kavanagh's snappy prose, cynical eye and sordidly fertile imagination make his books amusing and enjoyable to read. But who is he? - or, more to the point, who does he think he is? 'There are some days when I feel quite normal', complains Duffy to long-suffering friend and ex-lover Carol, who replies: 'Don't worry, love... You're not even odd; not to me, any more; I mean, you probably are odd, but I suppose I've got used to it.'

Does Mrs Barnes, a.k.a. Pat Kavanagh, feel the same way, I wonder?

Charles Mitchell



# THE RESTAURANT GUIDE



Robert Spicer

Oxford is said to have more restaurants per head than any other place in the country. That being so, eating out should present little problem. But this is not always the case, especially if you are trying to get a good meal out of your parents.

It would be impossible to give a full run-down of all the reasonable places to eat in Oxford, but one could do worse than start with **La Cantina**, 34 Queen Street, tel. 247760. The atmosphere in this subterranean cavern is jolly and the food can be delicious, but you have to tread carefully. For starters, the lasagne verdi at £3.60 were succulent, though I think the chef got carried away with the nutmeg. But the oven-baked melanzane (aubergine) was heaven for only £2.15. For the main course, my companion chose saltimbocca al romana (£3.95), veal escalopes with a lot of sage. I picked one of the specialities; these tend to be a bit over-elaborate, so I plumped for the straightforward osso buco alla Milanese. Not cheap at £4.50, and the only way to describe it is 'savoury'. The selection of vegetables is regularly bland and greasy, but the Merlot house red for £5.45 was good. Altogether about £15 a head, and a definite winner with Mum and Dad.

You might be tempted by the elegant interior of **Gee's** (61a Banbury Road, tel. 511472), Brown's swanky new offshoot, but it's actually very disappointing. The management clearly subscribes to nouvelle cuisine which means that you don't get much on your plate, and what you do get is certainly not worth the price. The spaghetti con funghi (£2.75) were memorable only for the tastelessness of the mushrooms drowned in too much butter. The crespelle of spinach and cheese at £2.25 were according to my companion 'unassuming, but quite cheesy'. For my second course I sampled the hot chicken salad with herbs and greens (£5.75), which turned out cold, dry, and undressed. In contrast, the salmon stuffed with fish mousse, wrapped and baked with lettuce was alpha, though pricey at £7.95. The vegetables were delicious, the £4.95 house wine decent, but it all came to about £15 a head. It's much cheaper at lunch-time: there's a set menu for £6.95 which is probably worth taking your parents to. On the other hand, if you're thinking of splashing out at lunch, **Le Petit Blanc** down the road in Summertown (tel. 53540) will give you better nouvelle cuisine than practically anywhere else in the country for £15. **Michel's Brasserie** (Rue Petit Clarendon, tel. 52142) is French for 'Michael's Brewhouse', but don't come here if you want to treat them to 'le pub lunch'.

Ten pounds will buy you a starter and main course, or a main course and dessert: I started with diced avocado, preferred my companion's seafood profiterole, but wished I'd gone for the enormous helping of moules marinière served at the next-door table. The pork medallions were also choice. The ambience was sympa, the service bon, but the value questionable, considering the tastier dishes carried a rather punitive supplement. Not as good as **The Elizabeth** (84 St Aldate's, tel. 242230).

For even more of a bistro-like atmosphere (red-checked tablecloths, menu on blackboard) the **Casée-Croûte** (103a The High Street, tel. 241320) is recommended. Some have accused the menu of being too small but the quality of the seven-odd choices is very good. The onion soup is a classic and the moules marinière, both at £3.25, are generous. The plat du jour garnis at £4.45 is always good value, and the accompanying vegetables are all fresh; the courgettes are especially appetising. This restaurant has a small capacity so it's worth booking ahead, else you might be forced to move upstairs to **La Sorbonne** where you get the same fare at twice the price.

No guide, however cursory, would be complete without mentioning the Indian food you can get here. East Oxford presents a concentration of good-value Chinese (Pak Fook, 100 Cowley Road, tel. 247958) and Indians (Moonlight, 58 Cowley Road, tel. 240275, and the Anglo-Indian Tandoori at number 84, tel. 243390). **The Prince of Bengal** (92 Cowley Road, tel. 241344) is a symphony of blues, purples and greens, presided over by the inimitable Mr Hoque and Bengali waiters (in full regalia). The quality of the food is excellent at prices little more than the average £7 a head. Of the more expensive specialities, chicken shashlic (£4.15) has to be tried for a change, along with a pint of unusually good draught Dortmunder lager. You can eat your meal at open tables, or in individually curtained-off sections, with civilised touches such as hot flannels, mints and strange chewing herbs. The 10% discount (on production of NUS card) eliminates the need to add on anything for service, but you may find yourself wanting to anyway.

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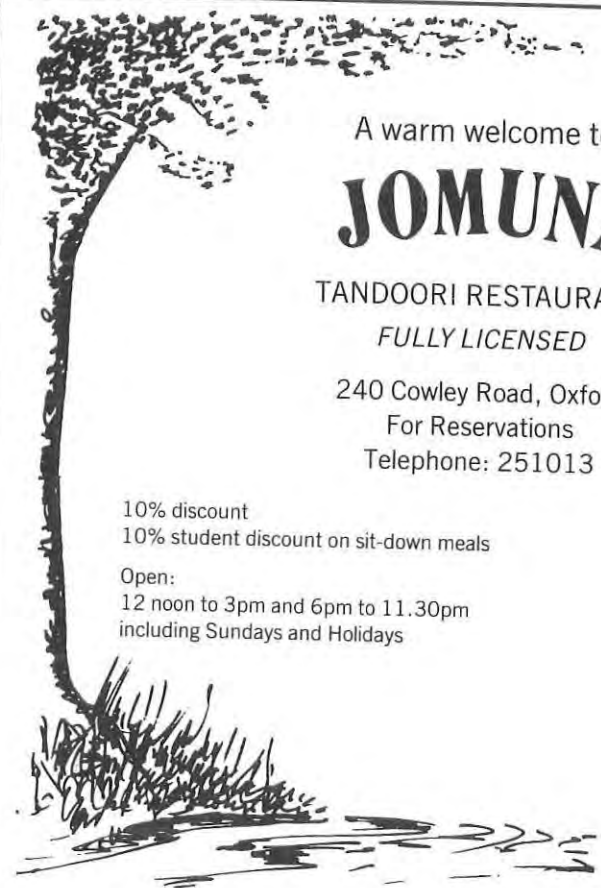
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