Dear Diary,

I am deeply worried about the content of the Hilary issue of the Linacre Li(n)es. What dark forces were in the making, both before solstice and as the term went by, is a mystery to me but it seems that it is full of light stuff!

Steve Whitelam flips through the latest Grisham novel at fascinating speed, Rachel Becker boldly deals with beasts, Caroline Cawthorn finds out what the switch is for, as Alison Wates waits until the light goes out. Asif Memon reassures us that it takes two to tango. European-American Jeremy Nelson likes it hot. Katerina Oikonomopoulou does it the Greek way while Annelene Dahl plays it mysterious. Dave Skinner transcends it, Ella Chase does not like to talk about it unlike Rachel Higgins who boasts about her experience with Superman.

Oh, God! Do I dare?
Well, have it:

Ben Booth contemplates it on a larger and smaller scale. Zenon Quispe elucidates how they do it in Peru, Maria Artamonova denies in vain that she eats bears for dinner and Carter Ingram plays Bond girl in Madagascar. Mary Menton must have it the romantic way – walking, and Dean, as usually, teases the taste buds of the whole college. With regard to the three articles on sporting... I leave them to your judgement. Last but not least, Christina Orphanidou alias Morticia pulls out her sharp tongue to whip up the Linacre social scene. Fortunately, Paul Pennington’s alter ego Lenny Kerr only chases the end of the rainbow.

As for me, far from heaven, "I am so fast, that last night, when I switched off the light, I was in bed before it went off."

Or did I get it all completely wrong?

Ilona Gottwaldova
Editor

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War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
But, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say, “Behold!”
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
so quick bright things come to confusion.

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

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The Linacre Li(n)es are here to put this pride to a test.

In this issue:
- Steve Whitelam, Caroline Cawthorn, Rachel Becker, Katerina Oikonomopoulou, Annelene Dahl on LIGHT
- Asif Memon and Jeremy Nelson on AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY
- David Skinner, Rachel Higgins and Ella Chase on THEMSELVES
- LINACRE SCRIBES – Alison Wates
- Ben Booth on ENVIRONMENT
- Maria Artamonova on RUSSIANS, Zenon Quispe PERUVIAN MONETARY POLICY and Carter Ingram on MADAGASKAR
- ABC of a Fellow - Gillian Ramchand
- Christina Orphanidou on LINACRE SOCIAL LIFE
- Simon Crooks, Lydia Mason and Asif Memon on SPORTS
- REVIEWS and MUSTS – Mary Menton, Ilona Gottwaldova and Dean Worrall
- Paul Pennington chases Lenny Kerr
- Technical support - Caroline Cawthorn and Christina Orphanidou
- Section icons - Paul Pennington
Light is truly remarkable. We know it best as a means of conveying information: light reflected from objects and picked up by our optic nerve reveals the nature of the world around us. It is a tireless messenger, carrying the secrets of the earliest universe from the edges of space to our telescopes. Laser light has been used by scientists to probe the structure of matter, and to create temperatures low enough to make outer space look balmy by comparison. So what is it?

Light is electromagnetic radiation, a disturbance in space consisting of electric and magnetic fields changing in time. The more rapidly these fields change, the higher the frequency of the wave. Visible light is a particular frequency range able to trigger the nerve endings in our eyes, turning electromagnetic energy into a chemical response; different frequencies within this range appear as different colours. But light comes in many other guises. Outside the visible range we have forms of light lower in frequency than the visible, like microwave and infrared radiation (also known as heat), and forms of light with a higher frequency, like ultraviolet and X-radiation, well known for causing skin cancer and enabling Superman to see through walls, respectively.

But this isn’t the whole story. If we ‘zoom in’ on the structure of light we find that the fields in question are not smooth and continuous: they are grainy, made up of discrete packets called photons. The most accurate theory of quantum mechanics and light that physicists possess – the imposingly-titled Quantum Electrodynamics – regards light as a particle conveying the electromagnetic force from one point to another. Thus the force spinning your compass needle is composed of lots of little particles of light.

Confusingly, this particle can sometimes behave as a wave. A single photon fired at two very thin slits can produce a pattern of light and dark that could only be caused by a wave. Cover one of the slits, fire another photon at the apparatus, and the pattern of light and dark is replaced by a single point of intensity, signifying particle-like behaviour.

So light is a fascinating and subtle beast, sometimes a wave, sometimes a particle. Just as fascinating has been the struggle of scientists down the ages to get to grips with this phenomenon, a struggle we’ll take a closer look at in what follows. As with most protracted debates in physics it reads like a gripping page-turner: a copper-bottomed guarantee of spine-tingling intrigue and suspense that you’ll find impossible to put down. (Or have I got that mixed up with my new Grisham novel?). It’s quite an interesting story, anyway.

The Beginnings

We start in ancient Greece. Much was known empirically about the behaviour of light. Euclid, in his Optica (c.300 BCE), described the laws of reflection and noted that light travels in straight lines; Hero of Alexandria demonstrated that light takes the shortest path between two points. These are correct statements in what is called the geometrical limit of light theory, when the wavelength of the light involved is much shorter than the size of the objects with which it interacts.

But the Greeks got some things wrong. They thought vision was a result of emanations from the eye to the object in question, rather than the other way around. We had to wait until Alhazan of Basra, about a thousand years later, for the correct theory. Alhazan was also responsible for much work on the behaviour of light interacting with mirrors and lenses, and on refraction (when light changes its wavelength by passing from air into water, for example).

So much was known early on. But two questions remained open until the 20th century: what is light, and how fast does it travel? We’ll look at the speed of light first.

How fast does it travel?

Very fast. But not infinitely so, as was thought by Aristotle. The Aristotelian idea of an infinite speed for light
propagation persisted in some circles for a long time, with such luminaries as Descartes championing the notion. But the opposition camp steadily grew. Empedocles (according to Aristotle) believed light to travel at a finite speed; Roger Bacon (c.1270) thought similarly. Galileo (c.1610) suggested a possible experiment with lanterns to determine this speed.

The first roughly accurate measurement of the speed of light was due to the Danish astronomer Rømer (1676). Studying one of Jupiter’s moons, he discovered that the frequency with which it was eclipsed by Jupiter was irregular, with the irregularity corresponding to the distance separating the Earth and Jupiter at the time of measurement. He concluded that light took a finite time to bridge this distance, and estimated a value for its speed accurate to about 40%.

Substantial improvements were made by the Englishman James Bradley (1728), who used his knowledge of the speed of the Earth in its orbit to make an angular correction to Rømer’s value, and, in the 1850’s, the French scholars Fizeau and Foucault, who made the first land-based measurement of light’s speed. Their methods involved cunning arrangements of toothed wheels (Fizeau) and rotating mirrors (Foucault); their values were correct to about 1 percent. The Polish-born Albert Michelson went better still. He used Foucault’s method on a grand scale, swapping his laboratory bench for a 2000-foot stretch along the bank of the Severn, and notching up a few more decimal points of accuracy. Nowadays the value is known so precisely that scientists choose to define the unit of length, the metre, in terms of the speed of light (rather than vice versa). And it is fast: light could travel round the Earth seven times in one second.

But Michelson was to make another important contribution to light theory. For all this knowledge of how fast light travelled, it was not known what light travelled in. Michelson and his collaborator Edward Morely were the first to suggest that the answer might be nothing at all. They tried and failed to find any evidence of a medium – called the luminiferous aether – through which light might propagate, like sound travelling through air. Their results suggested that light could travel through the vacuum of space without the support of an underlying medium. The absence of an aether furthermore suggests there is no fundamental frame of reference in the universe, and this was one of the factors that led Einstein to develop his Special Theory of Relativity.

So why was this aether cooked up? It appears to have been motivated by analogy with sound, a pressure wave that travels through air and other media by vibrating their constituent atoms. The aether was to have been light’s ‘air’, a colourless, odorless, and tasteless medium that it could vibrate as it went about its merry way. It was the brainchild of the Dutch physicist Christiaan Huygens. And Huygens also reckoned that light is a wave, which brings us to the other of our two questions: what is light? Huygens supported Robert Hooke (1665) in suggesting that light is a wave. But they were about to run into fairly significant opposition, in the shape of Isaac Newton.

**Particle or Wave?**

Newton also liked the idea of the aether, but not the idea that light is a wave: he preferred to think in terms of discrete corpuscles able to excite waves in the aether. His reasoning seems to have been based on the idea that sound waves bend round a corner, and light does not; hence light is not a wave. This reasoning was flawed. Light does bend round obstacles, a process called diffraction, but only when the obstacles are comparable in size to the wavelength of light. Since this is much less than the wavelength of sound, light cannot bend round large objects like street corners.

The two camps squared off. Tensions weren’t eased by the fact that Hooke and Newton didn’t like each other very much. Hooke was a loud, prickly character who regarded optics as his private preserve; Newton a flawed genius psychologically unable to accept criticism of his ideas. They had clashed on other aspects of optical theory,
waging a war of letter writing that would captivate the scientific community. And if prizes were awarded for sheer blood-mindedness, Newton would have cleaned up: he spent several days recovering after nearly blinding himself during an experiment to change the shape of his eye lens using a pointed stick. But he was not to win this dispute.

Gradually, evidence began to accrue in favour of the wave theory. Thomas Young (1801) demonstrated that light exhibited interference, the process whereby a wave’s crests and troughs add up to create regions of very strong or very weak intensity. Augustin-Jean Fresnel explained the phenomena of polarization (splitting light up according to the direction of its electric field) and diffraction in terms of waves. Ironically, Newton himself had produced a periodic ring-like interference pattern of light, supporting the wave theory. But the final nail in the coffin of the corpuscular theory came in 1849, when Fizeau and Foucault ascertained that light slowed down in water, as predicted by wave theory alone. The corpuscular theory, sustained for so long on the strength of Newton’s great reputation, was discarded.

So towards the end of the 19th century we were left with the picture of light as an electromagnetic wave propagating independently of an aether. But as is so often the case, there was to be another twist in the tale. We have already mentioned that light behaves both as a wave and as a particle, under different conditions. Newton’s particle picture had been quashed: but Albert Einstein reestablished something similar. He showed, in 1905, that light is not infinitely divisible, coming in packets (called photons) that behave like waves in certain circumstances. Although not corpuscles in the sense Newton had intended, you get the impression he would have felt a certain satisfaction to have, however belatedly, achieved some form of parity with Hooke and Co.

We leave the story at this point, the start of the 20th century, when two thousand years of scientific research had set our theory of light on the right track. But clearly the story didn’t stop there. Our understanding and mastery of light have continued apace in the last hundred years. Scientists have measured the bending of light by gravity, constructed holograms, and studied the complex interactions of light and matter. Telescopes of exquisite sensitivity probe the depths of space, searching for clues about our beginnings.

Steve Whitelam

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The 2001 Turner prize, famously denounced by Kim Howells, the culture minister, as a breeding ground for ‘cold, mechanical, conceptual bullshit’, seemed like a good place to begin an article on light and art. The winner of last year’s accolade, Martin Creed, created a work featuring an empty room with the lights going on and off, entitled, appropriately enough, The Lights Going On and Off. Surely, then, Creed could be expected to provide some insight into the importance of light in art, a few handy quotes for me to share with the readers of Linacre Lines? Unfortunately, Creed’s explanation of his work was evidently not made with my article in mind. ‘I think people can make of it what they like,’ he said. ‘I don’t think it is for me to explain it.’ Well, thanks for nothing, Martin. The art critic for The Times, Rachel Campbell-Johnson, wasn’t much more help: in her view, Creed’s installation ‘may mean everything or it may mean nothing.’

Of course, Turner himself was known as the ‘painter of light’, as can be seen in paintings such as Sunrise (1835) and The Fighting Temeraire (1838) – the latter of which was allegedly referred to by the artist as ‘My Darling’. In addition to adopting sweetly affectionate names for his pictures, Turner’s eloquence lasted until his dying moments, when he famously uttered the line ‘The Sun is God.’

According to Plotinus, the eye is a microcosmic sun, a notion enthusiastically adopted by Goethe, who asked ‘how could
we see light if the eye were not sunlike?’ The idea that the eye was a miniature sun had significant theological implications, which came to be reflected in art. Plotinus’ idea inspired John the Evangelist to identify the Logos with light – hence the importance of light in much medieval art. In subjects such as the Virgin of the Annunciation, the Divine Word is depicted as a ray of light travelling towards the recipient of the Logos.

Light has been of potent symbolic value in many cultures and in many periods. The ancient Greeks, for example, had the same word for light and truth. During the Enlightenment, light came to represent the most cherished values of Western civilisation, such as democratic forms of government, enlightenment for the masses and industrial progress. For Matthew Arnold, writing in the nineteenth century, the phrase ‘sweetness and light’ encompassed the ideals of modern civilisation. Symbolic lightholders, such as the Statue of Liberty, installed in 1886, became prevalent.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, people’s experiences of light were transformed by the installation of electricity. Light in art today can represent sterility and artificiality, rather than the power of nature or divine inspiration.

Caroline Cawthorn

 LIGHT AND ‘DARK AGES’

‘The fire in leaf and grass
so green it seems
each summer the last summer

The wind blowing, the leaves shivering in the sun,
each day the last day.’

-from ‘Living’ by Denise Levertov

Light and its opposite belong to a category of automatic literary symbols; for better or worse, light is almost always associated with goodness and purity, and darkness, with evil and impurity. Light assuages our fears, whereas darkness exaggerates them. In the above poem by Denise Levertov, the presence of ‘light’ is implicit: in order to see the ‘fire in leaf and grass’, there must be daylight. In Paradise Lost, Milton’s Eden is a place of vibrance and colour; his hell, a miasma distinguishable only by the fallen angels who inhabit it. Milton, whose own sight had deteriorated by the time of the epic’s composition must have had a special relationship to light and darkness, one which transcended the religious associations evoked by the story of the fall and expulsion from the garden.

Just as light performs as Milton’s muse in Paradise Lost, so too does it escape narrow definitions in earlier, pre-or, near-Christian literature. The Old English epic Beowulf, like Paradise Lost was likely written for a Christian audience some centuries after the conversion. Unlike Paradise Lost however, Beowulf contains few explicit references to Christianity, suggesting that the concerns of early Christianity demanded a different sort of masterwork from their favourite poet. Beowulf is not a religious story: its protagonist, a young Danish warrior Beowulf at the poem’s beginning and old King Beowulf at its end, must fight three beasts, each more challenging than the one before. He does this not only to prove himself as a warrior to a people who still valued bravery, and loyalty to one’s lord, above all else but also to defend the very foundations of their society. The poet avoids any mention of a ‘light of the world’ in a religious sense and opts instead for a seemingly simpler strategy: words meaning ‘light’ or ‘brightness’ describe all things Danish and good; words suggesting darkness evoke the enemies and signal that trouble is near.

There are two words in Anglo-Saxon that denote light, ‘leoht’ and ‘leoma’. Both appear in equal measure throughout the Anglo-Saxon corpus. ‘Leoht’ usually retains a more physical and literal sense and ‘leoma’ a metaphysical one. The decision to use one over the other, however, was most likely determined by the metrical concerns of the line and not a word’s refined
meaning. This interchangeability, one of the tools of the Anglo-Saxon poet's craft, is visible throughout the poem. As Beowulf tells of battling sea monsters, he explains that once 'light ['leohθ'] came from the east' he was able to see land and took comfort in the ordeal's eventual end at sunrise. The Dane's great hall, Heorot, is described as a building like no other whose 'light ['leoma'] shown over many lands'. The poet here uses the hall's brightness as a symbol of its goodness, in comparison to the monster Grendel's dark, shadow-walking persona, setting up the good versus evil paradigm we might expect.

Both 'leohθ' and 'leoma' also appear just after Beowulf slays his enemies so that the sense is both literal and metaphorical: 'a light ['leohθ] appeared and it grew bright within' the cavern once Beowulf has killed Grendel's mother-monster-number-two. After an elderly Beowulf slays the dragon, the hoard he was guarding becomes hyper-illuminated, its golden treasure glowing with such a brightness ['leoma] that Wiglaf, Beowulf's closest friend, can 'see the ground beneath him' in its entirety, the suggestion being that the gold was that much brighter for their bravery.

'Leohθ' can also appear as a part of a compound word. In these cases, its meaning changes and takes on shades of fear and terror, as in 'fyr-leohθ', 'æled-leoma' ('fire-light') and 'hilde-leoma' ('battle-light'). While the Anglo-Saxons had every reason to be suspicious of what they couldn't see lurking in the darkness, light itself did not always signify goodness, purity, or, most importantly, safety. In a poem devoid of specific and salient references to Christ, the warriors, kings, and queens who people the poem appear, in many ways, like Adam and Eve before the fall, vulnerable to attack, temptation, and invasion.

Rachel Becker

AN ‘ENLIGHTENING’ GUIDE TO GREEK LITERATURE

Light and darkness form the simplest, most easily perceivable, and most striking contrast that exists in nature. Exactly because of that, human thought and language have utilised it from their earliest stages, in timid attempts to form a code of metaphorical communication – the basic code according to which literature works. Here is how this contrast is reflected in some of the most famous Greek texts.

Life and death
In Greek epic death is perceived in terms of loss of vision. When a warrior dies he is deprived of the sun's light (and, literally speaking, he is). The opposite way of saying the same thing is that that his eyes are covered by darkness. The standard formulae used for one's death is that he 'ceases to see the light' or that 'darkness covers his eyes' (Iliad 4; 461, 503, 526). If death means lack of vision, consequently the place where the dead live will be a place of darkness and gloom. And the one thing one sees in the darkness is shadows – the outer shape of things, not their substance. Hence, the image of dark Hades along with a whole fiction about the underworld and the ghosts that live in it (occasionally intruding in the upper world as well).

Knowledge and ignorance
In Greek mythology soothsayers are presented as blind: they are people who lack external vision, but are endowed with the power of infallible internal knowledge of facts – infallible because it comes from the gods. The most famous soothsayer with these qualities was Teiresias. In Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, the encounter between Oedipus and Teiresias (lines 315ff.) is laden with references to light and darkness. Darkness signifies the king's ignorance about his status, i.e. that he has killed his father and married his mother [this, by the way, inspired Freud to coin the term 'Oedipus complex'], whereas light signifies the soothsayer's knowledge of the truth. The sage refuses to disclose the truth to the king (read the play), who, being the mighty king he is, doesn't take 'no' as an answer. As a result, he disputes the sage's prophetic qualities. At some point during their argument the prophet, with the usual
ambiguity of prophets, says: ‘You do not see the point of disaster you have reached’ (367). Oedipus, outraged by now, responds: ‘There is no truth in you, because you are blind’, both in mind and sight’ (370-1), and continues ‘You are nourished by perpetual night, and so you cannot harm me or anyone else who sees the light’ (374-5) [this is what we call tragic irony: Oedipus does see the light literally, but not metaphorically (in direct contrast to Teiresias): but only we know that, he doesn’t!]

**Old and New order**

‘And there will no longer be night, and they will have no need of the lamp’s light and the sun’s light, for God the Lord will light upon them, and they will rule into the ages of them’. (John, Apocalypse 22.5) ‘His coming will darken the light of the sun, the moon will no longer give off its own light, and the stars will fall from the sky’ (Matt.24:29).

These are two phantasmagorical samples of images (describing the establishment of God’s eternal kingdom and rule) that abound in the New Testament and the (all in all obscure) text of the Apocalypse. God manifests his presence by annulling the force of what are the most standard points of reference to humans: the sun, the moon, the stars. Their light will be obscured by the power of his own light, which stands for enlightenment and illumination. So he will, on the literal level, change the natural order, and, on the metaphorical level, spread the light of truth – truth consisting in a complex theological conception of what God’s presence in this world is, means, does, entails, etc. Combining all perceptions of the light-darkness contrast together in an ultimate, characteristically Christian, synthesis, God represents life over death, knowledge over ignorance, and finally the New World of divine justice over the Old World of human justice. Whoever said that divine justice is blind?

Aikaterini Oikonomopoulou

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**TRUTH AND PHOTOGRAPHY**

All we will ever see is light. Photographers are perhaps more aware of this little glimpse of truth than others. Whereas most people have seen, and continue to see, photographs as records of reality, photographers know better. The question of whether or not an objective world really exists at all we better leave to the philosophers, however, what we can say with certainty is though it appears as trees, birds, people, a beautiful dawn or a starry night – all we will ever see is light. And on this fundamental proposition the relationship between photography and truth rests: Photography is neither objective truth nor subjective expression. More than any other art form, the photograph has traditionally been seen as a document of the real, as records of our past, as documents of history – they are even admitted as evidence in courts. We have seen photographs of kings and queens, floods and fires, foreign emissaries, bomb shelters and nuclear missiles. However, just as the historian is not bound to record the truth, the photographer is not bound to show reality. A photographer can make the fat look thin, can make the young look old, can make a cold winter day look like a summer night. We have even seen photographs of heaven and hell, of angels and UFOs. And it is this illusion that makes photography an art. Masquerading as reality, the photograph is as malleable with the truth as a paintbrush. In fact, the photographic process can perhaps be better understood through a comparison with painting: Photography is essentially painting with light. The camera was originally developed by Renaissance painters attempting to paint landscapes more true to nature. Painters would go out into the countryside carrying a tent with a small hole on one side through which an image of the landscape was reflected on to a large canvas inside. They would then trace the outline of this image with their brushes. The modern camera works much the same way but on a much smaller scale, and instead of a painter we now have light-sensitive film reacting with the light filtered through a lens into a hole in the camera body. But where does the question of truth come in? To most people, it seems intuitively impossible to manipulate light.
But to the photographer it can be done in two stages: first through the manipulation of the light between the object and the film when taking the photograph, and secondly through the manipulation of the light between the negative and the paper when making a print. When taking the picture, the photographer can choose angles and lenses that distort the scene. She can make certain objects stand out in contrast while letting others fade into the background or combining different negatives in order to create one image. Photography is thus unique as an art form in its insistence on being taken as a document of truth suggesting an unquestionable reality while actually being a medium as malleable as painting or drawing. And in this manner photography is the manipulation of light to create the illusion of truth.

Annelene Dahl

A STRANGE TANGO

‘US bashing’ is a national pastime where I come from. Spend a little time on any given day during tea breaks at the office, lunch hour at a university cafeteria, at the barber store or an evening with some drawing room intellectuals and you’ll come away thinking the United States of America is truly evil. It’s easy for Pakistanis to blame everything on the United States (the west in general). The truth is, that’s why they do it. Surely our economic and social woes have more to do with our own inability to right our ship, no matter how evil the Americans are (not, that they are).

Pakistan is a new nation still struggling with its identity. Caught in the political crossfire between fundamentalist Islam and a moderate Islam on one side and military rule and democracy on the other, her pragmatic people are merely concerned about making ends meet. Let the corrupt politicians, bureaucrats and cricketers fight over what’s left of the country. Yet, Pakistanis are a vibrant people, full of life and eternally hopeful that things will work out for the better. They seem to have decided though, that America is a thorn in that hope’s side. So what’s new? Everyone’s got it in for the Americans. Nobody likes them and no one trusts them. Right?

Wrong. A Pakistani’s mistrust for the Americans is much more deep-rooted than that. Most Pakistanis will make vague references to a Zionist conspiracy against Muslim nations, America’s support of Israel in the form of military and financial aid, American military presence in the Middle East since the Gulf war and now in Pakistan. They will regurgitate wild conspiracy theories, that they’ve read in Urdu tabloids (Yes, we have them as well) about how America does not want conflict points like Israel-Palestine and Iraq solved peacefully because they want to control the oil and about pressure from the American military and weapons manufacturers...blah blah blah. But, these are distant things that don’t really affect the average Pakistani. We feel it is our duty to raise these issues as we are a part of the ‘Muslim Umma’ (brotherhood).

The real problem, though, is closer to home. Afghanistan, is the reality with which every Pakistani has lived since 1978. Pakistan with her strings held by the United States has danced a strange tango with Afghanistan for the last two and a half decades. Pakistan has never had brilliant relations with Afghanistan². Pakistan’s relations with the United States were at their coldest in the mid 1970s. Then, at the height of the cold war, Afghanistan became an issue. The United States in its efforts to keep the Soviet Union out of the region, supported the Afghani mujahideen against the Soviet army. It was a ‘Just War’. For this the US went to bed with a military dictator in Pakistan, General Zia-ul-Haq, who was crucial in channelling funds and weapons to the mujahideen. The US provided this group of Islamic zealots with the appropriate training to wage guerrilla war against the Soviets. Many Pakistanis of my generation grew up in a repressed society with soldiers and armoured vehicles in our streets under the rule of General Zia-ul-Haq. The military rulers squandered a decade of financial and economic assistance (this, albeit, cannot
be blamed on any American). In 1989 the Soviets lost. Communism was defeated. The Americans let go of the strings. Pakistan went from ‘Trusted US ally’ to ‘US S*** list’ faster than you can say ‘God bless America’.

Throughout the last decade Afghani weapons, Afghani drugs and Afghans themselves poured into Pakistan. Estimated figures for the number of Afghani refugees in Pakistan ranges from 1.5 million to 2.5 million. The weapons and drugs have caused havoc in places like Karachi (my home town). AK-47, stinger missile and heroin are now common place in our vocabulary. In this period the Pakistani military has (without any help from the US) backed the tyrannical Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

Me, and many in my generation, have grown up with military dictators, Afghanistan and the silent presence (or very loud absence) of the United States of America. In a way it is unfortunate that we as Pakistanis seem to be so obsessed with and reliant upon the US. Many in my country cannot differentiate between the actions of the US government and Americans (most of whom were scarcely aware of the whereabouts of Pakistan and Afghanistan till recently, let alone knew of their government’s involvement in Afghanistan). For them it is difficult to trust Americans. The US government used us while it suited them and then threw us aside. Perhaps most Afghans think of Pakistanis in a similar manner. Our government used the Taliban while it suited us and then threw them aside. But most Pakistanis and Americans are busy going about the humdrum of ordinary life. They don’t influence the decisions taken at government levels. Maybe they should sit up and take notice. The Afghans have a right to the humdrum of ordinary life as well.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the US government went to bed with a military dictator in Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf, who was crucial in providing assistance to the US war on terror. It was a ‘Just War’......

Asif Memon

¹ We’ve had our own little territorial dispute since the British left in 1947.
planning continues, despite few proven links between Iraq and international terrorism, and despite strong opposition to military action from within the UN Security Council.

So far, Administration officials have brushed aside these criticisms and have denied that the new war will distract from the broader campaign against the Al-Qaeda network, which seems to have stalled after early victories in Afghanistan. They have also ignored the more salient point that a U.S.-led invasion could spark a new wave of anti-American sentiment around the globe and jump-start the recruiting efforts of the world’s terrorist organizations.

The Bush Administration may also be underestimating the long-term costs of demanding support from skeptical European allies, many of whom face intense domestic pressure to oppose a war in Iraq.

While it remains unclear how this latest crisis will ultimately unfold, it appears likely that the American political climate will continue to harden against multilateral cooperation and diplomatic solutions to conflict. In such an environment, it seems as if increased military action will soon become inevitable, even as its chances of making America safer become increasingly unrealistic.

Jeremy Nelson

FROM THE DIARY OF TZINACAN

Physics has a bad reputation. To many people, it smells of glass blocks, ticker-tape timers and worst of all, cold equations. And so it was with some reluctance that I agreed to write about what I do. To overcome this reputation, clearly I should write about some fascinating aspect of modern physics, perhaps quantum theory or black holes.

Consider a fork. Steal one from the dining hall if you like, and bring it upstairs to the common room. If you try this, you should notice an amazing result (actually, two, but let’s forget about the one involving an irate Patrick in hot pursuit). The other, incredible thing to notice is what happens to the fork itself when you move it – absolutely nothing! Unfortunately, we often consider this to be boring and commonplace, and of course it is commonplace, but it is not boring. Think a little more about the fork. Forks are not unbreakable objects, but are made up of many, many smaller pieces that we may as well call “atoms”, although “quarks” would do just as well. For some mysterious reason, these atoms have decided to group themselves together into a fork. The curious fact is that whatever is holding these atoms together in the dining hall works just as well up in the common room, even though we have moved them over a distance vastly greater than their own size. This immediately tells you that the true laws of nature cannot depend on position; that \( \mathbf{x} \) does not mark the spot.

You may argue that such weighty matters are best not left to forks. Perhaps there is some change in the atoms of the fork, but by looking only with our failing eyesight we do not notice it, or perhaps we should have moved the fork further in order to see this small effect. Wise concerns! So be patient. Wait until summer, when the earth will have moved to the far side of the sun, and see that the fork will be there to greet you. Go further. Examine the atoms themselves, not the forks. Study them and their constituents in detail under a powerful microscope, or see them in a thousand distant galaxies, and recognise that they are the same. Many have done so, and they confirm that physical laws indeed do not depend on position.

But this is strange. It is clear that \( \mathbf{x} \) is important if you actually want to use the fork. It doesn’t work nearly so well if you pick it up by the prongs, or leave it in the common room when trying to eat in the dining hall. The laws of nature are not enough to describe the evolution of our universe; we must also give the state of all the objects it contains. When should we specify the location of the fork? The fork is there
today because it was there yesterday, a year ago, because it was fashioned from iron present when the earth formed, cast across the heavens by a supernova, burning because in a dense region after our universe came into being.

This then is my work. The nature of Nature is simple, but complexity emerges due to the vastness of space and the huge number of objects it contains. To see, childlike, through to the simplicity and to grapple with where the complexity arose is physics as I know it.

Dave Skinner

### Superman vs Kryptonite

Have you ever considered the amazing natural variation in leaf shape between different species of plant? No? Well as someone who spends a lot of her time pondering such things, let me convince you of how stunning the plant world can be. Plants were around millions of years before we were and in all that time they have been evolving to optimise productivity in relation to their particular environment. Why do you think holly is prickly whilst the maple leaf is lobed? (Have a guess and I’ll tell you at the end.) Leaf shapes are fascinating mathematically since they exhibit manifold symmetry. The study of fractal geometry, that shows shapes repeating on ever finer scales, is a relatively new field, yet ferns have been producing fractal leaves since before the dinosaurs were around. Furthermore, many plants also show designs based on Fibonacci numbers, the numerical series that is said to have influenced centuries of art, architecture, music and poetry. The prevalence of such mathematical themes in nature is what makes it so aesthetically pleasing to us symmetry-loving humans, but plants have evolved this way for practical reasons, for example Fibonacci numbers allow optimal space filling by leaves hence maximising light capture.

My lab works on the comparative morphology of leaf shape, that is to say we study the genetics of why leaves of different species show different forms despite being analogous structures. The model plant we work on, *Arabidopsis thaliana* is a relative of cress and has fairly non-distinctive oval shaped leaves. However, it grows quickly, can be mutagenised and genetically modified with ease, and since the entire genome sequence of Arabidopsis has been published, it is the species most amenable for study.

One way of ascertaining which genes are important in governing leaf shape is to carry out random mutagenesis on thousands of plants, and then screen these for leaf defects. Often the defect seen will be due to the inactivation of a single gene, and hence the usual role of this gene can be assessed by inferences from deficiencies that the mutant plant displays. For instance, when the gene ‘*SUPERMAN*’ is made inactive, mutant plants have extra numbers of stamens (male sex organs, hence “superman”), which tells us that the usual role of *SUPERMAN* is to limit the number of stamens. A perk of carrying out mutagenesis is that you get to make up witty names for your mutants. Following the naming of *SUPERMAN* came the naming of a gene that suppresses its activity, yes you guessed it, ‘*KRYPTONITE*’.

In my lab, several Arabidopsis mutants have been identified that show degrees of lobing of the usually straight-marginated leaves; and it has been shown that in these lobes a class of genes, called KNOX genes, are active. In normal Arabidopsis plants, the KNOX genes are not found in the leaves, but in tomato they are, and tomato has leaves that are dissected into leaflets. Then it seems that one explanation for why some leaves are lobed/dissected (oak, fig and olive) is via the differential regulation of where KNOX genes are active. Thus we have a molecular mechanism to explain an evolutionary observation.

Determining the factors that regulate where and when KNOX genes are activated in plants is a main area of my research.

Thus holly and maple which both show...
lobed leaves are likely to have KNOX genes active in the leaves, and this has given them evolutionary advantages: holly is prickly to fend off herbivores, whilst maple leaves are lobed to provide a large surface area for light capture that is wind resistant. So what is the ultimate point of such research? On a holistic scale, knowledge of a system allows you to understand it better (and exploit it more) and given that we couldn’t breathe or eat without the activities of leaves, they are a system well worth studying.

Rachel Higgins

By the time that we get to graduate studies, we often find that our chosen subject of interest is far too narrow to be remotely interesting to anyone else. In fact, asking someone what their PhD thesis is about can be a fantastic conversation-stopper. 14th century methods of hygiene, anyone? Or the immunological impact of G5-T29 of the 2nd and 5th loci of the 3rd chromosome to the right in a small, ugly organism that no-one’s ever heard of?

This year, a new DPhil course has been created, aimed to make graduate students a little more inter-disciplinary than the normal specialised subject. As a graduate of a particularly multi-disciplinary degree (Human Sciences), I was happy to continue this breadth in my studies. Unfortunately, it doesn’t mean that I’ve avoided that blank look as I try to explain to people exactly what I do...

I work in a building dedicated to Pathogen Studies, in a room of 9 graduates of Maths, Physics, Computing, and Biochemistry, officially I’m in the Computing Lab, I study Genetics, Medical Imaging, and Bionanotechnology, and the name of my course is the Doctoral Training Centre at the Life Sciences Interface. Got that?

This isn’t exactly an informative description of what I (and two others in Linacre) actually do, and if I listed what we’d actually studied this term, you’d be even more bemused, because it ranges from the evolution of HIV drug resistance, to the rhetorical basis of an argument for human rights over cultural diversity, right through to the solution of partial differential equations. Eek!

The aim of the course is to train students to work on mathematical and statistical problems in areas of biological science which desperately needs numerate researchers. In areas like genetics and medical imaging, increasingly sophisticated data collection techniques have led to an explosion of data (like the human genome project). But there is a dearth of people to accurately analyse such data, because the mathematicians don’t have an adequate understanding of the complex biology, and the biologists don’t know how to program. A huge generalisation, yes, but the fact that it has been given a £5.3 million award by the EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council) shows how important academia feels this to be.

The great thing about our course (still no convenient short name for it – answers on a postcard please) is that it doesn’t limit itself to tradition. We have access to people who are leaders in their field; we are being taught communication skills so that we can write effective grant applications; we are encouraged to build a network of contacts who have expertise in different areas which we can rely on in the future.

Multi-disciplinary researchers often have too much breadth and not enough depth, simply because of the sheer amount of knowledge out there. The fact that we are being trained as a team means that we can access each others’ knowledge to bypass this lack of specialisation.

So I’m excited by it – but I have a sneaking feeling that me talking about it is still a conversation-stopper…so I’d better stop now...

Ella Chase

SO WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU STUDY?

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Ella Chase
Don't Turn The Light Out

"He's dead" she said from her end of the phone
I opened my eyes it dropped like a stone
"He's gone - get your mum they'll all be coming
I need a hand and the water's running"
"Mum it's nan grandad's dead shall we go in my car
or take yours instead"
"It's alright mum we're coming right away
poor mum" she said "It'd have to be today -
It's alright we're here let's see him poor soul
well he looked dead last week all skin and bone
and as white as a sheet. Right get some water
go on love don't stare he's only a shell
he's no longer there."
well where's he gone and fancy leaving
such an awful body imagine feeling yourself
all wrinkled and blotchy.
"Listen to this -
i think he went last night"
"Why didn't you call"
"Well it didn't seem right"
"But mum he's all stiff you must've known"
"Well i think i did but i didn't want to phone -
i made a cuppa tea
and put it to his mouth i thought it seemed strange
when it all came running out -
he was awfully cold so i gave him a bottle
i wrapped him up warm and put on the kettle -
i didn't want to think and i was already yawning -
One more night It could wait 'till morning.

Alison Wates
When I first became aware of the issues involved in climate change in the early nineties, it was still very much debatable whether we would experience it in our lifetimes or not. Now a whole swath of events seems to get attributed to it (such as the flooding in the Czech Republic and in the UK in 2002 and 2000 or the spread of malaria vectors). We can now read newspaper articles that tell us that our emissions of fossil fuels (through car use and industry) will change the climate to produce warmer winters; that it will rain more; that pests and diseases will be more prevalent; that Europe might go into a second ice age; that the world will face large changes in land use which will cause more migration, conflict and famine. The threat of climate change on our lives would appear to be a serious one yet as quickly as these stories run they disappear again, replaced by news items about fire strikes or rail delays or falls in the stock market. Given the seriousness of the climate change impact why is there not a greater level of debate in public circles? If you survey people in the street you will find the spectrum of views from skepticism to resignation, yet if you were to ask people what we could scientifically say about climate change you would probably receive only blank stares. The lack of public understanding of the science behind climate change is due in the main to three things: the nature of the science information itself, the gap between our conception of weather and the larger-scale models which science addresses, and the very nature of the solutions to the issues.

The scientific progress has come on in leaps and bounds and yet this doesn’t seem to have penetrated into the public arena. There are a number of reasons for this, one of which might be the public perception of the weather itself. What everyone knows, especially if they have lived in the UK for any length of time, is that the weather is thoroughly unpredictable. No wonder there is a deep seated skepticism of forecasts of climate in 50 years time when the weather men are unable to tell us anything beyond this coming weekend. It is exactly that bit of science that everybody knows: The weather is fundamentally chaotic. Yet the scientific community has come out with forecasts of the climate in 2050 and can do so because climate is different from weather. While the prediction of weather on a day-to-day basis remains elusive, the statistics of weather over a given period appear to be predictable and this is what forecasters are able to work with. This is one of the reasons why the science of climate change doesn't appear in the comment pages of our daily newspaper. The quantifiable answers that it can provide are statistical!

Much of the scientific effort in the field of climate change in the past decade has concentrated on the questions of whether we can detect change in the recorded observations, and whether we can attribute the cause of any change to human or other influence. These questions start from an awareness of the series of record warm winters and wet summers over the past decade. Are these extreme temperatures greater than the variation that you would expect from the climate's natural variability? If this can be shown to be the case, it is then important to consider whether the changes are due to man made emissions or other influences such as changes in the strength of the sun. In the past couple of years the science has moved on to the extent that we are able to say that the earth's climate has changed beyond what can statistically be expected as part of its natural variation and that the changes over the past century can be statistically attributed to solar changes (largely in the mid century) and man induced changes (particularly at the end of the 20th century).

This statement has profound implications for the relationship between the natural world and us but it has failed to make an impact on public consciousness partly because of the difficulty in conveying it.
In a similar vain, forecasts of future global temperature change are also difficult to convey. Using the same state of the art computer models, which have been used to detect and attribute climate change in the past, climate scientists run simulations of the earth's climate out into the future. Due to the chaotic nature of weather, uncertainties in the exact state of the climate at the start of the simulations and current uncertainties in the climate processes, the forecasts are necessarily probabilistic. By this, I mean that the forecasts, which are produced show a spread of future global temperature change (a change of between 1.4 and 5.6 degrees by 2100 for instance) with a probability that the earth's realized temperature will fall within a particular region of this spread. This might not seem like a solid scientific result, but it does convey a lot of information. First of all it says that there will be a climate impact by 2100 (the world would have warmed by at least 1.4 degrees on current day temperatures). It also says that we can't rule out a temperature response of up 5.6 degrees at that time, which would indicate very significant climatic changes. The range of possible outcomes, however, makes it difficult for the general public to take on board without becoming a lot more sophisticated about how we see climate change. This is especially true if you consider climate change mitigation. The forecast I gave above is one produced in the latest report by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It assumes that the world economy continues to develop as it has up until this point without any mitigation by world governments. Updated forecasts for future scenarios, which consider the impacts of cuts in the human emissions of green house gases would show a similar spread but cover a lower range of temperature. It might be highly desirable to take policy mitigation of green house gases if it means that we would face temperature changes of say 3.4 instead of 5.6 degrees. If this, however, results in only a difference between 0.9 instead of 1.4 degrees, it will be harder to argue for strict economic action.

Given time we can expect the probabilistic range of these forecasts to narrow and become more confident. The desire to wait till we have more concrete data is off-set by the knowledge that changes that we make now in our green house gas emissions, will have a proportionally much greater impact than similar changes later on. The need for greater public debate on this subject is certain but is it limited by our ability to deal with probabilistic information?

The second difficulty in communicating climate research is the gap between the scales which science employs and the scales that people use in their day-to-day lives. As I've mentioned above, much progress has been made in detecting and forecasting global climate change, yet most people's experience of climate is on a more local level. Events like the recent flooding occur on much smaller scales than the state of the art climate models are able to address. It is the local scale that people are typically interested in. Will climate change result in more flooding in my area? Will climate change mean that I can grow grapes in Scotland? Regional skill in these models, even at the resolution that they do resolve, is limited at best. Undoubtedly this picture will change as the science moves to address regional impacts in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, the difference between the questions that people ask and the answers that the science provides contributes to the difficulties of communicating climate research.

The last limitation and perhaps the most significant one in generating public debate on global warming is again scale related. Mitigation of green house gas emissions might be the solution between a damaging environmental change and a disastrous one for us and our children. While this is perhaps quite widely recognized, the connection between the actions we take as individuals and the global picture is weak at best. In a way, we are all complicit in the problem but effective action requires a global solution. It is easy to see that changes that we as individuals, communities, towns, and even nation states are able to make are made ineffectual unless these actions are supported by a wider international
The world is making tentative preliminary steps towards addressing climate change with the Kyoto agreement (which is in the process of being ratified). This is a first step, but will have minimal impact without further action. Yet the case for Kyoto is still being made and without the greater involvement from the general public in developing and pushing this debate the future steps will be even harder. There are still many challenges which face the scientific understanding of climate change, but equal to this is the challenge of making the science relevant to people.

Ben Booth

DINNER WITH A RUSSIAN: SOME CULTURAL TIPS

It is always good to start with a very true story as a prologue:
Once upon a time, a Russian programmer was chatting over the net with a girl from… Down Under. It was winter on the Other Side, so she naturally thought it was freezing in Russia, too (Russian Winter, no less).
Girl: It must be freezing in Moscow now!
Russian (sweating on a stifling hot July day): Oh yeah, it's pretty bad. I've got snow all over my keyboard. Can hardly type.
Girl: Oh my, life must be really difficult where you live!
Russian: It is! But good things happen too – I've just been out, killed two bears.
Girl: Oh no! It's cruel to kill animals!
Russian: Cruel, eh? But these brutes keep attacking our children and stealing their vodka!

This story would only be half as funny if I myself had not participated in a conversation in the course of which a guy got completely convinced that Russian children get spoon-fed vodka before they are weaned…

But imagine you are eating your dinner side by side with a real, one hundred-percent Russian! Without a military fur hat or snow on their boots! Not to miss the opportunity, use some of these frequently asked (and variously answered) questions:

Er…Whereabouts do you come from? (add a compliment) Your English is very good!

Answer variants:
A1: Moscow - Then go on to say that Moscow must have changed greatly in the last decade. Express your wish to go there some day (not necessarily soon).
A2: St. Petersburg - Say you've heard a lot about the beauty of the place. Say you know that that's where all the culture is. Say anything you might think about Cambridge, putting "Moscow" instead of "Cambridge".
A3: some other place you might never have heard of - Try to locate it on the map. Don't try to repeat the name if you hear it for the first time. If you ask how many people live there, be prepared to hear "about 2 million".

Try to express a general interest in Russia. Alternatives include:
Q1. Russia…It's so big…What is it REALLY like? (Then be prepared to either listen for three hours and a half, or to hear some incomprehensible mumbling with half-audible bits of phrases like "cold" and "different"). Do not let "cold" and "big" be key-words in your conversation - all the Russians secretly envy Canadians because they don't get asked these questions thirty times a day despite living in a big and cold country, too.

Q2. How has the economy been lately? (Again be prepared for a three-hour long answer if you were unlucky enough to meet an economist, but otherwise you might just see a light blush and hear the same mumbling, boiling down to "it's getting better…hopefully")

Q3. Try to make a joke about Communism (borrow it from a 007 movie) - Not advisable. Would probably be considered bad taste, like asking about a skeleton in your cupboard. On the other hand you can end up
listening to an agitated speech: "There were positive sides to it...Western people will never understand...". There is some truth in it, though where exactly, is not quite evident. Get more informal...

Q1. Ask something about the Russian language ("difficult but beautiful" should work all right, but be ready for a rather chauvinistic answer along the general lines of "You speakers of English, you don't know what a real language is." If you can produce a couple of phrases to demonstrate at least an elementary familiarity with Russian grammar, you are likely to win a perpetual admiration, bordering on awe. But do not expect that a "privyet" or "babooshka" will provoke more than a strained smile and an even more sad expression of Russian eyes than usual.

Q2. Try to show how much you know about Russian culture. For example, ask "Does everybody read Dostoyevsky in their primary school?" That will gain you time to finish your dinner to the accompaniment of a lecture on Russian literature. If you do know any other author beside Dostoyevsky or Tolstoy, say so. It will be a huge pleasant surprise for the person you are talking to. For some obscure reason, Russians consider it natural that anybody knows more than two English, French, German, etc. authors, but will immediately start suspecting that the person who has revealed a similar awareness of Russian literature must have a university degree in the subject. Avoid mentioning films like Eugene Onegin or Doctor Zhivago - anything Hollywood with a Russian theme will most probably be treated with utter contempt.

Q3. In the likely event of talking with a maths/physics/computers person, you can ask whether their field is well represented in Oxford. But be ready to hear something like "It's cool stuff. I did it in my high school" or "My supervisor's great. But he is Russian, of course".

IMPORTANT: The question NEVER EVER to be asked:

"Can I buy you a shot of vodka?"

If you are talking to a non-vodka-drinking Russian (that's not a myth), you are likely to get a tired look full of reproach. If you happen to meet a real hard-core one, "shots" simply wouldn't count as measure units.

Try these questions on more than one Russian if you have a chance. You will get an experience of perplexing diversity after hearing completely different answers (most probably not the ones given here). So - grab a Russian and get started!

Maria Artamonova

MONETARY POLICY IN A TROUBLED LATIN AMERICA

Over the last two decades the Latin American economies have faced recurrent periods of crises with a combination of inflation, recession and unemployment. Some known sources of these troubles are their underdeveloped financial markets and their close links to international financial markets. One critical case of this phenomena occurred during the early 80's with a huge run-up of debt that began with the debt default of Mexico. The Latin American governments tried to overcome these crises implementing stabilization policies with a combination of structural reforms that in same cases failed to achieve stability. This article is going to deal with one important aspect of the stabilization policies implemented during the 90's in Latin America: The Monetary Policy.

It is widely accepted that monetary policy consists of the Central Banks' actions to influence on an economy's monetary and financial conditions in order to attain price stability. This price stability (low inflation rates) is expected to enhance stable and sustained economic growth rates.

However, during the 1980s the
main problem of Latin American countries was high inflation rates (463% annual average in 1980-90) combined with recession (1% annual average growth rate).

Some countries reached hyperinflationary levels combined with deep recession: Argentina 3000% of inflation and -7% of recession (decreasing output) in 1989, Brazil over 1500% of inflation and -4.5% of recession in 1990, Peru around 7650% of inflation and -11.7% of recession in 1990.

Consequently, during the 1990s the Latin American Policy Makers decided to tackle the accelerated inflation processes using different monetary policy strategies. Some countries chose the exchange rate as an anchor, others controlled the rate of creation of money, allowing free flotation of the exchange rate. These policies had to be accompanied with market oriented reforms (trade and capital liberalization, privatization of state owned companies, financial deregulation, etc), and with fiscal discipline. In what follows I will concentrate on comparing the policies of two economies: Peru with a floating exchange rate scheme and Argentina with a currency board strategy.

Peru: In August 1990 the inflationary process was arrested when a new government implemented a strict control of the money creation process through a drastic stabilization program, allowing free flotation. One component of the reform was the new Peruvian Constitution and Central Bank Charter, which established the autonomy of the central bank and made price stability its sole objective. The Central Bank is forbidden to: (i) finance the public-sector; (ii) finance any state development bank; (iii) grant guarantees; (iv) lend to any particular sector of the economy; and (v) establish more than one exchange rate market. Fiscal discipline was imposed through strict monetary tightening.

The Central Bank’s accountability (open to be monitored) has been oriented to guarantee its independence; the members of its board of directors may be impeached only by Congress. The transparency of monetary policy is promoted through next-day publication of central bank market operations, weekly publications of macroeconomic statistics, immediate publication of central bank policy statements and the annual publication of the Central Bank Report.

The fiscal discipline can be observed from the fact that the central government raised, on average, a primary surplus of 1.4% of GDP between 1991 and 1998, with an average fiscal deficit of 1.9% of GDP during the same period.

The outcome of this policy mix has been a reduction in the inflation rate: from 7650% in 1990 to 57% in 1992, 15% in 1994, 6.5% in 1997, 3.7% in 2000 and 1.5% in 2002. It has also led to a steady annual average growth rate of 4.2% between 1991 and 2000.

Argentina: In 1991 Argentina opted, instead, for a strict peg of its currency to the US Dollar fixing a one to one exchange rate, and backing its domestic currency with its net international reserves. This currency board scheme also eliminated the possibility of financing fiscal deficits through money creation and limited the Central Bank role as lender of last resort. The Government also implemented a market oriented reform with trade
and capital liberalization, privatization of state owned firms and opening the financial system to the international competition.

The strict peg of the domestic currency to the US dollar succeeded in controlling the inflation rate from 3000% in 1989 to 171% in 1991, 3.4% en 1995, 0.04% in 1998, down to -0.7% in 2000. Also, Argentina reached an annual average growth rate of 4.3% between 1991 and 2000. It seemed that with different monetary policy strategies Argentina and Peru reached similar results in controlling inflation and reaching economic growth.

However, in 2002 the Argentinian inflation rate reversed its decreasing trend, increasing to 41.3% and went back to a deep recession of -4.4% in 2001 and -11.6% in 2002. Whilst in Peru, the inflation rate kept its decreasing pattern down to 1.5% and the economy grew at 4.4% in 2002. What went wrong in Argentina?

One of the most important factors for this turmoil can be found in the currency board scheme itself, combined with high external debt and difficulties in reaching fiscal discipline.

To build credibility, an economy with a currency board scheme has to be strict in backing its domestic currency with international reserves held by the Central Bank. During a continuum of international financial crises (Mexico 1995, Asia 1997, Russia 1998, Brazil 1999), the international investors want to put their money in safe places, not in highly indebted and fiscally undisciplined developing economies. This attitude shortens the flow of international resources to the developing economies and in many cases reduces the international reserves. These external shocks pressured down the amount of Argentina’s domestic currency in proportion to the reduction of its international reserves. However, the domestic economy, which was working and transacting with the former amount of money, found itself directly bottlenecked by the scarcity of financial resources and was forced to slow down its activity level. Here, the monetary policy is passive, there is no role for the Central Bank in providing the required financial resources. Argentina had to ask for external loans from multilateral institutions in order to overcome the shortage of financial resources. The increasing debt and the persistent fiscal imbalance enhanced the country risk, raising the interest rates and feeding the growing external debt.

That’s not the case of economies with floating exchange rate scheme, where the shortening of international resources is adjusted through an automatic devaluation of the domestic currency without directly shortening the amount of financial resources to the economy. Here, the monetary policy is active in managing the amount of money. The automatic and forced devaluation in the Latin American countries as a consequence of the international financial crises left Argentina’s Peso overvalued.

So, these series of external shocks and the appreciation of the Peso, as well as the fragile fiscal position set Argentina into a trap with a scarcity of financial resources, recession and debt which, combined with the gradual closure of the international financial markets, became unsustainable ending in a run on the currency and bank deposits. These processes forced the new government to freeze the banking deposits in 2001 through the “corralito”, default the external debt and abandon the currency board, turning into the floating exchange rate scheme from the beginning of 2002. However, the high inflation and recession process is actually still continuing in Argentina.

In the same context of external shocks, the Peruvian economy found a way of overcoming them through its floating exchange rate scheme, fiscal and monetary discipline, enough international reserves and keeping a low country risk. The inflation rate is down at international levels and has prospects of economic growth of around 5% in 2003. 

Zenon Quispe
One never knows exactly how one will be perceived by the local community when doing fieldwork in a new place. As inconspicuous as I was trying to be my presence would always be suspicious to many people. Shortly after my arrival to my field site, it was recommended that I go around to the surrounding communities to introduce myself and convince the local people that I was not a monster, as commonly believed about vazas (white foreigners), who would eat the intestines of their children if they encountered one in the forest. I could understand this stereotype, especially since I was starting to look pretty scary by this point since my only bag containing clothes and all other personal gear was eternally lost in transit to Madagascar. So, after a few weeks of no showering, matted hair and wearing a pair of dusty male trousers which were 8 sizes too big held up by a not-so-perfect length of rope and a white-turned-brown t-shirt, I was beginning to look the role into which I had been cast. However, once people were adequately satisfied that, as a vegetarian, I would most likely not eat children’s intestines, I gained a new label in the region. Rumors began to spread that instead of a monster I was a spy wandering around the forests and going back and forth between NGOs and development projects searching for information. I couldn’t really deny this since apart from collecting tree and plant data in the forest, that was what I was supposed to be doing. I was surely undercover as a spy in the traditional sense since I definitely wasn’t gifted with the magical moves of many of the greater spies before me. My few ‘inspector gadgets’ weren’t so trusty and definitely didn’t save me from any tight binds. The GPS could only be relied upon at certain times of the day, the light meter went through batteries much faster than I could keep charged in the field and the magnetic pins in the compasses were being tweaked by the influence of the underlying metallic geology. Surely a real spy, of the James Bond breed, wouldn’t lower him/herself to deal with such basic technical problems. And, surely, a true ‘spy’ could speak any language eloquently and quickly escape difficult situations such as being stranded miles away from town without water, lost in the forest or losing the only boat available to cross the river. Yet, my broken Malagasy and French, my lack of technical savvy and my inability to rescue myself numerous times failed to convince anyone I was not a spy but just a mere, very mortal student researcher. Maybe the villagers were right, though. One definition of the verb to spy is ‘to search or look for intensively’. Therefore, if someone doing such activities is a spy then all of us conducting research for our theses and dissertations are spies. So, remember when doing fieldwork or anything else that may put you into the ‘limelight’, that spies like us are more conspicuous than you may think.

Carter Ingram

Join Wolfson College Taido Club! A beginners course in Taido will begin Sunday, 26th January at Haldane room, Wolfson College, 5.30pm. Taido is a Japanese martial art with its roots in Okinawan Karate-Do. Training is fun, an excellent way of keeping fit, and you will have the opportunity to train for and take belt gradings. Cost: £10 per term. Come to the first session and see before you sign up. Our website has more details: http://www.wolf.ox.ac.uk/clubs/taido/ or email lars.larm@wolfson.ox.ac.uk
A is for art
Always my worst subject in school.

B is for bedtime book
Stacks and stacks of them piled up next to the bed. Too bad I always fall asleep the second my head hits the pillow.

C is for coffee
Checked out my clothes drying rack the other day and noticed that everything I wear these days is some shade of brown, like coffee beans of various roasting times.

D is for a day off
Never know when its going to happen, but everyone needs a good skive every now and then to keep sane. Although, as a linguist, it is hard to be truly off duty--- one is always noticing intriguing stuff in people’s conversations.

E is for eating
Food is one of the great pleasures in life. I'm an omnivore, proud to be at the top of the food chain. Anything but croutons or natto.

F is for fellow at a graduate college
I'm so glad I am..

G is for gardens
In linguistics, there's a famous kind of sentence that causes processing difficulties called a 'garden path' sentence, so called because it leads you into a wrong parse (up the garden path) and then you can't recover in enough time to realise the sentence is actually grammatical. An example is: 'The horse raced past the barn fell.' Work it out!

H is for hobbies
Singing Scottish Gaelic folk songs, and playing the drums, not necessarily at the same time.

I is for internet
What's up with all that weird mail from widows of African despots, or exiled government functionaries? They always start ‘Dear Sir, you will be very surprised to receive this mails.
I'm confused, but definitely not surprised any more.

J is for jazz
Jazz fusion is specifically what I like. Jazz fused with dance music or funk or pop. I also have a secret shameful obsession with Steely Dan.

K is for Kayleigh and Katherine
My two gorgeous nieces.

L is for lunches at Linacre
When I can drag myself away from the office, always a good natter.

M is for must do
Learn to drive a car.

N is for never again...
Get into the driving seat of a car.

O is for Oxford
GREAT place for bikes.

P is for pedestrian
An adjective with an unjustifiably bad rep.---walking is GREAT.

Q is for question of importance
When will I ever learn to drive?
R is for research
I’m interested in the syntax and semantics of natural language, for example the question of why
‘John is easy to please’ and
‘John is eager to please’
look so similar on the surface but behave so differently semantically.

S is for Scotland
Homeland. Most beautiful country on earth.

T is for Trinidad
Homeland. Most beautiful country on earth.

U is for universe
The place that surrounds the homeland.

V is for vices or virtues
Yes

W is for war
Well, I’m not even going to try to be flippant or clever here. It’s upsetting and frightening and I despair of our so called leaders.

X is for xerox
Did you know that companies deliberately think up brand names that contain striking and little used letters like x because they are more salient and easily remembered by the public. Too bad you can’t use most of them in scrubble. Although now I think you would be allowed to use ‘xerox’ in principle, if it weren’t for the fact that there is only one x (You know you’re sad when you start fantasising about cool words for Scrabble and where you would like to place them).

Y is for years at Linacre
Stopped counting. Like my age.

Z is for Zodiac
After Bach, Radiohead are my next favourite musicians.
Cross-dressing, belly-dancing, gambling, falling in love and getting married in less than 3 months, ice-skating, watching Big Brother in the common room after meditating for an hour, salsa-dancing, watching the Full Monty for the 100th time, getting wasted with people whose countries you've never heard of and whose hairdos you don't understand (!), fighting over the last spoonful of Tesco's economy coleslaw on a Sunday afternoon while studying an art exhibition about the Kama Sutra….

No, that's not the plot of the next Woody Allen movie. That's the Linacre College social scene….and there's more….

"Clothes make the man"
Mark Twain

Linacre freshers had the first clothes-related shock at the newcomer's dinner. During that, they were introduced to what was to become an essential item of their wardrobe during their Linacre years: THE GOWN. Batman and Robin jokes were on a roll but little did they know of what was to come….
The famous Linacre bops gave once again a unique opportunity to the Linacre people to reveal their inner selves (and fantasies?) by dressing up.

Flares, shoulder pads, white satin trousers over diamande G-strings (on men!), eyeliner, batwing tops and print shirts gave the required disco-flavour to the 70's and 80's bop in week 1. The freshers started to wonder…….

Then came the Latin bop, which didn't really give the opportunity for people to reveal any secret part of their personality (although red lipstick was really popular –again on men!). The true revelation took place on the last bop of the term, the Hallo-queen bop. Most Linacre macho men ran through their female friends' wardrobes, “for the fun of it”, and chose the most flattering and trendy outfit they could fit in (a certain someone actually went out and bought a new outfit from TopShop-now that's what I call dedication!). Linacre women were stunned by the awareness and sense of perfectionism these men revealed: “Does my bum look big in this?” “Should I wax my chest hair?” “Is this concealer suitable for combination skin?”!!! And then came the party! As the “ladies” strut their stuff in the Common room all women looked on in envy at big Torsten’s long and shapely legs, Justin’s daring cleavage, Gareth’s slim physique flattered by a blue nurse’s outfit, Simon’s (hairy yet toned!) midriff subtly revealed through a leopard skirt and David’s elegant bone structure complemented by his long orange hair!

As the term came to an end the question remained unanswered: “Do clothes make the man?”

"Dance like no-one’s watching"
unknown

If there is one thing that Linacrites know how to do it is dance. Starting from week 1 during the visit to the Lebanese restaurant, several men (especially an excited anthropologist, Nick) paid their respects to the Arabic culture by successfully trying some belly dancing (though their excitement had a lot to do with the blond Geri Halliwell-lookalike belly dancer!). Then it was the 70’s and 80’s bop with Saturday night fever at a peak and an excited common room doing the moonwalk and the YMCA like there’s no tomorrow! The Latin bop gave us all the chance to try our salsa moves downstairs (and fail miserably!) although by the end of the evening again the whole Linacre was dancing the night away in the common room with body contact reaching a maximum. In the Hallo-queen bop the cross-dressed had the perfect chance to show their sexy moves with tunes.
they had always liked but never in the past dared to enjoy.  
After all girls just wanna have fun! And it WAS raining men…(only they were all in women’s clothes...)

“Kill my boss? Do I dare live out the American dream?”
Homer Simpson
From watching “The Simpsons” every day in the Common Room to day-long camping in the TV-room watching the rugby league and weekend-long movie weekends Linacre caters for every viewer’s taste.  
On Sunday in week 2, the British movie weekend took place where we all had the chance to watch, for yet another time, the Liverpool guys strutting their stuff in the “Full Monty”, Julia Roberts confessing to Hugh Grant that she just wants to be loved although she is a multimillionaire Hollywood star in “Notting Hill”, the infamous toilet diving scene in “Trainspotting” as well as other famous British movies while eating buttered popcorn and the leftovers of brunch.  
Then, there was the Bollywood evening in Week 5 when, whilst trying to digest the spicy Indian dinner, we had the chance to watch the (3-hour-long!) Indian movie “Lagaan” and try our moves in Indian dancing (again failing miserably).  
Week 6 was another Big Screen Movie Weekend featuring Hong Kong movies on Saturday and famous musicals on Sunday.  
After getting over the initial shock of watching a movie that was in Chinese (and after a certain bar manager stopped providing martial arts sound effects-note that the movie had nothing to do with martial arts!) people really enjoyed the films. The next day, classic musicals like “Dancing in the rain”, “An American in Paris” and “Moulin Rouge” proved very popular and admittedly even the men (!) were upset when Nicole Kidman died in the end. “What a waste!” exclaimed an upset A.!  

“Never eat more than you can lift”
Miss Piggy
Famous for serving the best food in Oxford (round of applause for Michael, Derek and the rest of the kitchen staff), the Linacre dining room is the core of our social life! It is the place where, after queuing for 1 hour from as far as the University parks, we get to meet people, check what they are eating and how they are eating it and decide whether we do fancy them or not, fight with the person in front us over the last portion of Tiramisu and finally by the end of first term create the so-called Dining Hall Cliques (DHC). DHCs are defined as groups of Linacre people that are not necessarily friends (although some are!) and don’t necessarily see each other outside college but somehow end up having dinner and lunch together every day! Linacre DHCs fall under one of the following categories: The British (love curry), The Americans (big meat-eaters), The Environmental Change and Management people (half of the dining room), The Greeks (always speak Greek to each other), The Bamborough Building residents (loudest table in dining room), The Atmospheric Physicists (usually have dessert), The Africans (anything with chicken in it) and several other smaller groups that usually mingle with the other major ones. (Apologies if a DHC was not mentioned).  
Apart from the usual everyday meal the formal dinners become very important to Linacre’s food map. Starting with Week 1’s Newcomers’ dinner and ending with Week 8’s Christmas dinner (with the random advisor dinner in between) we all had to go through the process of understanding what each fork is for and what “Benedictus benedicat” actually means.  
However, Linacre food is much more than what is served in the dining room. Who can really survive a Sunday without the croissants, fruit buns, grapes, cheeses, donuts and yogurts served at the Sunday brunch? Although the quality (and quantity!) varies no-one can deny that brunch is, as the newly elected brunch coordinator Ivailo declared during hustings “A very important part of our lives” (!).
David wonders whether Immac facial wax stripes actually work

Gareth points towards the ladies room

When Louise is away.....

“Does anyone want my flower”? 
Simon heard a model scout was around.

"Straight shoulders, slightly bent knee, breasts forward..."
Justin works the Page 3 pose to perfection.

"Oh, meine Liebe......"
"Yes!"

Linacre Lines Competition

Name the person!
answers by email to the editor

Win a pint with the owner of the legs....
There was a great start to Michaelmas term this year, with more than four full boats of novices (two men's and two women's), eager to strut their rowing stuff on the Isis. Just as things were really looking good, however, the skies opened and drenched us with week after week of rain. So, outings on the water ended prematurely halfway through term, and Christ Church regatta unfortunately had to be cancelled. However, the novices were still super-keen and trained hard in the gym nevertheless. A massive turn out and loads of laughs at the Christmas dinner showed that spirits could not be dampened by the bad weather. With trials at the beginning of Hillary term, and visions of winning blades in Torpids, we have fingers crossed for better weather.

Anyone interested in rowing should contact: (men) Chris at bjorn.grobler@linacre.ox.ac.uk or (women) lydia.mason@linacre.ox.ac.uk or rachael_nimmo@hotmail.com

Lydia Mason

It's been a season of highs and lows for Linacre's finest in short pants this year. Having both put in some sterling performances and riding our luck at times, the mighty Corpus-Linacre MCR FC climbed to the pinnacle of world football; MCR premier league winners, marvellous!, earning themselves top billing in December's grand final showpiece. Walking proudly onto the lush greenery of the Christ Church football pitch on a crisp Saturday morning, under the roar of a capacity crowd of five people, Corpus-Linacre's hangover heroes were only ninety minutes away from what surely must have been another convincing victory. We lost 3-1, nuff said! Under the new banner of "Linacre MCR FC", having lost their third leg; Corpus, the boys are again back to winning ways as they follow the trail towards MCR Cuppers glory, football's holy grail. In conclusion the heel is always on and MCR football, as always. It is truly a game of two halves, it's what dreams are made of. HAVE IT!

Simon Crooks

Encouraged by the possibility of a free dinner from college and the spiritual experience of watching the four-hour long 'Lagaan' in the Bollywood night the previous evening the nine members of the team played as one, truly embodying the team spirit. The team, comprising Kenneth Bauer, Alimamy Bangura, Nicole Barnabee, Matthew ‘Pooks’ Elliott, Ralph Grimble, Carter Ingram, Asif Memon, and Jeremy ‘Paco’ Nelson, was motivated at the beginning of every game by spiritual leader Ben ‘Yoda’ Booth and did not allow their spirits to sag on account of the usually horrid British weather.

The trophy was received recently and brought some much needed respectability to Linacre's Trophy cabinet. At this momentous occasion star player/former captain/yoda Ben said ‘They better build a bigger cabinet because that trophy isn’t going anywhere for a while.’ Right On, Ben!

Asif Memon
**Flowers:**
Beginning in late January and early February, the meadows and forests around Oxford offer an incredible display of wildflowers. At the moment, the bright yellow flowers of winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*) and white snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*) are popping up throughout University Parks, especially just west of the duck pond. Crocuses (*Crocus sp.*), although planted, will be appearing in a variety of colors. Later in February, look out for wild daffodils (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*), and sweet violet (*Viola odorata*). The white flowers of wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and the yellow primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) can be seen in wooded areas starting in March. Highlights later in the spring include hundreds of fritillary (*Fritillaria meleagris*) in the Magdalen Meadows and the bluebells (*Endymion non-scriptus*) found in the nearby forests of Wytham Wood and Tubney Wood in April and May. For some beautiful garden flowers, check out the Oxford Botanical Garden on High Street or Blenheim Palace in Woodstock which opens for the spring on 14 March ([www.blenheimpalace.com](http://www.blenheimpalace.com)). Fieldguides to wildflowers are available in all the local bookshops. Phillips, R. 1977. *Wildflowers of Britain*. Pan Books: London. was a helpful reference for scientific names and phenology.

**Trees:**
I cannot resist the chance to suggest that everyone visit my favorite park in Oxford, Headington Hill Park. You can get there via St. Clement's – Headington Rd or cut through the meadows behind Linacre (also a good place to look for wildflowers) by following the footpath and then heading right (staying to the east / north of the river) which will eventually bring you out to a lane which meets up with Marston Rd. The entrance to the park is across Marston Rd. In the park, you will find my favorite tree, a great old chestnut whose branches have re-rooted and become trees in their own right.

**Walks:**
Aside from the old standards of walks along the Thames and through Port Meadow, there are a number of walks within a short bus-ride of town. If you haven’t been to the Cotswolds yet, with an ordinance survey map and a sense of adventure (and direction...) there are hundreds of great walks at your fingertips. For one, take the bus (stops outside the Odeon on Magdalen St) to Burford. In the hills east of High Street, you will come across a medeival church which is well worth a visit.

Mary Menton (with wildflower help from Peter Savill)

**MUST-SEE**

**Burnt to crisps or bloody as hell?**

There is something fishy about Todd Haynes Oscar-nominated retro-film *Far From Heaven*.

The story is set in the 50s in the small town of Hartford, Connecticut. Frank Whitaker, an executive in TV company Magnatech and his perfect wife Kathy are darlings of its provincial society, cherished while ideal, flawless and successful couple, doomed and excluded at the slightest deviation from its petty morals. As it turns out, nothing is as it seems to be. While Frank prefers to “work long hours” and spend his time in underground bars instead of their clean and cozy home, Kathy finds herself being attracted to a “negro” gardener (mind you, we are in the 50s). When Frank's medical condition begins to threaten their perfect family life, Kathy would do anything to save it. Also Frank is determined to fight his “illness” and start a treatment. Nevertheless, it is his position in society not his home, he wants to save first of all. This cleft in the couple’s goals worsened by a generous handful of gossip spread by Hartford’s judgemental society ensures that the attempt to mend the relationship safely leads to failure and their perfect marriage falls into ruins. As the story...
progresses, both Kathy and Frank try to find a place for respective dreams and longings within the confines of all that society allows. In vain. They have reached a forked path: they can either give up their dreams and keep the place in society, or pursue them and live at liminal places. And I am not going to tell you who of them is going to make the step and take the path to "heaven". Excited? - Exactly.

How can a contemporary audience, which knows no taboo and no restriction, get excited over a „weepie“ starring a proud domestica and her perfect home shattered to ruins? And, along the way, expected to digest the divinely bright colours, compassionate sound and a somewhat too expressive acting style – all that served in a simple linear narrative? Todd Haynes pays here - as the critics say - homage to the master of melodrama of the 50s, Douglas Sirk, and Far from Heaven (2003) is a remake of Sirk’s All that Heaven Allows (1955). Did this help? No? They say it is perfect, and – it actually is. Moreover, it is very gloomy, too. And, in spite of those bright colours and emotional tumults, the aftertaste is steely cold.

I would be reluctant to call Far from Heaven a remake. Regarding the plot, there is really little these two films have in common. All that Heaven Allows deals with age and class differences in the love story of an older middle class widow and her younger gardener. Far from Heaven follows the slow and inevitable destruction of a seemingly ideal couple, and addresses race, sex and gender. Both are set in the 50s, in a provincial town, and both boast an ennobled gardener (quoting Thoureau in the former and appreciating abstract art in the latter).

It is more than obvious that Haynes has not remade one specific movie of Sirk’s: he has taken a deep dive for inspiration in many of them. The distancing style, the colours, the light, the shapes, the sound and acting bear a visible Sirkian touch to such an extent that at the first and slightly deceiving sight it might be difficult to differentiate between the two directors’ work. The result, however, is neither a copy nor a stylistic exercise.

Sirk always balanced the lushness of his scenery and the emotional swirls of his melodramas with an appropriate portion of alienating effects. “Framing” proved to be one of the most effective of these distancing techniques in reaching the desirable level of equilibrium. Carefully dispersed images reflected in mirrors and windows, or captured in door-frames, as well as the lush colours, kept the viewer alert about the unreality of that which was watched. Haynes has pushed this anti-realistic aesthetics even further, replacing Sirk’s baroque decadence with ultimate “journal” perfection. He refrains from any authorial commentary on the story neither does he offer the slightest drop of contemporary criticism, which would produce in our faces a single relieved grin. His distancing is purely formal. The dramatic events are encapsulated in a very carefully staged show of perfection. No matter to what extent it addresses race and sex, Far from Heaven, with its shapes, morals and clichés remains ostensibly and stubbornly rooted in the 50s era and persistently resilient to our present times.

Haynes, nevertheless, could not have counted on his audience recognizing his source of inspiration and therefore appreciating his film just because of that. So what is there for an “uninformed” viewer? Far From Heaven tells a strong story. The social world of Hartford is a journal world, perfect in outward appearance, an illusion. Kathy is definitely a heroine but Frank is none the less a hero, a fact, which, might remain unnoticed in the flooding of colours and perfect shapes, and last but not least, highly stylized acting. Acting technique, retrieved from the 50s, once again subverts realism and creates a distance between the story and the audience. Eruptions of colours, in contrast to the ever-present emotional suppression, produce a paralyzing effect. Actors like mannequins on a catwalk freeze in poses and gestures for just a little bit longer than is natural. Lighting enhances facial expression to the
perfection of a figurine. Emotional reaction, surprise and fear, are thus mostly limited to gestures, which deny the possible realism of the moment. All the three main actors, Julianne Moore as Kathy, Dennis Quaid as Frank, and Dennis Haysbert as the gardener have adopted this technique with ease and given a brilliant performance.

As its title suggests, Far from heaven is not – in spite of its light and easy appearance - a fashion magazine. Its bright colours have acquired a gloomy shade and perfect shapes became distorted long before the story started... Under Haynes carefully subversive guidance, this story of love and betrayal, lies and tears, hypocrisy and pretension has turned into a drama of almost Strindbergian qualities.

German born Douglas Sirk (1900 -1987), earned his renown in the 50ies as a director of women’s pictures denigratingly labeled “weepies”. His touching melodramas were brought to critical attention long after their first screenings. He had remained unnoticed and ignored by film critics until briefly acknowledged by French New Wave directors. No one else, though, has rediscovered and explored Sirk’s cinematography better than his countryman Reiner Werner Fassbinder in his social melodramas of the 70s. Later, Sirk’s films became subject to feminist criticism. The former “weepies” have come to be appreciated for their hidden irony, formal perfection, exposure of social tensions and taboos and contrasts in emotional and formal representations. Quentin Tarantino even invented a “Douglas Sirk hamburger” - which is “either burned to crisps or bloody as hell” singling out the essence of Sirk’s movies. Last but not least, the genre of melodrama has been continuously revived in the films of Pedro Almodovar, and most recently in Todd Haynes Far From Heaven.

Seafood Lasagne
Serves eight.

- 4 oz of salmon
- 4oz of hake
- 4 oz of prawns
- 4 oz of smoked haddock
- 1 1/2 pints of milk
- 1/2 lb of butter
- 1/2 lb flour
- paprika, salt, pepper
- green lasagne sheets (spinach)
- chives
- cheese (parmesan)

Get all your fish, except for the prawns, and steam it or poach it for 5 minutes. Flake the fish while still hot and set aside to cool.

White sauce: set your milk to boil. Then melt the butter in a separate pot. Add the flour to the butter and mix to thick pastry-like consistency, to what chefs call a roux. When you have done this, add the milk slowly until you get a thick white sauce. If it is too thick, add extra milk. Pinch paprika, salt and pepper and set aside on a low heat and stir occasionally. When it is cooked - after app. 15 minutes – set aside to cool in the fridge with your fish. Spare some white sauce to put on the top layer of lasagne sheets.

Soak 6 lasagne sheets in cold water until soft. Take cold white sauce and add it to the flaked fish. Then add your prawns. Line your lasagne dish with the first layer of fish mixture, add dry lasagne sheets on top and repeat. Put the soaked lasagne sheets on top of the last fish layer and spread the rest of the white sauce over with cheese.

Set the oven to gas mark 5 (180dgs) and bake the lasagne for app. 35 minutes.

Dean Worrall
Lenny has got up late... again!

Great, I've only just got up, and I need to go to a lecture about light in the arts and spine.

stumble, stumble...

Finally... and so as there is no Cagney without Lacey, no bacon without eggs, there can be no light without dark. To capture it in the words of Katrina and the waves: "Love shone a light": I thank you.

My, what a captivating lecture. He seemed to have deconstructed light in the world of arts, in much the same way that a prism refracts light in the physical world. What a thought-provoking lecture... I'm off outside.

What do you know! It's a rainbow! It's a rainbow! This is unbelievable!

Ahh, it's a pot of gold and luck, a rare experience with the pots of Guinness!

Final thought...

... well, folks, remember that your subject matter needn't be restricted to the confines of the classroom, library or lab. Quite by accident, I found that my current topic of learning has many practical applications in the world around us, I never knew work could be so much fun! Maybe you too can see you work in a different perspective. But, probably not. Terrible, then! 'Til next time!