



LITERALLY SPEAKING

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Marathon Men

BY PHOEBE COBB

Long Distance Runners was a reunion of former Festival friends P J Kavanagh, Peter Kane Dufault and the absent Pearse Hutchinson. Kavanagh's reading of Hutchinson's poems lacked the enrichment of the author's Irish boom, but the simple imagery and honest sentiment evoked a strong visual picture.

The conversational tone of Kavanagh's poetry was complemented by his informal reading, often pausing to address the audience. He described the poet's job as being "the eyes that listen" and his reflections fulfilled this role.

Dufault gave a witty and incisive performance from memory on his "theory of everything." An image which gained particular appreciation was that of God suiting the form of a butterfly over that of a man. Similarly, his perception of a "walnut brain" possessing the knowledge to make a tree was satisfyingly apt.

Delivering the goods

BY PAUL BALLARD

During the 1970's, Felicity Kendal endeared herself into the hearts of a nation with her role as Barbara Goode in *The Good Life*. Her autobiography *White Cargo* takes hold of that same nation and invites it on a personal exploration of her life, especially the relationship with her father.

Speaking on stage at Cheltenham, Kendal was asked as to why she had written such a personal account of her life. The answer was that she felt a more standardised or traditional approach would not interest either herself or the audience. *White Cargo* "...conveyed the emotion of how I wanted it to be."

The book, Kendal feels, is a true representation of what she wanted to say, rather than something controlled by the media. In writing her autobiography, Kendal found that she had "a little more courage" than she initially thought.



Although claiming that writing a book is rather like having a baby, she believes that the final result was well worth the effort and is currently preparing a second one.

After reading *White Cargo*, the reader may ask 'why write so publicly about the private relationship she had with her father?' Kendal says that whilst her writing is personal, her father was very public and open,

unlike her mother, who was slightly more "Victorian" in her standing.

It is clear from her talk at the Festival that Kendal has found writing the autobiography a cathartic experience, and by sharing her emotions (and those of her father) in *White Cargo*, she gives the reader a unique and genuine insight behind the scenes of the life of a well-loved acting icon.

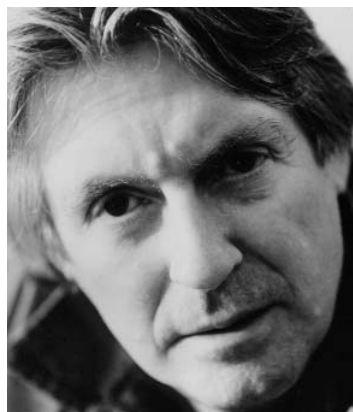
Jewels of Duality

BY ADAM HOROVITZ

Ian Hamilton and David Harsent (pictured) read from new works before a still, stunned audience in the Town Hall yesterday. Hamilton introduced a short reading from his book *Sixty Poems* by saying that they were not written to be read aloud; however, the craggy power of his writing - particularly on his father's death - and his sombre voice allowed the words to burrow their way into the brain and become personal. His poems "...lean forward to watch the thorns / Pluck on your skin white pools / That bleed as your fist tightens."

Harsent has a lighter voice, more used to reading; his tone was apt, given that he read from a new sequence called *The Marriage*, about

Pierre Bonnard and Marthe de Melisny. Like a "...side-slip of red-hot jazz from the radio.", Harsent guided us through a finely detailed look at the more mundane aspects of married life. As a poet he is particularly interested in painterly images and dual things; his writing shines "...like glass rolled to a gleam by the surf."



Free Will

BY HANNAH ROLLS

"Where did history stop and drama begin?" This is the question that John Julius Norwich was seeking to answer in his book and lecture on *Shakespeare's Kings*. Norwich examined this relationship in detail as he looked at the period of British history from 1337 to 1485 (covered in nine of Shakespeare's history plays), which includes both the Hundred Year War and the Wars of the Roses.

Norwich found that Shakespeare was generally able to stick reasonably close to the truth and where deliberate inaccuracies occurred, it was only in the cause of increasing the drama or constructing a better play. In Norwich's words "...the miracle is that he was able to stay as close to the truth as he did."

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

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James Kelman
Town Hall, 1-2pm

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Michael Palin
Town Hall, 6-7pm

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Wings of Song
Town Hall,
7.15-8.30pm

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Back issues of 'Literally Speaking' are available from the Front Desk in the Town Hall



Check your Philo Fax

BY HANNAH FOUNTAIN

Gerard Kilroy, with guests Bel Mooney and John Sutherland, brought a touch of Parisian class to Cheltenham last night with a re-creation of Café philosophy culture.

Debating the question "Do times change?" were a collection of some fifty to sixty budding Kierkegaards.

At times, the limited acoustics of Café Rouge threatened to hamper proceedings, but as the presenters and the crowd gradually swelled to full voice, this ceased to be an issue.

The evening began with Kilroy outlining a few key considerations, notably "Are periods and eras really different, or are we continually governed by past orthodoxies?" and "Can we consider the past as it really is without imposing our current viewpoint?"

Championing the cause for an eternal, consistent human nature, Bel Mooney quoted from a variety of literary sources, including Chaucer and Heaney's new *Beowulf* translation, stressing that the sentiments and issues expressed so many years ago are still evocative today.

In the uncertainty corner, John Sutherland rebutted with the statement "We are creatures of the times in which we live. And those times are singular."

Ultimately, it was conceded that any resolution to this debate, like so many in philosophy, is virtually impossible without direct access to the past. However, the audience continued to participate with gusto.

We were still some distance from the stage where physical violence became a real possibility, but there's definitely hope for the future....

THE TEAM

SUB EDITORS:

Adam Horovitz, Alan Maddrell.

STAFF JOURNALISTS:

Nisha Kumar, Mary Fauset.

ROVING REPORTER:

Jon Andriessen.

The Generation Abyss

BY NISHA KUMAR,

MARY FAUSET &

CANDY ROBINSON

Attending Richard and Simon Hoggart's discussion, we soon realised that we were not of the generations involved, being the only people in the audience under forty! Waving walking sticks, the elders deliberated the similarities and differences between the wartime generation and their offspring, revelling in the 'good old days.'

The Hoggarts both had a tendency to go off on a tangent, with rambling anecdotes forming the loose structure of the discussion. Sexual matters were



seen to be the main influence on changes between generations, the most practical trigger being the introduction of the Pill. A couple living together 30 years ago was virtually unheard of; now "...you lose social sta-

tus points by getting married." They asked "...has respectability been superseded by street-cred?"

The consensus was that modernity rules. How else would we have Tony

Blair as Prime Minister, and Mr Darcy looking like the "...winner of a wet, cambric T-shirt competition?"

In Richard Hoggart's solo evening session, he regaled us with stories and influences from his life, then

launched into all that's wrong with society today. Did anyone else notice that after scathing attacks on countless others for class/race bias, he then declared that people on Social Security were "...not very bright" and

added that the "underclass" had no sense of family? Was he playing to his audience, feeding them media-led misconceptions (something else he claimed to oppose), or did he simply not



see that he was committing the same crime?

Surely such sweeping generalisations are not a responsible way to approach the study of culture.

S & R Hoggart sketches by Heather Spears

In need of therapy?

BY RACHEL APSLEY

& SCOTT JEFFERY

Susie Orbach, highly acclaimed therapist and author of many theoretical papers, recently turned to fiction as a way of conveying the life of the therapist to the wider public.

Challenging the stereotypical 'I'm listening' image of an entirely detached, emotionally un-involved individual, Orbach portrays the therapist as someone who is intensely affected by the process. Her book, *The Impossibility of Sex* is a series of fictional case studies and "...a love letter to everyone." She describes how she carries her patients and characters around in her heart: "I would often go to sleep thinking of them." However, the realism of its form may make some readers feel uncomfortably voyeuristic.

Lisa Appignanesi has taken the opposite approach. Usually writing



novels, in particular thrillers, her most recent book is autobiographical. She described this venture as a "...search for the truth."

Despite the fact that Lisa has now rejected the approach of "whodunnit" (interestingly, Orbach ditches the 'Eureka' theory in favour of random patterns), there are obvious points of drama in both books. They both tackle life-changing events that affect their characters, be they real or fictional, and explore how their pasts might shape their futures.

The Stoat

It has come to our attention that Brian Patten may be losing his youthful appeal. During his appearance at The Everyman the other day, one of the children piped up with "Do you know Des O'Connor?" The Stoat thinks we should be told.

Marcus Moore overheard in the Press Room: "Sara-Jane (*our illustrious editor*), you're the only person in the building I could ask this of. Could you rub this gel into my back? And here's an envelope of money for you." We hope it was profitable for you, Sara!

For anyone wondering, the disco lights in various lectures were not a deliberate feature. Normal service has been resumed and the offending technician sent to work at Selsley Herb Farm.