



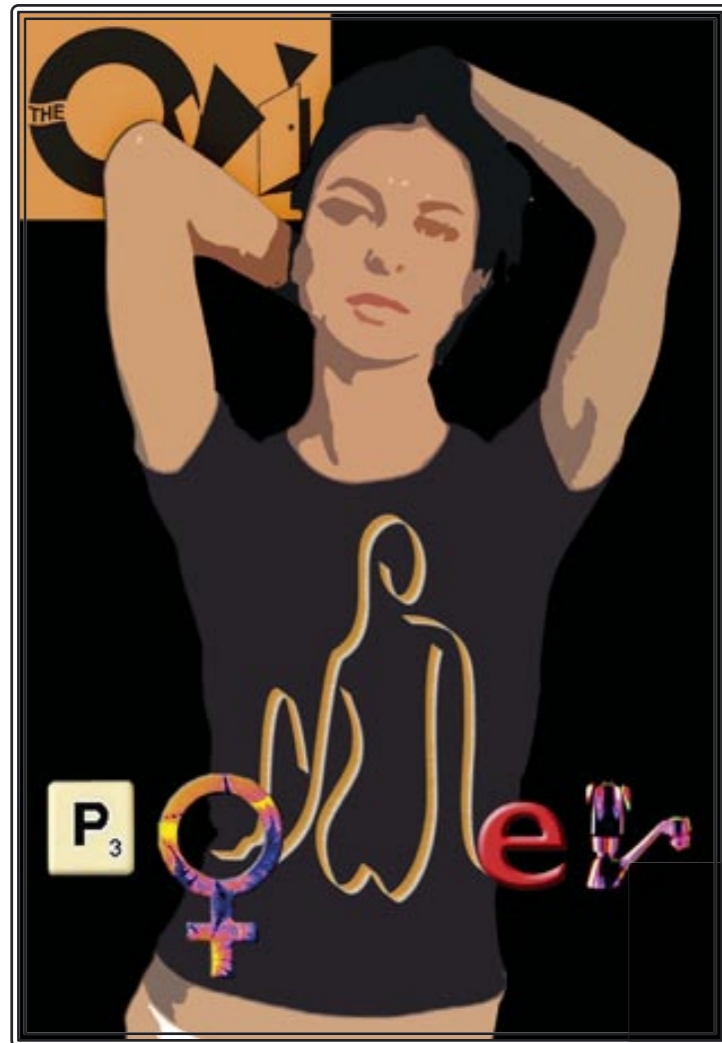
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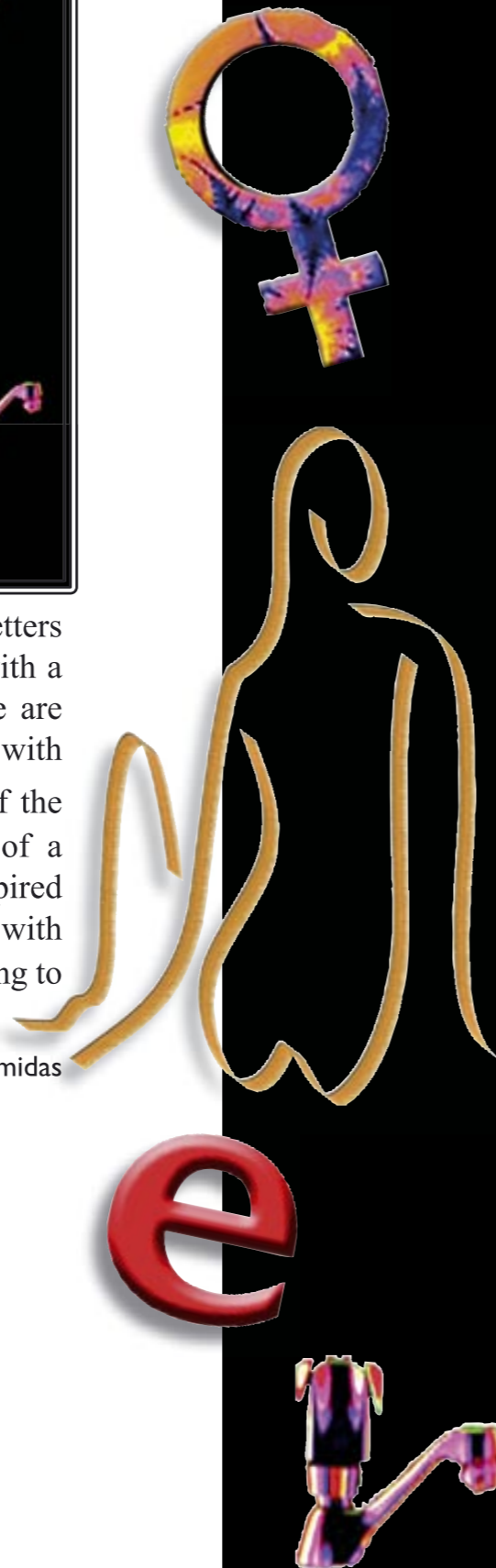
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“The cover page is a combination of letters and shapes. The word ‘**power**’ begins with a ‘**p**’ from the game Scrabble, since there are thousands of words to describe woman with the letter ‘p’. The ‘**o**’ is in the shape of the Venus Sigil, the ‘**w**’ is the drawing of a woman’s body (something that has inspired art for centuries), the ‘**e**’ is drawn with lipstick and, finally, the ‘**r**’ is a tap referring to the housewife...”

By Thanos Kalamidas



As gentlemen used to do, Asa and Thanos opened the door and I came in. Thank you, guys! I’m already feeling pretty comfortable in here.

They said that the Ovi needed a feminine touch... Hmm...let’s see what I can do. I can’t guarantee that the fact that I’m a woman would really make any difference. I’ve always been one of the guys. I had no sisters, just brothers. I’ve always been very close to my cousins and we have always been very close, but they were also just boys.

I spent my childhood complaining that I’d like to have sisters or girl-cousins. But the day they came to me with this 3rd degree cousin who wanted to force me to play with her dolls, and I saw the boys going to play in the park with their toy guns, I simply fooled the girl and escaped to the park, joining the boys with a plastic machine-gun.



But 15 years later, and 15 thousand kilometres further, here I am joining The Ovi in its 3rd issue that has women as this month’s subject. Woman, this universal incognita... Even science called it XX! It’s a double problem! In the case of XY, you can find y and get to know x, or vice versa. But when it comes to an x, you get it or you don’t get it at all. No science, its pure luck.

Who understands what goes on in a female mind? A woman can be fascinating, or a bitch, or a fascinating bitch... You can love a woman or hate her, but in neither of these cases, you understand what goes on in their minds. Not even when you are one yourself.

Hope nobody is expecting any answer from me. All I can guarantee are some more questions.

Greetings from the first country to have a female president and prime minister!

Juliana Elo

I'm sure you will agree that the PDF format of the second issue of the Ovi Magazine was catchy. The number of downloads show that you liked it and a few very encouraging mails make us continue. So this issue, the third, has again a PDF attachment with a selection of articles.

We still have no news from the people in Seychelles, who keep visiting our online magazine, and we have some new friends from Australia, Japan and South America. We thank them all and we remind them that they are welcome to join us, write with us and promote their work.

Talking about South America, we have a new member in Ovi with dual responsibility, she is Brazilian, or as she said Brasilian with an 's', and she is going to bring a South American air to our magazine and give a feminine touch. Juliana Elo wrote a small article for our 'inside magazine' Le Métèque and she opened Ovi's door. Now she writes to her grandmother and she's pushing her candidate for a Pope.

Juliana is equally opinioned, just like the rest of us. She has humour and is willing to express her feelings. She is a young woman in a man's world. In our first welcome meeting, we talked about the third issue and, even though we had a number of ideas, we decided to make a special issue for women's power.

So here it is. A women's issue. That's another first for us. In the last issue, Asa and I noticed we had both written a few articles about racism and the cover page for our PDF magazine was inspired by the racism issue. So, we went again for a thematic issue. We are not sure if that will work and we trust that you will mail us your opinion or post them on our new forum.

The cover page is a combination of letters and shapes. The word 'power' begins with a 'p' from the game Scrabble, since there are thousands of words to describe woman with the letter 'p'. The 'o' is in the shape of the Venus Sigil, the 'w' is the drawing of a woman's body (something that has inspired art for centuries), the 'e' is drawn with lipstick and, finally, the 'r' is a tap referring to the housewife.

Of course, the issue 'women' is huge and we are going to return to it in the future, for example we haven't said anything about domestic violence or about women in the working environment, women immigrants, abortion, women and democracy, women in art and if I continue this is going to be a very long list. This is just a first approach to the issue women's power.

Another new thing about this issue is the forum where we invite all of you to join a conversation about our magazine, our articles and the things that interest you. Don't forget that communication feeds both you and us.

Next to the forum, we added iKritic where we talk about books, CDs, DVDs, films, that we enjoyed or didn't. One thing I always believed is that critics should write for all kind of books, records or films, not only the new ones. How many of you have read Mary Shelley's Frankenstein? Most have probably seen the film. Why shouldn't I tell you how wonderful the book is even though it was written 200 years ago and that you must read it, if not have it in your bookcase?



Then we have the iBlog, bloggers have helped us a great deal promoting the last issue and we'd like to especially thank Phil with his www.finlandforthought.net blog. Blogs are a brilliant way for people to reflect their thoughts. Phil, for example, keeps us informed daily on what is going on around us.

Finally, iPromote is where we are willing to put adverts free. We are going to let immigrants and new businesses advertise their companies all around the world, remember this is the Internet. We know the need of advertisement for every new company; we are familiar with the cost of this advertisement, so if we can help, we have all the will to do so. We are willing to have even personal adverts if you want. Of course, anything that is against the principals of the magazine will not be published or be welcome.

Coming back to the beginning of this editorial, we'd like once more to thank all the people who visited our site and hope that you will continue doing so. We would also like to give another special mention to something we noticed just two days before we published this issue.

Two free license journalists from the most popular Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat honoured us, especially Asa, by taking the article Die-ignosis as an inspiration for their articles. Two journalists, writing about the same thing, in the same style, just 19 days after we published our last issue, is just too much of a coincidence.

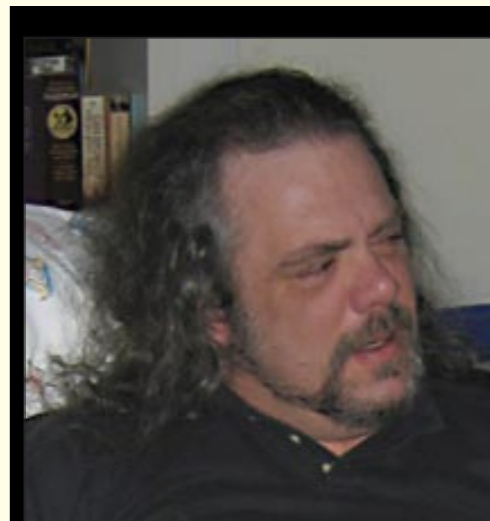
We haven't the time or the logistics to check who is 'inspired' by articles published in the Ovi Magazine but we would appreciate if either the name of the creator or the magazine was mentioned. At the same time, they reminded us that there are 'professionals' who read us and that whatever happens we are the original and we have the unique ideas, so the only thing they manage to write is one good article and feel guilty about it.

However, if any online magazine, blog or paper wants to publish parts of the Ovi and, so long as they ask us and remember to mention us, they are most welcome to do so. It makes sense because we will add a link back to you free.

Thank you again for being with us once more, and keep sending us your feedback.

Enjoy women's power,

Thanos Kalamidas



Something curious has been happening at Ovi Magazine. Vases of fresh flowers are appearing on some of the pages, embroidered pillows are propped up against some of the links and, yes, the toilet seat is always down. We may not be the sharpest tools in the toolbox but we sense that life will never be the same again.

After the outbreak of Issue 2, we met a friendly Brazilian (she prefers the *s*) lass named

Juliana Elo, who is also married to a Finn and living in Finland. Following our formal introductions and jokes, “Hello, Mrs Elo!” we settled down to the business of creating Issue 3 for the enjoyment of our growing readership – and, cor blimey, it is growing!

Juliana has become the surrogate mother to our little Ovi, while John completes his academics Stateside, but she will be permanent fixture barring any necessity for maternity leave. She brings to Ovi some of the missing dimensions that we were sorely lacking. The magazine now has a feminine touch and the added perspective of a South American on world issues; she brings a unique view of the E.U., President Bush and has inspired the issue’s theme: women.



My translator tells me that Juliana’s surname means ‘life’ in Finnish and we are certain that she will continue to convey that through her writings. Life also has no end of irony, it seems. You innocently wander along life’s road and before you realise what has happened two new women have entered your life. Following a fancy 4D-ultrasound, my pregnant wife and I discovered that the gender of the one lodging inside her womb is a girl.

The concrete announcement has made the prospect of fatherhood even more real and, thanks to Thanos’s decision to add five brand new sections, I have been practising being up throughout the night. We have added a Forum for you to interact, discuss, bitch, champion and spy on what everybody thinks about stuff from Ovi, stuff in life and other general...stuff. Go and register now and be among the first to post messages.

Other brand new sections include, iView, iKritic, iBlog and IPromote, because you can never have too many eyes when it comes to spotting the problems and issues of the world. Three of these new sections allow increased communication between you and us, you and the world at large. Hit the links and see how they can work for you.

Issue 3 is filled with fresh content and you may need to download and print the PDF version, so you can read it away from the computer. The latest PDF has all the articles from this issue and looks quite sexy once again.

Don’t loiter around my editorial, get reading...

Asa Butcher

ID of the second gender

By Thanos Kalamidas

Why the second gender? Has anybody ever thought why any kind of group that searches for equality would ever call themselves the second gender? And who is the first gender? The 'enemy'? The other side? The man?

The first formed societies, thousands of years ago, worshipped women. The first holy figure humans made temples for was Gaia, Mother Earth. The family was and, to my opinion, still is very matriarchal. The oldest woman was in total control of the family's wealth, while the men had to hunt for the food. Which reminds me of something a close friend says often, "In our family, I take the important decisions like what's going to happen with the environment, if there will be a solution with the Middle East problem, if there is life on Mars. My wife takes care of the rest." Obviously, that rest includes everything from the everyday family problems to the wealth of the individual members of the family.

Traditionally, gender has been used to refer to the grammatical categories of "masculine," "feminine," and "neutral," but in recent years the word has become to refer to sex-based categories, as in phrases, such as 'gender gap' and the 'politics of gender'. This usage is supported by the practice of many anthropologists, who reserve sex for reference to biological categories, while using gender to refer to social or cultural categories.



This is the entry in the internet dictionary, hinting strongly between the distinction of the biological 'sex' and the socially constructed 'gender', and recognizes the neologism of the word. In practice, the word joined by 'the second' has transformed over the last few decades into a social thought, generating the women's movement.

According to what I have read you can identify three periods in the women's movement. The first period of 'feminism' women, like Charlotte Perkins Gilman, tried to distinguish between biological and 'secondary' sex characteristics stating what women were 'naturally' suited for. By not naming these distinctions their stand wasn't accepted and opposed by other feminists.

The second period derives from the work of anthropologists, such as Margaret Mead, who described socially constructed masculine and feminine patterns of behaviour, emotion and intellect as distinct from biological characteristics. Yet, the lack of clarity in the theory and disagreements about goals of the feminist movement continued.

By the end of the second period came Simone de Beauvoir, her major thrust into philosophical analysis was due to her life-long friendship with Sartre; using some of the ideas she worked with him in Ethics and a few of the 'underpinnings of existentialism' as it was described by Sartre.

De Beauvoir went on to produce her famous work, *The Second Sex*, working with the idea that women are the "other," and the statement: "that woman is not born, but made," De Beauvoir's book and articles was a definitive declaration of woman's independence.

Does that explain why women are the second gender? Or why men are the first? Most people remember Simone de Beauvoir as the life-long companion of the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and not as a philosopher in her own right; she has an enormous number of publications and lectured all around the world. When I say 'most people' I include women as well. Do women feel comfortable being the second gender? Does the 'second' protect them from the obligations coming with the first?

Simone de Beauvoir was the first to isolate the sex from the gender emphasizing the feminine side of the equal woman. She repeatedly said that: "Freedom of choice, humanity's utmost value, is the criterion for morality and immorality in one's acts. Good acts increase one's freedom, while bad ones limit that freedom." And that has nothing to do with gender or sex.

De Beauvoir, herself, in an apocalyptic book called *The Guest*

comes to remind the other qualities of the second gender, the sophisticate modern woman, the jealous girlfriend, the woman who uses sex and makes it work for her in its biological term. I'm not sure of the semantics she wanted to use, but what I saw was a woman acting exactly the same way a threatened man would. The greatest theory of the second sex in that book was passing a message to her boyfriend and known womanizer, "Look here pal, if you cheat on me, your girlfriend, even if she is my niece, is in deep shit."

There are women in every possible position and profession nowadays. Unfortunately, not equally treated or paid. Margaret Thatcher was often misunderstood for a man, blamed for masculine behaviour and opposition to other women. What we forget is that Margaret Thatcher did nothing more than be equal to men and behave exactly as men did at the same period.

Dennis, Mrs. Thatcher's husband, often ironically called 'Mr. Margaret Thatcher', his only mistake was that he was behaving exactly how everybody expected the Prime Minister's spouse to behave. Now the same people are critical towards Mrs. Blair for her out-spoken behaviour.

The only place where the woman comes second is in the Biblical Genesis where women came after the man and perhaps this is the only case that demands a study from the feminists. The second sex identifies the biological part of the female in distinction of the masculine and not a social behaviour.



Girls will be boys

By Asa Butcher

Earlier this month my wife and I went for a 4D-ultrasound and discovered that our future baby will be a girl. This news has completely changed the dynamic of the pregnancy and it has all suddenly become very real. Before the scan, the baby was called 'it' and the tasks of choosing a name, clothes and toys.

My wife's response at discovering that we are having a daughter was, "She is not going to be girly-girly; she won't be dressed like a princess." Her statement comes from the fact she was a tomboy during her childhood and loved grazing her knees with the rest of the lads. She is ignoring the fact that we have little control over her desires to dress as a fairy or as a cowboy.

As a father, one aspect that has cheered me up is that I get the best of both worlds. Even though I am having a daughter I can still take her to football matches, buy her Scalextrix, Lego, Hornby trains and ten-litre super soakers. She can wear football shirts, jeans and any manner of fashion that she likes; she can even pierce her ears and wear make-up.

Can a mother do the same for her son? If a mother wants to share her childhood with her son then she is bordering on psychological abuse. If she dressed her son in a pink frilly princess dress or gave him a dollhouse to play with, then she would receive a great deal of abuse from family members and the public. It seems strange that it is ok to treat girls like boys but not vice versa.

From day one, boys are dressed in blue and girls in pink, which does stop strangers mistaking the gender but enforces the gender difference. I am sure that we will fall into the trap every now and then, but we will make a conscious effort to give our daughter the opportunity to play with Action Man or Barbie.

This is a start:

What are little boys made of?
What are little boys made of?
Sugar and spice,
And all things nice
That's what little boys are made of.

What are little girls made of?
What are little girls made of?
Snips and snails,
And puppy dog's tails
That's what little girls are made of.



Ms. Villain

By Asa Butcher



Name the top five movie villains of all time? No problem, Darth Vader, Hannibal Lector, Gollum, Khan and the Joker, but where are the women? Do you need testosterone to be capable of master villainy? The silver screen has had its fair share of feminine nemeses, antagonists and megalomaniacs with deep-rooted evil desires.

Villainesses are a rare breed but when they appear, it makes women with PMT appear like the Virgin Mary. No amount of chocolate, self-help books or pampering will cure these individuals; the courageous knight in shining armour would rather slay them with his sword. The question we must ask is 'Who's the uber-villainess?' Which of these could chill your blood with, "I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice Babycham" or a Norma Bates shower scene?

In over 20,000 movies, how many female villains have made your skin crawl? I am well versed in the world of movies and know I can tackle this question with ease. Criteria eliminating the candidates of evil needed to be intricate, infallible and incredibly insane; you just have to trust my judgement.

Many female anti-heroes are the victim of male actions and are seeking unadulterated revenge - Lorena Bobbitt style. The empowered duo of Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon in *Thelma and Louise*, Uma Thurman in *Kill Bill*, Nancy Fowler Archer in *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman* and Michelle Pfeiffer as Catwoman in *Batman Returns* are examples of their inner conflict of good and evil. The only female anti-hero that doesn't fit into an obvious category is maternal Mindy Sterling's Frau Farbissina in the Austin Powers trilogy.

These anti-heroes have enslaved our hearts, but now we want the definitive bitch. We want some real cold-hearted bitchiness, none of that diluted pre-menstrual

hormonal rubbish, something like Nurse Mildred Ratched in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. She was a character that men and women could both loathe, unlike Demi Moore in *Disclosure* and Glenn Close in *Fatal Attraction*, which terrified every single man, while Rebecca De Mornay's nanny in *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* that sent the shivers down every mother's spine.

Film bitches have serious psychological problems caused by inhaling the acetone in nail varnish. Compare Jennifer Jason Leigh in *Single White Female* and Nicole Kidman's ambition in *To Die For* to the psychopathic tendencies of Kathy Bates in *Misery* and they are left looking like cherubs. Academy Award-winning *Rebecca* was Hitchcock's best, helped by the mind games that Judith Anderson's Mrs. Danvers inflicts upon poor Joan Fontaine.

The line of human decency and moral adherence has been crossed; we are entering the dark side of the soul. Few of these women have killed, except boiling the occasional innocent pet rabbit. Before we judge the solo queens of evil, we should pay homage to the female accomplices that earned their stripes in a gruesome manner.

Juliette Lewis in *Natural Born Killers* and *Kalifornia* does terror-ific work as a sidekick to any enthusiastic serial killer, while Faye Dunaway's portrayal of Bonnie Parker in *Bonnie & Clyde* had to have inspired Miss Lewis in *NBK*. Comics have produced many partners in crime, with Uma Thurman (again) in *Batman & Robin* as Poison Ivy and *Superman II*'s female Kryptonian criminal Ursa.

Ursa and Poison Ivy are technically aliens or mutants from other worlds and are not counted among the truly immoral humans. Likewise, Natasha Henstridge

in *Species*, supermodel Slavitz Jovan's Gozer in *Ghost Busters*, *Carrie*'s Sissy Spacek and her telekinesis, Rebecca Romijn-Stamos' shape-shifting Mystique from *X-Men* and *The Exorcist*'s Regan MacNeil are all barred from claiming the crown.

Bond has also served up anti-heroes that become good in the end, such as Honor Blackman's feisty Pussy Galore in *Goldfinger* and Grace Jones' asexual May Day in *A View to a Kill*. Bond has had plenty of practice between the legs of women, but he never faced death until Famke Janssen's thighs attempted to crush him in *GoldenEye* or Rosa Klebb's knife-in-a-shoe attack in *From Russia with Love*. *The World is Not Enough* featured the best Bond villain, Sophie Marceau's Elektra King, which made a refreshing change from megalomaniacs stroking white pussies.

It would be intolerable to skip the villains with which we grew up. Our childhood innocence was pulverised and real psychological damage was inflicted. *The Wizard of Oz*'s Wicked Witch of the West was terrifying, but she was the Fairy Godmother compared to *Return to Oz*'s headless Princess Mombi. Disney has much to answer for, with Wicked Queen Grimhilde's apple delivery service (*Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs*) and Cruella De Vil (*101 Dalmations*) insanely driving her car directly at the viewer - I shudder even now.

The road to ultimate female villain is winding to an end, as we approach the turning for outright insanity; the moment when a woman becomes a cold-blooded movie killer. The recently released *Monster*, starring Charlize Theron as Aileen Wuornos, is a great, almost perfect, candidate. It is based on the true story of America's first female serial killer and does not win because of its lack of originality; we want an original villain, although some sympathy should be offered

- she was a second generation American with Finnish maternal grandparents.

Lady villains from original screenplays are not that rare. Jeanne Tripplehorn in *Basic Instinct*, two from *Kill Bill* (Daryl Hannah and Lucy Liu), Barbara Stanwyck in *Double Indemnity*, while Madonna in *Body of Evidence* was just plain evil in her acting. However, each of these characters paid for their crimes with their life, a prison sentence or nudged back into the recording studio. How many 'get away with it'?

Male villains rarely escape punishment before the credits roll, so what chance do the girls have? Maintaining the equality is Catherine Zeta-Jones in *Entrapment* who escapes but didn't kill anyone, while in *Chicago* she did kill someone and does get away with it, as does her co-star Renée Zellweger. Joan Cusack in *Arlington Road* rides into the sunset with Tim Robbins and *All About Eve*'s Anne Baxter leaves a trail of emotional destruction in her wake achieving her goal. That leaves only one...

Kathleen Turner in *Serial Mom* is the 'uber-villain'. She fulfils the credentials and is the ultimate baddy, with the contradiction of being an anti-hero. Not only is she a psychotic serial killer, she is a loving mother who only has her family's best interests at heart. There is no regret or remorse. While at the end of the movie, she is a free woman and, the piece de resistance, she kills a female juror who pronounced her innocent. Can you get any more evil than that? Well, can you?



The Apartheid of the Veil

By Thanos Kalamidas

Some years ago, a friend of mine worked as a doctor in a Saudi Arabia hospital and she had the chance to get familiar with the whole region travelling to Iran and Iraq, Kuwait and Bahrain. One of her first memories was when she first landed in Jeddah, supposedly the most liberal city of the kingdom. For 14 centuries, Jeddah has been the entry point for millions of travellers from all around the world on their way to Mecca, the holiest place in Islam, each year.

Even though my friend was warned, she decided to keep her headscarf in her bag and she was relieved to notice that she was not the only woman doing so on the plane and later in the terminal, but this is where everything finished. Entering the country via passport control, she faced the reality of a full-length gown called abaya and, of course, the veil.

In a tourist guidebook, my friend had mentioned that Saudi Arabia was perhaps the most difficult place on the globe for women to travel alone; a husband or a male relative must escort them and that there were no exceptions. Of course, things get worse moving to Iran where a cast of men, religious freaks, rule a nation in the darkest times.

In Saudi Arabia, women do not have the right to vote, be elected or hold any kind of official position. Women are not allowed to drive and when sightseeing they must wear the full-length black gown and veil. I don't want to go into the laws and the punishments, for example for adultery, because it is inhuman when the woman is guilty.

In all these countries, women are allowed to own land, transact business, maintain separate accounts from their husband and go to school. For what propose? Men make all the decisions anyway. Men are writing the laws and make them work to their best interest without changing the status quo.

A few years ago, we all saw the death of the apartheid of colour in South Africa and we keep missing the apartheid of gender in the Middle East countries. The



veil is the symbol of this apartheid and I always wanted to see what these women hide behind the veil. I'm sure that they have a stitched mouth.

The Christian Bible asks the women to enter the temples and churches covered, something that mainly Catholics and Orthodox still keep and, even then, not everywhere or all the time. Nowadays, we see women priests, which shows that even religion evolves; what is the excuse for the veil and the apartheid of the gender?

This social reality has moved with these people even in democratic Europe, where in the name of a multicultural society and acceptance of the difference we allow the veil to ghetto people and separate them. It's very naive to believe that a nine-year-old girl that goes to school wearing a veil shows our multiculturalism. The only thing we manage is to isolate her from her natural environment, the schoolyard, forcing her to be with 'her own people' ending the chances she had to emulate Western society; in the end she lives a double identity and has no identity.

Vanishing Catholics

By Juliana Elo

The choice of a Polish pope was a surprise in 1978, but Karol Josef Wojtyla wasn't elected Pope from nothing. Born in Communist Poland, the choice for John Paul II was strategic. During his pontifado, he was an anti-communist activist, and it's said that this Pope helped to defeat the socialist dictatorships in Eastern Europe and to "cool down" the Cold War.

But how much help does the Catholic Church indeed offer? While the world inquires about the Brazilian government's omission in the act of slaughtering street children who were killed while sleeping in front of Candelaria's church in Rio, I wonder why 50 children searching for shelter by a church door were not allowed inside the church.

Could it be that the Catholic Church became so attached to its traditions that it forgot its essence? What is the Catholic Church based on after all?

The Catholic Church in Brazil is an elitist institution. I, myself, studied in a Catholic school my whole childhood. The monthly fee was separatist. During the 13 years that I studied there, I remember having one black colleague, who was hard working and diligent. She probably saw it as a chance to have better future than her mother who was the school's cleaner. But the day that I realized she wasn't

studying there anymore, her mother wasn't working there either.

While the Catholic Church was sitting on its beautiful temples on the top of the hills, small suburban evangelical churches propagate. Even the controversial Universal Church, won the upper classes sympathy when it gave an artesian well to people, standing up to the "Dryness Industry" in North East Brazil – where owners of latifundiums have the power over the water and over people's destiny. Over the past decade, evangelical churches have spread from downtown to uptown.

Brazil is still said to be the biggest Catholic country in the world. If, after the impressive number of followers lost by the Catholic Church, Brazil still is the biggest Catholic country, we can have an idea of how much power the Catholic Church has lost all over the globe.

It is no wonder why São Paulo's Archbishop, dom Claudio Hummes, famous from his emphasis on social justice, is now indicated as one of the three favourites to succeed John Paulo II, so let the land of football and carnival also be the next Pope's country.

PMT:

Patient Man Test

By Asa Butcher

Periods, menstrual cramps, vaginal bleeding, tampons and panty liners are enough to make even a hardened man uncomfortable and resort to crass jokes. This discomfort stems from ignorance and a fear of the unknown, but why are men so uneducated when it comes to a woman's menstrual cycle?

When children are growing up, they are taught different things; one of those differences is that many parents prepare their daughter for her first period. Not many parents teach their son about the menstrual cycle that will test their patience to the limit every month with future girlfriends, wives and female family members.

Thankfully, my mum taught me how to wash my clothes, use an iron and explained about 'that time of the month'. Partially she prepared me for married life, while my dad filled in the blanks. Nothing really prepares you for the first time you see a partner changing her tampon or the menstrual fluid that has been absorbed into the panty liner, and you naturally make a distasteful joke because of the shock.

The second shock was the fact that she needs to buy tampons very month, which is something like 10,000 tampons in her lifetime. Usually she will have a good stock of period accessories, but the day will come when you are sent out to buy some. If you thought buying condoms was embarrassing then wait until you try to buy a box of tampons.

Standing in the shopping aisle looking at the selection you feel the world staring at you, it isn't embarrassing but it is. There are different brands, do you buy the super value or spend a few extra pounds? Every box has different quantities, 16, 32, 14, 20, how many does she need? Then you see something else, Regular, Super, Mini, Super Plus, does

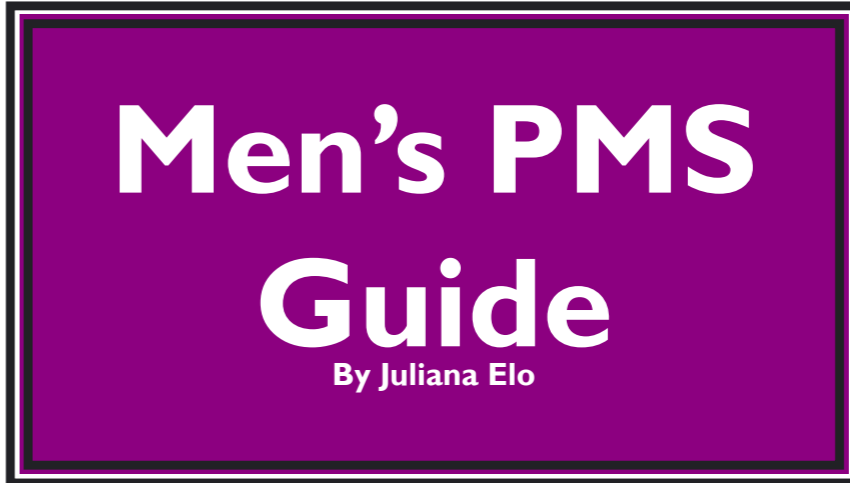
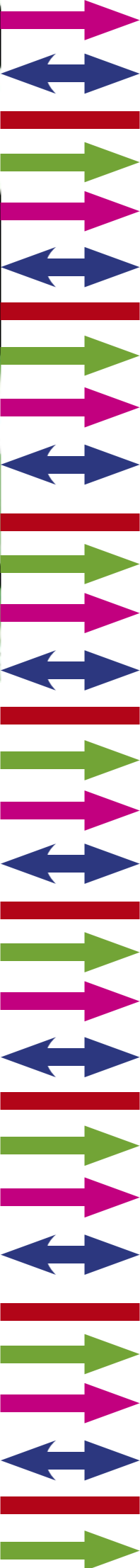


this refer to her vagina size or the quantity of menstrual fluid?

What I could not believe is the fact that women have to pay for tampons. Men don't have to buy razors, we could all have beards, but a woman can hardly ignore a squashed tomato feeling within her underwear. I realise that there are washable cloth menstrual pads, small natural sponges and menstrual cups, but it is like still rolling your own cigarettes even though you are not a student anymore.

Over time you ask questions like, "What happens if the string breaks?" and "Why don't you go skydiving like the girl in the adverts?", but pain is a great teacher and you stop talking to her all together during her 'girly things'. My dad forewarned me of the random mood swings but I figured he was winding me up; in fact, he was playing it down. My assumption that the bad temper was only for *that* week was fatally flawed because it can strike half way, during a full moon, a night out with the lads, when she has to cook, hmm, could it be a watertight excuse?

The period truly is a mystery and a misery, although not for everybody. I must tell you a true story about this guy I once met who explained to me that his hobby was collecting used tampons and, before I could laugh at this twisted joke, his female friend added, "Yeah, he even has one of mine."



You never know the day when it will come, and when it comes you take some time to realize that it has come. She maybe starts crying, or gives you hell for something you said two years ago, and you don't even remember saying that. What happened to your sweet little darling? Who is this monster?

Soundtrack: "...Pleased to meet you, hope you guess my name. And what's puzzling you is the nature of my game..."

It's said that 70% of women suffer from Pre-Menstrual Syndrome - but let me add some words of my own - and 100% of men. She suffers, you suffer. If she doesn't, you're luckier than the average guy is, but you're not safe. There are many women with PMS out there.

And it's all about hormones, damn things. For men, it's easy: Men have testosterone, period. Men's levels of testosterone decrease slowly after he is 20 or 30 years old, and that's all! It may cause some humour changes, but you have a lot of time to learn to deal with it. Women's hormones change more in a month, than men's hormones change in his whole life!

Right after the period is over a woman's body starts to produce estrogen and its level increases for 14 days. When estrogen gets to its maximum level, the body starts to produce progesterone, and the estrogen level decreases. During the period, both hormone levels reset to zero. Imagine what this hormonal rollercoaster doesn't cause!

Its depression, sadness, anxiety, anger, irritability, indecision, lack of concentration, headache, breast tenderness, joint pain, muscle pain, insomnia, hypersomnia, anorexia, food cravings, fatigue, lethargy, agitation, clumsiness, dizziness, vertigo, paresthesia, nausea, palpitations, sweating, acne, greasy or dry hair and gain weight - among other symptoms.



But forget the others. Take just the last three symptoms: acne, problems with hair and weight gain. Understood now? It's a female's hell.

She can be a kilo fatter, which is already reason enough to cry three litres of tears, scream for four hours and break five objects that she can reach. If you try to hold her, she'll refuse you. If you want to talk, she won't. If you don't say anything, she'll accuse you of not loving her anymore. And, for God's sake, of all the things you shouldn't do, please don't try to be funny. It's irritating.

Doctors are unanimous: there's no cure for PMS, so beware because women can be excused in court for committing crimes while suffering from PMS. There's one solution though, at least for men, RUN!

Le Météque



Check our inside magazine



How many frogs have
you kissed
TODAY?



Get your kit on!

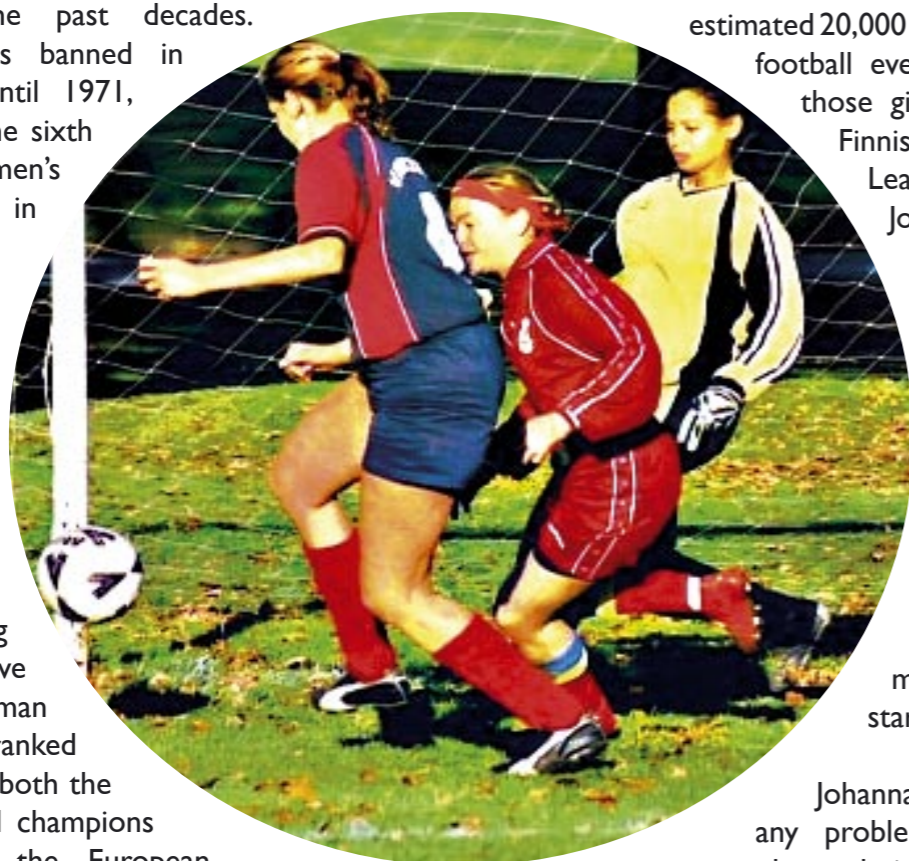
By Asa Butcher

We grew up with sisters and girls wanting to join in our game of football at the park, but the instant they punted the ball with their toe a collective male groan could be heard. This image is embedded in the memories of every man, which is why when women's football is mentioned we make jokes, such as, 'How can you take a free kick in high heels?', 'Does the goalie wear washing-up gloves?' and 'Don't break a nail during a throw-in!'

The jokes have been volleyed back at us, as the popularity of women's football has grown considerably over the past decades. Women's football was banned in England from 1921 until 1971, but in a few months the sixth UEFA European Women's Championship kick off in Manchester.

Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway and Sweden will travel to host country England to compete for the brand new trophy, after the original was presented to Germany for winning their third consecutive title in 2001. The German women's team is ranked number one, they won both the senior and U-19 world champions and have dominated the European competition since its inception in 1991, taking the title five times.

Finland, ranked 16th in the world, has managed to qualify for the last eight of a major senior UEFA tournament for first time and is hoping to make an impact on the competition. Geoffrey Thompson, England's Football Association chairman stated, "The last final in Germany drew a crowd of 18,000 and I hope our fans will come and watch it. International women's football is an entertaining game and a great sport."



The English FA wants the tournament to inspire more girls to participate in football and sport in general. In 2002, it was estimated that 1.4 million girls had taken up the game and was the most popular women's and girl's sport. It does not end there, Finland, who are participating in their country's first major football tournament finals, are also working hard to develop the infrastructure of the game.

The Football Association of Finland (SPL) hosted a women's tournament in 2001 and has an estimated 20,000 Finnish girls playing football every week. One of those girls playing in the Finnish Championships League (SM-sarja) is Johanna Aromaa, 28, who has been playing football for 20 years. "I have always liked sports. I don't remember exactly why I started because I was so young. Maybe it was because most of my friends had also started."

Johanna has never faced any problems from Finnish guys about playing football, "I think that nowadays most men think that it's ok when women play football compared, for example, to ice hockey, which I have also played. Most of the men think that ice hockey isn't for women." Finland has developed women's football so much that there are now three divisions consisting of the of a top Championships League consisting of ten teams, followed by the First Division split into West and East divisions, and then there are Second and Third Divisions.



Playing for Malmi Football Club (MPS) and her love of world football gives her some authority on the game, Johanna believes that the men's game is stronger and quicker than women's, and thinks that the teams should not be mixed because the likelihood of women picking up injuries is far greater.

Turning to the summer tournament in England she is happy that all of Finland's matches will be broadcast on television, "I hope that Finland will succeed in the women's Euro Championships because that gives the opportunity to add publicity; the women's game needs more publicity in the newspapers, magazines and TV. I hope that Finland will succeed but, if I am realistic, I have to say that Sweden and Germany are the strongest teams."

When it comes to the best female footballer she admits it is a tough decision but there are some names to watch out for in the coming Championships, "Swede Hanna Ljungberg, many people think that she is one of the best female footballers in the world." Another player to check out is the Finn Laura Kalmari, "She was the top goal scorer in the Swedish Championship League last season, which is one of the best leagues in the world."

The future of women's looks set, as Championships and Leagues are being formed all over the world and that is not all. There are now female referees, lineswomen, managers, directors and it seems only a matter of time before the tea lady is replaced by a man.

Radical decisions

By Thanos Kalamidas

Reading the sports papers around the net and especially the Greek news. I learnt that lately there is one common thing in football that all countries share, and it is not the eleven players, the referee and the ball; it is violence.



allows them to grow.

One of the Greek teams, Olympiakos, has nearly two million

organized fans. In a country of 12 million, this is one-sixth of the population. Some months before, the team was once again punished for violence and the management blackmailed the government by saying that if the punishment stands then two million voters will vote for the opposition - the government withdraw the punishment in two days.

What happened lately in Greece has upset me since one of the teams involved is the team I have followed for the last thirty-six years. The two biggest Greek teams were playing one another and, during the two weeks leading up to the game, all the Greek newspapers were talking about nothing other than the problems the fans were going to cause. The police had to mobilize extra manpower and the government had to think, while the teams were selling tickets, jerseys and plastic flags.

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The management of each team is responsible for the control of the fans and instead of doing anything in this direction they use the excuse: 'for the love of the team'. This statement is turning the fans into fanatics; it is like the professional wrestling in the big circus known as WWF, where the two contestants declare before the fight that they are going to tear each other into pieces.

We don't need to see the next trouble. I think it is about time for somebody to take a radical decision and stop all this by sending both teams responsible for all these problems to the bottom league and force them to start from the beginning. Even better would be to demolish them. Make them disappear from the map. And I, myself, am a lifelong supporter of one of these teams.

In the WWF circus, the wrestlers and the crowd are aware of the theatre and they are aware that they are all players in the same play. In football, things are a bit different. Here you have a social event that takes on other dimensions. Hooliganism is not a football thing; it is a social problem, which is a result of unemployment, education and many others aspects, but this is not the right place to analyse.

If you love your team, you have to respect the sport, the people and the world around you. If you cannot do that then keep away. The majority of people who watch football love the sport and these sorts of events disappoint them, keeping them away from the sport they love.

The biggest responsibility is held by the teams and their management. The players, either individually or through their unions and international organizations, try to do something but they eventually just give an alibi that doesn't curb the feelings, it just

The people who run these teams are rich and to become so rich proves that they are intelligent. However, what they are doing to football proves that even intelligence has its limits before idiocy sets in.



There are two schools of thought when it comes to Greatest Hits albums: a watered-down discography or an hour of musical excellence. My beliefs lay somewhere between the two schools, thereby creating a third category...hmm. For me, music isn't the beginning and end of all life, I don't listen to lyrics in an attempt to find a deeper meaning to existence and album art does not make my legs go wobbly with passion.

Music is a soundtrack to my life, triggering memories and emotions long forgotten, such as Bruce Springsteen singing "You can't start a fire without a spark" immediately brings my Dad's long-distance driving cassette from the -80s to mind, while The Final Countdown is 'our' song and Mark Knopfler's Why Aye Man is a family in-joke.

The love of individual songs led me to buy Greatest Hits and Various Artists albums. These albums are comparable to the free samples of washing powder – try before you buy the big box. The first compilation that I ever played was my parent's eight-LP Beatles Box that featured virtually every Fab Four track. This set introduced me to The Beatles and now I am buying their individual albums.

However! There is one aspect that upset me when it comes to recent compilations, such as the release of The Beatles Anthology. Three double-CD box sets featuring never-heard-before-rarities-remastered-etc., which in layman terms means 'stuff that was too mediocre to release initially but fans will buy anything'. One other marketing trick used was the inclusion of a single brand new track, so if you wanted to hear it...

The Eagles are another group guilty of this swindle. I love this super group from the -70s, but they have released countless compilation albums. The latest was their THIRD Very Best of the Eagles album (1994, 2001 & 2003) that featured one new song, Hole in the World. In their thirty-year history, The Eagles also have these in their discography: Their Greatest Hits, Eagles Live, Greatest Hits Vol. Two, The Best of the Eagles, Hell Freezes Over (a live album) and Selected Works 1972-1999. Ch-Ching!

Despite my mockery of these money-spinners, I do have some begrudging respect for the titles that are slapped upon the CD case

in order to shift a few more units. Some of you may have seen the Louis Armstrong's Definitive Collection, Ultimate Elvis, Fun Lovin' Criminals A's, B's & Rarities, The Beatles Let It Be...Naked and all the Classic, Live, Acoustic, Digitally Remastered and All-Time Greats on the shelves. Ch-Ching! Ch-Ching!

Best of compilations are great Christmas gifts and, as I said before, are excellent at familiarizing new generations with music from yesteryear. I have The Best of The Doors double-CD and I enjoy listening occasionally, but when I tried their Strange Days album I was skipping tracks. Sorry any Doors' fans. Hardcore fans are often against compilations, whether this is a form of musical snobbery or a hardcore dedication to a group's every song, I don't know.

Various Artist compilations are another source of conflicting emotions for me. I love the Best of the 1960s' albums, but find it peculiar that there are never any Beatles or Rolling Stones tracks – weren't they good enough? Pleasure is found in the



occasional instrumental rendition of my favourite tracks, such as Richard Clayderman plays the Sex Pistols on his piano, but Panpipe Moods can trigger feelings of homicidal insanity.

In my CD tower, I have a copy of The Best Rock Album in the World...Ever! Please note they used an exclamation mark, the words 'best' and 'ever', plus the claim 'in the world', so can I ask why a year later they released The Best Rock Album in the World...Ever! Vol. 2? Shouldn't that have been Best Rock Albums or Best Rock Album Series, or the sequel should have been titled The Second Best?

A friend once suggested a few reasons that bands regularly re-release greatest hits compilations, "Not only does it bring in more royalties, it reminds advert makers that they could use their song in a commercial and, most of all, it gives every up-and-coming boy band an idea of the song they should cover for their first hit single." Cynical, yet something rings true.

The Gender Awards

By Thanos Kalamidas

There are global awards like the Nobel Prize, there are continent awards like the Biennale Award, there are local awards like the Austrian Academy award and there are surreal awards like the Orange Award!

Awards are given to people for their achievements in literature, art, science, etc. the Orange Award is given once a year to a female author. The surrealism starts when only women can take this award from women judges and critics, with only women invited to the ceremony.

The Orange Award is the third most important literary award in Britain and celebrates its tenth anniversary this year in a dazzling ceremony that I'm sure emphasizes the need to reduce the distance between the two genders and bring social and literary justice.

Perhaps it is the women's revenge for all these years exiled from any kind of literature awards. Perhaps they had enough of men being awarded for describing how women feel. Perhaps there are too many reasons and the differences and the unfairness between the genders even in the beginning of the 21st century are still not solved.

The case is not to recognize the problem, the problem is here and we know it, the case is how you handle the problem and creating a close club of women who award each other is neither helping nor healthy. You cannot from one side say how unfair



the Booker Prize is because it is mainly given to men and then create a new prize given only to women.

Writing nowadays is something that men and women share equally and awarded equally. It has nothing to do with stereotypes, like men smoking cigars and women knitting, but awards such as the Orange Award only succeed in further isolating women.



'Appy Birtfday to Yah

While attending a friend's birthday recently I was once again forced to endure the painful recital of one of the worst songs ever written. Happy Birthday to You is a horrendous song that gets wheeled out at every opportunity by all age groups in the belief that it adds some extra cheer to the Birthday Hero's special day. You are wrong.

Happy Birthday is an uninspired four-line horror that merely repeats the same line three times and includes the unfortunate recipient's name in another. It also signals the arrival of another year, just like the extra candle on the cake. In all of my 26 birthday celebrations and all the parties I have attended, I have never heard a group of people perform the song with any melody, tone or actually together.

Albeit, the "sweet and wholesome" Marilyn Monroe sang gave President John F. Kennedy a loin-stirring rendition of the song for his 45th birthday, the song is a tough number to master, even though the words are simple enough for five-year-olds.

In addition to guests unable to do justice, depending on where and when it is performed, they should also pay royalties. In 'strange but true' fashion, Happy Birthday is copyrighted and the copyright is currently owned and actively enforced by Time Warner. The tune brings in more than USD \$2 million in annual royalties the copyright is now not due to expire until at least 2030.

Royalties should be paid if it is sung in a place open to the public, among a substantial number of people who are not family or friends or you are involved in a public performance of that work. Should you ever hear Happy Birthday performed in a movie then watch the closing credits and you'll see:

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY"

Written by Mildred J. Hill and Patty S. Hill

Used by permission of EMI Music Publishing Ltd/Keith Prowse Music Publishing Ltd



According to Boycott-riaa.com, the story begins as follows: Schoolteacher Mildred J. Hill and her sister Patty published the song's melody in 1893 in their book Song Stories for the Kindergarten, calling it "Good Morning to All." However, the Hill sisters didn't compose the melody all on their own. There were numerous popular nineteenth-century songs that were substantially similar, including Horace Waters's "Happy Greetings to All," published in 1858. The Hill sisters' tune is nearly identical to other songs, such as "Good Night to You All," also from 1858; "A Happy New Year to All," from 1875; and "A Happy Greeting to All," published 1885. Children liked the Hill sisters' song so much that they began singing it at birthday parties, changing the words to "Happy Birthday to You" in a spontaneous form of lyrical parody that's common in folk music.

Today, the melody has passed into the public domain, so you are safe to hum in public without permission, which was my point at the start. Next birthday please ask your guests to hum and avoid anybody thrusting cotton buds deep into their ear canal; failing that there is always, "For he's a jolly good fellow..."

<http://www.unhappybirthday.com/>
<http://www.boycott-riaa.com/article/print/15999>

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

Signet Classic paperback, 2000

By Thanos Kalamidas

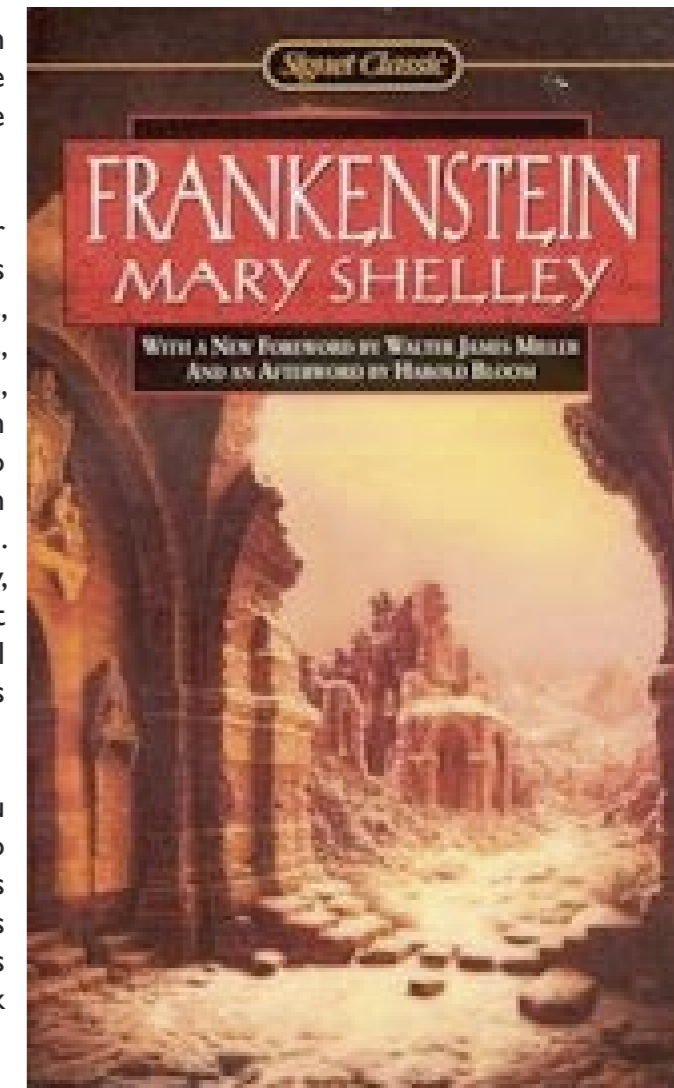
In 1816, the poet Percy Shelley and his wife Mary were enjoying a Swiss holiday with a group of friends, including Lord Byron, when the group decided to tell ghost stories to one another. Nothing particularly memorable came from the efforts of the rest of the group, except that Shelley's wife was unable to think of one. That same night she had a dream, put it to paper and Mary Shelley, aged 18, had given birth to the tale of Frankenstein.

Her characterization of Dr. Victor Frankenstein is a portrait of all those scientists who don't have any ethics when it comes to the success of their experimentations or theories. Victor's Creature represents all those victims who have to live with the effects. This

surprisingly modern tale would come to be called Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus.

Frankenstein later became books, cartoons and comics, films, parodies, examples, comedies, t-shirts, computer games, and, in the -90s, Robert de Niro played the Creature in another film version. Most importantly, Frankenstein is the first science-fiction novel for the friend of this kind of literature.

However, even if you have seen the film, do read the book. This classic drama contains all the twists and turns an Ancient Greek drama can give you.



Suomalainen sisustuskirja (Finnish Interior Book)

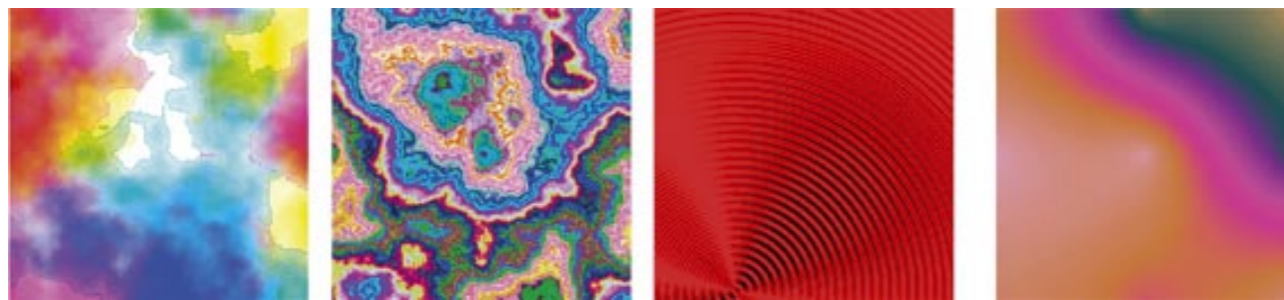
Otava, 2005

By Thanos Kalamidas

I know very little about interior design. For me a perfect house should have bookcases from wall to wall and I don't understand why the bedroom is so important, since you go there to sleep. I never understood why it is so important glasses need to be there and why blue curtains don't really match a brown sofa. Actually, this 'it doesn't really go there' kills me.

Anu Jokela is a Finnish interior designer with experience in the UK and her book introduces us to the Finnish world of interiors. There is a combination of minimalist styling and sense of the northern light, while showing that Finns have the right guts to make a book about interiors.

Even though the book is in Finnish, the photographs are worth examining to gain an insight into Finnish homes. If you can read Finnish then you'll get value for money by understanding the text. Don't just browse through it in the shop; buy a copy!



McIlvanney On Football

Hugh McIlvanney

Mainstream Publishing Co

(Edinburgh) Ltd, 1994



By Asa Butcher



Hugh McIlvanney is a craftsman. A painter of words, a sculptor of vocabulary and a metaphor magician. Page after page provided a concrete foundation for those goals, players and magical moments shown numerous times on the television, never meaning anything to somebody like me born in the late Seventies. Match Of The Day would ask viewers to pick their favourite World Cup goal but there was never any context for a maturing football supporter when choosing between Tostao and Bobby Charlton.

McIlvanney On Football has been 35 years in the making; the book collects together many of his greatest articles written for national newspapers, such as The Observer and The Sunday Times, during three decades of sports journalism. Hugh McIlvanney has steadily built a solid reputation among fellow journalists and has a kinship with giants of the game that is clearly reflected through his writing; his respect for particular players and managers cannot fail to rub off on the reader.

From his first piece on the 1960 European Cup Final at Hampden Park to the 1986 World Cup game between Uruguay and Scotland there is a generous sprinkling of all things Auld. McIlvanney is Scottish and having been bought up in the industrial West, he naturally has a place in his heart for others who grew up around the coalfields and down the mines of Lanarkshire and southern Ayrshire. His belief that Scotland produced three of the greatest

managers and most formidable individuals the game has ever known is hard to contend, when the trio are Sir Matt Busby, Bill Shankly and, the Big Man, Jock Stein. A bias continues when he highlights the wonders of the present generation of Scottish success stories with Alex Ferguson, Kenny Dalglish and George Graham topping his list.

'The Big Man and Other Giants' and 'World Cups' make up the two largest sections of the book, while a smaller section titled 'Issues' concentrates upon the darker aspects of the game. McIlvanney's interpersonal expertise is outstanding throughout the first section and has the ability to obtain the deepest insight of the interviewee or subject. In his article on Jimmy Greaves and his fight with alcoholism, 'Greaves gets by on his own spirit', the compassion of the journalist is prevalent. The high-esteem thought of this ex-player was summed up with his quote "when we say that British football is unlikely ever again to know the riches brought to it by Greaves...we are dealing in reality, not nostalgia."

Nostalgia is absent from McIlvanney's writing since the articles are a compilation of work previously published, however in his introduction he does state that he has always seen the game through his own eyes and not relied upon somebody else to interpret the game for him, like some journalists today. The rules that govern his writing are

self-imposed; there is common sense, justice in his methods and a preserved moral standard. Clichés are almost absent from the book, except for the piece on Bobby Moore's death when he remembers Moore exchanging shirts with Pele in 1970 recognising that, for them, brotherhood in sport had meaning.

The passing of a legend provoked McIlvanney to produce some of his best work and the pieces included portray the character of both the author and the deceased. Celebration of their lives was the key component, whether it was Stein, Shankly, Busby or Moore he knew how to elevate them above being a successful component of the game and champion them as a great human beings. His words could have been used as a eulogy at their funeral, of Sir Matt Busby he wrote, "he could be passionate about football without losing perspective about its place in relation to the deeper concerns of the heart."

Recognising the humanity of players and paying tribute to those who keep their feet on the ground and acknowledge their roots is prominent in the interview with the irrepressible Brian Clough, then manager of Nottingham Forest. The opening paragraph illustrates the difficulty of motivating Clough to talk about motivation, although he was quite happy to open his heart, offer a plain-spoken opinion on the subject that resulted in a very colourful article. McIlvanney's reputation in the world of soccer is powerful enough to be permitted, by Alex Ferguson, to be

the first to interview the young Ryan Giggs.

It comes as no surprise to learn that McIlvanney has been a regular winner of the prestigious Sports Writer of the Year, seven times no less, and has the unique distinction of being the only sports journalist to be voted Journalist of the Year, when you read literary genius such as the day Kenny Dalglish becomes a gusher of controversial quotes, stones will be queuing up to give blood transfusions, and of George Best's balance, it would have made Isaac Newton decide he might as well eaten the apple.

Following on from the profiles are a number of articles that examine the issues English and World football are facing. Following the Hillsborough disaster there were many knee-jerk reactions and an absence of common sense, however McIlvanney put forward a deeply intelligent feature that stirs the imagination and comments on society as a whole. One paragraph highlights the need for football as an escape from the drabness imposed by unemployment and poverty and from the terracing they can, for an hour or two at least, look down on Yuppiedom with unanimous contempt.

Rampant hooliganism, reckless and dangerous elbowing and Clive Thomas making his opinions about referees heard are all featured in the 'Issues' section, although taking the death of Graham Taylor's regime as an issue was one of the highlights. It took me a couple of minutes to compose myself after he wrote: "Let us remember that the favoured alternative to Palmer was not a Bobby Charlton or a Bryan Robson in his prime. It was Sinton, and anyone who believes his involvement from the

start would have caused England to seethe with penetrative ideas has seen something this watcher has missed."

Throughout his last section McIlvanney focuses on the World Cup dramas that have unfolded over the decades. Two of his best pieces involve England, the first was their 1966 World Cup final which was the first time I had ever read the match and the second was the 1970 match against Brazil in Guadalajara that seems to be an example of perfect football and sports reporting. Brazil appear to share a place in the author's heart with his native Scotland, they are accredited with playing the game beyond a professional standard and are depicted as Herculean in matches. When they played one another and Scotland lost 4-1, McIlvanney wrote in defense of the losers, "when Brazil is in an attacking mood a goalkeeper is liable to feel that his efforts are as futile as sticking brown paper on the windows during a nuclear attack."

Time after time the author has his finger on the pulse appropriate reaction and comments to World Cup events, he was disgusted by Uruguay's uncouth behaviour in 1986 describing them as 'having psychopathic paranoid tendencies', echoed the footballing opinion of this household that Shilton should have squashed Maradona, physically punched the ball out and never given God a chance, while his level-headed opinion on the press vilifying Bobby Robson for deciding to return working for PSV Eindhoven after the 1990 World Cup reminded us that the worst of the country's hooliganism has nothing to do with tattoos, beer bellies or Union Jack

singlets. World Cup profiles on figures such as Hagi and Romario provided depth to the headlines they usually garner on the sports pages as goal scorers, exhibiting their struggle to the top and their respective backgrounds.

One of the few criticisms that could be found with McIlvanney On Football was repetition of some of his favourite phrases that have been used over the years. His pet phrase seemed to be the reminder that over the past eight World Cup tournaments, England have won their way through only three qualifying series – it begins to get under your skin as an England supporter. I believe occasionally reading this would bring more enjoyment than ploughing through it in a couple of sittings.

Overall the book was an eye-opening read and provided a great deal of context to the football that has surrounded me since my first tentative years as a young football supporter. Now I have moved on beyond the need to memorise factoids and statistics, the soccer equivalent of the taxi drivers Knowledge. Beyond the Panini sticker album and recreating a Lineker goal at the park is the vibrant history, the tantalising folklore and gifted soccer legends that the game has produced over three decades, Hugh McIlvanney has, to quote part of his introduction, "raised my spirits and deepened my attachment to what I regard as the most beautiful and exhilarating of all team games."

Permission to Land:

The Darkness



2003 Warner Music

Throughout the history of music there have been albums that have changed the face of music and pushed the genre beyond its boundaries: The Beatles' *White Album*, Nirvana's *In Utero*, Queen's *A Night At the Opera*, The Eagles' *Hotel California*, REM's *Automatic for the People*, and countless more influential albums that have found a place in the public's heart. *Permission to Land* by The Darkness is certainly not one of those.

While most contemporary bands are quite happy to rehash an old hit or two from yesterchart and line the original artists pockets with more royalties this band have taken a different approach. The Darkness have drawn heavily on the super rock bands of the past, such as Queen, AC/DC, Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin and KISS – not bad influences I hear you say – which is why it such a shame that the album stumbles through the darkness.

From Justin Hawkins' opening pained warblings on 'Black Shuck' to the final track 'Holding My Own' he screams and wails throughout all ten tracks leaving anybody with a headache or migraine wanting to kill themselves by mid way. It is the castrato vocals that disappointed me and it was a crying shame because behind the screeching are some great melodies.

Justin also plays guitar, synthesizer and piano on the album, Ed Graham is on drums, Frankie Poullain plays bass and Justin's brother Dan plays lead guitar. Together they have recreated the style of genuine rock that has slowly disappeared from the charts because so many people seem to believe it only belongs to mulleted, leather-clad, low I.Q. hardcore rockers. The band obviously loves their musical influences and has managed to recreate a cheesy genre but play without any tongues in cheek.

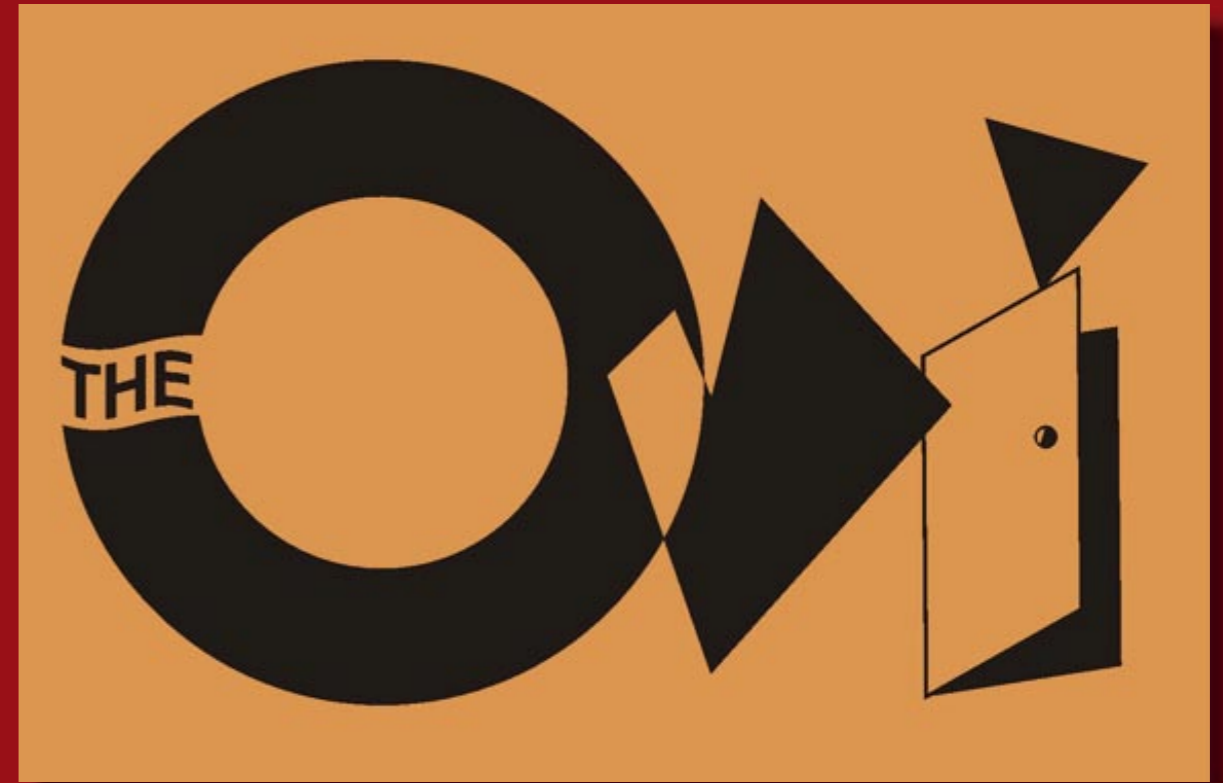
By Asa Butcher

Each of the ten tracks does offer something different, different isn't necessarily good, but different nevertheless. The opening track 'Black Shuck' promises to offer some real rock but then comes crashing down around our ears when Justin opens his mouth, while the next track 'Get Your Hands Off My Woman' allows packs of dogs to howl in unison. Track three 'Growing On Me' could be as close to a love song as The Darkness get but with lyrics like, "I won't have a life until you're dead" but I'm still in two minds.

Following the same music industry standard for every album, track four was the first track released as a single and is perhaps its one redeeming feature. It has a sing-along chorus, à la Bon Jovi, and the video that accompanied it was a real homage to Peter Frampton and his open-chested catsuit with tight leather trousers.

'Love is Only A Feeling' slows the pace down and allows Justin to sing within the human hearing range and the following track, 'Givin' Up', features the subject of heroin abuse and the rather pleasant line, "I'd inject into my eyes." 'Stuck In a Rut' provides Dan to get in on the action and perform some Slash-like guitar that will send air guitarists everywhere into fits of ecstasy, which is followed by 'Friday Night' which is actually quite a nice song and I am unsure how it ended up on this album.

Just as some doubt was beginning to enter my mind over the quality of *Permission to Land* the penultimate track 'Love On the Rocks With No Ice' kicked off and we plummeted straight back into Screechville: Population Dan Hawkins. The final track 'Holding My Own' wasn't offensive and wasn't a classic, it just signalled that the end of a mere 40 minutes of aural torture was in sight. The Darkness could be the antidote to the sugary crap dealt out by the pop ponces, sorry, princes and princesses but they need to turn the treble knob down and move into the light.



It was a beautiful sunny day, Adam went to play golf and Eve stayed at home, absolutely bored. There was nobody else around. She had no friends to call, no TV. She was alone in paradise. "Why the hell did that man think that every beautiful day is a good day to play golf?!" - she wondered.

Any woman in that situation would have done anything for a big bar of chocolate, but, instead, what she found was an apple tree. Around the apple tree, she found that strange super smooth-talking snake:

- Are you unhappy with what you see in your reflection on the water?! Doesn't that grape leave you wore last summer fit you anymore?! Have you tried everything without success? This is the opportunity to change the way you look, feel sexy and confident!!!

Eve was listening to the snake, with her eyes wide open.

- Our apples are carefully designed to get you in shape faster than any other thing you could eat. With just one apple, you can have enough fibre, protein and vitamins to keep you in the best possible shape! You know what they say: an apple a day keeps the doctor away!!!

- Forget the oranges and bananas! With a single apple, you can make delicious pies, refreshing juices and much, much more! No more seeds between your teeth, isn't it fantastic?! What are you waiting for?! It's yummy, it's red and it fits under your bed!! Get your apple now and you'll get this unbelievably smart sharp stone that cuts anything...

Cherchez la femme: The price of an apple



By Juliana Elo

You know the end...she got two for the price of one! Everything was all right to Adam, as long as she wouldn't be after him complaining that she wanted more attention. But later, when the Boss asked how he would pay for those apples, he put it on her back. Well, that's the end of paradise for them both. The saga of the apple still happens today, except now it's called the credit card.

Women's guilt is such an old story, but it's extremely profitable and men did their best to spread it into every culture, passing it from generation to generation.

In Greece, Pandora opened the box and spread all the evil of the world, but nobody blamed her husband Epimetheus for stealing the fire. In France, Jeanne d'Arc was accused of sorcery, but nobody burned Charles VII for being weak, while so many other women around Europe were burned during the Inquisition.

In Arabic countries, women are stoned to death when suspected of adultery, not the men. In Japan, it's mother's fault if the children aren't the best at school. In Finland, Anneli Jäätteenmäki was blamed to for using

secret documents that revealed what Paavo Lipponen had said to Bush about Finland being with the USA in the war against Iraq; strangely, she maintained her dignity and resigned. The whole world blamed Yoko Ono for the end of The Beatles and, here at home, every time my husband loses his things, among his own mess, it's my fault.

They say if there's a mystery that nobody can solve, a crime with no suspects left - Cherchez la femme! - Find the woman, because there might be a woman involved. It can be because of a woman, for a woman, or a woman herself. Sure! What else would take these so centred wise men out of their minds?

On the other hand, "Cherchez la femme" can be used in case somebody is not able to do something. Women might go to men when they need to open a jar, but if there's a harder problem: - Go and find the damn woman!

It's not easy to be a woman, but I must confess it is fun.

Mothers-in-law



By Thanos Kalamidas

Continuing my study of the human race, it came in front of a very special kind of species that I have to admit totally confused my special powers as an expert of the Schizoid- psycho- history, among other things. I tried to call the Pope thinking of him as an expert but I found out that he had moved to the next level; he became a saint or something like that anyway. Then I tried to call the philosopher Charlie but he was busy getting married. So, I ended up with some very interesting conversations with simple people.

One of the things I learned was that simple people have many stories for this species, for example: Gary was travelling down a quiet country road when he noticed a large group of people standing around outside a house. He stopped and asked a farmer why such a large crowd was gathered. The farmer replied, "Billy Bob's mule kicked his mother-in-law and she died." "I see," Gary said, "Well, she must have had a lot of friends." "Naw," the farmer replied, "We just all want to buy his mule."

The Mother-in-law is an overweight monster with a red nose and blue hair. She cooks well and her hobby is to eat sons or daughters-in-law. Nobody is good enough for her baby and even classic painters, like Leonardo da Vinci (known for his latest coded bestseller), had a MIL who'd hold a heavy rolling pin in her hand ready to hit any son or daughter-in-law who would dare stand in front of her.



It doesn't matter how much you try to keep away from her, even miles away she will find a way to come to your house. This proves that this monster has perfect olfaction. It doesn't matter what you do, she will never be happy and she will always have a good word for you in the end that makes you understand that all the murderers are not guilty. This shows that this monster has a perfect tongue, very pliant!

I suppose that if you are married, you have some knowledge about mothers-in-law, if you are not married, you are lucky. Keep it this way.

My best friend was explaining one night in a pub how wonderful his mother-in-law is. He actually said, "My mother-in-law is an angel!" The other friend smiled at him and added, "Lucky bastard, mine is still alive."

I SPY WITH MY EYE SOMETHING BEGINNING WITH K

By Asa Butcher

Knickers can get a man's blood pumping; sadly not to our entire body, but just one particular nether region. Knickers, panties, bloomers or the final obstacle, whatever you call them, are the sexiest material construction.

It doesn't matter if they are part of a lacy lingerie package from Victoria's Secret or the everyday cotton variety, they always demand attention. Girls seem to think that guys are only turned on by the tiny g-strings, which is not true. Our minds are purely focused on the gift within; ask any man what colour his lover's knickers were and the response will be a sheepish grin.

This stems from men never growing up. Kids don't care about the wrapping paper on the present, they just want to tear it open and play with it; men are just the same. As hormonally charged teenagers, we spent hours drooling over the underwear section of mail-order catalogues and not many of us were thinking of placing an order.

Once a guy finds himself in a long-term relationship, the inevitable happens and we find the illusions tumbling down around us. The shock of learning that girls do not wear this sexy underwear everyday and their drawers are not filled with erotica is a bitter disappointment. They complain about how thongs are uncomfortable and slowly chip away at our slutty fantasies.

At the bar, the guys are all sharing stories about past girlfriends who slid off their sexy Ann Summer's panties to reveal a ghastly stain, or while experimenting with knickers with a sexy little zipper they accidentally trapped tender flesh. More beer passes through our livers and more stories spill out, like tugging a girlfriend's tampon string as it snaked over the top of her underwear and then someone admits being caught by his mum trying some on.

Yes, female underwear is snug and I still claim that it was for a bet with my invisible friend, but that is not important. Debates rage in fashion magazines about VPL (visible panty line) and whether it is acceptable or a faux pas.

Personally, seeing any type of underwear on display reminds me of a building site – weird I know – but it girls are able to get away with these things more. Could you imagine how sexy a pair of beige Y-fronts hanging over the top of a pair of cords would look?

In the end, they are just another piece of clothing, but WHAT a piece! It is strange that the idea of wet t-shirts arouses but wet knickers are purely for the water sports crowd. If all this talk has left you with your knickers in a twist, then I suggest one course of action...go commando.

My Taiwanese friend Raymond

By Thanos Kalamidas

On the 13th of March this year, the President of China, Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party and head of the Chinese Army, Hu Jintao, wearing a full army uniform, called the army to be ready for a war in a televised message. On the 14th, a day after the Chinese Parliament voted a law that lets the government to use even force, if necessary, to stop Taiwan declaring its independence.

Taiwan is thousands of miles away. It is a very small country next to the biggest country. Mao Che Tung once said that if all the Chinese people hit their foot on the ground the same time the whole globe will shake. It is probably true. Then, there is a tiny island off the coast of China, with Chinese people, that wants to be free. Free from where? From their mother country.

They are the same people, with the same past, the same origins; they have been the same throughout their centuries if history. Their differences have built up over the last 60 years with a great deal of tension, bitterness and...politics. They have built up so much that they are ready for a war; a civil war.

In the mid-80s, I was working for an international company in Tokyo and I used to travel often to Taipei, Taiwan. Taiwan was at the top of their industrial miracle when all the world was full of 'Made in Taiwan' products. However, my most memorable visit to this city was my first.

A man called Su Lee Smith, I don't know if he would like to see his real name written, was waiting for me at the airport. Very politely in perfect English, he explained to me that because I'm a foreigner I could call him Raymond. I

thought he was making a joke, so my first reaction was to laugh. He wasn't joking, it is very important how you sound when you say something in Chinese; you might say one thing and mean another.

For fifteen days, Raymond became my guide and friend. We were in all kind of different meetings all day where he was my assistant and translator, and then he took me around Taipei. As we visited museums and monuments, he told me the history of Taiwan and, for a few evenings, we were joined by his wife and their fantastic four-year-old son.



My Taiwanese friend Raymond explained to me, or better painted with words, Chiang Kai-Shek's march out of main China, the strangle of the native population against Kuomintang, the move of a whole army and their families from China, following their nationalist leader Chiang Kai-Shek.

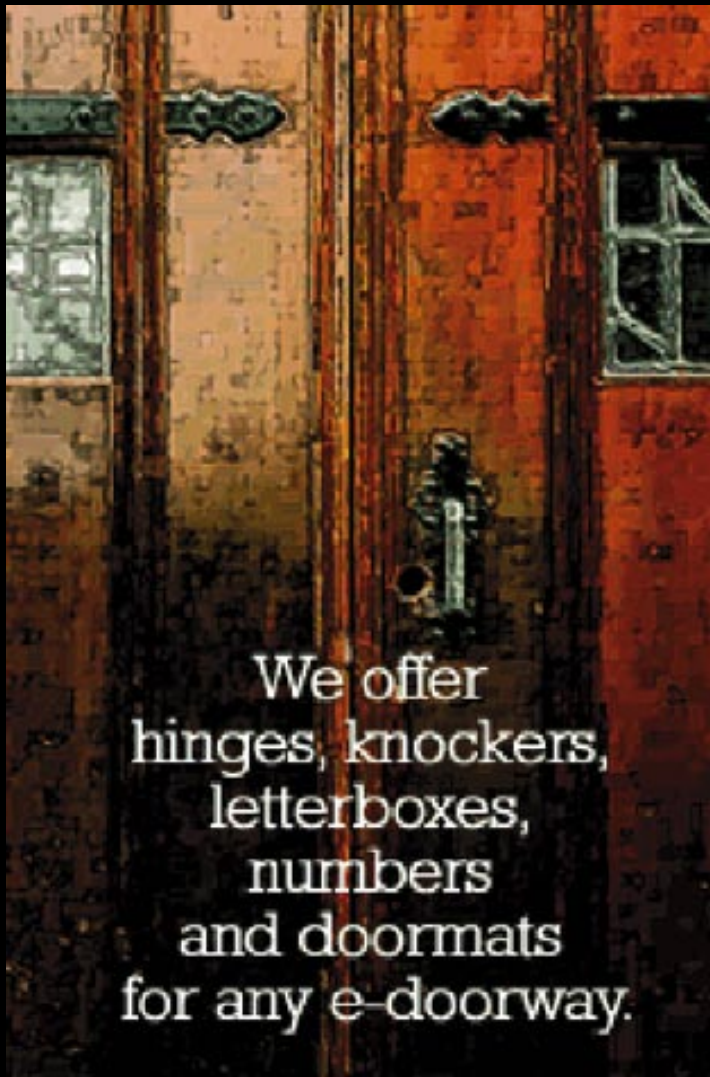
Chiang Kai-Shek was not the best example for a democratic leader. On the contrary, he and Kuomintang had an iron fist over Taiwan. Something

they kept until 2001. But back in the mid-80s, they were strong, very strong, and Chaing Ching-kuo, Chiang Kai Shek's son was the president. Taipei was holding the financial miracle and my friend Raymond was telling me that he couldn't communicate with his family back on the mainland.

His biggest dream was to visit Peking and see his lost family, his cousins and aunts. Aunts and cousins he knew only from his father's stories. His wife, a native Taiwanese with long roots on the island, shared her feelings for mainland China and, when I later met more Taiwanese, I learnt that they all shared the same contradicting feelings.

For the next three years, I've visited Taiwan at least four times a year. Every single time I met my friend Raymond and every single time I started a conversation he had to tell me something about Chiang Kai-Shek and every time I could see him getting sad thinking about his family on the mainland.

If these people, who love China so much, have so many memories and ties with the mainland are ready to start a war with China, aren't they worth their freedom and independence?



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