

"Sight"

RATE IT X

By Jennifer Sievers
Diversions

George considers himself an average businessman, well on his way to becoming a millionaire.

George's product is pornography, and judging from this television producer's financial success, cinematic sex sells.

As producer and star of cable television's "The Ugly George Show," George convinces young women on the street to undress for his audience in "dimly lit hallways."

"I put my product out on the market. If people like it, they buy it; if not, they don't," he says. "But it's obvious that as I put my show up the flagpole, many people salute it."

George is just one of many American men interviewed by feminist filmmakers Lucy Winer and Paula de Koenigsberg in the documentary film "Rate It X," which opens Thursday at Sheldon Film Theatre. Produced 15 years after the birth of the women's movement, the filmmakers uncover the strength of male chauvinism and acceptance of pornography in our country today.

The two women traveled throughout the country interviewing more than 20 chauvinistic males: corporate executives, a fundamentalist minister, a funeral parlor director and a cartoonist for Hustler magazine, about their beliefs and roles in the exploitation of women and sex.

Remaining in the background, Winer and de Koenigsberg refrain from narration and let their interview subjects carry the script.

Somewhat humorous, listening to pompous men trap themselves in narrow-minded and chauvinistic statements about women, the film is fun to watch without losing its serious tone.

As one elderly man stated: "Women do put out a lot more work than men. They do the type of work men don't want to do, like having

babies and cleaning the house."

A fundamentalist minister attests that God instills a submissive heart in women, a heart that only wants to please the man of her life.

In another interview, the owner of a clothing store proudly shows off his store's "prize" dressing room. Completely wallpapered in Playboy centerfolds, the owner admits that it's the greatest thing to hit his store. "The customers love this dressing room," he says. "Many times I have trouble getting them out."

An advertising executive agrees beautiful women and sex sell products. In his latest campaign, a blonde model draped in ermine is seductively posed next to a personal computer. When asked why the beautiful woman is the proper advertising tool, the smiling executive states that the product is top quality and so is the woman — her looks, that is.

"Advertising in America has always been inclined towards well-endowed, blue-eyed blondes," he says.

The 95-minute documentary slowly leads from the depths of male chauvinism and the mild forms of pornography to the harsh reality that exploitation of the female body is a thriving business.

From adult entertainment centers with female dancers and sexual products, to the neighborhood news stand selling pornographic magazines, to the latest sex video games, owners agreed that pornography is all about men's fantasies.

Even though the filmmakers realistically portray an alarming element of our society, the interview format is ineffective in keeping the audience's interest. The humorous remarks became redundant and the feminists' point that the male mentality hasn't changed is made within the first 30 minutes. But the point is well made — male chauvinism is still running strong.

My Beautiful Laundrette

By Scott Harrah
Diversions

England, the Mother Country. Fergie, Charles and Di. Trafalgar Square, adorned with pigeons and punks posing for tourists. Big Ben. The Beatles. Tea and crumpets at the Savoy. Old world charm and modern cosmopolitan icons like Boy George . . . Mods and fashion victims. Sid and Nancy . . . Buckingham Palace. Oxford. Double decker buses . . . Oscar Wilde and Westminster Abbey . . . Benny Hill . . . The Thames. . . The real Great Britain, right?

Unemployment, racism and poverty linger in the foggy British air with the onslaught of Thatcherian discontent. The draconian stench of King George and all his idiocy still wafts throughout the minds of the British upper crust, tossing bigotry and tyrannical ardor to the working class masses.

The dark, often unmentioned side of England forms the cinematic focus of Stephen Frears' highly acclaimed seriocomic "My Beautiful Laundrette."

Many critics hailed this incisive look at the working-class dregs of South London as one of 1986's finest films. The reason? Its potent use of the sociological understatement.

The film's thematic backdrop is a bleak one — punks and low-lives wait around on the streets, broke, bored and waiting to smash someone or something for a thrill. However, Hanif Kureishi's screenplay grasps for some light and humor among all the ashes, adding jocular energy to some very disturbing circumstances.

The plot is suffused with blatant realism. Omar (Gordon Warneke) is a young Pakistani who is trying to nurse his bedridden father, a former left-wing journalist, back to sobriety. In an effort to pull Omar out of the cultural abyss, his father tries to send him to college but winds up getting him a job at his brother's garage. His brother is a product of Thatcher's capitalism and has become a millionaire, thanks to a variety of shifty enterprises and scams.

The brother takes Omar and puts him in charge of a run-down laundrette, (the British word for a laundromat.) Omar hires his former schoolmate Johnny (Daniel Day Lewis) to help him run the place. At this point, the two engage in a secret homosexual love affair with a double taboo tacked on it. Johnny, a handsome punker, starts to date Omar regularly, and the fact that his mate is a Pakistani (England's most hated people) adds more controversy to the scene. But don't get the wrong idea. This isn't a gay movie and there are no sequences in which the film tries to make some cogent argument for the toleration of homosexuality. Instead, it's a story about outcasts, members of Britain's lowest social order. The film's political acumen uses the characters to illuminate the lives of the country's downtrodden poor; it doesn't attempt to preach or spin moral parables.

Omar and Johnny decide to renovate the place and turn it into The Powder's Laundrette, a gleaming yuppie palace filled with enough chic decor, muzak and amenities to satisfy the snobbish members of London's fashionable West End set.

During the opening of the Laundrette, punks stand outside, impatiently waiting to get into the new establishment, while the Pakistani godfather and his mistress dance to the Muzak and the whirl of the spin dryers. Meanwhile, in the back of the room, Omar and Johnny are getting it on.

When Omar gets caught he explains that he and the boy were merely lying down and resting before the celebration. It's small comic touches like these that keep the film from being too heavy, sermonistic or melodramatic.

The ending is tragic, but the simplicity of the boys lives and their intentions triumph over loss and hardship, helping them to move towards a more realistic view of themselves and their country. Anyone who wants to see the real England will find this film a unique, brooding and curiously funny look at the purported lower depths of the class system.

the funny page



Wendell Luebke/Daily Nebraskan

Fable John Presents THE Internal Organs.



John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan

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MONDAY, JANUARY 26th, 3:00 PM
TUESDAY, JANUARY 27th, 7:00 PM

Qualifications

- Strong commitment to helping students in a residential setting.
- Sophomore class standing or above as of Fall Semester 1987
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- Normal academic course load
- No outside employment
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Benefits

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