

Questions & Answers

From time to time Cwg receives questions referring to topical and/or important issues of the day. This week we share with you some of these questions and the answers we provided to our readers.

Q. Is there only one Amol Rajan?

M. Figgis (Mrs.), Bromley-But-Not-By-Bow.

A. Dear Mrs. Figgis,

We assume you are asking this question because Amol has a prolific body of work, (The Independent, Independent on Sunday, London Evening Standard, BBC Asian Network, Radio 2, 'The Today Programme' on Radio 4, 'The One Show', current Podcasts with Nick Robinson, quiz master on University Challenge (he was Captain on the celebrity Christmas version in Dec 2020 representing Downing College Cambridge who unfortunately lost in the first round to Durham University) Radio 4 series on the current economic crisis, etc, etc, etc.) It is difficult to believe therefore that one man can be so ubiquitous and we suggest he has an avatar.

Q. What is an avatar? Mrs. Figgis.

A. A persona created by Artificial Intelligence.

Q. What is Artificial Intelligence? Mrs. Figgis.

A. Please refer to a session on the subject run by the computer group SELu3a very recently.

Q. Shakespeare is interested in the phenomenon of how couples defeat insurmountable obstacles within their respective relationships ('Taming of the Shrew', 'As You Like It', 'Henry V' et al) and how existing marriages ('Macbeth', 'Othello', 'Antony and Cleopatra' albeit not strictly speaking a marriage) all go disastrously wrong. Does the fact that Shakespeare never depicts long-established happy marriages in his work suggest he wasn't very happily married himself? If one examines in detail.....

Prof. Ivor Largenumberofbraincells St. John's Colleges Oxford and Cambridge.

[This question has been edited for reasons of space]

A. Quite possibly.

Q. My cat whom we have called Milton because he, like the famous C17th poet, is blind, can however, it appears, see in the dark as indeed can many species in the animal kingdom. How can humans equip themselves to see in the dark also?

Sir David Attenborough c/o BBC

A. Buy a torch.

Q. Is Dr. Michael Mosley really a doctor? He keeps changing his advice to us each week about just one thing we can do to boost our health and I am very confused.

Perplexed of Penge.

A. Michael Mosley *is* a doctor.

And finally....

Q. With the panto season upon us please can you suggest a suitable entertainment for 2 impressionable daughters that would illustrate strong feminine traits of independence, capability and dignity in the face of difficulties we women face in the modern world?

Boudica, Queen of the Iceni. East Anglia.

A. Thank you your Royal Highness for a very interesting question. Cinderella is perhaps not a good role model as she appears desperate to get married to a handsome prince who is well-connected and loaded. Jack's mother in 'Jack and the Beanstalk' does not cope well with life's vicissitudes. Her son is somewhat out of control and trades the family cow for some magic beans (LSD?) which his mother throws out of the window in a fit of unrestrained pique resulting in a Safeguarding issue and her young son having to take charge himself and cut down the offending vegetation before equilibrium is restored and he can provide for his mother in her old age. (Cue: Everything's Comin' Up Roses.) Old Mother Hubbard and Mother Goose too refer respectively to powerless women who cannot put food on the table or in the case of Hubbard in the dog bowl, and starvation ensues. In the case of Mother Goose she displays a somewhat feckless attitude to life whereby a belief is held that 'something will turn up (in this case a golden egg) without much effort being displayed to acquire it and that all will somehow be well.

Therefore perhaps the best panto to which you can take your daughters would be 'Aladdin'. It contains the iconic figure of Widow Twankey' who in our view ticks all the boxes. She is usually played by a man* illustrating cross-gender role acceptability in the C21st, it is set in the past in the Middle East (although probably originally in China), and she is a supportive single mother to Aladdin and his older brother Wishee Washee who is lazy and a bit dim although in her eyes just as loveable as her more driven and ambitious younger son. She herself toils tirelessly running a laundry business and despite hardship and numerous challenges manages to keep up appearances as a glamorous and positive thinking-woman, allowing her family to prosper. What's not to like?

*Please note some of the outstanding actors who have brought the character to our theatres- DannyLaRue (1978), Les Dawson (1981), John Inman (1991), Ian McKellen (2004), Christopher Biggins (2005).

If you have a question for Cwg please send in to:
marlenejmitchell@yahoo.co.uk and we will endeavour to provide you with an answer.

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