



Aaron Sullivan Illustration

Woody Allen directs and stars in the satirical 1972 comedy 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex\* But Were Afraid to Ask.'

## Woody Allen film tackles sex education with humor

Comedy about the opposite sex provides memorable cinema

RYAN NYBURG  
PULSE EDITOR

Sex is a dicey subject. It is a basic human activity, yet one many people, in this culture especially, have a lot of trouble with. To this end, an undue number of books have been released through the years that try to deal with the topic of sex in such a way as to

### FORGOTTEN FILMS

make it less mysterious and more scientific. At their best, these books can be informative and helpful. At their worst they can be prudent exercises in the condemnation of "deviant" behavior.

I don't know which side of the fence David Reuben's "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex\* But Were Afraid to Ask" falls on,

as I have never read it. But familiarity with the book is hardly a requirement necessary to enjoy Woody Allen's "adaptation" of it. The filmed version of the book, released in 1972, is an anthology of seven short pieces by Allen arranged as answers to the questions posed in the book, such as "What is Sodomy?" and "What Are Sex Perverts?"

While adapting a sexual-education guide into a film is a bizarrely interesting idea, Allen's satire does not end there. Each short piece is in itself a satire of a different filmmaking style or genre. As a whole, the pieces mock common notions of sex and sexuality.

The film opens with the light "Do Aphrodisiacs Work?," a satire of medieval castle dramas. Other than some good digs at Shakespearean dialog, the short is nothing more than a passable exercise of Allen's neurotic persona. It's the weakest short in the film, but it is soon forgotten after the powerhouse sketches that follow.

The second short is the first to really grab you. Entitled "What is

Sodomy?," it concerns a New York City doctor (played by the wonderfully twitchy Gene Wilder) who through an odd occurrence ends up in love with a sheep. Here the writing is strong enough to allow Allen to riff on the absurdity of the situation itself without having to satirize a particular style. It also contains some terrific dialog: "The defendant did commit an adulterous act with a sheep. Most distasteful in view of the fact that the sheep was under 18 years old."

The next short is one of Allen's best works as comedic filmmaker. "Why Do Some Women Have Trouble Reaching An Orgasm?" is a satire of the often self-possessed Italian cinema of the 1960s, in particular Michelangelo Antonioni and Bernardo Bertolucci. Done entirely in a mangled Italian, it deals with a newlywed couple's sexual problems, specifically the wife's frigidity.

The short works both as satire and as a piece of cinema in its own right. It also contains some of the most patently absurd dialog ever filmed,

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## Bill Clinton's autobiography may bore readers with its length

The former president's new book, 'My Life,' lacks an emotional bond

STEVEN R. NEUMAN  
FREELANCE REPORTER

There are apparently two kinds of books in this world, and that division is not made on the basis of fiction or non-fiction, nor is it partitioned along the lines of paperback or hardcover. There are presidential autobiographies and then there is everything else. President Bill Clinton's new book, "My Life," falls squarely into the first category, but it sacrifices a lot of charisma to be there. Surprisingly, the book, unlike Clinton, is terribly dull, and at 957 pages it may be the only current bestseller less accessible than the Bible but just as thick and heavy.

### BOOK REVIEW

For the most part, "My Life" disappoints. With an enigmatic and particularly powerful orator as its author, the reader expects a tome with a more invigorating tone. Instead, Clinton's words languish in overblown prose. It's hard to get a sense of the voice of the novel, because it clashes so violently with the passionate voice the reader expects from Clinton.

First and foremost, the book is a detailed account of Clinton's life. It is understandable then that it would revel in

the intricate details, but this is truly where the book falls flat. Unfortunately, he makes no distinction between important details and banal ones. Beginning at the very beginning, with his birth in 1946, Clinton is remarkably candid about his youth and his sometimes fractured family life. His accounts of his unconditional love for his stepfather and his strong but fragile mother, who weathered him through tough times, can be charming. But "My Life" gives off a very distinct impression that it is a collection of nebulous memories that have been Scotch-taped together, rather than crafted as a whole.

Those interested in a fly-on-the-wall view of presidential politics will be sorely disappointed. The second half of the book dedicates itself to discussing Clinton's work as president. While "My Life" doesn't have the Tom Clancy whiz-bang excitement Clinton's former advisor George Stephanopoulos packed into his 2000 Clinton exposé "All Too Human," it does put a human spin on the very nature of presidential decisions. Clinton's willingness to relay his recollections of emotional moments that proved pivotal in his presidency is one of the best features of the book. It is the first portion, however, which highlights his tenure as governor of Arkansas and his rarely discussed early political work, that delightfully provides insight to the better-known national politician.

The often-discussed Kenneth Starr-bashing isn't nearly as

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