

The image features a minimalist abstract design. A thick black vertical bar runs down the left side. A horizontal black line crosses the page, with a yellow square positioned above it on the left. On the right side, there is a yellow square at the top and a thick black vertical bar extending downwards. The text is located in the lower-left quadrant.

A Dream Of Gaza

Gavin Kitching

A DREAM OF GAZZA.

A PLAY

by

Gavin Kitching.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

'THE LAY OFF'

An academic's office, any university anywhere, mid-1990s. George Robson, a lecturer, early middle age, over weight, bearded, balding, is sitting reading at his desk. There is a knock at the door.

G. Yes, enter!...Ah...er...Yusuf...good to see you. Come in, come in.

A young Pakistani man enters, he quasi salaams and enters the room in a semi-crouch. He smiles dazzlingly but defensively.

Y. It is time doctor?

G. Time? Time for what? Er.. .what time is it?

Y. No, I mean it is time for our meeting,...we arranged...

G. Oh, oh yes of course, our meeting. Was it today?...Yes of course it was.. .our meeting...yes of course. Well do come in, make yourself comfortable. Oh yes, just move that stuff.

Yusuf removes a coat, some papers and a few books from a battered chair and sits down nervously, smiling the while.

Y. You have read it then doctor?

G. Read it?...er... read it...er...oh yes of course...I have it here somewhere.

George rummages on a large desk piled high with papers, books, half-eaten sandwiches, various dirty plastic cups. There is also a phone and a computer in there somewhere. Eventually he pulls out a sheaf of papers.

G. Ah yes, here it is. Went through it again just this morning actually. Quite promising I thought, though I do think you will need to situate this rather detailed discussion somewhat more broadly for the reader, I mean even your examiners are not likely to be too familiar with the ins and outs, as it were, of the Damascus water supply system.. .eh? I mean a bit of historical and geographical background to the problem wouldn't go amiss, I thought perhaps...

Y. No doctor.

G. No?...Why not?..I mean even your examiners, learned as they may be, cannot be expected...

Y. Not my writing Doctor, not my subject. I am Yusuf Mohammed doctor "The Problem of Kashmir in Pakistan/ India Relations". Not Damascus water supply. That is the work of Ahmad Mohammad.

G. Not...no not...of course not..."The Problem of Kashmir"...yes indeed...Just a moment.

More rummaging. This time the desk yields nothing, but after a subsequent search in an overstuffed brief case another sheaf is produced. There is butter on the front page. George wipes it off, or rather on.

G. Had it at home last night...You know what small children are like Yusuf, get everywhere, into everything.

Y. Yes of course doctor. No problem. You read?

G. Yes, I did read it Yusuf...that is, I tried to, but it was...er... a little difficult.

Y. Difficult! But doctor I tried to make it easy as possible.

G. No, not difficult in that sense Yusuf, not substantively as it were. It is rather more a question of your English Yusuf. It is sometimes, indeed quite often, difficult to be sure what you are saying. Take for example

just the title of your chapter “International Relation: A Realism and Norman Approach”...Now there are a number of errors simply in that one line. In English we speak of “International Relations” - the plural form. One could speak of course of “an international relation”, meaning perhaps a maiden aunt in Majorca...

G. laughs. Y looks puzzled. G stops laughing

G. . .er yes.. .But aside from that, we use the plural form in this context precisely to stress the plurality of forms of relations between states, the very plurality with which we are concerned in the study of international relations.. .relations Yusuf.

Y. Plurality of forms?

G. Yes indeed.

Y. But I am not concerned with forms.

G. Oh yes you are Yusuf, you are, we - and you are part of ‘we’ in this context Yusuf - all are in this...er...area of study.

Y. No!

G. No?

Y. No! Forms...they are for bloody bureaucrats. So many bloody bureaucrats in our country. I not a bureaucrat, I a scholar...forms no!

G. No No Yusuf. Not forms in that sense, forms in a more abstract sense, “forms of relations” means here “types of relations” or perhaps “different kinds of relations”, (not including maiden aunts of course).

G laughs again. Y still looks puzzled. G stops laughing.

G. And then you say “a realism and norman approach”. Now in the first case that should be “realist”, “realist” Yusuf, not realism. Realism is the noun form. Here you require the adjectival form “realist” qualifying the noun “approach”.

Y. No.

G. Oh yes I'm afraid so, believe me...

Y. No! our English teacher tell us there are no cases in English.

G. Cases?

Y. Yes, you said "in the first case", but there is no first case in English, Mrs White tell us...no cases...a great simplify.. .she said.

G. No, I don't mean cases in that strict grammatical sense Yusuf. I just meant that. ..that....there are two mistakes in the latter part of your title Yusuf and "realism" was the first of these. "Norman" of course was the second.

Y. Yes, yes, I remember, "norman" is not right. I made a mistake, stupid mistake.

G. Ah good Yusuf. ..I mean...er. . .good that you have recognised a mistake here. So what should it be, not "norman" but...?

Y. Normal.

G. No No Yusuf. Not "norman" or 'normal" but "normative". "Normative" here meaning "to do with norms or standards". Of course (*he laughs again*) one could I suppose have a "norman" approach to international relations but I don't think it quite fits the spirit of the modern age. Bit too crudely imperialistic if you know what I mean!

G likes his own joke. Y does not. G stops laughing.

G. Er...er...yes. But this does raise a more substantive issue Yusuf. Normally a realist approach to international relations is thought of as very different from, indeed as hostile to, a normative approach. How exactly would you hope to make them compatible Yusuf? Because the conjunction "and" does suggest an unproblematic compatibility.

Y. No, not "normative", "normal". "Normal" is right, you said so.

G. I said so?

Y. Yes you said “normally a realist approach”. So that is what I want, a normal realist approach.

G stares at Y. Y once again smiles dazzlingly.

G. Er, yes. ..Yusuf.. .I wonder whether I am really the right person to be supervising your..er...your...er... dissertation. I wonder..er. ..did you see Mr. Wolstenholme as I suggested? As I said to you last time, I’m an economist. International relations is not really my field. Mr. Wolstenholme on the other hand is centrally concerned with international relations and especially with international security issues. I’m sure he would be the perfect person. Did you see him?

Y. Yes.

G. And what did he say?

Y. Mr. Wolsteholme said he thought my thesis topic very interesting...

G. Ah, there you are you see.

Y. But unfortunately he very busy.

G. Yes, well we’re all very busy!

Y. And he say he know nothing about India, only Nato. My thesis is not about Nato. He say you departmental specialist on India.

G. Did he indeed! Yes, well as I’ve said Yusuf I do have a certain interest in the Indian sub-continent, but only from an economic point of view. Your kind of topic, though fascinating of course, isn’t really my province. I wonder if I gave Mr. Wolstenholme a ring myself personally, explained the position as it were, I’m sure we could arrange something to our mutual benefit and to your benefit Yusuf, that is the point.... Now let me see... (*he looks vaguely round the desk*)...What is his extension?

At this point there is a knock at the door and a young woman pushes it open slightly and peers anxiously into G’s office.

Young woman. Oh you are in George. I wondered if I could just...Oh I’m sorry you’re busy. (*She makes to withdraw*).

G. Oh no Susan come on in. I'm sure Yusuf won't mind a short interruption. Come on in, come on.

The young woman enters.

G. What can I do for you Susan? Yusuf, this is Susan Carey, Dr. Carey, our new recruit from ANU. Susan, please meet Yusuf Mohammad from Pakistan, a doctoral student of mine.

Y stands up and Y and S shake hands, exchange greetings etc.

G. Well what is it Susan?

S. Oh nothing of any real urgency. Just a few queries about these result sheets you gave me to fill out. I can always come back later.

G. Oh no dear girl. Let's clear it up now. I know how difficult it is being a newcomer, not knowing the ropes and all that. What do you need?

S. Well the first thing is these student ID numbers. I need a complete list.

G. Student ID numbers for "Politics and Post-Modernism". Should be on a print out in the file.

G. goes to the filing cabinet and immediately finds the relevant file. Unfortunately the print out isn't in it. He rummages in other files, turning occasionally to give reassuring smiles and/or to mutter to himself. At last he gives up.

G. Well I really don't know where they can be. Should be in that bloody file...Anyway Susan I'm sure that Ann in the office will have a copy on file. Pop down there I should for that. Anything else?

S. Yes well there are a few marks here on your list (she produces a mangled piece of paper) that I can't quite decipher. For example here "Roberts JK". Is that a B++? or just a B+? And here "Marshall W.P" Is that a C+ or a D+?

G. Oh, oh...*(he peers at the paper)*...I'm not quite sure myself I'd have to check the original essays...Now let me see. They are here somewhere. *(He looks vaguely around the room)*. I think one of these

boxes. (He rummages again. Again to no avail).

S. Er look...Never mind George I'll come back later when you're less..
..er... occupied. It's wrong of me to interrupt your discussion with Mr.
Mohammad like this.

G. Er...what? Oh yes, perhaps, all right Susan. Sorry not to be of more
help.

S. It's all right George. I'll speak to you about it later. Pleased to meet
you Mr. Mohammad.

She makes to leave.

G. Oh Susan, just a minute. You're in international relations aren't
you?

S. Yes.

G. Yusuf, I think we may have had a stroke of luck here. I had
forgotten about Dr Carey's recent appointment. I cannot think of a
more appropriate person to help you.

S. What?

G. I should explain Susan. Mr. Mohammad is just in the first stages of a
thesis on "The Problem of Kashmir in Pakistan-Indian Relations" and
although I have been provisionally acting as his supervisor I really do
not feel that I am best suited to his needs...just an old economist you
know. Whereas he really needs, and deserves, the guidance of a true
international relations specialist, someone who really knows his field.
Someone like yourself.

S. His field? I'm not working in his field.

G. Well you have just obtained your doctorate in international relations
Susan...And an outstanding one I may say Yusuf . I was privileged to
see some of the examiners' reports on Dr. Carey's work.. .absolutely
outstanding.

S. I would hardly call a thesis on "The Growth of a Committee
Secretariat in the Group of Eight" 'the same field' as Indian-Pakistan
relations!

G. Well perhaps not in a narrow technical sense, but in a generic teaching department such as this we have all got to be flexible. Yes, flexibility, a non-dogmatic, non-sectarian, open, fluid approach to learning. That has to be our watchword Susan. Certainly always been mine. And in any case did you not say at your interview that you were very interested in multicultural matters?

S. In multicultural education in Australia, yes.

G. Well then here is your chance, a multicultural teaching opportunity in an international relations subject which has itself - has it not Yusuf? - a multicultural dimension. What could be more...er...multicultural...than India and Pakistan after all?

S. Yes, well, perhaps, I don't know....

G. Good, fine. Well that's settled. Yusuf I should go along with Dr. Carey now, and take your .er. . . latest draft chapter to show her. Meanwhile I'll pop along to the office and get you formally reassigned to Dr Carey's care. Go along now the both of you. No point in wasting valuable discussion time sitting a round with an old fogey like me. (*He ushers them both toward the door*).

S. George, Dr Robson, I'm not at all sure...

G. I know, I know. It's always a little nerve racking, one's first doctoral charge and all that, but you'll soon get the hang of it. Yusuf here is an...er...enthusiastic and diligent student. And of course if you need any help or advice don't hesitate to ask. Always here...

S. Yes but...

G. Oh come along Susan. But me no buts. This is a first class professional opportunity for you. Just what's needed for the old career development.

S. Is it? Oh I suppose so...er...thank you.

G. Not at all, not at all.

George closes the door on both of them then returns to his chair and, beaming happily, puts his hands behind his head and his feet on the desk. Meanwhile S and Y are in conversation just outside the door.

S. Er...well you've just started then?

Y. In 1991 I come yes.

S. 1991!

Y. Yes, yes...Dr Carey...

S. What?

Y. Are you married?

The scene should finish with a real time and slow motion replay of Gazza's cross field pass to Platt in the England-Czechoslovakia match at Wembley (1991?)

ACT TWO
SCENE ONE

'THE DRIBBLE'

A departmental staff meeting, Professor Alec Watson in the chair, a gaggle of others, including Susan Carey and George Robson, around the table.

AW. Very well, let's get started. Any apologies? *(He looks around)*. The usual. Your turn for minutes George? *(George nods)*. Can we take the last lot as read and accepted? Good. So let's get down to it. I have another meeting at 2p.m. so I want to be brisk. First item, teaching loads. I think that's yours Felix.

F. Yes thank you Alec. Well as you probably all remember this goes back to a meeting early in the session when Jennifer *(he smiles in her direction)* raised the matter of the weight attached to marking in our current system. As you can see in the paper I circulated... *(There is a scrabbling in files, some come up with the paper)*... the current weight is 0.2 of a point for every hour spent marking. This means of course that five hours must be spent marking simply to earn one point. Jennifer suggested, if you remember, that this was anomalous given that we award two points for any subject requiring two hours of lectures weekly irrespective of the number of students taking that subject and irrespective of whether the lectures are newly prepared or simply repeated material. She felt therefore that the weight accorded to marking should be increased and Alec came up with the idea of a sub-committee of Jennifer and myself to look into the whole question. This we have done and our paper was pre-circulated. As you can see our suggestions are as follows:
(1) That the weight for marking remain at 0.2 for the first 4 hours, but that it be raised on a sliding scale for all marking in excess of four hours, as follows
(a) 4-6 hours 0.3 of a point
(b) 6-8 hours 0.4 of a point
(c) All marking over 8 hours 0.5 of a point per hour.
However we also feel that extra weight should be accorded for particular kinds of marking in accord with the following formula...er...

G. Felix, I'm having a little difficulty getting this all down old fellow. I wonder could you go a little slower.

F. There is no need for you to get it down George. It's all in the paper.

G. Ah yes the paper. I wonder...

AW. Here's one George *(He pushes a sheet of paper at GR)*.

G. Oh, thank's Alec. In my file somewhere.. .sorry.

A neatly besuited and bespectacled middle-aged man in a bow tie raises his hand to speak. It is Henry Dobson, the departmental patriarch and reactionary.

W. Yes Henry.

H. As all the details are in the paper Alec, and as it has been pre-circulated, perhaps we could forego Felix's formal presentation, excellent though I'm sure it will be, and proceed direct to the discussion of the principles involved.

AW. I was thinking that myself Henry. It would save time and time is already pressing. Any objections Felix?

F. (*huffily*) What? Oh I suppose not...

AW. Good. Then you have something to say Henry?

H. Yes Alec. Frankly I see not the slightest need for any of the changes being proposed in this paper. Our current formula for assigning teaching duties was arrived at after extensive discussion and seems to me to work perfectly satisfactorily. Marking is a necessary part of our duties and is adequately rewarded under the current formula. I certainly do not find any inequity or problem with marking loads in my own case.

Jennifer (*muttering*) Of course you don't. Your bloody Phd students do most of it.

H. I beg your pardon?!

J. Nothing.

H. May I continue uninterrupted Alec? Good....Moreover, it seems to me that any formula for assigning teaching duties must clearly distinguish between those aspects of our work requiring experience, painfully acquired expertise and genuine intellectual creativity and those which, however time consuming, are largely a matter of routine. Our current formula recognizes this in the greater weight assigned to lecture preparation and delivery... .

J. Ha!

H. What!

J. I said Ha!

H. Alec I really must protest!

AW. Jennifer, either make the point you wish to make in a proper way or be quiet until Henry has finished.

J. Very well Alec. I will make my point properly. Henry talks about lecture preparation and delivery. That however assumes that there is some new preparation involved, that the same set of lecture notes are not being recycled for the twentieth or twenty-fifth time.

H. Are you implying that I do not update my courses?!

J. I am not implying it I am stating it.

H. Alec am I to stand here and be insulted by...by...junior members of staff, driven by...by...fanatical, indeed hysterical ideologies, who come up with these kind of proposals to avoid the proper work load which they were appointed to do and which is a necessary stage in their.. .their. . .apprenticeship in our profession.

J. A necessary stage in the exploitation of women's labour you lazy, pompous old windbag!

General fluttering around the table. AW intervenes.

AW. That's enough Jennifer. Henry I think we have heard enough to understand your general point. Has anyone else got anything they wish to say?

Philip Rogers, the departmental positivist and statistician, raises his hand.

AW. Philip yes.

P. Well personally I feel some sympathy with Jennifer's position (*he smiles at J.*), but I can also sympathize with Henry's anxieties (*he smiles at H.*). I was thinking therefore that a solution agreeable to all might be found by some slight amendments to the formula proposed by

Felix (*he smiles at Felix*) and Jennifer in their paper. The formula I have in mind uses the well known Wilkinson's derivation principle in which an index of difficulty for any task can be derived by first dividing that task into its component parts, weighting the components and then obtaining a dual purpose duration/difficulty index. So for example in the case of marking one could divide the task into, say, a reading component, a comprehension component and a comment or grading component. One then simply gives an agreed weight to each of these either for all our marking, or, if one wishes, for each different marking task, and then multiplies this index weight by standard hour units. To give you an idea of what I mean I have prepared this specimen paper. I'll just pass it round...

Philip's paper has its due anaesthetizing effect. The room goes quiet and all stare gloomily at their sheets of paper as Philip drones on and on and on. The stage should go dark and a large screen show Gazza's wonderful penalty area dribble against Belgium in the 1990 World Cup George smiling beatifically into space. It should be repeated three or four times in slow motion as well as real time. Then it should disappear abruptly and the stage be relit.

J. What!

P. I said "the final application of this formula produces the following results, 0.232 of a point for the first four hours of marking, then..."

J. I heard what you said, and I can also read Philip. What this amounts to is a difference of somewhere between three and eight hundredths of a point from the formula which Felix and I proposed!

P. Well, yes, roughly. On these component weights, which, as I stressed are simply personal and provisional...

J. Is that what we have listened to you for...for...25 minutes to get to?!

H. Yes Alec I do think Philip's efforts, although... er. . .admirable in their own way, don't really address the point of principle here.

P. Well really. I was just trying to be helpful. This paper took me all last night to prepare. Marjorie wasn't pleased I can tell you, we were supposed to be...

AW. Yes, well, thank you Philip. I'm sure we are all deeply grateful for your efforts. I'm sure George will take full note of your paper in the

minutes, won't you George.

G. What?

AW. I said, I'm sure Philip's statistical efforts will be well reflected in the minutes.

G. Statistical efforts?...er yes of course. ...fascinating...yes. . just let me have a copy after the meeting will you Philip?

P. It's there in front of you George.

G. In front of me? Where? Oh yes fine. I'll make sure it gets...er...its full weighting of all its component parts...eh? (*He smiles around the table. Nobody is amused*)... in the...er.. .minutes.

AW. Thank you George. Well since the hour is up, I can suggest nothing other than that we return to this issue at the next meeting, and the other...er. ...six items will just have to take their turn then to. Well, as its past 2 o'clock I formally declare the meeting closed, unless of course there are any other really urgent items of business which people feel have to be raised now.

AW rises to leave the room as do the others. Susan Carey however raises her hand tentatively. Reluctantly AW notices her.

AW Yes Susan.

S. Professor Watson I want to report that...that...

AW (*impatiently*) Yes Susan

S. That...that... I am being sexually harassed by a student!

ACT TWO
SCENE TWO

'THE TACKLE'

George's office. He is alone, scrabbling through mounds of paper. A knock at the door.

G. Come in.

Jennifer enters briskly with a file in hand. She looks serious and business like.

J. Good morning George. I hope you can spare a few minutes.

G. Well...er...I am rather busy.

J. This is important George. More important than anything you've got there I'm sure.

G. *(sighing)* Oh very well.

J. *(sitting down)* Good. Well you know the situation George. A formal complaint of sexual harassment has been made by Susan - by Dr Carey - against Yusuf bin Mohammad, a graduate student in this department.

G. Yes, yes.

J. The complaint will be considered first by the Equal Opportunities and Gender Relations sub-committee of the faculty, and then, if upheld, by the Gender Relations sub-committee of the Senate. If the complaint is also upheld at that point the accused party can be expelled from the university.

G. Yes I know. Alec gave me the gen.

J. Good. Well then you will also know that as EOGR officer in this department it is part of my task to gather any information which may bear on the complaint.

G. Yes. But why should you think I know anything?

J. Mr. Mohammad was your student for nearly three years!

G. Yes, but that doesn't mean I know anything about his personal life or...or...sexual predilections. I've got fourteen graduate students for God's sake!

J. More germanely George, it was you who suggested that Dr Carey should take over supervision of Mr. Mohammad. In fact "suggested" hardly covers it George - "railroaded her into it" might be a more appropriate phrase.

G. Yes well...

J. However, that's not my concern, at least not directly. I understand however that Alec will be speaking to you about it.

G. Will he? Oh God.

J. At any rate. I want to ask you first whether you have ever witnessed Mr. Mohammad's behaviour in the company of women?

G. Women? What women?

J. Any women George.

G. Well...er...I don't know. I believe I once...

Another knock at the door. Another colleague of George's – Miguel Rodriguez, a Chilean radical – enters briskly without waiting for an invitation.

M. George. Glad I've found you in. I've something very important... Oh, it's you Jennifer.

J. Yes, it's me Miguel.

M. Of course...I should have guessed you'd be poking your nose into this.

J. And what precisely do you mean by that?

M. I mean that this is the kind of incident intolerant femocrats like you just love. Any chance to put the boot into a male, especially a Third World male.

J. Oh rubbish. I have certain duties to perform as Gender Relations Officer that is all. I'm here to ask George a few questions, and I'd

appreciate the opportunity to do that without benefit of your knee jerk Third Worldist rhetoric. If you want to speak to George you can do so in a few minutes when I'm finished.

M. I think I should speak to you now George. I'm here to inform you officially that Yusuf bin Mohammad is bringing an action against the university under the Race Relations Act. A writ was formally issued this morning and so of course all matters pertaining to the recent alleged incident between Mr. Mohammad and Dr Carey are now *sub judice*. I'm also here to inform you specifically George that Mr. Mohammad's solicitor intends to subpoena you as a witness in the case.

G. Subpoena?! Subpoena me as a witness! What of? I wasn't there when he...he...

J. Attempted to fondle Dr Carey's breasts.

G. Whatever. I wasn't there!

M. The scope of Mr. Mohammad's case is far broader than the alleged sexual harassment. It concerns his whole prejudicial treatment at this university, including the culturally insensitive and offensive forms of teaching he has received - especially from you George!

G. From me! Oh Jesus, is that what he says?

J. And who exactly is acting as Mr. Mohammad's solicitor in this action Miguel? It wouldn't be your brother Antonio by any chance?

M. That has no bearing on anything.

J. Ha! Thought so. And whose idea was it that this action be brought? Not Mr. Mohammad's I would guess.

M. Yusuf - Mr. Mohammad - came to me very distressed after he heard about Dr Carey's complaint against him. He asked for my advice, and after hearing the whole disgusting story of his three years in this...this...place, I had no doubt what he should do. The racism...the institutional racism...of this so-called university needs to be exposed and this case exposes it utterly.

J. And I suppose Susan's complaint is also racist?!

M. Of course. Yusuf denies the allegation completely. In fact he contends that Dr Carey showed considerable sexual interest in him, and

when he, as a happily married man, rebuffed her, she came up with this malevolent complaint - eagerly supported of course by the usual white western sisterhood!

J. What pathetic crap! You know perfectly well that Susan has a very happy sexual partnership. But no doubt women “ask for it” just as often in Pakistan as here. The only difference culture makes to patriarchy is to make it worse!

G. (*shouting*) Will you two just shut up! Shut up and get out of here! (*he ushers them both toward the door*). Go on, go! I can't stand this! Jennifer, I can't remember anything about how Yusuf treats women, but if I think of anything I'll let you know. Miguel, if and when you send me the subpoena I suppose I'll have to come to the bloody court. Until then I don't want to talk to you or anybody else about it. I suppose I'll have to get a bloody solicitor or something myself. Oh God! Get out! Get out!

George pushes Jennifer and Miguel out of the door, slams it, locks it, and slumps down into his chair. He has only just composed himself when there is another knock.

G. Go away! I told you! Go away!

AW. George. it's Alec. Open the door please.

G. Oh Alec...yes...(*He hurries to the door and opens it*). Sorry...I thought it was...sorry...come m.

AW. I suppose you've heard the latest George.

G. About Yusuf's court action?

AW. Yes George exactly. I've just had the VC on the phone. He's already being pestered by the press and media. Apparently your former student is at the local TV studios at this very moment giving his side of events. It'll be on the news tonight. Have you any idea what is involved if this case comes to court. Have you?! Have you George?!

G. Well. I'm sure it wouldn't be good Alec. Bad publicity and all that.

AW. That's the least of it. If this case gets to court - and whatever the outcome - it's going to get this university a massively bad press abroad - in India, Pakistan. the rest of Asia - and do you know what that means George?!

G. Er...well...I suppose...

AW. They won't be sending any more students here George - that's what it means - and since 20% of the income of the university and 30% of the income of this faculty comes from overseas student fees, it means, to put it bluntly George, that we're all going to be in the shit, the financial shit!

G. Oh I see.

AW. Oh you see do you George? Well I'm glad you see, because when that occurs, cuts will have to be made, savage cuts. Heads will have to roll George, and when they do George, when they do *Dr Robson*, I'm not going to risk anything for a lazy middle aged bleeder with a distinctly mediocre teaching reputation and one review article in the last five years! Am I making myself clear?!

G. Er yes...I see Alec...er... Professor Watson...I...yes...I understand.

AW. Good. And while you, I, all of us, are waiting for the redundancy notices, I'd appreciate it George if you would do two things for me. Firstly, before you slough off any more of your responsibilities on Dr. Carey, the departmental secretary, the janitor, or a passing dustman, I want to be informed. And secondly, you will take back Mr. Mohammad as your supervisee and just for once in your life you will. ..you will...work your over expanded arse off with him! Got it?!

Alec exits without waiting for a reply, slamming the door behind him. George crumples into a nearby armchair.

Stage darkens. George, sitting in the dark, starts to move his hands from side to side in a parallel motion. As he does this a back projection shows Gascoigne's zig-zag approach to the Belgian defence in the 1990 World Cup game(This approach run is shown from the rear, from the perspective of the English goalkeeper).

When the stage lightens George is standing, in 1950s soccer gear, in the middle of a group of 12 or 13 year old boys. It is a cold winter's day on the Durham coalfield in the north-east of England. Two sides are being picked for a school soccer match. As was and is the custom, they are being picked by the two best players nominated as team captains by the sports teacher. The two captains are "Kenny" and "Paul". They stand with their backs to the audience but facing the bunch of potential team members.

K.. OK we'll have Dickie.

P. Brian.

K. Terry Smith.

P. Ronnie Jackson

And so on. until a miserable huddle of 3 or 4 boys, suitably humiliated, are left. George is among them

K. All right. We'll have Shortie Wilson.

P. OK Stubbins. You're with us.

Just two remain.

K Oh shit! We'll have Fatty Robson. You're in goal Fatty. Don't piss it up, all right?

P. *(left with 'Specs' Johnston, the only player deemed worse than George)* Specs, you're on the left wing. Stay out of the fuckin' way!

ACT THREE
SCENE ONE

'THE HEADER'

George and Yusuf in George's office in intense conversation over some more of Yusuf's blighted dissertation.

G. Now this section an "objectivity in the student of international relations", The title is perhaps a little personal but the section itself shows promise. However, there are just one or two points I want to go over with you.

Y. Personal? Why it personal?

G. Well I mean, some people would hold Yusuf - though I am not one of them I may say - that objectivity resides in the act of scholarship itself, I mean in the way it is conducted, rather than in the person conducting it.

Y. Yes.

G. Yes what?

Y. Yes objectivity is in the student.

G. Personally I agree with you Yusuf, I'm only saying that conventionally...

Y. No, not personally, in the student! The student has to be objective.!

G. I agree Yusuf. In reality we cannot divorce the practice from the practitioner, the responsibility here is ultimately a personal one.

Y. No No, not personal! In the student, the student! The student must be objective, the student must be based on facts, just on facts, not values.

G. The student must be based on facts, I'm sorry I don't...Oh... er,... you mean the *study* must be based on facts, on facts not *values* Yusuf.

Y. Yes sorry, I make a mistake in my English. The study should be based on facts not..not...values. The study should be objective, yes?

G. Of course I do not disagree with that. Only as it happens I think you were nearer to a more fundamental truth in your first formulation. Albeit a mistake. Objectivity is ultimately a matter of a personal moral responsibility, a question of personal honesty, sometimes a painful honesty. Indeed, one could say that objectivity is only important when it is painful. It is easy to be objective about things one does not care about.

Y. No not easy, impossible.

G. I'm sorry?

Y. Conventional positivist...positivist yes?

G. Positivist yes, that is the word.

Y. Conventional positivist textbooks talk about objectivity, talk about value free.

G. About value freedom Yusuf, *value* freedom.

Y. About value freedom yes, but this is impossible. Value free impossible.

G. Why is it impossible?

Y. Too many different cultures, too many different perspectives. Dr. Stokes said in her lectures.

G. Ah, that is what Jennifer says is it? I might have guessed. And you mean perspectives Yusuf, not perspectives. Perspectives is a kind of plastic, or so I believe.

Y. Yes, perspectives, yes. Dr Stokes says truth is a masculine concept, a concept of...of...of...what the word?...of...domination. "An attempt to make a diverse reality one thing". I remember that she said that.

G. Yusuf. Have you ever been forced to recognize something as true that you did not want to be true?

Y. I do not understand Dr Robson.

G, Yusuf, when I was a boy in England I supported a football team, a soccer team. Do you know what I mean?

Y. Oh yes. I played soccer. I was a...a... goalkeeper...yes... for my vocal town team.

G. Local Yusuf, *local* town team. Though they may have been vocal as well of course. Hope they were. A good team is always vocal on the pitch. (*George laughs. Yusuf doesn't*)Anyway this team was called Sunderland, a team based in a port town on the Durham coalfield. They had had halcyon days...They had been a good team Yusuf...in the past But when I was a boy and supporting them they were mainly mediocre...not very good Yusuf.

Y. Mediocre. I know this word.

G. Good. Anyway, one blessed, never to be forgotten season when I was just a lad...boy...of...ten years, Sunderland managed to reach the quarter finals of the FA Cup, a famous soccer competition in England.

Y. FA Cup I know. Do not patronise...yes.

G. Sorry...to the quarter finals of the FA Cup where they had to play the famous Manchester United,

Y. Bobby Charlton, George Best, Dennis Law, Matt Busby, Munich...I know.

G. Indeed. This was indeed the team of Best, Charlton, Law, Crerand and so on. Sunderland however had a good team at that time too...Clough, Crossan, Herd, Hooper...Not as famous names as those of United perhaps but fine players, fine players.

Y. Yes, you like this team. I know, yes?

G. I loved them Yusuf, loved them, worshipped them as only a child can love and worship....At any rate, there were three replays of this game Yusuf, three. The first, held at Roker Park... at Sunderland... ended as a 1-1 draw. The second, held at the famous Old Trafford ground in Manchester....

Y. Old Trafford, yes, I know.

G. ...was a 3-3 draw. A wonderful match Yusuf, wonderful. And I watched it all from the Stretford Road end with my father....But in the

end of course Manchester United won out. They beat us 5-2 in the third replay Yusuf, and my father and I watched that too.

After the match I was completely distraught, I cried out to my father that in some way we had been cheated, that three of United's goals were offside, that the referee had been biased, that it was unfair because our players were tired. Anything and everything I could think of - reasonable, unreasonable - mostly unreasonable. And I still remember to this day what my father did Yusuf I still remember. He became angry. He grabbed me by the shoulders, turned me towards him and said 'Listen son. They won tonight because they were the best team. They deserved to win. That's all there is to it.' I hated my father for saying that Yusuf. There was no comfort in his words. They just made the pain in my heart worse. But I knew what he was saying was true Yusuf. I knew. Even as a boy of eleven I knew. That was why I hated him so much.

Y. Yes. But very hard, for a small boy, yes?

G. Very hard indeed Yusuf. But, and this is the point, my father was speaking the truth, the objective truth. He didn't want it to be true any more than I did, but he had the maturity, intelligence and honesty to recognize that it was. And the point is Yusuf...the point is...if Dr. Stokes philosophy were true, events such as the ones I have just recounted could not happen. For in her world the only truths we can recognize are the ones that suit us, the ones that it is in our interests to recognize, the ones that are convenient or make life easy. But that, though often true, is not always true Yusuf, thank God...

Y. Praise be to Allah.

G. Yes...er....perhaps...and the fact that it is not always true means there is more to truth, and to objectivity, than is suggested in Dr. Stokes's too easy relativism. Which is not to say that I believe in value freedom. In objectivity yes, but in the so-called value freedom, No. In fact I believe that it is only people who have strong values who can be what we call objective. Do you see? Do you see Yusuf? .Oh I'm sorry...we've rather got lost, and criticising a colleague in front of you too...I'm sorry...I...

There is a knock at the door.

G. Yes, come in.

Susan Carey enters, file in hand.

S. George. I'm still having problems with these result sheets, I...*(seeing Yusuf)*..Oh,...er ... I'm sorry,... I'll come back later. *(She makes to exit)*.

G. Oh no Susan, don't go. If it's just a small administrative matter, I'm sure it can be dealt with now. Yasuf doesn't mind. Do you Yusuf?

Y. *(sullenly)* No.

S. Oh...er...I don't know...I suppose...Yes well...it won't take a minute I suppose...er... There are a number of student names on this computer printout for whom we don't seem to have any marks George. I just wanted to check that they're genuine drop-outs and that there isn't any oversight on our part.

G. Certainly. I'll just get my class attendance lists from the file and you can cross check. Please sit down a moment. *(He gestures to a chair)*.

Susan makes to sit down as George goes to rummage in his filing cabinet. To sit down she has to remove a poster from the chair. As she sees what it is she smiles.

S. What's this George?

G. Oh, it's a poster of Paul Gascoigne, a well known English soccer player.

Y. Yes...I saw it too... Gazza...Famous yes..

S. I know who it is George, I meant what are you doing with it?

G. I bought it this morning. It's a birthday present for my son, I...er...You know who it is?

S. Of course. One of the most naturally gifted midfield players I've ever seen. It's a great pity he wasn't able to play in the last World Cup. It's the only fitting stage for a talent like his... Oh of course!

G. Of course what?

S. The undertone, the accent...I knew there was something... You come from the north-east of England, don't you George? Just like Gazza.

G. We were born about ten miles apart. I knew scores of lads like him when I was growing up. Not with his talent of course, but they all sounded like him, even looked like him a lot of them. Of course he's from across the line. I mean he comes from Newcastle territory rather

than from Sunderland. But, but, how do you know about football, - about soccer - Susan?

S. I not only know about it George, I play it, or rather I played it. I haven't played since I finished at Princeton.

G. Princeton has a soccer team? How amazing!

S. They have a womens' soccer team George. Rather a good one in fact. We finished second in the Ivy League women's soccer competition in my last season with the team. Women's soccer is actually a very rapidly growing sport in American colleges generally, although you'd never know it from the remarks of the male commentators during the last World Cup. If men don't play a game it isn't really being played, that was clearly their assumption.

Y. Huh...women's soccer...huh.

S. What is that supposed to mean?

Y. Womens' soccer...What position you play?

S. Striker.

Y. Striker...huh.

S. And what do you know about it?

Y. I play soccer, at home, in Pakistan. I play goalkeeper, and I know women cannot play soccer...impossible.

S. Now you listen to me bozzo.! I've played football since I was six years old, and I've played in teams since I was eight. My father played professional football in Britain and then was a manager and coach in Britain and Ireland. He...

Y. It make no difference. Women cannot play football...no strength...I know...Womens' football..huh!

S. George, I'm leaving before I hit something...or someone...I'll come back and deal with this other business later. (*She makes briskly for the door*).

G. Susan..No please Susan...Come back a moment...I have an idea...(*he smiles*) ..An idea for you both.

ACT THREE
SCENE TWO.

'THE SHOOT OUT'

A football pitch. Only one goal is required however. Susan and George, both in football gear, are standing talking. George also has a whistle around his neck, and a soccer ball under his arm.

S. Look, I want to make it absolutely clear George. This changes nothing. I'm still going ahead with my complaint. I want that Neanderthal out of the university. I'm just doing this in the hope, probably vain, of getting across to him that women are good for something other than...other than...other than lying on their backs in a harem!

G. Oh of course Susan. I hadn't thought anything else. Not for a moment. Now where is he? We said two o'clock. Its quarter past already.

Yusuf appears jogging. He is dressed in goalkeeper's gear and wearing a flamboyant cap.

Y. I late, sorry. I had problem with one boot - need fixing.

G. Er...that's alright Yusuf. Well, let's get started shall we? The rules are agreed I hope. First player to score three penalties with a two goal advantage wins, or, beyond that, first player with a two goal advantage, irrespective of the score. Is that clear? *(Susan and Yusuf both nod)*. My word is law in any dispute....Good...The player winning the toss shoots first. There is supposed to be some psychological advantage in that... Call please Yusuf.

Y. Tails

G. Heads it is. Susan to shoot first

Yusuf jogs confidently into the goal and takes up a relaxed goalkeeper's stance with a supercilious grin on his face. The grin disappears instantly when Susan blasts a shot into the corner of the net before he has even moved. She looks suitably pleased.

G. One nil to Susan. Yusuf to shoot.

Yusuf runs up strongly and shoots well and low but Susan dives to her right and pushes his shot away. Yusuf tries to get the rebound but Susan dives on the ball again. He accidentally kicks her on the shoulder as she lies clasping the ball.

S. Hey foul ref!

G. Not a foul, just an unfortunate entanglement. But there are no follow-ups allowed Yusuf. I thought we'd agreed that. Once the ball is blocked it is saved.

Y. Oh yes sorry...I forgot...sorry...sorry... Dr Carey.

S. OK

G. Still one nil to Susan. Susan to shoot.

This time Susan shoots low and hard again. but Yusuf, much more serious now, dives well and saves. He leaps so his feet in joy and yells ~Allah al Akbar!" (God is great!).

G. Yusuf to shoot.

Yusuf shoots well again and this time he just beats Susan's dive.

G. One goal each, a good contest. Susan to shoot

Susan makes no mistake this time, beating Yusuf with a rasping shot to the right of the goal as he dives away to his left.

G. Good penalty Susan. Hard luck Yusuf. Two one to Susan. Yusuf to shoot.

Yusuf shoots well again and beats Susan's dive but the shot is just too wide and goes outside the goal.

G. Still two one to Susan, Susan to shoot.

Susan takes a stuttered run-in and faints to shoot to Yusuf's right. Yusuf dives that way, and as he lies on the ground, Susan taps the ball into the empty middle of the goal. She whoops across the stage in triumph while Yusuf bangs his head on the ground in anguish.

G. Susan wins the penalty shoot out by three goals to one. Excellent. Good skills shown all round.

S. (*calming down*) Good...well...let's go George, and please remember what I said, I...

Yusuf comes running up to Susan and grabbing both her hands in his pulls her, startled, to face him.

Y. Please...please...Susan...Dr. Carey...I mean no harm. I far from home. My wife...beautiful Dali..she cannot come. We have no money for her to come..I so lonely...so lonely., for her, for my children. I know no one in this country. I can hardly speak. People think me fool, but I no fool. I just afraid, so afraid. What happen if I fail? I must pay back all the money to government, to my family, and I have no money. There will be such shame for me. I know my thesis not good...my English...but I think...I understand... I not stupid...No! Please forgive me...I so lonely.

S. I. don't know...I will think about it...Er...please don't be upset...I will think about it.

George smiles at the both of them, scene ends.

ACT THREE
SCENE THREE

‘THE MEDALS’

The departmental staff meeting again. Alec in the Chair, George, Jennifer, Susan. Miguel and a selection of others all present.

AW. Well let's get to it then. Thanks to George for the minutes of the last. Are they a true and faithful record? (*Murmurs of assent*). Any matters arising? (*He smiles*) ...A duly delicate silence. But of course there is a matter arising, the question of Susan's...er...sexual harassment and the...er...complications which we all know arose from that. We all know too that the whole thing has been happily resolved and I'm sure we all thank heaven for it. Susan came to me...when was it Susan?...last Tuesday morning I think... and announced that she was dropping her complaint against Mr. Mohammed, and Miguel followed her into my office shortly afterwards to tell me that Yusuf too had decided to drop his legal action. I was mightily relieved by both pieces of news, as you can imagine. I hardly need to tell you what grave consequences might have followed from...from...the kind of court case which we were all envisaging. Roger...er...the Vice Chancellor dropped me a note just a few days ago congratulating me...er...congratulating us all.. on the...er...'quietly diplomatic way' - I think that was his phrase - in which things had been resolved and making some, I must say, very complementary remarks about this department in general. (*He beams around the room*) ...So, I'd just like to say well done to everybody here who was involved in the...er...happy resolution of things...and to especially commend the good sense of the major parties in the...er...misunderstanding..., who, when tempers had cooled, recognized - as of course I knew they would - where the best interests of the department and the university lay, and did not allow - how shall I put it? - Did not allow overweening egotism to get in the way of that recognition...(He beams again). Well done everyone!

(“Thank you Alec” etc murmured by George and Susan, smiles all round).

AW. And not only that, but I gather that Susan has decided to take on Yusuf's supervision after all and that both she and George feel that at last some real progress is being made. Is that right?

G. Yes, some definite signs of improvement Alec. Yusuf seems...I don't know...to have found a little more confidence in himself suddenly.

AW. Susan?

S. (*smiling shyly*) Yes, he's...er...trying hard Alec.

J. I don't want to spoil the party Alec. And of course I am as relieved as you are that the matter has apparently been resolved without...er...without...er... undue conflict. But I at least have never received a satisfactory explanation of how this resolution came about. And I must say I can only think...

S. Jennifer please...

J. No Susan it must be said...I can only think that some sort of pressure must have been brought...Susan after all is a very junior member of staff, she has her whole career in front of her, and must be very vulnerable to...to...

H. To some foul patriarchal threats. Is that what you are wanting to say Jennifer dear?

J. Don't call me dear, you patronising old toad! ...No, no.... But well to...to...to some kind of pressure...that is all...

S. Jennifer I've told you. No pressure was involved.

J. I know Susan. But...but..I know how difficult your situation must be..I however have my tenure. I can speak out...And I want to make it clear that the resolution of this case - fortunate though of course it is - should not lead anybody to think that all is well with this university. As long as certain attitudes to women...

H. Oh do spare us the wearisome homilies...

AW. Quiet please Henry. Jennifer has the floor.

J. As long, as I was saying, as certain attitudes to women - attitudes strongly represented around this table - abound in this university - we will have more incidents of this kind. The basic underlying problem...

M. The basic underlying problem is the racism - the endemic racism - of this white, liberal anglo-saxon bastion.

J. I believe I was speaking Alec.

AW. Yes Miguel. You may say what you wish when Jennifer has finished.

H. It is hard to say which of them is the more predictably boring.

Miguel and Jennifer together. Fascist! Slimeball!

AW. Miguel, Jennifer! Stop it the both of you. Henry, we can do without your provocative interjections. Now let me make it clear...

The stage darkens, as the ideological brew ha ha continues. Spotlight on George. He is smiling beatifically once more. A backdrop shows replays of Gazza's dribble, his pass etc etc and finally his famous "burp" reply to an Italian interviewer. The play ends with a huge still of Gazza's infantile but enchanting grin.

THE END