Column/Manavendra K. Thakur

Maurice not only a good film

There has not been any review in The Tech about Maurice, nor any discussion of it. I have added Maurice to the reviews page as a column instead of a film review because I would like to address two aspects of this film: as a film itself and as a film dealing with a very sensitive and important issue of homosexuality.

As a film, Maurice is a notable accomplishment, especially as a follow-up to the major commercial and artistic success of A Room with a View. The producer/director team of Ismail Merchant and James Ivory did not let its previous success go to its head. They set out to adapt E. M. Forster's novel to the screen, and then they showed that they can do it, and more, and no less. Although their achievement in Maurice does not equal their achievement in A Room with a View, the film is certainly most worth seeing.

There are many themes common to both Maurice and A Room with a View, in both films, the detail of physical and sexual pleasures that characterize Edwardian society, and the major flaw in that society. Maurice is depicted as a social contrivance, an inhibiting force against the very fact that the lovers risk disgrace and happiness. Societal pressures to conform are induced. This relationship exists in both films.

Both films resolve the conflict with a gentle yet firm repudiation of the lovers in society. While A Room with a View is a humorous comedy of manners, Maurice is darker in both cinematic style and narrative tone. The film's narrative style is certainly enriched through the fact that it is a film that we do not much about. We learn very little about who he is, what he is, or what he stands for, or where he is going, and yet, how exactly Alex climbs a ladder up to Maurice's bedroom, apparently on a bunch, is not immediately clear. Alex and Maurice had previously received no more than a few glances. It's this sort of ambiguity that stops us from ever fully understanding Alex, despite his lovingness.

So that's how I feel about Maurice, as a film. per see. But the very fact that the film has been made and distributed so widely is important in of itself. The film does not deal with homosexuality as if a bubble of its own. I can judge the film as a film, but should be more interested in what it tells us about society and art. Maurice forces me to make that acknowledgment and to act on it rather than focus exclusively on my skills as a film reviewer.

I cannot forget the muted squeals of excitement and joy uttered by an elderly man sitting in front of me whenever a love scene would be about to happen. It was just as genuine as Maurice's love for Clive and later Alec. It was clear that he was overjoyed.

Column/K.J. Saeger

AIDS education restrictions needed

Special interest groups have been shown through this film with a severe case of tunnel vision that meets any minor perceived infringement on lifestyles with a disproportionately hostile response. The result is that the tunnel vision has worsened and "disproportionately hostile" has now been replaced by "unnecessarily harsh.

This point was exemplified when local gay and lesbian groups were frustrated by Senator Edward Kennedy and John Kerr. These two special interest groups were people who were not particularly against the amendment. The only reason I can think of was that you are inflicted with the terrible AIDS crisis which has made the argument of the amendment more pressing.

The amendment requires AIDS-education groups to promote abstinence from sexual activity, sex outside of marriage, and drug use. This interpretation is obviously contrived given the wording of the amendment. Just what does the amendment require? Three of these statements is clear. They are, of course, the ones that I would have liked to see in the legislation. In many cases, one or two of these statements is clearer. One case is clear, and the other two are not.

Thirdly, the phrase "obstinence from homosexual activity" seems to evade the issue. Homosexual activity in the generic sense is not a problem. Somewhere.

Mankind, through the practice of sodomy, has developed a very efficient means of transferring bodily fluids between sexual partners. With the widespread prac- tice of sodomy, whether homosexual or heterosexual, a vast pool of virions can be easily inhaled across the penis, or even the mouth, and thus is only a matter of time before the human race is engulfed with AIDS as lethal as any other involved in the history of mankind.

This, coupled with the fact that in many states sodomy is illegal, makes the conclusion clear. AIDS-educational material must dissuade runners from hazardous sexual practices.

This last point is where many gay rights groups feel their rights are being violated. They somehow feel that some imagined right of sexual fertilization is infringed upon if anyone speaks against their sexual practices.

Last Friday, Brenda Schmidt Jr., president of Yale University, declared that a Supreme Court decision to uphold a Georgia sodomy law. He called the ruling a "judicial flight from intelligence."

What Schmidt did not describe was under which part of the Constitution the law was to be overrulled. A search of the document unreeves no right to sexual gratification.

Even if such a right did exist, couldn't it be outweighed by community concerns? A society's right to be free of the scourge of AIDS clearly overrides an individual's right to perform a certain sexual act. If certain sexual prac- tices are dangerous, the public should be informed about them.

Suppose you find out tomorrow that you are infected with the terminal disease AIDS. Unlike AIDS, this disease has a cure. The cure costs no money, con- sumes no time, and allows you to lead a normal life. You would be foolish not to seek this cure at all costs, even if the remedy was something as difficult as getting your ears pierced. You would then be able to say that "I did everything in my power to protect myself."