

Eyewash no. 1125 February 4, 2005

Except the cover and Educashun Newz, this issue had disappointingly little eyewash in it.

The cover showed Condaleeza Rice calling the Iraq election “a great day for freedom” and, behind her, George Bush saying he was now “free to attack Iran”. The joke, it’s true, was feeble, and for the usual reason, because made without caring what truth or justice was in it, a gag for a gag’s sake, and so not much of a gag at all. (And now that the Iraq elections have been followed by the resignation of Lebanon’s Syrian-backed prime minister, the announcement of multi-party elections in Egypt and of reforms for the Palestinians, the joke looks feebler still. But, hey, it’s only a joke and who, three weeks later, is looking anyway?)

And, also as usual, they had nothing to say about education at all. The item filed under Educashun Newz, about a PFI schoolbuilding contract, might have gone almost anywhere in the investigative side of the paper. Of course, exposing dodgy financial transactions is a nice, safe option to take. It saves you from the risk of giving away how much, or little, you have to say about more important things, how indistinguishable you yourself might be from, say, Charles Clarke or Ruth Kelly or anyone else you bait as a Moron.

But they must have got a different Remote Controller for this issue, one who thinks the main thing *is* whether programmes are any good or not, and their hostile review of Ian McEwan’s *Saturday* was good too. The review’s main count against the novel was “the huge weight of research pressing down” on it and of characters who “grew out of the research ... establish[ing] their professional *bona fides* rather than possessing independent lives of their own.” They haven’t been reading *us*, have they? (*What else? In this issue, they followed our lead on Prince Harry too.* Ed.)