

THE KING'S SPEECH



This recent box-office hit tells the story of *George VI's* accession to the throne and how he was never nurtured or taught how to be a king. His brother's love affair and then marriage with a twice-divorced woman changed the course of his life and, indeed, the course of British History.

Story, history and History are entangled to create a successful Hollywood-style biopic as emotions (and sentiment) are aroused throughout the film. The whole plot revolves around King *George* who has to overcome his stammer - a reflection of his low self-esteem - and deliver a speech since he is expected to unite the British people around him as war against *Germany* has just been declared.

Moreover he is constantly guilt-ridden as he feels he has to justify his coming to the throne instead of *Edward*. He manages to do so, but not without the help of an eccentric Antipodean speech therapist, *Lionel Logue*.

The movie is punctuated with humorous interludes providing comic relief, mostly due to *Geoffrey Rush's* brilliant rendition of the physician's bold attitude with the King, whom he dares to call "*Bertie*" and whom he encourages to say some of the strongest swearwords in the English language.

Colin Firth proves to be a remarkable *George VI* as his formidable acting reveals the contradictions between the reservation expected from a monarch, the formalities due to the new function and his own human fragilities.

This movie may provide a perfect opportunity to discuss the function of British royalty and the various modern-day challenges that it faces - a subject that is given further relevance by the approaching wedding between a 'modern' royal, *Prince William*, and his fiancée *Kate Middleton* !

