

...the same about the part of the... quite frankly, the Treasury has often been at least institutional, and at worst obstructive. Alistair Darling has not given a major speech on the environment for two years. All this has got to change. Instead of the Treasury blocking green reform, I want a Conservative Treasury to lead the development of the low carbon economy and finance a green recovery. Let me explain how.

First, a Conservative Treasury will help the government to lead by example. For all Labour's fine rhetoric and mass of initiatives, the government's carbon emissions are higher today than they were in 1997. Despite Labour's target of cutting emissions by 22.5 per

cent within 12 months of the election. And if any department needs encouraging to take action, a Conservative Treasury will simply give them less money to spend on energy bills. This isn't just good for the environment. It will give up to £300m a year. That's good for taxpayers too.

The second way that a Conservative Treasury will drive green growth is by financing a green recovery. The global market for green goods and technologies is worth trillions of dollars a year, but with less than a 5 per cent share of that market, Britain is failing to take advantage. In fact, we have a smaller share of the green market than France, Germany, Japan and

can help kickstart our green recovery by providing green companies with the investment they need. This will help us deliver the green finance we need for new jobs in every region of the country.

The third role for a Conservative Treasury is being part of the answer to our environmental problems, instead of being treated as the problem. Take recycling, for

example. We need to introduce new Green IRAs, a new tax-free savings product in which all the funds invested would help green our economy. This will not only unleash new sources of finance for green firms, but will give everyone a chance to be an investor in our low carbon future. That's the right way to green our economy and help families to save for the future.

Under a Conservative government, the Treasury will no longer be the cuckoo in the Whitehall nest when it comes to climate change. If I become Chancellor, the Treasury will become a green ally, not a foe.

George Osborne is Shadow Chancellor

Alistair Darling has not given a major green speech for two years

Reading between the sheets ...



Helen Croydon

EROTICA is, by definition, literature or art of a sexual nature. Unlike pornography, it doesn't necessarily have the aim of arousing sexual desire. That makes last weekend's Erotica '09 exhibition in London inappropriately named.

Yes there was an entertaining mix of exhibits from extravagant love Jacuzzis and leopard-print silk bed spreads to downright terrifying whips, chains and - look away now if you're faint hearted - gadgets that give electric shocks. Shudder. There was plenty of eye-candy too: glamorous girls towering 8ft high on stilts, and dancing male models with stomach muscles as bumpy as a mountain of moguls. There was an eye-popping display of sex toys so techni-

cally advanced that it made the Large Hadron Collider look like a Wendy House. One exhibitor, LoveHoney, has got sex down to such a science that its staff stood in lab coats with clip boards offering personalised anatomy-specific advice.

But there was very little art or literature. Why do the British feel the need to mislabel anything racy with the term erotica? Apparently if you want sordid no-strings-sex with a stranger you go "erotic dating". If you want to try swinging but are too worried about your Google search history and the IT-police, no problem, just look for an "erotic ball".

Is it because we are so reticent about sex that we feel the need to mask it with a highbrow façade? Or is it social snobbery? It's not chic to talk porn, but go to a dinner party and retell your visit to the Le'enfer exhibition at the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris and that's simply fascinating, darling. You can have a painting of Lady Godiva above your fireplace, but

would you admit to being drawn in by pictures of Katie Price posing seductively on a horse in a recent promo for equestrian clothing?

Art critics attempt to distinguish erotica from porn by suggesting that eroticism explores the emotions of sex, while pornography is limited to the physical aspects. But the boundaries have always been blurred. In 1857 Michelangelo's naked statue, David, arrived at a London museum. All were content that this was "art" but curators still thought it best to reach for a fig leaf.

Then there was *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. What a definition nightmare that book was. It was banned under the Obscene Publications Act until 1961. But now

Are we so reticent about sex that we must mask it in a highbrow façade?

that it is safely in the genre of literature, we can read it on the Tube. Consider also the kerfuffle when super-model Lily Cole - beautiful, pure, with skin like porcelain - appeared nude on the cover of French *Playboy*, her assets concealed by a teddy bear. She said it was art. Others considered her downgraded to Bunny Girl.

Historically language changes the most quickly in areas of taboo. The more times a euphemism is used, the quicker it becomes associated with the negative connotations we are trying to avoid. It would be a real shame if "erotica" became one and the same as a backstreet Soho store flogging PVC nurses' uniforms and glow-in-the-dark nipple tassels just because we aren't brave enough to use the s-word.

There sure as hell isn't anything wrong with high-octane vibrators, quick-fasten suspenders and multi-sensual massage machines, but let's call them sex commodities. Don't deride art with all your linguistic dodgings.

ture has been pre-recorded and will be presented as a video.

E.O. Wilson, as he is always known, fulfils the Darwin inheritance in several respects. First, he is a brilliant scientist (and winner of the Crafoord Prize, the Nobels for subjects the Nobels don't cover). Secondly, he is a supreme naturalist in the true sense of the word - a fine observer of nature, just like Darwin; not an easy task when you lost an eye as a boy while fishing.

Thirdly, he is a brilliantly clear writer and few people who have read his books can fail to be inspired by the natural wonders that he helps you to discover, often in the undergrowth rather than the forest canopies. Not many Crafoord Prize winners have also received Pulitzers. And fourthly, I can add from personal experience, he is an utterly nice man, befitting someone with the easy charm of a southern, Alabama gentleman. Put all these qualities together and you have a modern-day equivalent of Charles Darwin, minus the beard.

Schools of science

WILSON WAS once goaded by a famous physics-trained scientist who suggested that his work on ants and other social insects was nothing much more than "stamp collecting". But in his lecture today, Wilson suggests that the "age of reduction" in biology, as epitomised by the study of DNA rather than living organisms, has largely passed.

There are two powerful ideas driving biology in the light of Darwin's theory. One is how living things do what they do, working within the confines of the laws of physics and chemistry, and the other is why they do them in the light of natural selection and evolution. The former is the preserve of the problem solvers (the reductionists), while the latter is for the naturalists, Wilson believes. "The procedure of the naturalist is to adopt a group of species, such as conifers, diatoms, or orb-weaving spiders, and fall in love with it, and learn as much about it as possible across all levels of biological organisation, from its genes to its place in ecosystems," Wilson says. "At the risk of oversimplification, it can be said that the naturalists discover the problems in nature that the problem solvers solve."



A gentleman and a scholar

AMONG MY most cherished possessions is a signed copy of one of Wilson's books. It still makes me blush to think that he would ever consider putting someone like me in the same camp as himself. "For Steve Connor. Fellow student of the ineffable made effable. With warm regards." And to complete the signature, he drew me an exquisite little portrait of an ant.