



## Manuel Alvarado

*Thinks academic publishing about media is getting tougher despite the proliferation of media studies courses.*

### What attracted you to the publishing world in general?

I've been involved in publishing ever since I was editor of my school's magazine as a sixteen year old. My co-editor and I had unsupervised control of all aspects of commissioning articles, photographs and drawings, designing the 'look' of the publication, selling advertising space and marketing the magazine. I enjoyed every minute of the experience and was certainly more fun than most lessons! Little was I to know then that the experience would be highly educational and so useful to me later in life.

I subsequently went on to be

editor of the student newspaper at my university and not that long after leaving university I became editor of a quarterly international academic journal focusing on cinema, media and education. Eventually I went on to found a media publishing imprint for John Libbey Publishing - an imprint that later became a university press.

### What attracted you specifically to join Intellect?

Oddly enough, Intellect was founded at the same time that I created John Libbey Media. Even more strangely the two imprints covered very similar areas so it was entirely logical for me to join the Intellect team when the

University decided to close down their operation.

### Do you think your academic background is a help or a hindrance in helping authors to articulate their thoughts well? Do you have an intellectual agenda of your own?

I think my intellectual development helps me enormously to advise authors. In fact my original degree is in English Literature because Film, TV or Media Studies did not exist within the formal curriculum at any educational level in those days. Therefore I was one of the tiny group of people to create and define this broad subject area under the auspices of the British Film Institute's Education Department and the Society for Education in Film and Television back at the beginning of the 1970s. As a result my whole subsequent career has been spent defining, revising, extending, teaching, examining, researching and publishing work in what is now a very large field. For the first two decades my own work was extensively published, but for the last decade I have concentrated more on supervising PhD students and advising researchers and authors whose books I was going to publish as editorial director of a specialist university press.

In response to the second question, all intellectuals must, by definition, have their own agenda but obviously it would be improper of me as a publisher to let that interfere with the advice I give to students or to authors. At the same time, it would be irresponsible of me if I didn't bring to the attention of students and authors, material which they might have overlooked or not encountered.

### How do you compare and contrast Intellect's publishing programme with other publishers?

I think Intellect's programme is extremely interesting and stimulating. I wish I felt that about some of the other publishing houses working in this field. Nevertheless, I understand the pressures and reasons for adopting certain strategies, which I will briefly enumerate as follows.

All publishers obviously have to make money but the academic end of the business is getting ever tougher even though higher education has expanded at a remarkable speed. Publishing is getting tougher partly because of competition from the web and other electronic media but also because the increasing expense of higher education means that students have less disposable income for books. They want comprehensive course text books rather than dozens of individual titles. Whilst I don't agree with this attitude, the larger publishing houses are increasingly focused on producing such volumes which can be 'stacked high' in the bookshops!

This is clearly not good news for intellectuals, academics or researchers who want to publish their original work as monographs and books. It is also not good news for the Research Assessment Exercise particularly because textbooks do not count in RAE submissions. It can therefore be clearly seen why Intellect's project is so important and invaluable. Along with a couple of other small presses, Intellect is literally helping to break new ground and push back the frontiers of our knowledge and understanding in this field.

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“The secret to film is that it’s an illusion.” – George Lucas

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**What is the best book you have read recently?**

I don’t know about ‘the best’ because I have read so many good books recently, but I particularly enjoyed Francis Wheen’s *How Mumbo-Jumbo Conquered the World* (Harper Perennial 2004), in which he describes how so many aspects of recent political and cultural activities around the world have broken with Enlightenment values and ideas.

**What is your favourite movie of all time and why?**

This is a question I have been asked many times over the years and it gets ever harder to answer. It would be extremely difficult if one was allowed to name one’s favourite movies in each of the major genres, or one from each country, or one from each of the great auteurs or even a favourite movie from each decade – but a favourite of ‘all time’!

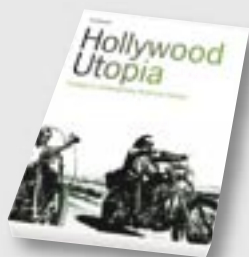
I have therefore decided to choose a film by a director I particularly admire, who is currently producing a body of highly original and wonderful films. The director is Emir Kusturica (who is a Bosnian Serb from Sarajevo currently living in Brittany, France). I would place at least four of his films as the best made in the last fifteen years and if I had to choose one

I suppose it would have to be *Time of the Gypsies*. There is so much to say about his work but there are two observations I will make here. The first is that he often (but not always) focuses on a people who have suffered – and continue to suffer – the most awful bigotry across the world, and he does so in a way that is wonderful and totally life affirming. The second is that he has created a cinematic style and language, unique to him, to express these values, which can be best compared to the Magic Realism of the great writers of Latin America. There is the added bonus that he also plays bass guitar in a wonderful Gypsy/Techno/Rock band called ‘The No Smoking Orchestra’. ●

**FURTHER READING**

*Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema*

By Pat Brereton | £19.95, \$39.95



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## Call for submissions

Intellect published its first journal in 1986 and its first book in 1987. Since then we have served the academic community by publishing authors and editors with original thinking.

As we continue to grow, we are seeking new authors and editors with a strong commitment to their ideas. Being an academic publisher, all our manuscripts are subject to peer review.

We commission regardless of whether there is an established readership for the ideas. We support our authors to articulate their thoughts and then bring them to their full potential readership in print and in electronic form. We choose authors and editors who are willing to be a part of our publishing process, backing their ideas by investing their energy and resources as needed and in co-operation with us.

Our publishing programme focuses on topics related to creative media, such as: art, film, television, design, education, language, gender study & international culture. Contact me if you would like to join our community of exceptional authors and editors. I look forward to hearing from you.

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