

THE ARROW



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THE EDITORS

Disha Bhatt
Editor in Chief

Young people today are often accused of disengagement from current issues- I am proud to say that any reader of this publication can completely refute that statement. The students of Owen's have shown their enthusiasm on a wide range of topics, resulting in cogent, compelling pieces. The design and collation of the Arrow has also been a deeply personal task- allowing me to rediscover a passion for graphic design, for which I am intensely grateful.

Riya Myanger
Cover Artist
Writing, Editing

Designing and creating the cover art for the Arrow has been immensely enjoyable... I wanted the cover to capture an air of iconic tradition, together with a contemporary twist, symbolising the modernism which allows Owen's to continually flourish; participating in a magazine full of such a fascinating breadth of topics has been a wonderful experience!

Ben Lloyd
Writing, Editing

The Arrow is a brilliant reflection of the vibrant and modern politics scene at our school, something I am grateful to be a part of. But what makes our school unique is the diversity of topics that thrive, from maths to science, history to art; the Arrow captures this at its most wonderful.

Afra Sterne-Rodgers
Writing, Editing

Being part of the creation of this year's edition of the Arrow has been a wholly rewarding experience, and I think the engagement and enthusiasm of all those who contributed is clearly reflected in the quality of the magazine we have put together.



Pictured, from left to right: Afra Sterne-Rodgers, Riya Myanger, Dorothy Burrowes, Disha Bhatt, Nick Scott

Dorothy Burrowes

Writing, Editing, Managing

It's been hard work, but simply having the opportunity to be educated on such a breadth of genuinely exciting topics, from politics to (dare I say it!) maths, has made putting together this issue of the Arrow an utterly worthwhile experience.

Nick Scott

Writing, Editing, Advertising

Creating this year's Arrow has been an amazing opportunity, as it has allowed me to use and improve my writing and editing skills, while working alongside a team of talented, dedicated individuals.



BAN THE VEIL?

The current UK Prime Minister Theresa May declared in reaction to World Hijab Day “what a woman wears, is a woman’s choice.” However, as a reflection of our current society this statement appears to be limited:

In 2004, France had a clampdown on any students displaying religious symbols in state-run schools. In April 2011 it was a public ban for the full-face veil that was further enforced.

In March 2017, the European Court of Justice ruled that employers would be given the right to ban religious symbols, including the hijab and burka, from the workplace. Most recently, in January 2018, St John’s School in Newham banned the hijab for girls under the age of eight. It therefore cannot be denied that the debate over the rights of women to wear headscarves is one that is current, relevant, and alive today.

The act of covering a woman’s head is one that in our liberally-minded society, can be indeed be seen as oppressive and even misogynistic; the sheer concept of women being forced to adhere to rules dictating the way they display their bodies doesn’t sit comfortably within our ‘modern’ society. This is a view that is even taken up by a few Muslim women themselves; Quanta Ahmed for example, writing for *The Spectator*, emphasises the lack of explicit command within the Qur’an to cover the head, and thus the reluctance to ban the veil is what she calls a “strange collaboration” between liberals and extremists. Indeed, the reasons to ban religious covering can be strongly argued; not only can it be a source of discrimination in schools and the workplace, where all religious and political barriers should be removed in order to ensure that all are viewed as equal in the eyes of the law, but it also poses a security risk when the subjects of banks and airports are risen. Arguments generally focus on the impracticality of veils, and the natural assumption that Halloween masks or balaclavas which cover one’s face would be asked to be removed in our western society; why not the veil?

However here lies the root of the argument that counters such banning, and that is the simple fact that the veil is not the same as a mask or balaclava, and should not be labelled as such. The freedom of religious expression is a freedom often overlooked as we progress onto a modern society that appears to be being liberated from what are, for many, the shackles that are ancient religion and tradition. However, it is also one that is vital in a society that claims to tolerate all peoples and people groups; is it really within our right to determine what others should be wearing? Certainly, the sheer concept of women being forced to adhere to rules dictating the way they display their bodies doesn’t sit comfortable within our ‘modern’ society. Whether forcing women to wear the veil or not to wear the veil, the concept appears to be the same, and that is the concept of deciding the terms of another’s oppression or empowerment.

Nevertheless, perhaps a line must be drawn in order to determine what is oppressive, or unjust, which the 29 Iranian women who were arrested due to their protesting for the right to not wear the hijab seem to view veilling as; often those trapped in such systems of repression are unable to voice their opinions and hence are in no position to “choose” as May put it. If that is so, should the government make a stand in order to allow freedom to those oppressed? Quanta Ahmed cites the unwillingness to ban the veil as “what happens when Islamists are tolerated by a western culture that’s absurdly anxious to avoid offence”. Is this the case? Do we live in an atmosphere with such an ambition to be politically correct that we cannot even stop oppression in its tracks when we see it?

Dorothy Burrowes

Neena Lall, the headteacher of St Stephen's Primary School in London, announced in January 2018 that girls under the age of eight would not be allowed to wear the hijab. The reaction shocked her. The school received five hundred emails a day, many of which were abusive; the former mayor of Blackburn, Salim Mulla, called her a "vile racist"; an online video compared her to Hitler. Barely a week later, the school governors overturned Lall's decision. Yet the hijab is not required in Islam for under-eights.

This, in my opinion, shows that the push for children in primary schools has nothing to do with personal choice. The little girls may say that they want to wear hijabs, perhaps emulating their mothers (just as some girls would surely love to wear lipstick and high heels), but is it really the case that it is a personal decision made because of strongly held religious convictions? After all, girls as young as four have worn one to school.

The hijab is often portrayed as a matter of choice, but for many girls, it is not. A poll in 2016 found that 44% of British Muslims believed that schools should be allowed to insist on the "hijab or niqab [a veil that covers the entire face apart from the eyes]", while only 32% disagreed. Many girls also face strong pressure from their families and communities to wear such clothing. Of course it is not the case that no one who wears the hijab does so out of choice, but nor can it be claimed that everyone does. Banning the hijab protects those girls who do not want to cover their heads but are too scared to admit it; school becomes a place where they can be equal and treated equally.

In 2006, the House of Lords considered the case of Shabina Begum, a Muslim who argued that her school was violating her rights by not permitting her to wear the jilbab (a long and loose fitting coat that covers the head but not the face). It ruled unanimously that her rights had not been violated; a key part of the decision was the risk that other female pupils might feel pressured into wearing stricter dress. The ruling is worth quoting in detail:

"Some pupils were resistant to wearing the jilbab as unnecessarily restrictive and associated with an extremist group. The head teacher and her assistant, and also some parents, were concerned that acceptance of the jilbab as a permissible variant of the school uniform would lead to undesirable differentiation between Muslim groups according to the strictness of their views. The head teacher in particular felt that adherence to the school uniform policy was necessary to promote inclusion and social cohesion, fearing that new variants would encourage the formation of groups or cliques identified by their clothing. The school had in the past suffered the ill-effects of groups of pupils defining themselves along racial lines, with consequent conflict between them." –Lord Bingham of Cornhill, *R (Begum) v Governors of Denbigh High School* [2006]

Islamic facial coverings are a visible symbol of female oppression that the West is too scared not to ignore. They might be a part of Islamic culture, but does that mean we have to stay silent? Perhaps there is a case for secondary schools to allow the hijab. For primary schools, there is not.

Nick Scott

In a country where wearing a hijab is not governed by law, there is no case for the idea that wearing a hijab is fundamentally oppressive. To ban an expression of culture and religion is a decision where everyone loses out: The school environment is not only one in which you learn academically, but one in which you learn socially. As an institution which children up to the age of 16 are legally required to visit seven hours a day, 190 days a year, children learn the majority of their social skills from interacting with their peers in the school setting. If the hijab were to be banned, non-hijab-wearing children would lose a fantastic opportunity to learn about the cultures of others, and appropriate ways in which to approach experiences which are perhaps unfamiliar.

For hijab-wearing children, this would have an even more devastating effect: In today's society, where people wearing headscarves are often immediately alienated and even (consciously or subconsciously) associated with danger or terrorism because they are wearing a headscarf, it is vitally important to ensure that children and young people who want to practise their religion, or express its meaning for them, get the opportunity to do so; this is the only way in which society will progress to a state in which people can wholly feel comfortable wearing a headscarf in Britain.

The converse, banning the wearing of a hijab, would accordingly have the opposite effect, and lead to further social conflict and division, as it would add to the growing issue of Islamophobia plaguing the Western World. Banning hijabs in a secondary school, where children are at a hugely impressionable age, would far from destigmatise the hijab, but perpetuate the false belief that Western ideals are the ultimate ideals, and could lead people to think that every single woman wearing a hijab is forced to do so, and that it is a symbol of her oppression.

To ban the veil is to remove an important aspect of religion and culture from people's lives, a move that I would not feel comfortable supporting.

Afra Sterne-Rodgers

A key aspect of modern day western society, that many of us take pride in, is the freedom and liberty given to all - the freedom of expression, the freedom of thought, of belief and religion. It does not take long for the media to criticise a third world nation for 'oppressing' members of society, be it due to religion, nationality, race or gender: why should it be deemed so just when put into practice in a first world and so-called 'developed' nation? A person who is forced to wear the hijab unwillingly is deprived of freedom as is an individual who wishes to wear it of their own free will but is not permitted to do so. Banning the hijab in schools is far from a solution to the problem of many girls being pressured to wear the hijab, as that would suggest all girls wearing the hijab are doing so against their will.

Personally, I consider myself to be extremely fortunate to have not had to face discrimination due to my religious beliefs and the fact that I wear the hijab. If anything, I appreciate the respect my religious beliefs and requirements have received and the curiosity expressed regarding them within the Dame Alice Owen's community. Having said that, I do wish that this could be said about elsewhere and everywhere, but sadly that is not the case.

Nabiha Karim



CAREER PROFILE: INVESTMENT BANKING

Nikki Zhao- a former Owen's student, Cambridge graduate and current Investment Banking Analyst- kindly agreed to share her insights on investment banking in an interview with the Arrow, resulting in this compilation of her perspectives.

There seems to be no "conventional path" into investment banking- indeed, Nikki notes the huge mix of varying degrees in her team (the head of her team is a History graduate, for example). It is worth mentioning, however, that around half of her coworkers consist of Economics, Business and Finance graduates- although she has also mentioned the challenges of jumping into the industry even from an Economics background.

At the secondary school stage, the main way to gain familiarity with the industry would be to attend insight days: mainly geared towards A-level students, banks invite you in to "experience the world of investment banking". Making an impression on these programmes isn't the main goal (although building connections from such an early stage is undoubtedly meritable) rather, you should focus on collecting as much information as possible and approaching the sector with an open mind. Given the fact that there is no conventional path into the industry, it is reasonable to assume that a great deal of training takes place to bring all new employees to the same level of understanding. This is mainly garnered through comprehensive training programmes held in the workplace, however, there are external resources which can be helpful for anyone hoping to gain a deeper understanding of the industry. Accordingly, one way I would recommend you to extend your knowledge would be to explore the resources below: reading through forums is a useful way to familiarise yourself with fundamental concepts and issues.

In 2015, only 25% of people going into banking in London last year were women- diversity remains an issue for the industry. However, the problem seems most concentrated at the upper echelons of management (where the disproportionate numbers become startlingly clear- less than 5% of the most senior executives at investment banks are women), and Nikki states that her experience hasn't differed from her male counterparts due to the largely meritocratic nature of her work. The current feeling is that banks are becoming proactive when it comes to internal and external programmes- if possible, you should take advantage of the many minority events on offer. There are also third-party organisations which can help you progress onto these events: SEO, for example, works with university students to help them secure spring weeks, internships and graduate roles.

In general, experiences don't appear to vary across banks as much as they do across teams and Nikki stresses the impact that the people you work with can have- comfort in making decisions and voicing opinions is key, and something you gain from a supportive team.

One of the biggest challenges faced is one I'm sure many recent graduates come across: the transition from study to employment. The loss of structured days can be jarring and one key adjustment is that of self motivation and initiative: once you reach employment chasing your goals is a largely individual endeavour.

Disha Bhat

RESOURCES: www.wallstreetoasis.com www.ibankingfaq.com
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Muhammad Ali
ma@mathematicsandsciencetuition.com
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INDEPENDENCE

freedom from the 'lazy poor'

Evidence for growing nationalist attitudes in Europe has been building determinedly, with perhaps the most obvious example being Brexit. The fuel for this sentiment seems to mainly come from the aversion many hold to supporting 'lazier' areas of the world and Spain is one country that has turned this antipathy inward – with the Catalan independence movement.

Since the 16th century Catalonia has fought against the central rulers of Spain, and many believe nationalist sentiment among the Catalan people began in the 19th century with the *Renaixença* (a revival of the Catalan language and culture). The emergence of modern independence movements in Europe shares similarities with the situation in Catalonia, which is why it is a useful case to study.

The reasons for the modern Catalan independence movement are primarily fiscal – they revolve around Spanish policies relating to taxation and spending. Many Catalans feel they are subsidising 'lazier' areas of Spain, and it is true that Catalonia is the third largest tax contributor in Spain, but eleventh in terms of resource collection (out of seventeen autonomous regions in the country). The primary issue with the above sentiment, however, is that the consensus in many independence movements seems to be that the area seeking independence is supporting other, 'lazier' individuals. 'Lazy' has become synonymous with 'poor'. The reason Catalonia is receiving fewer resources is because other regions are deprived of those resources – not due to an inherent laziness but simply because they are not as wealthy as other regions and need to benefit from redistribution measures.

The arguments of many Brexiteers hinged on the fallacious sentiment that the UK was supporting lazier individuals – many believed that free movement of labour within Europe created a strain on housing, welfare and education which was not being paid for by immigrants. This is simply not true. A UCL study in 2014 showed that, over the previous decade, EU migrants had contributed £20bn more in taxes than they had claimed through benefits.

Independence movements tend to follow a pattern: first, cultural fervour is raised among citizens and 'lost' traditions are lamented with no political focus (observe the *Renaixença* in Catalonia); next, the cultural verve is converted into political ardour and finally, the masses are encouraged to mobilize and embrace the goal of independence. This cultural and political change has been felt throughout Europe, with the Catalan referendum in October of 2017 ostensibly showing the wish for imminent independence, and Brexit quite clearly showcasing an existing successful independence movement. Given these two clear cases of incendiary nationalism, the hope now must turn to the rest of Europe to not fracture.

Disha Bhatt

WHY TRUMP WON

Afra Sterne-Rodgers

Nick Scott

On November 9, 2017, millions of people woke up and immediately checked their phones to find out the results of the American presidential election. After seeing them, most probably assumed that they were still dreaming. Donald Trump was perhaps the unlikeliest winner of an American presidential election in history. The story of how a man with no political experience, opposed by the media and the candidate with the most funding ever, became the oldest and wealthiest President of the United States is incredible. Trump was hit by scandal after scandal that would have destroyed most politicians' careers; you probably don't remember them. Mocking a disabled reporter, calling for women who have abortions to be criminally charged, insulting the family of a Muslim veteran killed in Iraq, calling a former prisoner-of-war a coward...

Complaints about 'fake news', the effect of third-party candidates and the popular vote (though four people before Trump have won the presidency despite losing it) mean little. As illegitimate a victor as many Americans perceive him to be, the truth is that on November 8, sixty-two million people decided to make Donald Trump the most powerful man in the world.

Trump's victory raised many questions that are still being hotly debated. We will stick with just two: how did a man like Donald Trump win a presidential election – and what does that tell us about the next one?



Racism and white nationalism

Many commentators have emphasised the levels of white identity politics (or ‘white nationalism’) seen during and in the wake of President Trump’s election; what had been simmering at the surface began to boil over. Millions of white Americans had begun to think that something had to change. The Democratic Party had been unable to offer the white working-class of America what it wanted, and consequently much of this group felt disinclined to vote for another Democrat whom they did not feel would aid them in the way they wanted. Democrat presidential candidate Bernie Sanders says “I come from the white working class, and I feel deeply humiliated that the Democratic Party cannot talk to the people where I came from”. This recognition is something Hillary Clinton failed to truly accomplish, and so this section of society turned to Trump for change and for that which they felt they lacked: a voice.

For many, the appeal of ‘white nationalism’ is not new. Appealing to white voters has always been part of American politics, but Trump’s support from extreme figures such as white supremacist David Duke – whom Trump initially refused to denounce – has led to a rise in white nationalism, through making white people feel vulnerable in their whiteness. The author Ta Nehisi-Coates has written “not every Trump voter is a white supremacist. But [they] felt it acceptable to hand the fate of the country over to one.”

Immigration and terrorism

Pledging to build the border wall, a key part of Trump’s campaign was a stroke of genius; playing on the ‘rising tide’ of white nationalism, he could not have offered a solution to keep the outsiders outside at a better time. Many people were not persuaded by discussions of immigrants’ contributions’ to the economy, instead prioritising feelings that their very way of life was under threat. Throughout Trump’s campaign, Europe and America had been struck by a string of terrorist attacks such as the Paris attacks and the Orlando nightclub shooting, and the fear they left behind was more than enough to divide communities. Trump channelled this fear towards many, including (mainly Syrian) refugees, Muslims and Mexicans. The idea of a wall to protect them from criminals and potential terrorists appealed to many American voters.

Protectionism and opposition to globalisation

Russ Feingold is a veteran senator who stood for office in 2016 in Wisconsin, a state in the ‘Rust Belt’ where Trump’s victory has been attributed to opposition to free trade. Feingold therefore seemed a perfect candidate, having voted against NAFTA and attacking his opponent’s support for the TPP and other free trade deals. Yet, though Trump won the state by 26 000 votes, Feingold lost by 100 000. He was a Democrat. This was far from unique; by larger margins than Clinton, Ted Strickland lost in Ohio and Katie McGinty was defeated in Pennsylvania, despite both being more opposed to free trade than their Republican opponents. Protectionism and manufacturing jobs, though much discussed during the campaign (and after it) seem not to have been a priority for many Americans.

Trump has embraced certain anti-globalisation policies, such as the tariffs he imposed on steel and aluminium imports; in this, he favoured the manufacturing industry over traditional Republican orthodoxy. However, he has stopped short of some of his most extreme promises, like a pledge to leave NATO, and many of his decisions (such as withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement) have been unpopular. There is truth to the idea that opposition to globalisation helped Trump to win. But not much.

— Hillary Clinton as a bad candidate —

After the election results prompted much soul-searching among the Democratic Party, many among the progressive wing of the party felt that it was not so much the case that Trump won the election but rather that Hillary Clinton lost it. It was – yet another – scandal that likely cost her the election; two weeks before November 8, she had a greater lead than Obama did in 2012. Then, FBI director James Comey announced that he was re-opening the investigation into her use of a private email server during her time as secretary of state. For the rest of the campaign, Clinton and her team were forced on the defensive.

But scandals were far from the only factor that hurt the Clinton campaign. Reasons why she was considered a poor candidate include her lack of appeal among younger voters (young Democrats backed Sanders in the primary, and youth turnout in the election was low) and the working class, and her husband (former President Bill Clinton) and the scandals involving him, including the Lewinsky affair. Trump used the many accusations of sexual misconduct by Bill Clinton in order to deflect attention from him after the release of a tape featuring him admitting to sexual assault, which had been seen as the doom of his campaign. Defenders of Clinton point to her experience, her strong support for the rights of women and minorities, and her practical and well-thought-out policies as factors that helped her, as well as the narrow margin of her loss, but it is true that many in America have hated the Clintons for twenty years.

— Donald Trump as an outsider (opposition to the ‘system’) —

A key reason why the Trump campaign attracted so much media attention was because of how unprecedented it was. People who felt let down by the so-called ‘system’ saw in Trump a man prepared to destroy it. They rejected Hillary Clinton’s moderate proposals and incremental reforms, having heard such rhetoric more than they believed they had felt its benefits. Contrastingly, Trump offered, with his certainty of the border wall being built, concrete ideas which were tangible to the common people, which they could imagine being carried out within weeks of his gaining office. In such a crowded primary field (there were seventeen candidates for the Republican nomination), Trump was able to stand out; he received unprecedented levels of free media coverage. He was unlike any candidate who had preceded him in his ability to draw the attention of the media and millions of people across the world.

It is fair to describe the atmosphere in the lead-up to the election as ‘anti-establishment’, and this was not unique to the Republican Party. Hillary Clinton, widely considered the guaranteed victor in the Democratic primary, faced a strong challenge from the independent senator

Bernie Sanders, whose radical left-wing policies appealed to younger voters. Similarly, Jeb Bush, brother to one president and son of another, performed poorly with the Republican base despite his enormous campaign war chest. Perhaps the one thing a majority of Americans could agree on was that they did not want another “Bush vs. Clinton” election (there had already been one, in 1992). And if they wanted an election unlike any in history, they certainly got one.

Factors favouring Republicans

Trump’s rhetoric and campaign were undoubtedly different to those of standard Republicans, but perhaps it is a mistake to assume that he won because of that. It could be argued that he won in spite of them. After all, Trump’s most controversial actions, such as attacking Khizr Khan, the Muslim father of a soldier killed in Iraq, or admitting to sexual assault, did cause a temporary drop in support. Trump often underperformed Republican Congressional candidates, suggesting that many Republicans refused to back him. Nevertheless, he did retain enough of their support to narrowly win an election in which he lost the popular vote by a record margin. Many believe that a ‘generic’ Republican would likely have won comfortably. Following two terms of a Democratic president perceived as ineffective, and facing a candidate untrusted by the country and despised by the Right, the Republicans enjoyed many institutional advantages, which contributed to their retaining control of Congress. Would Trump have won without them?

The old adage that “liberals fall in love, conservatives fall in line” held true. While Democrats ‘fell in love’ with Sanders’ and Clinton’s idealistic principles, many groups that disliked Trump ‘held their nose’ and voted for him because of key issues such as abortion, gun rights and the empty seat on the Supreme Court that had the potential to be a deciding vote on many divisive issues. Congress’s Republican leadership received widespread criticism for refusing to hold hearings for a new justice until after November’s election. It may have won them the presidency.

Trump has embraced certain anti-globalisation policies, such as the tariffs he imposed on steel and aluminium imports; in this, he favoured the manufacturing industry over traditional Republican orthodoxy. However, he has stopped short of some of his most extreme promises, like a pledge to leave NATO, and many of his decisions (such as withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement) have been unpopular. There is truth to the idea that opposition to globalisation helped Trump to win. But not much.

And will Trump win in 2020? If it seems impossible now, remember that two years ago, even the prospect of his winning the Republican nomination was seen as absurd. His popularity, while low, is not unprecedented; Republicans who once derided him have now given him their support. Incumbency has always proved an advantage too. The Democratic Party is deeply divided, and as progressives and moderates fight for control the primary field is expected to be larger than ever (in contrast to the three major candidates for the 2016 nomination). That is not to say that his victory is guaranteed, but it is certainly possible. And if there is one thing we’ve learnt for sure, it’s that complacency can lose an election.

DON'T Give Sixteen-Year-Olds the Vote

I'm seventeen. I am very interested in politics, as are many of my friends, and have been for years. We often discuss the latest political news; I find that people are very respectful and articulate even when disagreeing with others. Every week, dozens of people from Year 11 upwards attend the student-run debate club, where recent topics have ranged from nuclear weapons to climate change, both of which inspired passionate arguments.

I'll admit that I'd certainly like to have a say in how the country is run. But I don't think sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds should get the vote.

Why? What we have to remember is that Dame Alice Owen's School is not normal. In most schools, few (if any) students know much about politics; fewer care. Whether that is caused by a lack of political education - and I certainly think that plays a part - is irrelevant; the simple fact remains that knowledge of how Britain is governed is essential in deciding who should have that job.

For all the rights that those turning sixteen gain, the age of majority in Britain is undeniably fixed at eighteen. At sixteen, you cannot marry without parental permission and are legally required to be in education. Why should people who are not allowed to join the army have the right to vote for the government that controls it?

A possible compromise is to give sixteen-year-olds the right to vote in local, council elections. The idea is that it would provide a simplified introduction to politics, seeing as such elections revolve around local issues that young people would probably be familiar with, and whose lives they do affect. While I am not opposed to the idea in principle, I question its usefulness. Local elections inspire worryingly little attention even among demographics which have historically had a much higher turnout than the young.

It is true that the right to vote at sixteen exists in some countries, but clearly not all policies can exist worldwide. In a country with so little political education in schools and such a lack of political knowledge or interest amongst young people, giving sixteen-year-olds the power to decide the fate of the United Kingdom makes no sense.

Nick Scott

DO Give Sixteen-Year-Olds the Vote

I strongly believe that 16-year-olds should be given the vote. Currently, 16- and 17-year-olds are too young to vote; they must pay taxes, but are unable to elect those that decide how to spend them. Introducing the vote for 16-year-olds would immediately result in greater political awareness from those who would have previously felt as though their view would never make a difference. 16-year-olds have the mental capacity to make an informed judgment, and if this were supplemented with the affirmation that their vote mattered, it would instantaneously generate political interest.

This would consequently mean political interest being cultivated from a significantly younger age; political awareness is inarguably a fundamental part of personal and social development. Engaging younger people in political debate would not only mean greater cognisance of topical issues, but would also quell the increasing sentiment that young people are misrepresented by older generations who have differing ideologies and priorities. It is true that preceding generations have more experience, but we undoubtedly deserve to have more say in determining our own future as the generation that will have to bear the consequences of political decisions longer than any other demographic.

Many would argue that large proportions of students do not care about politics, or would be incapable of making an informed and knowledgeable decision. I believe that this is feeding into the stereotype of an indifferent, lazy, and intellectually lesser millennial generation. The majority of 16 year olds are mentally mature enough to inform themselves on vital issues and are able to make conscientious decisions: it seems counterintuitive to label young people as uncaring whilst not presenting them with opportunity to directly voice and implement their views, nor providing incentive to engage themselves politically.

But, how is it possible to nurture political awareness without political education? I believe that political education should be integrated into the schooling system so that young people feel equipped and capable to vote, enabling those that do not care to be compelled to recognise the importance of political consciousness. Schools will have the responsibility to teach about the British political system, and well-prepared 16-year-olds will result in more avidly engaged adults. Ultimately, those that definitively have no interest in politics will likely simply not bother voting; those that feel politically motivated would be those that voted.

The right to vote at 16 exists in other countries; it is time the United Kingdom followed suit. If 16-year-olds were granted the right to vote, political interest would be heightened and people would feel inclined to become educated upon the topic: We deserve the right to decide our own fate.

Riya Myanger

How economies and human bodies are the same

The human body is wildly complex. Hundreds of meters of tubes weave intricately in and out of one another. Some are wide, and some so narrow that blood cells have to squeeze through them one by one. Millions of cells somehow work together to create a living, breathing human being. Molecules make up organelles, which work in harmony as a cell. Cells make up specialised tissues, which combine to form organs, organs work together to form organ systems, which in turn make up humans. No one really knows exactly how these things actually work together to create human life. Doctors have some idea of how certain systems function however they are yet to uncover the whole picture.

Economists face much the same issue. The world somehow distributes its limited resources but no one has quite discovered how. Individual people make rational economic decisions to maximise their utility. Individuals trade in small communities, these communities interact to make nations and these nations trade as part of a global economy. Both human bodies and economies often throw up problems. Humans can develop deadly cancers whilst economies develop poverty, have sudden market crashes and can suffer from famine.

There was once a time in medicine, many thousands of years ago, when medical intervention was looked down upon. “Don’t interfere, it’s God’s will”, priests would proclaim. Instead of actually helping patients, sacrifices and prayers to all powerful beings were made in the vain attempt that they would be miraculously healed. People didn’t know how bodies work and hence assumed there was some invisible force guiding the human body and that this force should not be interfered with.

Economics still has a similar theory - the ‘invisible hand’ that appears to guide economies. In a similar vein to former religious leaders, laissez-faire market economists say that man is unworthy to interfere with the direction that the invisible hand dictates, intervention will always have unintended consequences and therefore should never be used. This idea has some basis, intervention of course has its side effects, due to the fact that no politician or economist has perfect knowledge of present markets let alone future ones.

Imperfect knowledge of human bodies and the side effects caused by it, however, do not stop modern doctors from administering drugs. It’s time economists learn from them. Cancer and poverty might both be ‘natural’ phenomena, but doctors and economists must try to prevent and cure them both.



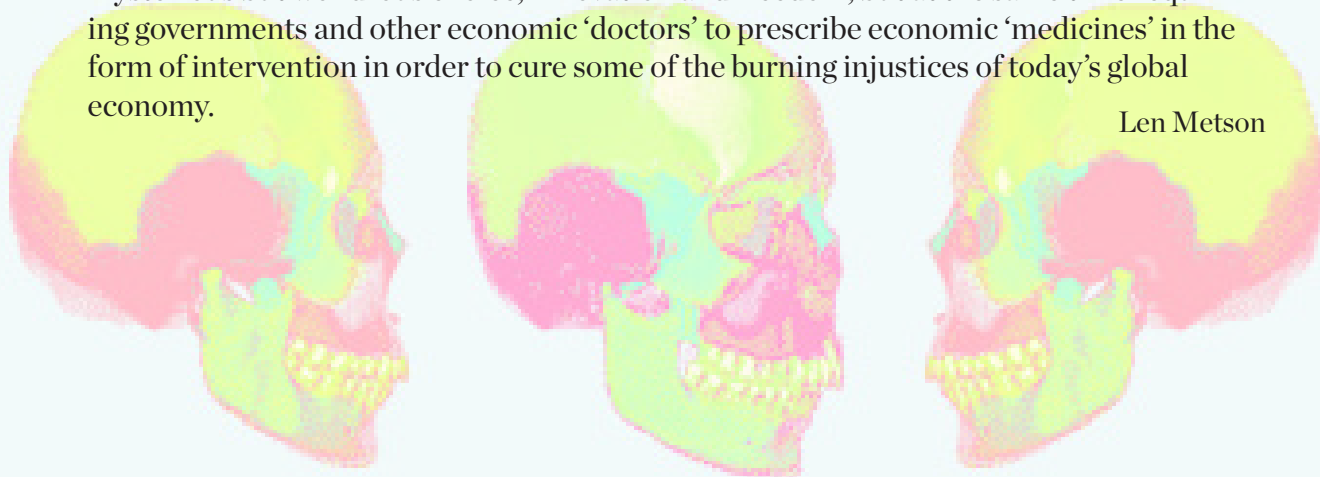
Cancer drugs kill cancer but the patient also feels weak; their stomach bleeds, and they lose their hair. Despite this the doctor sees it fit to give the drug because its benefits outweigh its side effects. Economies also suffer from ‘disease’. One such example is poverty traps. Government intervention in the form of taxation to fund free healthcare and education can do a lot to enable social mobility which ‘kills’ poverty traps, nevertheless there are also ‘side effects’ to government provided services in the form of taxation. Whilst requiring people to pay the government money that they have earned may seem undesirable when out of context, when looking at society as a whole, the positives of increasing social mobility outweigh the negatives of taxation, provided of course, that the tax rates are reasonable.

Doctors and economists also have a common problem when it comes to forecasting future events. GPs know of certain factors that make a stroke more probable but they will never attempt to tell a patient exactly when their stroke will happen because they simply do not and cannot know. Similarly, economists may know factors that cause market crashes yet they cannot say when a market crash will happen or how hard it will hit the population. This proves to be a problem because there is an increasing trend for populist politicians to use previous wrong predictions to discredit everything economic experts say, especially when expert opinions contradict their narrative.

We are quickly slipping into a post-truth era of ‘expert-hating’ which, if unchecked, will have disastrous consequences. It is no coincidence that the rich and powerful want to promote completely unrestrained capitalism. The inequality of opportunity allows them to accumulate wealth and power for themselves and their offspring. At the same time, I’m in no way calling for a socialist revolution, too much intervention has disastrous consequences, including widespread famine and the erosion of individual liberty. Just in the same way as over prescribing drugs can cause more harm to the patient than the disease.

The system I’m calling for is one in which we allow the market to provide us with all its mysterious but wondrous choice, innovation and freedom, but at the same time requiring governments and other economic ‘doctors’ to prescribe economic ‘medicines’ in the form of intervention in order to cure some of the burning injustices of today’s global economy.

Len Metson



False hope

Someone has to say it:
Corbyn is not your saviour

Based on the atmosphere in Dame Alice Owen's School on the day after the 2017 general election, you would be forgiven for thinking that Jeremy Corbyn had won the election. The feat of winning a mere 55 fewer seats than the party that actually managed to form a government was arguably the best result Jeremy Corbyn could have dreamt of, leaving him with all of the prestige and none of the responsibility of a newly elected Prime Minister. The Conservative Party was forced to reckon with its division with respect to Brexit; Labour was not.

But what was all of this enthusiasm about? Why did young people turn out in record numbers to elect a 68-year old socialist? This was more than just one school's election resulting in a 'LANDSLIDE LABOUR VICTORY' (as the posters so gleefully proclaimed). This was, and is, a country-wide movement, with chants of "Oh, Jeremy Corbyn!" everywhere from the fields of Glastonbury to the streets of Kensington creating the momentum that so many believe, and more hope, will carry Jeremy Corbyn to the most famous address in Britain. The "likely lad", as the Economist calls him, is an unlikely success story, rising from obscurity to a position of little power but a great deal of adoration.

But a closer examination of the reasons given for dismissing Corbyn's chances produces genuinely worrying findings. Corbyn's success came from three factors: a low base of support that even his most loyal followers will admit is largely his fault, a horrifically weak opposition campaign, and a manifesto filled with populist positions instead of Corbyn's own views.

Yes, I know this will strike many of you as heretical—I have been told more than once that Corbyn is the epitome of the principled politician—but young people turned out and voted for someone whose true views would likely shock them. Deleting a 2012 article entitled "High time for an end to NATO" from his website does not hide the fact that he has been a strong opponent of the alliance and all things Western for the entirety of his political career. The principle "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" gives a man strange bedfellows, but Corbyn is unique even in this regard. He has appeared on Iran's state propaganda channel, refused to condemn a terrorist group that murdered five people in an assassination attempt on a British Prime Minister and suggested ignoring the views of 99% of Falkland Islanders and giving partial sovereignty over the territory to the nation that invaded it.

The 2016 edition of the Arrow contained an article entitled "Why Jeremy Corbyn is not the person to solve Labour's anti-Semitism crisis." Two years on, those words now seem

prophetic. He presides over a party where numerous senior figures – including Ken Livingstone, the former Mayor of London, and the MP Naz Shah – have been suspended from the party for anti-Semitic remarks. Corbyn’s response was widely perceived as lacklustre; the enquiry set up under Shami Chakrabarti to investigate anti-Semitism within the party was described as a “whitewash” by the vice-president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Corbyn’s actions have often been anti-Semitic; over a dozen of his MPs attended a protest criticising him for defending an anti-Semitic mural.

But even these issues, which conjure up echoes of Trump, are not what I am convinced is both a great betrayal and a political stroke of genius. I refer of course to the monster that lurks in the shadows, going by the name of Brexit. I remember June 24, 2016, very clearly. The atmosphere resembled that of a funeral (at least amongst the unlucky 66% who voted to Remain in the school referendum). I saw people close to tears, feeling shocked, physically hurt. They felt—and still do—as though Brexit was robbing them of something very precious, that they would lose out in every aspect of their lives. These were not my views, but I understand them fully.

What I will never comprehend is why these same young people turned out in droves to almost give a man who has opposed the European Union since before it bore that name the keys to 10 Downing Street.

Corbyn voted to leave a watered-down version of the European Union back in 1973 and refused to say how he voted last year. He opposed the Lisbon Treaty, which arguably created the EU as we know it today. On June 24, 2016, even before David Cameron had resigned, he called for an immediate invocation of Article 50 (if that had happened, we would officially leave the EU in June 2018), and the Labour manifesto called for “an end to free movement”, which the EU has insisted will necessitate a hard Brexit. Labour figures’ contradictory statements on the issue sought only to appease the party’s different bases of support: Labour promised all things to all men; they knew that they would never win, so they were free to do so.

The masterstroke, terrifying in its brilliance, almost backfired.

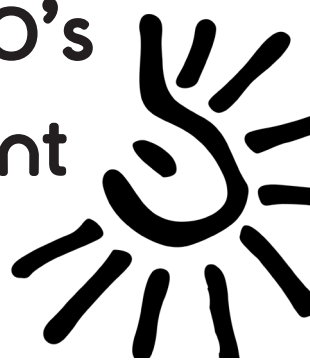
Had he become Prime Minister, Jeremy Corbyn would have been forced to betray either his deepest-held beliefs or his most fervent supporters. Yet he ‘lost’, and so the great deception continues. Young people turn up to rallies and protests, creating something that is very, very real—yet what is it worth if it is built on lies?

The Economist recently wrote “June’s experiment with diluted Corbynism was a success. Expect the next version to be stronger.” I fear that to be true, and that is why I am writing this article. I do not hate Corbyn; I merely fear for his Britain. That is why I ask this of you: if you oppose Brexit and support corrupt regimes and everything that the Conservatives seem to stand for, then vote for the Liberal Democrats. Or the Green Party. But Corbyn’s Labour is, like so much else in politics, just too good to be true.

Nick Scott



The Life of a 1980's Ghanaian Student



Although I cannot speak fluently in any of my native tongues, Fante, Ga or Twi, I can understand all 3 languages relatively well, and love to embrace my Ghanaian background and culture. I also love to share my culturally rich background and history, and I will be doing so in narrating to you two interesting tales of what it was like being a student in Accra, the capital of Ghana, in the 80's, from my parents' perspective.

Like most of Accra's children at that time, both my parents attended primary school, starting at 6 years old in Class 1, the Ghanaian equivalent to Year 1. From that point, they were taught the alphabet, numbers, verbs and tenses, history - all in English. Thus, many children were brought up bi-lingual or multi-lingual as they were spoken to in their native tongue at home (Ga for my dad and Fante for my mum) yet taught in English at school, and often were taught French at an intensive level when they were older.

1979 was the year my dad started primary at New Order Preparatory School, which was essentially a private school. The school fees were astronomically expensive for the family my dad came from, so he was very privileged to be able to go there. Only my dad's eldest brother, Gabriel, also attended a prep school; the rest of his other siblings had to attend a public school, where the quality of education was considerably lower. It was a hard decision for my grandparents, to choose which of their children had the most potential to succeed at a prep school, but it was a decision they needed to make nonetheless. My grandmother, Margaret, had to wake up at 2am every day in order to prepare the food in time to sell in the morning. Although it meant leaving his family back in Accra for long periods of time, my grandfather Christian had to work in Kumasi, which is another large city 4 hours away from the capital, just to generate enough extra income for school fees and numerous other things Margaret's 'chop bar' (the equivalent to a café) business simply could not cover.

My mum began primary school in 1981 at Quartey Memorial Preparatory School. Like my dad's, this was a private school, so again, the school fees were ridiculously expensive for my grandmother Mary. As a consequence, my grandmother had to work Monday to Saturday, waking up at 3am to man the chop bar, because by 6am there were already truck drivers waiting to be served. She could never take a break, or my mum would not have had enough to go to school. Funnily enough, these same truck drivers would be the ones that would drop my mum to school where she would sit in the front seat; once they arrived, the drivers helper would cross the road safely with her where she would walk the rest of the way. This was because if the drivers were nice to my mum, Mary would give them extra food! Only my mum out of all her siblings, was able to attend prep school all the way to Class 6, and so she was extremely privileged.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Me: Now that you have seen all of your children attend a primary school in London, are there any noticeable differences to your education in Ghana?

Dad: Yeah, primary education is seen as the right of every child, whilst in Ghana it's a privilege. School trips are made up of excursions to the brewery, or hydrothermal plants, compared to here where they go to zoos, then beach etc. Oh and we didn't get to go on residential trips like PGL! The education focused mainly on literacy and numeracy, arts and crafts were kept to a minimum. I much prefer the education here, because you are challenged and able to achieve your potential more. In Ghana, most of the primary teachers didn't have degrees in education, so the standard is much better here.

Mum: Absolutely. There's a huge difference in the starting age of primary school, here they start at 4, there they start at 6. The facilities available to the children here at such a young age are incredible. The intelligence of the children at the same ages here, compared to those in Ghana is far higher. We didn't do anything like PSR or PSHE, art was just drawing, and there are no trips that we went on that I can recall. But having said that, I schooled in a private school and so I was so much more privileged than the other children of Accra.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Me: Your secondary school experience, what would you say about it?

Mum: It was really exciting, I had a lot of wonderful friends and staff around me and the future was very optimistic. One memorable experience that sticks out to me was our trip to the Coca Cola Factory - because of the poverty in Accra we hardly ever got to have Coca Cola as it was seen as a luxury, so to suddenly be told that you can drink as much of it as you can... you can imagine our excitement. I was also the long distance champion for my school - I was the 1,500m reigning champion all the way to 6th form, that was also a great memory for me. Oh I almost forgot! The dreaded hair chop! The school uniform policy included that hair was to remain natural and at a length of 1 inch. Although I did eventually get used to the length, I was rather disappointed that I couldn't have my hair in 'jelly curls', which was how all the 80s disco stars had their hair at the time. That was also a massive part of school, Disco. We would all try and save up to get disco style clothes, and we'd have to go to the person who owned a record player to be able to listen to all the latest disco hits. I loved it.

Dad: It was very outstanding and full of fulfilling experiences. My intellectual prowess and leadership abilities were quickly spotted and I was chosen as the form rep for the students representative council and continued to stay top of the class, eventually being selected as head boy as well as president SRC. I made lots of great friendships, and I was more of a political animal then than now! I used to be a proper disco animal, and used to win dance competitions. Give me any 80s disco song and I could probably have a good attempt at humming the tune and breaking out a few dance moves!

My mum attended an all girls school for her secondary education, and since it was one of the best schools in Accra, you had to sit an entrance exam to get in, which my mum got top marks in. However, the year before (Year 5), seeing as my mum had such high potential, it was arranged that she sit the exam one year early, but this time to get into one of the best schools in the country, which would mean she would start secondary school with those one year her senior. She sat the exam to get into the prestigious high school St Mary's, and passed, which was a remarkable feat, but unfortunately due to some unforeseen circumstances she couldn't actually go. So the following year, she started school at Accra Girls School. For O'level (GCSE) she took English, Maths, General Science, Agricultural Science, Accounting, Commerce, Economics, French, R.S. Her results were in division one, which is the highest you could get,

For secondary education, my dad went to The Christian Methodist Secondary established by American missionaries. It definitely wasn't the best of schools, but my dad took the opportunity of an education, and studied extremely hard and was also rewarded with division one results. To give a sense of how remarkable a feat this is, he managed to achieve these results without a French dictionary he received an A in French, and without the prescribed literature book he received top marks in English. The education quality was in stark contrast to Britain's.

Britney Laryea



VEGANISM

Since the turn of the century, the Western World has seen an upswing in the number of people opting for a vegan or vegetarian lifestyle. Hence young people being closely associated with this animal-friendly ‘trend’. Yet is this trend here to stay? I asked a few young people for their opinion on the matter.

Initially I asked about their motivations for making the decision to go meat-free; many had had surprisingly similar experiences. For one, it was while eating Hawaiian pizza that she thought: “Wait, why am I so cool with eating flesh?”. Another, while in America, visited a restaurant which featured pieces of meat hanging from the walls, which was such an affecting sight that she decided to go vegetarian. So, could it be that this generation is more empathetic to the plight of animals than older ones?

However, it is not only through experiences like these that young people are deciding to cut meat out of their diets; they are educating themselves more on the social and environmental impacts of the meat and dairy industries through the internet and other sources of information, including documentaries such as *Cowspiracy*. The amount of land and water used to raise livestock is astronomical in comparison to the amount needed to sustain a vegan lifestyle, and one young person picked up on this fact.

“I don’t really agree with the animal industry,” she said, “it is unnecessary and cruel. If the whole world went vegan, world hunger could be eradicated ten times over.” This is due to the fact that much of the grain currently grown is used to feed fast-growing numbers of livestock, when it could be used to provide for those going without enough food.

Even some of those who are not vegan or vegetarian appreciate the acceleration of the movement: “There are so many vegan and vegetarian [food] substitutes nowadays that the necessity of meat-eating has been rendered almost obsolete. Vegetarianism and veganism should be promoted as lifestyles; I think it is the future.” This young person (Year 12 student Patrick Liu), though not vegan himself, enjoys sampling and producing his own vegan food, and is a talented cook. He is not alone in enjoying vegan food without making the decision to become vegan completely, as the number of vegan food establishments and their popularity have both seen a dramatic increase in recent years.

However, not all meat-eaters share this view. One young person I talked to was adamant that although she believes that all animals kept in captivity by humans should be treated “humanely” (meaning ‘free-range’), she thinks people should be free to eat whatever they choose, especially if meat is part of one’s normal diet, because of the possible unknown consequences of diet change.

The overwhelming opinion amongst herbivores and omnivores alike was that meat-eating is not the most ethical or sustainable way of living, with some thinking that meat-eating should be regulated more closely. Young people who are not able currently to maintain a meat-free diet, whether due to parents’ concerns (having spoken to one young person about her struggle to eat vegan with disapproving parents, I can greatly sympathise), or otherwise, have shown their capability to rationalise their thoughts about the meat and dairy industries, and take according action.

So while the majority of young people will not give up their fried chicken or sirloin steak, a growing number of young people are choosing to become vegan or vegetarian, whether for ethical, health or environmental reasons.

Afra Sterne-Rodgers

The world has never been better

Are you unhappy with the direction this country is heading?

If you are, then you're not the only one. 72% of British people think that Britain is on the wrong track, and this is far from an extreme figure. Millennials tell pollsters that they think they will be worse off than their parents; fewer than a third would rather grow up today than in the 1960s.

But if you think that the world is worse than it was, then you're wrong.

Hate the government? Tell them! More than half of the world population now lives in a democracy (fifty years ago, barely a third did). People take to the streets in the hundreds of thousands to protest policies they disagree with – those protesters would once have been shot.

Human rights – treating all people as equals – are a frighteningly new idea. Donald Trump told CNN that America was great in the 1950s. Agreeing with him is a mark of privilege. At that time, forty percent of Americans would move out if a black family moved next door. As late as 1995, only a minority of white people in the US were in favour of interracial relationships. Did you know that at the turn of the millennium, not a single country on the planet recognised same-sex marriage? Now, just seventeen years later, around twenty-five do.

But it's not just about human rights. The world today has never been better by virtually every measurable metric.

Since 2000:

The percentage of people living in extreme poverty has halved globally.

The number of children performing child labour has fallen by 80 million.

The under-five mortality rate has gone down by a third.

This is something to celebrate.

Louis XIV, King of France, was once the most powerful man in the world and had access to every luxury in existence. This did not include any of the medical technology that people across the globe now see as essential; five of his six children died before reaching adulthood.

It is true that we face great challenges in the coming decades, be it climate change or our age-

ing population, but we as a species have overcome such obstacles before. Diseases like polio or guinea worm that were once commonplace have almost been destroyed. With the cost of solar and wind energy plummeting, CO2 emissions stabilising and 195 states having signed the Paris Climate Agreement, many scientists believe that there is reason to be optimistic about global warming too.

It's easy for us to focus on what the life was like in Britain, so, coming from a Polish background, let me give you a little perspective. While you remember the latest music and fashion, my mother remembers queueing for hours to buy something as simple as petrol. You remember having more money and leisure time; she remembers when her mother's application to borrow her own passport was rejected, without explanation. You remember the increasingly liberal attitude of this country; she remembers when the General of the Army announced the imposition of martial law to crush opposition to his government. She remembers the tanks that appeared on the streets overnight – she remembers the people who were killed in the brutal, two-year crackdown.

Today, Poland is a peaceful democracy with a thriving economy, a member of NATO and the EU. But there are dozens of countries with pasts like Poland's. There are millions of people like my mother. How can we claim the world has become worse after listening to their stories of the past? How can we justify wanting to go back to a time when they are treated so badly? How dare we sentence them to a life where those painful memories become harsh reality once more?

Matt Ridley wrote a book on this subject called *The Rational Optimist*, and at an event in the Midwest the crowd told him that their lives had not been getting better. He replied: "Yes, but this isn't the whole world! Are you not even a little bit cheered by the fact that really poor Africans are getting a little less poor?"

How dare we disagree? How dare we compare our unhappiness with their lives? It is the epitome of selfishness to claim that our so-called suffering is in any way comparable to the millions of lives that have been saved or transformed in and by the modern world.

There is a place for pessimism. But I believe that it is time for us to appreciate everything that humans have achieved – everything that we have achieved – in the past century.

We eradicated smallpox. We brought the Berlin Wall down peacefully. We ended Apartheid. Never have fewer countries been at war. We have created a world where a working-class family in a rich country has a lifestyle that 99.9% of all humans who have ever lived would have done anything to achieve.

People alive today are the healthiest, wealthiest, most intelligent, longest-lived and safest that they have ever been. It's time to embrace the fact that the world has never been better.

Nick Scott

The Innocent Men

Some people deserve to die. But too many who are executed do not.

On February 17, 2004, Cameron Todd Willingham, a man sentenced to death by the state of Texas for murder, was told that Governor Rick Perry would not grant him a stay of execution. This had been his last hope. He told his mother: "Don't be sad. I'm going home to see my kids." Less than an hour later, he was strapped to a gurney and had sodium thiopental, pancuronium bromide and potassium chloride injected into his body. He was alleged to have murdered his children by starting a fire in his house. The evidence says he did not.

The case against Willingham was built on deeply flawed scientific evidence, inaccurate eyewitness testimony and a jailhouse informant with multiple psychiatric problems who later admitted to having lied. The fire expert Craig Beyler wrote a damning report that said that the arson investigators' approach was devoid of "rational reasoning".

He is far from alone. More than a dozen people who have been executed in the US since 1976 were likely innocent (some sources claim forty or more). These include Carlos DeLuna, where a different man with a history of violent crimes repeatedly bragged about committing the murder DeLuna was executed for, and David Spence, who was executed despite a lack of physical evidence; the detective and police officer who led the investigation both said that he was not guilty. Richard Masterson was convicted based on the testimony of an unqualified pathologist who had falsified his credentials and was later fired; the main witness against Brian Terrell was pressured by police to lie in exchange for a lesser sentence (he faced the prospect of being executed himself).

There have almost certainly been more. Well over a hundred people have been exonerated while on death row in the United States, and these decisions have often relied on crucial DNA evidence. What happens in cases that lack it?

I believe that the death penalty is morally right and that certain criminals deserve to die for what they have done. In theory, it can act as a deterrent and the ultimate form of retribution, the only just punishment for the worst crimes imaginable. But the unavoidable price of this is that innocent people will be killed too. How could that be a price worth paying in order to kill people who would die in prison anyway?

In a system with perfect police forces, detectives, forensic scientists, politicians and courts, the death penalty would be justifiable. But that could not be further from reality.

Nick Scott

THE LIFE OF A STUDENT ATHLETE

School is a stressful time. Burdened with two-year courses of GCSEs and A-Levels, people struggle with the workload; ‘all two years of school to be learnt for two months of exams’ is a fairly standard cry of despair when talking about the ridiculously large pressure school bears on students. “Eat healthy, get nine hours sleep, drink lots of water, stay fit, do mindfulness, make friends... and for every hour of work you do in class you should do another outside,” they say, “oh - and enjoy yourself.” But the thing is, the school workload is a problem that even green tea can’t fix.

So, what if you had to go through the stressful strain of school while trying to uphold a career- a sports career even? Statistics show that, among teenagers performing at elite standards, on average a gymnast will train for around 28 hours a week, a swimmer 27 hours, and track athletes anywhere from 10 hours to 18 hours. (Track athletes, like myself, train considerably less than their counterparts because running, especially sprinting, is much more intensive on joints, tendons and muscles.)

Even still, all athletes have to train a lot, so much so that in many cases training takes up almost double the amount of time sixth formers spend in lessons (15 hours) – and that is only the physical toll! An athlete’s training does not end when they step off the track, pool or court; all athletes have a disciplined regime including diet, sleep, rehab, foam rolling (used to help with muscular recovery), and even simply, and essentially, relaxing. So the question is raised: how can athletes meet these necessary requirements? Energy-wise, swimmers need around 10,000 calories every day, five times the recommended daily value – lots of which needs to be carbohydrates, protein and vegetables, and clearly a diet not catered for by the regular school meal.

Possibly the greatest struggle faced by athletes, are competitions. Any athlete can tell you that competitions are long and draining; they require complete focus as well as often long-distance, even abroad, travel. A competition is fundamentally a test of your ability, almost like an exam - and yet unfortunately for us athletes, our big competitions frequently occur at the time of school exams! Take the under-20 National championships and World Junior Trials for athletics, which this year will be held on the 16–17th June. Competition season is a time when two worlds – sport and school – collide.

It all sounds like doom and gloom for athletes. But if it were really all bad, we wouldn’t do it. The adrenaline from reaching a goal, the accomplishment after a hard training session, the friends met, and the opportunities to travel the world, are all amazing benefits. Let the purpose of this article be to let you see into our world, so often hidden away at school. And to any young athlete reading: it’s a hard, tiring, sometimes painful road, but then again - ‘the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing’.

Ben Lloyd



Caster Semenya

Gender and Sport

South African 800m and 1500m runner Caster Semenya has been one of sport's most talked about athletes this year, as during the 2017 IAAF World Championships she took gold in the 800m in addition to a bronze medal in the 1500m.

Caster Semenya is also intersex. This means that she was born with any of several variations in sex characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals that, according to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies”.

This has caused such an issue as it has raised the question of whether Semenya should be allowed to compete in women's competitions. The governing body of athletics, the IAAF, pre-2015 used to force intersex athletes who have high testosterone levels to take medication that would reduce their natural testosterone levels. However, in 2015 the Court of Arbitration for Sport prevented the IAAF from doing so, and gave them two years to present a scientific case for enforcing the medication.

The IAAF returned two years later with evidence. Researchers measured blood testosterone levels in 1,332 female athletes competing across 21 track and field disciplines at the 2011 and 2013 world championships. Those with the highest levels of testosterone demonstrated significant advantages over those with the lowest levels – notably in the 400m (2.7% faster), the 400m hurdles (2.8% faster), the 800m (1.8% faster), the hammer throw (4.5% longer) and in the pole vault (2.9% higher).

These percentages may appear small, but they can be the difference between a medal or not. The inevitable question is whether competing with elevated testosterone levels is fair. To argue the fairness of such natural genetics one has to question the meaning of fair in elite sport. Usain Bolt is at an unfair advantage as he has naturally longer limbs; humans come in all shapes and sizes and make-ups, many with natural advantages, so should we be stunting the growth of tall, young sportspeople? That would inherently evil. How do you apply 'fair' to a sport that is arguably based on natural advantage?

Could it be possible that Caster Semenya's problem is not that she is intersex, but the fact her femininity does not look as we want it to? In 2009, following a 800m World Champion win, an 18-year-old Semenya was forced into taking a humiliating test to “prove” her gender. We have to ask ourselves whether we would treat a man who had higher testosterone levels than other male athletes in the same way... would they be forced to medicate to compete? A male athlete is expected to be masculine, they would be hailed as the pinnacle of athleticism. This is not how we treat Semenya: She is guilty of nothing.

Ben Lloyd

WHY I LOVE MATHS

Forced to complete sheets of near-identical exercises on a weekly basis, all involving standard methods that have been memorised without understanding, it is little wonder that many students find maths boring and frustrating. Maths is so much more than manipulating numbers to obtain a required result, and it is a great shame that so much of the secondary school curriculum has been reduced to this.

So what is mathematics? A primary school pupil would likely say that the job of a mathematician is ‘doing calculations’; a secondary school student might instead opt for ‘proving theorems’. But, as the mathematician Gian Carlo-Rota once said, describing a mathematician’s job as ‘proving theorems’ is like describing an author’s job as ‘writing sentences’.

Mathematics is the only field of human endeavour in which the concept of absolute truth has any meaning. Mathematical theorems are cast-iron chains of logical reasoning leading to an undeniable conclusion. They are different from anything else that humans have created because we did not create them at all; they were discovered by us. Maths is the purest of all subjects; indeed, it is impossible to imagine another in which the fundamental facts proved centuries ago are still the core of that subject today.

Over the past two thousand years, humanity’s understanding of geography, history, physics, chemistry, astronomy and morality have all been completely transformed. Pythagoras’ theorem, which was first proved at least a thousand years before the birth of Christ, has remained unchanged. Pythagoras’ theorem was true before Pythagoras proved it. It was true before humans first started to count; it was true ten billion years ago, long before this planet came into existence. It will outlast all of us.

This is what makes mathematics beautiful. I think that it is rather like music. Both could simply be described as ‘manipulating symbols’, but feature hidden, abstract structure that it can take a decade or more of study to fully understand. Both have been explored by humans for millennia but will always have more to offer us. The difference is that mathematics involves searching for the structures that underpin the entire universe.

Imagine an alien civilisation ten thousand light years away, so utterly unlike us that there would seem to be no way for humanity to understand them. Our philosophy, our language, our religions and our art would be meaningless to them; their chemistry and their biology might be beyond anything we thought possible. And yet, if they had achieved any form of civilisation at all, then I believe that there is no doubt at all that they will have discovered mathematics. Perhaps that will be the key that will allow us to communicate with them.

Now, wouldn’t that be beautiful?

Nick Scott

Let's apply neuroscientific business models to improve learning in school

For a thriving business, you need motivated individuals that are not just able to learn, but eager. To achieve this, companies use the services of organisations such as CIPD, who use neuroscience to form business management models. These are intended to improve the environment of a business by creating a checklist of what makes learning easier for the brain (to improve, for example, retention or t). Though the business models discussed in this article are focused on improving learning conditions for adults, they can still be relevant to schools.

The acronym SOCIAL is used by CIPD to improve the learning process for workers. Security, Ownership, Connection, Identity, Altruism, and Legitimacy are factors considered to be essential in providing a stable, efficient learning environment. CIPD base this model on the idea that there are two states at which a brain can learn in: the "away" state, where the brain is not focused and cannot learn efficiently, and the "reward" state, which suggests that there is motivation to learn due to a sense of reward. The goal of the model is to push the brain to the reward end.

Security

Security (also called safety) appears a lot in theories of business, one glaringly prominent model being Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's pyramid suggest that security is the second most important factor in human motivation. However, as we will discuss later on, security in the sense of physically being safe is not the only contributing factor to a healthy learning environment.

Ownership

CIPD talks about how if employees (students in this case) can 'own' their learning, they will be more likely to retain the given information. This means that if students feel in control of their learning process, as I have seen in some revision lessons where students are encouraged, for example, to teach other students a concept to solidify their understanding, they are more inclined to stay in a "reward" state of mind.

In other countries students who are not able to score a minimum grade in their subjects are held back a year. This might seem a dramatic way to deal with struggling students as it is a whole year retaken, but the students have a whole year to learn the same concepts they struggled with. If the curriculum keeps moving for those who already feel behind, their minds will fall into the "away" state because they feel that it is out of their control whether they succeed or not, most likely due to the lack of perceived hope of succeeding. Implementing short courses, revising basic knowledge required for the current lesson could be reassuring for students.



Connection

Other scientific studies suggest music could be a strong linking factor in boosting the brain's memory function, which all point to the idea that for effective learning, you need a connection. In the case of this particular model, commonly used techniques are of an emotional nature. This is a two-way effect though, as employees can often have bad memories associated with training and learning so will purposefully avoid, for example, a particular training course. Students cannot choose to avoid education, so they will simply not pay attention. So we want to try to make a connection between the students and their learning a strongly positive one.

Identity

In the context of learning, we talk about the perception of status. In a class of thirty children, those with less powerful voices tend to feel irrelevant and will eventually opt for giving no contribution as opposed to participating to further the discussion. Matthew Shanahan proposed the theory that a less developed ego identity would be associated with higher levels of procrastination. So we need to consider nurturing the ego of students so that enough confidence is gained within themselves to provide their own drives.

Altruism

The idea that selflessness needs to be considered as part of the endeavour for better education seems disjointed. But CIPD reckons that the reception of our kind acts plays a big role in our attitudes whilst learning. Altruism involves the response of others, which everyone hopes to be positive and therefore solidifies the relationships we attempt to improve. This positive stimulation within a classroom is amplified when you consider the importance of friends to any one adolescent. "Prior research has shown that friendship is important in adolescence—it predicts everything from stronger psychological health and better stress responses to improved academic motivation and success during adolescence," writes Jenny Anderson on qz.com.

Legitimacy

No one likes to feel singled out within a group; the same applies for a classroom full of students. A survey conducted by ditchthelabel.org found that 50% of young people had been bullied at some point and 25% of young people had experienced this within the past year. Legitimacy is associated with creating a fair learning environment (which you would assume is influenced by teachers), but we have to consider the unfairness of bullying playing a part in diminishing the quality of someone's education, especially considering how large this problem has become.

In conclusion, these factors do not seem complex, but they do often seem to be overlooked in the face of the sheer numbers that the British education system has to provide for. Our school (and the whole system) must provide first for the masses before considering students' individual requirements. However, I believe that whilst we strive for quantity, we can also aim for quality.

Tracey Nguyen



Is



CREATIVITY

CRUSHED



in schools?



Do you remember when a cardboard box became a castle? When you could spend hours on end fighting dragons and conquering vast stretches of land? It is not a coincidence that children can conjure up stories in seconds, invent characters in a heartbeat and have the capacity to imagine the impossible. Progressing through our education system, one thing has become increasingly clear to me: I have lost the ability to think outside the box.

Advancing through the system, this concept becomes more and more visible. It feels as though society is churning out students that can regurgitate bouts of information, or learn a precise word-for-word answer an exam board wants to hear, akin to a robot. Though this information is of course fascinating and important in furthering our education, pushing young minds through a rigid structure of dictation, memorisation and regurgitation hinders their learning. We are taught the artificial skill of passing exams; we learn for the purpose of producing results. The magic of learning disappears as students are fed a syllabus that requires little to no imaginative thinking. This ultimately produces adults that are clones of a system, who lack creative inclination and inherently struggle with imaginative concepts. Why are we preaching standardisation?

This attracts the natural argument: how is it possible that factually fuelled subjects could ever have imaginative thinking interwoven into them? I am by no means suggesting that imagination is necessary in all situations, nor am I implying that these subjects don't deserve the accolade and acknowledgement they get. In our corporate and financial world, the importance of maths and science is stressed as these are the subjects that traditionally equate to economic prosperity. What the stigma in our society dictates, however, is that the arts are of lesser or little importance – or none whatsoever. Though art and science are very contrasting subjects, together they move us closer to a rounded human nature and keep society flourishing. What is not properly recognised is the arts teach one to analyse; give the incomparable experience of the thought process behind both a planned piece, and spontaneous manifestation; and show us how to co-ordinate the mind from inspiration to final touches. The arts enable us not to be afraid of unique, unconventional interpretations, teach us to embrace the inspiration that surrounds us, and empower us to stray from the conformities of a textbook answer, ultimately resulting in open-mindedness.

In reality, specialisation and expertise in a field pays, therefore schools teach to specialise. The STEM subjects, humanities and languages instigate progress; they are at the forefront of technological advancement. But it would be illogical to conclude that inventions and developments do not require an element of inspiration. It takes one person, with one creative thought that is different to others', to achieve great things. The ability to notice a need for change and succeed as an industry leader, for example, undeniably requires creative thinking and vision. Creativity is key where a narrow mindset simply cannot open any doors.

Schools and teachers are of course incredible, and most will try and teach as creatively as possible while confined within the boundaries of a curriculum. But I seek to address the stigma in society. Sir Ken Robinson, an expert on creativity and education, highlights the fact that “at school, you were probably steered away from the subjects you enjoyed because you would ‘never get a job doing that!’” and “many creative, brilliant, talented people think they're not, because everything they were good at at school was stigmatised”. This stigma has been highlighted to me whilst choosing my A levels, leading to the profound realisation that retaining passion for what we love is integral, and will lead an individual along the right path for them. Sir Robinson emphasises how the subject hierarchies we are so familiar with – of Maths, Science and English over



Drama, Music and Art – are damaging. Creativity carries us far beyond the classroom; why are we fixated on teaching conformity rather than diversity and variation?

The core issue is society's narrow definition of intelligence. We are educated to be good, methodical workers, rather than creative thinkers. The truth is that creative thinking is sidelined while we steer children into a uniform society, scared of making and learning from mistakes. Companies are run on the underlying, fundamental belief that the worst thing you can do is make a mistake; this unrealistic expectation prevents originality from co-existing with corporate thinking. Recent research by Adobe shows that whilst 80% of people feel that unlocking creativity is critical to economic growth, only 25% believe that they are living up to their creative potential. Businesses are craving creativity, but struggle to find it amongst graduates who from the start of schooling have lost the freedom to explore, take risks, and experiment.

“Everyone is born creative, but it is educated out of us.” My hope is that children's creativity is nurtured and cultivated alongside academia, so that we can carry these vital qualities through to adulthood. Maintaining these attributes would lead to adults who have the capability of self-expression and interpretation, who develop a unique and imaginative perspective on life. If creativity were de-stigmatised, and interwoven into education with emphasis on its importance, this would be possible. We need to ensure that alongside fading memories of cardboard castles and duels with dragons, our creativity is not forgotten as well.

Riya Myanger



Artwork title
Artist name
Medium
Year



What art means to me

If you would say that you have not come across even the smallest piece of art in your entire lifetime that hasn't excited you;

If you haven't become completely infatuated with the need to know where something came from;

If you resist feeling a form of satisfaction when you find out how something is achieved;

If you neglect the child-like excitement of turning over crisp white pages with a readiness to lay down original markings or strokes;

If any of these statements listed above chime with you, let this be an insight on how euphoric art can make you feel.

Art isn't just simply toiling over the same canvas for hours on end. It's about how you deal with a situation, challenge norms, create a new perspective; it's a creative way of thinking that can lead to a different and more aesthetically pleasing outcome. It's how you hold yourself, radiating confidence to change the view of the observer. In art, there's no right or wrong answer. Art isn't methodically trudging through constant, monotonous writings; it's jumping to and from branches sprouting from the roots of your interest. It's serendipitous, taking innovative and different perspectives, each growing and moving in line with your thoughts.

Self-belief and satisfaction are inevitable results of producing art. Any cynical, despondent thoughts (that you'd think would be omnipresent on the mind of someone who is mostly unaware of the final outcome) are defeated; indeed, there's something refreshing about exploring your constantly evolving thought process, as there's no one else who has access to your overflowing imagination. Unleashing something from your innermost thoughts and being able to present it exactly in line with how you intended results in a feeling of complete elation, opening your eyes to art's timeless beauty.

Dangerous, compelling, provocative, delicate, obsessive, addictive. Art is antagonistic as well as a source of serenity. Something so simple can cause an uproar, something so intricate and pastel can invite a sense of fear. The unexpected turns into the familiar, where a single person is able to guide others into untouched realms, and if creative minds come together then the opportunities are unimaginable.

The possibilities are infinite.

Alannah Smith

The Golden Triangle of Madrid

Sophie Lloyd

Symran Shah

After an extremely early start on February 9th we boarded the flight heading to Madrid. Full of excitement and joy, we arrived at the airport, however tragedy struck as Salyme Gunsaya left her passport behind on the plane! But that was not the only problem, as unfortunately Ethan Robinson misplaced his boarding pass and Sophie Lloyd dropped her EHIC card... but this didn't hold us back as we all began our journey in Madrid.

On our first day in Madrid, we visited the Prado Museum. Sophie Lloyd said "it was splendid, the classical sculptures were inspirational". During our lunch break we were able to order food, thanks to Emily de Naeyer's knowledge of Spanish. We then headed to the botanical gardens, though unfortunately it wasn't the best time of year to visit the garden as the flowers were not in bloom.

We were awakened by the hustle and bustle of Madrid early the next day and were able to see the sunrise, as well as the breathtaking view of the city below from our hotel rooms. We ventured off to the Thyssen Bonemiza Museum, which had a wonderful collection of masterpieces, including some by contemporary artists such as Roy Lichtenstein, Lucian Freud, Richard Estes and many more. Furthermore, there was a selection of traditional artworks which demonstrated the importance of religion, which was enlightening. The group had a productive sketch session, and we all produced a stunning variety of art. We loved walking around the streets of Madrid as the teachers encouraged our independence while still ensuring our safety.

We then found ourselves at the stunning palace, where we had a view not only of the beautiful mountains, but also of the Plaza de la Armeria. Whilst some of us were sketching, others took free Segway rides and fantastic pictures. Lauren Britten took a great selection of photos, winning the prize for the best creative photo in the department, as she perfectly captured the essence of the heart of Madrid. This signifies the importance of having school trips to enhance the art curriculum, as they help to inspire creativity among students.

On the last day, we embarked on our adventure to the Reina Sofia Museum. In our opinion this was the best gallery we saw in Madrid, as we were very inspired by the works of José de Almada Nageires and Eduardo Vienna; there were so many great, influential pieces to view. This is another reason for having trips like Madrid; our minds are broadened as we experience new artists and styles. Also, the gallery's extensive collection of media and film was very impressive; the many interesting videos really captivated us.

We were all reluctant to leave as we were still full of energy and none of us wanted to go back to the miserable weather in England. The weather was so delightful that some of us decided to buy sunglasses, despite the extortionate prices! This trip helped to bring all of the students closer together as we got to know everyone so well. We would like to thank the art department for organising such an amazing trip that benefited all of the students as well as helping us all to produce stunning work in our sketch books. We would especially like to thank Mr Anastasi, Mrs Grigson and Miss Veerayen for looking after us in Madrid.

MR NODOBY The Gatsby Immersive Experience

FROM NOWHERE

The Great Gatsby is a novel written by F. Scott Fitzgerald in the year 1925. Through the eyes of the narrator Nick Carraway, the reader is submerged in his unique depiction of the glamorous city of 1920's New York. It is in this exuberant city that through Nick, we are met with the illustrious character named Gatsby; a man whose parties are notorious throughout Long Island. However, beneath the excessive drinking, laughter and vigorous dancing, a darker secret is yet to be revealed. The host always seems alone, waiting for something. It is around this young mysterious figure the story centers, his character filled with hidden secrets that intrigue Nick, and in turn, the reader.

As these secrets are revealed throughout the story, the narrative is a fragmentary one, confusing, overwhelming, and fascinating. An immersive theatrical experience therefore, where no one night is the same, and every audience member's experience is different, is the truly perfect way to dramatise the story of Mr Jay Gatsby.

On the cold night of March 7th, several Year 12 English Literature students embarked on a journey to Gatsby's drug store in London for a night of decadent partying. As we waited outside the entrance, surrounded by a swirl of colours, the anticipation only seemed to build. All of us were dressed exceptionally well for this event, from crisp white suits to elegant flapper dresses; I almost believed I had personally been flung back to the peak of the Jazz Age in New York. It was with wide grins and furious chatter that we were finally summoned into Gatsby's abode.

It is a difficult task to enchant an audience of fifty, yet despite this we were enthralled throughout. As soon as we entered Gatsby's bar, Nick Carraway appeared and initiated the immersive experience with his faultless account of the final words of the novel, easing the audience into the story. Then, through two grand double doors, Nick guided us to the main part of the event; the party. Upon entry, we were welcomed with an outburst of jazz music and a kaleidoscope of colours. The theatre was beautifully decorated like an American country house, littered with fairy lights and opulent furniture, brilliantly reflecting the materialism of the novel. It was here that we were "formally" introduced to the other characters - I got along particularly well with Jordan Baker, a picture of the evolving image of women in the Twenties through her trousers amongst the sea of dresses. Straight away (because what other way is there to start an evening in 1920s New York?) all the characters enthusiastically taught us the Charleston, bringing the energy and movement that so characterises the novel to the forefront of our experience.

One of the highlights of the evening involved an outrageous game of 'spin the bottle'. It was a scarring experience; Mr Jones was asked to be ridden like a pony by Myrtle as part of a dare. This event was both terrifying and hilarious. My previous enjoyment in the company of Myrtle was shattered, like that bottle in the hands of Tom, in just seconds. Flashbacks of that iconic event will haunt the dreams of Year 12 English Literature students for many years to

“The most amazing and unique experience that absolutely brought the book to life.”

Riya Myanger

come.

Throughout the night we were whisked away by all the characters to different/hidden rooms within the theatre. There were simultaneous events that could lead anything, from creeping down corridors to eavesdropping into plans for a tea party. Although most of the events were in a linear sequence, depending on which character you followed, you would be shown a different rendition of the book, unravelling various events from the novel through different character perspectives. In the poker room you could have had a secret meeting with Gatsby himself and be informed of his illegal activities and gambling opportunities stationed in Chicago. In the bar you could be with Myrtle and Wilson witnessing their irretrievable marriage fall apart, or helping Myrtle hide her affair from Wilson (she always had a couple of the female audience members by her side). The variety of events were unique to each audience member and yet nevertheless there were several moments where the whole audience watched a scene, marking out the crucial events of the story and keeping the story flowing smoothly.

The atmosphere of the experience changed depending on the scene we were witnessing and whether it was tense or romantic the actors adapted perfectly, reflecting the unchronological and fragmentary nature of the book itself. Overall, the experience was one I will never forget. We left the establishment with amazement branded on our faces, yet all was not quite over; we left with a number to call the following morning given by Gatsby's assistant Rosie. Listening to the notorious Meyer Wolfsheim's chilling voicemail message was just another minute finishing detail that this company procured which made the night so spectacular. It was an incredible one, and again reignited my fascination with the mysterious character of Jay Gatsby.

Vinusha Haran

“It was an experience that I won't forget and is something I must go and do again.”

Jack Fox



What, if anything, do rich countries owe to those states in which poverty is widespread?

An inherent human instinct is one of self-preservation, yet a human conscience will seek to help the misfortunate. Born a slave, Booker T. Washington became one of the most significant African-American intellectuals of the 19th Century, and famously said “the highest criterion of civilization is its willingness to help the less fortunate people”. In the current turbulent global climate, there are vast voids between the worlds’ richest and poorest; arguably this void is merely getting perilously wider. It is difficult to illustrate what rich countries owe to poor states, without addressing why they do so. Fundamentally, rich countries owe to poor states the opportunity to develop themselves with resources and support, yet corruption and the impacts of colonialism plague the very social construct of the impoverished states.

It is a compelling moral imperative that rich countries do owe poor states. From a utilitarianist stance, the wealth spent on luxuries in our privileged Western bubble could be used to drastically improve, if not save the lives of the destitute. Provision of education, sanitation and housing are fundamental human rights that everyone is legally inarguably entitled to, and it’s simply wrong for a violation of human rights to pass without the rich taking moral ownership of the problem. Therefore, rich countries owe financial aid but more vitally, resources to enable these states to prosper and flourish, stemming from the basic principle of equality and ethics. The extent of poverty is striking; over 100 million people trapped in a cycle of inescapable poverty, whose situations are so precarious that one bad harvest or brief period of illness can become fatal. Since parents are unable to invest in health, education or skills, their children are born into the same bleak cycle with no means to climb the rungs of a collapsing social ladder. The injustice of extreme poverty shown on the plasma screens plastering the walls in houses of the rich is heart wrenching, yet with a distinct distancing, an “us and them” outlook. The uncomfortable truth is that inaction is almost equivalent to disregard: empathy is not enough.

The history of severely poor nation states bear the many scars of wounds caused by colonialism, exploitation and the slave trade, whilst mere thoughts of Western imperialism remain stinging gashes in the minds’ of civilians whose preceding generations endured unforgivable and incomprehensible hardship. At the Berlin conference in 1884-1885, lines drawn onto a map symbolising land division and political boundaries by the European powers created shock-waves of disruption, unravelling communities and crudely creating new, separated groups. “The colonisers drew the boundaries completely on their own whim, having no respect whatsoever for the realities on the ground” says economist William Easterly. Coupled with staunch opposition to progression of democratic foundations by the colonisers, a sufficient system of governance was continually suppressed from emerging, in turn explaining the poor governing and lack of freedom contributing to



poverty today. Africa was carelessly rendered a tool for use by the rich, exploiting natural resources for selfish gain whilst leaving the continent to fester in steadily worsening poverty.

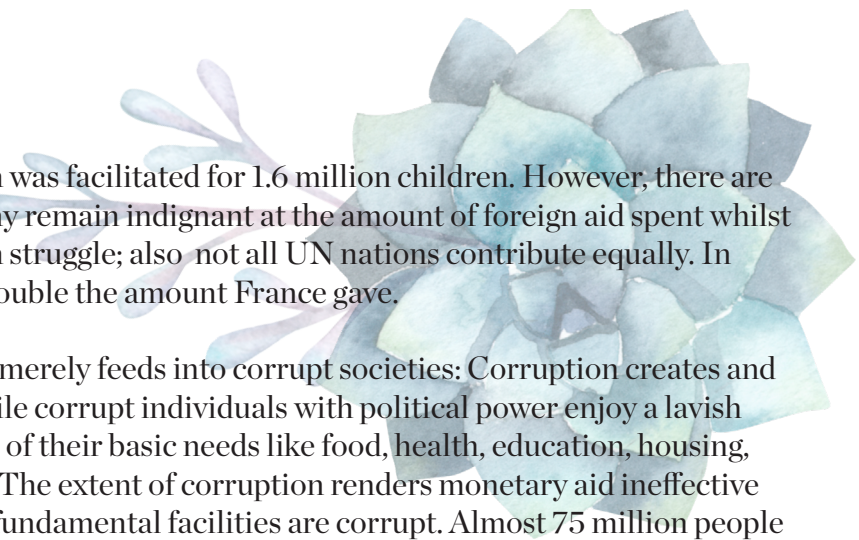
A central post-colonialist idea is the Marxist dependency theory, whereby wealthy nations have preserved the reliance of poor nations upon themselves. It explains that even with aid being provided, the poor nations remain exploited in terms of labour and resources, making it impossible for them to develop enough to be free of poverty. It is only post colonialism that these countries became poor relative to the West, therefore congruent to draw the conclusion that they are not to blame for their own underdevelopment. When the European core nations took control of what became satellite nations, they were cogs in a machine running for selfish benefit; with exports in natural resources and valuable goods generating colossal profit in the West, whilst colonised communities became ridden with European military forces and slavery. However, the poignant infringement of justice is even when “freedom” was gained, their development was stunted because of the lasting impact of colonial rule.

The colonised nations became “monocultures”, meaning each country was used as means to export only one or two products best suited to the climate and landscape, which has rendered these countries reliant on these low value exports to this day. The actions of colonialism have left a legacy of violence, as displayed with the slave trade. As well as this, the vast national divisions implemented hindered social development, due to the creation of artificial states. The tribes which were loyal to colonialism were favoured and given political and economic power, instigating friction between ethnic groups. These divisions cause turmoil even now, as displayed in Rwanda between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes: colonialism heightened the plight of their cultural differences, erupting in the tragedy of the 1994 genocide.

Blatant and mindless disregard for ethnic, linguistic and historical distinctions means a fragmented infrastructure. To improve the infrastructure, rich nations could provide help to rebuild networking, with significant focus on railways for functioning transport and communications. The colonial era brought the construction of railways and roads with the primary intent being to transport raw materials from the area of extraction to the ports. This left a continent exempt from internal connections which means that the costs and difficulty of moving goods is hugely inflated in comparison to developed countries making it almost impossible to secure a competitive price. The vast expanse of landmass means the continent is ideal for railways, which would pave the way for a breadth of economic opportunities in mining and agriculture, fuelled by the correct investment. Not only would this allow them to send goods to market more effectively, but it would also create more jobs in building and transportation to improve the economy overall.

However, there is currently a significant amount of foreign aid that goes towards vaccination, schooling, food, and medical care: last year, for the fourth year consecutively, the British government met the UN 0.7% target for foreign aid, contributing 13.3 billion to the international aid budget. This aid has been undoubtedly proven to be effective in the past as well; in 2002 in



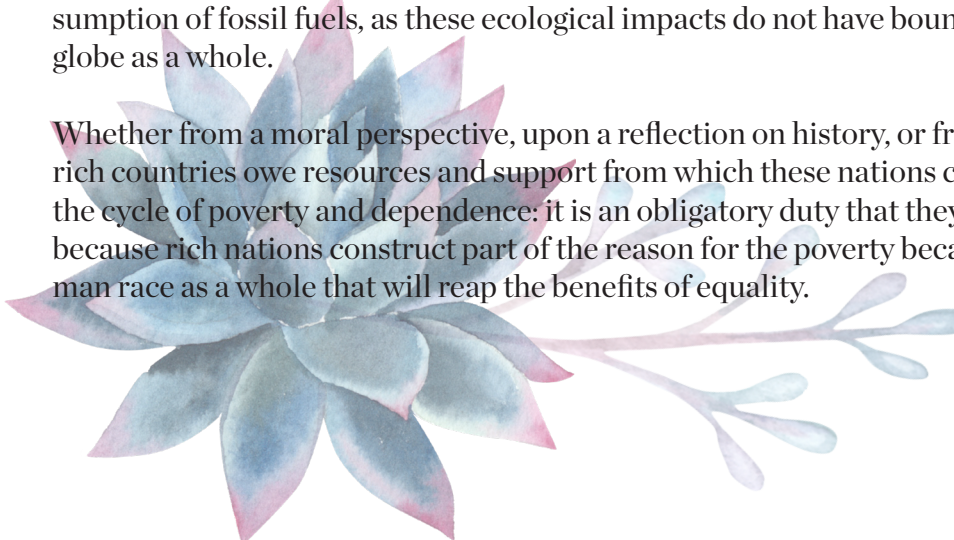


Tanzania for example, free education was facilitated for 1.6 million children. However, there are problems with the aid itself too. Many remain indignant at the amount of foreign aid spent whilst facilities like our NHS and education struggle; also not all UN nations contribute equally. In 2015, over 14% came from the UK, double the amount France gave.

There is the concern that foreign aid merely feeds into corrupt societies: Corruption creates and increases poverty and exclusion. While corrupt individuals with political power enjoy a lavish life, millions of Africans are deprived of their basic needs like food, health, education, housing, access to clean water and sanitation. The extent of corruption renders monetary aid ineffective in many cases, in a nation where the fundamental facilities are corrupt. Almost 75 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa are estimated to have paid a bribe in 2015, many purely to get access to desperately needed necessities as well as some to escape punishment. Corrupt officials must be prevented from laundering and hiding stolen state assets. This can be done by rich countries leading negotiations for the reform of international public finance administration, and by empowering the people with a voice to speak out against their systems.

Indeed, Africa is plagued with not only a history of land disposition but also the destroying of regional identity. Those people are owed the dignity and respect of cultural recuperation, the embracing of long held traditions and beauty not to be tainted by Western ideologies. The women in post colonised countries like India and Pakistan still grapple with the ties of European beauty standards. The epitome of beauty is light skin, with adverts telling them that after using skin lightening cream they will be radiant, successful, and happy. These are toxic notions which companies still gain profit from, with the lasting impact of colonisers maintaining control over governments and over the very fabric of social construction too.

Rich countries owe compensation for the environmental detriment they are causing. Environmental damage caused by rich nations affects the poor nations drastically, actually exceeding their combined foreign debt. The burning of fossil fuels in rich countries mean the considerable worsening of health in developing countries, where treatment is not readily available for illnesses caused by ozone depletion such as cancers, cataracts and blindness which they become increasingly prone to, and has led to higher healthcare costs. In effect, “the rich nations have developed at the expense of the poor and, in effect, there is a debt to the poor”. The impact the poor countries have on rich countries is grossly disproportionate due to the differences in consumption. This disparity surely warrants investment into healthcare, as well as financial support to remedy the environmental damage. Needless to say, rich countries should strive to reduce their own consumption of fossil fuels, as these ecological impacts do not have boundaries, but instead affect the globe as a whole.



Whether from a moral perspective, upon a reflection on history, or from an economic standpoint, rich countries owe resources and support from which these nations can build themselves to break the cycle of poverty and dependence: it is an obligatory duty that they owe to poor states, not only because rich nations construct part of the reason for the poverty because ultimately, it is the human race as a whole that will reap the benefits of equality.

Riya Myanger

DofE: Great opportunity – or waste of time?

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) certainly has no shortage of fans. Founded in 1956 by Prince Philip, it has since spread to 144 countries; 112 000 young people take part each year in Britain alone. The Award consists of three levels that become progressively more difficult: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Each of these requires young people (participants must be aged between 14 and 24) to volunteer, to develop a skill and to take part in a physical activity for an hour each week for months (Gold also involves a five-day residential course). Each level also requires an expedition planned by students (this is normally a hike; while cycling, canoeing and riding expeditions are allowed, most schools – including this one – do not offer them), who have to camp, navigate, and cook independently for two, three or four days respectively. They have to do this twice; once in a practice expedition, and once when they are assessed.

According to the Award's website:


The DofE gives you the chance to do something completely new and improve on things you're already doing. It takes you out of your comfort zone and into a place where you'll push yourself and have amazing new experiences. You'll build confidence, resilience, skills for work and friendship groups. And you'll have a brilliant time doing it... Colleges, universities and employers regard a DofE Award highly so it will help to open the right doors for you. If you're keen to get off the sofa and put 100% into something that could change your life, the DofE is for you.

But how accurate is this? Or, if DofE is such an amazing opportunity, why is it not the case that everyone does it?

The truth is that huge numbers of students do the Bronze Award. Here, more than half of all pupils either take part in it or enter the Silver Award directly, which is far from unprecedented. Many schools, as well as youth organisations such as the Scouts, strongly encourage young people to complete the Award, which many believe has reduced the appeal of candidates with the Bronze Award to universities and employers. Indeed, some top universities care little about any level of DofE; the University of Cambridge states "we are not interested in extra-curricular activities". In fact, it is commonly believed that DofE is more useful when applying for a job (than for university) because of the skills that finishing the Award strengthens and demonstrates, such as commitment, organisation and teamwork. Several major companies, such as British Gas, encourage their apprentices to complete the Award for precisely this reason.

Yasmin Crowe, a Year 12 student who is doing Gold, agrees with this. She says:

I think DofE is worth doing as it really challenges you to stay committed through the different sections but also when doing the expedition. But the best thing about DofE is the memories and fun you have with your group as you push each other on.



Depending on who you ask, the expedition is either the most exciting or the most dreaded aspect of the experience. While challenging and often painful, it can (but doesn't always) provide people with an unexpected sense of independence, camaraderie and achievement.

Matthew Crook-Sycamore (Year 12) has completed most of his Gold Award. He says:

I'm doing DofE because it's something good when applying to uni. The whole expedition is fun especially when you're with your mates; the only annoying part is the walking!

However, many fear that the Award interferes with schoolwork – and they are right. Someone who completes all three levels of the Award in succession would have to devote three hours a week to it for twelve months and one or two hours a week to it for another twelve, as well as spending nearly a week on a residential course (though the activities often do not require much additional work, since continuing an activity that a student was already doing counts). Perhaps the biggest problem is the amount of missed school days caused by the expeditions; Silver causes two, and Gold leads to a further six. It is also not uncommon for students to not feel well enough to attend school the day after a strenuous expedition.

Even more problematic can be the large costs involved with participation in the Award, which are often hidden. The Bronze and Silver expeditions may appear quite cheap, but paying for all four will cost nearly £100. At this school, a company called BXM runs Gold, so those expeditions cost over £200. Less publicised but equally significant is the cost of purchasing equipment for the expedition. Though some items can be borrowed from the school, a surprising number need to be bought; walking boots and a sleeping bag are essential, and many people also find that they lack suitable clothes. Parents are often disappointed to find that the walking boots they bought for Bronze need replacing for the Gold expedition two years later. Participation in the Award can easily cost almost a thousand pounds once activities such as the compulsory residential course are taken into account.

Sarah Kapllani-Mucanj, a Year 12 student, completed her Bronze Award and started Gold, but decided to drop out. She writes:

At first I had been convinced by so many websites and people that DofE is an impressive and worthwhile achievement to have on a personal statement (which I still agree with) and I also loved the idea of camping in the wilderness. At the end of the day it was the cost that put me off, as with the expedition money I could instead do other activities related to what I want to study at university. The preparation for the expedition was also time-intensive, leaving me with little time after school to study. DofE is nevertheless a useful and fun experience – having done Bronze, I can definitely say that I made some of my best and funniest memories during DofE, not to mention the great time management skills I developed from it. However, nobody should feel constrained to doing DofE in order to have a good personal statement; there are cheaper alternatives such as NCS [the National Citizenship Service], and you can simply develop your teamwork and cooperation skills through joining school clubs too!

So is the DofE worth it? I think that the Award's usefulness in later life is at best over-emphasised. I do believe that most people who take part do not regret their decision. It certainly provides an opportunity to form new friendships and strengthen old ones, to learn new skills and to leave one's comfort zone. But if you are worried about the expedition, the effect on your free time or the cost, and are considering doing the Award solely "for your personal statement", then my advice is simple: maybe you shouldn't.

FAR OUT

A New Generation of Space Scientists

The Institute of Physics has found that only twenty percent of students studying A-Level Physics are female, a proportion which has barely changed in the last twenty five years.

The Institute is combatting this issue with a number of outreach schemes, such as the Science Ambassador programme. With an emphasis on including girls, it involves fun and stimulating tutorials delivered to local primary schools by Key Stage 3 pupils, with guidance from A-Level Science students.

Before the workshops, the students attended a training day to equip them with the facts and experience that they needed in order to deliver the workshops. The event was hosted by the University of Hertfordshire at the Bayfordbury Observatory, a fitting choice of location given the nature of the experiments. The theme? Outer space.

The experiments were active and engaging. One of the more morbidly fascinating activities entailed filling a doll's head with foam and sealing it into a pressurised container, and watching as the foam oozed out when air was removed, illustrating why you wouldn't want to remove a space helmet once you had left the familiar comfort of our Earth's atmosphere.

Meanwhile, outside, fizzy rockets containing effervescent tablets soared into the air, demonstrating how pressurised gases can make things fly high above the earth, enabling the human race's bold breakthrough into exploring the cosmos.

Once all the activities had been tried, the students demonstrated their favourite experiments to the rest of the group, which helped them to develop their presentation skills in preparation for the primary school visits.

Afterwards, some time spent in the observatory's planetarium opened our eyes to the incredible expanse of the universe that we call home, and raised a thought: If this vast intercosmic space surrounds us all, we should all have the opportunity to study and explore it.

Korina Chapman

HANDS

Lights- metal trays- all the same- bound in plastic- feeling like I'm suffocating- months- or is it years?- pass. Don't have my battery yet- can't tell- infinite darkness all around- taken out- daylight? Before I realise I'm shoved into the darkness again- but not smooth- it's bumpy- incredible roaring surrounding me. It stops.

Bright white- blinding- hooked- hanging above everything- my hands whir into motion- it's all precise- no deviation- this is it- until I stop working- constantly moving- but trapped at the same time- never slowing- never speeding- exact until the end of time- my whole existence.

Nothing to do but stare into the room- sometimes dark- normally not- people moving within- they have looked at me- panicked- looked at me- cheered. Most days the same view- sometimes with a pine tree in the corner- or bunting- the space around me has changed- different tables- different pictures on the wall- I've never changed though.

It's strangely comforting- staying the same while everything around changes- always watching- waiting- measuring- knowing exactly when people will die- wishing I could scream- to tell them- but trapped my hands go on and on.

David Nendick



FILM



Black Panther

A Film Long Overdue

Branded by many as the best Marvel film so far, this film is not unfairly appreciated. Year 12 student Elsa-Rae Walker-Hynes comments, “From watching the trailer alone, I loved the music, the effects and the colours that were used. It’s a very effective trailer, I definitely want to watch this film.” But is there more to this film than the graphics alone?

Today in the Western World we are fortunate enough to be largely past the era of lynchings and racist parades, but a few issues concerning race still remain; notably, the problem of unconscious bias. This is where we categorise the world around us into certain groups, based on stereotypes and/or our own experiences. Bias in itself is not much of a problem, but it becomes more worrying when we begin to form negative views of a certain group.

This phenomenon is perpetuated through the stereotypes portrayed to us through newspapers, television shows and books. We have the classic example of the meek Indian corner-shop owner, the Chinese mum pushing her children to the limit in her painfully parodistic accent, the violent black drug dealer.

These characters alone are not the problem; the issue is that this is the only characterisation of each race we ever see. Therefore, consciously or unconsciously, many people begin to lock their car doors if they see a black person with their hood up about to pass, or frown as if they know it all when an Asian person complains about their strict parents. Alone, this can have a damaging effect on an individual’s psyche, but when it gets to the level where people are repeatedly checked in an airport because they are Middle-Eastern with a beard or turban, it can get more serious.

We may look to the case of institutional racism, bringing with it the cyclical arguments surrounding its existence and effects. One of institutional racism’s key impacts is seen in the punitive and governmental systems: the number of black and ethnic minority people (BAME) serving prison sentences, and the comparative lengths of these; the number of BAME living in poverty and the historical reasons for this; the lack of BAME representation in the government and the influence of nepotism with which BAME often cannot compete, in both parliamentary and higher education fields.

So when a young black child watches a film, and all those she sees with the same colour skin as her are drug dealing criminals, it is not only demoralising, but has another more sinister impact; she begins to see that in herself, and other black people.

Therefore, when this young black child goes to the cinema and watches two hours of people who look like her excelling- powerful, intelligent, kind and successful- the impact is profound. Seeing black people, who have (in all of British and American propaganda from the first half of the 20th century and previous)

been depicted as servile, dangerous, and subhuman, portrayed as capable human beings with no scarring history of European influence is something which has been needed in cinema and media for a long time, and will arguably have a positive impact on race relations for the future.

Not only for black people is this film important, but for women too; seeing an all-female military group protecting the (black) king of an extremely advanced nation has a similar effect as watching the Amazonian women training in the opening scenes of the newest Wonder Woman film: it reminds women that no matter how often we are fed endless images of women being subjugated by men, women still have power; we just need to be shown it.

Afra Sterne-Rodgers



When I first watched *Sing Street*, it was as a result of an evening scrolling through Netflix, yearning for absolutely any film that resembled ‘good’ and anxious to get on to another one by the time I was finished.

After watching *Sing Street*, I didn’t have the emotional capacity to watch another film.

Instead, I sat happily for a few hours more listening to the heart-melting soundtrack, content to dwell in some of the precious moments that the film boasts. I mean, I say boasts, but this is not a pretentious film; it’s not saturated with plot-twists or jazzed up with special effects – even the singing would not necessarily astound you. But in its simplicity lies its brilliance. *Sing Street* follows the story, set in 1980s Dublin, of a boy who impulsively creates a band to impress a girl. However, far from being simply a romance, this film wonderfully portrays a bitter-sweet, grounded narrative of an 80s teen making music that will make you laugh, make you cry, and make you buy the soundtrack album.

SING STREET

Dorothy Burrowes

Mr Ewins

INTERSTELLAR

I first watched this film almost by chance one Sunday night a couple of years ago. Up until that point I had never heard of it, or Christopher Nolan, its director, and was unaware of the many awards that it had won. I was utterly captivated by the drama, the scale and the emotional power of the film, all of which were supported by a beautiful but stress-inducing soundtrack. By its conclusion I was a gibbering wreck, whilst intellectually I tried to make sense of what I had just seen. I watched the final hour again the next day and found it every bit as powerful and only slightly less bewildering.

Some people say that the science doesn't make perfect sense, but never mind about that. Interstellar might be set in space, but for me it is the story of a man trying to save humankind whilst coming to terms with the fact that he must leave his daughter behind and the likelihood that he will never see her again.

Warning: If you are a middle-aged man with a fear of crying in public, watch this on your own.



I know what you're thinking... Why is my favourite film a heartwarming kids' film about a fluffy blue monster and his one eyed green sidekick gathering screams from children to generate power for a monster city? Does Mr. Latham have a hidden love for all things Pixar? Does he feel an unsettling connection to the film's fluffy blue protagonist? Is he some kind of overgrown man-child? No.

Monsters, not to be confused with Monsters, Inc. is the directorial debut of the now superstar director Gareth Edwards. Edwards, the man behind the truly glorious *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* and the not so glorious *Godzilla* reboot, had very humble beginnings indeed. *Monsters* tells the story of a photojournalist caught in the middle of a war torn Mexico in the near future. Andrew, played by Scoot McNairy, is tasked with the arduous task of recovering his boss's daughter, played by Whitney Able and delivering her safely back over the border into the U.S. of A. As you have probably gathered by now, this film is a long way from the fluffy blue monsters of its borderline namesake. Instead, the monsters in this film are towering extraterrestrial tripods that lumber across the gorgeous Mexican landscape and clash with the US army.

I'm going to hazard a guess at what you're thinking once again... this film sounds awful. It sounds like another explosion packed, mindless aliens vs. brave, macho American soldiers kind of film. I thought the same thing. I first saw *Monsters* having recently seen the jawdroppingly awful blockbuster 'Battle Los Angeles' and was certain that I was in for another dose of unmitigated nonsense. How wrong I was. *Monsters* is, by design, the antidote to all of those films. *Monsters* is fundamentally an 'on the road' movie that follows the journey of Andrew and Samantha through the Mexican jungle towards the border. The *Monsters* themselves take a back seat to the simple beauty of Edwards' cinematography and innovative filmmaking. The film's glory is a product of its unique and humble origins. Unlike *Rogue One*, with its budget of £270 million, *Monsters* was filmed and edited for less than £300,000. These restrictions, however, are what led Edwards' to make the brave decisions that ultimately make the film. For example, almost all the dialogue is improvised,

MONSTERS

Mr Latham

there are really only two paid actors in the film, every extra is played by a willing Mexican that just so happened to be in the right place at the right time and the film is shot with basic off the shelf equipment. Edwards is even solely responsible for all of the impressive special effects featured in the film that he completed at home, in his bedroom on basic editing software. All of this gives the film a truly unique, rough and ready quality that, interestingly enough, is exactly what got him the job for Rogue One where the same winning formula is utilised on a grander scale.

At this point I appreciate that this review is sounding more like homage to Gareth Edwards than anything else. Well, brace yourselves because my adjectives are about to get a whole lot more excessive. This is because it's now time to talk about the film's soundtrack... Goodness, gracious me! Monsters' visual splendor is elevated by the lush, dark, electronic tones of Jon Hopkins' score. Hopkins has been nominated for the Mercury Prize several times in his own right but for me it's his soundtrack to Monsters that takes the biscuit. I cannot think of a film where the visuals and music have been better matched! Last year I was lucky enough/geeky enough to make the ultimate pilgrimage and visit Mexico and embark on my own Monsters-esque journey across the country. It would be an overstatement to say I went to Mexico purely because of this film, an obsessive love of tacos played a part too, but there is no denying that Monsters is what switched me on to my love affair with Mexico. This trip confirmed my hypothesis that the Jon Hopkins score is the ultimate soundtrack to any adventure in a foreign country. Even if you don't watch this glorious film then at least pop the soundtrack on the next time you're on a long journey to somewhere. That then is the essence of Monsters as a film. Don't expect big explosions or gob smacking effects. Instead, just be willing to be swept up in a truly beautiful, labour of love of a film that immerses you in a 90-minute adventure. Here then we have the perfect antidote to big budget, popcorn fuelled monster films. Monsters turns an entire genre on its head and offers a warm heartfelt film that fills you with wanderlust. Mexico awaits!

I have to admit that the main thing about this film is that it stars James Stewart, who is obviously the ideal man. He generally portrays quiet, shy, slightly awkward men who are caring and kind, and also strong and with great integrity. They do the right thing and quietly get the job done. Sigh....

It's a Wonderful Life is set in small town America in the 1940's. George Bailey- our hero- is a talented young man with huge ambitions to travel and have adventures. However bad things happen, and again and again he unselfishly sacrifices his own dreams to help other people when they really need it. Time passes. George marries his childhood sweetheart, Mary, and they have a family. He runs the family firm which is a small Building Society, and he enables lots of people to realise the American Dream- to own their own home and prosper. He never gets to travel. He is well loved but dissatisfied and a little bit resentful.

Then catastrophe strikes- money goes missing and George faces ruin, disgrace and prison. He can see no way out and wanders into the snowy night intent on ending his life.

His guardian angel, the hapless Clarence, is sent to rescue him. He hears George wish that he had never been born and Clarence grants the wish for him. George then faces the terrifying alternative reality of a world where he never existed. It becomes evident that in his quiet little life he did so much good to so many people, that life without him is unbearably awful. The film does not end there, but you will enjoy it more if I stop spoiling it for you.

If the plotline is a bit familiar it may be because you have seen Shrek the Fourth, another excellent film, which copies the story at many points.

Enjoy!

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

Mrs Downie

BOOKS OR FILMS

There exists an age-old debate seeking to determine a superior form of creative communication between books and films; whilst one camp declares the other to be lacking substance and intellectual challenge; the other declares that very camp as holding on to an airy bed of sentimentality based on conventions of the past, and rapidly falling behind in this adapting technological society.

For it is clear that today, films are indeed boasting an increasing influence throughout the globe – in the UK alone, box office revenues in 2016 exceeded £1.2 billion for the second year running. The argument is that films enable a wider audience through the accessibility of the visuals they offer. For example, whilst J.R.R. Tolkien's complex and perhaps archaic prose in *The Lord of the Rings* may pose an intimidating threat to an English-learner, Peter Jackson's film adaptations of the books are much more accessible through their diminished reliance on language, allowing viewers to benefit from facial expressions and music to comprehend what would have been simply perplexing solely through words. Thus, films possess a form of social justice through the fact that higher education is not necessary to unlock the messages of the stories; everyone is on an equal footing as they approach the cinema screen.

This brings us onto the next argument of film-lovers; a film's sociability. The presence of a screen enables a film to be something that may be experienced by a group of people simultaneously, whether in a public or domestic setting. In contrast, books promote seclusion and isolation of individuals from groups. The accessibility of films in comparison to books heightens this, as films are more popularly watched and thus talked about more. Films are quicker to finish, quicker to absorb and quicker to obtain with the click of a button, and thus are far more widespread as a method of communication. In today's world, if you want a story to capture the hearts and minds of a nation, you use a film.

However, the active debate seems, more often than not, to have most weight on the side of books. The reason for this is simple; whilst with a film you can never be more than an observer of the story, a book enables you to live the story with the characters. The reader is privy to thoughts, feelings and the slight nuances that cannot be expressed in film; when films do make efforts to do so, they lack the subtlety and authenticity that books offer. This subtlety is what allows books to be interpreted so differently, and in fact allows the surprisingly sociable side of books to be evident. Books can be analysed, discussed, uniting and dividing people amidst the huge schools of thought that arise in order to debate texts; the existence of the aforementioned *The Lord of the Rings* film series indeed illustrates this, as Tolkien remains someone whose works have fuelled discussion for decades. Although books may demand more attention, this results in readers becoming more immersed in the plot line, thus impacting them far more deeply, in comparison to a film from which viewers are easily distracted, with key seconds easily missed. If you want a story to truly capture the heart and mind of an individual, you use a book.

Although the growth in the film industry is perhaps a symbol of the culture we live in today, requiring immediacy and possibly even lacking patience, books possess a timelessness which films cannot quite capture; every effort is made to produce modern versions of old films, but few to successfully rewrite the classics. Books fuel exploration and discussion of the past through the context they capture, and the sheer scale of difference in detail between books and films, for me, points to the superiority of literature as a whole. I cannot deny my appreciation of cinema, and the wealth of opportunities it offers, but the power of words to engross the reader in a story causes me to engage with it, and hence love it, far more than observing action on a screen.

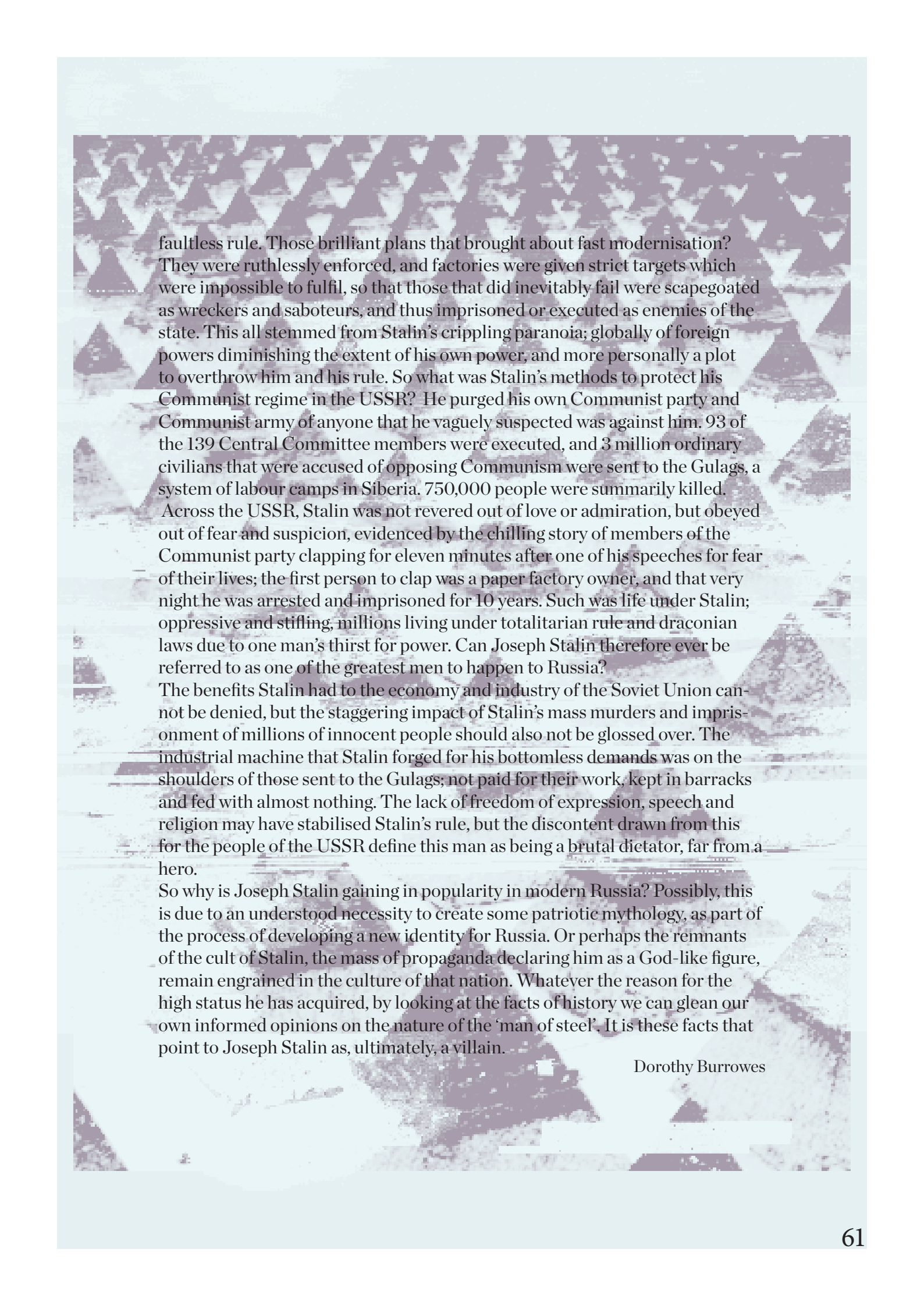
STALIN

Hero or Villain?

In 1956 Nikita Khrushchev, newly appointed leader of the USSR, declared that Stalin, ruling the Soviet Union from 1929 to 1953, was “changeable, irritable and brutal.” For many of us, this view of Joseph Stalin, as a harsh and demanding dictator, is common knowledge, assumed and accepted as fact. However, fast-forward 52 years later, and in a nationwide poll of 50 million people in Russia, Stalin, who is estimated to have caused the death of 20 million people, is voted as the third-best Russian of all time. Why is this? Is this the impact of institutionalised propaganda, or a worthy conclusion taken from the benefits of hindsight? Who really is Joseph Stalin?

On the one hand, it cannot be denied that self-named Stalin, literally meaning ‘man of steel’, transformed the Soviet Union into an industrial and military superpower. Despite the 58 different languages in the Soviet Union, Stalin managed to massively increase the literacy rate in ultimately a peasant society to 75% across the USSR. He encouraged education for all, offered free health-care and childcare, as well as cheap accommodation for workers. Could it be Stalin’s iron will and deft political skills that enabled him to play such a vital role during the Second World War, leading the triumph over Nazi Germany. In the late 1920s, his Five-Year Plans saw the USSR become a world superpower as it underwent rapid modernisation, raising the production of heavy industries like steel and coal, as well as the production of luxury items, like radios. He increased the amount of free time for workers for them to spend time with family and pursue hobbies. He was pictured in cultural dress with children, breaking the social boundaries constructed and institutionalised in such a colossal empire, and hence he was praised and worshipped. This doesn’t seem to be without a worthy reason, according to these stand-alone details; life under Stalin seems to have been good.

This same all-powerful, all-knowing father of the people, was also quoted to have said, “Death is the solution to all problems. No man - no problem.”, and it is this quote that perfectly sums up the reality behind Stalin’s apparently



faultless rule. Those brilliant plans that brought about fast modernisation? They were ruthlessly enforced, and factories were given strict targets which were impossible to fulfil, so that those that did inevitably fail were scapegoated as wreckers and saboteurs, and thus imprisoned or executed as enemies of the state. This all stemmed from Stalin's crippling paranoia; globally of foreign powers diminishing the extent of his own power, and more personally a plot to overthrow him and his rule. So what was Stalin's methods to protect his Communist regime in the USSR? He purged his own Communist party and Communist army of anyone that he vaguely suspected was against him. 93 of the 139 Central Committee members were executed, and 3 million ordinary civilians that were accused of opposing Communism were sent to the Gulags, a system of labour camps in Siberia. 750,000 people were summarily killed.

Across the USSR, Stalin was not revered out of love or admiration, but obeyed out of fear and suspicion, evidenced by the chilling story of members of the Communist party clapping for eleven minutes after one of his speeches for fear of their lives; the first person to clap was a paper factory owner, and that very night he was arrested and imprisoned for 10 years. Such was life under Stalin; oppressive and stifling, millions living under totalitarian rule and draconian laws due to one man's thirst for power. Can Joseph Stalin therefore ever be referred to as one of the greatest men to happen to Russia?


The benefits Stalin had to the economy and industry of the Soviet Union cannot be denied, but the staggering impact of Stalin's mass murders and imprisonment of millions of innocent people should also not be glossed over. The industrial machine that Stalin forged for his bottomless demands was on the shoulders of those sent to the Gulags; not paid for their work, kept in barracks and fed with almost nothing. The lack of freedom of expression, speech and religion may have stabilised Stalin's rule, but the discontent drawn from this for the people of the USSR define this man as being a brutal dictator, far from a hero.

So why is Joseph Stalin gaining in popularity in modern Russia? Possibly, this is due to an understood necessity to create some patriotic mythology, as part of the process of developing a new identity for Russia. Or perhaps the remnants of the cult of Stalin, the mass of propaganda declaring him as a God-like figure, remain engrained in the culture of that nation. Whatever the reason for the high status he has acquired, by looking at the facts of history we can glean our own informed opinions on the nature of the 'man of steel'. It is these facts that point to Joseph Stalin as, ultimately, a villain.

Dorothy Burrowes

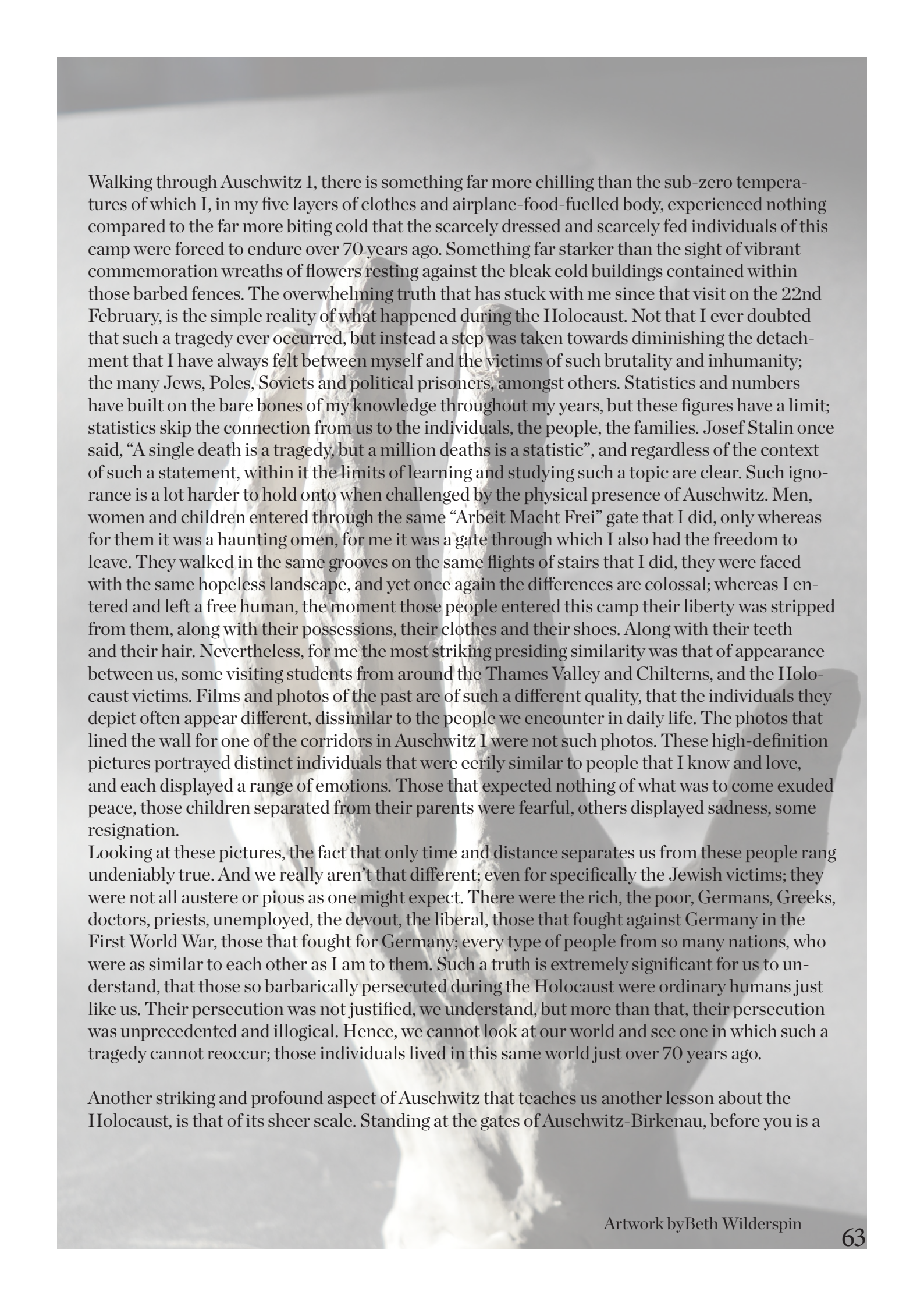
Lessons from Auschwitz

Dorothy Burrowes



I thought I understood what the death and labour camps of World War II were like. I have studied Nazi Germany and the various impacts of such a regime through History, Religious Studies and even Drama throughout my school life, I have read books written by survivors of camps such as these, I've talked with them, asked them questions. After visiting the extermination camp of Auschwitz, I can say with absolute certainty that I understood very little, if anything, of what it meant to be a prisoner in those camps, and as long as I live as a member of such a society as this, free from imprisonment and persecution, I never will.

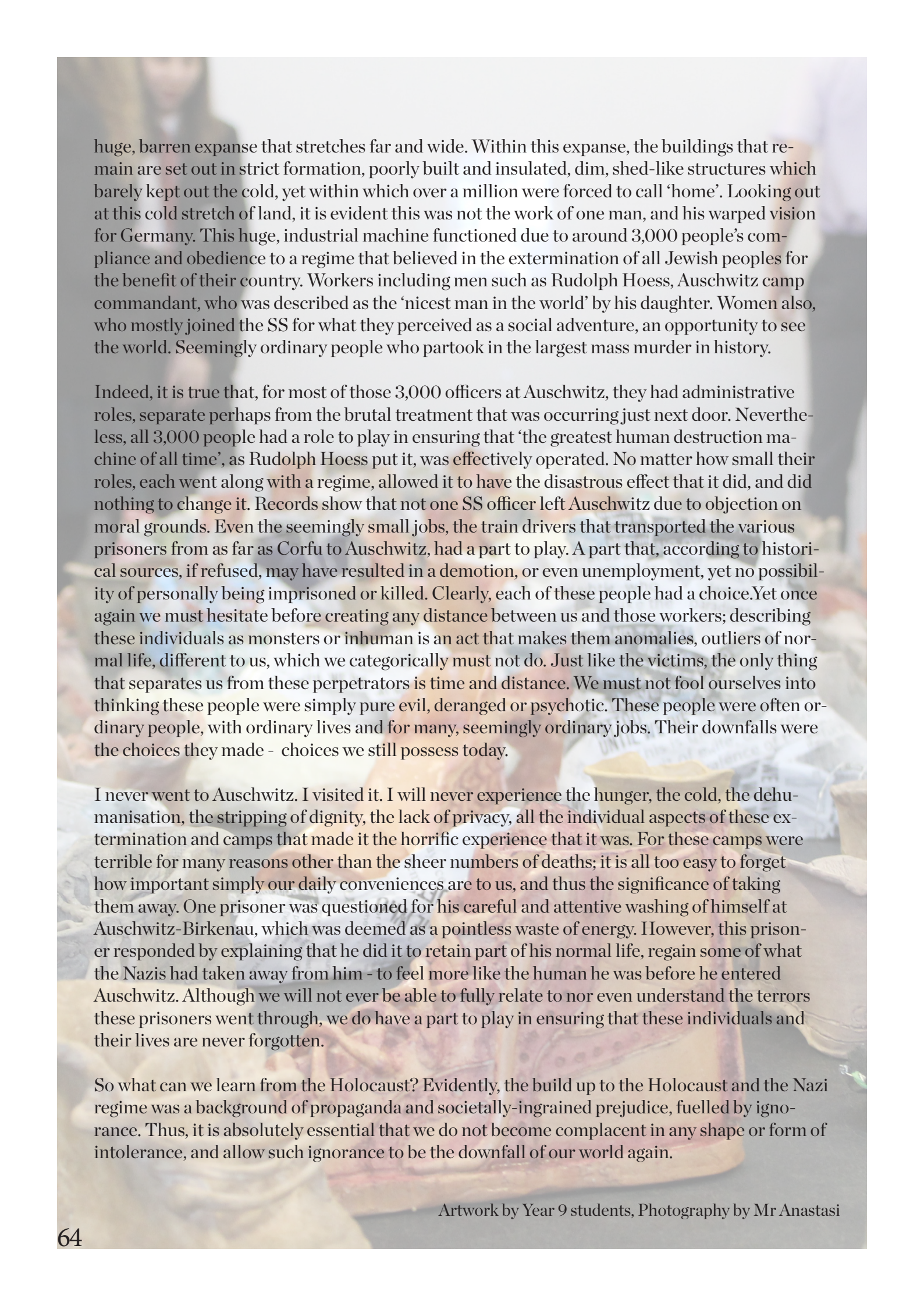




Walking through Auschwitz I, there is something far more chilling than the sub-zero temperatures of which I, in my five layers of clothes and airplane-food-fuelled body, experienced nothing compared to the far more biting cold that the scarcely dressed and scarcely fed individuals of this camp were forced to endure over 70 years ago. Something far starker than the sight of vibrant commemoration wreaths of flowers resting against the bleak cold buildings contained within those barbed fences. The overwhelming truth that has stuck with me since that visit on the 22nd February, is the simple reality of what happened during the Holocaust. Not that I ever doubted that such a tragedy ever occurred, but instead a step was taken towards diminishing the detachment that I have always felt between myself and the victims of such brutality and inhumanity; the many Jews, Poles, Soviets and political prisoners, amongst others. Statistics and numbers have built on the bare bones of my knowledge throughout my years, but these figures have a limit; statistics skip the connection from us to the individuals, the people, the families. Josef Stalin once said, “A single death is a tragedy, but a million deaths is a statistic”, and regardless of the context of such a statement, within it the limits of learning and studying such a topic are clear. Such ignorance is a lot harder to hold onto when challenged by the physical presence of Auschwitz. Men, women and children entered through the same “Arbeit Macht Frei” gate that I did, only whereas for them it was a haunting omen, for me it was a gate through which I also had the freedom to leave. They walked in the same grooves on the same flights of stairs that I did, they were faced with the same hopeless landscape, and yet once again the differences are colossal; whereas I entered and left a free human, the moment those people entered this camp their liberty was stripped from them, along with their possessions, their clothes and their shoes. Along with their teeth and their hair. Nevertheless, for me the most striking presiding similarity was that of appearance between us, some visiting students from around the Thames Valley and Chilterns, and the Holocaust victims. Films and photos of the past are of such a different quality, that the individuals they depict often appear different, dissimilar to the people we encounter in daily life. The photos that lined the wall for one of the corridors in Auschwitz I were not such photos. These high-definition pictures portrayed distinct individuals that were eerily similar to people that I know and love, and each displayed a range of emotions. Those that expected nothing of what was to come exuded peace, those children separated from their parents were fearful, others displayed sadness, some resignation.

Looking at these pictures, the fact that only time and distance separates us from these people rang undeniably true. And we really aren't that different; even for specifically the Jewish victims; they were not all austere or pious as one might expect. There were the rich, the poor, Germans, Greeks, doctors, priests, unemployed, the devout, the liberal, those that fought against Germany in the First World War, those that fought for Germany; every type of people from so many nations, who were as similar to each other as I am to them. Such a truth is extremely significant for us to understand, that those so barbarically persecuted during the Holocaust were ordinary humans just like us. Their persecution was not justified, we understand, but more than that, their persecution was unprecedented and illogical. Hence, we cannot look at our world and see one in which such a tragedy cannot reoccur; those individuals lived in this same world just over 70 years ago.

Another striking and profound aspect of Auschwitz that teaches us another lesson about the Holocaust, is that of its sheer scale. Standing at the gates of Auschwitz-Birkenau, before you is a



huge, barren expanse that stretches far and wide. Within this expanse, the buildings that remain are set out in strict formation, poorly built and insulated, dim, shed-like structures which barely kept out the cold, yet within which over a million were forced to call 'home'. Looking out at this cold stretch of land, it is evident this was not the work of one man, and his warped vision for Germany. This huge, industrial machine functioned due to around 3,000 people's compliance and obedience to a regime that believed in the extermination of all Jewish peoples for the benefit of their country. Workers including men such as Rudolph Hoess, Auschwitz camp commandant, who was described as the 'nicest man in the world' by his daughter. Women also, who mostly joined the SS for what they perceived as a social adventure, an opportunity to see the world. Seemingly ordinary people who partook in the largest mass murder in history.

Indeed, it is true that, for most of those 3,000 officers at Auschwitz, they had administrative roles, separate perhaps from the brutal treatment that was occurring just next door. Nevertheless, all 3,000 people had a role to play in ensuring that 'the greatest human destruction machine of all time', as Rudolph Hoess put it, was effectively operated. No matter how small their roles, each went along with a regime, allowed it to have the disastrous effect that it did, and did nothing to change it. Records show that not one SS officer left Auschwitz due to objection on moral grounds. Even the seemingly small jobs, the train drivers that transported the various prisoners from as far as Corfu to Auschwitz, had a part to play. A part that, according to historical sources, if refused, may have resulted in a demotion, or even unemployment, yet no possibility of personally being imprisoned or killed. Clearly, each of these people had a choice. Yet once again we must hesitate before creating any distance between us and those workers; describing these individuals as monsters or inhuman is an act that makes them anomalies, outliers of normal life, different to us, which we categorically must not do. Just like the victims, the only thing that separates us from these perpetrators is time and distance. We must not fool ourselves into thinking these people were simply pure evil, deranged or psychotic. These people were often ordinary people, with ordinary lives and for many, seemingly ordinary jobs. Their downfalls were the choices they made - choices we still possess today.

I never went to Auschwitz. I visited it. I will never experience the hunger, the cold, the dehumanisation, the stripping of dignity, the lack of privacy, all the individual aspects of these extermination and camps that made it the horrific experience that it was. For these camps were terrible for many reasons other than the sheer numbers of deaths; it is all too easy to forget how important simply our daily conveniences are to us, and thus the significance of taking them away. One prisoner was questioned for his careful and attentive washing of himself at Auschwitz-Birkenau, which was deemed as a pointless waste of energy. However, this prisoner responded by explaining that he did it to retain part of his normal life, regain some of what the Nazis had taken away from him - to feel more like the human he was before he entered Auschwitz. Although we will not ever be able to fully relate to nor even understand the terrors these prisoners went through, we do have a part to play in ensuring that these individuals and their lives are never forgotten.

So what can we learn from the Holocaust? Evidently, the build up to the Holocaust and the Nazi regime was a background of propaganda and societally-ingrained prejudice, fuelled by ignorance. Thus, it is absolutely essential that we do not become complacent in any shape or form of intolerance, and allow such ignorance to be the downfall of our world again.

Artwork by Year 9 students, Photography by Mr Anastasi

Who is Responsible?

Caitlin Firm

Dorothy Burrowes

(Red writing alone to be read on first reading. Read again including black writing too.)

She only packed them into the cattle trucks,

Which says a lot about how she viewed
Those handpicked from society,
Whether displaying poverty or propriety,
Picked for nothing more than the family they were born into.

Packing them in, with the foul odour and muck:

Urine, faeces, sick, those who didn't make the journey.

Mingled with their precious belongings.

Pans, crutches, keys, reading glasses.
Items of those returning home.
Items of those who did not know
Just how evil people can be whilst still saying "I did not know".

He only drove a train;

A train headed to Auschwitz,
The largest of the Nazi Concentration and death camps.

And to him they were distinctly the same,

Even though there were included those
Liberal and those pious, Soviets, political prisoners, German and not German, the old and the young,

Travelling across the far corners of Europe;

From as far as Corfu, cramped for days with only their cries for comfort.

He only directed, sent them to a side:

Separating families amongst final sharp cries of agony,

Left or right, not a big choice and besides

Just a flick of a finger and he decided their fate,
The weak from the rest, discarding the weak and keeping the best,

He was doing his job, no more and no less.

Sending children to their deaths, moments away from the breaths that would become their last.

She only wanted to see the world-

Her spa days during their last days,

And to see a new country, she was just a happy young girl

Enjoying benefits of happy young girls,
Whilst next door hair was being shaved,

Shoes stolen and sold,

Humanity stripped from women who once too were happy young girls,

Going on an adventure.

A journey she got to make because she was not a Jew.

A journey that did not rid her of her freedom because she was not a Jew.

A journey that she would be able to return from

Just because she was not a Jew.

He only dropped some pellets,
Cans of Zyklon B for the sole reason to bring death, so
No one is alive to tell of it.
It's up to us, to never forget that
'He was doing what he was told he had no choice.'

You see, within Auschwitz, not one of the 3000 workers left out of moral obligation in
reaction to the disgusting events that took place there.
Not one said no and I must go, this is wrong and must be stopped-
Not one said so.
Not one.

But we continue to keep quiet, because at least we are not responsible.
Until we are next.
Whilst genocides take place across the globe
We repeat "Never Again".
Rwanda, Bosnia, Serbia;
Places where people have been poached
Because of their religion or their race
And yet, because it doesn't directly affect us
We turn to face the other way.

Now we have an opportunity;
We have a chance
To take the past and use it to enhance
The world we live in today.
So that in 50 years time,
We as a generation
Can turn back and say,
'Never again means never again'-
Because we are all responsible.





Has Modern Medicine Gone Too Far?

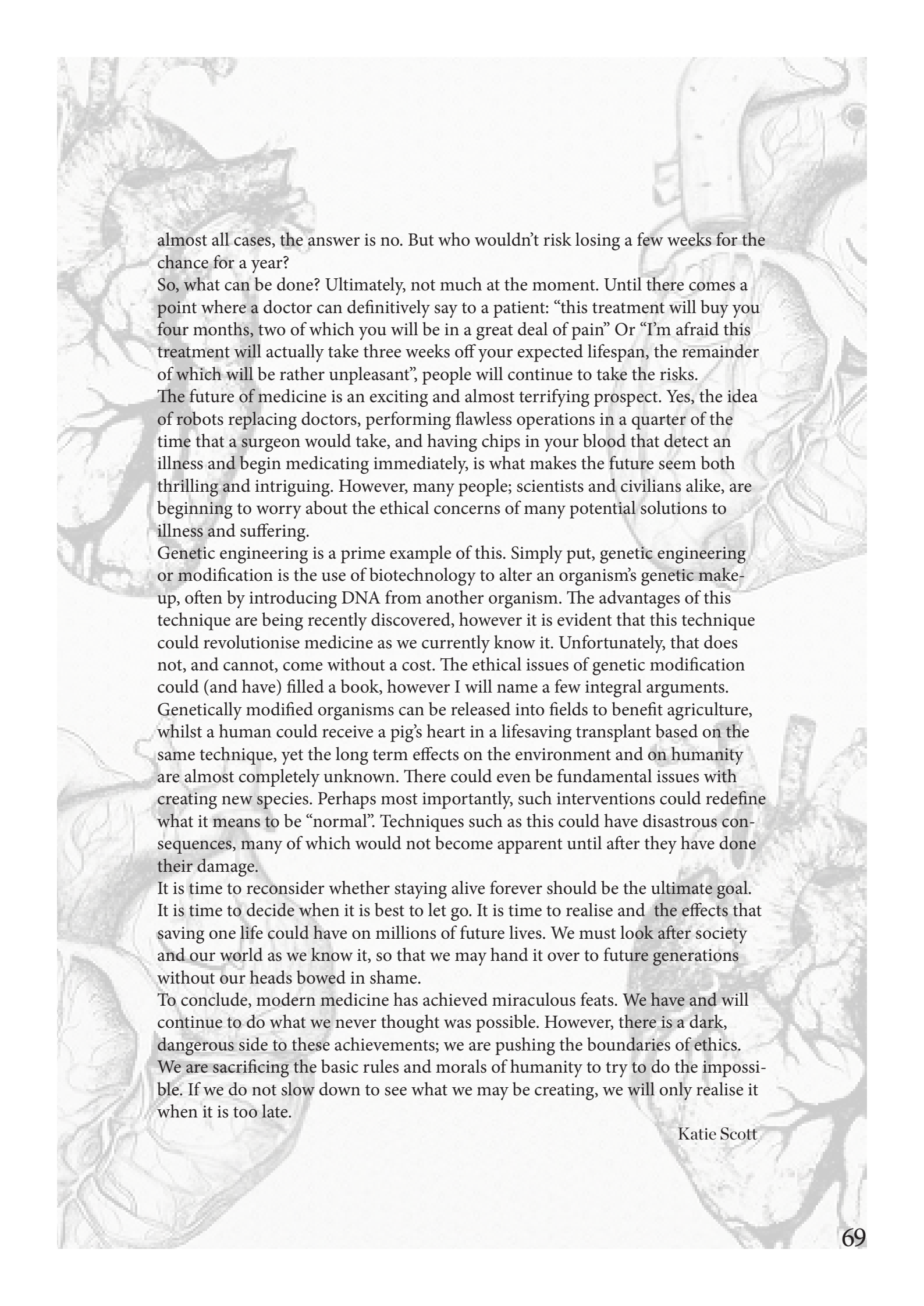
Modern medicine is undoubtedly brilliant in its capabilities. Patients who, if they were alive 100 years ago, would have died in weeks, are now living whole and healthy lives. In the last 10 years alone, there have been significant breakthroughs in the field of medicine. These include: the Human Genome Project, Stem Cell Research, Laparoscopic Surgery and the HPV vaccine. Modern technology and new understanding of the innermost workings of the human body are among the reasons behind the mind-blowing advances in medicine during the last 100 years. However, it is not all good. How far are people willing to go to survive longer, to be healthy and strong for the longest duration of time? Are people willing to break moral and ethical codes? Naturally, the first instinct of many is that if something can be done to save a life or improve the quality of it, whatever it may be, it should be done. But at what cost? Where does the line get drawn?

Let's begin with the end; end of life care is all about possibilities. A person with a terminal illness may have a 5% chance of gaining approximately an extra year if they undergo a traumatic, intensive, sometimes experimental treatment. If a person is in the 5%, then fantastic, they have gained an extra year. However, it is the 95% who suffer. More often than not, they would have survived longer had they not undergone the treatment. The last few weeks of their life would be calmer, perhaps even pleasant, if they did not undergo the treatment. This is in stark contrast with the potential weeks of agonising pain, suffering and drifting in and out of consciousness experienced by those undergoing the treatment.

In his internationally bestselling book *Being Mortal*, Atul Gawande writes: "our every impulse is to fight, to die with chemo in our veins or a tube in our throat or fresh sutures in our flesh. The fact that we may be shortening or worsening the time we have hardly seems to register". After all, one would naturally hope to fall within the 5% who do get better and pray to be the miracle case that is cured.

The suffering of the 95% of patients, unfortunately, is not the only problem with the often destructive palliative care. For the majority of people, medical treatment in the last few months of their life costs more than the total medical treatment of their entire life prior to those months. In the UK, though this is covered by the NHS, the money still has to come from somewhere. Thousands of pounds are spent to buy people a mere few more weeks of time. Wouldn't that money be better spent on funding a child's education? Or donated to a deserving charity?

In the end, it comes down to whether the risks outweigh the potential benefits. In

The background of the page features a detailed, light-colored illustration of a human heart on the left and a robotic hand holding a heart on the right. The heart is shown with its major blood vessels, and the robotic hand is depicted with mechanical joints and a textured surface. The overall style is a fine-line, etched or engraved look.

almost all cases, the answer is no. But who wouldn't risk losing a few weeks for the chance for a year?

So, what can be done? Ultimately, not much at the moment. Until there comes a point where a doctor can definitively say to a patient: "this treatment will buy you four months, two of which you will be in a great deal of pain" Or "I'm afraid this treatment will actually take three weeks off your expected lifespan, the remainder of which will be rather unpleasant", people will continue to take the risks.

The future of medicine is an exciting and almost terrifying prospect. Yes, the idea of robots replacing doctors, performing flawless operations in a quarter of the time that a surgeon would take, and having chips in your blood that detect an illness and begin medicating immediately, is what makes the future seem both thrilling and intriguing. However, many people; scientists and civilians alike, are beginning to worry about the ethical concerns of many potential solutions to illness and suffering.

Genetic engineering is a prime example of this. Simply put, genetic engineering or modification is the use of biotechnology to alter an organism's genetic make-up, often by introducing DNA from another organism. The advantages of this technique are being recently discovered, however it is evident that this technique could revolutionise medicine as we currently know it. Unfortunately, that does not, and cannot, come without a cost. The ethical issues of genetic modification could (and have) filled a book, however I will name a few integral arguments.

Genetically modified organisms can be released into fields to benefit agriculture, whilst a human could receive a pig's heart in a lifesaving transplant based on the same technique, yet the long term effects on the environment and on humanity are almost completely unknown. There could even be fundamental issues with creating new species. Perhaps most importantly, such interventions could redefine what it means to be "normal". Techniques such as this could have disastrous consequences, many of which would not become apparent until after they have done their damage.

It is time to reconsider whether staying alive forever should be the ultimate goal. It is time to decide when it is best to let go. It is time to realise and the effects that saving one life could have on millions of future lives. We must look after society and our world as we know it, so that we may hand it over to future generations without our heads bowed in shame.

To conclude, modern medicine has achieved miraculous feats. We have and will continue to do what we never thought was possible. However, there is a dark, dangerous side to these achievements; we are pushing the boundaries of ethics. We are sacrificing the basic rules and morals of humanity to try to do the impossible. If we do not slow down to see what we may be creating, we will only realise it when it is too late.

Katie Scott





