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Friday 10th November 2017
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VARSITY

Counselling cover-up

Revealed:

- Staff resignations at University Counselling Service led to five-week waiting times and counselling time cuts
- Cambridge University held back information and misled ex-staff

Louis Ashworth and Anna Menin
Editor-at-Large and Associate Editor

A series of staff resignations significantly disrupted the operations of the University Counselling Service (UCS) over the past two academic years, leading to dramatically increased waiting times and a reduction in counselling hours the service could offer to students.

As part of a year-long investigation, *Varsity* found that a spate of staff leaving the UCS resulted in increased waiting times for students seeking counselling in 2015-16, and a significant reduction in the number of counselling hours that could be offered during the past academic year.

Following a request for official comment, the University incorrectly told multiple former UCS staff that this paper was preparing to publish their names, which potentially had a chilling effect



▲ The University Counselling Service is based on Lensfield Road

(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

on former staff who had spoken to *Varsity* about the UCS on the condition of anonymity.

After receiving this misinformation, a staff member who had spoken to *Varsity* anonymously about their reasons for leaving the service chose to retract their statements.

In the process of its investigation, *Varsity* found:

- Documents from the UCS's executive committee show “staff attrition”, combined with sickness and the retirement of a senior staff member, led to five-week waiting times for some students to access counselling in Lent 2016

- Difficulties with staffing numbers led the UCS to substantially fall short of the number of counselling hours they aimed to offer students in 2016-17

- Cambridge University would not release raw information about waiting times, saying it did not hold the data

- The University would not immediately release a copy of the UCS's annual report for 2016-17, doing so only after the deadline for *Varsity* to put it in print

Géraldine Dufour, head of the UCS, declined a request for interview via the University. The University has not responded to a written request that this paper may be allowed to interview a representative of the Senior Tutors' Committee, which holds a position of oversight in relation to the UCS, to determine whether higher echelons of University management were aware of

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PalSoc panel goes ahead after ‘aggressive’ University intervention

Elizabeth Huang
Senior News Correspondent

There was controversy on Wednesday evening, when University staff and students gathered at an event to discuss the current situation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, after the University replaced the event's planned chair with their own director of communications.

The panel discussion, entitled ‘BDS [the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against Israel] and the Globalised Struggle for Palestinian Rights’ was co-hosted by Cambridge University Palestine Society and the Cambridge University Middle East Society.

The panel comprised of Omar Barghouti, co-founder of the BDS movement, Malia Bouattia, former NUS president, and Asad Rehman, executive

director of anti-poverty charity War on Want. The discussion was chaired by Paul Mylrea, the university's Director of Communications.

Mylrea was installed as chair by the university, after their objections to plans to invite Dr Ruba Salih, an academic from SOAS, to chair the panel.

During the panel event, Barghouti discussed the goals of BDS and its concern with ending the “settler colonialism” and

“apartheid” which he believed had been imposed by Israel on the Palestinian people. Bouattia followed with a discussion of the role of students and suggested that pro-Palestine activism “laid the foundation for a re-politicisation of the student movement as a whole”.

Priti Patel, the former Secretary of State for International Development, also drew debate. Bouattia emphasised the importance of interrogating

the “ideological perspectives” driving government policy and suggested that attempts to “depoliticise” activist movements should be viewed with suspicion.

The speeches were disrupted by the chair's repeated calls for “respectful debate” in response to a protestor displaying signs in the front row. The

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EDITORIAL

University silence

There is little disagreement that the mental health and wellbeing of students is important. What does appear uncertain, however, is the extent of the University's responsibility towards its students in that regard. An email sent by one DoS to his students, warning them against compromising their degree by enjoying themselves, sparked outrage and condemnation from students. In *Comment*, Alasdair de Costa argues that directors of studies should offer pastoral as well as academic support (p.14) – the University has a duty of care towards us.

This week, however, *Varsity* can reveal significant disruption within the University Counselling Service, which approximately 8.5% of the student body use. High staff turnover has led to increased waiting times over the past two years, with some students having to wait for five weeks to be seen. Particularly alarming for the student press was the University's significant intervention in our attempts to establish the extent of the disruption caused (front, pp.6-7).

Meanwhile, another week brings another open letter. PalSoc and the University's Middle Eastern society invited an academic from SOAS to chair a panel about Israel and Palestine but the University objected, installing their own director of communications as chair instead. A few hours before the event, an open letter appeared in the form of a Google document, and now has hundreds of signatures, accusing the University of "aggressive institutional intervention" (front, p.9).

In the wake of the Paradise Papers, which revealed that multiple colleges avoided tax by investing in fossil fuels (p.4), attention turns once again to Zero Carbon, who disrupted a careers fair in protest against the oil companies present (p.5).

Student activists push for changes within the University, but we must examine the efficacy of their campaigns. This week, *Varsity* can also reveal that the students campaigning over the future of the class lists were not aware that the names removed from Senate House are still published online, despite this fact being clearly stated on the opt-out forms and publicly available on the University website. What's more, no change in the system has taken place since the controversial referendum campaign last year (pp.2-3). This begs the question: what was it all for?

Requests for information about the counselling service were denied, Queens' college refused to comment on the controversial email, but when it comes to fossil fuels the University can no longer avoid taking a stance. We must now not only ensure that our voice is heard, but that it is listened to.

Students 'misinformed' in class lists referendum

● Opting out only applies to lists posted outside Senate House

● All names are still published online in the *Cambridge University Reporter*

● University to make a final decision on the future of class lists this year

Todd Gillespie
Senior News Correspondent

Key figures in last year's CUSU referendum on the future of Class Lists were unaware the class list opt-out did not apply online, *Varsity* can reveal.

Senior figures involved on both sides were not aware that the existing opt-out system does not apply to the class lists posted in the *Reporter*, accessible to all members of the University with a Raven login.

This important part of the system, which is still in place, was not common knowledge by students at the time of the vote in November 2016.

This week, CUSU admitted to *Varsity*, "The issue of students' names being published in the *Reporter* has only recently come to CUSU's attention.

"Once it was brought to our attention we immediately made contact with senior members of the University, including Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education Graham Virgo to work on ensuring that opting out of class lists also meant opting out of publication in the *Reporter*."

Roberta Huldish, CUSU education officer at the time of the vote, has also admitted she only became aware of the fact after the referendum. Huldish said: "I think students were definitely misinformed about the incomplete nature of the current opt-out, and I was also misinformed.

"This rule was never communicated to us by the University or anyone else and I feel like there is significant confusion about how the system works, even among those implementing it. I know

that current CUSU officers and the University are still working on a real and complete opt-out system."

Huldish was not permitted to campaign in the referendum due to her position in CUSU.

The revelation raises questions about the information available to students when they voted to mandate CUSU to campaign to save Class Lists. 55% of a 20% turnout answered 'yes' to the question: "Should CUSU campaign to keep the class lists, with an easier opt-out process?"

The Save the Class Lists campaign, of which 2016 CUSU presidential candidate Jack Drury was a part, was responsible for the wording of the referendum question. The campaign declined to comment on the particulars of the referendum campaign, saying only, "The referendum was clear: implementation is CUSU's responsibility."

The question seemed to imply an opt-out system was already in place, yet it was not made clear to students by the relevant campaigns that this system did not apply to the class lists published online in the *Reporter*.

The form to withhold personal data from the physical class lists, freely available on the University website, states that "the procedure only relates to the list posted outside the Senate House and in any list posted by the relevant department; their names will continue to be included in the complete class list which is published annually in the Special Edition of the *Reporter*".

Senior figures involved in the referendum, including those in CUSU and the students involved in the campaigns, have admitted to *Varsity* that they were

unaware of this at the time of the vote.

No change in the system has come since the result of the referendum, which bound CUSU to campaign for "an easier opt-out process". A month after the referendum, Regent House, the University's highest governing body, voted to retain class lists.

The current system has been criticised as heavily onerous for students wishing to opt out. Any opt-out application, which must be submitted by the student's tutor to the secretary of the applications committee, "will only be considered where there are exceptional circumstances and for good cause, such as where there is demonstrable medical (e.g. from a GP or Counsellor) and/or other appropriate supporting evidence that publication would be likely seriously to endanger a student's health or mental well-being".

Even for those having completed this arduous process, their names are still published online in the *University Reporter*.

Nadine Batchelor-Hunt, co-founder of Our Grade, Our Choice, which campaigned to abolish class lists, said, "initially I was not aware" of the fact, and only found out after the campaign.

Our Grade, Our Choice was founded around 18 months before the referendum to push for an unconditional opt-out process. By late May 2015, the campaign had gathered over 1,200 signatures of students in favour of this, but no change was implemented by the University.

In April 2016, a freedom of information request by *Varsity* revealed that the General Board of the Faculties had proposed to the University Council that the public display of Class Lists be stopped.



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▲ The University will make a decision on the future of class lists this academic year
 (LOUIS ASHWORTH)

In July, the University Council approved the proposals but Regent House then rejected them, with 727 against and 514 in favour.

Since the referendum, which bound CUSU to campaign to keep class lists but lobby the University for an easier opt-out system, no changes have occurred. A hypothetical guidance document for college senior tutors to help ease the process for students was floated at CUSU council in February, but this was put aside as CUSU tried to lobby for a long-term overhaul which the University has not yet been implemented, as deliberations are ongoing over the future of class lists in the face of data protection regulation.

Speaking anonymously to *Varsity*, a student who opted out condemned the “abhorrent” status quo, which does not allow names to be entirely removed from class lists despite the “deeply stressful process of obtaining a medical letter saying that to have their names published would seriously endanger a student’s health or well-being.

“The fact that results are still published online makes the whole process completely redundant and shows no compassion from the University for students going through extremely difficult times. My name being removed from the physical list decreased the visibility, but this was of little benefit.

“I do not think that this process was made clear enough to the students of the University, as I was only told that my name would not be removed entirely once I asked. It goes to show that the University puts its honour of tradition above the welfare of its students. This is a problem which should have been addressed a very long time ago, and it

baffles me that this is only just coming to light now.

“I only found out when I talked to my director of studies and tutor about wanting to withdraw my name. I was also not informed as to whether or not my application had been successful, so spent exam term stressing about whether or not I had been successful.”

CUSU’s lobbying was delayed due to long-term concerns in the face of incoming EU data protection regulation, due to be implemented in May 2018, which may put the legality of class lists in doubt.

Now the University has received legal advice, CUSU insists that it is “once again clearly and strongly arguing for the retention of class lists with an easy, unconditional opt out option for students, and furthermore for the choice of opting out of class lists to also apply to the publication of results in the *University Reporter*.”

A University spokesperson said: “The University is currently considering the potential effects of this legislation. As part of this, it is reviewing whether the display of class lists should change to an opt-in or opt-out system.

“As this is a complex issue this will be considered by the relevant University bodies before a decision is made.”

Keir Murison, former president of Student Minds Cambridge, expressed his dismay at the lack of progress on the issue.

He said: “It is very frustrating that there hasn’t been a change. Ultimately Cambridge moves very slowly.”

A University spokesperson confirmed that the University will make a decision on the future of class lists this academic year.

“This rule was never communicated to us by the University or anyone else and I feel like there is significant confusion about how the system works, even among those implementing it”

Roberta Huldisch
 Former CUSU welfare officer

“This is a problem which should have been addressed a very long time ago, and it baffles me that this is only just coming to light now”

Student who opted out

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 Cambridge supports Living Wage Week
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News

Divestment movement marches on, with

Patrick Wernham Editor

Phoebe Gargaro Deputy News Editor

Cambridge's divestment movement had a busy day on Thursday as they staged a protest at an Engineering careers event, shortly before the second town hall meeting was held on the issue.

Protestors from Cambridge Zero Carbon Society interrupted an 'Engineering, Science & Technology Event' hosted by the Careers Service in the University Centre (UC) on Thursday afternoon. Shortly after 2pm, roughly a dozen demonstrators entered the main hall of the UC, shouting and chanting.

The protesters, dressed largely in black and with black paint on their hands, proceeded to walk towards the Shell and BP stalls, before lying down in front of them. They continued chanting for approximately ten minutes, as University security staff arrived at the scene.

Security looked bemused and did little to stop the protesters. Eventually, a proctor arrived. After 15 minutes, the activists voluntarily left the hall, continuing their chanting as they left.

Speaking to *Varsity* after the protest, Cambridge Zero Carbon Society's campaigns officer, Marcel Llaverro Pasquina,

said: "With this action, Zero Carbon highlighted once again the hypocrisy of Cambridge investments. The University is supposed to educate the next generations and yet it profits from climate destruction. The University pledges to invest ethically and yet it is revealed in the Paradise Papers that it has millions in offshore investments."

"The Council must take responsibility and the least it could do is to pull investments out of fossil fuels now."

Thursday also marked the second 'town hall' meeting of the University Council's divestment working group. At the meeting, which, like the first, was chaired by Dame Athene Donald at Lady Mitchell Hall, the focal point of debate was whether it was better to divest or engage with hydrocarbon companies.

David Chambers, a Finance student at the Judge Business School, emphasised his concern over the impact of climate change. However, he stated that, although divestment would be an effective solution, engaging with hydrocarbon companies as a shareholder or an investor might be a better way of encouraging more ethical practice. Chambers added that, even if Cambridge chose to divest from fossil fuels and confidence was lost in their stock, companies such as BP and



University avoided tax with fossil fuel investment

Caitlin Smith

Senior News Editor

The universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and several of their constituent colleges, have invested millions of pounds in tax havens, according to documents released through the Paradise Papers leak.

Analysis of files from two offshore service providers by *The Guardian* and 95 other news outlets shows that a fund into which both universities paid had invested money into a company dealing in oil exploration and deep-sea drilling.

According to the documents, Cambridge invested \$1.7m (£1.3m) in Collier International, a private equity firm based in Guernsey, as did a number of individual colleges. Money invested from Oxford in the same firm totalled \$3.4m (£2.6m).

The money invested in the firm was split between two funds, one of which – Collier International Partners V – became the largest of its kind worldwide, attracting a total of \$4.8bn from investors across the world.

The biggest investment made by the fund was received by Royal Dutch Shell, an Anglo-Dutch oil and gas company. Other Shell partners that benefitted from the fund include Xtreme Coil and the Shell Technology Ventures Fund, both of which are involved in oil exploration and production.

The majority of colleges linked to offshore investments did so through the Collier funds. Colleges who invested in

this manner include Clare, Downing, Gonville & Caius, Jesus, Murray Edwards, Newnham, Pembroke, St Catharine's, St John's and Trinity Hall. Several colleges made investments in their own right, including Trinity College, the richest in Cambridge. Trinity's investments totalled \$13m (£10m).

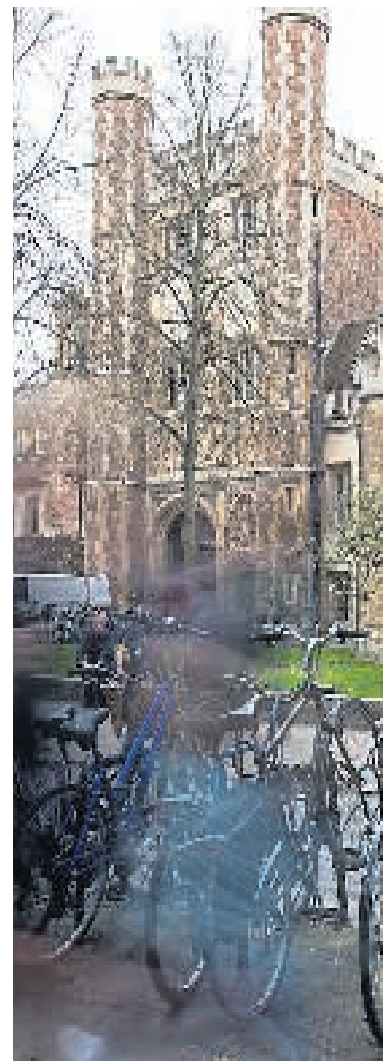
According to *The Guardian*, the documents also reveal information about investments made by both universities in multi-billion dollar private equity partnerships based in the Cayman Islands, a well-known tax haven.

An endowment fund attached to the University, the Gates Cambridge Trust, individually invested \$4.5m (£3.4m) in private equity firm Dover Street. The firm is one of a group of corporations known as 'blockers', which enable investors to avoid US taxes on cash put into hedge funds.

The revelations have sparked anger from those campaigning for the University to divest from fossil fuels. As a result of growing unease among University members about where the University invests its cash, the University established a working group to evaluate the "advantages and disadvantages" of divesting from fossil fuels. The second of its kind, the working group will reportedly "consider the question of disinvestment from such businesses more broadly" than its predecessor. The group has recently finished two 'town hall' meetings designed as a means of gathering the opinions of University members on the issue.

In a statement released on its Facebook page, Cambridge Zero Carbon Soci-

▶ Trinity College invested in offshore funds independently
(LOUIS ASHWORTH)



“Investing in Shell's deep-sea oil exploits is outrageous”

ety, a divestment campaign group, said: "These revelations are absolutely scandalous. That the University has been investing tens of millions of pounds in offshore funds to dodge tax is bad enough. That in doing so it has been investing huge quantities in Shell's deep-sea oil exploits is outrageous."

The statement called on the University to apologise for its past investment decisions, and vow that it would not invest in offshore funds or deep-sea drilling companies in the future. It also demanded the resignation of the University's Chief Investment Officer, Nick Cavalla.

A spokesperson said on behalf of the colleges and University: "The Colleges and the University are charities and therefore their holdings in investments are tax-exempt in the UK, US and many other countries. This means there is normally no tax to pay."

"The fund arrangement, through which the University and Colleges invest, is standard for collective investments of this type. The fund is managed by a highly reputable investment advisor and, as is normal, the adviser makes the decisions about specific investments to be made by the fund."

"A divestment working group was set up by University council in May 2016 to consider the question of divestment from businesses involved in fossil fuel industries. The University is currently seeking views from a wide range of organisations and individuals. In addition to written submissions we are holding town hall meetings open to staff and students from across the University."

demonstrations and town hall meetings



◀The demonstrators disrupted an event at the Careers Service (PATRICK WERNHAM)

Shell would become even more inaccessible to the public if they were to transform into private companies: “When investors engage on environmental or social issues, they do have an impact on those firms and how they behave.”

Many of the pro-divestment arguments sought to tackle this notion. Reverend Paul Dominiak of Jesus College argued that Cambridge had largely shaped the world for the better, with the exception of its decision to invest in industries which contributed to climate change. He stated, “If it’s wrong to wreck the planet, it’s wrong to profit from that wreckage.”

The argument that major energy companies are also looking for ethical and sustainable options was countered by several speakers at the event. Anna Bryan, from Sidney Sussex College, argued that Cambridge’s refusal to divest “is damaging the University’s reputation,” because of the links between some companies, like BP and Shell, and alleged human rights violations. She stated that Shell aims to invest only 3% of its overall budget into their Carbon Project, while some companies actively sponsor climate change denial. She also noted that major energy companies only fund 0.6% of Cambridge University research

projects.

CUSU President Daisy Eyre, who spoke on behalf of the students at the University, recalled the 2000 petition signatures by Cambridge students in 2015 in favour of divestment, and conveyed a warning about the potential results of continued investment in fossil fuels: “Climate change is not a joke, or an exaggeration.”

Her remarks followed an impassioned case for divestment put forward by Jeremy Caddick of Emmanuel College, who argued that the roots of the University’s reluctance to divest lay in “business as usual instincts”. Caddick described the current attempts to tackle the problem as “pathetically inadequate”, but conceded that it was impossible to tell what the future would hold: “Either we will have managed to find a way to live sustainably,” he said, “or bequeathed [to future generations] a climate collapse.”

As proceedings at Lady Mitchell Hall drew to a close, it was clear that the majority of the audience were in favour of divestment. During a round of speeches from the floor, Jenny Langley stated: “We are in a privileged position here. We could make a huge difference to the world. We are capable of standing up and being a shining example.”

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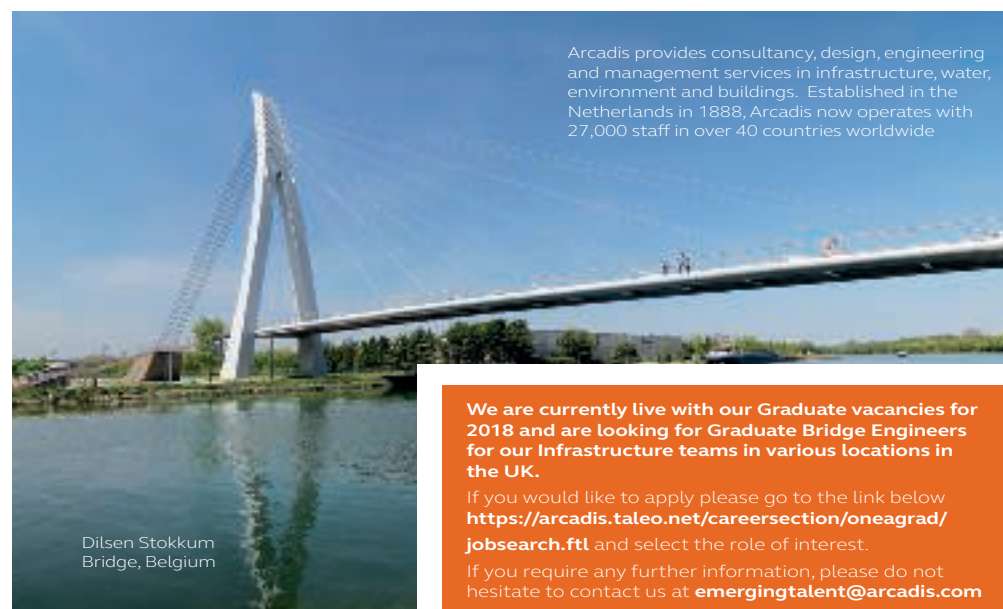
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News

Shortages at Counselling Service caused

Staff resignations disrupted student counselling

Continued from front page

issues caused by staff resignations.

Using information published on the UCS's website, cached information from which goes back as far as 2010, *Varsity* found that 11 members of staff (excluding those on temporary training placements) left the UCS in the three years following Dufour's appointment in 2013, compared to five in the three years before her appointment.

Last Thursday, *Varsity* reached out to the University with a list of all the names of staff who left during this period, seeking information on what proportion of all those staff retired, resigned, or did not renew their contracts. Questions on this element of staffing were included as part of a broad comment request packaged as a document.

On Wednesday, a University com-

munications officer emailed multiple former staff members who were named in the document, misrepresenting the information presented by *Varsity* and insinuating that the document, which contained anonymised quotes from several former staff members, defamed a UCS staff member.

Referencing the document but not attaching it, the communications officer told the former staff members in the email: "we believe you being named in this document could give you a strong case for group defamation", and said "*Varsity* plans to publish on Friday [today]". In saying this, they misled former staff members, as the document was explicitly described as "a comment request" when it was sent to the Communications Office, and was never intended for publication.

A University spokesperson disputed this, claiming: "We informed the people



▲ Staff resignations, sickness and a resignation disrupted student counselling
(LOUIS ASHWORTH)

that they were named in a document sent to the University, not that their names would be published in an article."

'Unforeseen staff turnover'

As a whole, the University of Cambridge has one of the best counsellor-to-student ratios of any UK university. In 2015-16, the UCS said 1,573 students accessed individual counselling. It offered 180-240 individual counselling sessions a week according to its annual report from that year. Most students who receive counselling self-refer. To do so, they must submit an assessment form, after which they are contacted with appointment times. At present, waiting times for a counselling appointment are listed as two to three weeks.

As part of its investigation, *Varsity* attempted to use the freedom of information act to obtain raw, anonymised data about student waiting times to access counselling, to verify stated figures and assess average waiting times. In its reply, the University said "we do not hold this information", despite several references to the recording of waiting time data in available documents. The University did not comment on how this could be the case, but acknowledged that the UCS is subject to freedom of information requests.

In Lent term 2016, waiting times spiked as high as five weeks after employee sickness and an unexpectedly high number of staff leaving the service led to a significant increase in waiting times. The impact of staff resignations and retirements was first flagged as an issue in minutes from a meeting of the UCS's executive committee in February 2016. As part of an expenditure report it was noted that: "Although there had been reasonable certainty over staff costs... events had turned out otherwise through resignations and a projected retirement."

A summary of comments attributed

to Dufour in minutes from a meeting in May 2016 show that she reported that Lent term that year had been "a busy one for the Service which had culminated in increase waiting times".

Dufour acknowledged that the increase "was not satisfactory", and said that it had "primarily resulted from difficulties from staffing levels during the term - sickness absence, staff attrition and the retirement of a senior member of staff had all contributed." She confirmed that "by the end of Lent Term 2016, there had been 237 clients awaiting ongoing counselling and, for less urgent cases, this had resulted in a wait time of up to 5 weeks", according to the minutes.

Robert Smith, the UCS's financial administrator at the time, reported in the same meeting that the surplus it was projecting for that year was "primarily the result of reduced payroll costs following unforeseen staff turnover and one significant retirement".

Minutes from this meeting were received by the Welfare and Finance Committee, a subcommittee of the high-level Senior Tutors' Committee, where they were "duly noted" without further recorded comment.

In an October 2016 meeting of the UCS executive committee, Smith reported that there had been a "larger than anticipated staff turnover", and that "Those who remained had worked, in many cases, significantly beyond their hours" to deliver planned levels of counselling.

In a statement sent to *Varsity*, the University said: "Universities in the UK are currently facing rising levels of demand from students for counselling services and Cambridge is no exception, with approximately 8.5% of our student population using the University Counselling Service (UCS). What makes our challenge unique is that we have to work with a short term of only 8 weeks, which makes for an intense experience for students and marked peaks in demand for access-

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wait time spike



ing counselling.”

They added: “There was an increase in waiting times in 2016 for a short period due largely to staff sickness absence, combined with a recruitment lag and an increase in demand for appointments. It was recognised at the time that this was an issue that needed to be addressed and measures have been put in place now to ensure that no recruitment lag will occur in the future.”

The minutes from the May 2016 executive committee meeting show that Dufour reported both that the UCS’s waiting list “was reducing”, and that “considerable recruitment activity had begun” in an effort to fill six counselling posts. The minutes add that “it was hoped this would make a significant difference to the [UCS]’s ability to respond to demand in 2016/17”.

152

Projected hours deficit for counselling for the 2016–17 year

At the start of Michaelmas term last year, the UCS had just six non-senior student counsellors on its list of employees. By mid-November 2016, five new non-senior student counsellors had been hired, with a further two added by the end of the academic year, bringing staffing levels in this role to their highest recorded level since 2010.

‘Concerns raised’

By the time the executive committee met in February 2017, the UCS was able to project that it was going to fall far short of the projected number of counselling hours it was able to provide that academic year.

The UCS had budgeted for an increase of 184 contact hours of counselling in 2016–17 compared to the previous aca-

ademic year. However, the minutes say “Due to staff resignations and the subsequent carrying of vacancies”, only 32 more contact hours of counselling would be provided, representing a projected deficit of 152 hours.

The majority of the hours of this deficit were “projected to be incurred against individual counselling sessions”.

The University did not comment on the reasons behind this stated deficit in counselling hours.

It was noted in minutes from a May 2017 executive committee meeting that the average number of individual counselling hours per client had fallen to 3.8, compared with a stated average of 4.27 hours the previous year. Combining group sessions into this figure, it fell from 4.98 hours to 4.24. The minutes note that the UCS “was moving more towards brief counselling”, and that “students were no longer offered a set number of sessions, rather the decision was based on progress”.

The minutes also state that “Committee members were interested in the Service’s move towards briefer counselling which appeared to have a positive impact on waiting times”, but that there were “some concerns raised about balancing time and resource with quality and student satisfaction”.

The minutes add that Dufour and Tim Ellis, a non-senior student counsellor with the UCS, “both provided reassurance regarding the care with which ceasing counselling with students was managed by the [UCS]”. It was noted in the same meeting that the UCS was “stretched”, and that consequently “even small increases in demand were likely to have an impact on waiting times”.

The UCS’s 2015–16 annual report says: “Care is taken to work efficiently and keep waiting times for counselling as low as possible, and judgements are made in the case of each client about how long to continue counselling”.

Varsity also requested that the University release the UCS’s 2016–17 annual report into its internal operations. After Varsity’s request for comment was sent, the page on the UCS’s website where annual reports were previously listed was made inaccessible, requiring an authorised login.

The University spokesperson said it was “untrue” that the reports had been made inaccessible, but acknowledged that the reports had been “removed temporarily so that photographs of staff members included in the report cannot be used without their permission by media outlets such as Varsity”. Shortly before Varsity went to press, the reports page was restored, with the 2016–17 report added. Minutes later, the link to the 2016–17 report went to a web page that did not exist. It reappeared online later, but once Varsity had passed its deadline for print.

The University said: “The University of Cambridge and its colleges take student mental health very seriously. The level of support available to students at the University of Cambridge is unparalleled in most other universities and is complemented by the comprehensive college-specific services.”

● Louis Ashworth and Anna Menin can be contacted via associate@varsity.co.uk

CHASING THE SUN

Ancient sundial discovered

A 2000-year-old Roman sundial has been discovered by University of Cambridge researchers in Italy. The sundial is intact and engraved with the name of the man who commissioned it. Dr Alessandro Lanaro, lecturer at the Faculty of Classics, said the sundial was important in showing “the level of involvement in Rome’s own affairs that individuals hailing from this and other relatively secondary communities could aspire to”.

PORT-BRIDGE

Cambridge is UK’s port and sherry capital

Data from Waitrose has revealed that Cambridge citizens buy more port and sherry than anywhere else in the UK. The discovery was made in the supermarket’s latest Food and Drink report, which analysed sales figures from across the country. The report also showed that last year people in East Anglia ate more pies than all other regions in the country. Other data showed a popularity for gin cocktails in the North-East of England.



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DOOMSDAY DAWNS

Hawking warns end of world is nigh

Stephen Hawking has warned that the end of the earth is likely to occur within 600 years. Speaking via video at the 2017 Tencent WE Summit, the Cambridge physicist predicted that overcrowding and energy consumption will cause the end to come in a “ball of fire”. For him, a solution could be the Breakthrough Starshot – a \$100 million research and engineering program which aims to explore the closest star system to ours.

PHOTOSYNTHESIS

Botanic Gardens host photo competition

Winning photos from the past 10 years of the International Garden Photographer of the Year competition are being displayed at the Cambridge University Botanic Gardens. Open until 21st December, there are 40 images on display from eight main categories, including garden, plant, flower and botanical photography. The international competition receives around 20,000 entries a year, with a winning prize of £75,000. They hope to “encourage visitors to take a closer look at their environment”.

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VARSLTY

Interview

Professor Anthony Grayling

“The paradox of liberalism is that it tolerates intolerant ideas”

A.C. Grayling, master of the New College of Humanities, discusses the crisis within representative democracy with **Josh Kimblin**

The American satirist H. L. Mencken is often attributed with the witticism that “democracy is a pathetic belief in the collective wisdom of individual ignorance”. The quotation is likely misattributed, but the sentiment has a contemporary resonance.

As Professor A.C. Grayling contends in his recent book, *Democracy and Its Crisis*, faith in representative democracies across the Western world is being tested, as a result of institutional discreditation and anger towards the incumbent political class. In the book, Grayling defends representative democracy and proposes a set of constitutional reforms intended to revive, as Churchill put it, “the least bad of all systems”.

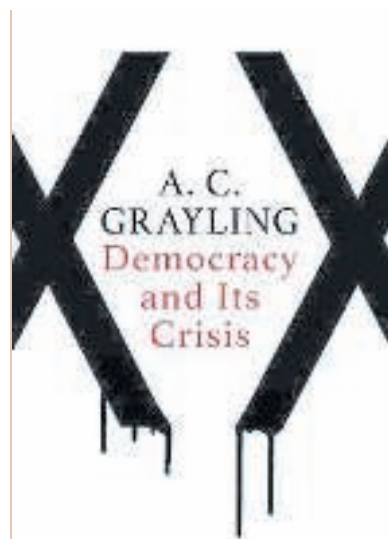
These suggestions include the adoption of a written, or at least “clarified”, constitution for the United Kingdom.

“There should be public acknowledgment of the fundamental aspects of our constitutional order,” Grayling argues.

“That includes the sovereignty of Parliament, the rule of law and perhaps giving a protected status to the Human Rights Act, which – as a matter of statute at present – is liable to appeal.”

Grayling is also an enthusiastic proponent of compulsory voting and lowering the voting age to sixteen: “We should follow the voting system of Belgium and Australia of compulsory voting. Both political jurisdictions regard voting as a civic duty, in the same fashion as obeying the law and paying taxes. I very much agree.”

On the lowered voting age, Grayling offers a familiar argument – “there are so many other things you can do at sixteen” – while also exhorting the need for “an active and vigorous civics education in schools, beginning at thirteen or fourteen.”



“Young people must learn how voting works; they must practise voting, participate in moots and debates and learn something of the great struggle to achieve the vote.”

He points out that opportunities for serious democratic participation are not always regular.

“Your age group has been rather fortunate to have both a general election and a referendum to participate in. If you turned eighteen this month, with no planned election for another four or five years, you’d be your mid-twenties before you have participated in our political process.”

When I question the practicality of these reforms, Grayling defends them as “extremely modest and ultimately conservative”.

“I’m not making a radical leap to sortition or Plato’s view that philosophers ought to run everything – although I do personally find that quite attractive. It’s far more sensible to go for something modest and achievable.”

Grayling’s book was recently attacked by Giles Fraser in *The Guardian*, who viewed it as “symptomatic of the revival of a particular species of highbrow sneering at the politics of ordinary people”.

Grayling regards the article as an “incredibly silly piece, because it was 180 degrees wrong about the point I was trying to make.”

“I was not looking down my nose at

the ‘ordinary voter’, if there is such a thing. On the contrary, I was defending the right of citizens, quite independent of property qualifications or education, to have a voice.”

Irrespective of the legitimacy of Fraser’s criticisms, they played on a now-familiar polarity of ‘elite’ and ‘ordinary’ people: attacks on ‘elite experts’ and ‘aloof academics’ have become part of our political discourse. I ask Grayling whether he thinks the quality of public discourse has declined.

He opens his reply diplomatically. “There has never been a very luminous degree of rationality in public debate. However, some who take on leadership positions within society can be more rational and considered than others: the contrast between Barack Obama and Donald Trump is illustrative.”

“In the United Kingdom, the public conversation is always subverted and damaged by the drag anchor of the tabloid press,” he continues. “Debates on major social issues – such as drug policy, prostitution, or same-sex marriage – are conducted through the hysteria of the tabloids rather than through a mature discussion of what would best serve society’s interests.”

Grayling has sympathy with some elements of the political class, however. “Almost all political careers end in failure. The longer you go on in politics, the more groups you annoy, until you have an-

nnoyed everyone. If you are going to have a successful political career, you must really get yourself assassinated early and hope people remember you with affection! The necessity of half-measures and compromise explains why public dissatisfaction with politicians is so high.”

He is far less sympathetic to current government ministers. “People regard politicians as prevaricative, if not outright liars. Lying seems to be the order of the day, though. David Davis today claimed that there are no Brexit impact studies, having claimed that there were 58 a few days earlier.”

“The people now at the centre of government are a very poor bunch: they seem to be either lying or incompetent.”

Referring to ‘good’ and ‘bad’ bunches of politicians raises the issue of whether constitutional practices can ever be sufficient to prevent poor government. In any representative democracy, doesn’t the quality of rule ultimately depend on the character and competence of the representatives?

To answer, Grayling points to the history of representative democracy, which occupies the first half of his book.

“When you go through the reasoning behind representative democracy, from Locke to Mill, you find the idea that, if you get the institutions and practices right, then they constitute a barrier against the worst aspects of elective representatives. It is the institutions which matter: the rule of law, rather than the rule of human beings.”

So is Grayling optimistic for the future? “Certainly,” he replies. “If we make these small reforms, it should really work. By ‘really work’, I mean that it would give us a ‘good enough’ government. We cannot expect all government and constitutional processes to work perfectly; all things human are deeply flawed and events and complexities intervene.”

“But we have a correlative right to ‘good enough’ government, if only so that our other rights – to privacy, autonomy, to assembly, to freedom of expression – can be upheld.”

Not all share Grayling’s optimism. I put to him concerns that university campus culture has challenged received ideas about freedom of speech and the necessity of engaging with disagreeable ideas. He acknowledges the concerns: “The university is the one place where people cannot temporise about freedom of expression.” Grayling declares that his own institution, the New College of the Humanities, is “a safe space for free speech.”

“Unless somebody is actually advocating violence or harm of a serious and immediately identifiable kind, any viewpoint is welcome.”

“That is the paradox of liberalism – it tolerates intolerant ideas. If you think those viewpoints are wrong, then you address them: the only remedy for bad free speech is better free speech. To censor people and deny them a platform, however bad you think their views are, only makes things worse.”

▲ Professor Grayling is one of the UK’s most prominent public philosophers. (WIKICOMMONS. IAN SCOTT)

◀ A.C. Grayling’s book addresses the challenges facing Western democracies. (ONEWORLD PUBLICATIONS)

‘Abuse of university power’ at PalSoc panel sparks open letter

Continued from front page

protestor, who asserted his right to “silent protest”, was eventually escorted out of the lecture theatre by security. As he left, he held up a large Israeli flag and said to the audience that they were “being told a pack of lies”. His departure was greeted by applause and cheers.

Both Bouattia and Rehman gave statements condemning Dr Salih’s dismissal. In a statement read out at the event, Bouattia expressed her “deep concern over the attempts of censorship and the undermining of academic freedom”, adding that it was important to stand in solidarity as “we continue to take on the white supremacist tendencies of the academy and our institutions through their so-called attempts at enforcing so-called neutrality”.

Speaking to *Varsity* after the event, Rehman said: “It is absolutely reprehensible that a woman of colour Muslim academic has been removed in this manner”. He added that it was an “abuse of University power” and that such interference should be of “serious concern to students”.

In response to Mylrea’s appointment, the Palestine Society published an open

letter that has already accumulated over 350 signatures, that criticises the University’s alleged “threat to academic freedom”.

The letter accuses the University of “aggressive institutional intervention”, and of having supported “those who seek to silence the voices of the marginalised”.

When contacted by *Varsity* for comment, a University spokesperson said: “The University is fully committed to freedom of speech and expression. We do understand that certain events and issues invoke strong feelings among people and communities. But we believe it is important that staff, students and visitors to the University can participate fully in legitimate debate.” They added that Mylrea had been appointed following “calls from the organisers for extra safety measures”.

On Thursday, CUSU president Daisy Eyre released a statement on social media, which read: “Last night, I was shaken by the implications of the University’s decision to request an ‘independent’ chair on the panel event ‘BDS and the Globalised Struggle for Palestinian Human Rights’.

“The University needs to think hard about whose voices it is privileging and whose it is silencing when it interferes

“It is absolutely reprehensible that an academic has been removed”



in events like this. The University very rarely takes a hand in student events and here, it has decided that a particular set of views are to be treated differently from others.

“This is certainly an instance of the insidious power of Prevent legislation, and an example of an uneven use of University interference.”

▲From left to right: Omar Barghouti, Malia Bouattia, Asad Rehman, Paul Mylrea (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PALESTINE SOCIETY)

Eyre said she had emailed key figures within the university and asked to meet and discuss changes to procedure. Her statement also urged students to “sign this letter condemning the action by the University, so that they can see that the choice they have made is not practical or pragmatic but an exercise of power against marginalised groups”.

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News

Cambridge comes together for Living Wage Week

Stephanie Stacey
News Correspondent

Throughout this week, Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU), Cambridge Universities Labour Club (CULC) and Cambridge Defend Education have united to encourage the University to pay all its employees the real living wage.

Cambridge MP Daniel Zeichner gathered with students from CULC and CUSU outside Senate House on Monday morning to raise awareness and to encourage academics to give their support to a Grace which requests "that the University of Cambridge seek accreditation from the Living Wage Foundation in the current academic year and therefore pay the Real Living Wage to all staff and contractors who work regularly on University premises."

The current UK Living Wage, calculated by the Living Wage Foundation, is £8.75 per hour outside of London, while within London it is £10.20.

It is hoped that the campaign, if successful, will not only improve the University's own treatment of its staff, but will also set a positive example for other employers to follow.

Daniel Zeichner MP told *Varsity* that despite "many years" of campaigning, there is still a lot of progress to be made

in order to ensure wages are sufficient to provide a decent standard of living, adding that Cambridge is a "particularly expensive city".

Zeichner also noted that Anglia Ruskin University is already an accredited living wage employer, suggesting that it is "time for Cambridge colleges to follow where Anglia Ruskin leads".

While this week is Living Wage Week, CULC and CUSU plan to continue campaigning in support of the living wage over the coming year.

Regarding future plans to continue raising awareness, CULC co-chairs Becca Martin and Edward Parker Humphreys spoke of "leafleting lecture sites" and told *Varsity*: "We need to generate as much pressure as possible in the university." They emphasised that "students will be key to the campaign".

On Wednesday evening, CUSU also hosted an 'email n chill' session during which students were helped to email academics in their colleges and request their support for the Grace.



◀▶ Academics were encouraged to sign a Grace outside Senate House on Monday
(STEPHANIE STACEY)



Chaos abounds at CUSU Council

Patrick Wernham
Editor

CUSU Council met for a brief and frustrating hour on Monday evening that resulted in the passing of two motions, while questions were raised about the legitimacy of votes at previous council meetings.

The meeting got off to an awkward start, as CUSU President Daisy Eyre struggled to answer a question from *Varsity* as to how quoracy (the number of votes required at Council for a motion to be legitimately passed) was defined.

In the CUSU constitution, co-written by Eyre, quoracy is defined as "a number present equal to or greater than three-fifths of the number of Affiliated Common Rooms provided the number of non-Executive Council Members present is greater than the number of Executive Committee Council Members present."

The constitution is therefore ambiguous regarding whether the number of Affiliated Common Rooms means the total number of JCRs and MCRs affiliated with CUSU, which would number around 50, or the total number of voting members from the affiliated JCRs and MCRs, numbering around 150 (as each common room has three votes).

The former interpretation would mean a vote requires roughly 30 people to be in attendance, whereas with the latter it would be roughly 90.

Eyre initially appeared confused when asked for clarification by *Varsity*, saying that she had not been given "any warning in advance of that question". She went on to say that the wording was

"open to interpretation", and that there was "no actual particular reason it would be for me [Eyre] to decide".

There was discussion as to which interpretation should be followed, with CUSU Democratic Support Coordinator Alex Cicale suggesting that quorum should be understood as three-fifths of the total number of affiliated JCRs and MCRs (meaning three-fifths of roughly 50). He said that if quorum were set any higher, most votes at previous councils, including on budgets, would be invalid. However, no formal decision was made as to which interpretation was correct.

Monday's Council also saw Simon Percelay, head of CUSU LGBT+ campaign, put himself forward to be on the CUSU Finance Enquiry Committee, a group organised to scrutinise CUSU's finances. Percelay noted that at present there was no one from the liberation campaigns on the committee, despite the campaigns having had their budget cut by £500 in the most recent budget. Percelay was voted onto the committee.

Two motions were also presented at Council, with Emrys Travis, the CUSU LGBT+ campaign's disabilities officer, proposing that the CUSU liberation campaigns be given more votes at Council. Travis argued that while each affiliated common room has three votes, each liberation campaign is only allocated one vote, despite representing caucuses of students much greater in number than any of the colleges. The motion was passed unanimously.

A motion proposed by Angus Satow, recently elected NUS delegate, to support rent campaigns in Cambridge, was also passed with strong support.

“
The CUSU constitution is open to interpretation
”

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Science

Ectogenesis: a brave new world

Huxley's dystopian novel may soon become a reality

Joseph Krol

When *Brave New World* was first published in 1931, the future that Huxley proposed must have seemed at best desperately implausible. His tale of a grimly hedonistic dystopia was so far from his reality: in place of an aimlessly saccharine vision, utter nightmares were being foisted upon the European continent. Yet, almost a century on, his novel is proving more prescient than he could have imagined.

One feature of the novel, much remarked upon at the time, is the artificial womb. In the book's opening lines he describes the 'Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre', a great building where the people of this pallid Britain are born. Scores of new students travel through the laboratories one after the other; we find industrial incubators, bottling rooms, even a 'social predestination room'. The whole system is described as a great pinnacle of society. Yet there is something deeply ominous amongst this enthusiasm. From a single egg, it is said, 96 identical people could be produced, and soon could be set to work on 96 identical machines: "The principle of mass production at last

applied to biology". In this world, there is no room for individuality, no room for meaningful liberty; life has been reduced to a formality. Nevertheless, at the time, such existential horrors would have been thought of as a distant nightmare.

The idea of growing babies outside the womb, otherwise known as ectogenesis, is steadily emerging from the mire of fantasy and science-fiction. Earlier this year, a remarkable experiment succeeded in growing several prematurely-born lambs, in an artificial womb, to full term; they grew their first coat of wool, they opened their eyes, they began to move. The implications are truly colossal.

Though this research has yet to be fully applied to humans, remarkable strides have been made in this area recently, centred on discoveries at Cambridge. Last year, a team led by Professor Magdalena Zernicka-Goetz allowed human embryos to mature for 13 days amidst a mixture of chemicals, designed to replicate the conditions of the mother's womb early in pregnancy. The study was forcibly cut short, only because British law forbids the artificial maturation of a fertilised embryo beyond two weeks. However many scientists are beginning to pressure the government into increasing the permitted period, although profound ethical questions are numerous. In any case, the research has shown that we may be closer to Huxley's vision than you might think.

Ectogenesis has a longer history than one might expect. The term itself was coined by British physiologist JBS Haldane in a lecture given to Cambridge's Heretics Society in 1923. He predicted

“We must determine what of human nature we are willing to sacrifice”



that by the 1960s, growing children in artificial wombs would be quite commonplace and by the 2070s a third of all newborns would be born ectogenetically. Haldane was writing with his tongue a fair distance into his cheek. It speaks volumes that he described his prediction as an excerpt from an essay by "a rather stupid undergraduate member of this University to his supervisor during his first term 150 years hence". But given the speed of recent developments, one might think there is yet a lot of truth in it. And this underlines the urgency with which humankind must begin to deal with some of the most fundamental problems we face.

As we progress as a society, we are beginning to realise the magnitude of the social and philosophical problems these biological developments pose. From the

▲ Ectogenesis: tampering with pregnancy?

(WELLCOME)

practicalities of keeping foetuses alive outside the womb for months at a time, to the very question of what it means to be human, there remains much to be answered by the government, by Cambridge, and ultimately by every one of us. Ultimately, we must determine what of human nature we are willing to sacrifice at the nebulous altar of progress. I imagine the answer will drift toward an ever more extreme consensus as generations mature, as minds are reshaped as time marches on.

Yes, scientific development undoubtedly provides humankind's best hope for 'progress' as a species, whatever that may be. Yes, it can certainly bring us countless benefits. But we must ensure that it remains the servant of humanity, rather than its master, as we enter into this brave new world.

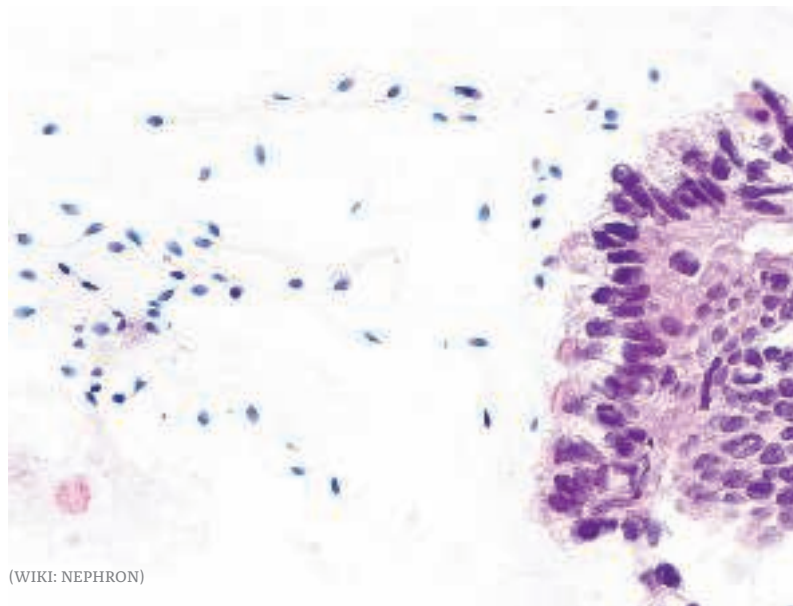
Making sperm and egg from a skin cell

A novel technology in cell biology is set to change our conception of reproduction

Navin Ramakrishna

Sperm and egg can be considered the most important cell types of the body as they are the only cells that contribute to the next generation in sexually-reproducing species. How such cells are made from an initially homogenous clump of cells that make up the early human embryo therefore presents an interesting question in developmental biology. In a desire to understand human gamete development, scientists in Cambridge and elsewhere in 2015 created models of sperm and egg development in a dish by artificially generating the very early precursors to gametes from embryonic stem cells.

More impressively, the same scien-



(WIKI: NEPHRON)

tists managed to create these precursor sperm and egg from human skin by first reverting skin cells to a stem cell state via 'induced pluripotent stem cell technology', then coaxing these reverted cells towards an early gamete state.

While the protocols do not allow the artificial sperm and egg to develop further from the precursor state for the time being, far more progress on this has been

made using mice. In 2016, scientists in China made artificial mouse sperm, and later in the year, Japanese scientists successfully generated artificial mouse eggs completely outside a mouse. Using *in vitro* fertilisation techniques, much like those used in NHS fertility clinics, they proved that these artificial sperm and egg were functional, giving rise to apparently healthy mouse pups.

Attempts are currently underway to develop similar protocols for making mature artificial human gametes, and some are starting to consider the tantalising opportunities that applications of such a technology could confer. For example, it may be possible to make functional artificial gametes from the skin of patients with certain forms of infertility and combine this with assisted reproductive technology to allow infertile couples to have children. This has been shown to work in male mice with genetic infertility as a consequence of having an extra sex chromosome, as the case in Klinefelter Syndrome (XXY) or Jacob's Syndrome (XYY). Japanese researchers showed this year that a proportion of the mouse skin cells discarded their extra chromosome during reversion to a stem cell state. These 'cured' cells were then able to generate successful artificial sperm.

Interest has also been sparked in the possibility of genetically-linked children – or 'gaybies' – for same-sex couples. The idea of generating eggs from male skin, or sperm from female skin, is not theoretically impossible. However, multiple biological hurdles involving removing or adding sex chromosomes will first have to be overcome, with the proof-of-principle yet to be demonstrated in

mouse models. The ethics involving the manipulation of the germline this way will also have to be considered before any such technology is approved.

Even in the simpler case of generating sperm from male skin or egg from female skin, problems with their biology may exist as an artefactual consequence of growing in a dish. For example, while artificial sperm and egg have given rise to seemingly healthy offspring in mice, these offspring may be hiding defects caused by improper re-setting of their epigenetics, one of the mechanisms a cell deploys to turn genes 'on' or 'off'. Such flaws may only reveal themselves when the organism is environmentally-challenged, for instance in conditions of stress. This uncertainty will also contribute as one of the many ethical considerations of adopting this technique for use in human reproductive medicine.

For now, the generation of artificial early-precursor gametes offers an excellent model for the study of the basic biology of how human sperm and egg are made. Numerous hurdles will have to be first overcome before the fully-mature artificial gametes can be made from human skin, with thorough discussion and consideration of the implications before such a technique can be implemented in therapy.

Genetic engineering: hacking a different type of code

The future of editing embryos is set to change with the advent of the novel technology CRISPR

Sofia Weiss

On first appraisal, Wednesday 2nd August seemed like a veritable landmark for human gene editing. An international team of researchers published results most can only dream of, suggesting that the CRISPR-Cas9 editing technique, a method that allows scientists to make precise changes to genomes, could be used to correct a disease-causing mutation in dozens of viable human embryos.

The study, which focused on altering mutations in the gene MYBPC3, known to cause the heart muscle to thicken and associated with sudden death in young athletes, was thought to repre-

sent a significant improvement in efficiency and accuracy in the usage of CRISPR over previous efforts. However, I use the words 'thought' and 'seemed' advisedly, for just under three months later, potentially irretrievable reservations have surfaced over the *Nature* paper. Critics argue that Mitalipov's team was misled into believing that they had corrected the mutation by relying on a genetic assay that was unable to detect a far more likely outcome of the experiment: that CRISPR had introduced a large deletion in the paternal gene.

The peaks and troughs of this discovery serve to highlight that despite the allure of hacking our genomes with CRISPR, the practicalities of the technique still leave much to be desired - particularly in context of the long-term goal of treating disease.

There are two chief ingredients in the CRISPR-Cas9 system: a Cas9 enzyme that snips through DNA like a pair of molecular scissors, and a small RNA molecule that directs the scissors to a specific sequence of DNA. The cell's native DNA repair machinery mends the cut, and this can be harnessed by providing a template for repair, the hope being that the genome will be fixed in the way you want it to.

Sadly, however, this is an imperfect science, and the genetic code is merci-



▲ Hacking embryos: the new normal? (ED UTHMAN)

less: a minor error introduced during repair can completely alter the sequence of the protein it encodes, or halt its production altogether. Our inability to control exactly where CRISPR-Cas9 makes all its cuts and where they are repaired means that, rather than the genetic scalpel desired, we currently have a butcher's knife. Thus defects in the technology itself, as well as oversights at the bench, are more often ruinous than not.

Nevertheless, with thousands of labs the world over engaged in an arms race for revolutionary results, the ethics of chopping-and-changing the germline should not be ignored - they might soon have to be dealt with in the clinic, after all. The trouble here is that unlike with editing somatic cells, alterations to a defective gene in an egg or a sperm cell would be passed on to future generations. This could change the genetic make-up of humans, likely in unpredictable ways.

The most compelling argument against human germline engineering perhaps, is that subjects involved in medical research should always give fully informed consent; since the individuals whose lives are potentially affected by germline manipulations could extend many generations into the future, they can't possibly agree to having their genetic material altered from what na-

ture would have otherwise made conceivable.

There's also a concern about human hubris. Who gets to decide what's an 'improvement' on a genome? Is it simply eradicating maladies, or is it creating six-foot blue eyed Cambridge student-types? Although the stuff of dreams - and nightmares - for futurists, I'd argue that this concern is more science-fiction than science-reality.

Overall, the very potential benefits of genetic modifications in embryos are substantial, and we can circumvent many an argument by remembering that such editing should be treated like any other medical procedure: with benefits weighed against harms. It should not be halted pre-emptively out of sheer terror. Ultimately, we affect the genetic make-up of our offspring every time we choose one partner over another, and every time we expose ourselves to dangerous chemicals or even excessive sunlight. Genetic editing would be a droplet in the whirlpool of naturally churning genomes.

What we do need to do is be careful about where and when to use these technologies. In particular, CRISPR holds serious promise, but there needs to be significant refinement to this tool before it can even be considered for use in medical treatment.

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Comment

The Queens' email is appalling – academics must do better



Alasdair de Costa
is a third year
historian at
Trinity Hall

You have probably seen the email sent out by the fellow at Queens' by now. For those that have not, it is a masterclass in decimating the self-worth of all but the most self-assured students. It reads as if the person writing it was consulting a checklist to ensure they did not miss an opportunity to trample over anyone who has ever had a mental health condition, struggled with work or felt like they do not belong here; I think that's probably all of us.

In the email, having a "good time" becomes a "behaviour pattern", and one which is not "possible or acceptable" at that. For "a large fraction" of those addressed, even their "full brain capacity" would not be enough to ensure they fulfilled academic expectations. This would be quite the feat of insensitivity were it sent to a group of hardened third-years; but it was sent to a cohort of freshers who have been in Cambridge for just over four weeks.

We know imposter syndrome is a commonly experienced phenomenon here, particularly amongst underrepresented demographics. We know that mental health issues related to work stress and academic pressure are rife. Why do some academics consistently engage in behaviours which perpetuate and exacerbate these issues?

The potential damage that email might have caused to student welfare was clearly not a remote consideration for Professor Terentjev. If it was, that is

in many ways far more concerning.

The email was admittedly extreme, but it was not produced in a vacuum. It is part of a much wider culture of disregard for the welfare and mental health of students at Cambridge. Much has already been made of the need to further invest in mental health provision and limit students' workload – which are both, of course, vitally important – but there has been less of a focus on the environment wilfully fostered by some of the academics at this university. Pressure is deliberately piled onto students in an attempt to improve their academic achievement, without any care for the impact that it could have on those concerned.

These attitudes come in exaggerated forms, as in the case of this email, but equally insidious are the smaller interactions between staff and students. These are not procedures which require reform – such as class lists, scholars' dinners and financial incentives for first-class students – but attitudes. They are the odd comment at the tail end of an email, telling you that you can 'build on' a set of results you were actually pretty happy with thank you very much. They are the deliberate over-estimation of hours students have to put into a working week to achieve the 'minimum standard of a 2:1'. They are disapproving comments about over-commitment to extra-curriculars, letters of explanation demanded of 'underperformers' and unhelpful criticisms scribbled in the margins of essays.

In the first meeting of the year with

your Director of Studies, the discussion is rarely about the grade you would like to work towards, rather the grade that is expected of you. Why, as adults who have chosen to go into higher education, are we not able to determine our own work/life balance? A Director of Studies should be offering academic or even pastoral support: you are not here to work for them. A university-specific entrance process and a good reputation does not change the fact that we are paying £9,000 or more a year for the privilege to be here. Our education should be ours to manage.

There is much that could be changed institutionally at college and University level. We know from experience, however, that this is easier said than done. A shift in attitudes is far more achievable. Every single academic needs to understand the impact of what they say to students, to appreciate the nuances of the ways in which a demanding academic environment and mental health issues can intersect, and treat students as if they are people rather than a grade.

The University needs to own this. Perhaps it is not us, but some academics who need to be "careful" of how they "handle" themselves. To those who find themselves falling short of the required standard, I say: look after your students, learn to enjoy it, and then see if you have any desire to send demeaning and belittling emails to those over whom you have a duty of care.

End of.



Millie Rietkerk is
a second year
studying Theology
at St. Catharine's

It's not just the rich and famous: sexual abuse is pervasive in all areas of society

At the moment, there appears to be an ever-increasing number of allegations of sexual abuse and harassment against well-known people. We are rightly horrified by the crimes allegedly committed by famous and influential figures, such as Harvey Weinstein and Kevin Spacey, yet, tragically, I find these allegations somewhat unsurprising and instead view them to be a sad reflection of a widespread societal problem of sexual abuse and harassment.

In response to these accusations, it is imperative that we do not consider them to be independent one-off events. The prevalence of these crimes is becoming clearer and clearer in the aftermath of the Weinstein allegations as more victims are gaining the confidence to speak out about their alleged abusers, whether they be from Hollywood or the House of Commons. After all, it was not long ago that Donald Trump was elected President of the USA, bringing a string of sexual assault allegations into the White House with him. Due to this, in order to do justice to those who have been victimised in these alleged crimes, we must offer more than sympathy and address



Queens' College (AZEIRA)

Alasdair
de Costa



Recent sexual assault revelations are just the tip of the iceberg

the root of the problem.

However, it is not just Hollywood stars or villainous politicians that are guilty of these kinds of crimes. Sadly, they are far more common than some may expect, as revealed by a report carried out by the Ministry of Justice, Office of National Statistics and Home Office in 2013. This found that nearly half a million adults are sexually assaulted in England and Wales each year with one in five women between the ages of 16-59 experiencing some form of sexual violence. The horrific frequency of sexual crimes demonstrates that they are far more ingrained into our society than many may think. The questions that arise from these findings are why these behaviours are so common – and how we can work to tackle them?

While it is, of course, unrealistic to provide one cause for the prevalence of sexual abuse and harassment, I do believe that one of the key problems is the normalisation of predatory and inappropriate sexual behaviour. One example of this is how predatory behaviour is often construed as simply being ‘keen’ or ‘persistent’. Many times, I have witnessed and experienced people refusing to take no for an answer, being convinced, in their own entitlement, that someone might change their mind. However, relying on someone to change their mind demonstrates a total lack of respect for the other person and their ability to give and withdraw consent over matters concerning their own body.

This lack of respect is also visible through the active shaming of those who do not consent to sexual activity. This is particularly clear in the accusation of ‘leading someone on’. Such a concept blames and shames a person for refusing to give, or for withdrawing, consent. Why is this kind of manipulation so com-

▲ Actor Kevin Spacey, who has been accused of sexual assault

(RICHARD C39)

monly accepted? From my experience, these tactics can make people feel as though they have little choice in the matter. On multiple occasions, I have heard female friends say that it was easier to get with someone than not to. In light of this kind of commonplace predatory sexual behaviour, the need for education about consent is particularly obvious, in order to create a safer and more respectful society.

In my view, it is also really important that we take predatory and inappropriate behaviour seriously, instead of allowing it to be dismissed as a joke. I think that this is particularly relevant to the notion of ‘sharking’, a term that I had never come across until coming to Cambridge. Whilst there is, of course, nothing wrong with relationships between older students and freshers, ‘sharking’ does literally imply predation. Regardless of whether it is construed as a joke or not, deliberately preying on younger students to receive sexual favours isn’t actually that funny at all. It’s not only patronising and demeaning to first year students, but risks creating an uncomfortable and hostile environment. Whilst I am by no means suggesting that ‘sharking’ inevitably leads to harassment or abuse, when creepy and predatory behaviour is brushed aside as banter it is hardly surprising that many victims of sexual crimes do not want to come forward.

Clearly, the problem of sexual harassment and assault runs much deeper than the exposure of the alleged crimes of the rich and famous. That being said, incidents like those concerning Weinstein and Spacey attract much public and media attention, giving an opportunity to discuss the tragic prevalence of these kinds of crimes and hopefully work towards a solution.

“Predatory behaviour is often construed as simply being ‘keen’ or ‘persistent’”

Stigma around mental health is misguided – and can be costly

Columnist *Florence Oulds* writes about her experiences taking medication for her mental health, and argues against the stigma that surrounds the issue



‘Stigma’ can often be a vague and misunderstood concept. Yet the existence of Halloween costumes portraying “mental patients” is a pretty concrete example of the stigma surrounding mental illness and its treatments. Following films like *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* and *Girl, Interrupted*, the cultural image of mental health wards, as seen in these costumes, is that they are either occupied by murderous criminals, or shambling zombies.

To people who find themselves in the process of being prescribed medication, this stigma – and associated worries about loss of the self and the numbing of emotions – makes the decision a moral one, rather than a consideration of what’s best for your health.

This decision is especially prevalent for university students. The limiting factor of time and the looming stress of exams mean that it’s not always possible or practical to unpack difficult issues in therapy and engage in a deep tackling of our issues. Medication is often criticised as being a ‘quick fix’ (which translates to a lazy or illegitimate treatment), but when juggling short-term stressors – of which university brings many – a short-term or temporary intervention might be exactly what a student needs.

So behind the stigma, what is it really like to take medication for mental health problems? I’ve been taking Citalopram for nearly three years. In that time I’ve found that many people are scared of antidepressants and woefully misunderstand them.

Of course, medication is not for everyone, and SSRIs and other anti-depression medications should only be taken when prescribed by a medical professional. If you think medication could be beneficial to you, you should contact your GP. The University Counselling Service also offers advice on medication and mental health treatments. For me, however, this was definitely the right choice. Yet, stigmatising representations of mental illness nearly prevented me from seeking this help.

When studying A-Level Psychology, my lecturer said that antidepressants were not a good treatment and should only be used alongside

therapy or counselling. By the time my exams rolled around I was so anxious that I frequently experienced dissociative episodes, and ran out of my first exam while experiencing the worst panic attack of my life.

I was receiving counselling during this time, but all the ways I’d heard medication talked about made me incredibly apprehensive. It took me until halfway through my first year at Cambridge to finally try antidepressants and even then it was only because of the support and reassurance of a friend.

This is often the case: it seems that sometimes the only way this stigma is unworked is through talking to a person who has or is taking medication, and realising that they are still a person and not wholly numb or absent from their own life.

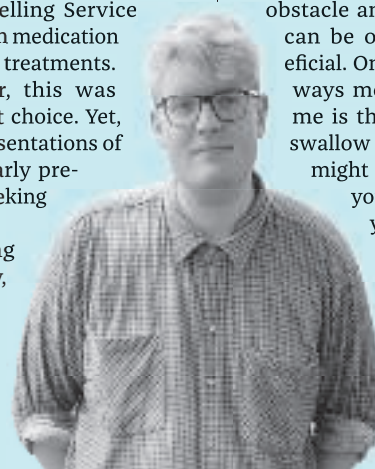
At first it can be difficult to really notice the differences, as your perception is that you will start to think and feel in whole new ways – but that’s really not true. While I expected it to ‘remove’ anxiety and stress, its effect for me was more like cutting off the high peaks of stress and deep lows of sadness.

The effect taking medication has had on my life cannot be understated. I’m no longer afraid of interacting with other people, and it does feel like I’m able to access a part of life that was lost to me before. Throughout my life, however, I’ve been confronted by an image of the treatment of mental illness as being a destructive process, fundamentally changing personalities and abilities. We must work to overcome this stigma.

Mine and countless others’ experiences show that overcoming this obstacle and seeking treatment can be overwhelmingly beneficial. One of the least obvious ways medication has helped me is that all I have to do is swallow a pill. Some days you might not want to look after yourself, and some days you might want to be self-destructive. If that’s something you struggle with, having a kind of self-care that doesn’t require mental or physical effort can be life-saving.



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Comment

The rise in child poverty exposes the cruelty of Tory welfare

In the wake of the IFS's report that found child poverty soaring, we must tackle the Tories' misleading rhetoric and counter-productive policies



Charlotte Lillywhite is in her first year studying English at Newnham

Charlotte Lillywhite

The Institute for Fiscal Studies' report on child poverty, released last week, has exposed the lies at the heart of the Tories' recent reforms of the welfare system. Such changes have involved merging six separate benefits into a Universal Credit system alongside tax credits. The child benefit part is limited to the first two children in a family. Seemingly due to this, the organisation predicted that 37% of children will be living in poverty by 2022. Under the weight of this, Theresa May's sarcastic claim that there is no 'magic money tree' unravels. Surely what does take some sort of disturbing magic is the ability to undo thirteen years of Labour's work in cutting child poverty to under 30%, by bringing it right back up to its highest point since modern records began in 1961.

The government claims that this will 'incentivise' people to work. Yet leaving families unable to survive doesn't encourage them into jobs, it forces them into dire situations which the welfare system was designed to prevent. Evidently, the Conservatives believe 'forcing' is synonymous with 'incentivising' because conceding to the Tory vision of how people should live is obviously the only viable solution.

Place the magnifying glass closer and you uncover the truth behind this exterior of 'encouraging' self-sustainment, exposing a labyrinth of loopholes through which the Tories exploit the poor. Even before its introduction,

“Just because a welfare system exists, we shouldn't assume its efficacy”



▲ Ian Duncan Smith (BRIAN MINKOFF)

funding for Universal Credit was drastically slashed, while the inbuilt 42-day wait before families can receive these credits again exposes this deceit. How does forcing a family into debt, by suddenly cutting their income, magically equate to peacefully encouraging them into work? What about the families who are unable to work?

Nobody can claim that these are just the unfortunate side effects of new reforms, particularly after the charity Mind proved the inefficacy of Tory welfare policies in 2016. In their survey, 83% of people with mental health issues stated that blackmailing them into work by threatening to reduce their benefits not only worsened their mental health, but rendered them less able to work.

The poison of Tory rhetoric lies at the root of this shameful exploitation. It's almost laughable how unashamedly obvious this is, when a Conservative spokesperson discussing the reforms stated that they are "committed to ... making the welfare system fair for those who pay for it and those who benefit from it". Predictably, the wealthier families who "pay" for the system come first, preceding the idea that the poorest families "benefit from" it, very subtly but very carefully making it sound like a luxury rather than a means for survival.

The actions of the government are the physical manifestation of this at times subtler malicious rhetoric – and children are now the victims of this hidden agenda, where the poor are only helped through the secondary effects of aiding the wealthy. This is clear when their proposed vision of helping vulnerable families involves cutting taxes, neglecting the fact that the poorest families rely on

benefits, not earnings, for their income. Used this way, the welfare system only serves to prop up Tory propaganda.

Therefore, given their track record, this situation shouldn't be shocking. What do we expect in a culture which stigmatises 'help' to cut off the poor from the very pathways which should aid social mobility? The deceitful treatment they receive conveys the message that they don't have the right to take up space, a feeling which is then passed down to their children who should be the key to breaking this vicious cycle. Great, Russell Group universities can raise funding for outreach programmes, but if these children are made to feel as if they don't belong in these places, there is little perceived reason to apply in the first place. The power of prejudice shouldn't be underestimated, because if money was the only enabler of social mobility then tuition fee-free Scottish universities wouldn't have the lowest proportion of poor students.

Ultimately, just because a welfare system exists, it doesn't mean we should assume the efficacy of it. If we make such assumptions, then any failure is immediately blamed on those who rely on this system, and such attitudes not only further marginalise them but also allow the government to silently force them into situations under the guise of 'encouragement'. As more children are shunted into poverty by these dishonest reforms, Theresa May's fresh-faced promise to help those "just about managing" becomes even more ridiculous. The poorest families in our society aren't a pawn to be traded in for more votes, then cruelly dealt with behind closed doors.

Blue Planet II is a wake up call – we should stay active on these issues

Sir David Attenborough's Blue Planet II, like all of his work, should do more than simply entertain us: it should turn us all into climate activists



Marcus McCabe is a first year studying English at Churchill

Marcus McCabe

After a four-year hiatus, the visually-stunning, epically moving *Blue Planet II* is back on our screens. On Sunday, over 10 million viewers were edified by the gentle commentary of national icon Sir David Attenborough, moved by the tides of Hans Zimmer's mesmerising soundtrack and entranced by exquisite shots of the beguiling deep and the creatures that thrive there.

However, it was the closing scene which truly melted the hearts of a nation: as icecaps thaw and the sea rises we see a desperate mother walrus battling to hold her baby afloat with no ice floes to rest on. As a result of this final act, Twitter was flooded with shock and condemnation of the effects of human impact on our climate and the sea life we share it with. But this is by no means a new revelation: the scientific realities of climate change have been well broadcasted for decades and yet it feels as if we haven't shown sufficient interest in our environment since *The Blue Planet* originally hit BBC1.

Through cinematography that delves deep down into the unknown, doing justice to the complex habits of the creatures that live there, *Blue Planet II* makes abstract statistics about global warming specific, palpable and relatable. Show-

casing a mastery of storytelling – from the tuskfish that uses tools to break open a shell, to the herd of walrus trying to protect their young from a starving polar bear – we recognise age-old tales of adversity played out dramatically in the new, blue arena of the oceans. The mournful violence we witness between the mother walrus and her kin, fighting for a place on a crowded slab of ice until it disintegrates, doesn't strike of nature red in tooth and tusk, but of the insidious, removed influences of human enterprises that we must own up to, and try to counteract.

In a television medium where viewers root for the underdog, it is time that we acknowledge our own role as arch predators, the over-dogs of land and sea. In *The Jungle Book*, Mowgli uses the incantation "We be of one blood, ye and I" to protect him from predators by drawing on a kinship of shared life. Now that the roles are reversed we must live by the same harmony, caring for the creatures who share the same blood.

Empathy and self-awareness are evoked in equal measure through the documentation of common patterns of experience between species, serving the important function of raising interest in marine conservation for viewers. However, it seems profoundly worrying that

“We must do more than consume, tweet and wait for Blue Planet III”

we require this submarine windscreen in our front rooms to remember widely documented facts of human destruction. Should we not foster an intrinsic respect for lives other than our own without requiring the visual reminders of cinema? Should we not act pre-emptively to stop tragedies of death and extinction before we can see them play out on our wildlife programmes?

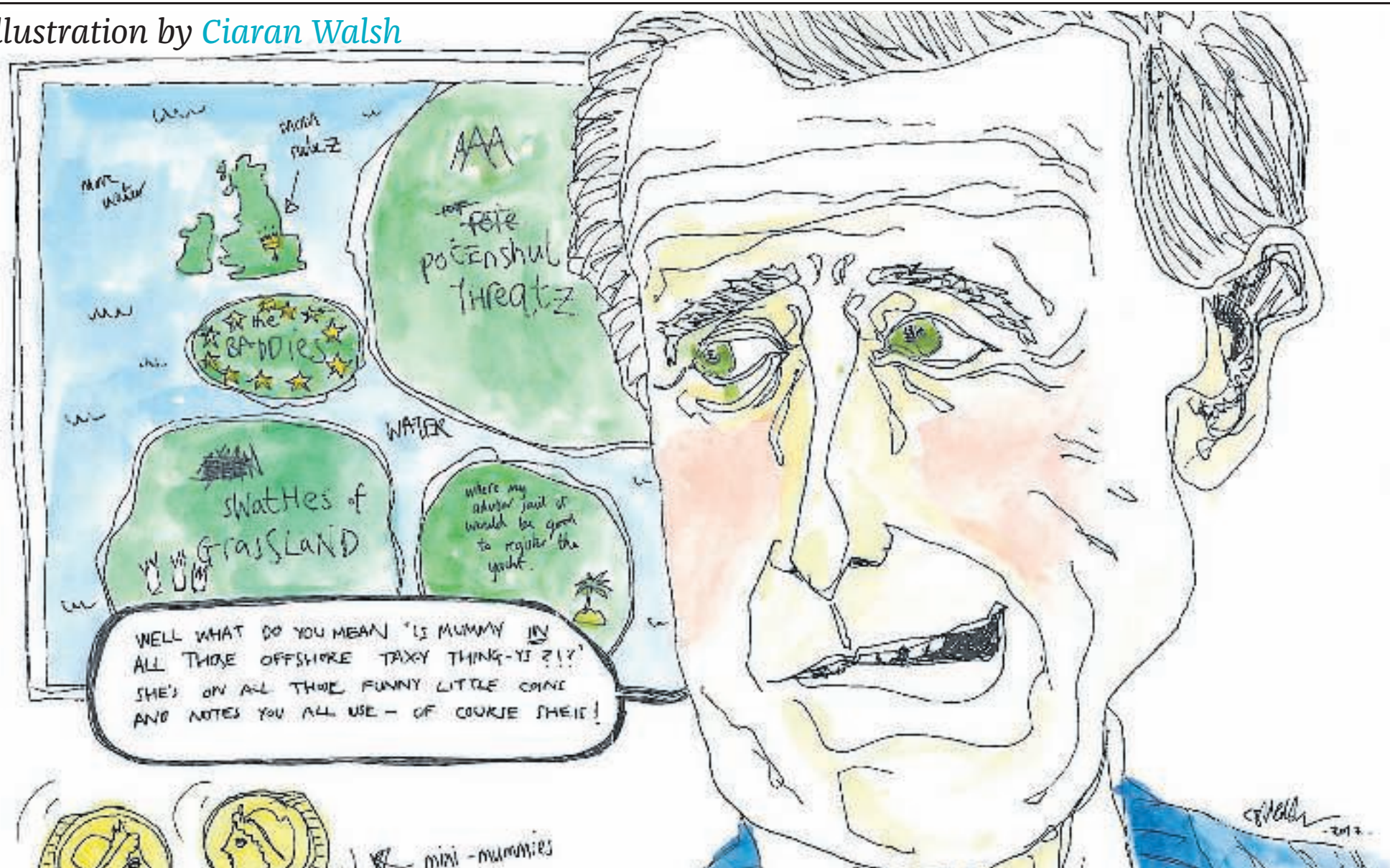
It is human nature to think within the parameters of our direct proximity – whether that be in the tirelessly documented Cambridge bubble, the wider world of work and mortgages, or in caring for those immediately close to us – but now that the more pervasive problems of conservation and climate change have re-emerged into our sphere of concern, it is vitally important to leave the disengagement of our television screens and be proactive. *Blue Planet II* brings our environment back, once again, into collective conscience. But this time we must do more than consume, tweet and wait for *Blue Planet III*.

Instead, we should do all we can to fight for our world. As Attenborough puts it, this is "our blue planet" and now, more than ever, we must consciously share it. As Arctic sea ice diminishes by 13% every decade, we should contact our MPs calling for immediate action

on climate change and marine conservation. With one quarter of coral reefs worldwide already considered damaged beyond repair, we should be conscious of our own role in global warming, at the very least switching off lights and using renewable energy. With global temperatures predicted to increase by up to 5.8% by the end of the century, we should reduce the levels of our waste and make sure we recycle what we do throw away. We should travel green, eat sustainable foods and, where we can afford to, support and donate to those organisations who are directly involved with cleaning up our oceans and stabilising our climate.

In a political environment where Donald Trump can withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord with very little in the way of consequences, our geographical environment is more at risk than ever before. *Blue Planet II* is an enjoyable piece of television, but much more significantly, it should be a necessary reawakening of our duty to this environment's wonderful yet waning beauty. If, this time, we do not escape the myopia of our TV screens and our consumer lifestyles, Attenborough's call to action may melt into elegy, becoming a documentary masterpiece that we look back on to commemorate marine paradises of the past.

Illustration by [Ciaran Walsh](#)



The Paradise Papers highlight the elitist dystopia we live in

[Felix Peckham](#) examines the broader implications of tax avoidance and how it is the younger generations who are responsible for reform

Last week I wrote an article about Apple and the role that young people need to play in confronting the corporation, and rejecting their immoral and exploitative practices. As it transpires, I was wrong. Worse still, I was patently and embarrassingly naive. The scope of my article, and the action that it demanded were far too narrow-minded. The measures were conservative.

A matter of hours after this first article was published, 13.4 million documents were revealed to have been leaked months earlier to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. These documents, referred to as the Paradise Papers, detail how the world's wealthiest, most influential and powerful figures – many in politics, entertainment and sport who are adored and celebrated as icons – hide their wealth from tax. Perhaps the most sickening revelation is the extensiveness of the efforts that these individuals go to to do this, as well as the hypocrisy and bare-faced lies they tell.

Tim Cook, Apple's CEO, said that not only does Apple pay its due taxes, but it respects the "spirit of the law." This is a lie. The Paradise Papers reveal the aggressive and sinister measures that Apple takes to prevent paying the tax that the law demands.

Meanwhile individuals like Lewis Hamilton (who has a net worth of £130 million) leverage their wealth and status to exempt themselves from paying tax. His private jet is reg-

istered in the Isle of Man as a charter jet, and then exclusively chartered to himself, through a company he owns. This means that he pays his own company to use his private jet – the company makes a marginal profit to create a façade of authenticity, with the profit then going to Hamilton.

This has saved Hamilton at least £3 million. In other words, the UK treasury has lost at least £3 million in VAT receipts; the NHS has lost at least £3 million, from Hamilton alone, that it could have spent on hiring more doctors, or building new hospitals. Think of what the Treasury could do were it to receive the total tax receipts it rightly deserves.

This is the stark cost of tax avoidance. It doesn't necessarily mean that the government can't build a new road in Scotland, or purchase new reading books for primary schools in Lancashire. Rather, the cost is borne by the most vulnerable in our society. British taxpayers have died in underfunded, understaffed and ill-equipped NHS hospitals. This is a human cost, the heaviest cost of all. I sincerely hope that Lewis Hamilton – along with the plethora of other cruel individuals – understands that his scheme is not victimless. I hope he feels remorseful for his despicable actions.

The Paradise Papers have shown that ultra-wealthy millionaires and billionaires of this world get tax cuts every single day on the VAT of their jets, yachts, houses and cars. By spending a certain number of days in Switzerland, Monaco or the Cayman Islands, they avoid paying income tax on the enormous salaries



Felix Peckham is a second year HSPS student at St Catharine's College

that they earn, which are already many, many multiples greater than the average British taxpayer could ever dream of receiving.

The poor, the deprived, the overwhelming majority of the working population get no such tax relief. They dutifully give the Treasury the money they owe, and many can barely afford to live comfortably afterwards. They aren't lose their job for fear of being branded 'scoundrels' by the *Daily Mail* for claiming Jobseekers Allowance.

The ironic and seemingly counterintuitive fact is that money begets money. Once you reach a certain level of ultra-wealth, you can afford to hire accountants from Ernst & Young and lawyers from Appleby, firms implicated in this scandal. They are experts in the exact lettering of the law. They know how to create proxy companies to channel funds through and establish ludicrous instruments to prevent these individuals and corporations from paying tax.

The reality is that we live in a perverse society which is fundamentally and structurally arranged to benefit the rich, at the expense of everybody else. This is not a Jeremy Corbyn soundbite. This is empirically the case. If you don't believe me then just google 'Paradise Papers' and make your own mind up. Or the Panama Papers. Or Wikileaks. Or the HSBC files. My generation's lifetime will be defined by this challenge. It is a struggle not for equality, but for basic fairness, honesty and transparency. At its heart, this is about the application of the law, the very basic principle that justice

applies equally to everybody. Nobody is exempt.

The global rich continue to dominate our economy, society and politics. They are driven by an unquenchable greed—enough is never enough. The fact that they already own everything they want, and then some, doesn't matter. It's not about the ability to buy another jet or house. It's about power.

A truism of history is that money equates to power, and this is true all over the world, even in the powerful yet malleable 'mature' democracies that have emerged in the past two centuries. The combination of this alongside the financialised economy that reaches every corner of the globe makes our fragile planet a playground for the ultra-rich.

My generation has been lumped with the most almighty and foreboding of tasks. We have to fundamentally and radically amend the international system: the way states work with one another and the way that individuals can operate entirely under the radar. Cooperation and unity will save our planet from the environmental destruction which will be brought about by the unchecked influence of the super-rich. A zero tolerance approach to the financial elites who continue to have total disregard for anybody but themselves will do much to pull society back from the precipice.

The injustice is infuriating. You should be angry. This requires a regulation of greed and a reshaping of our laws to reflect the moral realities of tax avoidance.

“The global rich continues to dominate our economy, society and politics”

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Vulture

***‘I knew more about
Shakespearean England
than the city I’d just
moved to’***

***Goodbye Cambridge,
hello year abroad***

20-21

Sculpting life

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Break from the bubble

MML students share stories from the beginning of their years abroad in Europe

Katy Cross retraces the house-hunting and moped accidents of her first few months in Paris, reflecting that Cambridge left her unprepared

Rewind two months. The prospect of having to start the big year abroad, which fills languages students with unabated excitement until they actually have to do it, was suddenly reality. Time to buckle up and be an adult for the year. But not yet. For the first week, I was staying with my parents in an AirBnB, whilst I looked for permanent accommodation. Much to their, and indeed my, distress, I'd spent the summer in China instead of house-hunting in Paris. I scoured accommodation sites and found a limited selection within my budget, mostly undesirable 'chambres de bonne' – tiny attic rooms that used to be servants' quarters – in which you can sleep, defecate and boil pasta within a two-metre radius. Even after cockroach-ridden rooms in China had vastly lowered my expectations, things were looking far from my classy Parisian fantasies.

Fast-forward to November and I'm living in a lovely apartment with Jacques and Hélène, who have essentially become my cool French parents. Because it's their actual home, it's not a hole, there's always somebody around to chat with, and the kitchen is equipped with an un-

“I'm not swanning down the banks of the Seine in an Instagramable Parisian dream every weekend”

▼ One of Jacques and Hélène's many tarte tins (Katy Cross)

godly number of tarte tins for all my pastry-baking needs. So, other than Jacques breaking several bones in a moped accident a week after my arrival, his son following suit mere days later, and subsequent accusations that I might be the Omen, all is well.

I feel settled, so much so that I almost forget I'm here, and am looking forward to the next nine months. Even the Tripos isn't managing to tarnish my experience, as the Year Abroad Project allows you to write on anything, as long as it's relevant to the language or culture. I've chosen a nineteenth century prostitute, meaning my research consists of 200-year-old gossip. That doesn't necessarily mean I don't have off-days, but “I've had fewer breakdowns than I expected” is my standard response when people ask how Paris is going. But the whole idea is to actually *live* abroad rather than just be a tourist for a year, and that does include having rough patches and binging on Netflix. Surprisingly, I'm not swanning down the banks of the Seine in an Instagramable Parisian dream every weekend.

There is arguably an expectation that every day has to be an extraordinary journey of self-discovery. Whilst this is garbage, I do think that, at the very least, the year abroad provides a welcome break from the Cambridge slog; it's easy to fall into a monotonous routine when everything is provided for you, and you spend most of your waking hours working or knowing you should be. Since arriving in Paris, I have discovered the elusive “healthy sleep pattern” and “weekends” that come with a standard 9 to 5, which I heartily recommend. The project still lingers, but it's only a third of the work I'd do in just one term at Cambridge.

Consequently, I have plenty of time for unintentionally broadening my horizons. I accidentally agreed to go to an African dance class with the lady who lives upstairs. Those who know me will confirm that this is about as far as I can stretch my gangly limbs out of my comfort zone. Two hours of sweat and a live Guinean drumming ensemble later, I'd discovered I actually really enjoyed it, but never in a million years would have tried this in Cambridge. Not all your language blunders result in public humiliation.

Nobody's ever fully prepared for the year abroad, but I think it's fair to say that Cambridge does not help. Practical advice is evasive: I found myself seeking advice on renting, and opening bank accounts from other universities' guides. Cambridge provides nearly no advice on welfare or mental health. As a result, a group of



students are working to fill this gap through collating student experiences in the hope of expelling myths, and offering student contacts to whom the ‘stupid questions’ can be directed. Furthermore, God forbid we should be taught anything practical on the academic side. A friend at another university had an oral exam in her second year in which she had to role-play a situation in an airport. Cambridge doesn't even have any oral classes for second years! I can dissect a medieval French Lai with relative ease, but faced with “Did you do much at the weekend?”, find myself resorting to “J'ai joué au foot dans le jardin. J'aime le foot”.

Despite being slightly embittered by Cambridge's failure to acknowledge the real world, I do feel strange nostalgia for a Cambridge that seems dead and gone. Most of my friends will have graduated when I come back, whilst I shall still be clinging on with MML and NatSci stragglers, and whoever I can convince to stay on to do a Masters. Fourth year Cambridge will be a very different place to what I knew before and will seem even more alien after having spent a year away from the bubble. But, when the idea of this starts to get me down I just remember I'm in Paris, and everything feels a little bit better





▲ (Left) Saint-Eustache, Paris (Louis Ashworth)
(Right) Scooters in Bologna (Sophie Aitken)

Sophie Aitken shares the ups and downs of the start of her year abroad in Bologna

On the first night of my year abroad in Bologna, Italy, I was on the phone to my friend Corey, who was at home watching the new series of *Upstart Crow* on BBC Two. The theme tune of the sitcom, set in Shakespearean England, made me nostalgic for home. Corey rebuffed me, “Oh come on, 1600s Stratford-upon-Avon isn’t home!” To which I replied, “It’s more home than this is!”

It was only a joke, but it feels like an appropriate opening image. Because truthfully, looking around the small room that was to be my home for the next ten months, I really did know more about Shakespearean England than about the city I’d just moved to. I was struck by a feeling that would return multiple times over the next few weeks: what the hell was I doing here, and why had anyone thought it was a good idea?

The first few days, luckily for me, were spent with family. My parents had taken the opportunity to fly out with me, stay for a couple of days, and then swan off on holiday to Naples.

The real challenge came when they’d gone.

I was left to face this unknown city, armed with Maps, the WordReference app (yes, I’m still using it – daily) and a semi-convincing belief that after two years of a Cambridge MML degree, I must be able to survive this.

◀ The Louvre, Paris (Hteinkmin)

▶ Le Due Torri, Bologna (Sophie Aitken)



I learned quickly to celebrate little victories, like successfully communicating my address to a taxi driver, or obtaining an Italian tax code despite the office only opening for an hour on Thursdays. Another of the first things I did, bad as it may sound, was book my Christmas return flight. This was partly because Easyjet had a sale on – but knowing that I’d be going home in 87 days also made the whole thing feel more manageable.

I went to a language exchange early on, too. I was given a Union Jack sticker to indicate I spoke English, which made me feel oddly patriotic. I know this definitely is not the aim of the year abroad, but I’ve never felt as British as I have in the last two months. There are some things about the UK I really miss, and one that I still can’t shake is the taste of Doritos. They’re not sold here. On the plus side, my local Carrefour does have a decent supply of Pringles.

On a slightly more serious note, when October hit and everyone went back to Cambridge, things got temporarily trickier. I was on Messenger and made the mistake of scrolling through uni group chats. It was like watching a party going on without me, my invitation lost in the Italian postal system. Realising this wasn’t going to get me anywhere. I muted them all. I never usually get FOMO, but I had to nip this in the bud early on.

Over time, I began appreciating the fun parts of my new life rather than pining for what I was used to in Cambridge, and the awkward but amusing situations kept rolling in. I was mistaken for a French person at the yoga class I joined,

and couldn’t understand why – then realised I’d been wearing a jacket with a pin-badge of France on it. I became somewhat of an unwilling ambassador for the UK and surrounding areas in my small Dutch class, being quizzed by the lecturer about the early invaders of England and the marshlands of Ireland. And I could write a whole separate article about the Italian version of *Bake Off* (YouTube it).

The Italians I’ve spoken to so far have been admirably generous with their comments on my speaking ability, and I’ve learnt some pretty niche vocab from yoga – the Italian word for ‘big toe’ is nothing like either the word for ‘big’ or ‘toe’. I have observed though – only half joking – that I’m not gaining as much in Italian fluency as I’m losing in English, essentially just making myself a less appealing candidate for English speaking jobs if I can’t find one that uses my languages after graduation.

Joking and despair at my employment prospects aside, I have picked up some life lessons that I think are genuinely important. First, and this is one Cambridge definitely doesn’t teach you, it’s okay to mess up. I’ve come a long way from questioning my entire language ability when the person on the checkout realises I’m English. Second, it’s easy to feel like you need to be having a life-affirming experience every weekend, because it’s meant to be ‘the best year of your life’, when this is just unrealistic. Not everyone ‘finds themselves’ on their year abroad, and that doesn’t make your experience any better or worse: it is just another year of your life, spent in a different place. Finally, Italian Netflix is hugely superior to the UK version: they have all seasons of *Friends* and *House* here. But if my year abroad project supervisor is reading this, I only heard that from a friend. I’m deep into my long translation, I promise ●



What's on

By **Georgie Kemsley-Pein**

Illustrations by **Coral Dalitz**



The Week 6 Mainshow this week is Peter Barne's satire: *The Ruling Class*. Marrying wit, frenzied energy and horror by exposing the power struggles of the English nobility, central character Jack struggles through the politics of family life as he inherits the title of the 14th Early of Gurney after his father's bizarre death.

The Ruling Class **ADC Theatre**

14-18 November, 7pm

Late at the Fitzwilliam **The Fitzwilliam Museum** 15 November, 5-9pm



The Fitzwilliam Museum will open after hours this Wednesday to celebrate the Degas exhibition featuring a talk by Richard Thompson entitled 'Degas: a Classicism of Movement'. Whilst this requires a ticket, the permanent collection will also be open, as well as current displays and exhibitions: 'Degas: A Passion for Perfection', 'Codebreakers and Groundbreakers', and 'Sampled Lives: Samplers from the Fitzwilliam Museum'.

THE MAYS 2018 - EDITOR WANTED

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www.themaysanthology.co.uk

The Memory of Water **Corpus Playroom** 14-18 November, 7pm

Shelagh Stephenson's *The Memory of Water* is a dark comedy about three sisters processing the death of their mother. Set on the eve of their mother's funeral, Theresa, Mary and Catherine experience flashbacks to moments of their mother's life, exposing a blurry and forgotten past.

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Arts

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Dame Elizabeth Frink: Larger Than Life

Tamsin Golding Yee
reviews the Heong Gallery's
latest exhibition

Fundamentally, people don't change. There is still unrest and violence in response to political disputes, and there are still artists striving to depict both the physical and psychological aftermaths of such circumstances. The Heong Gallery's new exhibition *Larger Than Life* skilfully draws parallels between the world that Dame Elisabeth Frink was responding to, and the world we live in and experience ourselves today.

Frink was a revolutionary figure, whose bronze sculptures both epitomise the feeling of an age, as well as reflect the events and encounters of her own personal life. Renowned for their power and prescience, a large body of Frink's sculpture consists of warlike figures and horrors of conflict, which coincide with her childhood experiences of World War II, living in close proximity to a military airfield in Suffolk. Frink and her siblings therefore had a unique outlook on the war; they would regularly come across aeroplane fragments and shrapnel near to their house, and Frink herself was nearly shot as a young child. It was this acclimation to conflict which stimulated the depictions of human suffering, fragility, and aggression in her sculptures – all subjects which went against the grain of contemporary ideals.

Larger Than Life produces a high level of emotional engagement with the spectator by simultaneously showing the two extreme ends of human sensitivity, both of which Frink had experienced in her own life.

For instance, the *Walking Madonna* (1981) reveals the tenderness and intimate relations Frink held towards nuns in her early life, and this is depicted through the craggy and tactile texturing of her face and garments, accompanied by the delicate hand which extends out as if to invite us in for motherly embrace. The *Walking Madonna* is the centrepiece of the exhibition, and is placed directly in front of the viewer when walking in to the exhibition. It stands on a simple, light wooden plinth, which ignites the earthly and humble qualities of the Madonna. She has not been excessively elevated, which makes the sculpture feel more accessible and allows further engagement and study of the surface texture, which only shows how atypical this sculpture is.

Frink has rendered the virgin as an aged and vulnerable woman in her later life without Christ. It was one of the only important female figures that she created in the span of

her career, partly because Frink believed she "couldn't draw women". Some critics even believe that the Madonna's face was modelled from Frink's own – the masculine jawline providing speculation for comparison between the two – although she strongly denies this.

In close proximity, the sight of the Madonna is encompassing. However, upon entering, it is not evident that she is the focus piece in the exhibition, and indeed the sculpture is superseded by the dominating presence of *Mirage I and II* (1969) to the viewer's right, which tower above. The twin sculptures are unusual and unexpected; one takes time to make sense of them and identify their form. These works are highly decontextualised, and the green-brown appearance of the bronze reveals their long-standing placement outdoors. The Heong Gallery solves this issue by placing them against a white wall backdrop – seeing other works behind or in front of the works would have only emphasised the decontextualisation further. In result, we are left to imagine our own surroundings for the placement of these strange beings, helping us gain a more personal and insightful interpretation of Frink's work.

Paradoxically to the humane nature of the Madonna, the Mirages could be seen to resemble machine drones – they are suspended in time, and appear to be drooped and dehumanised. Movement is suggested from the imbalanced positioning of their elongated legs, and from the ringlets of water which surround the bottoms of *Mirage II*, which suggests that it is walking through a shallow, stagnant pool of water. Furthermore, the dual sculptures could be compared to soldiers; they have subtle differences from one another, yet largely appear uniform.

Each piece has been acquired from different sources and locations throughout Britain, and therefore the diversity within style and form across the exhibited sculptures may at first appear incoherent in their collectivity. However, the Heong Gallery successfully places the hugely individual works in conversation with each other by identifying their common underlying themes, and taking the spectator on a journey which arguably mirrors Frink's own life experiences. This finishes with her last work: a set of colour screen prints, completed in the knowledge that death was imminent. The bright colouring and strikingly different subject matter of these prints is somewhat out of place amongst the monochromatic bronze

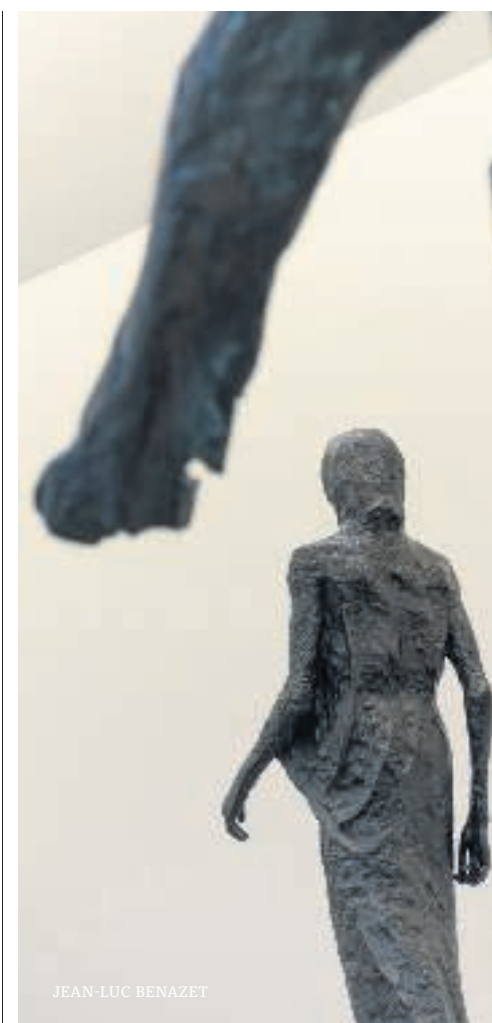
sculptures, yet nevertheless highlights the extent of change and development that Frink's artistic career saw.

The *Judas* (1963) sculpture holds a unique placement within the gallery. From its left side, it is seen in front of the large oak window which reveals a green outdoors. The effect of the window physically places the themes of the sculpture into a contemporary setting, the viewer's own world. This effect perhaps could have been more effectively utilised with a more politically concerning work such as *Tribute I* (1975), yet nevertheless the window brightens and opens up the oblong space which induces more attention to detail.

Therefore, the spectator is guided through the white-washed space by the meticulous stationing of each piece. The form of *Small Bird* (1961), situated at the entrance to the gallery, emphasises this directional notion to the exhibition from its sideways positioning, ultimately prompting the spectator to move around it and view the bird full frontally.

We are still confronted with war, unresolved issues, and conflicts both moral and political. *Larger Than Life* is important, not only because of Frink's household status as a sculptor who captured the essence of her time, but in how it illustrates that the very same anxieties she depicts, still continue to affect and change us today.

Dame Elisabeth Frink's Larger Than Life is free to visit at the Heong Gallery, Downing College, until the 6th February 2018 ●



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Film & TV



The Good: *The Florida Project* is a rhapsody in mauve

Madeleine Pulman-Jones reflects on the tension between fantasy and reality in a delightful yet challenging social drama

Dir. Sean Baker
In cinemas now

★★★★

Colours are the stars of some films. Bergman's *Cries and Whispers* starred red, Rhomer's *Claire's Knee* green, *The Grand Budapest Hotel* pink. Sean Baker's *The Florida Project* stars the colour purple. Purple so dominates that it would not be unreasonable to regard it as the film's protagonist – imbued as it is with all the light and shade of a great performance.

The walls of The Magic Castle, a rundown motel on the outskirts of Walt Disney World, and the home of the film's human protagonists, have recently been painted different shades of purple by the motel's long-suffering manager, Bobby (Willem Dafoe). It is out of this purple sky and purple ground that feral children Moonee (Brooklynn Prince), Scooty (Christopher Rivera), and their

friends craft their world for the summer.

Left to her own devices by troubled mother Hallee (Bria Vinaite), Moonee turns The Magic Castle Motel and the surrounding commercial wasteland into her own 'Magic Castle', full of possibilities which she exploits as much as she can. Hallee deludes herself that her lifestyle of drugs, prostitution, and theft will never catch up with her, but it hangs over the summer like a dark cloud, from which the eventual rain washes Moonee's world of colour.

The Florida Project is Sean Baker's sixth feature, though one would be forgiven for thinking it only to be his second, due to the way he burst onto the arthouse scene in 2015 with *Tangerine*. *The Florida Project* is certainly a few hundred miles closer to cinematic convention than *Tangerine*, a comedy-drama about transsexual prostitutes shot entirely on an iPhone 5S, but it is nonetheless riveting to watch for that.

Working with an almost entirely non-professional cast (the notable exception being, of course, Dafoe), Baker manages to expertly weave together the worlds of arch auteur/aesthete and gritty realist. The resulting cinematic experience feels akin to watching Andrea Arnold's *American Honey* (2016) if she had employed Wes Anderson as art director.

What is exceptional about Baker's film is that, though loaded with symbolism, it never lets the harsh realities of the life it depicts slip into the background, like the bedbugs hidden behind the headboards. The most heart-wrenching moments are those in which Moonee and her friends are shown turning their artificial universe into a tangible reality.

In the first episode of the film, the children are seen sitting on a balcony having a spitting contest. In their candy-coloured world of superficialities and escapism, the children seem humorously and hubristically to be almost creating their own storm out of sheer malaise. The children's intuitive

empathy with nature pervades these potent scenes.

Later in the film, Moonee confides to new friend Jancee that the dramatic tree in the Floridian swampland they are sitting on is "her favourite tree", because "it's falling over but it's still growing". Baker does not wallow in the tragic symbolism of the moment, but rather prefaces it with the girls voraciously devouring a humble picnic of jam and bread donated to the poor residents by a Christian charity. Indeed, Baker (who edited the film in addition to directing, co-writing and co-

producing), does not pan out to show us the entire tree until after their entire conversation, and even then only does so for a moment.

Despite the fact that childhood experience is undoubtedly at the core of the film, *The Florida Project* would be unthinkable without Viniate's courageously bombastic performance, as would it be without Dafoe's usual calm and understated gruffness. Largely left without soundtrack apart from the diegetic sounds of the rap music Hallee and her friends blast from their phones, the one piece of conventional soundtrack is a wild reimagining of 'Celebration' by Kool & The Gang which is certainly worth listening out for. The film also features an exciting subversion of form which ought to be kept from those who have not yet seen it.

The Florida Project manages to squeeze the sense of the passage of time of a traditional bildungsroman into a single school holiday. Even if ultimately, in its slight tricksiness, the film lacks the emotional gut-punch of Arnold's *American Honey*, it is nonetheless rare to encounter a film that so smartly merges humour, grit, and colour ●



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...and the ugly? Equality

Aron Penczu considers what makes this lauded social study such an original work of insight

Dir. Ruben Östlund
In cinemas 16th March 2018
★★★★

Uniquely, *The Square* is a series of interconnected, satirical episodes constructed around the life of a well-off Swedish museum curator. Its protagonist, Christian, breathlessly congratulates the stranger he thinks he has foiled an assault with: in fact, Christian's wallet and phone have been stolen. He narrows the phone's location to an apartment block with Find My iPhone and comes up with an unusual plan to get it back, with complex consequences.

Meanwhile, the eponymous "Square", inspired by a real installation ("The Square is a sanctuary of trust and caring. Within it we all share equal rights and obligations"), rolls out at his museum, and the viral marketing campaign he signs off distractedly goes wildly wrong. Padding out

its 142-minute runtime are comic vignettes like the hedonistic work party in the museum, a former Royal residence, and the inadvertent disfiguring of an art installation (mounds of rubbish) by a cleaner.

Although the film is mostly obviously a dig at contemporary art, Ruben Östlund's real skill lies in crafting individual moments of wit and insight. The scene in which Christian rehearses spontaneously veering from his written speech is a case in point: it is so well done, so apt for the character and the situation, and so well-timed, that the point about public sincerity resonates freely. When the film veers from this kind of even-handedness, as in the cli-



The Bad: The murder of *Murder on the Orient Express*

As bemused and befuddled as Poirot, Lillian Crawford struggles to stifle mockery of Branagh's attempt at rebranding a classic

Dir. Kenneth Branagh
In cinemas now

★★

The poster for *Murder on the Orient Express* is a lavish work of art – the blood-red steam juxtaposed with neon typography is sumptuous, enticing, and assertively simple. When one watches an Agatha Christie adaptation, everything has to follow in this manner, the audience desiring indulgence



20TH CENTURY FOX

in detail and method within pristine domestic sanctuaries. With the conclusion embedded in popular culture, it would seem a new film would need to delve deeper below this surface, uncovering the raw horror buried at its core. The evil at large is at its most unspeakable in Christie's novel, and as such the aim must be to speculate, probe, dissect, and leave unsettled the real mysteries at stake. And yet, Branagh has put down his pipe and tea to rest, and in their place grabbed a handful of sugary popcorn and a slab of Godiva chocolate.

Understandably assured by a cast every cinema-goer now knows by heart, the film was surely left to its own devices, with a pile of money to help get the engine running. The producers certainly spent it, much too frivolously it seems, with the CGI-train often looking less convincing than Robert Zemeckis's *Polar Express*, especially in a smeary avalanche scene. Proceedings were derailed much earlier, however, and it might be questioned if the plot was ever on the right track to begin with. Treated unnecessarily

to some fine shots over the Wailing Wall of Jerusalem, screenwriter Michael Green takes it upon himself to give a brief introduction to Poirot's style for the unknowing few with an utterly irrelevant prologue that soon descends into inexplicable farce. Its wasted length has a domino effect on the remainder, denying precious screentime for the key players as the film lurches hurriedly towards the predetermined conclusion.

Branagh is not terrible as the iconic Belgian sleuth, but he is no Finney, Ustinov, or Suchet. It can only be assumed that, if this is some self-gratifying passion project, it has been to contend with his predecessors, and it is difficult not to mock him for trying. With an aging caterpillar clinging to his top lip, he bumbles and murmurs inaudibly, sometimes with ludicrous subtitles appearing onscreen – Christie would never have needed to translate the occasional French comment to her readers, making for a concerning attempt on the film's part to patronise its audience. Ignorance is one of the film's central topics, changing the original characters to make distractingly simple points on anti-Semitism and racism, and our presumed stupidity means that even an unfamiliar viewer is allowed to solve the murder long before Poirot makes the announcement.

When he does so, it is in a bizarre re-enactment of Da Vinci's *Last Supper*, with Michelle Pfeiffer seated pride of place as the Messiah, dressed in contrasting bright furs in case the symbolism was not already overt enough. Her disciples face judgement for the satanic beast they have vanquished, portrayed by Johnny Depp in another role of self-parody, caked in orange foundation and gorging on cake. Indeed, Godiva clearly invested so much in this film that at times it feels like a two-hour advertisement for patisserie and chocolate. While Penelope Cruz is delivering the film's stand-out, and criminally underused, performance, Branagh turns to the side and comments that he loves all the "leeteurl cecks" on-board the train – like one of their famous truffles, the shimmering shell is not enough to mask the sickly softness inside.

Much of the cinematography is responsible for the nauseating effect of the film. Instead of complex, claustrophobic drama, cameras dart from side-to-side, up-and-down, and end up in the most oblique of angles. Upon discovering Ratchett's body, the audience is transformed into a fly on the ceiling, staring down at the compartments as though playing *Cluedo*. Every mode of

travel is tested when moving along the train's carriages, from external pans past windows at dizzying speed, to a slow-moving POV shot that turns to each character one-by-one as a cue to deliver their monosyllabic exclamations. In this light, it might be unfair to criticise Daisy Ridley for her consistently atrocious line delivery, or Olivia Colman's German accent (sure to join the worst of all time), when they have to attempt to act in the midst of this foray, and work with a script that bludgeons Christie's novel to death in the snow.

Much like the limitations of the film, there is not time enough to address each performance individually, although Derek Jacobi and Josh Gad deserve a brief mention for their minor but tender vignettes. They remain behind as Branagh turns his back to the mess he has left on the mountainside. He is informed by a soldier that he is needed in Egypt immediately, for there has been a murder on the Nile. A chuckle arose in the auditorium, some people delighted by apparent fan-servicing (hardly), the prospect of a similarly vain sequel already in the works. But this is the 1930s! It will surely take days to get there, the suspects already dissipated, the body decomposing, the crime demystified beforehand! The lack of forethought already asserted, at least we might get another pretty poster out of it ●

is absurd in *The Square*

mactic provocation – when an ape-imitating performance artist intimidates luxury diners – it seems to grow weaker, though not all viewers will agree.

The Square is also, less loudly but insistently, a film about social and economic inequality, about homelessness, and about the ways privilege tries and fails to shut out the divisions which beset it. "Shots of homeless people, beggars and poor immigrants", wrote A. O. Scott in the New York Times, "emphasise [Christian's] bad faith, but they also replicate it and pass it along to the audience. The joke is on everyone." This is unfair, but it is hard to feel quite comfortable about this element of the film. Its brand of irony, so apt for describing everyday relationships, is a blunt tool before large-scale inequity and inequality.

Perhaps what is most compelling about *The Square*, as well as *Force Majeure*, Östlund's brilliant previous film, is his technique. In the age of the continually roving camera, the Swedish director and his cinematographer have the courage to

stay still. Their meticulously-composed shots, held far longer than is usual in Hollywood, lend a sly irony to many scenes. Instead of cutting immediately to a response in conversations, we catch the awkward pauses or silences in between. Elsewhere, withholding an expected shot – like the damage to Christian's car when they pull out with a loud screech – creates rich anticipation. The editing, camerawork, and acting are equally precise. In the best scenes one feels as though they are in the hands of a master.

At Cannes, *The Square* won the Palme d'Or, arthouse's highest honour. It is a little baggy near the end, perhaps – certainly less cogent than *Force Majeure* – but a joy to watch all the same ●



TRIART FILMS



20TH CENTURY FOX

Fashion

Can social media really empower women?

Vivienne Hopley-Jones considers whether any positive impact can come of social media for women in fashion

The possibilities for political action through social media have been prominent in news headlines lately; women in Pakistan have been mobilising online platforms to show the political opportunities for accountability and change which social media offers. That social media can be a force for good is somewhat contrary to the normative stance on its more typical portrayal as destructive and damaging. Yet, is it not naive and crude to write off an entire platform based on its negative impacts?

It is, of course, important to acknowledge its possible dangers. Social media, like any other platform, has both positive and negative impacts, and often the positives are not emphasised enough. I am by no means ignoring or reducing the accounts which link social media with low self-esteem or inflamed mental illness, but instead I believe these issues are symptomatic of wider cultural phenomena, which vastly predate social media and which are merely being expressed and reinforced through it. If this is the case, these negative effects are not inherent to the platform: it is our culture and society which determines our online world. Since social media is here to stay, we should think about how it can be mobilised for good. It can empower women, especially in the world of fashion, and it is already doing so.

As depressing as the institutionalised sexism within the fashion industry is, with the top designers, casting agents, photographers and owners of the conglomerates who own the big brands being male, perhaps the role of social media can offer, if not a solution, then an alternative platform for female voices, ideas and creative control.

2010 saw the creation of both IntoTheGloss (from which beauty brand Glossier, an In-



◀ **Plus-size model, Ashley Graham, has used her social media to promote body positivity within the modelling industry (Wikipedia: Behind The Velvet Rope TV)**

▼ **Leandra Medina (left), of Man Repeller, has used social media to build her online fashion empire (Flickr: TechCrunch)**



“Is it not naive and crude to write off an entire platform based on its negative impacts?”

stagram phenomenon, has since developed) and Man Repeller, both female-focused companies led by entrepreneurial and inspiring creatives, Emily Weiss and Leandra Medine, respectively. Both women founded their companies through personal online blogs: spaces which were made by women, for women. It seems ridiculous that such criteria make them unique, yet in a market oversaturated with images of women defined through the male gaze, they offer a breath of fresh air and a real, relatable perspective on fashion.

Social media can give women opportunities, a voice, and a creative outlet. Despite the myriad of ways in which fashion models are sexualised and pigeonholed, social media has given previously voiceless models a platform of expression and to some extent more power and creative freedom within the industry. Furthermore, the way in which outlets such as Instagram are being used to challenge the highly sexualised and idealised stereotypes of the female form is somewhat progressive. The platform has enabled the voices of models such as Iskra Lawrence, Barbie Ferreira and Ashley Graham, who promote body positivity, to be accessed directly by young people. It also enables those the fashion industry does not represent to find inspiration and representation: from older women, who fall outside of the fashion industry's youthful ideal of beauty, to women of colour and transgender women.

Everyday street-style also enables 'normal' women to share their style and lives on their own terms, not defined by the established, gendered eyes of a profit-driven industry. Accounts such as Instagram's 'alysaintecity', run by a fashion editor at Refinery29, to name but one of many, offer a more accessible street-style than that of high fashion.

Social media is an essential cog in the machine of modern life, and criticising its faults is useful only in conjunction with celebrating its strengths. It allows us to think about how the opportunities for online sharing and communication can enhance the fashion industry – both directly through the promotion and expansion of female creatives and influencers, and also indirectly, through the lives of individual men and women who are influenced by the creative world and the progressive ideas it displays ●



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Check out Varsity Fashion's Instagram photos:
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Zooming in on sexual abuse in fashion

*What goes on behind the lens in fashion photography? **Jen Nurick** on the controversy surrounding Terry Richardson and his blacklisting by big names in the industry*

In the aftermath of over 50 sexual harassment claims made against disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein (and the knock-on allegations against Hollywood heavyweights Kevin Spacey and James Toback), it is only logical that the fashion industry would mobilise media attention to cast new light on a similar culture riddled with a history of sexual abuse.

News of severed ties between Condé Nast, Hearst Magazines, Valentino and Diesel (among others) and infamous photographer Terry Richardson should thus come as no surprise. Yet that the abrupt dissolution of these relationships could be perceived as (somewhat controversially) problematic might come as more of a shock. This is not to disempower victims of sexual harassment from speaking up in public should they want to.

But Richardson's public condemnation, dovetailed by a pervasive theme in media coverage of industry insiders that were already privy to Richardson's misconduct for years, does have converse effects. For one, it undermines those women and men that came forward with allegations against Richardson previously (including celebrities Coco Rocha, Cole Sprouse and Diana Agron).

Secondly, it shifts the blame from the editors, bookers and stylists on the other end of the partnership that turned a blind eye to, at least, some knowledge of

Richardson's behaviour. It also arguably neglects those allegations made against other industry professionals that have committed similar offences; because Richardson is notorious, but also happens to be well-known for his celebrity clientele like Kim Kardashian and Miley Cyrus, his offences matter and yours don't.

One only has to look to Cameron Russell's recent Instagram project or James Scully's 2016 address at #BoFVoices to realise this. Yet perhaps what matters most about the timeliness of Richardson's public naming-and-shaming is that it individuates a large-scale problem and fights back with a singular answer. This not only scapegoats Richardson, but also exploits the positive reception to said answer, circumventing a systemic issue that demands a plural solution, but is failed by an industry that will not provide one.

These problems are flagged by at least some in the industry, including designer Prabal Gurung, *Vogue* cover star Edie Campbell and DNA Models co-founder David Bonnouvier. In respective statements to *The New York Times*, Campbell and Bonnouvier acknowledged that "the difficulty is addressing the other people," and that while Richardson's firing may have indeed been necessary, it also offered the "quickest means for this industry to absolve itself from any responsibility." In a similar vein, Gurung posted to Instagram to emphasise that "it is important that we hold everyone accountable who worked with Terry Richardson.... they cannot say they didn't know, because we all knew."

So how do we unpack the industry's sudden falling out of favour with fashion's favourite photographer? James Woolhouse, Condé Nast's executive vice-president and chief operating officer, wrote in an email that catalysed Richardson's public dismissal that "any

◀ Terry Richardson's photography often features nudity and sexual explicitness (Instagram: Terryrichardson)



▲ Richardson has photographed hordes of celebrities, including James Franco (Wikipedia: Luis Venegas)

shoots that have been commission[ed] or... completed but not yet published, should be killed and substituted with other material."

This is a band-aid solution though, and one that unfortunately fails to cover up the wealth of available material already published under these titles. Richardson's credits include covers and spreads in *VICE*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Elle*, *Vogue Paris*, *GQ*, as well as music videos like Lady Gaga's 'Do What U Want' (2014) and Miley Cyrus' 'Wrecking Ball' (2013).

That Richardson is faced with countless sexual harassment allegations, which should be treated with utmost seriousness is not up for contestation – even in counterpoint with his statement in *The Huffington Post* disavowing these "hate-filled and libelous tales".

However, Richardson had an unembarrassed interest in pornography and vaunted sexuality – an interest that was and still is indulged by the industry (think Helmut Newton, Steven Klein, Harley Weir) –, and this is something that needs to be wrestled with. And, if industry professionals remain actively vocal about the allowance and even appreciation of nudity, sexuality and fashion-as-art, they need to face the music of their consequences and raise their voice about consent, misconduct, sexual harassment and abuse to a similar decibel.



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Music

Women in music: creators, performers & activists

Hermione Kellow explores the experiences of women in the music industry, citing the badass women pushing forward for equality

This week I finally found myself leaving the so-called 'Cambridge bubble' for the first time as I returned home for the evening. It was on this brief visit that I browsed the magazine stands of Cambridge railway station and found myself drawn to the swathes of articles covering the recent sexual assault case concerning Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein. Potentially one of the most controversial topics in social commentary today is the treatment of women in the arts and the outdated practices that have been swept under the rug for so many years, allowing cases such as this to go unmentioned and unpunished. In light of the case, I began to think about how the music industry treats women and to what extent our current musical landscape is being influenced by the backlash against it.

I felt truly compelled to write about the inherent power struggle within the industry after watching the Netflix documentary *Gaga: Five Feet Two*. The documentary depicts Gaga during the production and release of her fifth studio album, *Joanne*. The aim of the documentary was to humanise the ever elusive 'pop star' who, through her wacky outfits and celebrity status, was attempting to rebrand herself as the wholesome, Italian-American girl from New York.

The point at which the documentary was at its most poignant was a section of footage captured outside of the recording studio where Gaga was seen discussing experiences she had had with male producers. She comments on the power these men exert over women due to the strong sense of owing one's careers to the individual. These producers possess an ownership few others can understand, ownership of both your current and future financial security and of the creation of your artistic career. Gaga states that she actively reclaimed her control of such situations through putting absurdist twists on her work, such as wearing outrageous outfits that reminded her audience of the social context behind her songs. However, it is clearly still the case that many artists continue to be manipulated under comparable circumstances. *Joanne* is Gaga at her most sincere as an artist, yet it has only been through years of graft and persistence that, as a woman, she has reached the point at which she has felt capable of releasing such an honest, pared-back album.



GRANT LEIGHTON



INTERSCOPE RECORDS



HAIM:INSTAGRAM

On the other side of the genre coin I find myself looking towards female conductors, or as it has been until fairly recently, the absence of female conductors. The role of the conductor has often rather ridiculously been regarded as unfit for the delicate tendencies of the woman (I write sighing with contempt). However, in recent years there has been a flourishing of sorts and many trailblazers have fought their way to their rightful places at the top of the profession. Unfortunate comments by male conductors arguing over the distraction of having a woman in charge are assuredly being suppressed as we leap further over the hurdle of misogynistic thought. Conductors such as Marin Alsop and Simone Young are now much more frequently seen at the top of the bill for high-profile performances such as the Last Night of the Proms, and as gender norms are surely broken down, more opportunities for women to flourish in the field will continue to surface.

When looking to the future, there are several girl bands who are doing something individual with their work and doing so completely on their own terms. To mention but a few, Haim sisters Este, Danielle and Alana represent both literally and through their

music the essence of sisterhood. By refusing to pander to popular culture both in the style of their music and in the clothes that they wear, Haim continue to be one of the most refreshing and successful bands in the industry. Effortlessly cool but also clearly hard working, these sisters have recently brought out their much awaited second album

Something to Tell You where they continue to impress with their incredibly high production value and slick rock arrangements.

There is such a vast array of music and commentary to get through on this topic that I'm sure I could write multiple books and still have more to say. I hope that we are becoming more confident as a society to come forward and discuss our experiences.

I hope that we may stand tall in our art and feel pride in what we produce, yet most importantly, I hope that this dialogue continues to develop as we expose the deplorable actions of those who abuse positions of authority, so that we may empower women who are not only strong female role models, but who will be the future of our cultural existence ●

“I hope that we may stand tall in our art”

REVIEW

Skepta Vicious

★★★★★

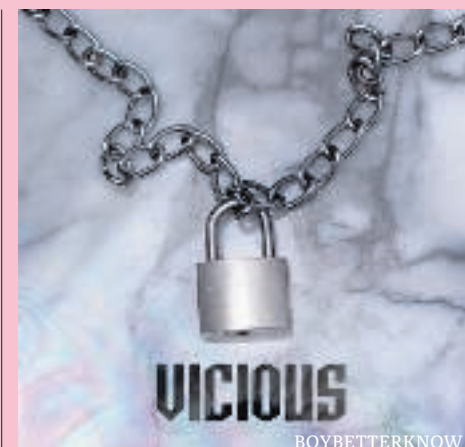
Skepta is clearly keen to persuade listeners success hasn't changed him. The dark chains dominating the cover of his new EP *Vicious* represent an artist confidently committed to his roots, as he states in 'Ghost Ride', "Man I got six chains, and I wear them anywhere".

The EP is a work composed of two twin impulses: British grime authenticity alongside a new trajectory of cross-Atlantic expansion. A scan down the record's feature list illustrates this, with appearances by Lil B, A\$AP Nast and A\$AP Rocky, as well as South London's finest, Section Boyz.

However, in some ways this EP is also evidence that crossovers represent a dilution of what distinguished grime as an innovative genre in the first place. The effect of this stateside focus is certainly present throughout *Vicious*, especially on tracks such as 'Sit Down' featuring Lil B, where over the trap-influenced beat Skepta parodies Kanye's 'American Boy' verse, rapping "Whose killin' 'em in the U.S, everybody gonna say U-S/ Reluctantly, 'cause most of the fake don't fuck with me". The beats throughout maintain a strong US influence, and represent a definite step away from the riff-based, self-produced sounds that have always been fundamental to Skepta's style, as well as being instrumental in the success of *Konnichiwa*.

'Ghost Ride' is slightly more of a stylistic blend. Though the American light snares and relaxed feel are there, so too is a quintessentially Skepta chunky piano line, and the classic Grime menacing sense of harmony. Moreover, though the appearance of the triplet flow of A\$AP Rocky is a departure, Skepta's supremely confident bars arguably put both him and Nast down with ease. He raps "Live a bit in these streets, I teach you how to survive/You disrespect me, you playing around with your life", perhaps competition is what pushes Skepta to raise his game.

On first listen there is an apparent lack of vintage Skepta bangers on *Vicious*. Original Halloween 2016 release, 'No Se-



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curity', goes some way to making up for this. The almost whispered hook exudes danger and menace, and Skepta goes in, silencing critics with his success, commenting "At the awards, intoxicated/The most nominated/And the dress code is understated." Many commentators, however, have noted the similarity of 'No Security' to 'It Ain't Safe', the fifth track on *Konnichiwa*. The beat certainly is familiar, and, as a result, loses momentum. Caught between these twin impulses, at once Skepta seems to be stepping too far and not far enough out of his comfort zone.

The main candidate for new classic is probably the album opener 'Still'. The track has a typically tense opening, and though maybe not a potential club banger, the beat gets my head nodding in seconds. Skepta goes in hard, covering topics from his experiences selling coke as a kid to his own, now certain, status within UK Hip-Hop history. His confidence, only grown by the intervening eight years, is evident: on 'Still', he raps, "Top boy for too many years and still nobody can top me/It's me they all tryna sound like, it's my gang they all tryna copy".

Despite this, in one of the EP's most interesting moments, Skepta shows an awareness of the limitations of his own style. On 'Hypocrisy' he spits "No, I don't do that conscious rap, but/Man still know about Wretch and Kendrick". Perhaps this is the point, Skepta doesn't need to be Kendrick, or Rocky, or Kanye. On this EP there are flashes of what Joseph Adenuga should and can be, but never quite to the standard which made *Konnichiwa* such an instant classic ●

Max Goodall

Theatre

More reviews are available online at:
varsity.co.uk/theatre



'Theatre has come to mean more than just a building'

PETER COOK (C) RSC



For plenty of people, the word 'theatre' will be enough to conjure up images of swathes of red curtain, spotlights and an audience licking their ice cream during the interval or, conversely, a dank, black box-like cellar. Fortunately, in Cambridge, we have both and more. Cambridge has the most vibrant student theatre scene in the UK, with a dozen or so productions taking place every week, in widely different venues, each catering to different aspects of the Cantabrigian theatrical experience. To a certain extent, it reflects the theatrical outlook in general, and the theatrical spaces and their usage says a lot about the people who choose to use them and the tone they are trying to set.

A theatre setting serves to define the performance and the audience's relation to it. If you walk into a traditional proscenium arch theatre, you tend to be doing so expecting a different experience than you might when walking down a back alley to a cloakroom that has been hastily jumbled together. Already, there is the need to discern between that which is fixed and that which can be altered. The proscenium arch is fixed and, more often than not, will play host to fixed tradi-

tions of theatre, while a venue somewhat out of the ordinary will either take centre stage, detracting from the performance or allow the performance to speak for itself, free from the associations that might be made within a traditional setting. Take, for example, the Theatre of Small Convenience in Malvern, the smallest commercial theatre in the world, seating up to 12 people. On the 25th February of this year, it closed its doors, but one can only imagine the dual attractions of it to an audience member and to a director or actor (thought it was most predominantly used for puppetry) where the venue is a novelty and of interest in itself, and where the space available is a challenge – ultimately completely filled – allowing for the performance to be overwhelming.

However, this differentiation between classical theatre venues and unusual ones, or black box spaces, means that both can be subverted, allowing for the unexpected and all theatre to be adapted to the venue in order to create the most challenging or visually striking piece. An excellent piece of experimental theatre, newly written, complete with audience interaction and varied use of space, can still be performed in a 17th century building, and one of the best Shakespeare productions

I've ever seen was done in a tiny black studio, the audience sitting on their hands or leaning against a wall.

In Ancient Greece, theatre would be performed as part of festivals and religious rituals encompassing politics, law, athletics and gymnastics, weddings and even funerals. While the amphitheatre was its home, it would move beyond that, into the temples and the seats of government. During the medieval era and beyond, theatre was taken to the road by travelling troupes who would never stay in any one place too long, falling afoul of puritanical fervour. The fact that theatre has come to mean a building as much as an art is interesting, much like how church comes to mean the building as much as the congregation and it is a testament to the place it has taken, moving beyond the town square, that today we are accustomed to sitting quietly and showing respect for the performers.

But what about if you don't feel catered for in the whole theatrical experience? The establishment of the theatre as a building, and its historical devolvement from a street art practised by a sometimes much derided group of social outcasts, turns it into a business... one that may not make much money,

if any at all, but one that must be ruthless in deciding what will keep it afloat.

This may also contribute to growing exclusivity as to who can access theatre, where theatre can be considered as catering to, and performed by, a white middle-class, even relative to other forms of entertainment. What if your choices are limited for other reasons? I wrote recently about theatre's role in a community. What I did not state was that 'community' can often exclude certain marginalised groups, when venues are not adaptable to their needs. Recent furor in Cambridge about the Corpus Playroom and its lack of wheelchair accessibility cannot be ignored in discussing the role of venue, as a petition launched by the Relaxed Theatre Company has highlighted. Many older venues will not be adapted to allow for a range of people to enjoy performances, and many more contemporary, underground venues almost have a veneer of not being bothered by accessibility. It should not be required of a performance that it is enjoyed by everyone, or even anyone, but it should be required that everyone has the right to see it and be offended, bored or, god forbid, entertained by it, age restrictions aside.

The physical venue and structure of a theatre is more than just a shell for artistic expression. It is a barrier to some, it constructs an image, whether glorious or foreboding, and it is a source of inspiration, even becoming a muse unto itself. Those who claim to care about the art of theatre should also care about attracting a range of people with a number of responses to the works presented and, if there is no accounting for personal taste and level of cerebral understanding required in any given instant, effort and money ought to be invested into accommodating that which won't affect opinion or enjoyment. Key to that is caring about the most important aspect of the physical body of the theatre – the audience, without whom the theatre is useless and liable to being turned into a shopping centre. It is a lie to suggest that there aren't ways of doing so while maintaining the original character and design of the structure ●

Zoé Barnes

To improvise, or not to improvise?



ADI GEORGE

From the 14th November, The Cambridge Impronauts will be bringing a touch of bardic dramaturgy to the Corpus Playroom. *Much Improv About Nothing* is an improvised Shakespeare play: an hour-long comedy made up entirely on the spot, based on audience suggestions and performed in the style of England's most famous playwright.

What does this mean? It means so-

liloquies, asides, wordplay, bloody murder, impeccable disguises. You might think that adopting a Shakespearean style of performance would inhibit or obstruct comedic spontaneity, but it really is a gift to improvisers.

His plays are filled with narrative archetypes, intrigue and relationships, stock and deeply psychological characters alike – all the things an improvised platform thrives on. It's been a delight to explore these qualities, written over 400 years ago, and work to translate them into something fresh.

Undoubtedly, the most difficult technical challenge of *Much Improv About Nothing* has been learning to improvise in verse. But the cast has risen to the challenge of recreating this metrical style with an appropriately Jacobean gusto. When, for example, a workshop warm-up exercise organically mutates into an iambic pentameter discussion – argued with great passion – as to whether or not the chicken came before the egg, you start to recognise the essential playfulness of early modern dramatic conventions.

Improvising verse opens up an entirely new language in which to communicate ideas with one another on stage. It really is a help rather than a hindrance in generating ideas, once you get over the initial rhythmic shock.

By making use of Shakespeare's linguistic exuberance, the Impronauts aim to create that characteristically bardic state of interplay between characters and audience. The Impronauts' goal isn't to recreate Shakespeare period-perfect, or to parody any specific play, but to perform an entertaining, funny show that riffs on typical Shakespeare plot motifs.

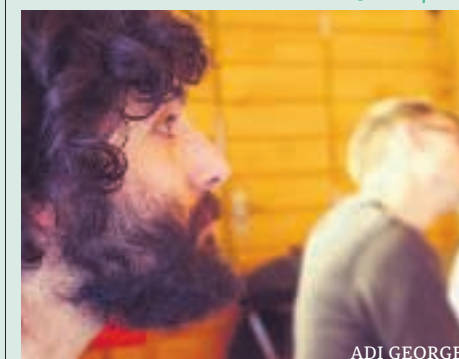
This might be an old form of theatre, but it certainly represents a new way of doing improv. Very few cast members of *Much Improv About Nothing* had ever performed any Shakespeare beyond the inevitable school-room encounters! But everyone involved has taken to this style like fish to water, where the fish in question just happen to be poets.

Every night of the show, the audience will get to decide what kind of Shakespeare play they want to see – a bloody Tragedie, perhaps?

The audience will provide the title and a collection of suggestions for elaborate metaphors to be invoked throughout the performance. And the Impronauts welcome the challenge.

So why see the show? We might just end up probing the ineffable depths of the human condition and representing the inevitable proliferation of semantic ambiguity one night, but mostly it's going to be fun ●

Joel Lipson



ADI GEORGE

In conversation with: James Ganendra

When it comes to Varsity, the water polo half of CUSWPC have a reputation to defend. Ganendra is confident that both the men's and women's teams can do just that. Out of the pool, however, this president only wants to enhance the reputation of his club, making sure that in another century's time swimming and water polo are still mainstays of Cambridge sport, perhaps even with their own pool.

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| Women's Lacrosse | 20 Bath | 3 |
| Men's Lacrosse | 7 Nottingham | 4 |
| Women's Netball | 39 Nottingham | 48 |
| Men's Rugby Union | 12 Crawshay's Welsh XV | 29 |
| Men's Volleyball | 3 UEA | 2 |
| Away | | |
| Women's Basketball | 45 Worcester | 59 |
| Women's Rugby Union | 35 Nottingham | 7 |
| Men's Table Tennis | 10 Loughborough | 7 |

Tottenham Hotspur: a brave new world

Harry Clynh
Sports Columnist

With the recent publication of Guillem Balague's book *Brave New World*, which charts Mauricio Pochettino's remarkable transformation of Tottenham Hotspur since he joined the club in 2014, as well as Spurs' rapid ascent up the English – and now European – footballing hierarchy, there has been much debate as to whether Spurs are, or soon could be, an elite force in world football.

After all, over the last two seasons, Spurs have emerged as genuine title contenders – being the only team last year to put any pressure on Chelsea last season – while recent performances in the Champions League have shown the side's quality on the European stage too. A well-deserved point against Real Madrid at the Bernabéu before absolutely embarrassing the Spanish and European champions at Wembley have clearly demonstrated the team's class.

However, it is difficult to argue that Spurs are, yet, a truly elite football team. Most significantly, Pochettino's revolution at White Hart Lane has failed to manifest itself into trophies. Spurs' victories have thus far merely been 'moral victories': playing the best style of football in the league, finishing above Arsenal, putting the pressure on Leicester and Chelsea. And so, whilst this current

Tottenham team, without any shadow of a doubt, has the *potential* to win domestic and European silverware, it cannot be deemed to be amongst the continental greats until it does so.

The question subsequently arises: how can Pochettino continue his transformation by taking Tottenham to the next level, the level shared by the great European outfits? The first answer is a relatively simple one: the club must retain *all* of its talent. For too long, Spurs has characterised itself as a 'selling club': being more than content to allow the likes of Bale and Modrić to move to other clubs for hefty prices. And with the building of the new stadium – with an estimated cost of around £800 million – the temptation to cash in on highly sought-after players such as Kane, Alli, and Eriksen,

Tottenham's margin of victory against Real Madrid in the Champions League

3-1

will, perhaps, be hard for Daniel Levy to resist. But if Spurs wishes to emerge as a serious force, one that consistently challenges for, and wins, major trophies, then the absolute minimum is to keep hold of these players. And this means paying them market rates.



Tottenham's stringent pay structure – through which even the biggest names are paid relatively modest wages – threatens to cripple any title chances. Dele Alli recently signed a new contract on £50,000 per week, but could easily earn three or four times that at any one of the major European clubs. In the last transfer window, Manchester United offered to double Eric Dier's £70,000 per week wage. With clubs such as West Ham and Crystal Palace paying their best performers well over £100,000 a

week (a privilege at Spurs retained only for Harry Kane and club-captain Hugo Lloris), many of these players will simply move elsewhere, to clubs willing to match their market value.

However, though the building of the new stadium represents a financial challenge for the club, it is also, simultaneously, an opportunity for it to announce itself as elite, in both financial and footballing terms. The increased revenue which will come from the massive capacity expansion – moving from

White Hart Lane's 36,284 seats to the new ground's estimated 61,559 – will, in the medium to long-term, mean *more* money to invest in the squad. And Spurs are becoming ever more marketable in a commercial sense: their recent success, and potential for more, means that massive sponsorships are a possibility and perhaps a probability. Indeed, Daniel Levy hopes to strike a sponsorship deal which will eclipse the £400 million agreement struck between Manchester City and Etihad Airways in 2011.

If these promising financial prospects come to fruition, then the board must seize this golden opportunity to invest in the team on an unprecedented magnitude. This not only includes greatly increasing the salaries paid to many members of the squad, but constantly adding talent to it, while continuing to develop Spurs' excellent youth set-up. If the club can avoid the short-sighted temptation to pay off some of its debts with big transfers, Spurs will undoubtedly become one of Europe's major forces, and trophies will follow.

Spurs is one of England's great historic teams, and is known for its glorious past. But an even more glorious future can await Tottenham Hotspur. If only it is ambitious in outlook, clever in its finances, and bold in its convictions on and off the pitch, then the Spurs can – and will – go marching in.

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Blues no match for brilliant Nottingham

Harry Normanton
Senior Sports Reporter

BUCS Midlands 1A, University of Cambridge Sports Centre

CUBbC 60
UoNBC 84

Nottingham extended their unbeaten start to the season and condemned their hosts to their third defeat in four games, beating Cambridge 84-60 on Wednesday night. There were lots of reasons for encouragement, though, for a developing Blues team adjusting to the loss of seven players since last season.

Not intimidated by their high-flying visitors, Cambridge flew out of the gates. For the first quarter they dominated the 'offensive glass' (hoovering up most of the shots that rebounded off the rim or backboard) and were aggressive in the 'paint' (the area closest to the basket). Ideally one would always shoot in this part of the court, but it tends to be the most congested with defenders, so getting there requires considerable physicality. The Blues showed that and more in the first quarter, repeatedly sending Nottingham defenders sprawling as they powered towards the rim.

Point guard Ricard Argelaguet led the way, drawing a foul while scoring a driving layup (a one handed shot from close to the basket that is bounced off the backboard), then scoring the subsequent 'free throw' to earn his team three points. And the result of this willingness to crash into the paint was that it cleared space at the 'perimeter' – the three point line which forms an arc twenty feet from the basket. Midway through the quarter, good ball movement earned power forward Riccardo Masina an open look from three, and the Cambridge bench rose as one as it arced into the hoop, giving Cambridge the lead, 15-13. They would



The total number of new players in the CUBbC first team this year

keep their noses in front for the rest of the quarter, and when Florian Popp put away an offensive rebound with the final play of the period, they led 25-22.

In truth, it could have been more. The Blues outplayed their visitors defensively as well as offensively, and Nottingham were only able to keep the game close

thanks to several easy baskets from steals. In the second quarter, though, they began to flex their muscle, led by star small forward C. Bruton. At the start of the period he anticipated a Cambridge pass, stole the ball, and charged the length of the court, drawing a foul on a spinning layup, then draining the extra point.

For the rest of the game he would control his team's offence, showing a devastating combination of power, athleticism and shooting accuracy. After the game, Cambridge coach Tim Weil shook his head, "he's the best player we've seen all year, his shot's so smooth, it's effortless." Nevertheless, in the second quarter the Blues were able to contain Bruton to a degree, often by marking him with two players, and at half time the game still hung in the balance, with Nottingham leading 44-41.

Any hopes of an upset were dashed at the start of the third quarter, though. Nottingham seemed to find another gear, grabbing every loose ball and draining every shot, while Cambridge couldn't quite make their attempts fall in. And as their deficit grew, Cambridge became increasingly frantic, often resorting to 'hero ball' – attempting to generate points as individuals rather than passing the ball around to develop a good

▲▼CUBbC's only win this season came in a 66-54 victory against Birmingham (HARRY NORMANTON)



look. The visitors scored the first seventeen points of the half, and although Cambridge battled gamely, there was no way back. Coach Weil put it simply: "We came out flat. When you play a good team, they make you pay for it, and they made us pay in a hurry."

Nevertheless, there were plenty of positives to take from the game for a team still getting to know each other. Captain Dami Adebayo said, "I'm really proud of my team for the first half performance", and coach Weil concurred: "that was our best half of the season". The key, both agreed, was that "we met their intensity". Now, says Adebayo, it is a case of improving fitness and focus, and above all of "learning to trust each other". If they can do that, he believes, 'we can play with any team in this league'.

Up next for Cambridge is the visit of Oxford Brookes.

Cambridge: J. Hauge, A. Priddey, R. Argelaguet, R. Masina, F. Cultrera di Montesano, Z. Lenox, F. Popp, D. Panayiotou, D. Adebayo, L. Skorcic, A. Walsh, M. Krstajic

Nottingham: Y. Kimamoto, B. Amini, B. Gunduz, D. Carvalho, J. Smith, G. Purnell, C. Bruton, A. Pratchett, O. Williams, L. Stewart, G. Garcia