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CAMDEN

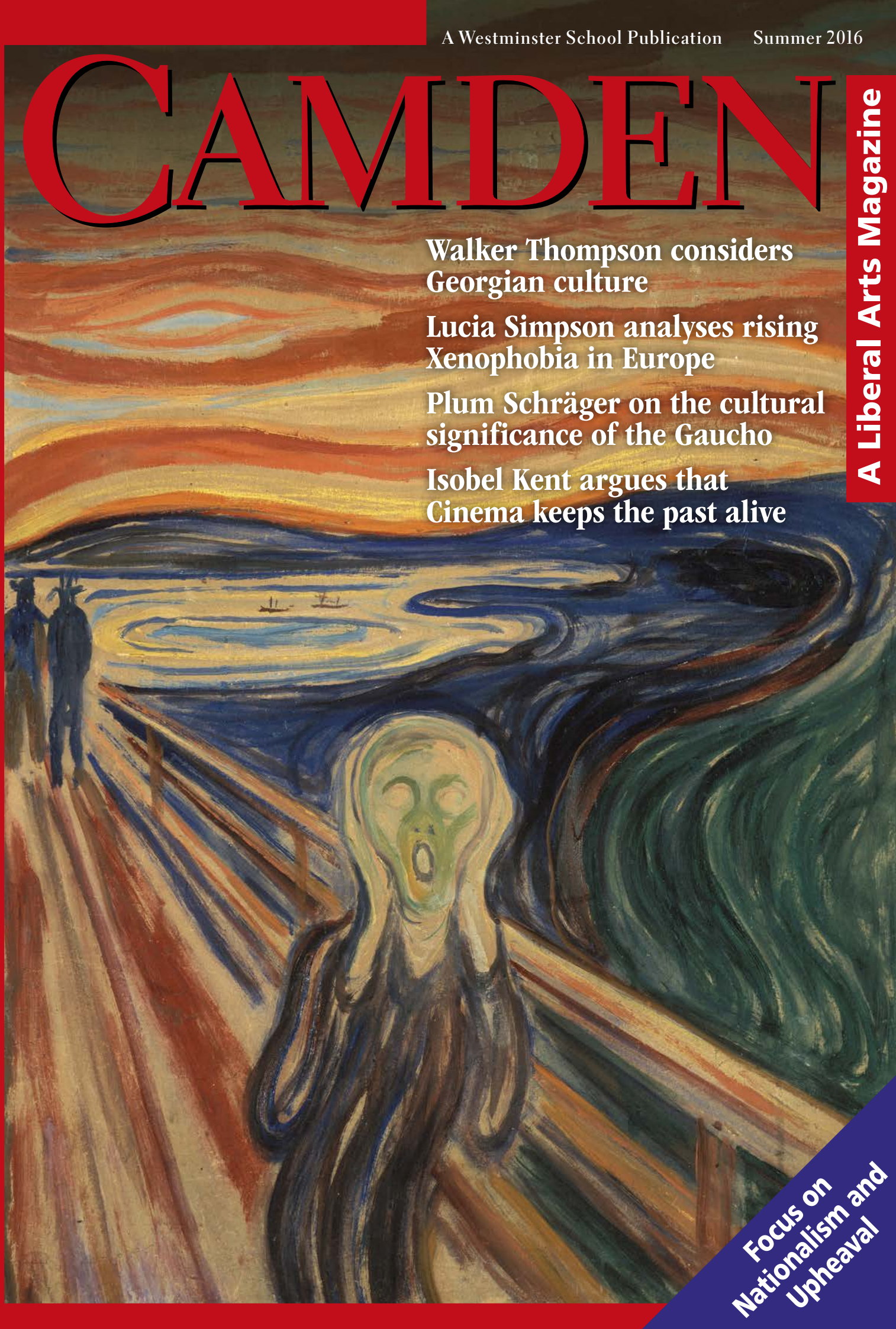
A Liberal Arts Magazine

Walker Thompson considers Georgian culture

Lucia Simpson analyses rising Xenophobia in Europe

Plum Schräger on the cultural significance of the Gaucho

Isobel Kent argues that Cinema keeps the past alive



Focus on Nationalism and Upheaval

Education in an age of conformity

The world of education is under threat, not just from political interference, but it now finds itself at the mercy of the market, media, modernity and millenials.

A pervasive safety culture has curtailed children's discovery of the new, prevents them from playing independently, from learning to control their own emotions and behaviour and from developing a sense of responsibility. Its influence extends to education, where a paternalistic control of reading material limits discovery of the world of fiction. What once passed as the accepted cultural canon is now off-limits. Trigger warnings are becoming more widespread; books which might offend sensibilities are being removed from the syllabus.

This, together with politicisation of language and political correctness, has given rise to fears of microagression, the perceived offence that someone's words cause to individuals and cultural groups. Examples of readily bruised sensitivities are widespread: student protests to remove Woodrow Wilson's name from a Princeton faculty or Rhodes' statue from Oriel; some US colleges have compiled lists of forbidden phrases. Some national dailies are banned from sale on UK campuses, as they may cause offence. Similarly, university campuses establish 'safe spaces'. Once a place of refuge for people exposed to racial prejudice or sexism, these are now used by illiberal students to ban words and ideas that oppose their own, to stifle freedom of expression.

This is a far cry from the Higher Education of the recent past, where University was a place where students could be challenged and intellectually taken out of their 'safe space'. The twin prongs of identity politics and the denigration of knowledge exercise a pernicious influence. Academic culture today, it has been noted, has a greater tendency to combine relativism with an absolute conviction in the validity of subjective truths. The Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University expressed concern about the disappearance of moral and epistemological modesty which enables the interchange of ideas, and she wondered whether it would ever return. She is not alone in this.

Educational institutions are at the mercy of these and other corrosive influences. The deculturation of education and politics, where policy is dominated by the balance sheet, is all-pervasive. It is devoid of any humanist setting or historical vision and has become an end in itself. This in a context of postmodernism, which seems bent on constant motion and perpetual change – be it in mentality, lifestyle or values; there is no specific goal, just the need to survive, communicate and consume.

Our obsession with media and communication has led to a blurring of boundaries between work and leisure, between the formal and the informal. We are all living a 'liquid life', which is "a precarious life, lived under conditions of constant uncertainty, in which the consumerist syndrome has devalued values of duration and instead elevated transience." These currents are reflected in language use. Words dissolve in the continual flux which is communication; they no longer play the role of symbolic markers. The discourse of advertising and instant messaging render content irrelevant. We live in the eternal present, reflected in tense usage: we are 'going forward together'; 'change is now'; 'Yes, we can'.

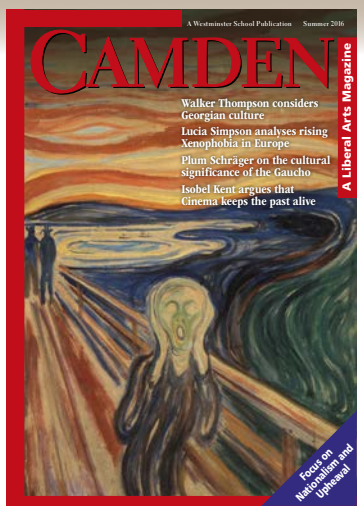
Liquid life is well illustrated by the contemporary pupils' obsessive, compulsive tendencies in mobile telephone usage. Initially provided as a means to keep in touch with parents, the device comes to symbolise freedom and security, the two contradictory needs which millennials yearn for most. But it is not just a link with the outside world, it becomes the affirmation of identity: texts, calls and photos corroborate the existence and popularity of the owner, messages are sought round the clock, even interrupting sleep cycles. The validity of modern teenagers' existence can only be confirmed by the receipt of a communication, however banal. *Je texte, donc je suis.*

The social consequences of growing up in liquid life and the protective environment of a safety culture have bred a greater sense of vulnerability in young adults and fostered a disinclination to trust their own judgement and take responsibility. They fear the sound of silence and shrink from engaging with uncomfortable ideas and the complexity of language. The Zeitgeist of the globalised landscape makes the task of educating bright young minds all the more challenging. How can school pilot the young learner between the Scylla of consumerism and the Charybdis of social media? It must set store by traditional values which develop the whole person and confront emotional fragility: cultivating a sense of community, team spirit, a moral compass, a sense of curiosity. It is essential that it fulfil its role to educate in the broadest sense, that it impart, maintain and renew those elements which form the cultural legacy of society.

Contemporary currents contrive to remove culture and history as a landscape for constructing personal identity. This is a dangerous development. Without a personal connection with history and culture, we risk simply building a shallow profile in an illusory world. To have roots and an awareness of a common past is all the more vital in today's liquid world. This is a key reason why, in today's educational environment, an understanding of knowledge of science and technology alone is insufficient; the teaching of the humanities remains of the utmost importance. As Kolakowski observed: "We learn history not in order to know how to behave or how to succeed, but to know who we are."

Contents

Georgia–*Walker Thompson* 4
Xenophobia–*Lucia Simpson* 10
But I was Igbo before The White Man came–*Archie Hall* 13
Confronting the past–*Isobel Kent* 18
The Dayton Peace Accords–*Stephen Horvath* 23
Sacred Duty... or Terrible Beauty–*Tom Edlin* 27
Confused Nationalism in Central Asia–*Sacha Mehta* 31
Benjamin Vaughan in America: A Second Life–*Michael Baron* 37
The Gaucho in Argentinian Culture–*Plum Schräger* 43
Wharton, Woolf: Class values and the Individual–*Christabel Mclain* 48
Conrad, O'Brien and Savagery–*Archie Hall* 53
Sailing to Byzantium–*Walker Thompson* 58
Poetry: From the Collection *The Colour of Bone*–*Olivia Boucher-Rowe* 64
Fiction: The Colour of Old Silver–*Thomas Nightingale* 66
Journeying in the Poetry of Larkin and Thomas–*Nick Plaut* 70
CDU success in West Germany 1949-1969–*Stephen Horvath* 73
Sport, Artistry and the Arts–*Charles Ullathorne* 76
From the Archive: Tales of Storytellers–*Charlotte Robinson* 79
From the Archive: Tales from the Town Boy Ledgers–*Elizabeth Wells* 82
Jeremy Bentham's Westminster Poems–*Nicholas Stone* 85
Goya: Emerging from The Shadows–*Jacqueline Cockburn* 89
Berlin in Oxford–*William Neubauer* 93
Is Science an Art?–*Lawrence Berry* 96
Notes on Contributors 99



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Georgia

Walker Thompson spent seven weeks in Georgia. In this essay he explores the country of the Russian Romantics. Situated in the heart of the Caucasus, it is blessed with some of the most distinctive and spectacular topography I have ever seen, either in photographs or in person. Two of the places he visited – Gerget'is Sameba above St'epants'minda (Q'asbegi in Soviet times), and Jvari (Holy Cross) Monastery outside Mtskheta, the ancient capital – inspired Pushkin's short poem 'Monastyr' na Kazbeke' and Mikhail Lermontov's 'Mtsyri', respectively, the title of the latter being itself a Russification of the Georgian word for 'hermit'. The country's mountainous north likewise features prominently in Lermontov's* Hero of our Time. *Yet one does not even have to venture far from the capital, Tbilisi, with its soaring, fortress-capped hills, to gain an appreciation for the sublime that Georgia has to offer. Even the contours of the city, traced out by lights visible from the plane at night, were like those of no other city.

In the mountains, however, is where the country truly shines. The mountains – in Georgian, 'mtebi' – are a sort of institution in Georgia. It is quite simply *where one goes* for exercise, relaxation, healing. When there, you immediately realise why. They are breathtakingly beautiful: towering peaks, bare and rocky in summer, snow-capped in winter, juxtaposed with deep glacial river valleys carved out of the rock by small, crystal-clear streams and thundering torrents thick with bluish sediment. Much of this water is, in fact, drinkable. In the heart of picturesque mountain villages, or at small stone pillars in isolated spots that were once very plausibly pagan shrines (now adorned with crosses), springs bubble up with cold, clear water, some of it containing natural minerals that only improve the taste. I can't count the

The Holy Trinity Cathedral of Tbilisi, (Ts'minda Sameba), the main cathedral of the Georgian Orthodox Church

number of times I filled up my bottle at such places, and on group trips, the *marshrutka* would occasionally pull over at elated cries of '*tsqaro!*' ('spring!') from the passengers. It is a peaceful and utterly unspoilt environment. Yet the mountains' methods of purification can be brutal at times. Once, I spent a long weekend in Khevi region. After nursing a mild headache at the end of a long high-altitude trek on the first day, I woke up the next day with about every possible complaint and spent about 28 of the next 36 hours asleep in bed. My teacher put it down to either sunstroke or altitude sickness, and said that her son, a veteran mountaineer, had had a nearly identical reaction.

One of the great appeals of the Georgian Caucasus is its utter wildness. The Alps, with their train lines, paved roads, well-marked trails, ski-resorts, and tidy settlements, seem positively tame and cultivated by comparison. (Georgia does nevertheless have one major ski resort of its own, Gudauri, popular with *novye russkie*.) Many of the tiny mountain villages are only barely connected to the electrical grid, meaning that ramshackle diesel generators are very common. Juta, our first stop in Khevi region, is accessible only by a 20km drive on a bumpy dirt road, including a harrowing washed-out section above a steep ravine. As in many developing countries, the ground in these remote villages is sadly strewn with rubbish: plastic bottles, packaging, packing peanuts – testament to the reprehensible influence of agribusiness and industrial chemistry even in the furthest reaches of the world. (Though reassuringly, I was told several times that Georgian farmers tend to abstain from using pesticides and growth hormones, and that the food is mostly free of additives.) Yet as soon as you get out of sight of the villages, the landscape is utterly transformed. Signs of human settlement are few and far between; those people who do live up in the remote hills and valleys of the Caucasus do so in remarkable harmony with their surroundings. High up in Gudamakari Gorge, on the approach to the pass, our group ran into a good-natured elderly woman, her arms spattered with fresh white milk, who lived in a small hut built practically into the steep hillside and at the time was taking a tin pail down to the river to collect water for her washing. This wildness is even to be found in the area around, and especially *above*, Gergetis Sameba – a popular destination for pleasure-trippers, outdoorsmen, and pilgrims alike, now accordingly served by a wide dirt road from Qazbegi. You only before have to ascend about 50-100 metres above the church before you lose sight of the 4x4s that now rumble day in, day out along this track, throwing up clouds of grey dust that choke those brave souls who venture to make the ascent on foot.

Gergeti Trinity Church. The church is situated at 2170 metres above sea level, under Mount Kazbegi

Khertvisi Castle in the Meskheti region (Southern Georgia). Completed 1354. Its location guards the strategic road between Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe.

Yet this sort of adventure tourism – 4x4s, cable-cars, paragliding, caving – which to the ecologically-minded and culturally sensitive foreigner may seem unfortunate and ruinous, is also regarded by the locals as a matter of pure economic necessity. For there is no getting around it: Georgia is a poor country. The economy is largely agrarian and the signs of poverty are everywhere, but are especially pronounced in rural areas. Even along the Georgian Military Road, the main North-South artery and a vital piece of strategic infrastructure, herds of unruly livestock obstructing whole lanes and holding up cars are a regular sight. The same motorway is riddled with potholes and washed-out sections. The streets of Tbilisi teem with wrinkled, pension-age beggars – proof of the lack of an adequate social safety net – and most villages in the countryside consist of dilapidated huts with corrugated-iron roofs. Nothing is recycled, and, as mentioned previously, litter is strewn along village roads, well-trod mountain tracks, highways, and city streets alike.

Georgian Landscape

Tbilisi does feel wealthier than the countryside, if due only to the skill of Soviet planners at masking poverty and a recent surge in foreign investment. A part of the old city has been beautifully restored – a rare positive legacy of the Saakashvili government – and among the results stands out the spotless Freedom Square (*tavisuplebas moedani*), a colossal cobbled roundabout hemmed with luxury shops and official buildings. Many of the paved roads I travelled along were in excellent condition, as were most of the churches I visited. And the country never felt poor in the same way as, say, Morocco, which has a comparable per-capita income: notably absent were the chaotic, filthy third-world markets and old-city slums. In many ways, Georgia felt no poorer than Greece, and in some areas slightly better off. This is despite a wide and widening gulf between the country's poor and its rich ruling class – including the billionaire former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili, whose crass modern residence crowns one of Tbilisi's several hills. Purely speculatively, one might posit that this is due to the lack of a true colonial history, which led to the emergence of wealthy "European" quarters and the degradation of old city centres in many African countries, for instance. But this is hard to say, as the Russians were, of course, there, and a part of the city around Marjanishvili Square looks like a bit of Petersburg plopped down in the middle of the Georgian capital, complete with a Russian church (of which there are two others elsewhere in the city). I still remember my first visit to this neighbourhood, and the surreal feeling of walking suddenly into what looked and felt like an outpost of imperial Russia.

The country was also hit hard by an embargo imposed by Russia after the 2008 war, as Georgia's neighbor to the north had also long been the largest export market for its wines and its famous salty mineral water, Borjomi, from the eponymous resort town once beloved of the Russian nobility. Both held a special place in the Soviet mindset and still do in the former Republics; indeed, an Estonian colleague of mine in London told me that bottles of Borjomi are to be found to this day on the shelves of stores in Tallinn. Georgian wines are also prized throughout the former USSR – even if they are comparatively little known in the West. This relative obscurity is surprising, since, as both government agencies and boards of tourism are quick to remind visitors, the country is the birthplace of viticulture. There has been a wine-growing industry in Georgia for up to 8000 years. Our Indo-European root for both 'wine' and 'vine' (Latin *vinum*, Ancient Greek οἶνος) could even plausibly derive from the Georgian *ghvino*, which predates it. They make a big deal of this history of wine-growing, too: I was handed a small bottle of *saperavi*, gratis, by a smiling, photogenic customs officer at the airport, with the board below her desk proudly informing travellers of the recently signed Association Agreement with the EU (which puts it in the company of most of North Africa, the Middle East, CIS, and Balkans – hardly an exclusive club – but nonetheless entitles it to freer trade with member states). These efforts to seek new

markets for Georgian products and to lure Western tourists to the country, if thoroughly transparent, have all been necessitated by the country's drift out of the Russian orbit and towards NATO and the EU. They also distinguish it from its neighbours: Armenia remains firmly in the Russian orbit. Partly because of this, Georgia is working to become more independent in its energy supply, as 97 per cent of its power – within the crumbling national grid, at least – is supplied by their monophysite neighbours.

As a result of these developments, Russian, once the second language of the entire Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic and a lingua franca amongst its various native ethnic groups (Georgians, Armenians, Azeris, Kurds, Greeks) and resident foreigners, has rapidly diminished in importance. English is now taught in schools and is spoken as a second language by most people under the age of 30 or so. The indirect result of this is that Georgian has now become much more important, by virtue of being the only truly common language in the country, at least among the ethnic-majority Georgians (endonym: *kartvelebi*). This presents a challenge for the foreign traveller, as Georgian is a difficult beast. In fact, I have heard anecdotally from several people, including three different Georgian-language teachers and my colleagues at an NGO, about surveys claiming it is the third-hardest language for English speakers to learn, behind Cantonese and Japanese and ahead of Arabic, Persian, and Mandarin. This is not surprising. The pronunciation, first and foremost, is difficult. There are six sounds called 'ejectives' that do not exist outside the Caucasus – apart from Georgian, they are to be found in just a handful of North Caucasian languages spoken by minorities in Russia – and which present continual difficulties for the foreigner, not least because five of them are easy to confuse with other 'normal' consonants (k', ch', ts', t', p'). Due to Georgian's extraordinarily synthetic character, a verb, through a combination of subject and object markers, so-called 'preverbs', infixes, circumfixes, causative markers, and other such morphemes, can yield literally hundreds of active and passive forms across three so-called 'screeves'. As a consolation, there are 'only' seven cases (versus the 15 or so in Finnish, for example), though the language does have so-called 'split' ergativity and a distinctive 'adverbial' case. There are also three different alphabets, all distinct from any other in the world, and only ever used to write Georgian and some regional languages (Mingrelian, Laz, Caucasian Albanian). The only character set a foreigner needs to learn is *Mkhedruli*; *Nuskhuri*, once commonly used in manuscripts, is now virtually extinct. Yet one occasionally encounters the third, *Asomtavruli*, in architecture, or in official or ecclesiastic contexts. In fact, the two plaques marking the entrance to the Georgian Patriarchate in Tbilisi would ironically be illegible to many Georgians, as one is in in *Asomtavruli* and the other in Latin.

On this subject, the Georgian Orthodox Church (GOC) is an exceedingly powerful institution. This is something that I did not expect coming to the country, but the influence it wields is enormous and in many areas surpasses that of the government. Politicians have to keep priests on side or risk losing local elections. Ivanishvili, the oligarch, allegedly made a sizable contribution to the construction of the largest cathedral in Tbilisi (and, in fact, in the whole of Orthodoxy): *Ts'minda Sameba* or "Holy Trinity", built on the site of an Armenian cemetery after the fall of the Soviet Union and consecrated in 2004. While officially all religions are tolerated equally, and one-tenth of the population is Muslim, the GOC enjoys a privileged position in public life. It has even received special constitutional recognition from the government. Its pervasive influence is cultural as well as political, as is perhaps most clearly experienced on the roads. Crosses are ubiquitous and conspicuously placed at junctions, atop boulders, on mountainsides. While many academics and businessmen are more secular and less devout, most ordinary Georgians will make the sign of the cross whenever they see such a cross or pass a church. (Government officials also make a point of being pious, and enjoy cosy relationships with hierarchs.) Indeed, it is more of a statement not to have a cross dangling from your rearview mirror than to have one, and every Tbilisi city bus I saw had a row of print-out ikons taped above the windscreen. In a striking reversal of the situation in the West, the young are also the most ardent believers: Our driver on the way to Juta, a young man, crossed himself fervently as we drove by a monument to a Georgian saint. It all makes one realise how secular our Western culture truly is.

Mother Georgia (Kartvlis Deda) The statue was erected in 1958, when Tbilisi celebrated its 1500th anniversary

Power corrupts, and the GOC is not immune in this regard. The Patriarch, Ilia II, is admired as much as a secular figure as a religious one, but he is a certainly not immune to graft, having come under fire recently for commissioning a palatial Spiritual Centre to receive foreign dignitaries in his ancestral village of Sno, which I saw whilst in the mountains. The Church, whose identity, like that of many of its Orthodox cousins is intensely bound up with nationhood, has similarly become an outlet for patriotic sentiment and social conservatism, which lately has displayed an unfortunate tendency to spill over into violence and racism. (Conservatism is a key word in Georgian Orthodoxy in general: at all the churches and monasteries I visited, a strict dress code was in effect including long trousers for men, and long skirts and kerchiefs for women. Picture-taking and mobile phones were also strictly prohibited, and many a time it was that I witnessed monks reprimanding clueless or insensitive tourists – a refreshing antidote to our permissive attitude towards Church tourism in the West.) The GOC seems to be something of a commercial enterprise, too: I counted no fewer than 12 shops selling ikons and other church paraphernalia along K'ot'e Apkhazi Street, which incidentally leads from Freedom Square down to its oldest church, Sioni (Zion) Cathedral, the main buildings of the Georgian Patriarchate, and most important seminary in the country.

The counterpoint to the corruption in the church hierarchy is the long and special history of Georgian Christianity. It was adopted as the state religion in the 4th century and since has gradually replaced the various pagan beliefs preeminent before – even if the latter persist to this day in a strange symbiosis with Christianity in some of the more remote mountain regions. The Christianisation of the country was begun by Jews with connections to the Holy Land and then continued through the efforts of St Nino, who made her home in Mtskheta, the ancient capital conceived as a Georgian 'New Jerusalem'. *Aghvsebis zatikis zatiki*, a traditional procession from the lower church of Svet'itshkhoveli up to Jvari monastery overlooking the city, was established there by St Nino and based on liturgical practices from ancient Jerusalem, as explored by Tamila Mgaloblishvili (a brilliant professor whom I got to know in Tbilisi) in her research on the connections between the Holy Land and ancient Georgia. After a long hiatus during Communist times, when the Soviet army maintained a presence in the river valley of the Kura (Mt'k'vari), the Patriarch finally reinstated the ceremony in 2010. The country subsequently retained its Christian faith despite centuries of invasions by Muslim armies, with its heyday being perhaps the 17th century, when many churches underwent extensive restorations and took on the forms one sees today. The Georgian Patriarchate maintained links with the Holy Land throughout Byzantine and Ottoman times, when a number of Georgian-speaking monasteries were founded there. Over the centuries, there have been also been disputes between the Georgians and the monophysite Armenians, including over the national allegiance and martyrdom of St Shushanik.

Georgian church architecture is beautiful and distinctive. Apart from the natural scenery and a number of old fortresses, it is arguably the main draw for visitors, whether for spiritual or purely aesthetic reasons. Many churches and monasteries are to be found in the most improbable locations, on remote mountain peaks or alone on the sweeping hillsides of spectacular river-valleys, Gerget'is Sameba being an extreme example. Inside, each one that I had the pleasure of visiting exuded a timelessness and sanctity often lacking in their Western counterparts. Dim, pewless, with the glint of candlelight on ikons and a lingering scent of incense in the air, they are places of calm – and, thanks to the cooling properties of their thick stone walls, of refuge from the scorching heat of the Georgian summer. Outside many of them one can find cool, bubbling drinking fountains, likewise welcome sights on a hot summer's day. Some, such as Sioni Cathedral in Tbilisi, or Svet'itskhoveli in Mtskheta, are in excellent condition; others, less so. At'eni Sioni Church outside Gori, Stalin's birthplace (ironically, he was enrolled in a seminary nearby!), had been under restoration for several years already when I visited. Though I

Mestia in Svaneti Province, NW Georgia. Photo by Uwe Brodrecht

was allowed to clamber around on the rusting scaffolding to examine frescoes barely visible from ground level, some of which had been beautifully restored, the elderly gentleman watching over the place said he expected the works to go on indefinitely, as the labourers only come for two days each week. During my stay, I spent many a peaceful hour inside Georgian churches, enjoying the frescoes and observing the Orthodox in their acts of devotion.

Yet alongside this serene, spiritual side of Georgia, the twin processes of modernisation and globalisation are already at work. The view from the window of Professor Mgaloblishvili's flat, which once looked out down a tranquil hillside and a over sea of two- and three-storey houses, is now flanked by three hideous glass-and-steel skyscrapers, the phallic brainchildren of Arab and Russian investors that tower over the low-rise centre of Tbilisi as monuments to poor urban planning and capitalism run amok. Such monstrosities are not the only unfortunate undertakings supported by the previous reforming, Western-oriented government: Saakashvili & Co. were also responsible for a very conspicuous new cable-car line, two massive sports stadia, the abolition of the streetcar system – resulting in a proliferation of motor vehicles and, accordingly, of pollution and traffic jams – and a slew of ill-advised building projects that, among other things, exacerbated the damage done by the recent flood in June 2015. The Soviet government, by contrast, was committed to keeping the city centre low-rise, to preserving old buildings, and to maintaining a first-rate public transport system (Tbilisi's metro, by all accounts quite similar to Moscow's, is all in all a far more pleasant experience than the London Underground). What is troubling therefore is how Georgia seems increasingly to be buying into the same fallacy as the rest of the world, namely that foreign investment and 'GDP growth' are the way forward, that quality of life must be measured by the dual yardsticks of unbridled capitalism and individualism. One must look no further than London's skyline, a tragic witness this same kind of cultural barbarism that results from this cult

Central Part of Tbilisi

of wealth taken to extremes (for is the profile of a city not a most valuable, if intangible, part of its cultural heritage?). To return to Georgia, one of the topics that came up in reports by Transparency International, the NGO where I worked part-time for four weeks, was about the destruction of the ancient Saq'drisi archaeological site. It had been bought out by a Russian-owned minerals giant, and government ministers, justifying the move by number of jobs it would create, had delisted it and authorised the company to start digging there. By all accounts this ancient mining site has already been irreparably damaged.

My concluding thoughts about the outlook for the country are thus somewhat grim. It is, of course, a place that continues to fascinate and enchant, with a great cuisine, legendarily hospitable people, spectacular physical environment, fascinating language, and almost unrivalled cultural heritage. Yet all this is at risk of being lost before the homogenising capitalist juggernaut. It is no coincidence that many of the older generation in Tbilisi not only lament the damage done to their city, but also pour forth nostalgia about Soviet times. While Saakashvili still has his supporters, one of the most common things I heard from those whom I asked about him was, 'Misha was crazy' (that exact phrase, over and over again). There is a sense that people did not know what they were wishing upon themselves with the fall of the Soviet Union, resulting now in deep regret about the problems of unemployment, a colossal informal economy, poverty, inequality, and destruction of the country's natural and human habitat, to name a few. Georgia is, in many ways, an exceptional country; as such, the greatest risk it faces, like the rest of the picturesque developing world, is of becoming a Dubai, a tourist Disneyland, and an American-style shopping mall all rolled into one. The language is already showing symptoms of runaway Americanisation, suffering palpably under a massive influx of English loanwords. While all this may result in a statistical gain in material wealth (and inequality), the concerned international observer fears the continued dilution and impoverishment of an ancient and unique culture.

Distressingly, an associate at my workplace in Tbilisi said once that he would not be sad if the Georgian language were to disappear entirely, and Georgia were to be subsumed entirely into the American cultural sphere. While this is certainly a minority view here, it is not altogether removed from the reality I have already described. And if such a thing were to happen, what a loss it would be before the world.

Xenophobia

Lucia Simpson considers the political pressures brought about by mass migration, a policy void, and the dangers of growing xenophobia in Europe and the United States.

Syrians and Iraqi refugees arrive at Lesbos from Turkey.

In January, Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for an attack on a hotel in Burkina Faso that killed 28 and injured a further 56. This is a sad addition to a canon of similar stories over the past two decades in which Islamist militants have attacked civilians throughout the world, and, tragically, it succeeds another attack in Jakarta three days previously. The temporal proximity of these incidents merely underlines the increasing intensity with which militant terrorist organisations are making their presence known. ISIS attacked Jakarta on the basis that Indonesia is insufficiently Islamic. Burkina Faso's attack came as a warning to the government to 'leave alone' Muslims and their land. This smacks of racketeering. While it does not bear saying that these motives give no excuse for killing, and that the horror of the attacks are not reduced by their frequency, it demonstrates the inability of the world to combat these attacks, and bodes ill for the future that shows no sign of featuring fewer of them.

The global impact of these attacks is clear: not only is a culture of fear taking root in our cities, particularly in Middle Eastern cities such as Beirut, where car bombs can be a daily occurrence, but the result of this fear creates a potent cocktail of xenophobia and suspicion of the unfamiliar.

A third story, one that highlights problematic elements of the first two, is the attacks of a different sort, in Cologne on New Years' Eve, during which 497 women were allegedly sexually assaulted, mainly by Syrian and North African perpetrators. This has understandably taken a toll on German feelings towards the very generous immigration policy that Angela Merkel has initiated in Europe, and in fear of this, the scale of the attacks were covered up, which has only compounded the negative reaction.

The West has come a long way from colonialism of the 20th century. Globalisation has turned every city into an international city, and ethnic diversity has become the norm in many parts of the world. However, with the combination of the security threat from Islamist terror organisations, and the 'culture clash' of immigrants, particularly in Europe, (whose behaviour arguably demonstrates fundamental differences in the treatment of women, and of property – many of the women who were assaulted reported that they had also been robbed in the process), it is easy to see how the world is in danger of regressing into the racism and xenophobia that characterised western politics from the time of the British Empire, through apartheid in South Africa, and that can still be seen in American cases of police brutality towards black young people. This regression is apparent from the increasing prominence of extreme right-wing parties across Europe who preach isolation and closed borders for the protection of those inside: France's National Front and the Alternative for Germany are merely two examples of parties gaining traction.

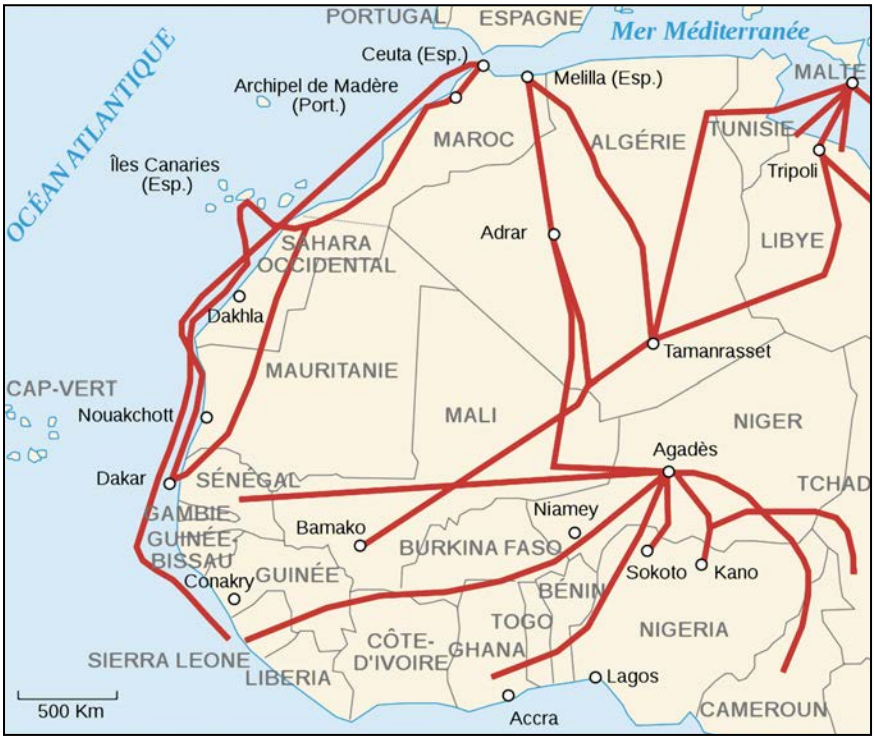
I would suggest that the problems that emerge from these events are not just based on facts; while the horror of each attack is real, and calls for immediate action, the global impact and global suffering that result from the increasing belief that 'all immigrants are rapists' or that 'all Muslims are terrorists' rival the outrage of the events themselves. As A.A. Gill pointed out after his trip to the refugee camps in Lebanon, to suggest that people abandon their home countries, sometimes parts of their families, and their livelihoods merely to pursue the 'free dental care' that Europe can offer, or worse yet, a more fertile ground for profitable crime, is absurd.

But by the same token, the cover up of the events in Cologne attempted by German officials is equally harmful. Most Muslims are peaceful, and suggestions by the likes of Donald Trump to create a 'Muslim database'

not only strain credulity but also border on fascism. That being said, the high tension surrounding the topic of radicalisation and the rise of militant Islam have merely created more space for the Trumps of this world to have their say.

The economic effects of these events are comparatively minimal – short term impacts on countries that have suffered attacks, particularly in LEDCs, result from lack of tourism which can damage the economies badly. The economic impact of immigrants on European countries has been much discussed, with positions on every part of the spectrum from a firm belief that migrants take jobs and scrounge benefits, to the view that our economy can only benefit from an influx of young, ambitious workers who do not shirk from even the most undesirable tasks. A journalist recently wrote about 'Schrödinger's Immigrant', the right-wing's projection of the immigrant who simultaneously 'steals our jobs' and 'scrounges our taxes by claiming unemployment benefits'. While there is an important discussion to be had about the capacity of the UK and the rest of Europe to absorb refugees and the kind of sacrifices that can be made to care for and accommodate them, this kind of aggressive rhetoric is both illogical and counterproductive.

Even in this piece, I have not discriminated between migrants from large swathes of the globe, or between refugees and economic migrants, and have made sweeping generalisations about the link between Islamist terrorism and totally unrelated migration through Europe. This lack of discrimination echoes the way in which extremist and reactionary media coverage and political opportunism have repeatedly sent the message that racism, and particularly racism defined by cultural and religious assumptions, is excusable on the basis of 'security concerns'. It also reflects the controversial definition of a refugee: for example, Syrians are refugees, but Algerians, whose country is under constant Islamist insurgency, are classified as economic migrants. This seems to reflect a heartless and overly cynical approach to those fleeing for their own safety.



African migration routes to Europe

Migrants at the Hungarian Border

Cynicism too In the north east of England, where the doors of houses provided to asylum-seekers are painted red, which has prevented successful integration and facilitated xenophobic attacks on the residents. While globalisation and ease of travel will not allow the flow of migrants to stop while conflict continues, particularly in the Middle East, Europe will continue to take in migrants and refugees from cultures that differ from its own. However, if a realistic discussion does not start now, in which moderate voices are heard over extremist rhetoric, and xenophobia is separated from valid concerns about cultural integration, every international city will become split down cultural lines, or worse, ghettoised.

As Nick Clegg said recently, mass migrations have happened before: a million Vietnamese boat people were dispersed across the world and assimilated into countries with little fuss. Similarly, after the failure of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, 40,000 Hungarians were resettled successfully in the United States alone. However, these migrations hold some quite key differences to the movement that we are seeing now.

Pegida demonstration in Dresden, 12 January 2015

Firstly, the scale of the migration is incomparable. In 2015, nearly 60 million people were estimated to have been displaced worldwide, equivalent to roughlyly the size of the UK population. Therefore, it goes without saying that this is not a problem one country alone can solve – the effort needed to settle this huge number of people will have to be on a global scale.

Secondly, and more problematically, the perception of the migrants involved is drastically different. Whereas the Vietnamese and Hungarian refugees fleeing Communism and its associated revolutions were seen as victims who bore no responsibility for the fate of their countries that created the conditions for their exodus, the refugees coming from the Middle East and Northern Africa at the moment do not enjoy the same recognition. Apart from flashes of understanding forced by images so horrific that it is impossible to deny reality, such as the photograph of baby Aylan Kurdi washed up on the shore, the wave of migrants is seen as a faceless, inhuman threat. Mainstream press has aired warnings that immigrants from Syria are more likely to be terrorists – a single minute of thinking makes this pretty clearly a daft assertion, given that it is precisely this Islamist terror that Syrians, Algerians, Nigerians and others are fleeing in the first place. Although pictures of the husk of Aleppo, no longer a city, are all over the news, we somehow still struggle to see Syrian refugees as victims, and continue to build fences and camps to contain them and keep them out.

As long as we are able to forget that migrants are people, we can continue to privilege economic stability and 'security' over the safety of frightened and displaced people. Whether ignoring displaced people seeking refuge, or being unable to empathize with a person different from one's self, our ability to dehumanize others is arguably at the root of every problem that affects society today. Greater human empathy would bring us closer to solutions when confronting injustices, conflict and suffering. It is a much needed addition to every European country's approach to taking on the responsibility of giving what we can to those who ask. Lebanon, a country of 4 million people, has increased its population by 25% in the past 5 years, attempting to absorb refugees from Syria and Palestine. This is slightly fewer than the whole of Europe has accepted. Between June 2014 and June 2015, the UK welcomed enough Syrian refugees to fill one tube carriage.

Denmark's immigration policy is so draconian that access to state-funded hostels is deprived to homeless people who do not have permanent residency status, even in the Danish winters, and has a points system for would-be spouses of Danish nationals that requires standards so high that they have been called into question for potentially breaching EU human rights legislation. The UK is not as universally strict as this – quite the opposite: treatment of 'expats', the code word for wealthy migrants, is notoriously generous, which has led to a phenomenon known as 'buy-to-leave', whereby foreign migrants with high net wealth are granted residency, and may buy a high value home as an investment, only to leave it empty. In the UK, nearly a quarter of a million houses have been classified as uninhabited for over six months, a particular concern in the midst of a national housing crisis. There are obviously incentives to court wealthy migrants who will inject their disposable incomes into British firms; but those who do not live in this country, and do not provide consistent contributions to the economy, seem to me to be taking up the allegedly scarce space that could be better used housing Brits struggling to find housing, or refugees in dire need of shelter.

European society is in danger of fracturing under the pressure of the current of migration – the size of the influx of migrants from the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa is threatening the stability of the world order that has remained relatively steady since the end of the Second World War. The political rhetoric characterizing this state of global flux has not discriminated between refugees and economic migrants, and has created broad-brush strokes of generalization that have heightened animosity between countries and polarised political ideologies. The societal reaction to the mass migration has been one of fear and apprehension, which can turn to xenophobia. Xenophobia has never been totally absent from the international dynamics of political posturing, but the extent to which nationalism has entered European and American party politics is at a height not seen since Europe in the 1970s, or the USA in September 2001. It is high time politicians shouldered responsibility.

"But I was Igbo before the white man came"

Archie Hall discusses the various influences which came to determine post-independence politics in Nigeria

"BEYOND the iron path careering along the same beaten track –
THE GLIMPSE of a dream lies smouldering in a cave"

– Christopher Okigbo, *Path of Thunder*

"I am Nigerian because a white man created Nigeria and gave me that identity. I am *black* because the white man constructed black to be as different as possible from his *white*. But I was Igbo before the white man came."

– Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*

The 1960s were a decade of hope and trepidation across the newly unshackled colonial world. Hope for a freer, more prosperous future, and trepidation that that dream might never arrive. At the vanguard stood Nigeria, a nation of around 66 million with one of the continent's best educated governing classes, "a land of great hope and progress, a nation with immense resources at its potential – natural resources, yes, but even more so human resources"[1], as Chinua Achebe put it. Within a decade, that same nation had seen two military coups and a civil war bordering on genocide[2] that had decisively ended any naïve hopes of a postcolonial Nigeria free of poverty, strife and slaughter. That ethnic motivations were behind this political

[1] Chinua Achebe (2012). '*There Was a Country*'. 2nd ed. Great Britain: Penguin Books. p.2

Biafran Soldiers 1968

The independent state of the Republic of Biafra in June 1967

calamity is indisputable, yet ethnicity is not itself sufficient explanation. As easy as it is to blame the bogeymen of tribalism and sectarianism, the reality of ethnic conflict is far more complex. The question that must be asked to understand how Nigeria's glimpse of a postcolonial dream lay just a decade later smouldering and dead on the fields of Biafra is how ethnic identity was weaponised to become the transcendent question of post-independence Nigerian politics.

In the same January 1897 article where Flora Shaw, a *Times* colonial correspondent suggested the name "Nigeria" for the area of West Africa then know as "The Royal Niger Company's Territories", she also noted that "Nigeria contains … widely differing characteristics of climate, country, and inhabitants"[3]. The 900,000 square kilometres that comprise modern Nigeria have hosted countless advanced civilisations, from the Nok to the Igbo-Ukwu to the Oyo, and 248[4] ethno-linguistic groups. Of those, by far the largest were and are the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the southwest and the Igbo near the southeastern Bight of Biafra, each forming a roughly cohesive ethno-linguistic identity with varying degrees of political unity. Each in oral tradition links itself back as a group to a single founder or unifier figure, Bayajidda for the Hausa, Odudwa for the Yoruba and Ora for the Igbo. Despite the existence of these identities open conflict was rare and there is extensive evidence of cultural interaction, such as the transfer of *cire perdue* or "lost wax" bronze casting from the Igbo-Ukwu culture to Yoruba cities around the 10th century[5]. While the history of pre-colonial Nigeria was far from Arcadian, the "racism of … fear"[6] that Frantz Fanon found in ethnically divided postcolonial nations like Nigeria was a long way away.

Since the 16th Century Portuguese slavers had ravaged the coast of Nigeria, but European domination and exploitation took on a far more total character upon the arrival of the Royal Niger Company, which annexed Lagos in 1861 and by 1900 was in effective control of all of modern Nigeria. It being impossible to administrate effectively such a vast and uncharted area, the British practised "indirect rule", giving governmental responsibility and British backing to aristocratic emirs in the north and "warrant chiefs" in the south. The political and economic power of these rulers was predicated upon their being the ruler of a cohesive ethnic unit. As a result, "indirect rule tended to reinforce the most conservative aspects of traditional political organisation while shutting down pre-colonial tendencies towards supra-ethnic group cooperation" (Graf)[7]. In the north of Nigeria, to preserve this arrangement and the close alliance between the British and local emirs, the sabon garri system was set up, a policy of ethnic segregation where southerners, "native foreigners"[8], were placed in ghettoes. Both these policies had the explicit aim of dividing rather than uniting; any common rallying under a non-ethnic "Nigerian" identity would have been anathema to British aims and interests. In these heady days of Victorian-style imperialism, cost cutting and resource extraction were far more important than any distant concerns about nationhood.

As the colonial era drew to a close, internecine conflict within the Nigerian national liberation movement brought ethnic tensions into the political sphere. General Olusegun Obasanjo, later Nigeria's first democratically elected president, said of Nigerian national liberation that "The only point on which Nigerian political leaders spoke with one voice was the granting by the British of political independence - and even then they did not agree on the timing."[9] The political divisions in this period between different elements of the Nigerian opposition were rife but can essentially be understood as a clash between pan-Nigerian and ethno-regionalist political values.

On one side of that divide lay the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), founded in 1944 by the Yoruba Herbert Macaulay and the Igbo Nnamdi Azikiwe. The NCNC was a party enmeshed in the continent-wide intellectual resurgence in ideas of African unity and closely ideologically intertwined with Kwame Nkrumah's pan-Africanist Convention Peoples' Party in Ghana. In its early years the NCNC was the only major national liberation party that was genuinely national and campaigned nationwide. NCNC campaigning against the federalising divide-and-rule Richards Constitution of 1945 was "the first time in the history of Nigeria that large numbers of people were made conscious of Nigerian unity"[10] (Coleman) and was so successful that upon Macaulay's death in 1947, 100,000 attended his funeral.[11]

The Yoruba-dominated Action Group (AG) and the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), representing Northern interests, approached independence very differently. The AG evolved from the radical National Youth Movement

under the leadership of Obafemi Awolowo to become, in Okwudiba Nnoli's words, "inspired by, founded on, and nourished by … chauvinism and regional parochialism"[12]. Awolowo famously wrote: "Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no 'Nigerians'"[13]. That attitude was moderate though compared to that of the NPC, which was formed by the Fulani feudal aristocracy in concert with the British colonial administration. It is telling that upon its foundation in 1951, unlike almost any other party in the history of African liberation politics it was not even officially opposed to indefinite British rule.[14] The NPC leader Sir Ahmadu Bello cared so little for Nigerian unity that he openly "would rather be Sultan of Sokoto [a northern Nigerian Muslim kingdom] than President of Nigeria"[15]. Indeed after the NPC gained power following independence, that was precisely what he did. He remained in what he viewed to be the more important role: governor of the North Region, dispatching his deputy, Abubakar Tafawa Balewato become Nigeria's first Prime Minister.

Given the colonial entrenchment and perpetuation of ethnic divisions it is remarkable that the NCNC gained the support that it did, but also perhaps inevitable that chauvinist regionalist politics did triumph over the NCNC's initial pan-Nigerianism. Following Macaulay's 1947 death, the NCNC under Azikiwe began a slide towards Igbo regionalism, though maintaining a significant non-Igbo following, particularly in the west of Nigeria. It was there that the clash between ethno-regionalist and nationalist visions of Nigeria's future culminated. Following a NCNC victory against the AG in the 1951 western legislative, Awolowo appealed directly to Yoruba NCNC representatives, imploring them in explicitly ethnic terms to join their Yoruba brethren in the AG[16]. Shockingly, a majority did and in turn "a true nationalist [Azikiwe] who championed the noble cause of 'One

[2] Ibid. pp.228-332, Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe (2007) '*Biafra Revisited*', Great Britain: African Renaissance, pp.86-98

[3] Flora Shaw (8th January, 1897) '*Nigeria*'. The Times

[4] Coleman (1958) cited in Larry Jay Diamond (1988), '*Class, Ethnicity, and Democracy in Nigeria: The failure of the First Republic*', Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, p.21

[5] Toyin Falola, Bukola Adeyemi Oyenini (2015), '*Nigeria*', United States: ABC-CLIO, p.40

[6] Frantz Fanon (2007), '*The Wretched of the Earth*', Great Britain: The Penguin Group, p.131

[7] Pade Badru (1998), *Imperialism and Ethnic Politics in Nigeria, 1960-1996*, United States: African World Press p.72

[8] Okwudiba Nnoli (2003), *Ethnic Violence in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective*, http://ostromworkshop.indiana.edu/papers/nnoli_021003.pdf, accessed 15/6/15, p.3

[9] Quoted by Major Abubakar A. Atofarati (1992), *The Nigerian Civil War: Causes, Strategies and Lessons Learnt*, United States: US Marine Command & Staff College

[10] Cited in Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe (2007), '*Biafra Revisited*' Great Britain: African Renaissance, p.29

[11] Ibid. p.29

[12] Ibid. p.31

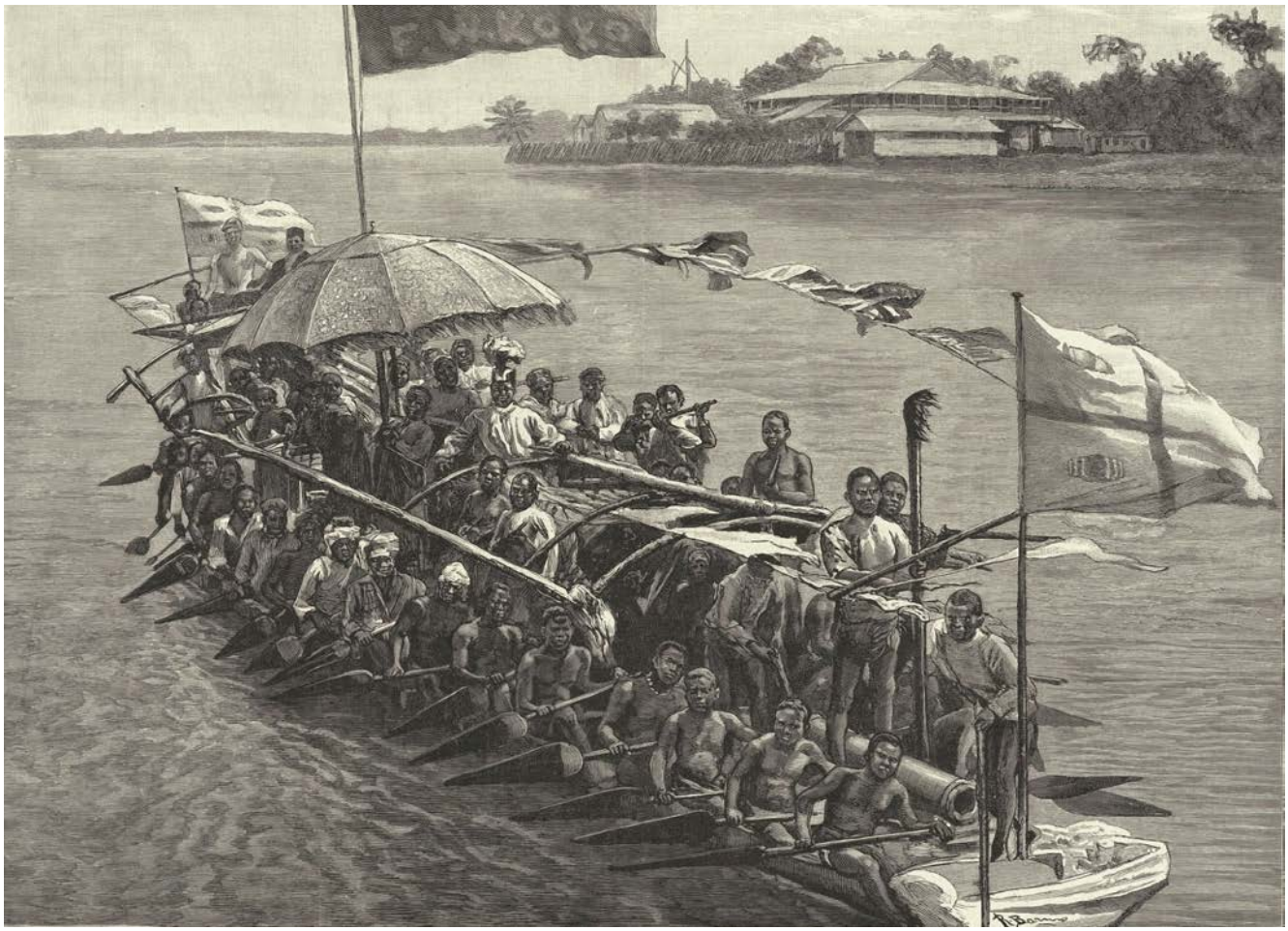
[13] Quoted from '*The Path to Nigerian Freedom*' in Martin P. Matthews (2002), '*Nigeria: Current Issues and Historical Background*' by United States: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., p.34

[14] '*Biafra Revisited*' by Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe (2007), Great Britain: African Renaissance pp.31-2

[15] Quoted in '*Encyclopedia of African History: Volume 1 A-G*' edited by Kevin Shillington (2005) Great Britain: Fitzroy Dearborn, p.224

[16] '*Biafra Revisited*' by Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe (2007), Great Britain: African Renaissance

King Koko in His War Canoe, London Daily Graphic, March 30, 1895; depicting King Frederick Koko, onetime antagonist to the Royal Niger Company



Oil war

Nigeria' … abandoned … the Western House"[17] (Achebe). Instead the Azikiwe retreated to the east and the NCNC completed its devolution into an Igbo-dominated ethnocentric political unit. The tripartisation of Nigerian politics was total.

Conflict over the independence timetable, above all else, turned latent hostility into hatred and weaponised ethnicity in the dying days of colonial Nigeria. In 1947 only 2.5% of Nigerian primary school enrolees were from the north[18], a region educationally and economically backward thanks to the autocratic rule of feudal emirs and a British ban on Christian proselytization, the main source of schooling for most Nigerians. By contrast, the more developed Igbo and Yoruba south possessed an extensive Western-educated elite prepared for governance. The NCNC and AG, therefore, were committed to immediate independence and in 1953 tabled a motion demanding independence by 1956. The NPC, needing time to develop a northern elite capable of governing, attempted to amend "1956" to "as soon as is practicable"[19]. When the AG and NCNC, hoping to raise northern support for earlier independence, sent a delegation to the northern city of Kano in 1953, the NPC responded by inciting race riots that lasted four days and killed 46[20]. Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe describes them as: "a carefully orchestrated attack against Igbo population centres across the city by mobs of Hausa-Fulani youth".[21]

Simultaneously, in a bid to ready itself for government, the NPC initiated "*Northernisation*", a policy rhetorically harking back to the *sabon garri*. Overtly discriminatory, *Northernisation* involved prioritising government jobs for "indigenous" (Muslim and preferably Hausa-Fulani) northerners. Only if no qualified northern or expatriate candidate could be found would the "native foreigners" of the millions-strong[22] northern Igbo and Yoruba diaspora even be considered. It is telling and tragic that before independence was even attained, Nigerian politics was already so ethnically stratified that campaigning outside ethnic heartlands sparked race riots and clear-cut racism in public sector hiring was government policy.

Obafemi Awolowo noted in *The Path to Nigerian Freedom* (1947) that "only an insignificant minority [of Nigerians] have any political awareness"[23]. While he and others of the western-educated elite believed that "this articulate minority is destined to rule the country"[24], all three major political parties recognised that mass political galvanisation in ethnic bases would be more important than ever as independence approached. Across colonised Africa this phenomenon of elites creating mass consciousness, described by Basil Davidson as "jubilant young men … setting out on endless journeys … meeting the "masses" in "schoolrooms, compounds, cinemas and churches""[25] took place, but it rarely had as ethnic a character as in Nigeria. Awolowo's AG "wrote its inspiring call for Yoruba resurgence in

Yoruba, ibeji deities, Photo by Sailko (Museu de Arte de São Paulo)

the terms and language of foundation myths"[26] (Davidson), an appeal that Nnoli described as based "explicitly and implicitly on [chauvinist] sentiments, sensibilities and interests"[27]. On the eve of independence the ethnic polarisation of Nigeria's elites was disseminated and politicised into mass consciousness.

The tripartisation of the national liberation movement set the newly independent Nigerian national government up for failure. All three major political parties had a concentrated regional base and little support elsewhere, and so the central government mattered only as a means by which to extract benefit for their own co-regionalists. This phenomenon, referred to by Richard A. Joseph as "prebendalism"[28] lay behind the development of what Fanon refers to as "racism of defence, based on fear" (rather than the conventional colonialist "racism of contempt")[29]. In the context of Nigeria, this played out as fear of "Northern dominance" or "Igbo dominance" where the rewards of national government would reside solely with that group, depriving the rest of the country. This fear lay behind the January 1966 coup d'état against the NPC by Igbo army officers that ended nominal Nigerian democracy, as well as the July 1966 counter-coup and anti-Igbo pogroms in the north. Those same pogroms eventually pushed Lt. Col. Ojukwu to declare Biafran independence in Nigeria's Igbo southeast and set in motion a war that would kill three million, the logical apotheosis of Nigeria's ethnic chauvinism, almost a century in the making.

The history of Nigeria after Biafra, from Yakubu Gowon's policy of "no victor, no vanquished" to the subdivision of the three post-independence states into 36, has been one of stumbling steps towards a functional body politic that puts good governance before ethnicity. However, the ethnicisation of Nigerian politics is not just rooted in simple tribalism, but rather the complex interaction of ethno-linguistic identity and the realities of Nigeria's colonial history, one that, in the torrid climate of national liberation and newly independent governance, set Nigeria on a path to civil war. Twenty-nine years after Biafra, Nigeria's

President Olusegun Obasanjo meets Donald Rumsfeld at the Pentagon, 2001. Photo by Helene C. Stikkel

first democratically elected president, the Yoruba Olusegun Obasanjo took office. During his seven-year tenure, 18,000 of the 20,000 Nigerians killed by government forces were Igbo[30]. Nigeria's ethno-political fissures, shrinking though they may be, have yet to close.

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[17] Quoted in Ibid. p.34

[18] Larry Jay Diamond (1988), '*Class, Ethnicity, and Democracy in Nigeria: The failure of the First Republic*', Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, p.27

[19] '*Biafra Revisited*' by Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe (2007), Great Britain: African Renaissance, p.19

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid. p.76

[23] Quoted in '*The Black Man's Burden*' by Basil Davidson (1992), Great Britain: James Curry, pp. 107

[24] Ibid. pp.107-8

[25] Ibid, p.111

[26] Ibid.

[27] Quoted in '*Biafra Revisited*' by Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe (2007), Great Britain: African Renaissance p.31

[28] Richard A. Joseph (1987), '*Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic*', Great Britain: Cambridge University Press

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Confronting the past

Isobel Kent considers the extent to which French holocaust documentaries, in particular* Shoah *by Claude Lanzmann and* Nuit et Brouillard *by Alain Resnais, reshape the way in which the world perceives the massacre.

In the period directly after the World War II, France was rife with stories of the strong French resistance, the myth of 'le résistancialisme' and sentimental stories of courage in the face of adversity. One key thing was missing: the representation of the deportee, in particular the Jewish deportee. In a period of national amnesia, the emergence of the holocaust documentary sought to counteract the unjust lack of representation of the suffering and atrocities and remind audiences of collaboration.

Post-occupation film in France sought to rediscover the French national identity by questioning what happened under German rule and how it was permitted to happen. The holocaust documentaries were the first to provide a truthful account of life and death in the camps, and more importantly, to render these events immortal so that we can pay homage to the dead by remembering their suffering. The two documentaries discussed emerged 30 years apart in two different contexts of thought regarding the holocaust. *Nuit et Brouillard* 'provided the first shockwaves to permeate through the post war culture of burying the past; however, itself it left unspoken certain aspects of the calamities, namely the unrivalled suffering of the Jews'. *Shoah* emerged at a time more open to conversation but was the debut of the homage to the deported Jew; it was the first to truly create two categories of deportees in the same way the Nazis had. Both films are united in their intention to warn future generations about committing the same depraved acts, urging them to recognise humanity as innately valuable.

The masterpiece which is Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* is undisputedly the most important piece of cinema concerning the holocaust. The film comprises a 9 and a half hour montage of interviews juxtaposed with landscape panoramas and split over 4 disks. The project, which took 11 years to finish, provides a meditation on the genocide of eastern European Jewish people. The name takes its origin from the Hebrew word meaning 'calamity' which is found in the Bible. Lanzmann rejected the word 'holocaust' on the basis that he could not define what had happened as one singular event but rather as the atrocious sum of many events; to him to speak of a 'holocaust' was a mistake. *Shoah* was used to convey a sense of the magnitude of what had occurred as something uncountable and unfathomable. The film focused solely on the experience of the Jewish deportees, another other aspect of the war common to other documentation such as the experience of the occupied countries was notably absent. The result of this was to finally create a piece which paid tribute to the millions

Site of Treblinka

of Jewish people who lost their lives, exposing the extent of the anti-semitism in Hitler's Europe.

Lanzmann aimed to redefine the perception of the holocaust by altering the way he formed the documentary; refusing to use any archived images, he composed the film solely from accounts of survivors and panoramas of the landscape of where the camps once stood. The way Lanzmann overlaps beautiful scenes of the countryside with haunting testimonies of what took place there forces the audience to associate the atrocities of the past with the images of the present, creating as said by Lanzmann himself; 'an absolute contrast between the beauty of the landscape and the horror of what is being said."[1]

The opening scene is one of the best examples of the haunting effect this juxtaposition has. The film opens with the landscape of Chelmo, a former Nazi death camp, which is now only a serene clearing in a forest. The commentary informs the audience that of the 40,000 Jews who were deported here, there were only two survivors. One of these survivors is Simon Srebnik, just a young boy during his time at the camp Srebnik was known for his extraordinary singing voice. Whilst at the camp, the Nazis required him to sing for them during their trips up the river during which they distributed the ashes from the crematorium of his dead Jewish comrades into the river. Lanzmann takes Srebnik again to the same river and recreates this scene. Srebnik, now an old man, sings the same song repeating the same journey down the river by boat. This scene gives a haunting sense of loss, Srebnik's song seems to call out to the dead; the melancholic tune is an echo of the past. The peace and tranquility of the landscape are no longer beautiful but notably empty, pointing towards all those who are missing from the scene, lost beneath the surface of the river.

Shoah is often referred to as a topographical film; the significance of location bears a heavy weight in its artistic direction. Each place is used to present another aspect of the meaning of the word 'holocaust' and all it encompasses. Alongside the testimonies

Auschwitz, entrance

of interviewees Lanzmann cuts to panoramas of the peaceful countryside which housed the brutalities. Lanzmann himself refers to these as 'non-sites of memory'[2] and uses these spaces in an almost obsessive manner, often showing the same clip several times at different intervals in the film, for example the continual return to the camera moving down the train track to the entrance of Auschwitz (for which Lanzmann himself pushed the camera.) The importance allocated to the physical dimensions of where the genocide occurred is monumental.

Throughout *Shoah*, Lanzmann urges the audience to understand the technicalities of the process of mass extermination and conveying a sense of the place it occurred is vital to this. *The long gliding tracks down the symbolic rail bed into Treblinka or the more agitated pans around the Treblinka stone monuments seem desperate attempts to measure the scale of the camp, to mark its boundaries, to insist upon the very slope of the ground on which it formerly stood. Surveyed in this way, the spaces themselves are made to testify to central truths of the exterminations in a way, Lanzmann believes, that simulacra of the murder sites, as reconstructed in so many fictional movies, never can.*[3]

At the core of the film is the depiction of the details of execution and the manufacture of the Nazi's large scale death factories. Lanzmann reiterates the mechanics of the genocide in order that the audience appreciate its barbarity. Lanzmann underlines the futility of the deportee's fight against this mass death machine. One particular image acutely resonates with this idea: the testimony of a Jew who survived Auschwitz' gas chambers by being employed in the cremation is played while the camera pans around the inside of the chambers themselves. The testimony recounts the marks, unrecognisable to the ignorant tourist, on the cement ceiling where fingernails of the choking victims have scraped away in vain trying to escape. The physical image of the place is inextricably linked with the events which took place there, they represent the scars in the landscape which remain after the victims' deaths. Lanzmann uses a combination of the scars of the holocaust which exist both in the landscape but also in the minds of the survivors in order to build up the image of the Shoah.

[1] Lanzmann 1993 as quoted by Guy Austin in *Contemporary French Cinema*

[2] Lanzmann as quoted by Stuart Liebman in *An Introduction to Claude Lanzmann's Shoah*

[3] Stuart Liebman in *An Introduction to Claude Lanzmann's Shoah*

Sarre-Union (Alsace) Desecration of Jewish Cemetery Feb 2015 © Claude Truong-Ngoc / Wikimedia Commons

Another of Lanzmann's aims with this obsessive association of act with place is to prevent the events from being forgotten. Toward the end of the war the Nazis began to cover their tracks through disguising the camps with trees and other plantations. Lanzmann refuses to accept this disguise and despite the apparent absence of evidence Lanzmann marks the places with the burden of what happened there. Lanzmann irrevocably stains these empty, tranquil places with their connection to the past which he obsessively reiterates.

Lanzmann's *Shoah* not only provokes a new perspective on the holocaust but also on the nature of the historical documentary. The rejection of any use of archived footage distinguishes 'Shoah' from any previous documentary. Joshua Hirsch suggests three main reasons behind Lanzmann's decision to avoid archived footage Firstly; the fact that no existing footage of Jews being exterminated exists. Further, the absence parallels the absence of the exterminated themselves; 'the absence of photographic image of the past in the film literalizes these other absences that resulted from the Nazis' determination to erase both the Jews and their extermination from history.'[4].

Not only does Lanzmann reject archival footage as not objective, having been filmed by the Nazis, a perspective from which Lanzmann does not wish to present the events. But he sees as 'both so shocking as to numb the audience and, paradoxically, not shocking enough to represent the extermination of millions of human beings.'[5] The absence of visual representation of the past despite it being discussed leads to an entrapment of the past in the image of the present.

Lanzmann redefined the holocaust as real and traumatic existence in the present. A notable example is used by Hirsch of Lanzmann's interview with Jan Karski; the first attempt to provide his testimony leads to Karski breaking down with a cry of 'No, I don't go back'. After leaving the room visibly upset, Karski is presented in the next scene to give his testimony after witnessing the Warsaw ghetto; 'Frankly, I couldn't take it anymore. Get me out of it… I was sick. Even now I don't understand your role. I am here. I don't go back in my memory, I couldn't take anymore… I never saw such things, I never… nobody wrote about this kind of reality. I never saw any theatre, I never saw any movie… this was not the world.'[6] Karski's description of his emotional response to the ghetto parallels his response when attempting to give his testimony; he ran from the room and was able to get out. Karski's example reflects what Lanzmann depicts of the holocaust; Karski relives the past instead of perceiving it as just a memory. In this case the past is not a finished action; it remains in the present.

The most important precursor to Lanzmann's *Shoah is Nuit et Brouillard* by Alain Resnais. The film takes its name from Hitler's Nacht und Nebel decree in 1941 which lead to the arrests of all resistors of the regime in France. This in turn lead to the deportation of thousands of resistance members overnight. Resnais, like Lanzmann, created this film in order to force people to remember the atrocities; Resnais was working in the context of the 1950s during which in France the popular theory was 'le résistancialisme', the myth that during the occupation the French were commonly involved in the resistance and supporters of

de Gaulle. The myth provided an attractive alternative to the idea that the French were aware of the camps and deportations but did little to fight them.

Resnais accepted the commission to make a documentary on the grounds that he worked with Jean Cayrol, a poet and survivor of the holocaust, one of those seized during the Nacht und Nebel decree. It was Cayrol who wrote the commentary for the film, a commentary which 'repeatedly breaks away from the traditional chronicling and explanation of historical events, an enters into poetic meditations on the difficulties of historical memory.'[7] Resnais followed the idea put forward by contemporary philosopher Bloch to 'understand the past in terms of the present'. The demand of working with Cayrol ensured an authenticity to the film which makes the images it presents more shocking. Hearing of the suffering through the voice of a sufferer gives the words a new poignancy and depth of meaning, parallel to the testimonies of survivors in *Shoah*. The effect of such poetic language parallels the melody of Srebnik's song; they use the form of art to pay tribute to and evoke an eery sense of echoing the deceased. The contrast of the melodic narration with the brutal images of violence, torture and death creates a striking balance between sentimentality and fact. Overexposure to graphic images of mutilated bodies would numb audiences thus make them immune to sympathy. The commentary accompanying shocking images is instrumental in maintaining immense loss and sadness.

Resnais, like Lanzmann, was influenced by many of the contemporary modernist films and by using similar techniques he debuted their usage in historical documentation. One of the most significant applications of these techniques is Resnais' experimentation with tense and the hierarchy of image and sound. The film is made up of fourteen scenes of colour surrounding the thirteen 'flashbacks' to black and white archival footage. This sequencing of images refers to the type of memory associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); the lapses back into horrifying images of the past from the seemingly peaceful moments in the present are similar to the 'involuntary, hallucinatory repetitions'[8] of traumatic memory that the condition invokes in sufferers. In referencing PTSD, Resnais that, it was not simply the deportees who found difficulty in addressing their experiences; the nation itself was not responding appropriately to the events of the holocaust. Resnais presents the holocaust as a trauma which we do not understand because we do not remember it properly. The film urges a reconsideration of our perceptions through the presentation of provocative, shocking images which remove our ability to claim ignorance of the atrocities.

[4] Joshua Hirsch from *Afterimage: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust*

[5] Joshua Hirsch from *Afterimage: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust*

[6] Jan Karski from his testimony in *Shoah* by Claude Lanzmann

[7] Joshua Hirsch from *Afterimage: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust*

[8] Joshua Hirsch from *Afterimage: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust*

Approach to Treblinka

Railtracks leading to Auschwitz II Birkenau

Cathy Caruth also draws attention to the idea that memory is distorted by PTSD because during the time which the events occur, the overwhelming horrifying experience is rejected by the mind and thus the sufferer will not remember it. This disruption in the mind's ability to process the memory then leads to confusion and this involuntary reliving of events. This is linked to Resnais' broader point about the collective memory of France of the holocaust. The volume of facts and footage of the atrocities in the immediate post-liberation period was too large and too distressing to be properly recognised. The purpose of the film is no doubt to remind the audience that we must remember and that we must learn from what happened; the end of the commentary turns the perspective on the audience, attributing guilt to conscience and warning against the assumption that it won't happen again: 'There are those who look at these ruins today as though the monster were dead and buried beneath them'. Indeed, Resnais' comment bore unpalatable truths: in May 1990 there were anti semitic attacks of the Jewish cemetery at Carpentras. In response, all five major French tv channels broke their schedules to broadcast *Nuit et Brouillard*.

These two documentaries offer an artistic, provocative meditation on the events of the holocaust rather than a typical, chronological documentation of facts. The films reintroduce the holocaust as a subject which remains as relevant as ever. The union of the past and present through cinematic techniques in both films forces a previously unseen link between the holocaust and our world today. Through *Shoah* Lanzmann undermines the apparent beauty of country images with the blood of the past; the audience understands that apparent tranquility is imbued with the echo of past horror. It is the juxtaposition, in *Shoah* of witness testimony with landscape, and in *Nuit et Brouillard* of colour with black and white, which compels the audience to experience the past through the present.

The reception of the films was one of shock, but they were also recognized as works of art. The modernist techniques, including the disruption of chronology, the altered use of tense and the absence of a typical hierarch of image to narrative to music, culminate in true artistic pieces that captivate the emotion and imagination of the audience about a topic that defies image or description. The films essentially introduced a new means of discussion about the holocaust. Where factual documentation was considered inadequate to preserve and perpetuate the importance of the holocaust, Resnais and Lanzmann employed modernist, artistic and often disturbing means to reinvigorate the discourse. The films were key in bringing the cruelty and barbarism of the 'final solution' to the forefront of the public eye. The revolutionary decisions of the directors changed the world's perception of the holocaust. The result is that audiences can begin to understand the significance of the past through the prism of the present.

The Dayton Peace Accords and the Limits of Democracy

Stephen Horvath argues that the Dayton Peace Accords have been the primary factor in Bosnia's flawed democratisation for three reasons: the burial of major disputes in pre-talk agreements, the encoding of competition between the quasi-state entities in the constitution itself, and the failures in international enforcement of the agreement.

Twenty years ago, the Dayton Peace Accords (DPA) were supposed to bring an end to four years of genocidal war and establish the constitution of a democratic Bosnia-Herzegovina.[1] Since 1995, Bosnian politics have progressed little. A majority of Bosnians still oppose the very existence of their state,[2] "ethnic nationalism remains too strong"[3] for the international community to withdraw, and Bosnia "is on the edge of complete collapse under the weight of its own dysfunctions, local corruption and politicking."[4] This presents a paradox: why has the development of democratic structures and institutions stalled despite the DPA's protection of peace in a fragile post-conflict nation? Parts of the DPA have been recognised widely as problematic in Bosnia and abroad, yet the tragedy of Dayton is that there is still no solution: "constitutional reform … has proved to be a *cul de sac*."[5]

Before starting, it is necessary to provide some historical context of the Bosnian war. As Slobodan Milosevic's 'anti-bureaucratic' Serb nationalist revolution began to tear apart Yugoslavia, nationalist parties from the

[1] The country of Bosnia-Herzegovina will be called Bosnia in the remainder of the essay.
[2] S. Bose. (2002). Bosnia after Dayton: Nationalist Partition and International Intervention. London: C. Hurst, p.3-4.
[3] BBC News. (2015). Bosnia-Herzegovina – Country Profile.
[4] J.R. Schindler. (2012). Forgotten failure in Bosnia. *National Interest* August 20 2012.
[5] South East European Studies at Oxford. (March, 2015).

Sarajevo Siege : Innocence in war

Signing the Balkan Peace Agreement in Paris Seated from left to right: Slobodan Milošević, Alija Izetbegović, and Franjo Tudjman (Photo: The Central Intelligence Agency)

Croat, Serb, and Muslim populations of Bosnia came to power in the Bosnian Republic, still a part of Yugoslavia, in 1990 amidst talk of constitutional reform.[6] Bosnia declared sovereignty in 1991 and independence in 1992. Open warfare commenced between Bosnia's three largest ethnic groups, with each trying to carve out ethnically homogenous areas from the multi-ethnic Bosnia. There was substantial involvement from the nationalist strongmen of the neighbouring 'mother countries' of Serbia and Croatia, Slobodan Milosevic and Frajno Tudjman. The atrocious acts of ethnic cleansing committed on all sides quickly elicited international efforts to seek an end to the conflict.

First of all, the U.S. paved the way for peace talks through two hasty agreements, the Washington Agreement and the Patriarch's Agreement, which served to bury rather than resolve major disputes. As first laid out in the failed Lisbon Agreement of 1992,[7] the international community (IC) coalesced around a plan to end conflict by sub-dividing Bosnia along ethno-national lines into quasi-state 'entities,' and U.S. diplomatic and military policy adopted this goal.

The Washington Agreement created the Bosniac-Croat Federation (FBiH) as one of the two entities of Bosnia in March 1994. The Croats and Bosniaks had been engaged in brutal open conflict,[8] and a political union between the two of them was only possible under extensive U.S. pressure.[9] The U.S. hoped to create peace between these two groups and unite them against the Bosnian Serbs.[10] The urgent need for peace meant long-term agreements were made without full consideration. German Ambassador Steiner, one of the lead IC representatives, has been accused "papering over differences"[11] about power distribution in order to get the Bosniaks and the Croats to sign the agreement. The Washington Agreement was supposed to end the attempts by Croat ultra-nationalists in the so called 'Herzegovinian Mafia' to create a Croat statelet in western Bosnia, but the concerns of Croat nationalists have grown, not subsided, since the creation of FBiH.[12] Bosnian Croats are concerned that their minority status is not protected because they lack an exclusive entity (they are at most 18% of the Federation).[13] This "viciously defensive posture of considerable elements of the community"[14] has led to the survival of "a vast, well-financed network of parallel Herceg-Bosna institutions in the Croat-controlled areas"[15] of FBiH. Despite the IC's attempts to dissolve these institutions, they continue to undermine Bosnia at an entity level and foster nationalist division.

The Bosnian Serbs were trying to establish an ethnic Serb mini-state in Bosnian territory called Republika Srpska (RS) with support from Serbian President Milosevic. RS was the other of the two entities that peace talks would have to accommodate, but Milosevic assumed leadership of the Bosnian Serbs under an agreement in Belgrade mediated by the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church in August 1995. Patriarch Pavle gave the "illusion that fences between Belgrade and Pale [RS's nominal capital] had been mended,"[16] when in fact Milosevic had succeeded in securing the "final word" in the negotiations.[17] Milosevic's dominance was sealed as the U.S. "had made this a condition for future negotiations."[18] Richard Holbrooke, the organiser of the Dayton talks and the lead U.S. diplomat, saw Milosevic as less 'evil' than the Bosnian Serb war criminals Rakto Mladic and Radovan Kardazic, and as a more reliable partner for peace.[19] In relying on Milosevic, the U.S. marginalised the Bosnian Serbs and left their representation to someone with different interests. Furthermore, the Bosnian Serbs only ceded negotiating power to Milosevic because, in the words of Montengrin President Bulatovic, "Republika Srpska could disappear"[20] due to the military advance of the Croats (who had U.S. support) in the summer of 1995.[21]

The underlying problems of the Patriarch's agreement, combined with Milosevic's domestic political pressure to end international sanctions on the Former Republic of Yugoslavia,[22] came home to roost at Dayton. Milosevic eventually abandoned important Bosnian Serb territorial demands that he was supposed to bring from Belgrade to Dayton under the Patriarch's agreement,[23] and then entirely "cut the Bosnian Serbs out of the negotiations".[24] Post-Dayton, Bosnian Serbs still had serious grievances over the territory of RS, including their important demand

for access to the Adriatic. These sort of unresolved issues further damaged the legitimacy of the Bosnian state in the view of Bosnian Serbs and created a sense of betrayal amongst them. This explains why men like Milorad Dodik, described as "the most frequent … proponent of (Bosnian) state dissolution" by the EU High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR),[25] still run RS.

The Washington Agreement and the Patriarch's Agreement were the building blocks of Dayton, and the DPA thus suffered from the same lack of nuance they did. This encouraged the active engagement of Serbia in internal Bosnian politics through control over RS,[26] and the ongoing identification of Bosnian Serbs with the 'mother country' rather than Bosnia.[27] Moreover, DPA elevated the Washington Agreement to a constitutional level. This made the problem of power sharing in FBiH harder to address politically as constitutional reform requires a cross-ethnic consensus and the endorsement of the OHR.

Second, the competing entities and the very fragile balance of ethnic power in a highly complex multi-layered government structure laid out in the Dayton constitution have problematised 'democratisation' in Bosnia.[28] Notwithstanding the extensive support of the IC, Bosnia has failed to develop the sort of democratic system Dayton intended to build.

The constitutional prominence given to the two entities, FBiH and RS, by extensive decentralised governance has resulted in the establishment of "nationally exclusivist political options."[29] Even at the highest levels of government, ethnic division persists. Under the DPA, the Presidency and the House of Peoples have seats reserved for each of the three constituent nationalities. The ECHR has subsequently ruled that this indirect prohibition on other minorities (such as Jews and Romani people) was illegal,[30] but the primary issue is that the system locks the three national groups into competition against each other.[31] In the worst case, nationalists still dominate politics, but even in the best case, Bosnian politics is fractured between

Slobodan Milosevic (left) and Joseph Lopez, IFOR Commander, 1996

the three constituent nationalities and real cross-ethnic parties have not succeeded in elections.[32] This is not for the want of trying of the IC: a four-year campaign from 1997-2001 to diminish the SDS, the Bosnian Serb ultra-nationalist party founded by Radovan Karadzic, did not decrease its power at all.[33] The only real non-ethnic party is the Social Democratic Party, but its appeal is confined to Bosniaks because the other two national groups do not feel secure enough in the Dayton settlement to move to a new form of politics.[34] This is a twin problem, as it means that ethnic tensions are not reduced, but also that many Bosnians cannot vote for parties that seek to address the important non-ethnic issues of social and economic development.

The failure of democratisation here can be best understood using Lipset and Rokan's model of party development: non-national parties have failed to make any significant gains and thus few functional cleavages have arisen, and territorial cleavages are still the most pressing concern for Bosnian voters. The DPA were, to an extent, accepted as a territorial demarcation, but "none of the [Balkan] parties was ready to back the political goals of the Dayton accord."[35] Dayton enshrined the ethnic group as the primary political category,

[6] D. Chandler. (1999) Bosnia: Faking Democracy After Dayton. London: Pluto Press, p.29.

[7] S.L. Burg & P.S. Shoup. (1999). The War in Bosnia-Herzegovinia: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention. London, M.E. Sharpe, p.60.

[8] S. Bose, p.103.

[9] Ibid, p.75.

[10] Ibid, p.258.

[11] L. Silber & A. Little, p.370.

[12] S. Bose, p.27-8.

[13] Ibid, p.29.

[14] Ibid, p.258.

[15] Ibid, p.28.

[16] L. Silber & A. Little, p.365.

[17] Ibid, p.366.

[18] Ibid, p.365.

[19] S. Bose, p.57-8.

[20] D. Chollet (2005), The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft. New York, p.64.

[21] L. Silber & A. Little, p.366-7.

[22] S. Bose, p.55.

[23] L. Silber & A. Little, p.379.

[24] Ibid, p.372.

[25] L. Charbonneau. (2012). EU Says Bosnian Serbs seek to undermine peace deal. 13 November.

[26] I. Jovanovic. (2015). Serbia PM Urges Dodik to Rethink Referendum. *Balkan Insight* 17 July.

[27] S. Bose, p.4.

[28] Democratisation is a contentious term, but is here used to mean the evolution of free and fair elections that offer voters a variety of competitive political choices that hold leaders to account. See D. Chandler, p.7-17.

[29] H. Silajdzic. (2000). *Memorandum on Change: The Dayton Peace Accord – a Treaty that is not being implemented.* In: S. Bose (2002), p.27.

[30] *Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* [GC], nos. 27996/06 & 34836/06, ECHR 2009.

[31] L. Silber & A. Little, p.378.

[32] Bose, p.8.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] L. Silber & A. Little, p.377.

Srebrenica massacre memorial gravestones. Some of the more than 6,100 gravestones at the Srebrenica-Potoćari Memorial and Cemetery for the Victims of the 1995 Genocide.

and the failure to move beyond this has led to important questions of reform being neglected.

Third, the IC has failed in enforcing parts of the DPA, whilst simultaneously problematising the process of reform. The DPA succeeded in providing a right of return for refugees, a key step in reviving the multi-ethnic living arrangement that had characterised Bosnia before 1991. However, the parties on the ground did not want to encourage this and the IC failed to enforce it. Out of 2.1 million refugees and displaced people (roughly half of the 1992 population), only a quarter million returned to their pre-war homes.[36] Although there are various non-ethnic reasons people chose not to return, such as the fact that 90% of returnees were unemployed two years after Dayton,[37] the IC's actions through both the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the OHR made the situation worse for those few who chose to return. The use of sanctions and political pressure against municipalities not enabling return "led to distrust between the communities and the isolation of returnees."[38] The IC's strategy of aggressively encouraging return without first mending community ties or creating basic infrastructure led to increased localised ethnic tensions that retrenched isolation. This is illustrated by example of Stolac, a Croat-run town, where "returns under economic pressure have resulted in segregation" and Muslim returnees are dependent on NATO trucks to bring water.[39]

On the other hand, the IC has been keen to prevent any relocation to new areas by displaced peoples.[40] Whilst this position is defended as protecting the fragile ethnic balance within and between the entities, this reflected the view of the IC at Dayton that "ethnic separation will now lead to peace."[41] The preference for return over relocation shows a short-sighted flaw in the DPA. If Bosnia had been reconstructed, refugees would have been allowed to move to areas with the infrastructure and job-market to support them. The persistent desire of the IC to preserve a fixed ethnic balance in terms of population and land does little to convince Serbs and Croats of the benefits of the survival of multi-national Bosnia. Displaced people were the victim of a triple threat: return to their prior homes under hostile circumstances, relocate at the risk of economic punishment by the OHR, or stay put in overstretched UNHCR camps.

The case of refugees is the most significant example of the process of internationalisation of reform in Bosnia, whereby the IC has become the "the pivotal factor in the weak, disunited, and dysfunctional state that is post-Dayton Bosnia."[42] The IC is the primary advocate of reform in Bosnia, but this has undermined Bosnian politics because reform has become associated with an international agenda of limited popularity and legitimacy.[43] In turn, this has pitted the reform agenda of the "international peace-implementation bureaucracy"[44] against the hard-line of nationalist political leaders. Not only has this discoloured politics at times by the conflict between the popular support for figures and parties unpalatable to the West, such as the SDS and the HDZ (the Croat ultra-nationalist party),[45] it has marginalised discussion of reform within Bosnian politics and allowed nationalists to paint themselves as resisting "laws imposed by the High Representative of the international community."[46]

In conclusion, this essay has demonstrated that Bosnian democracy has been significantly held back by Dayton in the broadest sense: the international actions that paved the way for the talks, the constitutional structure created by the DPA, and the international enforcement of the agreement after 1995. The necessary rush to create a ceasefire proved to be inappropriate for a post-conflict constitution, as vital ethnic-territorial disputes were sealed in a Pandora's box that has not been safely re-opened in twenty years. Carl Bildt's description of the DPA as "the most ambitious document … in modern history"[47] highlights this issue: one set of peace talks could not build a functioning democratic state from the rubble of a nation and around 100,000 corpses.[48]

[36] D. Chandler, p.105.
[37] Ibid, p.106.
[38] Ibid, p.109.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid, p.107-8.
[41] L. Silber & A. Little, p.376.
[42] S. Bose, p.6.
[43] I. Jovanovic.
[44] S. Bose, p.30.
[45] Ibid, p.8.
[46] I. Jovanovic.
[47] C. Bildt. (1998). Peace Journey: The Struggle for Peace in Bosnia. London: p.392 in S. Bose, p.1.
[48] BBC News. (2007). Bosnia War Dead Figure Announced.

Sacred Duty… *or Terrible Beauty?*

In the year marking the centenary of the Easter Rising, Tom Edlin considers the tensions and contradictions of commemoration, and recent trends in the 'narrative' of this great turning point in modern Irish History…

I HAVE met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth-century houses.
I have passed with a nod of the head
Or polite meaningless words,
Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done
Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion
Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
But lived where motley is worn:
All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

(W.B. Yeats, *Easter* 1916, September 25th 1916)

Yeats' interpretations of the history of his own times were generally partial, and frequently questionable. Most notably, he outlined in his 1923 Nobel Prize acceptance lecture a rather schematic argument for the central role played by culture – and, in particular, his own work in fostering the Irish 'literary revival' and establishing the Abbey Theatre – in the quarter-century 'Long Gestation' of the Irish Revolution in the years after Parnell's fall in 1891. Equally famous is his later concern to wonder aloud whether 'Did that play of mine send out/ Certain men the English shot' – the answer to which, in all honesty, is a sceptical 'not really'. But in *Easter 1916* Yeats was, for once, both utterly correct and searingly honest; the poem is (for him) an unusually *immediate* response to events, written within four months of the Rising, and genuinely wrestling with his own nascent comprehension of how five days of seemingly futile revolutionary violence in the streets of Dublin have had a legacy of such transformative power.

The poem is often misrepresented as an unquestioning paean to the martyrs of 1916. In reality, it represents the poet's working through of his own deep ambivalence about fanaticism and republicanism, in the light of the transformation undergone by men he had known, and in some cases scorned or dismissed. The clear sense of location offered at the start, as those 'vivid faces' of a nationalist clerical and petty administrative bourgeoisie hurry past through the Georgian streets and squares of Dublin on their banal everyday journeys home from dull office drudgery, serves to highlight the contrast between the mundane and the suddenly heroic. For Yeats, though, that process still leaves feelings of deep ambivalence:

Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart.
O when may it suffice?
That is Heaven's part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild.
What is it but nightfall?
No, no, not night but death;
Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith
For all that is done and said.
We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed and are dead;
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse -
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

And herein lies a major problem as the commemorations marking the centenary of the Easter Rising approach this year. Honest remembrance requires a level of ambiguity, duality, uncertainty, dissent – rather than a simple, imperative, heroic national narrative. Or, one might say, a lack of doubt indicates a lack of credibility in historical memory; as Yeats himself put it elsewhere, *The best lack all conviction, while the worst, Are full of passionate intensity.* But how does one truly commemorate an event which was genuinely transformative in its own time?

Éamon de Valera (the senior commandant of the Rising to escape execution)

How can one restore the 'lost voices' of 1916 while also offering an appreciation of the importance of this great turning point in modern Irish History? Whose perspective should dominate – that of the separatist, republican tradition in Irish nationalism… or the romantic and cultural strands also fully represented in an event planned and led by men described by Lady Gregory as 'innocent idealists, writers, poets, dreamers'?

The problem is exacerbated in Ireland by the deeply ambivalent place 1916 has occupied in what one might call the 'foundational narrative' of the modern Irish state. For two generations and more, the Rising was more remembered than studied, as analysis of any depth would have reopened deep wounds. As the remarkable unity of the 'Volunteer Campaign' which sustained the War of Independence was shattered by the split over the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921, so the Irish Free State was born into a Civil War over whether the compromises attending its inception (over partition, but more importantly over the oath of allegiance to be sworn by members of Dáil Éireann) were an acceptable price to pay, or a betrayal of those who had given their lives for the Republic in 1916. The sanction of the dead was soon being sought for political demands and positions which would have been likely to provoke division among the leaders of 1916 themselves. It is worth remembering that when the final decision was taken to surrender after the five days of the Rising, by the five men 'present at headquarters' in Moore Street, it was by *majority* (four to one), and not unanimous.

As such, the memory of Easter week was contested early on. The question of who should speak for the dead was an awkward one: surviving relatives, close associates, or immediate comrades in the Rising? While Éamonn Ceannt's spiritual sanction might logically be claimed for the extreme and absolute Republican views of his deputy in the South Dublin Union, Cathal Brugha, did that mean Joseph Plunkett would have supported the decisions of Michael Collins, who had learned so much of strategic planning and technical innovation from his mentor at Kimmage in the weeks of preparation? And how could old allies reject the deeply emotional appeals of Mrs Pearse, who had lost both her sons, or Mrs Clarke, whose husband and brother had both been shot?

In the context of the Treaty debates, this mattered hugely. Arthur Griffith made a passionate call to move on ('is there no living Irish nation? Is the Irish nation to be the dead past or the prophetic future?') Michael Collins argued that the Treaty gave, if not the total freedom for which men had fought and died, then at least 'the freedom to achieve freedom' – a point echoed by Richard Mulcahy's entirely logical insistence that accepting the Treaty would be a surer way to ultimate independence than rejecting it. Yet the anti-Treaty side's ongoing appeal to the demands of 'the Nation' and 'the Republic', as revealed spiritually by the heroic action of 1916, would bedevil Irish politics for years to come. The appropriation by de Valera's (anti-Treaty) Fianna Fáil of the Rising as the foundation of its vision of the Irish state left (pro-Treaty) Cumann na nGaedheal, and later Fine Gael, with Griffith, Collins and 1921 as the 'foundations of Irish democracy' – and the Rising at the centre of a bitterly disputed territory of legitimation. This remained so long after (as Collins and Mulcahy

Weekly Irish Times

SINN FEIN REBELLION IN IRELAND.

Weekly Irish Times front page reporting the Easter Uprising in Dublin, showing photographs of the rebellion's leadership. Courtesy of sevensignatories1916

had essentially predicted) the Free State had evolved, by way of the implicitly Republican constitution of Éire in 1937, to the Republic declared in 1948 and enacted the following year.

Of course, one reason for the contested legacy of the Rising lies in the overlapping strands involved in the event itself. The extraordinary coming together of elements from the divergent traditions of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, Eoin MacNeill's Irish Volunteers, Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League, the Irish Citizen Army and militant trades unionism (and more besides), all made an eventual parting of the ways more likely. This explains the focus in centenary commemorations on the seven signatories of the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic – men who between them represent the Fenian separatist tradition (Tom Clarke, Seán MacDiarmada), the Volunteer movement and the cultural nationalism from which it drew so much support (Patrick Pearse, Joseph Plunkett, Thomas MacDonagh, Éamonn Ceannt) and socialist idealism (James Connolly). The 'Easter Seven' and their varied experiences both before and during the Rising formed the basis of the remarkable seven-part series *Seachtar Na Cásca* in 2011, interspersing scenes in which the signatories debate and act together with the personal hinterland of each.

Such a collective focus also avoids the long-vexed arguments over leadership; Kathleen Clarke always resented the tendency to celebrate Pearse as the leader, when her husband had been 'first signatory' and, in effect, brought in the younger man to front his plans, beginning with the O'Donovan Rossa funeral in 1915. The focus of the 2016 commemorations will certainly avoid the excessively Pearse-centric tone of 1966, though it may well revive interest in the Proclamation itself (largely his work), as a document which has stood the test of time remarkably well, in its explicit call for civil liberties and social justice. Here too there is an opportunity to rescue a neglected past; for decades after independence, as first Cosgrave and then de Valera insisted that 'Labour must wait' in Irish politics, much of the radicalism of 1916 was deliberately buried on both sides of the

Dublin proclamation statue by Rowan Gillespie, 2008

Treaty split, in social and economic terms. As Kevin O'Higgins famously remarked, they had become 'the most conservative revolutionaries in history' – a betrayal, for many, of the spirit of the Rising.

A notable tendency of late, though, has been to move beyond 'the seven' to focus more broadly on 'the sixteen' executed in the aftermath – fourteen of them shot in Dublin, one (Thomas Kent) in Cork and one (Roger Casement) hanged in London. Anne-Marie Ryan's *Sixteen Dead Men* has been followed by a major publishing statement from the O'Brien Press in the form of *Sixteen Lives*, the first complete series of full biographies, being published in the build-up to the centenary. The series editors, Lorcan Collins and Ruán O'Donnell, point explicitly to their awareness of the 'diverse backgrounds' of the men, in wealth, social class and education – and to the multiplicity of stories to be told of the Rising. In some ways these books tend to re-appropriate Pearse's belief in the impact of 'blood sacrifice', with a subtext of hagiography; but there is also a clear sense that neglected stories of the Rising are being retold – from Ceannt as the 'forgotten signatory' to Willie Pearse, overshadowed by his brother and executed for his name alone; and the particular viewpoints of Michael Mallin (ex-British Army), Con Colbert (the radicalism of youth culture) or Ned Daly (only son and heir to a proud Fenian family tradition of violent separatism). It is central to the commemorations that there should not be one single story told, but many.

The same is true of the recent focus on the lives and perspectives of the women who took part in the Rising, whether directly or at the margins. This is of particular significance given their increasingly militant and radical stance in later years; in 1922, every woman TD in the Dáil voted to oppose the Treaty, and this absolutism was no coincidence. Constance Markiewicz has long been the subject of interest (and numerous biographies); as has, for slightly different reasons, Maud Gonne, muse of Yeats and estranged wife of John MacBride, who as one of the 'sixteen' redeemed himself somewhat from his atrocious marital conduct. The lives and ideas of the Cumann na mBan rank and file inform Senia Pašeta's recent work on *Irish Nationalist Women 1900-1918*; and the political, social and romantic entanglements of the women of the revolutionary generation feature largely in Roy Foster's ground-breaking *Vivid Faces*. Meanwhile, one of the most interesting recent perspectives on the Rising itself, Sinead McCoole's *Easter Widows*, uses seven lives as a window onto a society and a movement for too long viewed through a narrow (heroic, masculine) prism. It is worth remembering that

Birth of the Republic, Walter Paget

several of the leaders of the Rising saw themselves in advanced, modern terms; Thomas MacDonagh was jeered in the street when he became the first man to appear in the streets of Dublin pushing his own child's pram. Again, the diversity of experience is stark: from the ongoing political and social campaigns (and achievements) of Kathleen Clarke or Áine Ceannt, to the tragedy of Muriel MacDonagh and still vexed enigma of Grace Plunkett.

This sits readily alongside the new perspectives on the Rising which have emerged from the release of 1,773 witness testimonies, from across the revolutionary period, gathered by the Irish Bureau of Military History in the decade after 1947, but which had remained sealed until the death of the last contributor in 2003. These various and at times contradictory recollections, covering 36,000 pages of evidence, form the material for Fearghal McGarry's remarkable selection of 'Voices from the Easter Rising', published under the title Rebels in 2011; and also helped inform his new history of 1916 which appeared the previous year. They must surely also have influenced the writers of the recent RTÉ drama *Rebellion*, which follows the tumultuous events through the lives of a group of friends who find themselves playing conflicting roles in the struggle. What comes across most powerfully from these statements is the variety of experience, and the extent of the deviation from the accepted pious narrative which held sway for generations. The voices of those generally remembered as 'losers' in the story – most notably the Ulster Quaker and IRB organizer Bulmer Hobson, who tried to prevent the Rising going ahead and whose reputation was consequently trashed in the years which followed – are heard alongside the 'heroes'. Details emerge of extraordinary richness: did the key figures in the Provisional Government really spend their first night in the GPO under the sedative influence of opium? Above all, the emerging story involves *leaders* who consciously set out on a course to inevitable defeat and death, with advanced concepts of 'blood sacrifice' and 'the Republic', but of a *rebel rank and file* largely kept in the dark: blindly expecting success, non-existent reinforcements, and a 'clean fight' with 'the British' – and in many cases with no abstract concept or awareness of the 'Republic' for which they supposedly fought.

In a sense this is part of the broader 'hijacking of history' which the leaders of the Easter Rising carried off with such aplomb, imposing an heroic Republican viewpoint upon their own posterity. At the time, such doomed heroism seemed illogical given the promise of Home Rule, already on the Statute Book for enactment after the First World War was over – as Yeats himself put it, 'England may keep faith', making the sacrifice of 1916 a vain and potentially counter-productive one. As Éamon de Valera later admitted, 'the Rising was not popular in Dublin in 1916; I think I can say that without fear of contradiction.' Yet the sheer chanciness of considerably fewer than 2,000 men and women in 1916 (and no more than 10,000 across the revolutionary period as a whole) managing to snatch the political agenda from the grasp of some 200,000 patriotic Irishmen fighting what they saw as their country's war against German aggression in Europe was extraordinary. The leaders were imposing their own narrative on events which they knew would end in (immediate) defeat, but which they believed would herald a new dawn. That was Pearse's 'Triumph of Failure'. This apparent contradiction renders commemoration difficult on all sides, but it is an awkwardness which makes all the more necessary the diversity reflected in the stories told and voices heard a century on.

Children of Lir sculpture in the Garden of Remembrance, Dublin. The Garden is "dedicated to all those who gave their lives in the fight for Ireland's freedom"

Confused nationalism in Central Asia

Sacha Mehta is fascinated by the Pamiri people of Tajikistan, a peripheral ethnic group in a peripheral state. Over his 2 weeks in Central Asia in early November, he spent five days in Tajikistan including three in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO, the home of the Pamiris). His trip took him from Almaty in Kazakhstan, through Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, to Samarkand in Uzbekistan.

Apart from "Borat" and the occasional bout of ethnic violence, Central Asia rarely makes the headlines. Sacha Baron Cohen's character does however provide a number of insights into the turbulent politics between the 5 "Stans". Central Asia's intricate patchwork of rivalries and competing nationalisms, as well as its links with the Silk Road, were the main reasons I decided to visit.

Borat neglects to mention Central Asia's immense geopolitical importance. Central Asia has always been a battleground between superpowers. In the 19th century, the British and Russian Empires jostled for influence. Now, with the USA, China, India, Russia and Turkey all involved, the names have changed, but the tug-of-war continues.

As the business capital of Central Asia, Almaty in no way provides an accurate picture of the region. I landed, blurry-eyed, at 4.30am in the morning on Sunday the 1st November, and was struck by the crisp, clear Russian on everyone's lips. My fellow passengers clarified that since most of them had spent their formative years in the Soviet Union, Russian was their first language. Even more surprisingly, out of the 30 or so young karate champions (all ethnic Kazakhs from Oral/Uralsk) at my hostel in downtown Almaty, less than half knew a word of Kazakh. President Nursultan Nazarbayev has made efforts to promote the national language, but in business-friendly, forward-looking Kazakhstan, Russian is considered more useful.

Before the advent of Islam in the 10th century AD, Central Asia was predominantly populated by speakers of Iranian languages, such as the Bactrians and Parthians. From the 5th century onwards, migration brought Turkic peoples from the north-east. Linguistically, this resulted in a situation today where the majority of Central Asians speak a Turkic language, e.g. Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Turkmen, and a large minority (mostly in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) speak Tajik/Dari/Persian and several other Iranian languages. However, after 150 years of Russian dominance, much of the population also speaks Russian, and the main unifying factor of Central Asia, which separates it from Mongolia and

Almaty

Kazakh Karate Champions

Afghanistan (both sometimes included in definitions of Central Asia), is its "Russianness". 7 million Russians (and 500 000 Ukrainians) still live in the region, forming a little over 10% of the population (down from 25% before the fall of the Soviet Union). Russian is the regional lingua franca, especially in business.

Kazakhstan is undoubtedly the region's economic powerhouse. The state's huge reserves of natural resources have contributed to a sharp rise in GDP in the last 20 years, resulting in a 2014 GDP per capita (PPP) of $24,000, just below Russia's ($24,500), and higher than Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Latvia, all members of the EU. Apart from Turkmenistan, the other "Stans" are 5 to 10 times poorer, with Tajik GDP per capita a lowly $2,400. Though it cannot match the futuristic ultra-modern buildings of Astana, Almaty is still Kazakhstan's commercial hub. As expected in a petrodollar economy, Land Cruisers are the transport of choice. Flashy jewellery and Western brands abound, and headscarves are completely absent. In the words of Gulnaz, whom I met in Almaty, "headscarves are a recent, Arab-inspired fashion". When she travelled to Egypt, the locals were shocked to see her, a bikini-clad Muslim girl, acting with such "depravity".

It is easy to see why Kazakhs feel more at home in Moscow than in neighbouring countries. In terms of perceived distance, to most Kazakhs, nearby Afghanistan might as well be on the moon. And while the Slavic population of the other "Stans" has steadily decreased, the same has not happened in Almaty, where almost a third of the population is ethnic Russian or Ukrainian. Including Vladimir, an ethnic Ukrainian tourist from Tashkent, sat to my right in the Boulangerie Paul, at the top of Shymbulak ski resort. Quite apart from the novelty of having a chocolate éclair at 2,200m in a luxurious French boulangerie, it was fascinating to hear Vladimir extol the benefits of a Kazakh passport over the much less useful Uzbek variety. Contacts (and *vkontankte*) exchanged, I headed back down the cablecar, into the blizzard, past Medeu (at 1691m, apparently the highest skating rink in the world) and made my way to Dostyk Plaza shopping centre for some sushi and frozen yogurt.

After a nocturnal supper with the army of hyperactive Kazakh karate champions and their slightly mad Ukrainian cook, I headed off to Bishkek, the capital of neighbouring Kyrgyzstan. Like Almaty, Bishkek is grid-shaped, with several leafy parks and an unremarkable mix of Soviet and post-Soviet monuments. The mountains provide a pleasant backdrop: Kyrgyzstan's strength is its outstanding natural beauty. People come here to rock-climb, hike, and enjoy the view.

Having been stumped in my attempts to buy a Kyrgyz national football shirt, I did however chance upon a sumptuous restaurant called *Navat*, serving the legendary Central *Asian dish Beşbarmaq* ("five fingers"). After confirming with Aybek the waiter that I was not eating freshly chopped hand, I wolfed down this dish of noodles, boiled lamb and mutton broth (*shorpo*). Before leaving I took the chance to acquire a lovely camel-

shaped tea pot cover: my contribution to the Kyrgyz handicrafts industry.

Drawing boundaries anywhere is a dangerous game, but my Air Bishkek flight down from the Kyrgyz capital to its second city, Osh, seems retrospectively to have been the time when Central Asia really began. The cabin staff arrived approximately 10 minutes before take-off, one of them in a t-shirt and jeans, and the passengers consisted mainly of elderly men in traditional kalpaks (a sort of elevated cap strangely reminiscent of the Bolivians and their bowler hats) and Kyrgyz women wearing a substantial percentage of their wealth in the form of gold teeth.

I was welcomed at Osh airport by the indefatigable Umida, who over tea and naan briefed me on all aspects of religion, language and ethnicity. The Kazakhs, she said, are "honest, straight-talking and fair, like the Russians". So too the northern Kyrgyz, whereas the southern Kyrgyz, now politically dominant in historically-Uzbek Osh, are "sneakier" (Umida is Uzbek). Interestingly she claimed that the Uzbeks, despite speaking a Turkic language, are much more conservative and Iranian-looking than the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, and have a lot more in common with the Tajiks than with their northern neighbours.

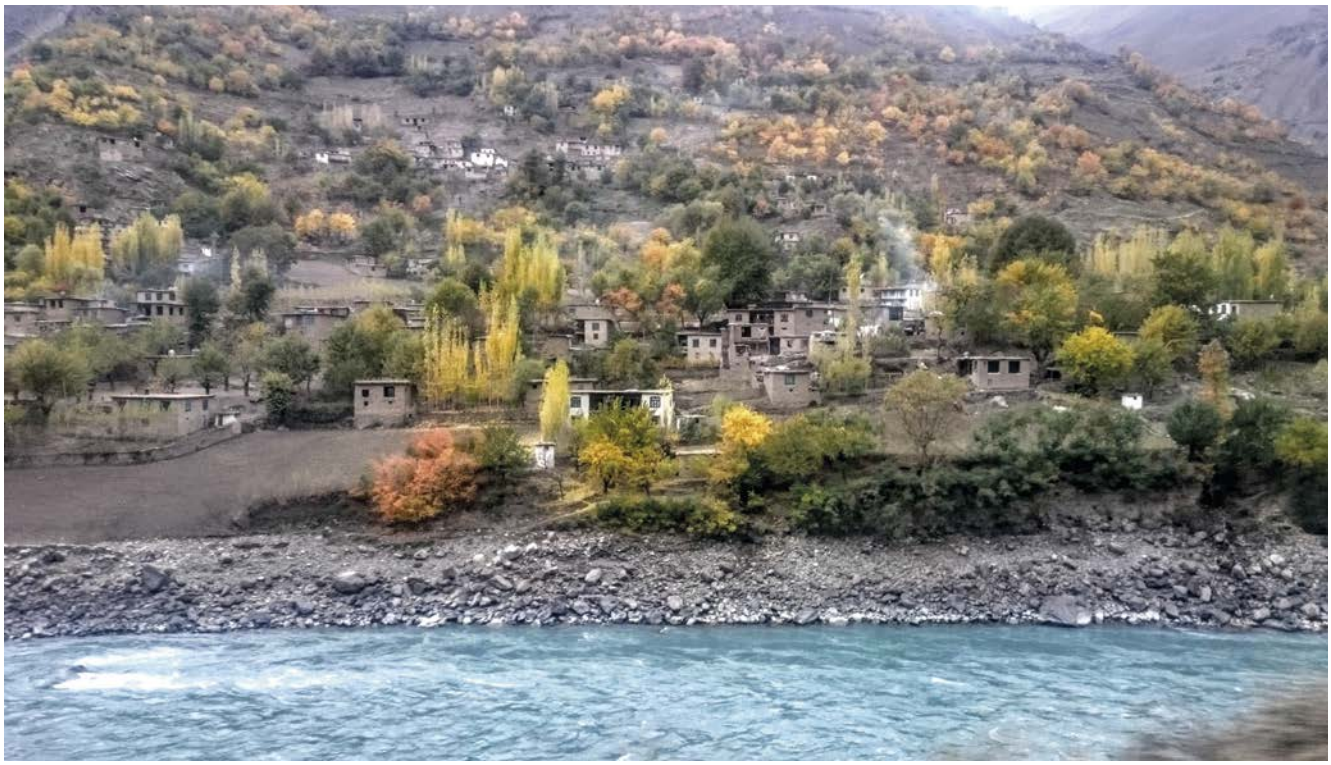
One man claimed by both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks is Babur, the first Mughal emperor of India (early 16th century), who was from the Fergana valley. A shrine to Babur, the *Dom Babura* can be found at the top of Suleiman mountain, and on reaching the shrine I was stunned to find even more echoes of my Swiss-Indian heritage in the shape of a family of bike fanatics from Zürich who were setting up an eco-tourist agency in Osh. Rushing down the hill to meet my taxi driver, I bade goodbye to Umida before heading off to the Uzbek border. Snowy conditions on the Pamir Highway (which climbs to 4,655m at the Ak-Baital Pass) had forced me to change my plans and head to Tajikistan via Tashkent, by taxi.

Uzbekistan leaves no one indifferent. On arrival at the border post I was somewhat baffled when the official asked me to locate all the pornography on my laptop. I was later informed that Uzbek president Islam Karimov has made watching pornography, as well as the wearing of beards, a capital offence. Once outside, after some spirited negotiation with dozens of yelling taxi drivers, I secured the services of a jovial but rather ursine Uzbek with a soft spot for 1980s British rock. Several hours, a mountain blizzard and much thigh-slapping later, I arrived in Tashkent, my vocabulary enriched with a variety of rare Russian obscenities, some choice Uzbek insults and the complete lyrics to Status Quo's *In the Army Now*. I was also weighed down by several kilogrammes of seriously devalued Uzbek som.

Early the next morning I had my first taste of Uzbek *plov*, Lamb and Rice Pilaf, at the aptly named *Tsentr Plova* ("Plov centre"), and made for the notoriously tense and heavily mined Tajik-Uzbek border in the company of two gypsies fluent in Uzbek, Tajik and Romani. A discussion of comparative Indo-Iranian linguistics ensued, tragically cut short by another frenzied search for pornography and drugs with the Uzbek customs official. I was warmly greeted on the other side by a young Tajik soldier, who cradled my passport for a few seconds before quizzing me on the relative merits of British, Russian and Uzbek girls.

Seven days into my trip, Khujand, the site of Alexandria Eschate ("Alexandria the Farthest"), Alexander the Great's most northerly base in Central Asia, was my home for the night. Having allowed myself the luxury of a private room, I collapsed onto the sofa, turned on the TV and enjoyed the delights of Milad Gholami, Sami Beigi, Gheysar and a host of other Iranian popstars.

Afghanistan across the Panj River



Shah-e Zinda, Samarkand

The next morning, I visited the monument to Ismail Somoni as well as the partly renovated 10th century fortress, before heading to Dushanbe across the Zarafshan ("sprayer of gold") range, whose highest point is almost 5,500m high. Stopping along the road to buy dried fruits, it was impossible not to be struck by the European features of the highlanders, or by the sour taste of the qurut (dried salty cheese balls) offered by two elderly ladies. On my arrival in Dushanbe I met two fellow travellers who had taken the same route separately: Californians who had quit their jobs for the road trip of a lifetime from Reading in England to Ulaanbaatar. Over fresh pomegranate and tea, we planned to join forces and hitch a taxi south to Khorugh, capital of the Pamirs and the inspiration for my journey.

The Pamiris are a linguistic and religious minority: predominantly Ismaili Shia in Sunni Tajikistan, with their own distinct Indo-Iranian language. Religiously, Central Asia as a whole has undergone significant change. Buddhism and Zoroastrianism were the major faiths before the arrival of Islam. Now the region is Muslim (mostly Sunni), though noteworthy for the high proportion of non-denominational Muslims (who consider themselves neither Sunni, nor Shia, but simply Muslim). At 74% in Kazakhstan they constitute the highest proportion in the world: Kyrgyzstan comes third with 64%, Uzbekistan 8th with 54%. Not so in Tajikistan.

Geographically concentrated in the mountainous southeast of the country (Pamir means "the roof of the world" in Persian), and separated from their kin in Afghanistan by the Panj river, the Pamiris have long been disadvantaged and marginalised by the majority Tajik population. They were on the losing side in the civil war which raged between 1992 and 1997, I was told by my driver Davlat as he raced down the narrow dirt tracks in our Land Cruiser. As Afghanistan came into view across the Panj, small mud houses, women wearing colourful veils and motorbikes racing along the narrow paths could be seen. On both sides the mountains rose sharply, and as night fell we finally paused for dinner. After 12 hours of what can only be described as off-piste driving, the joys of meat soup, fried eggs and a hard, stationary chair are not to be sniffed at.

As we arrived in the early hours of the morning we were greeted by the staff at the Pamir Lodge and shown to our rooms. The next day, my tour of Khorugh revealed a lively small town, nestled in a steep valley surrounded by mountains. The locals do not dress conservatively: the women wore no veils and openly exchanged kisses in the streets. Unusually for such a small town (population: 30 000), there are two universities, one of them funded by the Aga Khan Development Network.

Through the staff I managed to talk to the elderly Dr Shaikh, formerly the Aga Khan's representative in GBAO who arrived in 1991 and now splits his time between Khorugh and Birmingham. The doctor comes from a family of Pakistani Ismailis, who were converted from Hinduism by the present Aga Khan's grandfather. "It was his proudest moment," according to Dr Shaikh. Dr Shaikh helped build the *Jamatkhana* (Ismaili prayer house) in Khorugh and the adjoining Pamir Lodge, originally meant for Ismaili travellers, but now mostly used by backpackers. Khorugh is the starting point for drives down to the scenic Wakhan Valley – the narrow strip of north-eastern Afghan territory which was in 1893 fixed as the buffer zone between British India and the Russian Empire, in one of the final chapters of the Great Game.

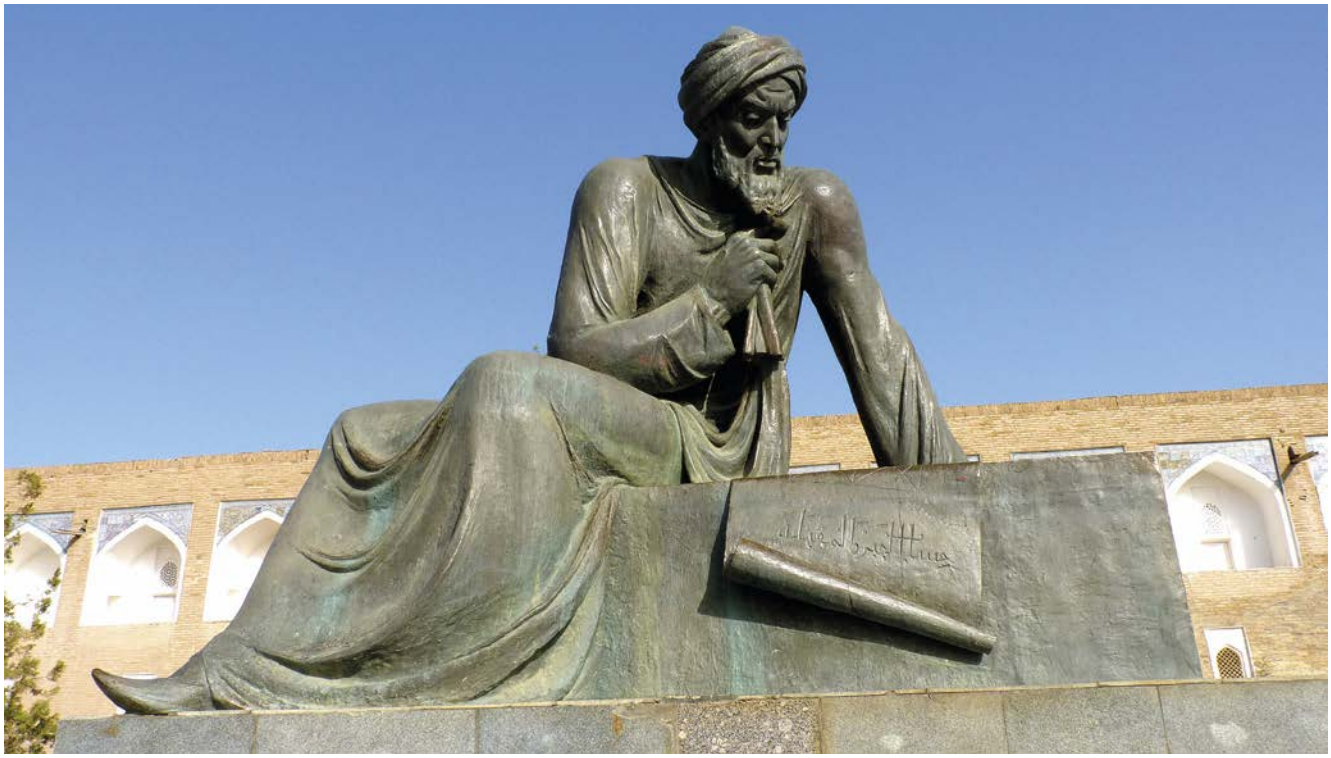
"Minorities cannot afford to be prejudiced," I was told by a local Pamiri in central Khorugh. He motioned towards a man delivering sand for construction works. "This man's brother was a leader of the uprising [against the Tajik military] in summer 2012. When the Aga Khan told the Pamiris to lay down their arms, this man urged his brother to keep a shotgun hidden. His brother didn't listen and gave everything up. When the Tajiks found out, they came and shot him dead." The military operation in 2012, though allegedly aimed at 4 "commanders" of local criminal groups, soon took on an ethnic dimension. 25 Pamiris and a few dozen Tajik soldiers were killed, further alienating locals.

The author with two of his hosts

On the Tajik side, prejudice is rife. When Dr Shaikh arrived in the early 90s, and was looking for a Pamiri wife for one of his sons, Tajik friends told him "no you can't. They are not real Muslims." One of his sons is now married to the sister of his Pamiri caretaker. The South Asian community of Khorugh, however, crosses all boundaries. Dr Shaikh is from Pakistan, and in central Khorugh, I found a forgotten outpost of my homeland. The Delhi Darbar restaurant, run by Hindus from Lucknow, served a succulent lamb curry and *tadka dal*.

My journey from Khorugh to Samarkand threw up a few surprises. After a vodka-fuelled discussion of contemporary Islam with a Tajik Special Forces soldier to my left, I fell asleep in the Land Cruiser, woke a few hours later and stumbled into my hostel,

Registan, main square in Samarkand



Statue of Muḥammad ibn Musa al-Khawarizmi, renowned Mathematician and Astronomer, in Khiva.

only to be greeted by an insomniac Canadian traveller, John, whose knowledge of the Wakhan Corridor was matched by his stories of life in the 1980s Bombay underworld. Sleepless and tipsy, I spent the next twelve hours making my way to Samarkand in Uzbekistan by shared taxi.

Located on the Park Lane of Samarkand, the hotel I stayed at looks onto the Registan Ensemble, the magnificent public square framed by three madrasahs, which formed the heart of Timurid Samarkand. As I savoured the local mile-feuille and tea with the owner Shah Jahan, I reflected that the beauty of the city is matched by the good manners of its inhabitants. Further adding to my excitement, I discovered that approximately 80% of the locals, including my hosts, were native Tajik-speakers.

Of all the places I visited in Central Asia, Samarkand stands out in terms of architectural brilliance. Apart from the stunning Shirdor, Ulugbek and Tilla Kari Medreses, all located on Registan Square, the Shah-i-Zinda ("living king") necropolis is a triumph of Timurid architecture, with turquoise and blue styles arranged in intricate linear and geometric patterns, and a strong focus on axial symmetry. I barely had time to visit the Bibi Khanum mosque and taste the difference between Samarkand and Tashkent *plov* before I was accosted by Akbar, Shah Jahan's nephew, invited to the family restaurant, and treated to a selection of *manti* dumplings and some strong *nasvay* (tobacco snuff). Head spinning, I then met Shah Jahan's wife, a Tajik from Dushanbe. It was fascinating to hear their comparison of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with Shah Jahan expressing his pride in Samarkand and the secular nature of President Karimov's Uzbekistan. "Extremist Islam is unwelcome here," he said, as I prepared my suitcases for the flight to Moscow. "Terrorists are not tolerated."

Samarkand was eye-opening in terms of language politics. Its majority Tajik population also speak Uzbek fluently, are completely integrated, and are proud to be Uzbek. In fact, before the Russian conquest, the area which now constitutes Tajikistan and Uzbekistan consisted of several emirates, most notably the Emirate of Bukhara, which used both Persian and Uzbek as official languages. Tajiks and Uzbeks lived side by side, and were often physically indistinguishable. Against this historical backdrop, the republics of Central Asia are a relatively recent creation, with their roots in the Soviet partitioning along ethnic lines of the Central Asian Socialist Republics, in 1924 and 1929.

As in the much-publicized case of Crimea, these borders took on added importance with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. In areas such as the Fergana valley, border tensions persist to this day. Time and time again during my trip to Central Asia, the ease with which I travelled across boundaries was in stark contrast with the constant difficulties encountered by Uzbeks, Tajiks and Kyrgyz as they attempted to visit family members stuck on the wrong side of artificial borders. Considering the shared heritage of the "Stans", this is a tragedy. As Central Asia continues to be fought over by outside forces, its wealth concentrated in the hands of small elites and its society threatened by sectarianism, examples such as the Tajiks of Samarkand and the Russians of Almaty serve as a reminder of another, often unfashionable alternative, which Borat might not have approved of: peaceful coexistence.

Many thanks to Mr Peter Foy, McKinsey & Company and St Peter's College for their generous grant, without which my trip to Central Asia would not have been possible.

In the interests of security, the names of the people I met in Central Asia have been changed.

Benjamin Vaughan in America: A Second Life, 1794-1835.

The Promotion of Useful Knowledge

The first part of this article appeared in the Summer 2015 issue under the title 'Benjamin Vaughan, Anglo American Politician and Intellectual' and recounted the years in England – schools, universities, the City of London, and the House of Commons – from 1751 to 1794.

The Whig M.P., aged 43, representative of the eighteen electors of Calne, Wiltshire, fearing persecution by William Pitt the Younger's government for radical, but not revolutionary, views, fled England on 4 June 1794. There is no evidence he was bothered that his constituents would have no one in the Commons to speak for them; and no evidence that the town of Calne was bothered that its M.P. was in exile. One celebrated philosopher was bothered. In February 1796, Jeremy Bentham wrote to the *London Morning Herald* in defence of Vaughan's flight to the continent.

Vaughan was in self-imposed exile in France and Switzerland, under the pseudonym of Citizen John Martin. First, in Passy in France and after his release from the Paris Carmelite prison, he moved to Geneva, Berne then Basle, he lobbied the authorities for a passport to leave for the United States. In England, as repression of dissent advanced, he had thought of emigrating with his young family to a freer country. He had one considerable advantage over those of his contemporaries who were thinking that the young USA offered the liberty of expression and opportunity denied in England. Tom Paine of 'The Rights of Man' had emigrated in 1782, and during his ten year stay in France in the 1790's was influential in persuading the Committee of Public Safety's Georges Delacroix, father of the painter, to issue a passport so Vaughan could leave to join his family in the U.S.A.

Amongst his contemporaries, the scientist and teacher, Joseph Priestley – whose Warrington Academy had schooled Vaughan – had settled in Pennsylvania in 1794 after Birmingham rioters had destroyed his house and

Benjamin Vaughan, 1768 by Francis Cotes (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Signing of the Preliminary Treaty of Paris, November 30, 1782

laboratory. In the first summer of Vaughan's exile, the young Coleridge and Southey (the latter expelled from Westminster in 1792 for publishing a criticism of flogging), undergraduates at Cambridge and Oxford, planned for an ideal community also in Pennsylvania and not so far from Priestley's house in Northumberland, on the banks of the river Susquehanna. The pair never left England for America. But Benjamin Vaughan, unlike any of these and other radicals of like mind, had a Boston-born mother, an interest in a family farmhouse with several hundred acres of land in Hallowell in Maine; and valuable American connections on which to draw. Not least his friendship with Benjamin Franklin and the editing of the latter's early writings from the time he was an influential but unofficial member of the British negotiating team for the Treaty of Paris (1783). His father, Samuel Vaughan, was a friend of Washington and Jefferson, a charter member of the prestigious American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, and the designer of its splendid building; in the same tradition, Benjamin was a founder of the Maine Historical Society in 1808. The Paris Treaty which recognised the independence of the former American colonies, put relations between the two sovereign states on an equal footing, and with hindsight's benefit laid the foundations for the much lauded and enduring 'special relationship'.

During the winter of 1794/5 Benjamin exchanged letters with his wife, Sarah, still in their London home in Jeffries Square, about emigrating to the U.S.A in the following summer. Correspondence would have been difficult. Britain was at war with France. Vaughan's biographer, Craig Murray in his *Benjamin Vaughan - Anglo - American Politician and Intellectual* (Arno Press, New York, 1982) explained the proposed arrangements '*…she and the children (seven in number) were to go first accompanied by Merrick, the tutor (a young Dissenting minister). Once they had reached America safely, Vaughan would follow them……*'. Sarah did not decide to leave until July 1795. With children and tutor, she sailed on an American vessel, the 'Ocean', carrying several letters of introduction including one from her father-in-law, Samuel to George Washington. It seems that up till then Samuel had not been informed of why his son had left London so hastily. Now he knew he was safe in Switzerland. If there was resentment at being kept ignorant, it might be explained by fear of the Correspondence With The Enemies Act of 1793, whose draconian provisions inhibited the sharing of information even between family and friends.

Mary Marvin Vaughan, in her privately printed memoir based upon extensive research '*for the descendants of Benjamin Vaughan*', believed fear of confiscation or loss at sea impelled Sarah Vaughan to make arrangements at short notice to sell furniture, china and other household goods including silver. In the 1970's a list of silver sold in London was found at the old family home in Hallowell with a note endorsed on it in Sarah's hand '*all wasted*'. The *Ocean* reached Boston in early September without being stopped and searched by French or English warships.

They had taken the precaution of asking several US diplomats in France including James Monroe, the Ambassador, to help if the ship was intercepted.

It was to be three years before Sarah and the Vaughan children were reunited with Benjamin in Boston and travelled together to Hallowell. He had not been idle. In exile he had written and published two books and several articles in French; and intellectual that he was, had arranged to have shipped from London his extensive library. With 10,000 volumes it has been suggested it was larger than the library at Harvard. A team of local joiners built the extensive shelves.

In a paper given to the Maine Historical Society in March 1907, local historian George Rowell opened with this paean "*Among the many historic houses which make the Kennebec river renowned in our early history, not one is more beautifully situated than the Vaughan Mansion…Crowning a high hill which overlooks the river at The Hook, surrounded with acres of beautiful gardens, on one side the Vaughan Brook, on the other the city… the house has been kept in perfect repair and today stands as substantial as when built over a hundred years ago…filled with historic pictures and furniture that would delight anyone who loves the things of our colonial and revolutionary period……that celebrated library… probably the largest private library in this country at that time*".

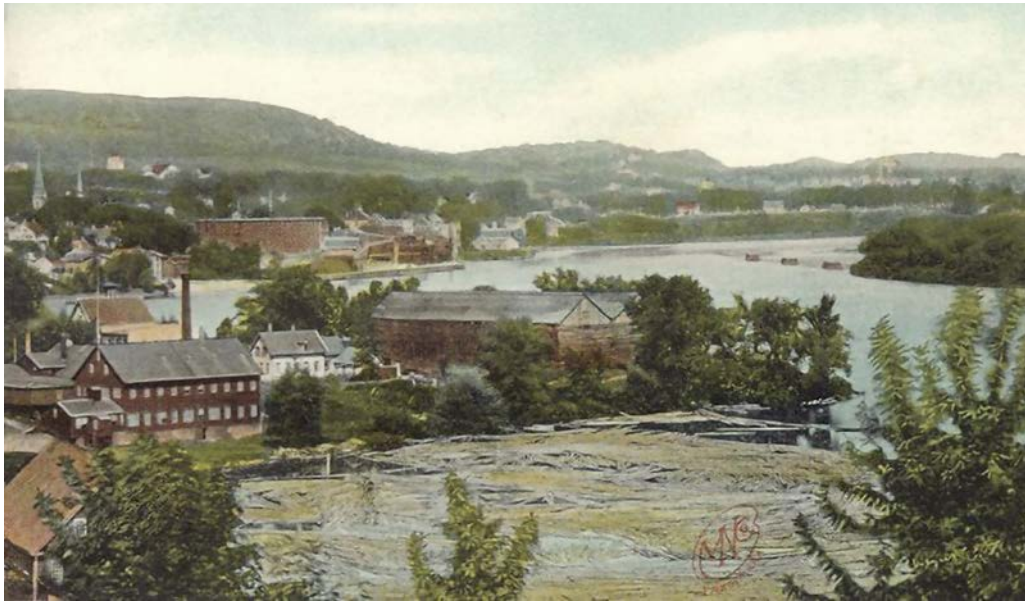
Like Meyer Rothschild of Frankfurt with sons representing the nascent bank in several European capitals, Benjamin's brothers were strategically placed by their father in Boston, London, Philadelphia and Jamaica. Each was commissioned to find workmen, books, seeds, trees, livestock and other supplies. To, Charles, who had moved to Boston, he wrote in October 1797, asking him to cash a bill for $200, explaining "*…we seek to live humbly, but in comfort and plenty*". The task of living comfortably in what became a grand mansion with gardens and vistas over the Kennebec River occupied Vaughan until his death.

Once in residence, a busy, different life began. He wanted to transform the farm from "*a wretched piece of English common*'. Labour was hired for the transformation and land was cleared. He experimented with varieties of vegetables and grains, potatoes and turnips, barley and wheat; imported fruit trees from England; fig trees and vine cuttings from France; and improved the breeds of cattle and sheep by importing stock. "*To this day*" wrote John Shepherd in a memoir published in 1865 "when cattle are brought from Kennebec to Brighton market, they exclaim "*…there goes the Vaughan breeds! – such pains did he take in importing the short horns and cattle of Durham celebrity……*". The climate of Maine is harsh. It was not Middlesex or Surrey. The house was weather-proofed against the intense cold of savage Maine winters, with double windows and doors (sic !) throughout. In February 1798, he had told his friend and patron, now Lord Lansdowne, of the night-time impact of weather on the residents "*…in the course of a single night…the breath forms ice upon the sheets*".

Lansdowne and Vaughan continued in friendly correspondence until Lansdowne died in 1805. They had known each other since 1781; Joseph Priestley may have introduced them since he had been librarian at Lansdowne's Wiltshire house from 1773 to1780. Vaughan had been his unofficial secretary and representative in the Paris peace talks. Lansdowne often urged Vaughan to return to England so that the two could travel together on the continent once there was peace with France. The Vaughans were tempted, but were deterred by a dwindling source of income from the family investment in four Jamaica plantations. In 1802 Samuel Vaughan, had valued the four Jamaica estates and 522 slaves at £160,000. Benjamin's capital assets were vastly improved when, in 1833, when following the setting up of the Slave Compensation Commission, he claimed and received £4870.2s.7d for the enfranchisement of some 286 slaves on the Vaughan Flamstead Estate. Perhaps more decisive was that extended travel to the old world would disrupt life in the new, and the responsibility for educating seven children in semi-rural Hallowell. The town was named after his grandfather, Benjamin Hallowell of Boston, one of the 'Kennebec Proprietors' on land originally granted by James II. In a letter of June 1800 to his mother, he apologised thus for his reluctance to visit England "*……a farming life has fascinated all our children……To tell them of the charms of wealth and of London life has little influence.*"

Writing to John Jay, a future Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and another of the 'Founding Fathers', in August, 1797, Vaughan thanked him for assisting in the family passage from Europe to Hallowell. He expounded the virtues of the private life in northern Massachusetts (as it then was) in '*a new country like the Kennebec*' and hoped Jay would agree with him that '*the general happiness of mankind is the noblest object of our respective pursuits*'.

Kennebec River from London Hill, Hallowell



Vaughan Homestead, Hallowell today

Eschewing any desire for public life, he anticipated '*living in as much harmony as I can with all parties, whether in politics or religion*'. How different from the fearful England of Pitt the Younger from which Vaughan had escaped by his flight to France in June 1794.

There was another Vaughan – Dr Vaughan, graduate of the medical school of Edinburgh, carrying, perhaps, a black bag, who '*in Hallowell for the first time practised his profession, visiting only the poor and usually supplying medicines as well as advice without charge*' – George Rowell, in a talk to the Maine Historical Society in 1907, continued this account of virtue "*…Dr Vaughan was the highest type of Christian gentleman; benevolent and kind*"…

Besides the articles he had written in England on political and scientific subjects, he had published, under the title of "Kilyogg, or the Rural Socrates" the result partly of of his enquiries in Switzerland, concerning the life of James Gouyer, the agricultural philosopher, anonymously, various political articles, and prepared two historical papers at a presidential request. When his published writings were not anonymous, these were over a fictitious signature. There were many in number and by all accounts an indefatigable worker, his American contemporaries knew his worth, receiving the honorary degree of LL.D. from Harvard in 1807, and from Maine's Bowdoin College in 1812.

Ann Royall was a busy writer and traveller, the first professional journalist in the U.S.A. who visited Hallowell in 1825. Her travel notes became 'Sketches of History, Life and Manners in the United States'. This is how she saw the 74 year old Vaughan: "*…a rather small, spare man, face thin and emaciated, eyes large and blue, manners and conversation simple…venerable and wealthy…an English nobleman who has vast possessions in this country and Europe……sbrouded in humility… and philanthropy…*" Allowing for deference to assumed wealth and class, Royall was impressed, but as Craig Murray points out, '*very few Englishmen of Vaughan's standing ever immigrated to America, and still fewer stayed*'. And to be the successful immigrant, he had to exchange the lost pan-European life for the American life which the late Professor Benedict Anderson described as one of '*deeply engrained provincialism*' rooted in the myth of the exceptionality of the USA. So how did Vaughan the one-time politician, very familiar once with the exercise of power, manage the transformation, for "*at Hallowell he spent the remainder of his life, improving his estate, advocating conservative political views, working in his library, writing literary and political articles, and carrying on an extensive correspondence*"?

The radical become conservative, which meant supporting the federalism of John Jay and Alexander Hamilton, as opposed to the nationalism of Washington and Jefferson. Amongst the plethora of economic, political, scientific and intellectual projects, the request to examine the line of the North-East frontier with Canada was one that must have excited him since the new state of Maine abutted the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick and Quebec. It may be a tribute of sorts to his English past

as the unofficial negotiator in the 1783 Treaty of Paris, that a remote township in Upper Canada, in 1792 was named Vaughan by its lieutenant–governor, General John Simcoe. If the link between Benjamin and Simcoe is true, it is ironic for Simcoe was opposed to the generous terms of the treaty concerning the same frontier. With great ambitions for the province and with the powers of his appointment, Simcoe named other townships including London and York. York became Toronto.

In that letter of 1797 to John Jay, Vaughan had also remarked that present concerns were '*religion, morals, education, agriculture, and real comforts*'. Thus, the newly arrived Englishman was soon able and eminently suited to join America's patrician leaders, and to show how wrong was Sidney Smith's understanding in his sniffy question in the Edinburgh Review in 1820…'*in the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? Or goes to an American play?*' In a nation intent on forging an American identity, alongside the five concerns expressed to Jay, were politics, law, publicly funded education, and the mechanical sciences.

American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia

Benjamin Vaughan's economic, political, scientific and intellectual projects were many. So many diverse interests, and so vigorous ,intense and concerned a correspondent, enabled Craig Murray to conclude the last chapter of his biography, 'Cultural Leader in an Uncertain Country' "*like Franklin, he was an universal man. It may be fortunate that he died when he did: specialization in the sciences in the later nineteenth century made such breadth of knowledge impossible…… Benjamin Vaughan may have been the last man in the west who came close to knowing everything*". That is a grand claim for an immigrant Englishman, a true scion of the Enlightenment, and of the English Dissenting elites.

John Jay, by Gilbert Stuart (The National Gallery of Art)

His teacher, scientist and old friend, Joseph Priestley once congratulated him on his "*good sense and sturdiness*", expressing his pleasure he was not an atheist. So if religion was a very American pre-occupation, Vaughan's good English sense never advocated one theological doctrine. The family attended the local congregational church, until he fell out with the minister who used the pulpit to trash the French Revolution. When in 1825 the first Unitarian society was founded, he and his wife attended its services regularly. But carefully ecumenical, Vaughan received the sacraments at the Episcopalian Church. On the more hard line attitudes of the New England clergy, he complained to his friend, the clergyman John Rush, 'our public opinion persecutes more severely than the laws do…in many European countries'. He was "*actively a dissenter*

in London and passively in Hallowell" and followed "*America's path towards open church membership and tolerant denominationalism with acute interest'*." In 1827 he was to explain his stance as "*Social Christianity – charity, mutual forbearance and peace*". Corresponding with New England theologians became an abiding interest as he aged. Importing biblical commentaries from Europe, these were often exchanged for theological magazines. To his friend John Appleton he opined (Vaughan was never short of opinions) "*there has been a criminal inattention to biblical criticism in this country*". He seems never to have referred to his English nephew, the future convert to Catholicism, Cardinal Manning, although a picture of Manning now hangs in the Hallowell house.

John Simcoe Monument, Toronto

There was more to Benjamin than farming and theology. Alden Bradford, writer of *Biographical Notices of Distinguished Men in New England* (Boston,1842), enthused that Vaughan was a "*classical scholar who had read the best English and French authors.... studied the sciences, metaphysics and moral philosophy…*". With the young Harvard professor, George Ticknor, he exchanged letters on subjects as diverse as '*Thebes and Etruscan Egyptian obelisks, an ancient harp found in engineering*'. An assiduous reader of the 'North American Review', wrote an article for the magazine in 1817 on 'Ancient Persian Bricks' where he reviewed opinions on the characters on the bricks from Pliny onward to contemporary authorities. If Vaughan was curious about classical Persia, he was curious, too, about the history of America, contributing articles to the Massachusetts Historical Society. He was a founder member of the Maine Historical Society, formed soon after the secession of Maine from Massachusetts. Maine became by popular vote the 23rd state of the Union; its coat of arms is almost entirely based on design elements proposed by Vaughan to the Maine legislators.

Benjamin had explained the absence of any need to travel in a letter of 1827 to a Hallowell neighbour…" *Boston and Kennebec must give me all the speculative amusement which I expect this side the grave. Books of travel and prints will bring me what more of the world I have yet to see. My books, my friends, and good health are more to me than empires; and there is only one art of which I am still as fond as ever, namely music.*" Music teachers came to the house to instruct the children in piano, flute and violin. At his death, Hallowell had more English-made pianos than any other Maine town.

Vaughan is little known except to academic historians for his role in laying the foundations of the U.S.A. The generous terms of the Treaty of Paris are forgotten. He was a key player and, overlooking his ambivalence of attitude to the blight of slavery in the West Indian colonies, he was an active campaigner for the liberal cause in the Pitt years. Is that the cost of exile, and the modesty of a man who did not want a biography! Which did not stop The American Almanac of 1837 commemorating his death as a man of "*great and various learning…a zealous friend to order morality and religion… benefactor…philanthropist*", nor The National Intelligencer of 1835 commissioning a verse elegy in eight stanzas lamenting "*the Sage, the Scholar gone*". England's loss was the gain of Massachusetts, of Maine, of Hallowell. His life is the presence in the Vaughan Homestead Foundation. Without the Foundation's treasury of books, articles and information, and the painstakingly researched biography of Craig Murray, this account of a second life could not have been written. And, if a book on my shelves had not on its first page a certain bookplate……

The Gaucho in Argentinian Culture

Plum Schräger examines the importance of the gaucho in Argentinian history, society and culture. The gaucho was a* mestizo*, that is, of combined European and Amerindian descent. They were nomadic horsemen, whose way of life came to symbolise tradition and national identity.

The gaucho is more than just a cowboy, epitomised by John Wayne in the 'Wild West' era of 20th century American film, or a chain of overpriced London steak restaurants. This way of life has existed for more than three centuries and become the touchstone of Argentine identity, and nowhere more clearly than in the literature of the country from which they hail. 'Literature is the history of the national will', and no other figure, in literature or otherwise, has possessed a will of such significance in the history of Argentina. No other figure in the nation's history holds such a timeless and unique role in the debate about what it means to be Argentine. This nomadic horseman is not, however, merely a litmus test for authenticity; he is a voice for social change, political disenfranchisement and the true 19th century Argentine. It must also be noted that he is not limited to the time when he was written about in literature, from Hidalgo to Martin Fierro, but must be examined to understand

Saludando
(Photo Eduardo Amorim)

Gaucho (1868)

his role, and why authors such as Borges still found him worthy of literary immortalisation 100 years after his 'breed' died out.

There are few images as quintessential as the solitary rider, seemingly immune from worry, galloping across endless terrain towards a sky that seems unbounded by geography or authority. From the tip of Chile, not far from Antarctica, to the Canadian plains, one can find versions of him. But, be it the *llanero*, *vaquero*, *huaso*, none are as iconic as the gaucho. An image that symbolizes non-conformism and independence, he is nowhere more important than as the litmus test for the Argentine national identity. In culture high and low, in rural tavern and urban literary club, the gaucho has come to form a core part of *Argentidad* or 'Argentine-ness', being at once both the most authentic and most ethereal of national icons. The gaucho is a legendary figure of Argentine society, a rebel reminiscent of Che Guevara. His elegance is supposedly inherited from the Spanish conquistadores and his freedom is intrinsically linked to the symbol of the country's pampas. However, in an age of paved roads, digital communication, and fenced properties, how does the image of the gaucho survive? And, more importantly, why does he matter?

Historically, there is much controversy surrounding how long they were around for, in their original form. The poet, Carlos Raúl Risso, believes that 'the gaucho only really existed for a very brief period, of about one century, roughly between 1770 and 1870'. Traditionally, the gaucho hails exclusively from Argentina's Rio de La Plata basin, an area that marks the start of the pampa and borders Uruguay and the south of Brazil. This area is the 'south' that Borges regularly references as the psychological and spiritual location of what he terms 'Old Argentina', which functions as the the setting for what his 'perhaps [his] best story', *El Sur*. However, the reality of the Gaucho is less important than his symbolism as a character and the representative of a way of life, and this is how he is remembered amongst the Argentine people, in literature and elsewhere.

Domingo Sarmiento Faustino, Argentina's seventh president and a revered intellectual statesman, introduces in his book *Facundo* the gaucho as a character of political dissidence and a threat to Argentine society in his critique of the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas. He presents the first clear demonstration of the dichotomy between civilisation and barbarism, embodied by the town dweller and the Gaucho and exacerbated by the *caudillo*, de Rosas, in what Eschevarria calls, 'the most important book written by a Latin America in any discipline or genre'. Within this ground-breaking piece of literature, Sarmiento stands for education and development in the face of what he deems to be the main impediment to Argentine development; the 'dangerously destructive native barbarism of the Latin American countryside', the gaucho. This text triggered a general acceptance within Argentine society of the aforementioned opposition being the main hindrance to Latin America's quest for social order and national identity. However, it also highlighted to its audience the threat of cultural dilution if Sarmiento were to be able to achieve his ideals, he was against everything that it meant to be a Gaucho and favoured a lethal alternative, Europeanisation.

The literary response to this was, and is, enormous, and it initially triggered a wealth of texts within the country that focused entirely on national identity. What this demonstrates is not that the gaucho is a plainly negative or positive influence, but that his character provides the medium through which the central issues of Argentine society can be discussed and acknowledged, something which in turn is only permitted by the diversity with which he is portrayed. Sarmiento's problematic dichotomy of civilization and barbarism continues to maintain "a rhetorical platform for social debate",

The Lasso, Juan Manuel Blanes (1862)

La competencia de Jineteadas (Photo courtesy patagoniacomunicaciones)

through much of the 20th century "the protagonist stands as an important rhetorical tool of national identity". Moreover, it cannot be denied that this novel alone sought to provide the very basis for some of the greatest Latin American novels of the early 20th century. It even continued beyond this to influence Gabriel Garcia Marquez 's '100 Years of Solitude' (1967) and Mario Vargas Llosa with 'The Feast of the Goat'(2000).

This demonstrates the cultural weight that this text continued to have for centuries after its publication. More importantly, it clearly highlights the importance of Argentina's nomadic horseman as an icon of total cultural understanding within the southern cone, regardless of whether one chooses to sympathise with the European forces fighting for unification or the men of the pampas, the truer Argentine people. Sarmiento is 'to Latin America what Walt Whitman is to American literature' in that it is a 'voice singing about itself'.

Facundo has as its subtitle *Civilization and Barbarism*. It continues to be relevant today in drawing attention to the diversity of lifestyles in Latin America but, more importantly, the tension of striving for progress while attempting to maintain tradition, not to mention the ethical experiences of the people at the hands of the government or regime. Sarmiento advances his vision of creating a certain type of Argentina —'one that would be defined by European influence'. Men such as Sarmiento saw gauchos as a perpetual drain on Argentina's resources, an impediment to the countries progress that prevented it from realising its true potential, as gauchos lived on horseback, away from centres of population, thus social customs and state laws had little traction. In Sarmiento's opinion, centralization was the solution to creating a successful Argentina. While *Facundo* is undoubtedly a one-sided perspective, it is an important voice in the greater conversation of what should define the Argentine nation'.

The original gaucho was defined by a number of attributes, both material and spiritual, that separated him from his fellow countrymen and made him such a fascinating character. The most important of these attributes was his insatiable appetite for freedom, stemming from his characteristically nomadic nature. By definition, the gaucho went where he wanted. He tamed the wild horses from the pampas and survived off these lands by effectively hunting and gathering. This 'outlaw' existence foreshadows his downfall however, as the gaucho did not see himself as subject to the law. Their honour based understanding of laws were defined by knife fights and courage. Therefore, the only man a gaucho would ever submit to would be another man who had proved himself, through fighting, to be stronger.

Whilst Sarmiento presents an interesting, and strangely timeless, insight into Argentina circa 1845, it does not focus specifically on the gaucho, it is just that the gaucho could not fail to appear in an account of the people. His appearance as a national figure begins soon after the wars of independence and his fame is due mainly to Artigas, San Miguel de Güemes and San Martín. The creation of the gaucho and his continual recreation 'attests to the figure's ability to educate and advance in different ways varying political and economic projects at various times in Argentine history'.

Gaucho Riding Skills (Photo EFE/Iván Franco)

There is, however, one text whose status remains unchallenged, and whose place in the hearts of the people remains unsurpassed. José Hernandez' epic poem 'Martin Fierro', the pinnacle of gauchesque literature, is a poem of protest that centres on the life of a Gaucho who is forced to forgo his freedom and sense of individuality because of the tide of social change that seeped into his beloved pampas. It was a protest which has historical legitimacy in the years of abuse that were suffered at the hands of landowners, generals and politicians. An attempt to alert the government, Hernandez's choice to articulate this social strife through the voice of the Gaucho demonstrates the significance of him as a representative of the dispossessed. The gauchos' contribution to the national development of Argentina is clear: they were pressed into military service and fought for independence from Spain. It therefore becomes clear why Hernandez felt the need to document their plight following their abuse, neglect and dispersal that began to erode their identity as a social group. One stanza of *Martín Fierro* reads: "I mounted, and trusting to God, I made for another district—because a gaucho they call a vagrant can have no place of his own, and so he lives from one trouble to the next." The character of *Martín Fierro* is on many levels true to the image of the gaucho presented to us by history, yet is championed as an ideal hero. '*Martín Fierro* is at once historical and literary, real and imagined'. As the poet Risso notes, the shift from real to imagined was precipitated by the reign of one man, Juan Manuel de Rosas, the archetypal tyrant.

The text, an immediate popular success, took several years to be recognised as a true classic but Jorge Luis Borges proves why this is not evidence of failure, but that 'because it is such an accurate evocation of its own time that it took some distance before its greatness could become apparent'. In 'Martin Ferro', the gaucho is portrayed as an oppressed minority, subjugated at the hands of the European-like ruling classes, who themselves strive to imitate the original Spanish oppressors who came before them. The author, therefore, presents a stance that condemns Saramiento's 'civilization' as the force destroying the national identity. Many scholars have consequently argued that this very portrayal triggered the start of the intellectual backlash against the notion of an ideal civilization, a movement that continued into the 20th Century with Borges' condemnation of Peron's autocratic regime.

Many other works of Argentina literature contribute to the growing symbolism of the gaucho as hero. Ricardo Guiraldes is one, and in *Don Segundo Sombra* he raises the gaucho to the status of the embodiment of the Argentine nation, 'the gaucho par excellence'. For Güiraldes, the gaucho, is a symbol of strength and character, attributes that were perhaps felt to be lacking within the nation at this point. Moreover, the vague and broad manner in which the gaucho is described within the text enabled an unusual level of accessibility for the reader, an aspect that greatly magnified the effect it had on society. This abstract definition of a gaucho allowed anyone, no matter their social class or geographical location, to aspire to be a gaucho , in terms of the non-conformist example that they provided. Don Segundo sums this up in his advice to the protagonist, Fabio: "if you're really a gaucho, you don't have to change, because wherever you go, you'll go with your soul leading the way, like the lead mare of the herd." All Argentines could acquire the strength of character necessary to be a gaucho. Furthermore, the plight of the protagonist also mirrored the plight of the country as the gaucho in this period had almost been erased from society, similarly a large proportion of the demographic lamented the erosion of a true Argentine identity. Fabio is tormented by the fact that he lacks identity, mirroring the diluted Argentine society in the 20th century and the confusion about what it meant, or what it was, to be Argentine.

Returning to Borges, many of his intellectual contemporaries saw the modern way of life as corrupt and superficial, lacking in substance and therefore lacking in roots. They empathized with the protagonist's plight and sought instead to 'promote the gaucho as the symbol of traditional Argentina'. According to Delaney, "for those individuals who feared that the nation had lost its vigour and had become bland and passionless, the gaucho combined many of the heroic qualities which they believed the nation had lost". Perhaps the true message of Guiraldes' novel is a profound fear within his country of social change, something against which the gaucho could act as the ideal bastion, as a manifestation of everything traditional that was valued.

Their traditional importance is also immortalized or defined by their skill as horsemen, a field in which they are so experienced that they put any of their North American cowboy relatives to shame. It is often said that if the gaucho were to be compared to any mythological creature it would be

centaur. The saying goes, 'the gaucho and his horse are one, the man on foot is half a gaucho'. With this in mind, given that the gaucho is no one with out a horse, respects no authority, wanders the country preferring to remain solitary, it would be easy to think that the gaucho is the same as his US cousin, but this is far from the case.

It is, in part, their headgear that distinguishes them out from their John Wayne-esque counterparts. Whilst the All-American cowboys choose wide brimmed hats that look like they've spent years being trampled on by hooves and beaten back into shape with hammers, the gauchos of Argentina go for something a little jauntier. Perched on the heads of these hardy, weather-beaten folk sits the most dashing of caps, the beret. This image seems quite comical. The national icon, these nomadic horsemen, the brooding silent types who sit on their steeds and stare off into the distance, who cook slabs of beef over open flames and shun human contact in favour of the more trustworthy contact of cattle should perhaps wear something more commanding than a beret. But, there is a story behind it, as there is behind every dimension of their multifaceted character.

The beret is a timeless mark of their heritage, in that the gauchos today can trace their roots back to the colonists who arrived in Latin America from the Basque country of Northern Spain and Southern France. There, unsurprisingly, the beret reigns supreme as the headgear of choice, and it's a tradition that has been retained over hundreds of years by the horsemen of central Argentina. In 1833, Darwin noted that "There is high enjoyment in the independence of the gaucho life--to be able at any moment to pull up your horse and say, 'Here we will pass the night' and arguably this is what people are still drawn to today.

Argentines have spent more than a century lamenting the passing of the gaucho, who once roamed the verdant countryside and unwittingly helped to bind Argentina into a nation. It is this binding of a nation that underpins the importance of the gaucho in that, in the era of nation building that followed the departure of the conquistadores, the rulers and the people were confronted by a huge country, with many inhabitants, who had no shared culture whatsoever. The gaucho filled this void. and though few gauchos now are as wildly elegant as those whom Darwin encountered in 1833, (he noted that they looked like, 'they would cut your throat and make a bow at the same time'), the gaucho remains what St George is for the English, the touchstone of their national identity.

Moreover, even beyond the specific parameters of gauchesque literature, the influence remains both significant and relevant. Jorge Luis Borges found the gaucho a worthy literary subject of fascination. *El Sur* has much common thematic ground with *Martin Fierro* and *Don Segundo Sombra.* Borges' story demonstrates the omnipresent nature of the Gaucho in society, the unavoidable influence of the past on a seemingly distant present. The protagonist, a librarian, suffers an accident and travels south, into the pampas, to recuperate in an *estancia*. This aspect of the plot alone has great symbolic significance. It represents the view that Argentina, suffering many problems, has one solution, to depart from what is currently deemed relevant and revisit the values of the past.

Martha Smith, curator of the Gaucho museum in San Antonio de Areco argues that this is still the case, in that "the roots of Argentines are still in question. Politically, it is a country that is still at blows". She notes that "there were Italian immigrants, Spanish, English--they didn't share a nationality. This makes it difficult for us to have a true national conscience. So when we speak of the *fogon* (campfire), of the *chacarera* (gaucho folk dance), this is our Argentina. This is what we need to affirm." Edmundo Murray once wrote that "the invention of history is a process intimately related with the construction of popular narratives", and in this vein the gaucho may well be an invention, but one that is grounded in historical truth and possessing of immense social importance. The external symbols of gauchos are everywhere, in urban *maté* drinkers, *asado* lovers, but also in the deep sentiment that from the vast pampas came forth not a mere construct but a real, new person, and a new culture, something distinct. The half man, half horse still rides out.

Los overos (Photo Eduardo Amorim)

The Representation of Society in Wharton and Woolf

Christabel McLain explores the individual and the values of the governing class in two novels. In both* Mrs Dalloway[1] *and* The Age of Innocence[2]*, the individual is portrayed as being almost entirely shaped, or deformed, by his or her interactions with the values of the upper classes; these being stoicism, a belief in tradition, and an abhorrence of passion.

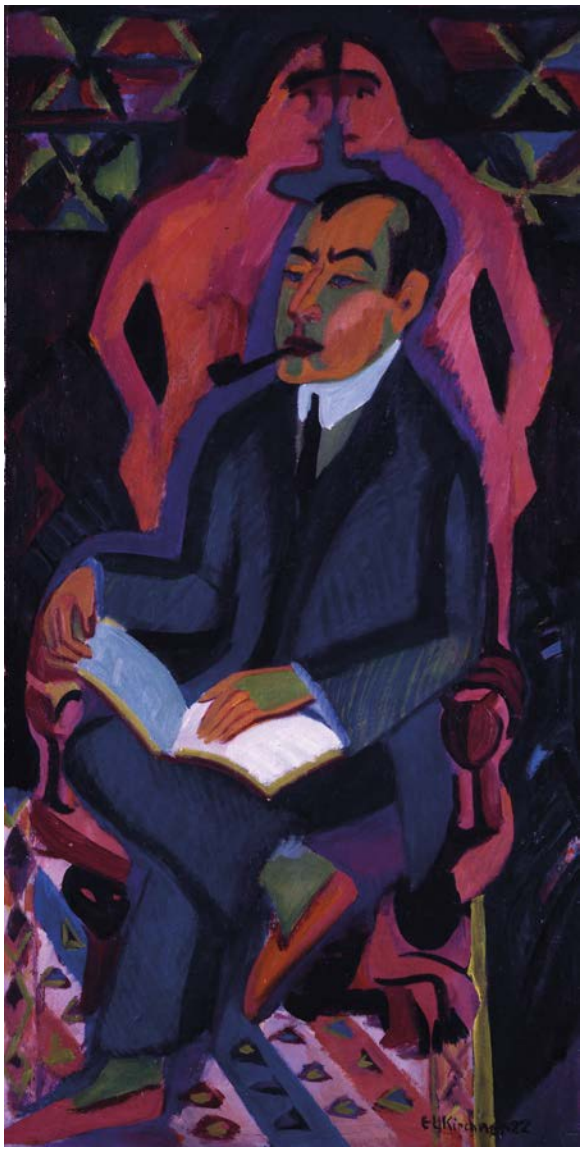
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner Das Wohnzimmer (1921)

Virginia Woolf stated in her diary her intentions 'to criticise the social system, and to show it at work, at its most intense', and her novel is thus an examination of the upper class and its control over English society. Nevertheless, it is not a direct indictment, as she chose to write mainly in the perspective of Clarissa, which forces the reader to sympathise, if not necessarily condone. Wharton's commentary is not as intentionally critical, as she herself grew up in the exact environment she depicts, and is writing with an air of nostalgia for a pre-war time. She believed that 'the small society in which (she) was born was 'good' in the most prosaic sense of the term'[3]. The time lapse between the settings of the novels is relevant, *Age of Innocence* being primarily set in the 1870s and *Mrs Dalloway* in 1923, as, in the words of Peter Walsh, 'Those five years - 1918 to 1923 - had been, he suspected, somehow very important. People looked different. Newspapers seemed different' (pp.48). Despite the vast effects of the war, the suffocating sense of sameness and entrapment is felt by the characters in both novels, due to the ever-present, all-encompassing social consciousness[4], and the stiff societal mould. The attempt to conform to this oppressive set of unwritten rules results in a lack of communication, at the price of vivid feeling, and the ejection of non-conformers from society. Behind the criticism there is, however, an implicit question; to what extent is self-hood being worn down by the formation of a homogenous society, or is it rather that,

without the constraints of a social code, there would be no 'self' at all?

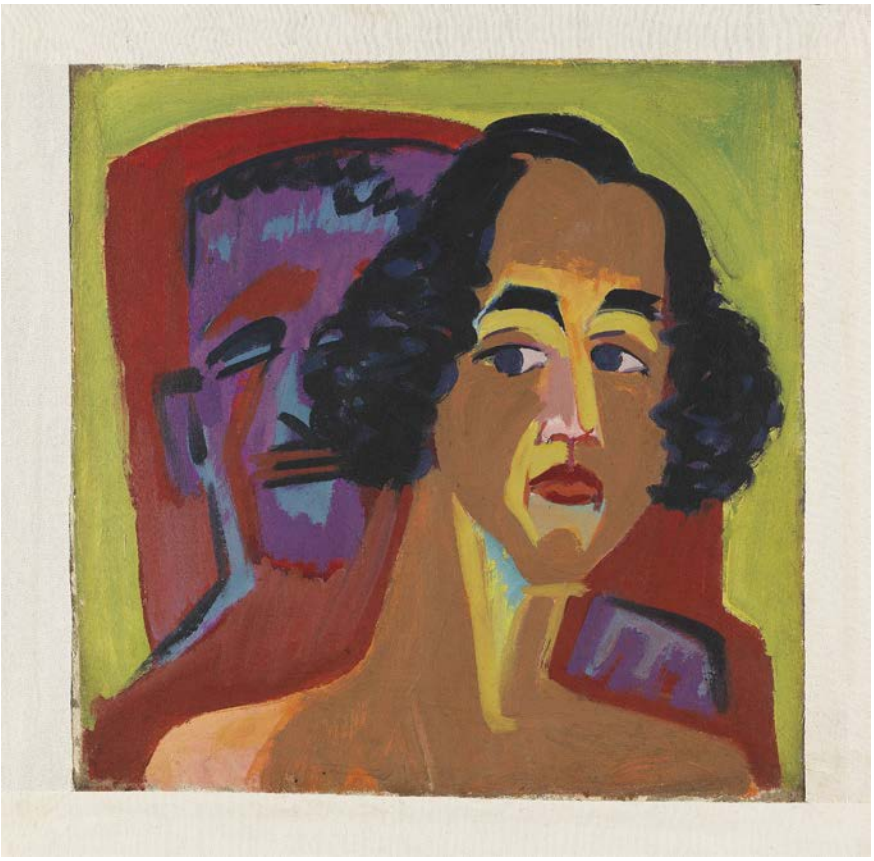
Throughout Edith Wharton's *Age of Innocence*, there is a stifling lack of open communication amongst the characters; even the reader is not excluded from this struggle, as the story is narrated mainly from Newland Archer's limited viewpoint, and thus most of the characters' inner selves remain a mystery to us too. Newland's inability, and perhaps lack of desire, to understand those around him is conveyed in the very first scene, set at the opera. On seeing May, he thinks 'The darling! She doesn't even guess what it is about' (p 4); in his naive 'thrill of possessorship', he misses subtle but present testimonies to May's actual understanding. As she watches the scene of seduction, 'a warm pink mounted to the girl's cheek, mantled her brow to the roots of her fair hair braids, and suffused the young slope of her breast' (p 5). This bears witness to an interior self and feeling which Archer cannot see, or prefers to overlook. As the tenderness of this first scene fades, May remains to Archer a vacuum; a symbol of convention, cold and suffocating, and the lack of verbal communication between them means this attitude does not shift. As well as contributing to his unhappy marriage, this censorship of expression leads to Newland's internalised feelings of horror to do with the inevitable sameness of his life. In a world where replication seems everything, and characters grow into copies of their parents, he is unable to communicate his feelings of entrapment, within his class and his own mind. This repression of the soul results in him being in the process of disintegration for most of the novel; 'Absent - that was what he was : so absent from everything most densely real and near to those about him that it sometimes startled him to find they still imagined he was there' (p 140) So far, it is suggested that the strict constraints, and the expectations of stoic repression, placed upon them are removing any sense of self for both characters; May's ideas and emotions we never truly know, and Newland's initial love for literature and independence we see being forcibly worn down. The beginning of the breakdown of his faculties and rebellious spirit can be somewhat pinned at the moment of his wedding, when 'all these sights, sounds and sensations, so familiar in themselves, so unutterably strange and meaningless in his new relation to them, were confusedly mingled in his brain' (p 117). Newland was ultimately powerless to resist this marriage, deemed inexorable by the ingrained values of his class, and in the near loss of his own free-will his mind becomes an 'empty and echoing place' (p 131). There is no form of escape from becoming a part of the conforming, continuous 'tribe', other than to flee and remove yourself entirely. Nevertheless, while the novel does convey that, especially for Newland, to be locked in the family, and society, is to be buried alive, it also acknowledges that the loss of social being is in itself a form of death[5], conveyed by the eventual fall from grace of Medora Manson, Julius Beaufort and Ellen. Perhaps this is why Newland does not escape with Ellen but instead stays, where he has no choice but to carry through his engagement.

In Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, the lack of communication in the novel is made all the more tortuous by the form of writing; we know the character's internal thoughts, and so we see just how crippling their inability to convey them. At her own party, full of the well-educated members of her upper-class society, Clarissa herself thinks that the young people 'could not talk…the enormous resources of the English language, the power it bestows, after all, of communicating feelings…was not for them. They would solidify young.' (p 181) These young people, just as May and Newland, are simply destined to grow into their parents, and become as repressed as the generation before them. This generation, in *Mrs Dalloway*, is the one which scrupulously ignores the war in an effort to deny its pain or significance, as described in Gertrude Stein's 'Lost Generation'. This wilful naivety could also have played a part in the choice of *The Age of Innocence* as a title; determined ignorance about anything meaningful is a trait shared in the upper classes of both novels, and the innocence is only a facade. As for post-war London, the War's only justification could have been as a liberating force to transform society, but, as Clarissa Dalloway says in the short story from which the novel grew, 'Thousands of young men had died that



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner Porträt Manfred Schames (1925-1932)

[1] A Harvest Book. Harcourt, inc.
[2] Wordsworth Classics
[3] Backward
[4] Which is defined by Alex Zwerdling in 'Mrs Dalloway and the Social System'
[5] As argued by Millicent Bell in 'The Social Subject in The Age of Innocence'



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner Das Paar (1924)

things might go on[6], and the sacrifice was meaningless. The detrimental effects of their attitude are physically represented in the form of Septimus Warren Smith, driven mad due to his experiences as a soldier. The final blow to his fragile mind is his friend Evans' death, upon which Septimus, 'far from showing any emotion or recognising that here was the end of a friendship, congratulated himself upon feeling very little and very reasonably' (p 85). The realisation that 'he could not feel' (p 86) is the trigger to the breakdown of his mind. Septimus struggles intensely and painfully to communicate, both with his wife and with his doctors, because the world in which he lives shies away from thoughts like his; 'He strained; he pushed, he looked; …Beauty, the world seemed to say' (p 69). His constant sensory overload and his attempts to find some meaning in the world do not fit with the importance placed on stoic repression. He cannot look to external life for stability, as, rather than seeing a comforting sense of traditional values there, he finds instead the horror of a class determined to forget what he is consumed by. In Septimus' own words, 'his brain was perfect; it must be the fault of the world then - that he could not feel'. Both Newland and Septimus, due to their inability to communicate and thus freely exist within their worlds, essentially lose themselves. The notable difference is that where Newland's mind begins to be eroded, emptied in the process, Septimus' overflows with inescapable thoughts and torment.

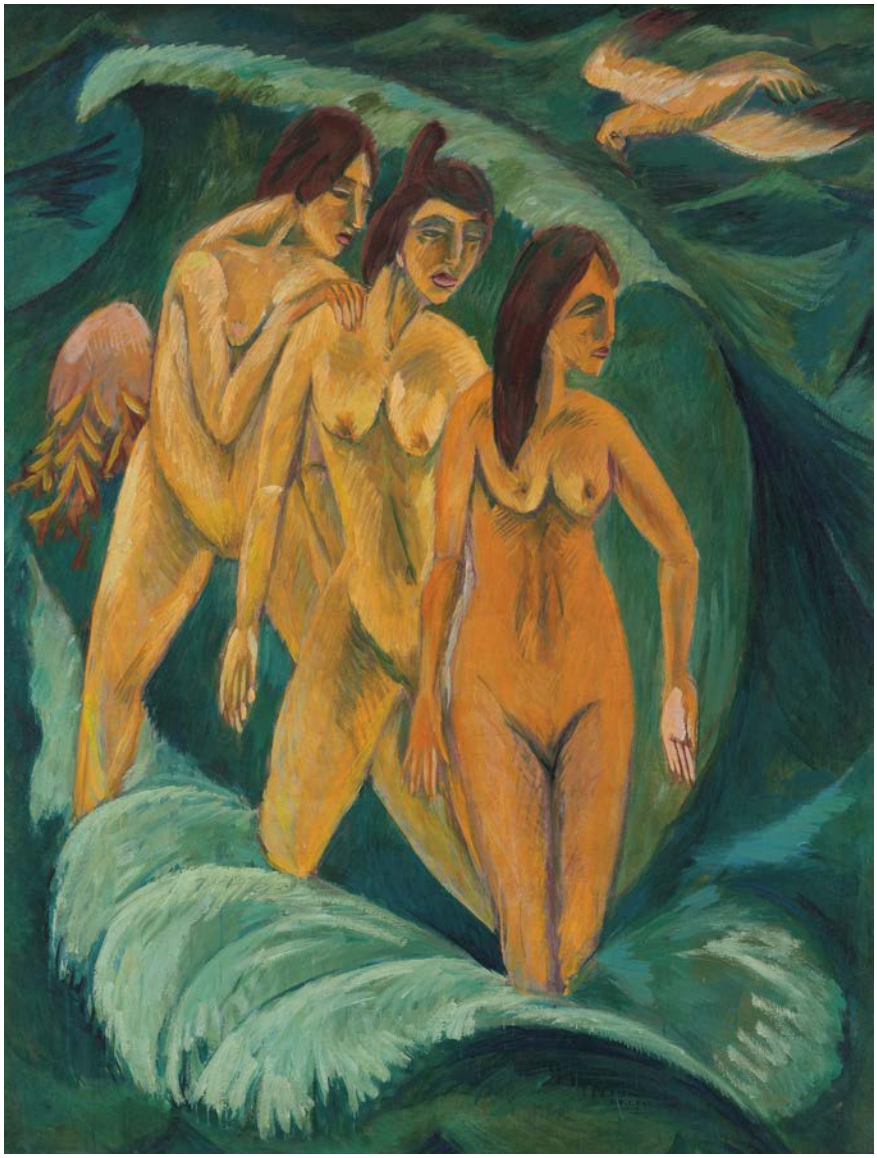
The repression of passion, and of any vivid feeling, in *The Age of Innocence* is not only a by-product of the New York governing class, but a way in which it sustains itself. Newland's marriage to May is perfunctory and cold, while his potential forbidden relationship with Ellen promises to be full of passion. It is not merely, however, his marital status which prevents Newland from being with Ellen; the overpowering, ever-present force of societal values obstructs it too. The impossible nature of their love is depicted in the scene at the Patroon House; away from their duties, the house, 'as if magically created' (p 86), represents a moment in which they might escape social categories and finally break through the laden silence between them. However, it does not work. Initially, this is because Archer, although finally in a position to act on his intense desires, is paralysed. Unable to shake the ideals so deeply ingrained, he feels the need 'to close his senses to it…he moved away from the hearth and stood gazing out… if the thing was to happen, it was to happen in this way, with the whole width of the room between them, and his eyes still fixed on the outer snow (p 86)'. Having escaped the eyes of society, he forces the distance himself, and looks out in an attempt to find normality. Finally, those eyes find them again regardless, in the interruption of Julius Beaufort entering the Patroon house. This scene could suggest two things; either, that Newland is not necessarily forcibly deformed by society, but rather willingly re-shaping himself despite what he thinks his desires are; or, society has worked its way so deeply into his mind that it has become completely inescapable.

The London governing class, too, forces its occupants to subdue their emotions. Clarissa Dalloway is a prime example of denying oneself ardour in order to conform to the expected path. She is in many ways exactly what May Welland is destined to become; a housewife who throws parties and seems on the surface superficial and ignorant, and in some ways is. Nevertheless, Clarissa differs in that while, as far as we know, May has had little experience prior to her numb marriage, Clarissa has felt passion, or even love. Clarissa and Sally Seton shared a rebellious spirit, planning to 'reform the world' (p 33), and their kiss, perhaps the happiest moment of Clarissa's life, produced in Clarissa a 'revelation, a religious feeling!' (p 36). Peter was unconventional, identifying as a socialist at Oxford, and also stirred powerful feelings in Clarissa. But to be with Sally was impossible at the time, and 'with Peter everything had to be shared; everything gone into. And it was intolerable, and…she had to break with him or they would have been destroyed, both of them ruined, she was convinced.' (p 8) The absolute terror of expressing herself drives her away from him, and into a life of stasis with Richard, who cannot say he loves her, or even say the word 'I'. Here, she must 'fear no more the heat o' the sun, nor the furious winter's rages' (p 9), and can become, as Peter predicted, 'the perfect hostess' (p 7). When Peter comes to visit

her after returning from India, they near a moment of true communication and feeling, when he, simply 'by those uncontrollable forces thrown through the air, burst into tears' (p 46), and 'Clarissa leant forward, took his hand, drew him to her, kissed him'. But, after nearing this precipice, 'Peter Walsh got up and crossed to the window and stood with his back to her.' This scene is a direct parallel to the scene in the Patroon house, and shows how the two men, despite seeing themselves as independent, are deeply affected by societal ideals, and are thus unable to act on their desires. The danger of closeness causes Peter to move to the window too, to look outside, and this time it is Elizabeth rather than Beaufort who intervenes. Clarissa, having taken the path which was essentially predetermined by her upper class upbringing, grows older feeling 'shrivelled, aged, breastless' (p 31). The passage in which she retreats to her bedroom, 'like a nun withdrawing, or a child exploring a tower', conveys the utter lack of sexuality in her life of repression, and suggests she has never grown up from the ignorance of childhood, given 'she could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth'. Clarissa is a paradigm of the ideal woman, in a society which lacks 'not beauty; not mind…(but) something central which permeated; something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contact of man and woman, or of women together' (p 31). In attributing this description to herself, she seems to admit that, ever since the moment of choosing Richard, she never truly progressed, or learnt what passion is; her soul remained virginal, void of feeling. Peter and Sally, too, lost their vibrancy as they grew; Peter needs Richard to find a job, and is more of a failure than a revolutionary, and Sally became 'Lady Rosseter', one of the elite she once sneered at.

In both novels, the pervading sense of repetition, within individual lives and through generations, and the forbiddance to speak out, ultimately stems from an extreme fear of the unknown. This necessarily leads to the expulsion of the non-conformers from upper class society, or even society as a whole. In *The Age of Innocence*, the governing class is depicted as a tribe, made up of a collective, entangled experience rather than discrete beings. In the very first scene it is stated that 'What was or was not 'the thing' played a part as important in Newland Archer's New York as the inscrutable totem terrors that had ruled the destinies of his forefathers thousands of years ago' (p 4), conveying that this structure has spanned over centuries, and the values are permanent. Ellen clearly presents herself as a discrete being; she has self-will and vitality, and directly challenges the social power, posing the possibility of instability. This is why Archer sees her as embodying enigma, passion, joys and suffering, and why New York society mistrusts her deeply. Similarly, in *Mrs Dalloway*, the class uses its influence to exclude any alien or

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Berliner Strassenszene (1913)



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner : Drei Badende

threatening forces; the characters who cannot learn to restrain their intense emotions are a threat to a society which ignores the tremors, and must be dealt with by 'authorities'. These characters are Doris Kilman, to some extent Peter Walsh, and mostly Septimus Warren Smith. In his case, 'the authorities' are Sir William Bradshaw, whose job it is to make sure that 'these unsocial impulses, bred more than anything by the lack of good blood, were held in control' (p 100). This is the equivalent of Lawrence Lefferts in *The Age of Innocence*, the final judge on 'good form'. Both are part of the conspiracy to keep any kind of vividness, any turbulence, at a safe bay; their goal is to produce a population of copies of their suitable template, and to remove any person who will not comply. In both novels, anyone outside the usual range of types is hard for those at the centre to appreciate or even see. For example, May thinks Monsieur Rivier is common, Ellen is not thought beautiful in America, and Medora Manson is forced into a downward spiral. Similarly, Doris Kilman's downfall is due to her ideas, that 'she would not pretend that the Germans were all villains' (p 121); Lucrezia is dismissed due to her foreignness; Septimus becomes a category of 'Sir William's Bill' in himself, and is thus easier to define and deal with. Their only possible responses, then, are either to remain downtrodden, accept ejection and defeat, or to escape on their own terms from this rigid and toxic society. It is in choosing the second option that Ellen Olenska and Septimus become parallels. Ellen is originally expelled not only from New York society, but also from the narrative for a period, though she is eventually re-ingratiated. Her final departure is voluntary; she must flee to Europe, which is viewed somewhat disdainfully by New Yorkers as a place for artists. Septimus' potential entrapment is more obviously dangerous; he will be subjected to a life of medical imprisonment. His choice of escape must therefore also be more drastic, hence his eventual suicide. Both characters are ultimately asserting their sense of self, by refusing to submit to their assigned category of 'outcast'.

In conclusion, both Edith Wharton and Virginia Woolf present their home cities as containing insular societies which force a mould onto each inhabitant's actions and mind, eroding any sense of individuality. Nevertheless, the authors, while agreeing on this overall concept, view it with different levels of scorn; Woolf sees it as detrimental to all progression and potential, while Wharton is slightly less scathing, due to her nostalgia for the security of the extinct lifestyle of her characters. This discrepancy could suggest, at certain points in the novel, that Wharton thinks the social confinements are necessary in creating any stable sense of self at all. However, it is rather that the values which she depicts as controlling her characters throughout the novel are somewhat also ingrained in her. Thus, Wharton is unable to write Newland an ending with Ellen; she experimented with offering her lovers some life together, but could not complete the story.[7] Woolf's more radical approach, of attempting to 'record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall', provides us with a more internal view, and relies less on exterior events than *The Age of Innocence*. From this perspective, our experiences lie entirely within the interior self of the characters, and so we more clearly perceive their constant repression of it. Ultimately, the authors convey that in their respective governing classes, there are two possibilities for the individual: to follow the protagonists, Clarissa and Newland, and immerse oneself entirely in the allotted societal role, thus losing your self-hood; or, to maintain your autonomy by escaping entirely, the eventual choice of Ellen and Septimus, despite the possibly painful consequences.

[7] As explained in the introduction by Stuart Hutchinson

Conrad, O'Brien and the theme of savagery

Archie Hall compares how Conrad and O'Brien understand savagery in* Heart of Darkness *and* The Things they Carried*, and explores the tensions between perceptions of the civilised world and experiences in the Congo and the Vietnam war.

"I was part of the night. I was the land itself – everything, everywhere – the fireflies and paddies, the moon, the midnight rustlings, the cool phosphorescent shimmer of evil – I was atrocity – I was jungle fire, jungle drums – I was the blind stare in the eyes of all those poor, dead, dumbfuck ex-pals of mine – all the pale young corpses, Lee Strunk and Kiowa and Curt Lemon – I was the beast on their lips – I was Nam – the horror, the war."

– *The Things they Carried*, Flamingo 1991 edition, hereafter "*Things*", pages 205-6

"Oh, it didn't surprise me in the least to hear this, and at the same time to be told that Fresleven was the gentlest, quietest creature that ever walked on two legs. No doubt he was; but he had been a couple of years already out there engaged in the noble cause, you know."

– *Heart of Darkness*, Project Gutenberg edition, hereafter "*Heart*", page 17

The stark dichotomy of civilisation and savagery is an ancient idea with a rich cultural patrimony, one stretching from the Greek idea of the Barbarian to Hobbes' State of Nature to Freud's ID and Superego and beyond. Both O'Brien's *The Things they Carried* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* chart disintegration when purportedly civilised men are brought to a place of barbarous darkness and forced, through trade, war or a mixture of the two, to civilise "the dark places of the earth" (*Heart* 8) and, in doing so, become re-barbarised themselves.

The civilisation-savagery dichotomy is explicitly set up in both *Heart of Darkness* and *The Things they Carried*. Marlowe's narration of the central storyline of *Heart of Darkness* begins with the declaration: "And this also… has been one of the dark places of the earth." (*Heart* 8), placing modern,

A derailed and abandoned railway car in Africa
By David Brossard - Flickr: Kinky

Le Rêve, Henri Rousseau (Photo: The Yorck Project)

civilised Britain part way through a journey that began with darkness and savagery. Describing the imagined experience of a Roman soldier first civilising Britain, presenting an archetypal idea of primitive savagery and explicitly foreshadowing Marlowe's experience in the Congo, Conrad writes that the soldier could "feel the savagery, the utter savagery, had closed round him, all that mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles, in the hearts of wild men." (*Heart* 11) Conrad is likely directly echoing the Darwinist R.H. Huxley[1] who in his widely distributed 1894 lecture *Evolution and Ethics* stated, "It may be assumed that, two thousand years ago, before Caesar set foot in Southern Britain, the whole countryside…was in what was called a *state of nature*" in harking back to Britain's savage past. Notably though, Conrad acknowledges civilisation's novelty and thus fragility, saying that "darkness was here yesterday" (*Heart* 9), in stark contrast to Huxley's "two thousand years". In *The Things they Carried*, O'Brien depicts Vietnam with language of savage exoticism. He writes: "the country rose up in thick walls of wilderness" (*Things* 89) and "this isn't civilisation. This is Nam"(*Things* 72).

In the opening story of *The Things They Carried*, one of Alpha Company's burdens is "the land itself – Vietnam, the place, the soil – a powdery orange-red dust that covered their boots and fatigues and faces" (*Things* 13). A hugely important factor in the identity-shifting induced by Vietnam is the physical displacement from civilisation to "Nam". This is reaffirmed by the specific reference to "faces", where identity is literally made manifest, being covered. The barbarising land is at its most visceral *in In the Field*, where "the field turned to slop, everything soft and mushy…the water kept rising…a terrible stink began to bubble out of the earth" (*Things* 167). Here directly and physically, the sordid savage "shit field" (*Things* 168), attacks and smothers the men until Jimmy Cross' "uniform was dark with mud; his arms and face were filthy" (*Things* 163). The filth has active agency and "seemed

to erase identities, transforming the men into identical copies of the perfect soldier" (*Things* 164). O'Brien "blamed this place [the shit field] for what I had become, and I blamed it for taking away the person who I had once been" (*Things* 185-6). This is taken even further in *How to Tell a True War Story*, where the land adopts human characteristics: "it talks. Understand? Nam – it truly talks. The guys can't cope. They lose it". (*Things* 72), "They order up the firepower…All night long they just smoke those mountains… It's all fire" (*Things* 72-3). The land's continuous chattering has worked its way into the men's heads to strip away their humanity, and their only reaction is destruction, the most savage instinct of all. When they return to base "[t]hey don't talk. Not a word" (*Things* 73); the land has excised language, one of the most crucial differentiators of civilised society and barbarism.

The land similarly de-civilises in *Heart of Darkness*, where it exercises eternal power that man cannot fathom civilising away. Conrad writes: "the silent wilderness surrounding this cleared speck on the earth struck me as something great and invincible, like evil or truth, waiting patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion" (*Heart* 52). In comparison to the tiny "speck" of land that man purports to have civilised, the "wilderness" looms, eternal and "invincible". For Conrad, any attempts to battle the land and thus force civilisation upon it are hubristic and futile; he describes a French warship as "incomprehensible, firing into a continent", writing that "there was a touch of insanity in the proceeding, a sense of lugubrious drollery at the sight" (*Heart* 30). The land in *Heart of Darkness*, like the "shit field" in *The Things they Carried* has agency, crushing civilisation. When Marlow arrives, he "discovered that a lot of imported drainage-pipes for the settlement had been tumbled in there [a ditch]. There wasn't one that was not broken. It was a wanton smash-up." (*Heart* 36) The pieces of technology imported from a civilised region are smashed by the Congo's savagery, and once destroyed, they are animalised. Conrad compares "an undersized railway-truck lying on its back" to "the carcass of some animal" (*Heart* 32).

The land exerts a formidable background effect in both novels, pulling individuals towards savagery, but a potentially more nuanced and powerful influence is the very experience of a civilising mission, through war with the goal of bringing freedom and democracy or through imperialism with the goal of "humanising, improving, instructing" (*Heart* 76). The principal vehicle for barbarisation in *The Things they Carried* is war's trauma. One of the most excruciating wartime experiences for any individual is the loss of friends, and O'Brien uses the death of Curt Lemon, who "was playing catch with Rat Kiley, and then…was dead" (*Things* 75) to explore the effect that such trauma can have. For Rat Kiley, his "best friend in the world" (*Things* 75), the effect is instant and brutalising. Attacking a baby water buffalo with "pupils shiny black and dumb" (*Things* 76), epitomising innocent and inviolate nature,

> "he shot it twice in the flanks. It wasn't to kill, it was to hurt. He put the muzzle up against the mouth and shot the mouth away. Nobody said much. The whole platoon stood there watching, feeling all kinds of things, but there wasn't a great deal of pity for the baby water buffalo…for now it was a question of the pain" (*Things* 75-6).

This act of gratuitous, stomach-wrenchingly savage murder is perpetrated and normalised by allegedly civilised men placed in a situation where the piercing pain wrenches at their humanity. O'Brien's understanding of human nature is, perversely, comparatively optimistic about the state of humanity. Under this narrative, it does at least take tremendous pain to twist a civilised soul back to a more base, savage form.

Conrad adopts a far more pessimistic view. In describing Marlow's response to a group of savages, he writes:

> "It was unearthly, and the men were—No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it—the suspicion of their not being inhuman…They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was…the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you—you so remote from the night of first ages—could comprehend." (*Heart* 83)

Marlow tries to distance himself, calling them "unearthly", but realises

[1] *Joseph Conrad and the Ethics of Darwinism*, Allan Hunter, page 18

this is not true, that even in his civilised heart there was "just the faintest trace of a response". Conrad's view of savagery's effect on human nature is that there exists a "fascination of the abomination" (*Heart* 11): somewhere in the dark heart of humanity there exists a part that is allured by savagery. Describing Kurtz, he writes: "it [Kurtz's soul] had looked within itself and, by heavens I tell you, it had gone mad" (*Heart* 158). For Marlow, the core of that attraction is his inexplicably burning desire to meet Kurtz, something that, try as he might, he cannot rationally account for, comparing it to "the dream-sensation, that commingling of absurdity, surprise, and bewilderment in a tremor of struggling revolt, that notion of being captured by the incredible which is of the very essence of dreams" (*Heart* 62).

In *Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong*, O'Brien explicitly plays homage to Conrad, depicting Mary Anne Bell, a classic American sweetheart who epitomises the civilised, feminine opposite of savagery, gradually becoming an animalistic, Kurtz-like figure. She is described as "fascinated by [blood]" (*Things* 93), and having ventured into the jungle "in a sense…never returned, not entirely, not all of her". She straddles the divide, "wearing her culottes, her pink sweater, and a necklace of human tongues" (*Things* 107). She says of the experience of the Vietnamese jungle: "it's like I'm full of electricity and I'm glowing in the dark – I'm on fire almost – I'm burning away to nothing - but it doesn't matter because I know exactly who I am" (*Things* 103). The "fascination of the abomination" approaches ecstasy. O'Brien writes that "it was as if she was taunting some wild creature out in the bush, or in her head, inviting it to show itself, a curious game of hide-and-seek that was played out inside herself." (*Things* 106)

The alteration of an individual's humanity by the brute force of trauma, the land or the fundamental attraction of savagery changes the way savages abroad and the civilised at home are seen. The dominant understanding of the savage enemy in *Heart of Darkness* is one of dehumanisation. Marlow never moves beyond seeing the natives as otherised, essentialised parts of a throbbing mass of savagery. This formed the cornerstone of Chinua Achebe's critique of Conrad[2] as a racist and is brought out through descriptions of the natives as "bundles of acute angles" (*Heart* 38). Whether this was due to Conrad's own inculcation of colonialist tropes or his attempt to depict the colonialist psyche is irrelevant to the contention that for Conrad colonialism-induced barbarism causes one to see the enemy as fundamentally inhuman.

To an extent, similar ideas operate in *The Things They Carried*, where dehumanisation exists in the substratum of dehumanising terms such as "gook" (*Things* 72) and "a crispy critter [for a dead Vietnamese baby]" (*Things* 231). Far more powerful, though, is the tendency to humanise. When O'Brien kills a Vietnamese soldier, despite knowing nothing about him, he uses physical details to construct a narrative, "his chest was sunken and poorly-muscled – a scholar, maybe" (*Things* 121), "[h]e liked books. He wanted someday to be a teacher of mathematics" (*Things* 122) "He hoped the Americans would go away." Attempting to understand and get into the mind of your supposed enemy is something conventionally considered civilised, and underscores how civilised and savage values can sit side by side in the human mind. On the other hand, the extent to which (author) O'Brien *ad absurdum* creates a sympathetic character is perhaps suggestive of the way the deed is traumatising (character) O'Brien's mind, a key part of the barbarising process. Notable too, is the particular narrative created. Edward Said noted[3] that the West understands the exotic Other by means of its own culture, simply as a poor shadow of itself. O'Brien begins by constructing a narrative based on Vietnamese culture, referencing "stories about the heroic Trung sisters and Tran Hung Dao's famous rout of the Mongols and Le Loi's final victory against the Chinese at Tot Dong" (*Things* 121-2). As Said would have predicted, however, this devolves into a gradually more American narrative. O'Brien discusses the man's time "attending classes at the University of Saigon, where he avoided politics and paid attention to the problems of calculus" (*Things* 124), when "one evening, they [he and his beloved] exchanged gold rings" (*Things* 124) and how he "wrote romantic poems in his journal" (*Things* 124). All these, especially the final two, are particular Western cultural tropes. Alpha Company is blind to who the Vietnamese really are, only able to see them as dehumanised natives or inferior versions of Americans. In war, no true understanding can exist.

Vietnam veterans returning to America, changed by war, famously found it almost impossible to reintegrate into a nation that didn't understand their experience and seemed no longer to have a purpose for them. O'Brien addresses this in the story *Speaking of Courage*. The disconnection with their former friends, family and peers happens temporally: they were gone for so long that their hometowns change, so Norman Bowker's sweetheart Sally Kramer "was now Sally Gustafson and she lived in a pleasant blue house on the inexpensive side of the lake road" (*Things* 140). But it also happens psychologically: Bowker imagines a conversation with his father, his war medals: "Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Air Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart…none of these decorations was for uncommon valour" (*Things* 142), but even in his imagination, Bowker realises that a yawning gap now exists between the set of experiences through which they variously understand the world, and this extends to all of American society. "The town had no memory, and therefore no guilt" (*Things* 144). Having experienced the blindingly vivid savagery of war, everything else seems insipid in comparison for Bowker; college "seemed too abstract, too distant, with nothing real or tangible at stake, certainly not the stakes of war" (*Things* 155). A barbarised mind finds it impossible to engage with placid, civil academia. Eventually, Bowker "hanged himself" (*Things* 158).

For Marlow, after the horrific savagery and the abominable beauty of Kurtz's world, re-integration is also problematic. Having come closer than anyone else in Brussels to grasping the full range of human nature, all else

seems petty; their "dreams" seem "insignificant and silly" (*Heart* 170). Beyond that though, caught up in the barbarism of the Congo, he now considers himself totally separate from common Europeans and perhaps, in a Kurtz-like sense, superior to them. He "had no particular desire to enlighten them, but…had some difficulty in restraining [himself] from laughing in their faces, so full of stupid importance" (*Heart* 170). Internalised savagery – he has experienced 'the horror' - separates Marlow from all men, not just enemies.

Long Khanh Province. After battle, soldiers await the helicopter which will evacuate their comrade from the jungle. Photo: Pfc. L. Paul Epley, 1966

Civilised humanity collapsing into savagery is a process that falls totally outside the remit of any reader's experience, and thus is incredibly challenging to translate convincingly to literary form. Conrad recognises this, and believes that only in death can the truth of human experience be understood. Marlow says "perhaps all the wisdom, and all truth, and all sincerity, are just compressed into that inappreciable moment of time in which we step over the threshold of the invisible" (*Heart* 169), but even that is dubious, since "[i]f such is the form of ultimate wisdom, then life is a greater riddle than some of us think it to be" (*Heart* 168). As such, it seems futile to attempt to convey meaningful observations about humanity to readers who have come nowhere near the precipice that Marlow skirted. Nevertheless, Conrad tries, with the disclaimer:

> "the meaning…was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine." (*Heart* 9)

The deeper you dig into the humanity's heart of darkness, in search of a single "kernel" of truth, the further you are from any true comprehension of human nature. All Conrad can do therefore is impressionistically depict human barbarisation and hope a vague understanding is absorbed. The closest the tale comes to having a "kernel" is Kurtz's dying utterance, 'the horror, the horror" (*Heart* 176), and even that, piercing and condemnatory of humanity though it is, eludes any kind of meaning that can be pinned down, categorised and understood.

O'Brien ventures further than Conrad. For him "what stories can do, I guess, is make things present" (*Things* 179). He too understands that intellectual conception of savagery is impossible, saying, "in a true war story, if there's a moral at all, it's like the thread that makes the cloth. You can't tease it out. You can't extract the deeper meaning" (Things 75) but nevertheless believes that a different kind of understanding can be achieved. For O'Brien, "A true war story, if truly told, makes the stomach believe" (Things 75), and that stomach-understanding is the closest one can get, via fiction, to understanding the moral truth of war. And the stomach only believes specifics; "a moral declaration…because it abstracts, because it generalises, I can't believe it in my stomach. Nothing turns inside" (*Things* 75). Given that any inkling of this moral truth of savagery is the most powerful kind of truth possible, O'Brien happily subsumes other, more mundane kinds to it. The veracity of a story is irrelevant; "story-truth is truer sometimes than happening-truth" (*Things* 179).

O'Brien through this believed that he solved Marlow and Norman Bowker's conundrum of how any individual can cope with returning to a world so separate from the one in which their new, savaged humanity was forged. How anyone can recover the person they once were. Writing is the solution: "stories can save us" (*Things* 221), "you can make the dead talk" (*Things* 226), you "can revive, at least briefly, that which is absolute and unchanging" (*Things* 229) and in doing so, achieve profound catharsis. For O'Brien, that is the reason why he writes, to rescue his former self, before death and before Vietnam, from savagery's abyss. *The Things they Carried* ends: "I realise it is as Tim trying to save Timmy's life with a story" (*Things* 235). And maybe Marlow has realised that too and, as the Nellie drifts along the Thames, it's for that reason we hear his tale.

[2] *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*, Chinua Achebe

[3] *Orientalism*, Edward Said

‘Sailing to Byzantium’

Walker Thompson was studying in Georgia last summer, when two academics, whom he met there, happened to bring up the subject of Mount Athos, a complex of Orthodox Christian monasteries in northeastern Greece, in the context of the long-standing connections of Georgians with the place and their historical presence there. This piqued his curiosity. Accordingly, he resolved to cut short his stay in Georgia to visit the monastic republic.

Meteora Monastery: interior of cupola. Photograph by Marc Dozier

Mount Athos is, officially, an autonomous region in Greece on one of the three fingers of the Khalkhidiki peninsula – the other two are largely taken up, ironically enough, by tourist resorts – and the world’s only Christian monastic republic. Geographically, it is the second tallest mountain in Greece and ecologically, it is probably the largest patch of old-growth forest left in the Mediterranean. Mount Athos has its own government known as the Holy Community that oversees all administrative functions of the peninsula, with the exception of the military, coast guard, police, and emergency services, which are provided by the Greek government. Most of the monks live in one of twenty monasteries ranked in a traditional hierarchy. Alongside these, there are also hermits and ascetics who live in small village-like compounds or dependent monasteries called *sketes*, and individual isolated cells (*kellia*). The Holy Mountain (a calque of the Greek name for it, *Aghion Oros*) does not figure largely in the Western European worldview, and certainly not to the same degree as, say, the only other remaining Christian theocracy in the world (the Vatican). This makes sense: Eastern Orthodoxy in general is not very well known or understood in the West, though our shared traditions are numerous and many Church Fathers considered to be “eastern” have had a crucial part to play in the development of Western Christianity.

Arriving there entails navigating a literally Byzantine bureaucracy. One must first reserve a sort of Byzantine visa, a *diamonitirion* (from the Greek word diamoni, meaning ‘a stay’), through the Holy Community. Due to the necessity of protecting the peninsula’s seclusion, there are strict quotas on the number of Orthodox and non-Orthodox visitors – only ten of the latter are allowed in each day, so I

made sure to request my diamonitirion far in advance – though it is easy to bypass these restrictions once one has contacts in the monasteries themselves. An arcane Byzantine law states that 'no road on which a wheel can run' can ever be built between Mount Athos and the mainland, so the only way to travel there is by boat. The result is that it feels more like an island than a peninsula. (Due to another age-old law, the *avaton*, the whole territory is also off-limits to women and to even female animals, with the exception of a very large population of both male and female cats kept for pest control.) To make matters more complicated, the two port towns from which the boats depart, Ouranoupoli and Ierissos, are only accessible via a bus that leaves from a terminal on the outskirts of Thessaloniki, as the Greek region of Macedonia lacks a well-developed rail network. In theory, an English speaker can go through the whole process without difficulty, though knowing Greek certainly helped me, not to mention the appreciation I received at every step of the way for being able to speak the language.

As I sailed out of Ouranoupoli, the monasteries appeared one-by-one along the coastline. Many are heavily fortified and look like castles. This eventually began to make sense when I later heard stories about pirate raids throughout the middle ages. Otherwise the landscape is empty, consisting of steep, forested hills and rocky cliffs rising up out of the Aegean. Originally, I had intended to visit three different monasteries, the typical pattern for pilgrims' journeys to the Holy Mountain. At the same time, I went in prepared for the unexpected and my stay did turn out rather differently than I had planned, as the Fathers at Vatopaidi suffered me to stay for three days in light of my readiness to carry out monastic obediences – that is, to work for free – and obvious curiosity about Orthodox monasticism. This provided an unique opportunity to settle briefly into the routine of cloistered life.

Mount Athos is rare in this day and age in being one of the few places where the distinction between cloistered life and the outside world is very acutely felt. (The only others where this could conceivably be the case are, perhaps, the island monasteries of northern Russia such as Valaam or Solovki, where the surrounding water freezes for at least half the year.) This is partly due to the aforementioned restrictions on entry, but mostly to the utterly different mode of existence that prevails there. Before I go into this last point, though, it is worth at least dispelling one myth about the character of Mount Athos. Namely, the romantic mid-20th-century conception of the Holy Mountain, widespread in the West amongst those who are aware of it, as being aeons behind the rest of the world in its development, and of its monasteries as romantic piles of rubble tended by a few grey-bearded monks, has no bearing on the reality there today – except, perhaps, in a handful of smaller, poorer communities. The Holy Mountain has, in fact, gradually caught up in its technological development with the rest of the world. Most monasteries have electricity now, though it is generated locally from renewable sources, since there is no power grid of any sort; running water is not uncommon, though pilgrims are asked to use it with strict economy and some places are still supplied by aqueduct; three monasteries have public e-mail addresses, though apparently only certainly spiritually accomplished monks are allowed access to the Internet, and even then only to carry out specific obediences; Vatopaidi even has a gift shop, though its merchandise is limited to ikons and other spiritual items. While these are remarkable developments, the caveats I have added to each reveal that, even with the gradual infiltration of modern technologies into the Holy Mountain, our collective approach as a society to using them – or rather, often, abusing them – remains very distant there. Moreover, ever since Byzantine times, the Holy Mountain has never shirked from innovation: A formerly Russian dependency (*skete*) of Vatopaidi, called Aghiou Andreou or Serrai, was host to the first photographic studio in all of Greece. The important thing is that, at least up until this day, none of this has damaged the quality of the spiritual life there.

Monastery of Xenophontos, established in 1010. It has two catholikons, the second of which is the largest church on Mount Athos.

The monks lead a life that seems very hard, if not impossible, to those of us living in the outside world. After rising at 3:45 a.m. or so each morning to the unmistakable beat of the Athonite *simantron*, they stand in the main

Varlaam Monastery (centre) and the Great Meteora Monastery (right). Photograph by wolff chronicles.

church (*catholikon*) for the early morning orthros service which lasts about two and a half hours, then disperse to one of the many chapels within the monastery walls for the Divine Liturgy, which lasts another two hours or so – though if it is a feast day or an otherwise important occasion, everyone, pilgrims and monks, stays in the catholikon for the liturgy. Tired legs notwithstanding, it is nothing short of otherworldly standing in the flickering candlelight at 4:00 a.m. and greeting the day to a background of monophonic Byzantine chant, while the shadows of the black-robed monks flit past in the gloom, occasionally stooping to venerate icons barely perceptible in the twilit wings of the building. Nothing in the outside world quite compares to it. Sometime in the morning after the services finish, the gates, which are shut at sundown, are reopened for the day.

After the service comes the first of two meals, at around 9:00 a.m. Then each monk performs his obedience, which is usually a form of manual labour: as a willing volunteer, I was tasked with changing beds, mopping floors, and working in the kitchen, all of which are fairly typical. This ends in the early afternoon, when there is a rest period set aside for sleep or contemplation until the hour-long Vespers service (*esperinos*) at 4:00 p.m. After this follows the second meal of the day, and another hour of standing in church for the *apodeipno*, the 'after-dinner' service and counterpart of Compline in the West.

This leaves time for work in the kitchen, reading, prayer, and contemplation in the late evening. Only Sunday provides any sort of respite from this gruelling routine, which surpasses the efforts of even the most intensively ascetic orders in the West, such as the Cistercians. It is worth noting here that the Orthodox Church does not have separate orders, only distinctions between monastic and secular life, and the clergy and laity. Monks not ordained as deacons or priests count as laity.

Apart from this ascetic rigour, two other distinct characteristics of the monks' way of life struck me: the extent to which they live in harmony with nature, and also the way in which every element of their lives is somehow sanctified. Of course, in their worldview these three ideas are intimately related: asceticism is predicated on economical use of resources; Creation is viewed as sacred; and the sanctification of human life occurs through ascetic struggle. Yet it is still worth teasing out the ways in which this manifests itself materially. Work is sanctified by the principle of submission to a Spiritual Father or confessor – hence the term 'obedience' – and by unceasing prayer, following very literally the advice of St Paul. This is supposed to cultivate the cardinal virtue of humility, highly exalted in Orthodox monasticism. Meals are, likewise, viewed as sacred occasions; not only is grace said very reverently at the beginning and end, but the brotherhood and guests all eat in silence while a monk reads from a sacred text. One must eat quickly, too, as the meal is over as soon as the reading is! There are, of course, philosophical issues that one can raise regarding the significance of sanctification in this sense – for example, whether the sacred can exist without the profane serving as a point of contrast, since the act of sanctification is inherently one of setting aside or apart. Yet whatever the meaning and sociological implications of sanctity, there is no doubt that it is experienced very intensely on Mount

Athos in the daily lives of the monks. The continued use of the Julian calendar and Byzantine method of time-keeping (the day is still 24 hours but begins at sunset in accordance with the ancient Jewish tradition); proud flying of the Byzantine flag; and the intense external symbolism of Orthodox religious observance, all strengthen this impression of sanctity and timelessness.

It can be no coincidence that the Holy Mountain is under the direct jurisdiction of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholemew of Constantinople, who is known for his critical focus on man's relationship with the natural environment, predating Pope Francis' engagement with the subject by thirty years. (Unsurprisingly, the two church leaders get on very well indeed.) Principles of economical and ecological living are very visible even in Vatopaidi, which has a reputation as being a 'modernising' community with relatively close links to the outside world. They still grow almost everything themselves from their miraculously fruitful gardens, fields and orchards. The harvest had just finished when I arrived, but usually it is all hands on deck in late summer to bring in the year's crops of olives, grapes, other fruits, wheat, and vegetables. The monks are fully vegetarian; fish is a rarity even on feast-days, and the olive oil and wine also disappear from the tables of the refectory during fasts. The changing of the seasons is very acutely felt, and the monks often spend time outdoors during their rest in the afternoon, wandering the gardens in contemplation. This contemplative aspect of the monks' lives is certainly facilitated by the tranquility of the physical environment: The rolling agricultural land around Vatopaidi in particular exudes a bone-deep stillness that must be experienced first-hand in order to be believed.

The monasteries no longer strive for complete autarchy as they were once forced to do in poorer times. They receive considerable financial assistance from the EU's Peripheral Development Fund for the restoration and upkeep of the buildings, as was advertised prominently on a large sign by Vatopaidi's quai. At one of the meals, cheese was served, incidentally some of the best feta I have ever tasted. While the cheese was almost certainly made there, the milk must, of course, have been an import. I did occasionally notice plastic cutlery and other synthetic materials, as well as a couple of computers and other appliances. Vatopaidi runs a Web site, and the well-regarded Abott (Efrem) travels outside the monastery from time to time. Yet despite this, the scope of self-sufficient economic activity in the Athonite monasteries is not to be underestimated. The monks make their own wine, olive oil, Turkish delight (loukoumi), and ouzo (which originated on Mount Athos), as well as painting ikons and publishing books.

From an architectural and art-historical point of view, the monasteries are veritable treasure-troves. The layout of the various buildings and outbuildings at Vatopaidi has the feel of a cross between a fortified medieval hilltown in Italy and a traditional Oxford college, with a completely different architectural style to either of these. No longer dilapidated ruins, most have undergone, or are undergoing, substantial work to restore them to their former glory. These restorations, as far as I could tell from the example of Vatopaidi, have been in incredibly good taste, presumably because of the monasteries' status as living communities, as opposed to museums or tourist attractions. They have also led to the rediscovery and cataloguing of the Holy Mountain's treasures. Vatopaidi has a large library with books on spiritual topics in all of the major languages of the Orthodox world (Greek, Church Slavonic, Russian, Georgian, Serbian, Romanian, Bulgarian, etc.) and also in English, as well as dictionaries, language-learning materials, and scholarly works. When the current brotherhood first arrived

The Church at Varlaam Monastery. Photograph by wolff chronicles

The basket pulley system in the Holy Trinity Monastery. Photograph by wolff cbronicles.

from Cyprus in the 1990s to repopulate the monastery, they discovered countless priceless ornamental and devotional objects in the monastery's neglected Sacristy (treasure room), which has since been turned into a small museum. Among the most spectacular in the exhibition are two medieval chrysobulls – so called because they are sealed in gold – issued by Byzantine emperors, which the Monastery has still been able to use today as deeds to prove their ownership of land. The catholikon is also decorated with frescoes, some dating from as far back as the 11th century. According to pious legend, some of the ikons have worked miracles over time, and the monks tell colourful stories about them to visitors on guided tours in several languages (English, Greek, Russian) that take place daily after dinner. There is also a spectacular collection of relics, including what are alleged to be the Belt of the Virgin Mary (or 'Theotokos') and the whole skull of St John Chrysostom (you can very clearly make out his ear through a glass window on the side of the reliquary).

One thing that certainly struck me about all the monks I spoke to, and especially the younger ones, was their generally high standard of education. Many were well-travelled, university-educated in subjects like mathematics and the natural sciences, and very conversant in all manner of academic subjects in addition to having a deep understanding of theology and Church history. It gradually became clear to me that these were not fundamentalist, Biblical-literalist zealots, like the Evangelical Protestants in the United States, but perfectly normal, educated people, who decided, for whatever personal reason, to forsake the vanity of the world and pursue spiritual goals. They also come from all over. While Iviron, the Georgian monastery, is ironically now entirely a Greek house, the brotherhood of Vatopaidi includes four Georgian fathers. There are also monks and novices from Russia, Serbia, Romania, America, Australia, Cyprus, Greece, and other countries, though none (yet) from the UK as far as I could tell. An older American monk, a cradle Catholic who came to Orthodoxy via Eastern spirituality (he considers the latter interest to have been a mistake) and the Old Catholic Churches, called this 'true Ecumenism'. I find this was a perfect description for what I witnessed there.

Putting aside for now the question of why so many bright young people in particular have resolved to join these communities – which is certainly an interesting one – the recent revival of Athonite monasticism cannot be considered anything but a positive development from a cultural and historical point of view. As I mentioned earlier, it has led to widespread restoration of the Holy Mountain's previously decrepit monastic complexes, as well as guaranteeing the survival of a rich Byzantine musical and artistic tradition, as the Athonite and, more broadly speaking, Macedonian school of ikon-painting is very highly regarded. Its causes are also relatively straightforward. The atheist regimes in Eastern Europe had brutally suppressed the Church during most of the 20th century, and there was a time when almost the whole Orthodox world apart from Greece,

Cyprus, the Levant, and the émigré communities in the West was under the yoke of Communism. Since the collapse of the USSR, the persecuted churches have been strongly resurgent in the former Soviet republics and Warsaw pact nations, as my piece about Georgia attests. The stream of monks from Eastern Europe that had all but dried up during the decades of Communist rule was suddenly opened up again, with the result being the revival of monasteries not only in the home countries, but also those representing various national groups on Mount Athos (the Bulgarians, Serbs, and Russians all have their own communities alongside the seventeen Greek houses, many of which are very mixed and pan-Orthodox in any event).

Why is it, then, that so many young, well-educated people have left behind the cities and the prospect of potentially lucrative careers, to go live in places like these? The decision to renounce the world in such a radical way is not to be taken lightly: In an era when competition on the so-called 'job market' is so fierce, those who go to live for a long time in these brotherhoods must know that it means forfeiting any chance of getting ahead in the world of work, were they ever to change their mind. It also means that they can never see any of their mothers and sisters again, or if so, then only very infrequently and outside of the peninsula. And from a secular perspective, the tone of much of it can seem rather macabre. When the clock chimed during a tour of Vatopaidi on my second day there, the monk who was leading the group took it upon himself to remind us that we were an hour closer to our deaths. Remembrance of death permeates every aspect of Orthodox monastic life: the monks dress in black to symbolise their 'death to the world'; and their bones are exhumed from the tiny cemetery after a few years, stacked up according to type (arms, heads and legs in separate piles) in a special building called the ossuary, where they are labelled carefully to make them easy to find and turn into relics, should one of the monks be canonised someday – a real possibility in such a place. The late Elder of Joseph of Vatopaidi, about whom I heard much during my brief stay, is already regarded as a saint informally within the community, and is interred in a place of honour behind the main church.

Yet viewed differently, the lure of this sort of life is entirely comprehensible. For one, from a religious point of view, it is easy to see why monastic life has been called the vita angelica or 'life of angels'. In its ideal, coenobitic form, it is a realisation of all the highest spiritual goals of the Christian faith: charity, humility, non-judgmentality, chastity, poverty (albeit a sort of 'controlled poverty'), meekness. It is also an exceptionally physically healthy lifestyle. Existing in harmony with nature as they do, it is no wonder that the monks live for so long. Their graves reveal that many live to be over ninety, some almost to one hundred. They are kept fit by the regimen of manual labour and healthy diet; instances of cancer and dementia are rare almost to the point of non-existence. It is, moreover, a place that is quiet and free from earthly cares. Rarely, for the modern world, there is no advertising or 'branding' of any sort to be found on Mount Athos. One of the greatest blessings must be that the Fathers do not ever read or watch the news. It is conceivable that many older members of the community have not heard about the September 11th attacks in the United States or any of the wars of the past decade, let alone the recent events in Paris and elsewhere, except through chance discussions with pilgrims (that does not mean, though, that they ever cease to pray for the whole world and even for the enemies of Orthodox Christians). On top of all that, Vatopaidi was one of the few places I have been these days where the relationships amongst human beings feel truly genuine. Take the three main corrupting ingredients – money, power, and sex – out of the equation, and people's interactions with one another immediately become a lot more sincere. Monks and pilgrims alike dress modestly and behave with respect towards one another and their surroundings.

I must admit that returning to the mainland came a bit of a shock, even though I only stayed for such a short time. Having to worry about making the boat, then the bus; coming face-to-face with rowdy, scantily-clad, smartphone-wielding tourists roaming the streets of Ouranoupoli; knowing that I would not be rising before dawn the next morning to sit in the candlelit catholikon, and would awake instead to electric lights of a hotel – all of this was somehow surprising and unsettling, and it took a good part of the ride back to Thessaloniki for it to sink in. What I have come to realise is that, far more than I ever could have expected, the Holy Mountain is an exceptional place, in the truest sense of the word – that it is an exception. Christianity has always counter-cultural, ever since the time of the Roman Empire, and it continues to be today like never before. Nowhere is the spirit of the Christian faith in this sense kept more alive than on Mount Athos.

Service at Vatopedi monastery

Poetry

The Colour of Bone

***Olivia Boucher-Rowe has written a cycle of poems entitled* The Colour of Bone.**
The following is a selection from that collection.

Atlas

From behind, he is the Earth
itself.
the fibrous back splits
like a valley,
a ridge of vertebrae mountains
holds the silver platter
above his wiry head.

He gristles against the clouds,
shakes a string of gulls
from his cavernous ear.
Does not shudder, even when
a woodpecker grazes his pelvis,
and knocks twice
on his moss-capped knee.

This straining temple
of muscle, stone,
does not know what he is made
from.
Does not know how long
he has watched men creep across
the earth
like lice on a bull's hide.

He will not understand why
they build monuments
only to destroy them.
You think you are different, he
says,
you think you are clever.
But you and your wars
are all the same.

Hunter-Gatherer

Once, I found two pheasants
in the pantry.
Lead-shot legionaries
hanged men
brothers.

Beneath them, two dark stains
dripped down the urns,
the wine glass,
the case
of pickled heads,
and fell on creamy stone.

We ate them
one after the other.
The scrape of meat
on metal on plate.

Pray Mantis

Pray, mantis.
Prostrate yourself at the
Banyan Tree
until the storm has passed
and you emerge,
ravenous,
eyes bulging,
to eat another lover.

Macaroni and Cheese

At the back of the cupboard
in the old house,
I recognise
the crescent moon,
shield of crayon blue
familiar, unsampled.
The brightly coloured box
of my youth
was prohibited.

Favoured instead
the stoic diet
of the meatpackers. Simple joy
siphoning fat from the pan
slipping salt into the flanks.
Hearty
reds and browns.
Not this pastel gum-paste
chemical soup.

I shake the pieces out
like plastic collector's toys
on the dismal countertop.
An assault of yellow
bee stings
police tape.

A legion of mealworms
springs
from the garish block
of oil-packed daffodils.

Buttercups. Child's play.
The powdered box
is past
its time.
I eat the rot anyway.
Stuff my lips thick
with the congealed relic
of the last,
synthetic supper.

Then quarter my brain,
a kitchen sponge,
and sluice the grease
from my fingers.
I toss the empty box
on a funeral pyre.
The house burns with it.

Sphynx Cat

See how she stalks
the clicking beetle,
treads on velvet haunches
flexes her back
flits the jaundiced eyes.

The folds in her side pull a face
like a chicken-skinned old man
as she pounces.

Ancient cat,
with your worm's tail
coiled like a brooch
on your fluted robe.
Teach me how you hunt,
how you command the room
as a queen,
a soldier,
a deity.

She whispers a warning in my ear,
like the one that boomed
from the tips of a pyramid
and rolled
down
into the sand dunes
some thousands of years ago.
The one we have always known
and do not listen to.

Theory of Evolution

Eve pits her children
against each other.
Both boys,
how daddy would be proud.
And dances in the arena,
loses a veil with the applause.
Loses
both sons.

The seventh day, she unpicks
her mind from skein to skein.
Unfolds
a bridal sheet in the sky,
mops the floor with acid rain,
blood clots, apple juice cartons.

Outside the stadium,
Preachers flash grubby thighs,
recall
their own truth.
While unicellular organisms
    clamber out of the water
and just get on
with business.

You are not fit, they say
to rule this kingdom.
You're the one who started this
    mess.
Maybe, replies the human,
with his feet still in he ocean
and the saw in his left hand.
He doesn't care
Kings should not be concerned
with puny details. Floods can be
    plugged,
People can be held accountable
for his problems
and shot.

The human is awarded
animal photographer
of the year.
He photographs himself,
ruffles his plumage in the lens,
marvels at the body
that is spread out
and smeared
with formaldehyde.
A ghastly specimen
on the medical table.

He thinks he has put
the knife in his back
himself.
But cannot lift
his calcified fingers
to pull it out again.

Another body
watches the river
in mannish stupor,
a paper dove
above his head

At some gruesome
museum in Philadelphia,
there is a whole collection
of distortions.
Giants, dwarves,
frog-like foetuses in their
amniotic jars.
A lady made of soap.
This is where
I will find Eve's hidden daughter,
underneath the rotting spleen,
the rack of plastic veins,
looking back
from the mirror.

Wishbone

I probed the rubble of my plate
and found
a wishbone.

The beveled tip
was punctuated
like fine cotton.
Robed in purple,
an imperial undercoat
of marrow
swept beneath its surface.

A scrap of flesh, pallid,
glistening like a pearl,
still clung to the toothy hold
as I snapped it.
And flew through the air
like a figurehead
fired from a cannon.

It seemed a shame to break
the slender neck,
the artful shoulders sloped
to the same length.
No winners then,
ah well,
a piteous waste of life.
But oh how good the crunch
of bone
between my fingers.

Short Story by Thomas Nightingale

THE COLOUR OF OLD SILVER

Author's note: This work is composed with oral performance, preferably by a skilled bard or skald, in mind.

Fishguts slithered past the wet knife, driven from the white flesh of the cod, its scales scraped onto the ground where they glittered like harsh and dirty stars amid a sand-streaked sky. Gutted flesh passed into brine or byre, feeding hungry broods. So passed the day, so passed the life of the fishermen's wives, knives like ploughs amid fish oil oozed out of mackerel like the mud through which the farmers struggled, labouring with their oxen under the double curse of wind-swept harvest and lord-sent tithe. So too toiled the salt-crusted fishermen, boats tossed along wave-cast furrows through the sea, hooks and nets searching for the fish on which all coast-dwellers survived. One such boat swam now, slipping through Fair Isle water, its sail beaten as a drum by the wind. Autumn spray splashed the fishermen, brining them as their prey would be brined; wind embraced the fishermen, cooling them as fish would be cooled by ice; weak sun struggled to warm them, not like the fires which would meet the fish-flesh of the hunted. So the men struggled, and so their labours were rewarded. A school of mackerel, whipping through cold sea, oblivious to the wind-rage above, their rainbowed sliver hides glistening in unknown anticipation of food or of dance, met not with herring or shrimp or other sustenance, but with hooked worms, tantalising and fatal glimpsed through the water's murk. Hauled in, oil-bound sides piled high, a promise of food for mothers and children, for fathers and brothers, for church and for lord, they weighed down the boat, setting it low in the water so that it rolled and slurped with every wave, held from sinking only by the skill of the helm and the stubborn mule-strength of the bailers.

Setting sun shadows cast upon the clinker-formed hull of *Norseman's Bride* signalled a return to the Orkney coast, to the cliffs and beaches and tree-stripped peat-plains of the islands. Her skipper turned her, the boom swung with heaved ropes and the bow sloshed round through the heavy water towards harbour and home. Driven by the now-gentle wind she sloped back with the fishing fleet, *St Claire* and *St Rognvald*, *Star of Hope* and *Silver Seeker*, *Westray Whippet*

Norsemen landing in Iceland

and *Wild Duck*, back towards the islands. A seagull circled lazily overhead, its broad white wings lifting it on updrafts of sea air as it eyed the men's catches, hoping for another meal. The man eyed it in turn, his gaze flitting from sea to bird and back to the sea, hand on tiller guiding his boat and his crew and his catch back towards the hearths and hearts of the homesteads. As the sails appeared, white against the red-streaked descent of Apolline fires, so the wives and the children of Stromness, lit still by the darkening hues of the day, not yet by the silver gaze of the northern moon, came out of their houses, put down their work, and assembled on the beaches, waiting to bring in their men and their catch. Boats splashed through the breakers, bows nuzzling into the sand like so many beached whales, and cold water grasped at the legs of the town as waders hauled boats and unloaded fish, sorting and carrying, casting and securing. Amid the hubbub of labour, snatched embraces signalled some human thought, some emotion other than stoic determination to toil and survive, yet only some. Cold stubbled work ruled elsewhere, would rule for all the sunlit hours until the darkness of the distant sun-dead sky made more work impossible, and drove the islanders back into byres, to sit around their own fires, to be their own Apollo and live by their own light. Families work together now, boats secured, long methodical lines bringing fish up from the boats, away from their last sea, to new lakes, Stygian waters of preserved fish-corpse, or to hot pans and sharp knives, where dancing wrists would slice fillets of flesh and separate the fishguts from the hot-pan fodder.

Darkness did fall now, sending at last the farmers back from the fields and the fishermen back from the coast. They huddled in their houses, families together round hearth-stones and suppers of bread, of broth, of warm silver fish for the lucky and rich. Seated at stools they ate off home-spliced tables, cut from driftwood or import, conversations of fish or farming, of God or of play, of silence drifting through the smoke-filled byre-house in fire-flickering darkness from tired mouth to tired mouth. Some men turned straight away to sleep, exhausted by their work. Others sat still, staring into the darkness or mouthing old nothings to their mothers or daughters, too battered by labour or tax-rate or food-giving to sleep and too battered to act. Some found fiddles and struck up jolly tunes of dance and of laughter, some sounded mournful airs of loss and love-loss. One man turned to his children, and spoke of their forebears, of grandfathers many times great, or heroes and farmers and traders and skalds.

" In Harfeld lived Hrothvar son of Haddur
Whose father was Fertram famed for his axe.
His parents were plough-skilled yet they were poor
But Hrothvar however had riches enough
Gathered from his farmstead to sleep and to feast
He married a maiden Solvig of Mæra
Her father was Finnvid smith and half-giant
And with her he fathered begat four fine sons
Heming and young Hoskuld Hrut and Kabbi
A daughter too he had born in December
A small tot in this tale Tunna by name.
With his father and wife he worked the fields
Growing good grub to sell and also to eat.
His cattle were kingly his crops a success
He grew hay in high pastures grazed heifers at home
He sold goods for silver skilled in the haggle
And as for his Bulls, my! They were the best!
Iceland had no better They were so big.
Proud as punch was Hrothvar Pleased with his stock
But some men are serpents Greed stalks their thoughts.
In Harfeld lived a liar Louse-bred, a cheat,
Ill-mannered Illugi hated by all
His luck was in his blood Cousin of Bork
A splendid man, and strong Noble and stately.
Bork disliked Illugi But blood bound them
Kept serpent-manner safe saved him from death.
Great greed grabbed Illugi He envied the bulls
So sly thoughts stole over him Envy and spite
First he cursed the cattle called down Gods' wrath
Then he tried to talk them down told false tales and lies
But all men know their worth and all knew his
And the Bulls bred better better than before.
So then he passed to plots planned to cattle-raid.
He fetched up his farm-hands fitted them with arms
Next on a moonless night he went near the farm
Crept close to the cattle to lead them away
But bulls would not be led they bucked and they lowed
Waking Hrothvar's household men and their hounds
The theft was not fate-spun it did not go through
Then serpent-spirit wailed struck through with hate
He started to slaughter Hrothvar's fine stock
Silver-worth slipped away with blood into soil
And breeding bulls were dead bones for the dogs
Now Hrothvar sought revenge ready to spill
Illugi's life-liquid with his great lance
He stayed until sunrise then with his sons
He marched to the man's farm made himself known
Illugi hoped to hide he had no honour
But Hrothvar's sons saw him the serpent was caught
Revenge-Seeker was raised death was readied
When Bork burst into the room begging for peace
He had heard of the raid and of revenge
He came to save Serpent to settle a peace
Hrothvar stayed his sword-hand sat down to talk
He bargained now with Bork valued Bulls lives
Sought silver and scythe-hands to soothe his loss
At last they did a deal damage was paid for
Illugi was punished Hrothvar repaid
The Lawspeaker witnessed in the Althing

Mackerel

The settlement was made all seemed set behind
There would have been peace now but for one thing
Hot-headed Heming Hrothvar's first son
He didn't like Bork's deal but wanted death
First he controlled himself but then this came
A huge happening history changing
He was fetching firewood from some fir trees
He met serpent-spirit down by the stream
Illugi served up slurs taunted with silver
Then anger took Heming aroused his axe
And slaughtered Illugi right where he stood
Now Bork's deal was broken a blood-feud begun
Huge danger faced Hrothvar Harfeld wasn't safe
He fetched his family found the silver-store
Then brought out the sea-boat left Iceland behind
Hrothvar steered them southwards sailed by the stars
His boat walked the whale-road to a white beach
Mounted on soft moor-hills under mauve sky
The islands of Orkney new home for Hrothvar
The beached the boat softly bounded ashore
Hrothvar set off to scout see the sea-coast
He found a farming town house and fields too
And here he made his home a new Harfeld
He farmed the flat moorland fished in the sea
Was now an Orkneyman Northman and Scot
Now swift time slipped past him seventeen years
Time aged him and changed him his children too

Heming was a housecarl with his hard axe
Meanwhile Hrut stayed at home worked with the hoe
Hoskuld 'came a craftsman clever with wood
And crafty Kabbi a word-smith became
His poems were perfect Hrothvar was proud
And now tiny Tunna was not a tot
But a beautiful bride betrothed to a Chief
They hoped for happiness now it seemed here
But Death just lay dormant he was not gone
Cold slaughter was coming catastrophe
For hot-headed Heming thought of Harfeld
Remembered his ranch there wanted revenge
One day he decided to dare not to duck
To set sail for Iceland see how things stand
He thought the feud ended that peace could be forged
So with six silver rings a sword and a cloak
He boarded a long boat to bear him north
And bade his brother Hrut be a spare sword
Together they travelled 'til they arrived
In Iceland near Innnes hometown of Bork
They sought first that statesman to stop the feud
And they found him feasting fish, meat and more
He greeted them as guests granted them food
Not knowing who they were nor what they wanted
But when he found their name Bork filled with fire
Now blood-rage seized his soul he sought revenge
For his cut-down kinsman killed by Heming

He seized his sword swiftly so did his sons
Heming was hacked down there and Hrut with him
Blood-worms shed battle-sweat bones were broken
Then sleep of the sword came they would lie still
Next Bork drowned their bodies blood-feud lived on
Wound-sea mixed with water swept the news back
To Hrothvar and Hoskeld and to his wife
They wept salt and they wailed weak with despair
Unable to act now they asked for help
Sought soldiers and sailors to slaughter Bork
Nothing was forthcoming this became clear
So finally Kabbi made a new plan
Urged father to forget Iceland for now
And focus on Orkney farming and fish
Hrothvar was angry still could not agree
'Til Solvig of Mæra soulmate and spouse
Sided with her young sons set feud aside
And focused on farming sheep and heifers
Meanwhile a marriage came soothed mourning minds
For Tunna as we've told through her true grace
Was wedded to a Lord a man of great wealth
Her beauty bewitched him she was his bride
The kinsmen grew closer came together
Kabbi was his poet lived at his court
His lip-streams like lyre-sounds livened up feasts
Hoskeld the whittle-skilled shipwrought and shaped
And Hrothvar like father or rather uncle
To the lord's court became found comfort there
So Hrothvarsons settled over the sea
From Harfeld their old home happy again. "

Pause came, hanging softly in the smoking air, a lost wind-breadth on the stone hewn cliffs of the cottage walls. Dozing children, lulled into broth-filled torpor by lilting alliteration, stirred in silence, eyes gazing up at father's tongue, hoping for more lip-streams, for the renewed murmur of their past to dance round the room. The pause continued, no new dances came to restore the rhythm of wakeful sleep, until the children spoke, young voices thinking questioning querying, *what happened next?*s and *where are they now?*s, *where did they live?*s and *why don't they rule us?*s. Paternal pause held a moment longer, held in judicial balance as weighted scales tipped towards decision, then broke, broke into a sword-thunder, a jagged storm of men wading through blood-red mud as raven-feeding warriors clashed on the body-strewn beaches, clashed on the corpse-swallowing sea, clashed beside byres and burns and brochs, men five hundred years after Hrothvar fighting amid horror-strewn field, fighting for his descendants' land, his descendants' wealth, his descendants' ships and power, and most of all for the rippling or tossing silver seas of his descendants, and the wind-driven trade routes they bore on their shoulders and the shimmering shoals of rainbowed silver fish which slipped through their bloodstreams. It was over those life-givers that Hrothvar's islands were attacked, over those life-givers that they fell.

The crude stone walls of the house drove back the fire's warmth now, casting it into the hearth where the embers slowly resigned themselves to cooling and dying, or at least sleeping until stoked up to roaring heights again. The lilting harshness of epic slept now too, finally extinguished in exhaustion for the night, would sleep through seasons more until some drunken respite from the toil of salt-spray or cloying mud allowed it to burst out again, a beacon amid the grime of life. And from the rough-woven rugs and the salt-speckled laps hard hands gently lovingly lifted young children, guided them staggering in word-drunk steps to soft corners of hay-built beds. They too would sleep.

Sunset

Journeying in the poems of Larkin and Thomas

Nick Plaut analyses the portrayal of journeying in the poetry of Philip Larkin and Edward Thomas.

View from the train window (Photo by Flickr 70023venus2009)

Whether in the form of the contemplative country walks celebrated in Roads or the midsummer's train ride into London of the Whitsun Weddings, journeying is a near-ubiquitous motif in the poems of both Edward Thomas and Larkin. Both poets create a sense of the motion and process of journeying itself, but also explore how journeying and contemplation relate. Moreover, journeying seems to present a sort of refuge to the narrator, a sanctuary from the hectic pressures of daily life where 'all hurry [is] gone' and often takes the guise of a sort of escape, or 'imaginative flight'. For the time between A and B, though ephemeral, seems to provide a refuge from the certainty of where one is coming from and what one knows, and also from where is going. Yet by definition, a journey must have a destination, and this certainty of destination takes on a fatalistic symbolism, where journeying represents the 'joining and parting lines' of life, leading unavoidably to a final destination; in Larkin's poetry journeying seems to represent certainty of death's approach and of silence, and in that of Thomas the realisation that 'now all roads lead to France' and the 'heavy… tread of the living' that leads there.

Both poets create a sense of the motion of travel through the structure of their poems, with Larkin evoking the speed and continuity of a train journey - often mirroring a train of thought - and Thomas the steady start-and-stop rhythm of his reflective walks. In Larkin's Here the fluidity of the train journey is captured in the first twenty-four lines where the reader's perception is sent 'swerving' both directly through the images Larkin uses and indirectly as the reader is kept 'syntactically suspended' by how these images are tenuously tied together to form this twenty-four line sentence. The images themselves are disparate rather than continuous, illustrated by the line 'grain-scattered streets, barge-crowded water' where a caesura between the two separate scenes portrays the short time it takes to get from one to the other and therefore the train's speed and the 'surprise' that accompanies each fleeting glimpse. Moreover, the syntax of the sentence keeps the reader almost one step behind the narrative; for example, the ambiguity of the first word 'Swerving' - which could either be a present participle or a noun - is only resolved at the beginning of the second stanza where we find out that 'Swerving…gathers so the surprise of a large town'. Neatly this rather unconventional use of 'swerving' - the gerund - serves to surprise the reader just like the 'large town' seems to surprise the narrator.

In this way, the syntax of the first twenty-four lines makes the reader feel, just like the narrator, almost unable to keep up with the blur of images and impressions one is granted with on the train journey. Thomas, on the other hand, evokes a very different sort of journeying. In The Sun Used to Shine he sketches his walks with Robert Frost by mirroring the rhythm of the walk in the rhythm of the poem itself. This can be seen in Thomas's use of a caesura in 'Slowly together, paused and started / Again' to evoke a pause in the walk and enjambement to speed up the flow of the poem and therefore to mirror Thomas and Frost beginning their walking again. The contrast in the effect to which a caesura is used in Here and The Sun Used To Shine is in fact evocative of how the process of journeying on the whole seems to differ between the two poems; in Here it captures a jump between one scene - or thought - and another, while in The Sun Used To Shine it is suggestive of a contemplative pause to reflect upon the walk's surroundings. The journey that Larkin describes through and out of Hull seems to represent a train of thought that explores Larkin's feelings about Hull or as Larkin puts it in a

letter to Robert Conquest 'a celebration of here, Hull.' He goes on to write 'It's a fascinating area, not quite like anywhere else. So busy, yet so lonely.' The journey in Here is an exploration of both the 'busy' side of Hull - contained in the cluttered twenty-four line first sentence - and the 'lonely' side of Hull - the 'unfenced existence: facing the sun, untalkative, out of reach.' On the other hand, in The Sun Used To Shine thought and the actual process of journeying seem to be separate - the most vivid insight into Thomas's perception in the descriptions of the 'yellow flavourous coat / of an apple', 'dark betonies' and 'crocuses…pale purple' is as Thomas and Frost '[stand] disinclined'. Yet the parallel between a train of thought and a journey is a device used in another of Thomas's poems Lights Out. Here Thomas portrays a sort of dream-like journey from the 'borders of sleep' along the 'many a road and track' that 'sink' into the 'unfathomable deep / Forest where all must lose their way'. Lights Out in his words, 'sums up what I have often thought at that call' - the 'call' referring to his imminent mobilisation to France. Yet while Thomas claims the journey into the 'tall forest' represents his thoughts about France, there is an undeniable undercurrent of mortality in the poem. This can be seen in the repetition of the sense of 'ending' ('Here love ends / Despair, ambition ends' etc.) and the deliberate double meaning of the final two lines - 'That I may lose my way / And myself': they evoke Thomas's contemplation of death, whether in his imminent departure to France or even thoughts of suicide, perhaps hinted at in the active nature of 'turn[ing] from' 'Any book / Or face of dearest look…To go into the unknown'.

Yet apart from its dark undercurrents, Lights Out also highlights another side to journeying that can be seen in the poetry of Larkin and Thomas: journeying as a sort of refuge or escape . It is not hard to spot the relevance of such a refuge in Thomas's own life; Thomas used to take long walks from his East Hampshire home to escape the heavy burdens of depression and a tortured family life. In fact, Lights Out seems to express a wish for just such an escape - 'losing oneself'. This sense of losing oneself and there being 'not any book / Or face of dearest look / That I would not turn from now' is mirrored almost exactly in The Sun Used To Shine in 'we turned from men or poetry'. Similarly, the preceding phrase - 'The to be / And the late past we gave small heed' - almost summarises exactly what journeying provides an escape from; in journeying one is granted with an brief refuge from where and what one is coming from, the 'late past', and from one's destination - 'the to be'. This portrayal of journeying as a sanctuary from the burdens of daily life can also be seen in Larkin's The Whitsun Weddings. It begins with a sense of hurry, conveyed by 'I was late getting away: / Not till about / One-twenty…Did my three-quarters-empty train pull out' where the inclusion of 'about / One-twenty' creates an image of the narrator looking at his watch impatiently. Yet once the train pulls out we find 'All sense of hurry being gone', followed by an almost liberating description of the train's motion; the 'I' of the first line changes suddenly to 'we', illustrating the narrator's personal concerns giving way to an a communal immersion in the scenery the train passes through. The descriptions of the weddings themselves further this sense of immersion and detachment from the self with the narrator even '[leaning] more promptly out' as he becomes more and more intrigued by the weddings; in an interview with Andrew Motion in 1981 Larkin noted 'There's hardly anything of me in it at all. It's just life as it happened'.

The sanctuary of 'life as it happens' as an escape from oneself is neatly also visible in Thomas's Adlestrop which describes another summer's train journey. The sense of blissful simplicity is expressed in the phrase 'What I saw was Adlestrop — Only the name', where the dash causes a pause in the rhythm of the poem that evokes an absence of anything other than 'Adlestrop', the scene outside the train window. The sense of escape this offers is conveyed through the final two stanzas, where Thomas moves from descriptions of 'Willows, willow-herb and grass' - plants in close proximity to the station - out to the 'high cloudlets in the sky' and to the 'blackbird [singing] / Close by, and round him, mistier / Farther and farther, all the birds / Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire'. The movement both of the narrator's perspective from close to far in the second-last stanza and the blackbird 'close by' to 'all the birds / Of Oxfordshire and Gloucester' evokes the sort of 'imaginative flight' we see in Here.

However, Thomas can only elicit this moment of escape for 'that minute' just as Larkin in The Whitsun Weddings soon finds he is 'hurrying' again 'towards London'. Even the choice of 'hurried' in 'We hurried towards London' evokes how the magic of the moment, the refuge the journey and the weddings offered in 'all sense / Of hurry being gone', has passed; instead 'the tightening brakes [take] hold' and 'there [swells] a sense of falling, like an arrow-shower / Sent out of sight, somewhat becoming rain'. 'The tightening brakes' contrast with the sense of free motion that 'We ran' created earlier in the poem, and the image of 'rain' contrasts with the halcyon images of 'all windows down, all cushions hot'. For in the poetry of both Thomas and Larkin the refuge that journeying provides is an ephemeral one and the removal of responsibility that seems so comforting in 'losing oneself' paradoxically seems to lead to a fatalistic helplessness to avoid the certainty of one's destination. In the case of Adlestrop, Thomas's immortalisation of this ephemeral moment of stasis in a journey is rather poignant as it describes a scene six months before the war but was written six months after the war, as Thomas became more and more aware of his calling to fight in France. It is hard not to feel Thomas's deep longing for a time when 'all roads' did not lead to 'France' but also Thomas's longing for a pause, a moment of refuge like that in the poem. This yearning for a pause, for stasis, can be seen most strongly in As The Team's Head-Brass, a poem dominated by the cyclical as Thomas, serving as an instructor at a nearby regiment, considers whether to go to war or not. We see Thomas sitting 'among the boughs of the fallen elm' that will only be taken away 'When the war's over'; Thomas seems almost sheltered by its static nature. Moreover, while journeying in the poems already discussed takes a linear form, the plough in As The Team's Head-Brass '[narrows]

Irises, Van Gogh (1889)

the a yellow square / Of charlock' with the ploughman pausing to talk to Thomas for 'one minute and an interval of ten.' This sense of the cyclical is furthered by the 'lovers [disappearing] into the wood' and '[coming] out of the wood again.'

Yet Thomas's conversation with the ploughman reveals that this moment of refuge in stasis actually depicts him on the cusp of embarking on the road to France, ending with the chasmic 'If we could see all all might seem good'. This seems aphoristic, but is in fact rather cryptic, if not sophist, and does not provide a solution to Thomas's dilemma, rather illustrates it. For it is only once we have embarked on the 'roads' that our decisions determine for us that we can 'see all' at which point we cannot change our destination. This fatalistic sense of inevitability can be seen in the context of 'France' in the latter half of Roads, written a year before Thomas's own death. The poem begins 'I love roads / The goddesses that dwell / Far along invisible / Are my favourite gods' and expresses Thomas's profound fondness for 'roads' and journeying in general, with images like 'The hill road wet with rain / In the sun would not gleam / Like a winding stream / If we trod it not again' that both express the ethereal beauty one is met with while journeying and, just like 'Often footsore, never / Yet of the road I weary', Thomas's seemingly unequivocal love for journeying. Yet as the poem nears a close, Thomas writes 'Now all roads lead to France / And heavy is the tread / Of the living', expressing both a sense of certainty of destination, and the same undercurrent of mortality we see in Lights Out in the resigned line 'And heavy is the tread of the living'.

It is this metaphor of 'roads' that 'all lead to France' that seems to be almost echoed in Larkin's Dockery And Son, where Larkin, having come from a funeral, first visits his old Oxford college where he is told a university contemporary of his - Dockery - now has a son studying there, a fact he can't help contemplating on his train journey back to Hull, where, on changing trains he finds himself looking at the 'Joining and parting lines' of the train tracks beyond the platform. These 'Joining and parting lines', just like Thomas's 'roads' represent fate and the path of time. As in Here the train journey in Dockery And Son mirrors a train of thought, this time centred around the issues of time and fate. As Larkin considers Dockery - 'the High-collared public-schoolboy' - we see 'a numbness that registered the shock / Of finding how much had gone of life' creep into the poem. The final destination of the 'joining and parting lines' of fate in Larkin's eyes is made starkly evident in the final two lines of the poem, neatly the 'end' of the journey we, the reader, have been taken along: 'And [Life] leaves what something hidden from us chose, / And age, and then the only end of age'. Next to this, in Larkin's notes is sketched a hangman's noose, emphasising the already clear sense of impending mortality the poem ends upon.

Ultimately, the significance of journeying in the poetry of Larkin and Thomas is defined by duality. Even in Roads, a poem that seems melancholy in its use of journeying as a metaphor for life, Thomas writes: 'whatever the road bring / To me or take from me' 'the dead' that 'Returning lightly dance' 'Keep me company'; in Thomas's poetry journeying both embodies the fateful trajectory he is on and the ethereal solace he can take in the journey itself and the knowledge that others too have travelled this 'road'. For Larkin journeying both represents an escape to the 'unfenced existence' that is always 'out of reach', the transformative, immersive 'travelling coincidence' that holds 'all the power / That being changed can give', but also the 'Joining and parting lines' that lead to 'Age, and then the only end of age'. For in the poetry of both Larkin and Thomas journeying seems to take on a paradoxical significance as both the inevitable 'road' of fate and time that goes on 'whether we use it' and the ephemeral but deeply powerful refuge where 'all sense of hurry [is] gone' and where 'love ends / Despair, ambition ends / All pleasure and all trouble / Although most sweet or bitter / Here ends'; journeying provides a retreat from the turmoils of human existence. Yet perhaps the only great contrast between the portrayal of journeying in the poetry of Larkin and Thomas is in nuances of how the journeys that Larkin and Thomas describes are undertaken. For Thomas journeying is an active process of discovery - almost Romantic in its nature - where one 'pauses and starts' and 'muses' and pauses to consider the 'dark betonies' or 'crocuses…pale purple'; Thomas even describes 'losing myself' as an active process where he 'enters and leaves alone.' On the other hand, Larkin sketches journeying in its modern form: a passive process where even in The Whitsun Weddings, a poem that describes, in Larkin's words, 'a wonderful, marvellous afternoon' that 'only needed writing down', the narrator is always somewhat removed from what he is journeying through and seeing. In fact, the metaphorical significance of the journey in Dockery and Son goes past just representing life's trajectory; it also serves as a warning. For what the poem omits is just as significant as what it includes. This begins with the spatial and temporal jumps we see in lines like 'A known bell chimes. I catch my train, ignored' (just like the jumps in Here - 'grain-scattered streets, barge-crowded water') that evoke how in Dockery and Son journeying is an intermediate state, eliding – in the narrator's consciousness - emptiness between A and B. The narrator realises life is in fact just these 'joining and parting lines' - 'first boredom then fear'; we spend much of our lives moving from one moment to another without appreciating what is in between - a boredom that seems 'quite natural' until we are gripped by the fear of 'nothing with all a son's harsh patronage' and faced with 'age, and the only end of age.'

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The success of the Christian Democrats in West Germany, 1949 – 1969

***Stephen Horvath analysis the origins and development of the CDU in post-war Germany. He argues that much of its success is in the way it reacted to the legacy of National Socialism, as well as harvesting the political fruits of the* Wirtschaftswunder.**

> "What is past is not dead; it is not even past. We cut ourselves off from it; we pretend to be strangers."
>
> — Christa Wolf in *Patterns of Childhood*, 1976.

West Germany (the FRG) was born in 1949, just eleven days after the end of the Berlin Blockade and after four years of inconsistent Allied control,[1] without a clear political path for the citizens of this semi-sovereign occupied nation. Catholic confessional (i.e. specifically religious) parties, such as the Centre Party in Weimar, had long been a fixture of German politics,[2] but they were in a seemingly weak position after World War II. They were seen as collaborators with the Nazis through Concordat and they were tainted by the political and economic collapse of Weimar. Conservative Catholicism had been "discredited."[3] Yet the following twenty years saw unbroken political domination by the Christian Democratic Union and its Bavarian partner the Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU):[4] the Union was in every government up to 1969, and did not have to enter into a 'grand coalition' with the Social Democrats (SPD) until 1966. It is the only party in the FRG's history to win a majority of the vote, which it did under Adenauer in 1957.

This essay will argue that the Union's success in elections was tied to the structural conditions created by legacy of Nazism and the subsequent evolution of a new German identity in the FRG, which was bound with certain political and cultural ideals expounded by the Union. The extreme extent of the Union's political success is explained by the lack of viable political alternatives.

First of all, although the traumas of Nazism "left deep imprints on national identities,"[5] there was little desire for explicit engagement with the atrocities of the Nazi era. Christian Democrats took advantage of this by seeking to limit the public debate and exposure to Nazism, and one of Adenauer's first actions in government was to reject 'victor's justice' and to stop the Allied programs of denazification.[6] Policies like this, in addition to being populist,[7] enabled the Union to situate itself in a political narrative that circumvented Nazism, and returned to earlier forms of morality and politics.

The Christian Democrats provided a combination of tradition and innovation that was very suited to the political climate, as people turned to traditional forms of political governance in reaction to the collapse of Nazism. Christianity

CDU Election Poster, 1949

[1] Judt, T. (2010). Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945. 2nd Ed. London: Vintage, p.122-126.

[2] Kalyvas, S.N. (1996). The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe. Ithaca, U.S.A.: Cornell University Press, p. 203.

[3] Kaiser, W. (2011). Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 163.

[4] Hereafter, the CDU/CSU will be referred to as the Christian Democrats, or the Union.

[5] Berger, S. (2004) Inventing the Nation: Germany. London: Arnold, p.171.

[6] Ibid.

[7] The contemporary liberal-left did criticise this, with the works of Karl Jaspers and Theodor Adorno being good examples of this view.

Volkswagen, the symbol of the Wirtschaftswunder

was a pre-Nazi source of morality, and confessional variations had played an important part in Germany's strong regional identities.[8] Yet the post-war mentality was not a simple nostalgia for 1933, as many Germans regarded the entire Weimar project as culpable for the descent into Nazism. The Union was a unique presentation of historic Christian politics and morals in a new biconfessional structure.[9] By offering the same "core Catholic values…but non-intrusive government and the new welfare state"[10] after the Ahlener conference of 1947, the Union was able to tie Germany's Bismarckian past with the FRG's future, cutting out Nazism from the historical survey.

The Union capitalised on the anti-Weimar sentiment, with Wilhelm Ropkë's declaration that the social market "defends capitalism against the capitalists"[11] aimed at the fear of economic collapse degenerating into political radicalism. This was a major competitive advantage for the Union over the SPD, because the SPD used the same policies and organisational structures from before the War. The SPD was often seen as responsible for creating the structural weakness of the Weimar Republic as the SDP dominated the National Assembly that drafted the constitution that was signed by Social Democratic President Ebert. The Union's new form and policies were appealing to an electorate who wanted to break with the discredited politics of the recent past.

Adenauer Keine Experimente Campaign Poster, 1957

The horrors of the Nazi era pushed many Germans to reject totalitarianism and to advocate for the antitheses of Nazism: stability, federalism, and an independent family sphere. Christian Democrats emphasised these three things ideologically, and their conception of a limited state was appealing.[12] For example, the CDU's family minister from 1953-62, Franz-Josef Wuermeling, stressed the importance of family life as a building block of Christian society, and contrasted this with the Third Reich and GDR's state control of youth organisations and reproduction and the SPD's youth groups and utopian visions.[13]

Second, the impact of the twelve years of Nazism and the division of Germany into two states led to the evolution of a new West German identity. With ethnic nationalism discredited after the Nazis,[14] West Germans were left to deal with the "cultural legacy of authoritarian nationalism"[15] by conceiving of a Germany based on 'positive' cultural values. For example, the editors of magazine *Der Ruf* saw "in Enlightenment humanism a specifically German" character.[16] Christian Democrats embraced historic German traditions of liberalism and humanism as part of a newly interpreted *sonderweg* (a German historical trajectory to democracy) leading to the FRG.[17] By contrast, the SPD were concerned with trying to repent for Nazism and then revert to an earlier united Germany.

Christian Democrats strived to build a new Germany, rather than continue from before like the SPD. The *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) led to bold claims about nationalism in campaigns, such as "*wir sind wieder wer*" (we can hold our heads high again).[18] Habermas' theory of 'constitutional patriotism'[19] can be interpreted as a consequence of this interweaving of national identity with the political success and stability of the FRG.[20] West German national identity became uniquely bound up with the political project of Christian Democracy, especially as it became gradually clearer in the 1960s that re-unification, and thereby a traditional national identity, was not a short-term prospect.

Third, the Union benefited enormously from a particularly weak political marketplace. The anti-Nazi drive created a broader anti-totalitarian impulse that fed the pre-existent and multifaceted anti-Communist opinion. Anti-Communism in the early 1930s was a factor in popular and big business support for the Nazis. Twelve years of effective and widespread Nazi propaganda against the Communist threat within Germany, as well as on the Eastern Front, only strengthened anti-Communism. The Red Army's occupation of East Germany convinced more people that Stalinism was abhorrent, and the widening gap between the FRG and GDR throughout the 1950s further supported this. Adenauer's Westpolitik

supported the Union's anti-Communist credentials, and this stood in stark contrast to the SPD's initially "'unsound' position on German unity,"[21] which made them seem hospitable to the idea of accepting some parts of the GDR's Communist system. The SPD's genuine commitment to parliamentary Marxism up to 1959 was seen as providing a gateway for the unpopular KPD (the two had already merged in the GDR) and Moscow. This is evidenced by the popular CDU campaign slogan "Where Ollenhauer ploughs, Moscow sows,"[22] and Adenauer's broader security vision that "Asia stands on the Elbe."

For the first time in German politics, the Christian forces of both confessions crystallised into a singular, democratic, and conservative Union.[23] With fascism and ethnic nationalism discredited in practise and by taboo as explained above, the moderate position of Christian Democracy was a more significant force on the right. Traditional Liberalism was weakened by the economic turmoil of Weimar and its role in the rise of Nazism, and while the Liberals (FDP) were large enough to be suitable coalition partners for the Union, they were not substantial enough to prevent its success. Pastor Niemoller's initial extension of a Church-SPD axis was an expression of the tradition of Left Christianity, but "the more conservative majority of the Evangelical Church distanced itself" from Niemoller's leftism.[24] Whilst the right wing of the church was dominant in the Union, the church did not directly control the party. Whereas Kass, the leader of the Catholic Centre party (ZP) from 1928-33, had been a cleric, Adenauer was a liberal Catholic layman and private about his faith.[25] This was important in the success of the Union as it strengthened its broader appeal, both to traditional Protestant confessional party voters and to general conservatives. The old ZP had harboured some elements in its traditional elite who were hostile to democracy and sympathetic to the idea of a strong man, but democracy held an ideological monopoly on the post-war Union.[26] Thus the Union was in a very strong position electorally: hegemonic, and the natural choice, on the right, and set against a weak SPD.

Furthermore, the grandfather image of Adenauer and his promise of 'no experiments' played into the pervasive *ohne mich* (without me) mentality, as it offered a politics not based on mass participation, in contrast to the SPD. The discrediting of radicalism also worked against active mass agitation,[27] and "deracinated much" of public discourse.[28] This is linked to the first factor, the legacy of Nazism, as the experience of totalitarianism and radicalism pushed many to withdraw into this private sphere: an attitude shift that helped the "dull" Adenauer succeed after the "flamboyant… style of Hitler."[29]

Konrad Adenauer at the CDU Party Conference, April 1960

In conclusion, Christian Democracy rose from the ashes of Nazism, as a reaction against it and its roots, although in part a manifestation of its anti-Communism. Over time, the features of Christian Democrat policy, such as the social market's prosperity and the integration of a divided FRG into Europe, came to be intertwined with the development of the West German state and a new identity for its citizens. The Union was uniquely well positioned to take advantage of the mood of a people who wanted a new form of politics: a stable democracy with minimal civic engagement. The lack of other strong political options is a significant factor in explaining the extent of the Union's electoral success. The fundamental success and popularity of the Union, however, was due to the structural factors that arose out of the defeat of Nazism and national division.

[8] Kalyvas, S.N. (1996). The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe. Ithaca, U.S.A.: Cornell University Press, p. 206-7.

[9] Ibid, p. 209.

[10] Kaiser, W. (2011). Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 169.

[11] Eschenburg, T. (1983) *Jahre der Besatzung* (1945-9), Vol. 1: *Geschichte der Bundesrepublick Deutschland*, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt/ Brockhaus, Stuggart/Wiesbaden, p. 424, cited in Williamson, D.G. (2001) Germany from Defeat to Partition, 1945 – 1963. London: Pearson, p. 67.

[12] Berger, S. (2004) Inventing the Nation: Germany. London: Arnold, pp. 181.

[13] Ibid, p. 178.

[14] Breuilly, J. (1997) The national idea in modern German history. In Fullbrook, M. (ed.) (1997) *German History since 1800* London: Arnold.

[15] Carter, E. (1997) Culture, history and national identity in the two Germanies since 1945. In Fullbrook, M. (ed.) (1997) *German History since 1800* London: Arnold, p. 433.

[16] Ibid, p. 439.

[17] Berger, S. (2004) Inventing the Nation: Germany. London: Arnold, p.170.

[18] Ibid, p.184.

[19] Habermas, J. (1988) Historical consciousness and post-traditional identity: remarks on the Federal Republic's orientation to the West. *Acta Sociologica*.

[20] Williamson, D.G. (2001) Germany from Defeat to Partition, 1945 – 1963. London: Pearson, Ch. 4.

[21] Hobsbawm, E. (1995). *The Age of Extremes: 1914-1991*. 2nd Ed. London: Abacus, p. 283.

[22] Berger, S. (2004) Inventing the Nation: Germany. London: Arnold, pp. 182. Ollenhauer was the SPD's leader and proposed chancellor in the 1953 election.

[23] Kalyvas, S.N. (1996). The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe. Ithaca, U.S.A.: Cornell University Press, p. 215.

[24] Williamson, D.G. (2001) Germany from Defeat to Partition, 1945 – 1963. London: Pearson, pp. 57.

[25] Kaiser, W. (2011). Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 173.

[26] Ibid, p. 170.

[27] Roseman, M. (1997). Division and Stability: The Federal Republic of Germany, 1949-1989. In Fullbrook, M. (ed.) (1997) *German History since 1800* London: Arnold, p. 373.

[28] Ibid, p. 369.

[29] Kaiser, W. (2011). Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 172.

Sport as Art

Charles Ullathorne argues that sport is as deserving of a seat at the table of intellectual discussion as traditional art forms. It merits at least an equal hearing as literature, theatre, music, paintings, sculpture and the myriad aesthetic pursuits we traditionally refer to as the arts. Furthermore, the cultural, historical and political impact of sport underlines its oft underestimated sophistication.

Arsenal's Home Ground: Emirates Stadium and the Stage of Football Theatre

Sport as an art form? What do we mean by the arts anyway? Plato considered art to be "imitation of life", the film director Fellini said that "all art is autobiographical", and Picasso was of the opinion that "art is a lie that makes us realise truth". It is hard to define, and we can only make generalisations about how it makes us feel, what it tells us about ourselves, and how it reflects our culture. Art has beauty, art reveals truth, art is part of our cultural expression. And in many ways so does sport. Sport undoubtedly has beauty, sport reveals character, sport is an essential part of our cultural life.

Sport and drama have been intertwined for centuries. Shakespeare, for example, mentions nearly fifty different games and sports in his plays. This connection brings to mind a football match, after which the then beleaguered West Ham manager Paulo Di Canio strode onto the pitch to remonstrate with his own side's fans. Writing in the Times, the journalist Simon Barnes compared Di Canio to King Lear ranting on the heath. An entirely apt metaphor: Di Canio, like Lear, had been driven mad by the perceived ingratitude of those whom he expected to care about him. The difference between the two was that it was the fans rather than Lear's daughters - Cordelia in particular – causing this disquiet. Barnes' writing is full of these erudite and elucidating metaphors. Yet, he is frequently mocked for his supposed 'pseudo-intellectual' analysis, daring to compare the vacuous world of football with Shakespeare!

Art evokes an emotion response, and so does sport. Let us even consider a 'sport' which many people disregard as a frivolous, unathletic, non-sport: darts. Anyone who has been present at a big darts tournament cannot fail to have been moved at least partly by the theatre of the occasion. When the protagonists take the stage, often in costume, with music blaring and the inebriated crowd baying, the hairs on the back of your neck rise. It feels as if you are in the audience at the Circus Maximus during a gladiatorial duel to the death. As the duel commences, each tungsten dagger draws emotion from the room. When a favourite player hits the magical 'One hundred and eighty', you cannot help but rise to cheer; conversely you experience catharsis when they miss the crucial double. Whenever you are part of a partisan crowd, you can get swept along in this vein. Psychologists call this 'emotional contagion' and the subtle and nuanced phenomenon is as noticeable in the opera house as much as the sports arena.

I have often thought that the enjoyment of sport is improved by an engagement in other spheres. When one considers the changing formations in football, for example, (the so-called 'philosophies' of football), it enriches that contemplation to compare it with the development of traditional philosophy. The Philosopher of Science, Thomas Kuhn, tells us about 'paradigm shifts' throughout the history of scientific endeavour, the rewriting of accepted wisdom by younger, fresher minds. Einstein rewriting Newton's laws. Copernicus overturning Ptolemy's idea of the Earth at the centre of the solar system . I would argue that this is no different to the way Holland applied a new way of playing 'Total football' in the 1970s. Or how about the way cricket teams approach limited overs matches now compared to even 10 years ago before twenty 20? Dick Fosbury famously revolutionised athletics by inventing a new way to approach the high jump - this could be argued to be one of the biggest paradigm shifts of all. Sports teams, players, and coaches therefore need continually to rethink old ways of doing things to find new strategies to improve their performance.

Ian Bell Batting at Trent Bridge against Australia (2013); Haddin keeps wicket

It is easy to be supercilious about the world of sport. Firstly, there is a tendency to assert smugly that talented sportsman do not have the equivalent intellect of a top German literary scholar or of a classical musician. This misses the point that without realising that most sportsmen have an incredible intelligence (anticipation of ball movements, tactical nous, 'reading' the game...), just one of a different type. Secondly, their strength or speed may be the crucial part of their armoury in some sports but they have worked hard to become such fine physical specimens, and it is the product of their 'ten thousand hours' training. Whether it is Don Bradman, as a child, spending hours incessantly hitting a ball against a wall with a cricket stump, or a young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart producing minuet after minuet at his clavier, the end product is a mastery of the chosen domain. Yet, one activity is venerated above the other because it is judged more refined to enjoy music than joining the baying throngs on the terraces. I am convinced that (certainly in this country) class distinctions have a role to play here.

Sport Balls: artistry comes in all shapes

Australia is a country where class is less of a problem than in Britain, and where there is nowhere near the same cultural tradition in poetry, literature, music etc. As such, Australians venerate sports, and it allows the country an expression of its prowess on the world stage. As novelist Thomas Keneally said of his schooldays, "If we spoke of literature we spoke of Englishmen. Cricket was a way out of [our] cultural ignominy. No Australian ever wrote 'Paradise lost', but Bradman made a hundred before lunch at Lord's". And very good at it they are too, even if we do have temporary hold on the Ashes.! Unencumbered by entrenched class divisions, they will celebrate their sportspeople alongside their scientists, painters and poets. Why should not we?

Political and cultural influences occur throughout the history of sport, and perhaps rather more interestingly, sport can influence our culture and

Rugby World Cup 2011 Final. The All Blacks perform the haka and intimidate France. Photo: Dave Lintott / photosport.co.nz

politics. The islands of the Caribbean are a case in point. Generally poor, feuding nations come together as one to play cricket as the West Indies. The history of West Indies' cricket is an instructive narrative. The legacy of colonialism, the slave trade, the desire for expression of a beleaguered people on the world stage: it has all the elements of a fantastic epic, played out over 22 yards. As the cricket writer CLR James noted, with a nod to Kipling, "what do they know of cricket that only cricket know?" As a result of cricket, the islands, at one time so mistrusting and divided, have a common team to follow, and heroes to idolise. As a unified collective, they can take on the world, and in the 1970s and 1980s they were the best in the business.

One of the most apposite examples of sport's influence in politics in recent times was the sporting boycott applied to apartheid era South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. To South Africans, like the Australians, sport was an important way of demonstrating national pride and prowess on the world stage, especially the springbok rugby team but also their cricket team. The country's segregation laws, which ensured that black and 'coloured' people were treated like second class citizens, had been in place since 1948. The boycott meant that until 1991 the country was prevented from taking part in any international fixtures, and surely helped lead to the downfall of apartheid and ultimately to the release of Nelson Mandela. To see Mandela, president of the new 'rainbow nation' South Africa, wearing a springbok jersey, previously a symbol of Afrikaaner superiority and a whites-only preserve, as he presented the rugby world cup to Francois Pienaar in 1995, was to witness a powerful symbol of sport as a vehicle for reconciliation.

The boycott itself came about partly because of a remarkable man and superb cricketer, Basil D'Oliveira , who left South Africa because of its racist policies to find a new life in Worcestershire. He rose through the county game to become a test cricketer for England, and in 1968 hit a century at the Oval against Australia. This innings of 158 had seemed to put him into the touring party for the South Africa test series later that year. However, political machinations were afoot, and the South African Prime Minister, BJ Vorster, stated that no touring party containing D'Oliveira would be admitted. The MCC seemed to bow to this influence (although the minutes of the selection meeting have mysteriously vanished) and d'Oliveira was omitted from the squad. This caused a scandal after his heroics in the Ashes, and after another squad member was unable to travel due to injury, d'Oliveira was selected. The tour had to be cancelled and the world sat up and took notice. South Africa was left in the wilderness not long after, and the political pressure was applied. Sport, the vehicle for reconciliation, showed itself also to be the vehicle for change. Perhaps not such a frivolous pastime, after all.

Sport is an important part of our cultural life. Perhaps it should be held up alongside the rest of the arts, and the back pages of the newspaper should not just be seen as reporting factual information on tries, wickets and goals. I will leave you with one final thought. In 1973, the Welsh Fly-half, Phil Bennett, whilst playing for the Barbarians against the All Blacks, sold two outrageous dummies in the course of setting up a try for Gareth Edwards, a try that is generally acknowledged to be one of the greatest ever scored. This stirred the soul of every one of the people that watched it, not just live but on television. Cliff Morgan, commentating said : "If the greatest writer of the written word would have written that story, no one would have believed it. That really was something."

I had not been born when it took place, yet this moment, and other moments like it, filtered through to my consciousness as I started playing and enjoying rugby. It was if I had witnessed it at first hand. The beauty of sport, in its unpredictable, character-revealing, emotive whole. At times brutal, at times attractive, at times dull, but always keeping you coming back for more. So let us start talking of Federer's backhand in the way we describe Coleridge and Wordsworth: cliché or not, it is poetry in motion. Can we justifiably describe the stories of the heroes of the Ryder Cup as the stories of Ancient Greek heroes? And not flinch when a writer compares Ian Bell playing a cover drive to the elegance of a Barbara Hepworth sculpture? Or admit to feelings on witnessing the raw power of the All Blacks' pack to those on hearing Carmina Burana?

Westminster has a (possibly unexpected) long tradition of sports writers and journalists, from Stephen Potter in the early 20th century, (he coined the phrase 'gamesmanship'), through to Henry Winter, currently Chief football correspondent of the Times. It is, then, entirely appropriate for the school to encourage future torch bearers to report on the aesthetic and the competitive, the performing arts, and to ensure that sport figures prominently in the pantheon of artistic endeavour.

From the Archive

Tales of Storytellers

Charlotte Robinson, Archives Assistant

George Colman (OW) and the Nonsense Club

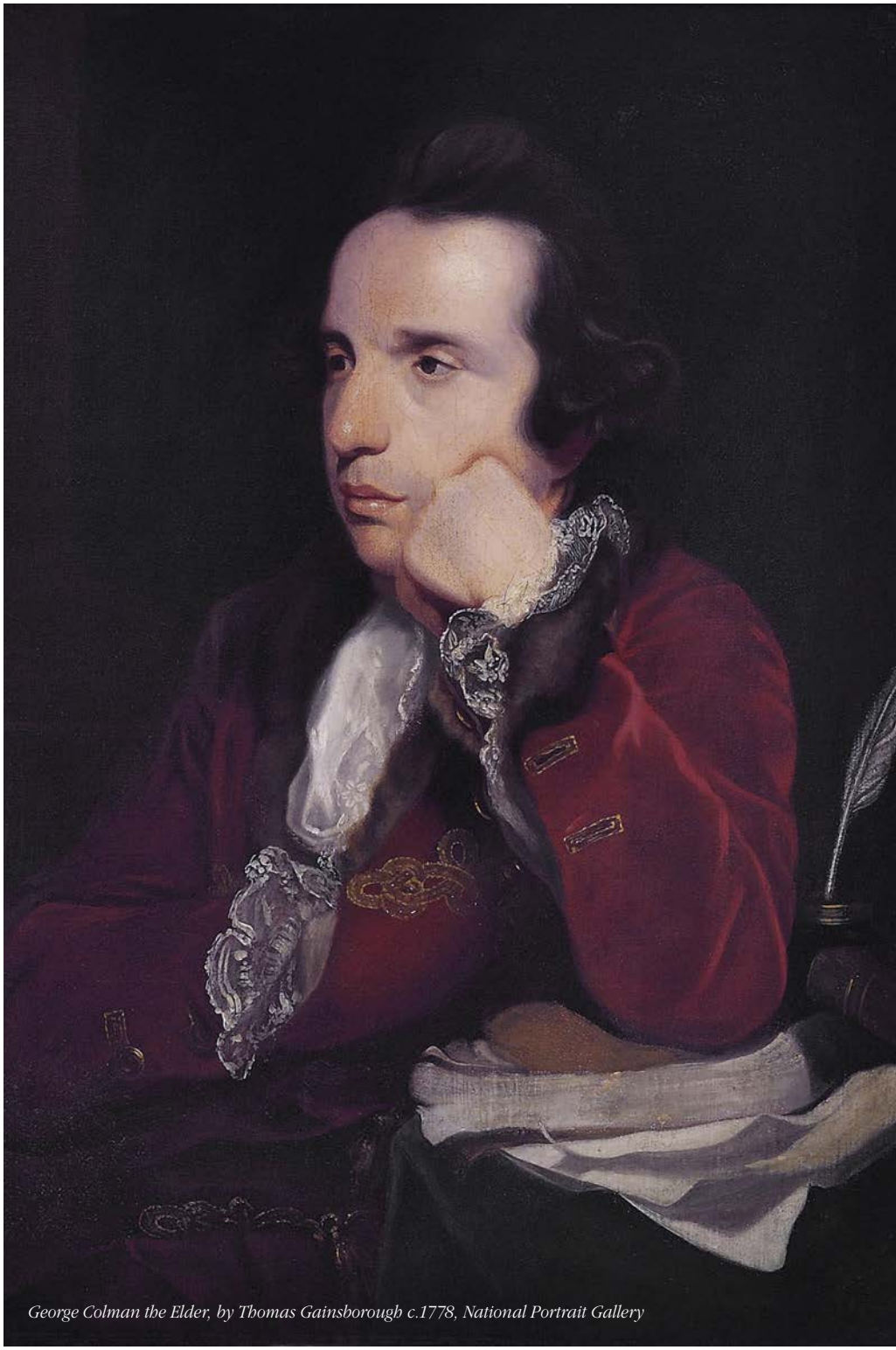
George Colman (1732-1794) was a theatre manager and playwright celebrated for his comic farces. He was born in Florence where his father, Francis, was serving as a British envoy to the Court of Tuscany and was baptised on 18th April 1732. When Francis died the following year, his widow Mary returned to England to live in St James's Park.

On the advice of his uncle and guardian William Pulteney, 1st Earl of Bath (OW), George was sent to join his cousin William at Westminster School. He was admitted in October 1741 and became a King's Scholar in 1746.

The Head Master, Dr John Nicholl (OW), was celebrated for possessing "the art of making his scholars gentlemen." George Colman thrived in this environment and, by the time he was elected to Christ Church, Oxford in 1751, he was top of the school.

Colman's first publication, an essay on literary criticism, was printed anonymously in *The Adventurer*. Then in 1754, he teamed up with his schoolmate Bonnell Thornton (OW) to produce *The Connoisseur*, a weekly magazine of satirical essays that was described as having "just views of the surface of life, and a very sprightly manner."

Colman's family was opposed to him pursuing a literary career; his uncle Pulteney insisted that he should study Law. So after earning his BA in 1755, Colman entered Lincoln's Inn and was called to the bar in January 1757. Although he worked on the Oxford circuit for the next three years, his heart was not in it. He wrote a poem, 'The Law Student', in 1757 in which he complained of the pressures from his family, of the workload, and of his lack of enthusiasm: "*Knowledge in Law care only can attain, / Where honour's*



George Colman the Elder, by Thomas Gainsborough c.1778, National Portrait Gallery

purchased at the price of pain." Instead he found himself increasingly drawn to the world of theatre.

On Thursday evenings throughout the 1750s and early 1760s, George Colman would dine with friends from his Westminster schooldays, including Bonnell Thornton, William Cowper, Robert Lloyd, James Bensley and Charles Churchill. Between them, they produced some of the most popular comedic drama, burlesque, poetry, and satirical essays of the day, and came to be known as the Nonsense Club.

Colman's first play was *Polly Honeycombe*, a cautionary tale of the effects of reading too many novels. It was premiered in Drury Lane Theatre on 5th December 1760, and proved to be so popular that the newly crowned King George III specifically requested a performance. His second play, *The Jealous Wife*, which was performed for the first time the following February, was also a brilliant success. *The Gentleman's Magazine* described it as having "few equals, and no superior" (1761). Bolstered by these successes, Colman finally gave up on Law.

Colman became close to Sarah Ford, a former lover of the actor Henry Mossop who had abandoned her and their daughter, Harriet in 1759. Colman took both Sarah and Harriet under his wing, and in October 1762 Sarah gave birth to Colman's only son, George. Colman married Sarah on 12th July 1768.

He continued to write comedy which was received with acclaim. The highlight was *The Clandestine Marriage*, which he wrote in 1766 in collaboration with the actor David Garrick.

In 1767, the patent for Covent Garden theatre came up for sale, and Colman purchased a share for £15,000. Despite scandal, quarrelling and lawsuits amongst the new patentees, the theatre was consistently successful under Colman's management for the next six years. A surprise triumph was the premiere of Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* in 1773.

Behind the scenes of his professional success, however, Colman's personal life was difficult. Sarah Colman was recovering from an illness in 1771, when she took the wrong medicine and died suddenly. Harriet, aged sixteen, kept house for her step-father. Later that year, Colman fell seriously ill – "seized with a fit" at the theatre – and sold his share in the patent.

Colman took some time to recuperate in Bath and travel with his son, who by now was also a pupil at Westminster. Then in 1776, took the management of Haymarket Theatre over from Samuel Foote. Finally in his element, Colman set about improving the repertoire and the company of actors. He continued writing plays, adaptations, comic operas and one-act pieces until the 1780s, when the gout began to overtake him. While taking a sea-bathing holiday in Margate in 1785, Colman suffered a stroke. George the Younger (OW), who was by now a celebrated writer and theatre manager in his own right, tactfully assisted his father in continuing to manage the Haymarket. However Colman's mind and body continued to deteriorate until he died in Paddington on 14th August 1794.

The Greene Collection in the school library includes a number of first or fine editions of Colman's works.

Little Muck and other stories

The school's old Magic Lantern sits in the Archives Reading Room on the Wren's mezzanine corridor. We also care for a large collection of lantern slides and glass negatives. The majority are teaching slides to illustrate geography, classics and ancient history lectures, and there is one collection of 50 negatives depicting school life in the late-1890s.

One series of slides stands out: six sets of 3¼ inch coloured slides that each tell a story. They were designed to give pupils early training in public speaking and would have been accompanied by a *Supplementary Lecture Book* containing the text to be read aloud. The slides were manufactured by a publishing company called Theobald and Co. between 1884 and 1911, which produced hundreds of these slides to illustrate folk- and fairy-stories or adaptations of novels. The story I wish to highlight is an adaptation of the somewhat orientalist 19th Century tale by Wilhelm Hauff: the *Tale of Little Muck.*

Somewhere in the Middle East, Little Muck, a dwarf, is forced to leave his home following the death of his father. Weary and starving, he agrees to care for a woman's many cats in exchange for food and lodging.

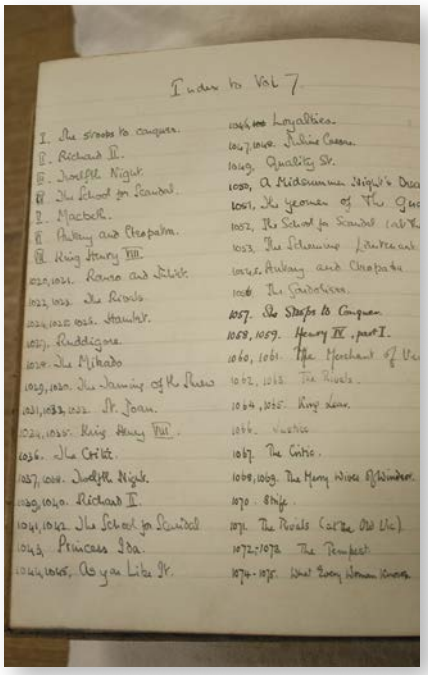
However, he grows dissatisfied and escapes his enslavement by stealing the woman's slippers and cane. One of the cats explains that these items have magical powers: the slippers enable the wearer to run as fast as lightening, and the cane leads its owner to buried treasure.

Little Muck wins a race against the king's fastest runner, and rises so high in the king's favour that the king's loyal advisors turn against Little Muck. With the help of the magic cane, Little Muck discovers some buried treasure in the king's garden, and naively attempts to buy the friendship of the king's advisors.

Prompted by his advisors, the king grows suspicious of Little Muck's newfound wealth and throws him into prison. To avoid execution, Little Muck confesses to the magic of the slippers and cane. The king confiscates these, and banishes Little Muck from the kingdom.

The Magic Lantern

Lantern Slides telling the Tale of Little Muck



Index of plays read by the Literary Society 1926-33

While the exiled Little Muck is roaming the wild forests, he stumbles across some magic figs which give an enormous nose and ears to anyone who eats them. Seizing the opportunity for revenge, Little Muck adopts a disguise and brings a basket of the figs to the king's court. Every member of the court tastes the figs, and are horrified to feel their noses and ears grow to comic proportions. The king begs Little Muck to restore them to normal but Little Muck refuses and, taking the slippers and cane, disappears out of the window.

Curtain Call for Lit. Soc.

Pupils at Westminster have always enjoyed an incredible variety of guest speakers and a range of opportunities to develop their own public speaking skills in the various societies. A Literary Society existed from 1882 to 1933 and kept a ledger, recording the members and the activities of the society. A play would be chosen each week, and every member would be assigned a part to read.

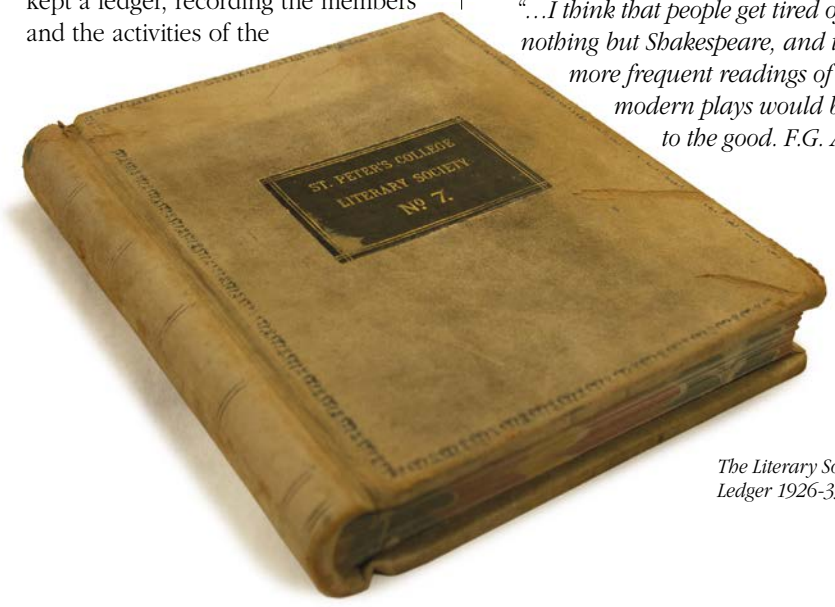
In theory, this was an excellent activity. After all, plays are written not to be read, but to be performed. Where it is impossible to stage a full production, it is more authentic to read a play aloud than it is to study it alone.

In theory. The reality was somewhat different.

"*I sincerely hope… something will be done to make [the Lit. Soc. meetings] bearable. For a considerable time it has been nothing but a source of boredom and irritation… Anthony B.L. Murison [KS 1921-26] Late Hon. Sec. 25.7.26*".

In theory, reading a play a week meant that pupils could experience a fantastic range of literature and explore all kinds of genres. In reality:

"*…I think that people get tired of nothing but Shakespeare, and that more frequent readings of modern plays would be all to the good. F.G. Adams* [KS 1928-33] Hon. Sec 1932-33"



The Literary Society Ledger 1926-33

In theory, assigning roles every week could enable pupils to take on a challenge, expand their comfort zones and really improve their public speaking.

It is a "*pity that the chief part should generally be assigned to Mr Tanner [OW, Librarian and History Master]. This is usually due to the diffidence of the junior members of the committee who do not like to suggest themselves… Cecil M. Harrison* [KS 1923-29]".

In theory, this could be a really fun way to spend an evening with friends.

"*After 1½ hours of prep one's appetite begins to make its presence felt, and as after a reading of average length one goes down to find what tea there is left stone-cold and what food there was, eaten by the 3rd Elections, it rather dampens one's literary enthusiasm. Cecil M. Harrison* [KS 1923-29]".

Lit. Soc. was brought to a close in 1933; it merged with the Political Society and the 'Pol. and Lit. Soc.' continued for nearly 40 years. This ledger is a fascinating document because it chronicles the struggle to keep enthusiasm for literature alive. It records the pupils attempting to move away from an over-emphasis on Shakespeare, and explores the relative status of works of literature. More significantly, though, its guileless account of sleepiness, boredom and hunger gives an endearing human perspective.

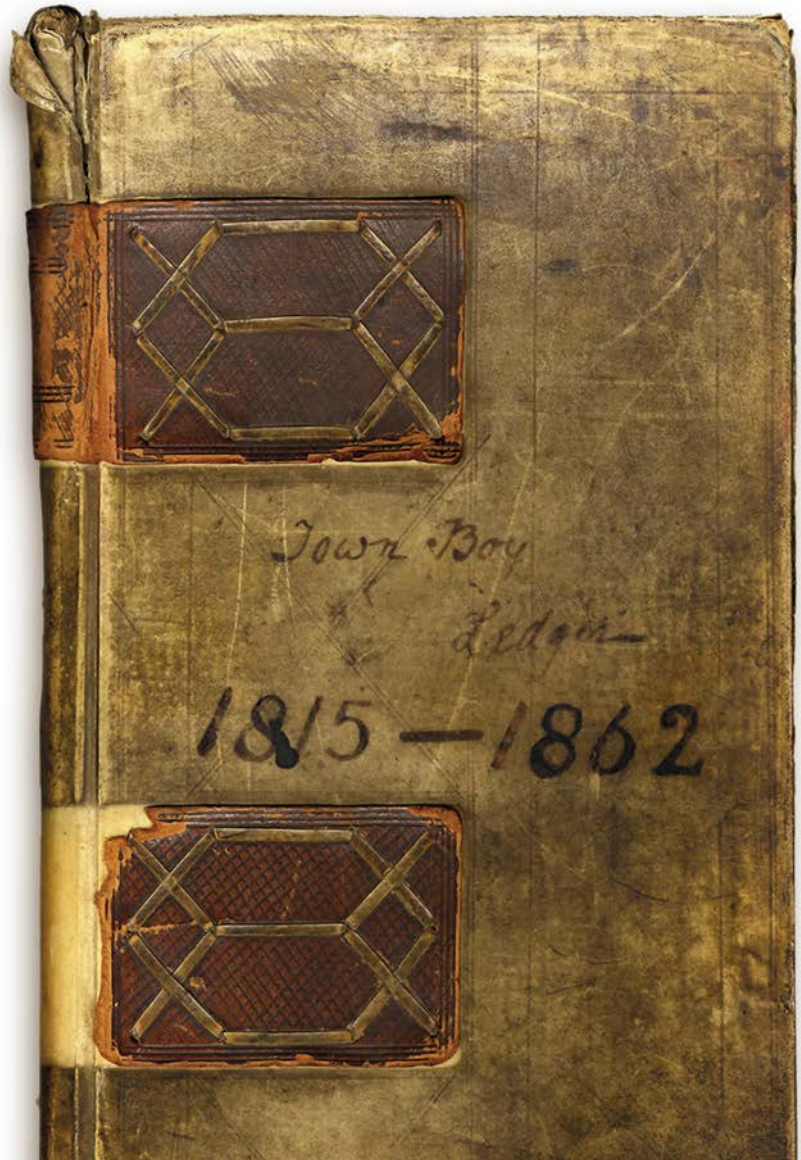
From the Archive

Tales from the Town Boy Ledgers

Elizabeth Wells, Archivist and Records Manager

As School Archivist one of the questions I am often asked is which is my favourite item in the school's collections or, as I think of it, the 'Sophie's Choice dilemma'. Everything here has a value – why else would we bother to preserve our collections for the future. However, the items which have really captured my imagination during the five years I have spent at the school are the Town Boy Ledgers.

'Town Boy' was the name given to any pupil in the school who was not a Scholar. In the early 19th Century, when the pupil numbers rarely exceeded 300 and at one point fell as low as 79, the Town Boys and Scholars represented two halves of the school. They would regularly compete with each other at sports in matches, including an annual cricket match known as 'Lamprobatics' for reasons that remain unclear. The Town Boy Ledgers provide a near continuous record of school life beginning in 1815 and finally trailing off in the 1960s as House identities began to take over. The Ledgers were kept by the pupil elected 'Prince of the Town Boys' (Princeps Oppidanus or Prin. Op.) and provide a vivid account of school boy experiences written exclusively for the benefit of future generations of pupils. They give us a rarely recorded perspective upon education at the time along with fascinating references to local and national events.



At some point in their past the ledgers had been kept somewhere damp and had suffered from mould growth, as well as the wear and tear of 200 years of handling. The School applied for and received some funding from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust to have the ledgers cleaned and repaired.

Towards the end of 2015 the Archive began a project to serialize the ledgers online. Thanks to the help of pupil volunteers Harry Spillane (DD 2012-2014) and Xavier Chitnavis (PP 2014-2016), who have worked hard to transcribe frequently illegible handwriting, we are now posting an entry online every weekday during term time. Here are some of the highlights we have discovered thus far:

Rowing about Rowing

In 1818 the pupils arranged to race Eton College on the Thames:

'*but the business somehow or other coming to Dr Page's ears, he forbad our engaging in it threatening expulsion if it were persisted in, wherefore it was thought most prudent to give it up.*'

This is the first recorded instance of what was to become a regular

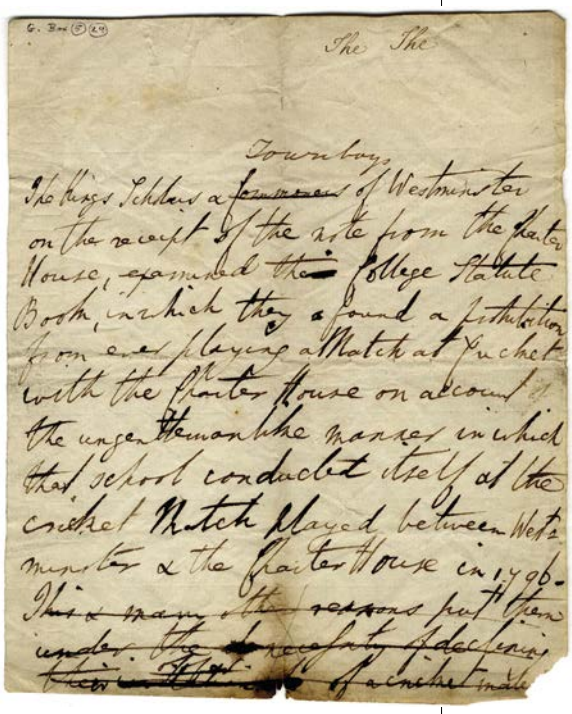
occurrence. In the early 19th Century few Head Masters appreciated the benefits which came with exercise and team work. They sought to prevent the boys from competing with other schools by whatever means possible. By the mid 19th Century Dr Williamson was forced to take some of the Westminster eight prisoner, locking them in his study, to stop them from taking part in a race.

Snobbery

However, not all invitations to play sport were accepted by Westminster pupils. In 1818:

'A challenge was also sent to us by the Charter House to play them at Cricket, which was very properly refused, not only on account of their being such inferior players but because it was thought beneath Westminster to accept a challenge from a private school.'

It appears that years earlier a match in 1796 had ended badly when the pupils from Charterhouse had conducted themselves in an 'ungentlemanlike manner' – the fact that Charterhouse won the match might also have had something to do with the Westminster pupils' condemnation of their behaviour. The two schools did not play each other until 1850 when H.G. Liddell, a former pupil of Charterhouse himself, was Head Master. Even then 'some of the eleven thought it too low on the ground of Charterhouse not being a publick school'. Liddell cleverly refused to give the school an early holiday on Saturday for the match unless all of the team played ensuring that the boys who had resisted quickly overcame their objections. The final result was not determined, although the Town Boys could not resist recording that 'we had much the best of it when the wickets were drawn'.



The Town boys,
The Kings Scholars of Westminster
on the receipt of the ale from the Charter
House, examined the College Statute
Book, in which they found a prohibition
from ever playing a Match at Cricket
with the Charter House on account of
the ungentlemanlike manner in which
that school conducted itself at the
Cricket Match played between West-
minster & the Charter House in 1796.

On the 27th of October Dr Goodenough deaf to all remonstrance, ventured to infringe upon the established usage off the school, by flogging a Sixth Fellow who had been shewn up for being intoxicated. In consequence of this it was unanimously agreed throughout the Town Boys that in order to bring him to a sense of misconduct and to cause him to redress the injury done to the Honour of the Sixth he should be hissed on his entering into School on the ensuing day. Circumstances which it is better to bury in oblivion than to mention, precluded us from carrying our resolution into effect; however having extorted a promise from Goodenough that he would never more inflict upon a sixth fellow similar punishment we were satisfied.'

The first time I read this entry in the ledger I thought it was a silly tale of drunkenness, naughty school boys and pantomime protests. But a few months later I came across a letter which completely altered my view. A pupil at the school had written home to his father about the incident explaining that the boy:

'would not let his briches down of a long time but Goodenough said he might either do that or be expelled, so he flogged him and that is what Page never did, and he felt it so much as it was so much the more disgrace because he was so high up in the school; he seemed very much downcast all the evening, and Longlands, the usher of the house he boards at, called him into his room and talked to him about it till he went to bed. He never spoke a word but as the fellow that sleaps in his room thought; went to sleep directly but most likely not for when that fellow awoke about half past six saw some blood upon his pillow but he knew his nose bled frequently so he thought nothing was the matter. He got up at seven and called his companion but he never answered, so he went and touched him; his pillow was streaming with blood. He went and awoke his brother who went to the house keeper and she went to Longlands; he came up directly and found he had made an attempt to stab himself but hit the blow in his arm, besides that he cut his neck in three places which he did with a penknife and after that laid the knife under his pillow and feel down but luckily the bed clothes came up to the wound and stopped the bleeding or else he would certainly have died. Three doctors were sent for; he is getting rather better.'

We have been unable to uncover the identity of the pupil or discover what became of him.

'Broshiering'

One of the most extraordinary entries in the Ledger concerns a boy who was thought to have died from surfeit – that fatal complaint that killed so many medieval monarchs in *1066 and all that*. The ledger records that:

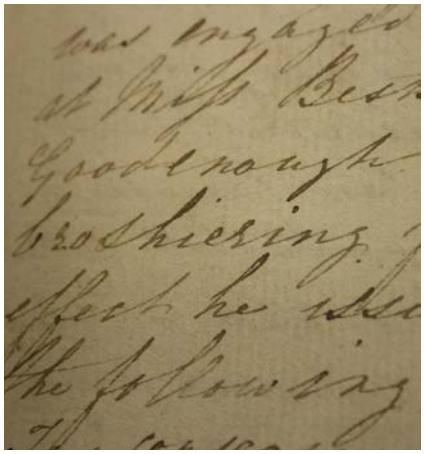
'A melancholy accident having occurred in the death of L.J. Parry a boy of the fifth form, in consequence of his having over eaten himself in a frolic in which he was engaged with others in the hall, at Miss Bests, it seemed fit to Dr Goodenough to forbid anything like broshiering for the future'

For a long time we were completely stumped as to the meaning of the word broshiering – which, whilst the 19th Century handwriting of the ledger can be difficult to decipher, was unmistakable.

An answer was provided by browsing the Oxford English Dictionary:

brosier | brozier, v.

2. *trans.* In Eton College phraseology: to attempt to exhaust the supply of food at a meal, as an expression of dissatisfaction with the fare provided; esp. in the phrase *to brosier my dame or my tutor.*



1850 *N. & Q.* 1st Ser. 2 44/1, I well remember the phrase, 'brozier-my-dame', signifying to 'eat her out of house and home'.

1888 W. ROGERS *Reminisc.* 15, I joined a conspiracy to 'brozier' him. There were ten or twelve of us [at breakfast], and we devoured everything within reach.

1899 C. K. PAUL *Memories* 111 If a tutor or a dame was suspected of being niggardly, it was determined to 'brosier' him or her.

Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable suggests that the term derives from the Greek verb 'broso' meaning 'to eat'. It is pleasing to know that our Ledger has produced a much earlier instance of the phrase being used beyond Eton College.

Dr Goodenough's problem did not find so ready a solution and he circulated a long list of rules concerning the consumption of food

'in consequence of the evident impropriety and manifest danger, of the wanton and excessive eating, alike destructive of good order, and prejudicial to the health which has at different times, and under various pretences taken place in the boarding houses, and with a view to prevent any such occurrences for the future'

As we delve further into the Ledger we will be able to find out whether his prescription was successful.

What happens next?

As the first volume of the series of ledgers (covering 1815-1862) has over 400 entries the serialization is likely to go on for some time! You can read the latest entries at http://townboyledger.westminster.org.uk/

Jeremy Bentham's Westminster poems

***Nicholas Stone finds that from these poems facets of Bentham's later thought did find an expression in his juvenilia, and there are also ideas presented that are at odds with his later beliefs. The poems* are *therefore illuminating, and there is a pleasing irony in this, as Bentham later referred to prosody as* "a miserable invention for consuming time".[1]**

Jeremy Bentham attended Westminster from the age of seven and left for The Queen's College, Oxford in 1760, at the age of 12. His schoolbooks from this period contain seventeen pieces of original Latin and Greek poetry written prior to his matriculation in August 1760. The majority of these had not been previously transcribed (though a few, sometimes inaccurate transcriptions appeared in the 1842 biography *The Works of Jeremy Bentham, Now First Collected: Under the Superintendence of His Executor, John Bowring)*, and only one had previously been translated[2]. However, I have now transcribed the legible majority of the poems, and produced translations of those I considered relevant to this essay, which are included in the body of the text[3].

Bentham's best known and most significant philosophical idea, and arguably the one underpinning all his others, was the 'greatest happiness principle', which he formulated as "*it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong*".[4] This principle, that we ought not to compromise our collective contentment, seems to be expressed in several of the poems collected here. *Velis id quod possis*, of May 1759 and arguably has an implicit Utilitarian message.

Velis id quod possis

Non facere ipse queo Tetrasticha; disticha possum,
Accipe quod possum, quod nequeo, sileat.

Jeremy Bentham by Henry William Pickersgill

Cut your coat according to your cloth

A quatrain isn't something I can do;
But here's a couplet: Take what's offered you.

Its title – "*Want what you can have*" – is a quotation from Terence's *Andria*[5], one of the cycle of Latin Plays that Bentham would have been exposed to at Westminster. Aptly, it can also be seen as essentially a reformulation of the Utilitarian Principle for personal use: Don't compromise

[1] Bowring, John (1842). The Works of Jeremy Bentham, Now First Collected: Under the Superintendence of His Executor, John Bowring, p.34.

[2] *Condita Messis*, of which Bentham seems to have written his own English translation in his schoolbook. The same translation was published in *The European Magazine, and London Review* (Vol:22 From July to Dec: 1792, p. 149), and titled "*Harvest Home: Translated from a Latin Poem of Jere. Bentham Jun. Esq., by the late Mr. John Elllis*".

[3] The verse translations principally aim to capture flavour and style. In the schoolbooks themselves, on the rare occasions that Bentham translated a poem (which he tended to do only after matriculating) he rendered it in verse, so I feel justified in doing the same.

[4] Bentham, Jeremy (1776). A Fragment on Government. London., Preface (2nd para.).

[5] Terence, Andria, II. 1. 6.

your own happiness by setting your sights too high. The couplet's title is also its sentiment, neatly summed up before the caesura in the pentameter line ("*Accipe quod possum*" – "*Accept what I can manage*"), and the idea is also conveyed by the chiastic structure of the hexameter line ("*Non…queo Tetrasticha; disticha possum*" – "I *can't write a quatrain; I can write a couplet*"), which neatly conveys the contrast between the reasonable and the unreasonable expectations. It is easy enough to see the cheerful little distich written by the eleven year old Bentham as illustrative of the same principle that he later espoused.

Tam prope tam proculque carries a similar idea, but is an altogether less pleasant poem, not least on account of the false quantity ("*Nobilis iste statim*"), though this can arguably be forgiven of a twelve year old poet.

Tam prope tam proculque

Nonne vides procerem sectatur ut ante sodales
Illi lucrosum qui petat officium,
Nobilis iste: statim faciam quod quaeris amice
Non opus est precibus: quod petis ipse dabo.
Cur te nacturum speras quod quaeris, inepte
Jam tibi non nummi sunt: et egenus eris.

May 1760

So near yet so far

Promotion's the thing he is seeking:
So after the boss he goes sneaking.
He's a good chap. Now ask what you will:
Old buddy, I'll send you no bill!
But why this acquisitive groping?
You're stupid, and broke, and stuck hoping.

This unpleasantness comes across principally because though it seems to have much the same message as *Velis id quod possis* it puts it across in a rather less charming and more vindictive way. "*Nobilis*" is heavily emphasised by its promotion to the head of its line, retrospectively drawing attention to its derisive tone when the mask slips in the final couplet. The biting parallel structure of the metrically equivalent line endings "*quod quaeris amice*" and "*quod quaeris inepte*", the one sarcastic and the one genuine, make clear enough the author's views on what he sees as reaching for the unobtainable, and thereby forsaking the personal 'felicific calculus'.

A further two of the poems appear also to have similar messages, though not as overtly. *Redit labor actus in orbem* is one of them, its title taken from Virgil's Georgics.[6]

Redit labor actus in orbem

Ambages caudae illatrans canis ore per omnes
Persequitur fatuus se, refugitque simul.
O canis irascens tecum, quid inane laboras?
Quocunque it corpus, cauda sequetur adhuc.

May 1760

Completed, the work wheels round again

The foolish, barking dog chases himself with his mouth, through all the evasions of his tail, and he flees at the same time.
O dog, angry with yourself, what empty work are you doing?
Wheresoever the body goes, the tail shall follow still.

It makes the point that the dog's thankless work pursuing his own tail is "*empty*" largely, it seems, on account of the fact that the dog ends up "*irascens tecum*" at the end of it, and is therefore unrewarded in Utilitarian terms. Perhaps this is too substantial a moral to draw from a cheery and innocuous seeming pair of couplets, but there is a danger that viewing the juvenilia of any celebrated person is apt to produce in the mind of the viewer apparent prefigurations of the author's later ideas which simply may not have existed for the author himself. However, given the ease with which Utilitarian notions regarding happiness can be understood in *Velis id quod possis* and *Tam prope tam proculque*, it does seem reasonable to see this poem in a similar light; the angry dog may be as much a device for showing our own inability to 'cut our coats according to our cloth' as the unrealistic dreams of the penniless professional climber seeking preferment, or Bentham's own protestation that we must be content with the sort of verse he is able to write, and not expect something else. The fact that the dog is addressed directly and didactically in the final couplet does perhaps lend weight to the idea that the poem may also have a similar philosophical message for its human addressees. "*Noli laborare inane*", to paraphrase the poem, could very well be a Utilitarian slogan[7].

Fas est et ab hoste doceri[8] is also understandable as a poem with a Utilitarian message.

Fas est et ab hoste doceri

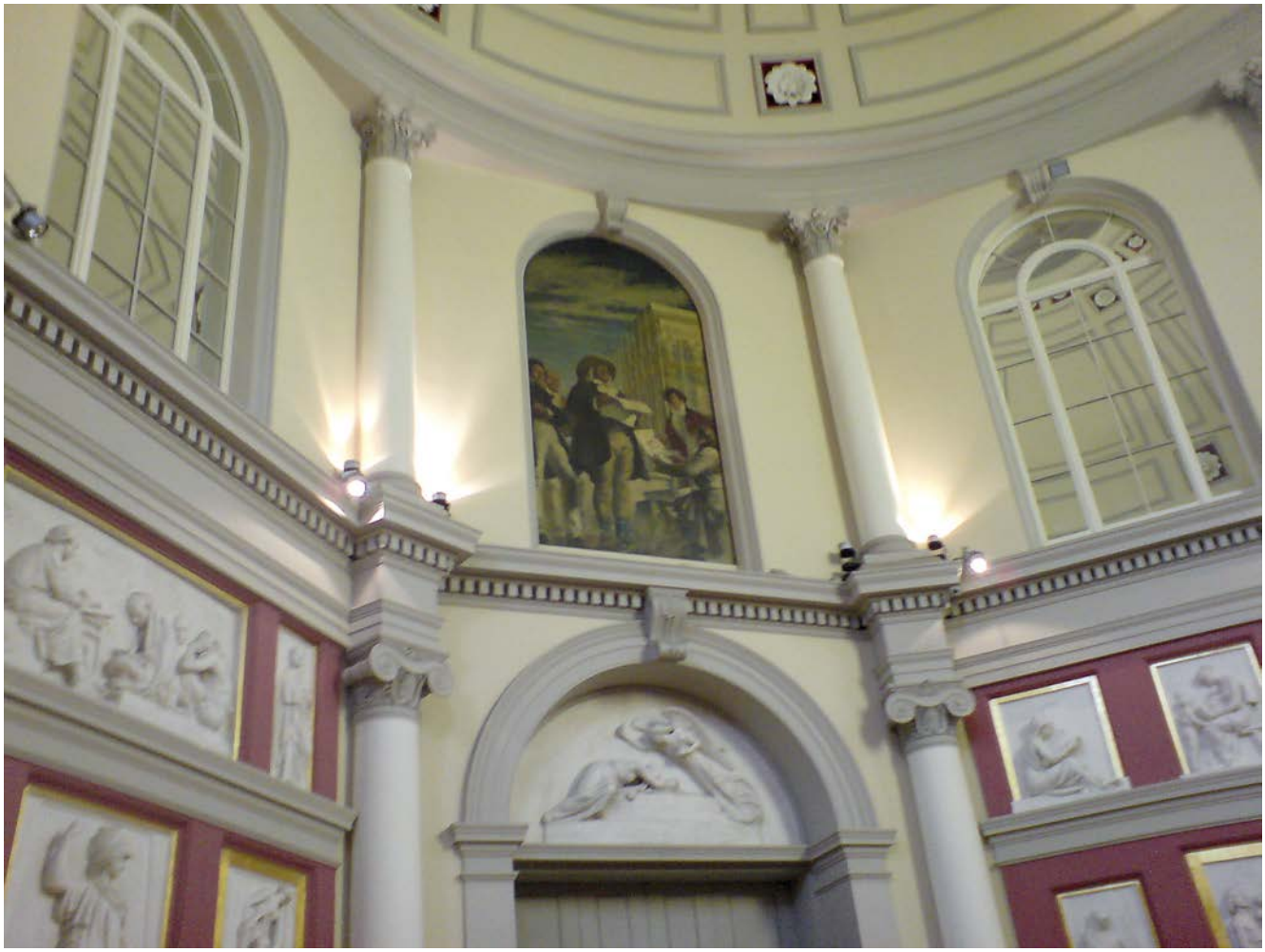
Cum Rex Suessiacus crudeli foedere junctos
Saxoniae vicit Muscoviaeque duces
His docuit bellum infelix, ipsumque domare,
Discere namque illis fas et ab hoste fuit.

May 1760

It is right to be taught, even by an enemy

When the Swedish King defeated the leaders of Saxony and Muscovy (joined as they were in beastly alliance),
As he crushed them, so he taught them both the unhappiness of war, and his own superiority,
And indeed it was right for them to learn these things, even from an enemy.

The historical context of the poem is baffling, as the belligerents named were actually all on the same side in the Seven Years' War, which was ongoing at the date that the poem was written, and was presumably its inspiration. Nevertheless, even if the countries named in the poem had never existed at all, the central moral of it would still surely be in the words "*bellum infelix*", which yet again seem to bring us back to the young Bentham's nascent Utilitarianism; the "*unhappiness of war*" is clearly a painful lesson for the defeated to learn, but seems to be one that teaches the pointlessness of an activity that decreases the sum of their happiness. The didactic title and concluding line add credibility to the idea that there is a moral lesson in the poem along these same lines for the readers also. Again, as the focus of the poem seems to fall on the subject of happiness, it adds to the evidence that Bentham was already contemplating the issues underlying his Utilitarian Principle when he was at Westminster. The four poems so far considered do at least show that such ideas were in gestation by the time Bentham matriculated.



A fictional painting of Jeremy Bentham overseeing the construction of UCL in the Flaxman gallery inside the 'main library'

Bentham's religious beliefs are another subject into which the corpus of his schoolboy poetry might allow us new insight. Bentham is usually thought of as an atheist humanist (indeed, the British Humanist Association lays claim to him by proxy by hosting a page dedicated to him on their website[9]), and his works on religion, mostly unpublished, seem to bear out this assessment of the adult Bentham. In his study on *Bentham on Religion: Atheism and the Secular Society*, James E. Crimmins puts it that

"Bentham never in so many words publicly avowed his atheism; he was much too cautious to do this. But that he was an atheist in substance there can be no doubt. His destructive criticisms of religious doctrine left no residue that could be of any value."[10]

However, it now seems possible that as a child Bentham was a devout Christian and that he did not always have the same difficulty rationalising religion that would later cause him to have difficulty in swearing subscription to the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England.[11] Bentham's *Ode in Christum Crucifixum*, written for Easter 1760, shortly before he left Westminster, is an extremely beautiful devotional poem in a verse form similar to the Alcaic stanza that Bentham may well have invented himself.[12]

Ode in Christum Crucifixum

Non jam Labores Herculeos ego
Nec fabulosi facta cano Jovis
Nec rogo carminibus favere
Falsas Pierides Deas.
Majora carmen facta tenent meum:
Mortale quae vix concipiat genus:
Christum flagisijis ferentem
Se mortalibus hostiam.
O plena cuncti congeries boni
Servator auctor et caput omnium!
Qua ratione benignitates
Tantas Numinis exprimam?
Tu jam domasti morte necem tua,
In se arma flectens principis horridi
Fregistique rapacis orci
Daemonisque potentiam.
Ad collem ocelli tollite vos mei;
Suspensa quae nam corpora conspicor?
Inter eos medius trabi haeret
Ipso progenitus Deo.

[6] Virgil, Georgics II, 401

[7] Indeed this connotation of *inanis* is an antonym of *utilis*, from which Utilitarianism is derived etymologically.

[8] Ovid, Metamorphoses IV, 428.

[9] https://humanism.org.uk/humanism/the-humanist-tradition/19th-century-freethinkers/jeremy-bentham/

[10] Crimmins, James E., Bentham on Religion: Atheism and the Secular Society, Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Jan. - Mar., 1986), pp. 95-110

[11] Bowring, John (1842). op. cit., p.37.

[12] I made inquiries of some experts as to whether the verse form had any existing name or precedent. The consensus was that Bentham was going his own way and improvising a metre, though he was not without precedent in doing this.

Suave reclinans in tenerum caput,
Interemptorum corde misertus est
Dumque graves patitur Dolores
Ignoscit sceleri viros.

Vir dure, num tu talia conspicis
Immotus? annon ira furit tua?
Annon te sceleris pudebit
Spectantem rabiem virum?
Divelle pectus, dilacera comas:
Maesto dolorem fundite pectore
Omne genus: nec ei negate
Justas vos lachrymas dare.

Ode on Christ's Martyrdom

No more I'll cant the tasks of Hercules
Or sing Jupiter's legendary deeds,
And no more shall I beg my verse indulged
By false Pierideans. Prithee, heed:
For greater deeds now captivate my song:
Deeds that the mortal race can scarcely grasp!
A sacrificial victim found in Christ
Unto himself all mortal sin did clasp.
O brimming heap of unremitting good:
Founder, Saviour, Lord of infinity!
However could a mortal man express
Such boundless mercies of divinity?
For now in death youve conquered death itself,
Onto yourself the Devil's arms youve hurled:
And broken into bits the evil power,
The Devil, the rapacious Underworld.
Lift up yourselves my eyes, up to the hill:
Do I not know the corpses in the air?
And in the middle, stuck upon the cross
The son of God himself is hanging there.
And lying back upon his tender head,
He pities his own murderers in in his heart
And while he suffers greatly dolorous things:
He still forgives the sinning man his part.
Unfeeling man! Behold you this unmoved?
Is anger still not manifest in you?
And are you not ashamed now at your crime,
At madness that you watch your fellows do?
Now rend your breast, and tear apart your hair!
Pour grief upon your breast, each race alive:
And don't deny to Christ, your martyred Lord,
That in your righteous tears he shall you shrive.

I do not believe that there is any phony devotion in this poem. Indeed, at points it seems clear that the author is genuinely stirred. There is a potent revulsion palpable in the line "*in se arma flectens principis horridi*". This is brought out by the piling up of consonants either side of the caesura, which, along with the rolled double r of "*horridi*", causes the second half of the line to be spat out effortfully, drawing attention to its demonic content. The amassing of rhetorical questions in the seventh stanza with the emphatic enjambing of "*immotus*" – suggesting that the author, by contrast, is moved – is another effect that lends the ode a forcefulness that would be truly bizarre if not the work of a committed Christian.

Despite the poem's style and content, an argument has nevertheless been presented to suggest that this previously unpublished poem does not shed any light on Bentham's religiosity or otherwise as a schoolboy. It is that the poem may only be an insincerely-written school exercise. The evidence for this caution is slim, as the schoolbooks appear to be essentially commonplace books rather than exercise books, and none of the poems contained in them show clear signs of being "set work" rather than genuinely original poetry. Indeed, the presence of epigrams such as *Velis id quod possis* may indicate that the others are equally independent of school direction. Regardless, it is also impossible to argue that if it were merely an exercise that this would make the arguments stemming from the vigour of the text any less sound; it is unduly cynical to suppose that a devotional poem written for homework is *ipso facto* insincere. It is in any case unlikely that Bentham would have gone to the trouble of improvising a new metre if his heart were not in it, exercise or otherwise. Farther to this, it is not the only devotional poem in the books, though it is certainly the best. *Ultimum Judicium* (August 1757) is a sparingly legible page of hexameters on the subject of the Last Judgment, and *Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit* (17 September 1756) is an elegiac poem on sin. Both of these read more as though they might have been prompted by exercises than does the Easter Ode, purely because they seem less enthused, but this is not to say that they were necessarily exercises either, as there is no direct evidence that any poem in the books was.

Whether or not the three poems are to be considered exercises, the fact that the Easter Ode comes across as more genuinely devoted than either earlier work, despite being written nearer to the apparent age at which Bentham became an atheist, suggests that the amount of effort Bentham put into theistic poetry certainly did not decrease during his time at Westminster. At most one might conclude that Bentham is strongly indicated as a theist before he left school. At the very least one must conclude that he can no longer be supposed with any certainty to have been harbouring atheist views prior to matriculation.

There is still a good deal more to be gained from investigating the schoolbooks. Another Westminster poem is a humorous verse dialogue on the merits of various English poets, which might be of use for anybody investigating Bentham's literary development, or biography more generally. For another thing, there are a similar number of unpublished poems dating from Bentham's time at Oxford, some of which show a pronounced sense of humour. It is also highly likely that in examining the books I have simply overlooked a number of fascinating details worthy of essays themselves. However, taking into account both the poems pertaining to Utilitarianism and the Easter Ode, I hope that I have shown both that a number of Bentham's juvenilia contain strong indications of the direction his philosophy would later take, and that some contain precisely the opposite, showing how different some of Bentham's views may have been as a schoolboy from as an adult.

(With thanks to Elizabeth Wells and Charles Low)

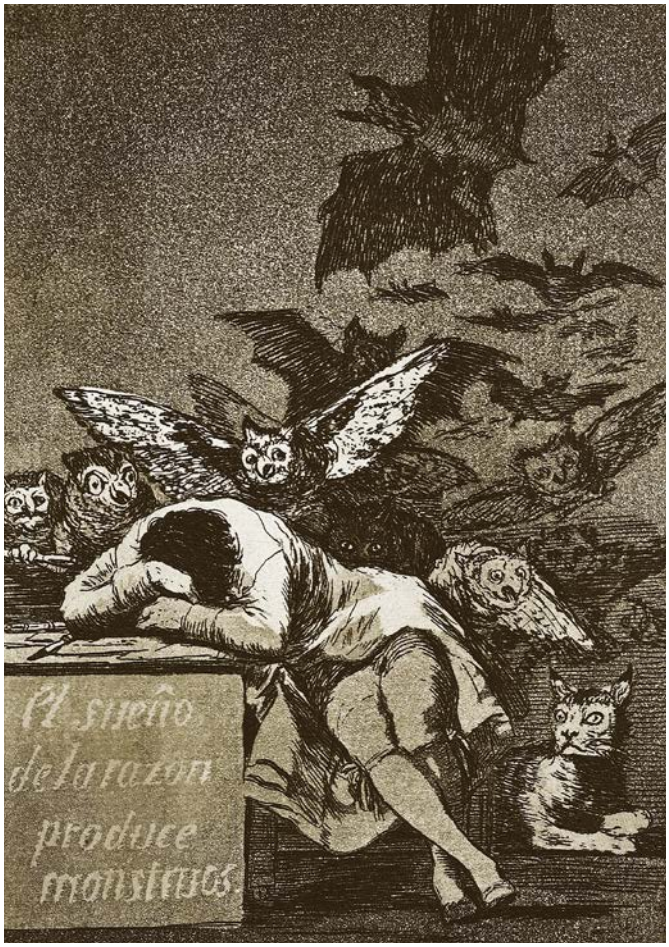
Emerging from the shadows: GOYA'S SELF-PORTRAITS

Jacqueline Cockburn authored the following introduction to the Exhibition at the National Gallery of Goya's Self Portraits, exploring the range of biographical and social details which emerge from the canvases.

The Family of Infante Don Luis de Borbón (1783)

The Goya exhibition coming to The National Gallery last autumn was the first ever to focus on portraits. Two extraordinary self-portraits on show enable the viewer to get a glimpse into the mind of one of the most psychologically revealing painters. Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes's face emerges from shadows, sometimes over painted, and at others embedded, peering at us, scrutinising the viewer or coyly reminding us that his authorial presence is undeniable. His many guises reinforce this subliminal advertising of self; he is a bird, a mythological god, a human corpse, a matador, a monk, a goat, a sneering aristocrat, a cuckolded lover, a ghost, a silhouette. During the course of his career he emerges from shadows and disappears back into them. Silhouetted or painted over, barely visible, tentatively entering or being born into his own paintings, eventually he will cover the canvas with his own face; he will be prepared to die on canvas.

His strange presence in the *The Family of Infante Don Luis de Borbón* (1783), in the Fondazione Magnani-Rocca in Parma, at the front of the painting crouched down, apparently servile, painfully twisted but included in a portrait of nobility as the virtuoso at work, is an advertisement for his courtly position. We interrupt an evening in the life of the family chatting, playing cards or having hair dressed and Goya plays a part if only on the outskirts and lowly. The extraordinary artificial lighting



The Dream of Reason Produces Monsters (1799)

Self-Portrait in the Studio (1794-95)

throws shadows on this conversation piece to create special effects. His silhouette on his canvas is indistinct but his bold profile relates directly to Johann Caspar Lavater's 'Essays of Physiognomy'.[1] Lavater believed the profile of a person revealed his soul and the silhouette revealed further poetic and expressive qualities. Goya's own humbled position can be compared to Lavater's *Profile of a Prudent Man*, notable through the forehead and the nose.[2] Humble and cautious, but optimistic, Goya is about to enter the stage of the Bourbon Monarchy.

In the 1790's, Goya, as director of painting at the Royal Academy of San Fernando in Madrid and the king's chief painter, was concerned with artistic status and individual freedom. In *Self-Portrait in the Studio* (1794-95), from the Museo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid, Goya's face emerges silhouetted against a stark white opaque background.[3] Probably stone deaf by this point, he is no longer surrounded by palatial luxury but alone in the semi dark, shut out from the light in his studio at number 1 Calle del Desengaño ('Street of Disappointment'), Madrid. The street name is perhaps apt at this point in his now disappointing life. With his increasing girth, he is a small fat man with a five o'clock shadow, tousled, yet wearing a costume which resembles that of a matador or a majo.[4] He peers at the unseen viewer as if we were his mirror. Brooding and unsmiling, with his long hair tied back and an over-elaborate jacket, we wonder why he hasn't dressed as a painter. His pot hat with its candle holders stuck in the brim, reminders of his need for light when working, suggests night time but the light is high noon. The studio seems more like a cell to escape to than a buzzing place of work. He hands us all the difficulties of the self-appraisal, the frank incredulity of an aging face and the disappointment in his own fragility. Self-portraits are autobiographical descriptions of 'the whole truth', if that is possible, and Goya, standing in the dazzling light from the window, does not shy away from the self which may seem ludicrous or self-pitying. It is hard to paint inner solitude or introspection and Goya's tense inquiring gaze challenges the viewer. The paper and the expensive silver ink stand on the table remind us that he can pour out his secret thoughts in his letters.[5] Indeed one of his letters to Martín Zapater, dated August 1800, contains a caricature self-portrait with 'así estoy' (this is how I am) written beside the seated figure with exaggerated lips. By this point he had become adept at lip reading, so this may well be a wry comment on his state.

Goya's *Self-Portrait* in Indian ink and wash of (1795-97), in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, displays a wild, leonine genius with hair like a halo or burning bush, unruly but parted, eyes staring yet lost and a bushy beard never seen in other self-portraits. He seems to search for his own face, to describe himself unsmilingly. Hirsute and animal-like, he may well have known the Leonine Heads by Charles Le Brun, in the Musee de Louvre.[6] Outward performance and theatrical stance are replaced by close ups, selfies if you like, which demand our attention. The

life-sized study of the artist's head *Self-Portrait* (1815), in the Museo del Prado, with head cocked on one side, hair even more untamed, shows us a face in conflict 'capturing visually the weary toll of Goya's long, intellectual struggle with…the ideology of the Spanish Enlightenment.'[7] The face is half in shadows, there are no signs of décor and no costume. It is a record of his face modelled to give us a sense of fleshiness and three- dimensionality. This self-portrait is evidence of fear and suffering; humanity laid bare. It has seen the French Invasion at first hand. It is the same face which sleeps in *The Dream of Reason Produces Monsters* (1799) (Fig. 5) in the first design for one of his great series of prints, *Los Caprichos.* We observe Goya as part of the dream amongst strange animals, a lynx, a dog, bats with faces like his, grimacing and peering down on his unconscious self, exploring himself. He is the truly Enlightened Man, aware of the boundaries between imagination and reason, dream and reality, light and shadows. Obliterated in the second version, wiped out, the stuff and the content of his dreams have gone, as has his face, replaced with a void. The inscription reads 'The author dreaming. His only purpose is to banish harmful ideas commonly believed and to perpetuate with this work of Caprichos the solid testimony of truth'.

In *The Family of Carlos IV* (1800), the Museo del Prado, light falls on Queen María Luisa as nurturant mother queen. In this timely advertisement for the functional Spanish royal family, citing Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656), Goya stands quietly, one might think shyly at the back but our eyes are lead towards the woman's face

Self-Portrait in Indian ink and wash (1795-97)

The Family of Carlos IV (1800)

Self-Portrait (1815)

Self Portrait with Doctor Arrieta (1820)

in shadows; the future wife of the prince of Asturias, not shown yet due to the uncertainty of who she might be. We might leave it there, as so many art historians have done, but we question why she is looking directly at the vast expanse of black which is the painting on the left.[8] Restoration of the painting in 1967 by Xavier de Salas revealed a painting within a painting precisely where the not yet unveiled woman looks. The cleaning exposed a bacchanal consisting of three figures, two are women and the other, a male figure, appears engrossed in the women. It is clearly Goya himself. 'Goya without a doubt' claimed Salas.[9] The Romantic genius, Goya has portrayed himself twice. The reticent ever-discreet observer in the shadows, yet the Classical god of mystical ecstasy and artistic and sexual inspiration, namely Bacchus.

But where has the genius gone in *Self Portrait with Doctor Arrieta* (1820), from the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Goya, at the height of his international fame, is apparently on his death bed. From Bacchus to a sickly weak man surrounded by shadowy representatives of the church or friends or neighbours who are there to witness the moment. The bald inscription reads, 'Goya, in gratitude to his friend Arrieta: for the compassion and care with which he saved his life during the acute and dangerous illness he suffered towards the end of the year 1819 in his seventy third year. He painted this in 1820.' It is not a priest protecting Goya, it is the doctor, as if Goya is claiming, as was the case, that medicine is emerging from the shadows of the Church.[10] Goya is in green, the symbolic colour of hope, although not as bright a colour as Arrieta the healer. Goya's face is half in the shadows to suggest internal contradictions or perhaps he is half alive and half dead. The Pietistic format, the glass with wine (or is it medicine?), the crimson blanket, the counterpane he nervously plucks at, all point us iconographically towards some kind of relinquishment or sacrifice. Once God, he is now Christ enshrining himself. Goya has finally emerged from the shadows and is stripped of all myth, he is humble, pathetic and near death. Although he would not die for another eight years, it appears that his journey in self-portraits has reached a conclusion.

[1] J. C Lavater. Translated into French from the German under the title 'Essai sur la physiognomie' (1781-1803). Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy were probably studied by Goya in the French edition of 1781-6.

[2] Victor I. Stoichita and Anna Maria Coderch, *Goya: The Last Carnival* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 242-244.

[3] Dates differ for this painting from 1775-1795 which would make a great difference regarding his illness.

[4] Robert Hughes suggests he might have represented himself as a manolo,' the kind of majo found in the back streets of Madrid, the eponymous hero of one of Ramon de la Cruz's most popular sainetes.' Robert Hughes, *Goya* (London: The Harvill Press, 2003), 81.

[5] See *Goya: A Life in Letters*, edited by Sarah Symmons with translations by Philip Troutman (London: Pimlico, 2004).

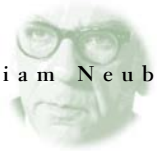
[6] Stoichita and Coderch. 73

[7] John J. Ciofalo, *The Self-Portraits of Francisco Goya* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 59.

[8] Ciofalo, ibid. 54.

[9] *Time*, 22nd December 1967, p, 46.

[10] Ciofalo, ibid. 104.



Isaiah Berlin in Oxford

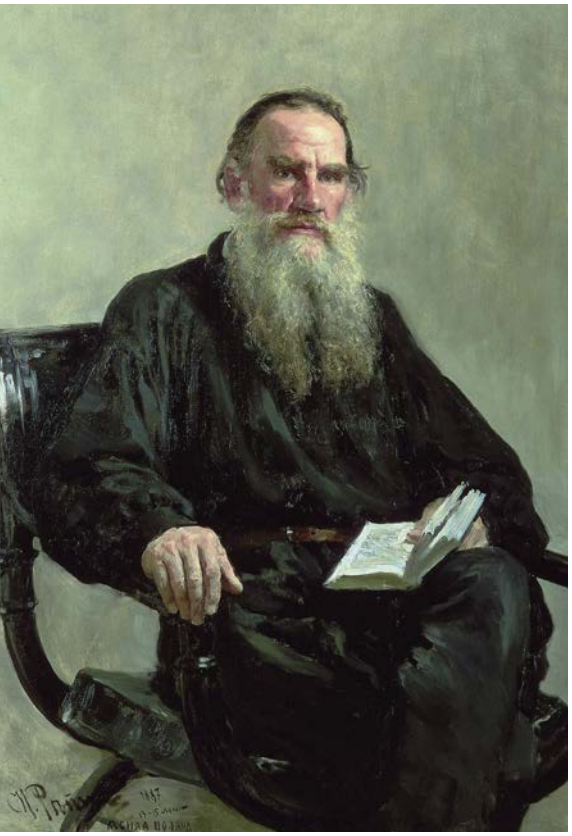
William Neubauer is struck by "The dominant scholar of his generation", a recurring phrase which is common to assessments of Isaiah Berlin's life and work, together with "one of the most celebrated thinkers of the 20th Century"[1]. His reputation is what first led him to explore his writings, and he concentrate here on perhaps the most compelling and well-known conclusion, his doctrine of pluralism and his work on the history of ideas, examining his key tenets, and their significance for us today[2].

A 20th Century Thinker:

Berlin was born in 1909 into a Russian-speaking, Jewish family in Riga, who were forced to flee their home country, following the Russian revolution of 1917 and the rising tide of anti-Semitism. They settled in Britain, where Berlin would live until his death in 1997, creating an odd mix of Jewish, Russian and British cultures and perspectives. Educated at St. Paul's and Corpus Christi, Oxford, he took a First in Classics, then a First in PPE the following year, being awarded the John Locke Prize for philosophy, before winning a prize fellowship at All Souls. He remained at Oxford for most of the rest of his life, apart from the period 1940-46 where he served in the British diplomatic and intelligence services.

Berlin's thinking would be moulded by the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution of his youth, the turbulent ideological struggles of the inter-war period, the destruction wreaked on the West (and on his Jewish heritage) during World War 2, and the seemingly never-ending clash of beliefs that constituted the Cold War. But what would be the effect of this upbringing? It would have been all too easy for Berlin to give himself to one of these belief systems, but instead, challenging ideologies from all sides of the political spectrum, he enjoyed a unique perspective on ideas. Fundamentally, he appreciated (from his own first-hand experience) the destructive potential of ideology, especially when it is pursued so relentlessly. This insight would lead to his signature doctrine, the pluralism and pragmatism that were encapsulated by his 1958 lecture: '*Two Concepts of Liberty*', given just three years before conflicting ideas of how to achieve freedom would give rise to the Cuban Missile Crisis, the closest humanity has yet come to self-annihilation[3]. Being so intrinsically wary of ideas, Berlin devoted his academic career to their history. As a writer, he was prepared to consider all philosophies (and, often, reject them in turn), recognising their effect on the course of human history, and introducing new thinkers into the realm of Anglo-American academic debate who had been virtually forgotten.

Codlington Library, All Souls, Oxford



Lev Tolstoy, by Repin (1887)

The 'Two Concepts of Liberty':

As mentioned above, Berlin is perhaps best known for his lecture on what he called the '*Two Concepts of Liberty*'. In this, one of the finest essays, certainly on the history of ideas, he summarises five centuries of philosophy debating how to maximise the freedom of the individual. From this he isolates what these wildly different viewpoints have in common, a series of points of agreement:

"*First, that all men have one true purpose, and one only, that of rational self direction; second, that the ends of all rational beings must of necessity fit into a single universal, harmonious pattern…; third, that all conflict… is due solely to the clash of reason with the irrational… and that such clashes are, in principle, avoidable, and for wholly rational beings impossible; finally, that when all men have been made rational, they will obey the rational laws of their own natures... and so at once be wholly law-abiding and wholly free.*[4]"

He then dismisses these common grounds as "basic assumptions"[5], thereby pitting himself against some of the greatest thinkers, and pioneering pluralism over "monism"[6] – the belief in a single correct ideology that Berlin himself saw destroy so much during his lifetime. Berlin's pluralism therefore, is not acceptance of thousands of conflicting viewpoints – this is a logical impossibility – rather it is the acceptance of the innate un-truth of each of these views, and of any argument that attempts to establish a principle, which, when worked towards, must lead to any kind of perfect world. He explores this point further in another brilliantly written essay, '*The Pursuit of the Ideal*'[7], which I will examine later, but the main principle of this first essay remains the founding tenet of modern pluralism.

While much of Berlin's writing builds on the work of other thinkers, it is important to appreciate his genuinely innovative arguments. Berlin's doctrine of pluralism is now a fundamental pillar of Western society, and represents a shift beyond the dichotomy of the Cold War, where the set of ideals adopted by the West were in many ways just as solid and unwavering as those of the East. The principle of the 'Two Liberties' is itself an excellent example of this sort of pioneering insight, as, having drawn out the philosophies concerning liberty, he proceeds to categorise freedom into two new, self-conceived, parts: 'positive' and 'negative'. For Berlin, 'negative' freedom is the more conventional of the two, the freedom to act as desired, within the laws of nature, or the answer to the question: "What am I free to do or be?". 'Positive' freedom, however, is the answer to the question: "Who is to say what I am, and what I am not, to be or do?", i.e. it is the freedom from coercion, or the freedom "of the individual to be his own master"[8].

By this simple, yet crucial, and inventive, device, Berlin transformed the way in which the West balanced the competing desires of the individual's freedom and their wellbeing. But what is the relevance of this doctrine in the 21st century, when the spectre of the Cold War is no longer looming large? Well, despite the apparent death of this ideological conflict, pluralism continues to dominate both the news and our moral decision making. The West in particular, from as early as the Renaissance, has always had a particular obsession with the freedom of the individual, and it is no surprise, therefore that this is the case. Consider questions such as 'Should a society allow its members to preach racial hatred?' 'Should it permit drawings of the prophet Mohamed?' 'Do our governments have the right to impose extra taxation on tobacco and alcohol?' Each of these we may reasonably expect to encounter, and is easier to appreciate when considered in its 'positive' and 'negative' dimensions, and Western views on each have already been moulded immeasurably by Berlin's ideas. If anything, pluralism is needed all the more today when we face a far more 'grey' moral landscape, and when it is far less easy to divide the world into ideas that are 'good' and 'bad'.

'The Hedgehog and the Fox':

Some of Berlin's most well-known essays are entitled 'The Hedgehog and the Fox'[9], a quotation from the Greek poet Archilochus: 'The fox knows many things, but the Hedgehog knows one big thing'[10] which Berlin adapted to refer to thinkers and writers (specifically Tolstoy), declaring them each either a Hedgehog or a Fox. Following this distinction he declares "Dante… Plato, Lucretius, Pascal, Hegel, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Ibsen, Proust' to be in the first category, and 'Shakespeare… Herodotus, Aristotle, Montaigne, Erasmus, Moliere, Goethe, Pushkin, Balzac, Joyce"[11] in the second - a typical quick-fire summary of a wide variety of great thinkers. As for Tolstoy, Berlin helpfully places him somewhere between these two categories, suggesting he "was by nature a fox, but believed in being a hedgehog"[12].

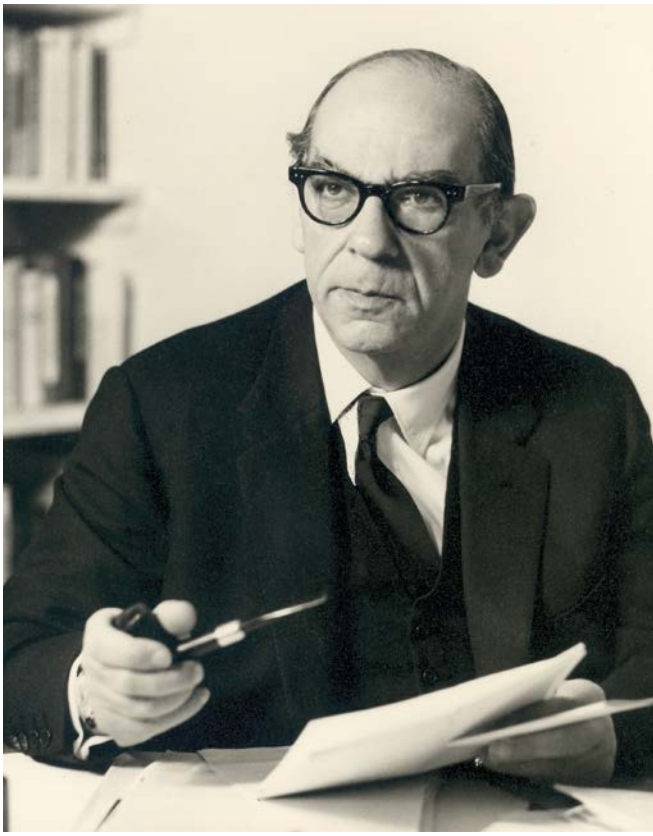
If we take the architect of this suggestion himself, he was quite clearly a fox. Not only in the sense that he was a pluralist, as opposed to a 'monist' - a comparison he does himself make – but also in his ability to appreciate so many views, and write so succinctly and expertly on the full variety of topics. As touched upon above, Berlin's true talent was as a historian of ideas; he was a writer immersed in the Western philosophical tradition, and, as such, one able to draw upon, surmise, and compare, dozens of different thinkers. Perhaps the best example of this is his 1988 lecture, '*On the Pursuit of the Ideal*'[13]. As well as being a beautifully

eloquent expression of what pluralism meant to him, it is remarkable for its ability to consider so many philosophies in just 16 pages. This work takes the form of, effectively, a history of ideals, into which Berlin subtly injects his own perspective, and as part of this, it covers almost every Western philosophy worth mentioning. The narrative flows from Plato to Marx to Rousseau to Tolstoy to Hegel with a perfect sense of how each set of ideas interacts with the next. The particular strength of this essay however, is its conclusion, which is exactly that, presented as obvious culmination of each of these viewpoints, despite the author having disagreed with each and every one of them.

I have chosen '*The Pursuit of the Ideal*' as an example, as it is typical of Berlin's greatest strengths: whilst his own ideas were important and pioneering, he will be best remembered for his views on the ideas of others. Often, due to the clarity of his expression, he is able to make a writer clearer and more logical than they even appear in their own works, with the added effect of classifying them, and showing exactly how they fit in the jigsaw of the Western philosophical tradition. This is perhaps due to his conversational style, one that suited essays more than a single tome, and language that is remarkably readable, a welcome break from the dense prose of his contemporaries[14]. As a reader, we feel neither patronised nor overwhelmed, and, despite assuming a total knowledge of each and every philosopher referenced, his explanation is so clear that it matters little if you have none of this.

The final point concerns what may be termed the 'pluralism' of Berlin's attitude to the history of ideas. When considering philosophical movements, he has a particular eye for the less-known, forgotten or rejected figures, at least outside the Continent. Certain individuals, most notably Vico[15] and Herder[16], were almost unknown to an Anglo-American audience – academic or general – before Berlin revived them. Others, such as Machiavelli, were drastically reinterpreted[17]. Equally, Berlin was prepared to consider any view (and usually then reject it turn), and he saw far greater depth in a number of writers than had previously been identified. The most interesting of these is Tolstoy, appreciated always as an artist, but whose philosophy was attacked by Turgenev as "farcical", by Shelgunov as being "of the swamp", and was widely considered by contemporary 'literary specialists' as being "trivial and superficial"[18]. Berlin however is prepared to perform a complete examination, and concludes that these charges are "grotesquely unplausible" [sic], instead praising the author for his "intellectual power" and "his appalling capacity to penetrate any convention disguise"[19]. For Berlin, each writer is considered only on the basis of the value of their ideas.

What then is the Berlin's legacy in our modern society? Many of us, especially the younger generations, may struggle to connect with Berlin's uniquely 20th century viewpoint in the 21st or his obsession with pluralism in a (relatively) tolerant society. It is important in this regard to appreciate the legacy that we already have: our society is built on the ideas of the last hundred years and the doctrine of pluralism. But also, given this truth, we should remember Berlin's ideas require just as staunch a defence today as they ever did, and perhaps begin to re-examine what his writings can teach us further.



Isaiah Berlin (courtesy of isaiahberlin.org)

[1] Again, various sources, chiefly the Isaiah Berlin Virtual Library, his official legacy site

[2] Other areas of special interest include, but are not limited to, Determinism and Historicism (see '*Historical Inevitability*', Oxford University Press, 1953), and Biography (see various, including '*Winston Churchill in 1940*', Atlantic Monthly 184, No 3, 1949; and '*President Franklin Delano Roosevelt*', Political Quarterly 26, 1955). All Berlin's works are taken, in this case, from '*The Proper Study of Mankind*', ed. Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer, 1997 (revised, Vintage, 2013), unless specified otherwise. The original publication reference will be given for each case, but page numbers refer to the Vintage edition

[3] Berlin, '*Two Concepts of Liberty*', (Clarendon Press, 1958)

[4] Ibid, p.225

[5] Ibid, p.225

[6] "Monism", the opposite of pluralism, i.e. "faith in a single criterion", both *Ibid*, p.241

[7] Berlin, '*The Pursuit of the Ideal*', (New York Review of Books, 1988)

[8] For a full definition of 'positive' and 'negative' liberty, see '*Two Concepts of Liberty*', pp.194-206 for a full definition, or p.194 for a briefer one

[9] Berlin, '*The Hedgehog and the Fox*', (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1953)

[10] Archilochus, "πόλλ' οἰδ' ἀλώπηξ, ἐχῖνος δ'ἓν μέγα", fragment 201 in M.L. West, '*Iambi et Elegi Graeci*', vol. 1, (Oxford, 1971), quoted by Berlin, '*The Hedgehog and the Fox*', p.436

[11] Ibid, p.437

[12] Ibid, p.438, where Berlin largely sums up his argument concerning Tolstoy

[13] Berlin, '*The Pursuit of the Ideal*'

[14] A direct comparison between two similar works, such as Berlin's essay '*The Concept of Scientific History*' (History and Theory I 1960) and Karl Popper's work, '*The Poverty of Historicism*', (Routledge 1957), reveals this most starkly. Whilst Popper is perhaps expressing more complex ideas, any reader of both will doubtless be left with an appreciation of Berlin's particular communicative abilities

[15] Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), was an Italian philosopher who Berlin credits as one of the first pluralists. See Berlin's '*The Counter-Enlightment*', taken from '*Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas*', (Hogarth Press, 1976) especially pp.246-248

[16] Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) was one of Berlin's 'Counter-Enlightenment' German philosophers. See, Berlin, '*Herder and the Enlightenment*' and '*Counter-Enlightenment*', from '*Vico and Herder*', *Ibid*

[17] In '*The Originality of Machiavelli*', (New York Review of Books, 1971), Berlin argues that Machiavelli's combination of Christian and Roman teachings on governance marks him out as an unlikely early pluralist

[18] These are quotations taken from Berlin, '*The Hedgehog and the Fox*', pp.439, 440, 440, respectively, who himself took them from various sources, largely letters, too lengthy to mention

[19] *Ibid*, Berlin's response begins on p.442, and these quotations are taken from pp.442, 443, 443, respectively

Is science an art?

Lawrence Berry looks at the beauty of reason and what drives scientific advancement. As Bertran Russell wrote, "Science may set limits to knowledge, but should not set limits to imagination."

Science is all around us. In today's secular world where science has largely replaced religion in guiding people's lives, it is easy to forget that science is not just some body of facts. Scientists are not infallible creatures – they are real people who make mistakes like everyone else. So, what is about the principles of science that makes a scientific explanation of our world more accurate than, say, a religious one?

The debate over the nature of science has raged for centuries, but it fundamentally boils down to the underlying process of empirical reasoning. Scientists make claims based not on philosophy or argument, but on evidence. Known traditionally as the "scientific method", first posited by Francis Bacon in *Novum Organum* (1620), this is the doctrine that defines how scientists investigate and theorise, based on empirical evidence and principles of reasoning. Bacon's traditional view may be summed up thus: a scientist begins by carrying out experiments whose aim is to make carefully controlled observations at some point on the frontier between what we know, and what we do not. They systematically record their findings along with others in the field. From these findings, scientists then formulate hypotheses and theories, attempting to confirm these theories by finding evidence to support them. If this process of verification succeeds, a new "law" has been found. Thus the body of scientific knowledge expands, pushing back the boundaries mankind's ignorance – or so the fairy-tale method goes.

Francis Bacon, Viscount St Alban (c1618)

Unfortunately, not all is well with this simplified view. The idea of extrapolating general theories based on accumulated data is a principle known as induction. Several philosophers throughout history such as David Hume and Karl Popper have disputed the fundamental logical grounds upon which the inductive scientific method stands. They point out that no number of singular observations can logically entail a general statement. For example, take the observation 'water boils at 100°C.' No matter how many times you make this same observation you cannot be sure that the same will still be true tomorrow. Popper illustrated this with his simple 'black swan' thought experiment in which an explorer travels the world to find out if all swans are indeed white. He observes countless swans, all of them white, but he cannot be certain that the next swan he finds will not be black, and thus he cannot prove the claim 'all swans are white'. The whole of this ideal Baconian method assumes what Hume termed the 'uniformity of nature'

– that the future will be like the past – yet there is no way we can prove this to be true, since, as obvious as it sounds, we cannot see the future. We run a high risk of falling for such inductive arguments because we think in terms of them every day. Our perception of the future, everything we may think we know is based on past experience – we are so constituted psychologically that we simply cannot help but use past experience in the scientific realm of inquiry.

As a result, if we take science at its face value we simply cannot prove anything to be true – the problem of induction limits our proven knowledge base down to nothing at all. But how on Earth can we cope with knowing nothing for certain in science? This problem, known often as 'Hume's problem' after the first description of it in his book *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), has been debated by philosophers and scientists alike for centuries, with many proposed solutions. Bertrand Russell suggested in his *History of Western Philosophy* (1945) that we must simply accept and live with the irrational argument that is induction, for without it the scientific principle falls apart. However, discontent with this fly in the ointment of science, Karl Popper sought to address the problem by indicating the logical asymmetry between verification and falsification in his work *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1934, English edition 1959). He suggests that though no number of observations can ever verify a theory, but that a single observation can falsify it. This idea is best thought of in terms of propositional calculus. Looking back to the black swan thought experiment, here is a statement:

Black Swan Family, illustrating Popper's proposition

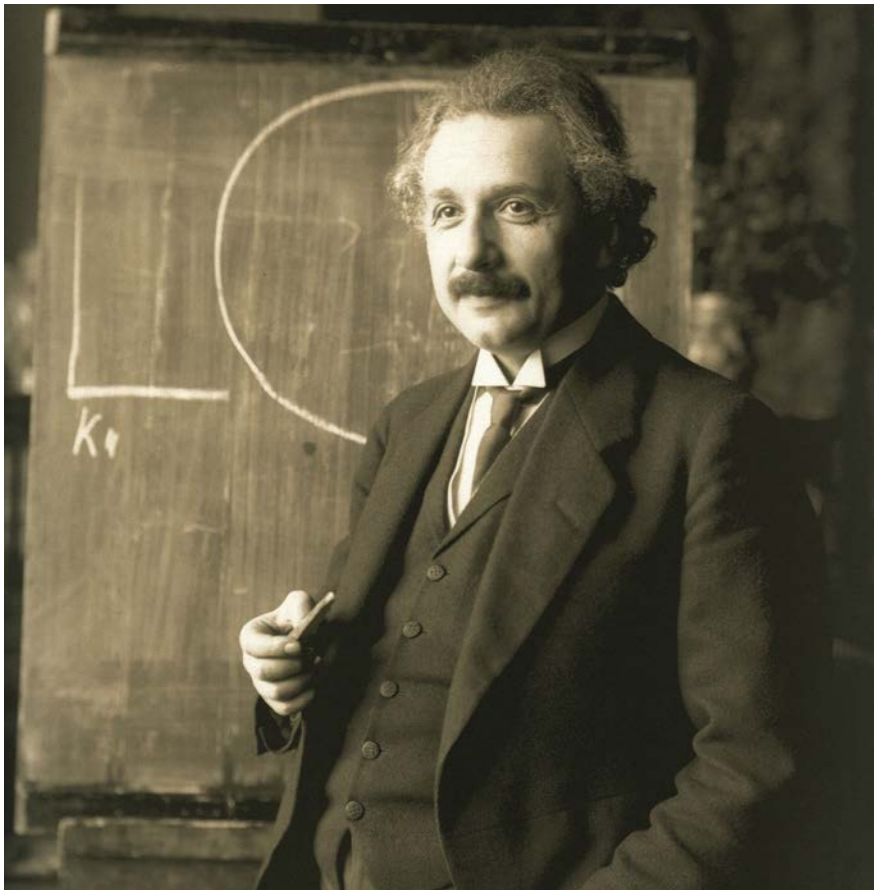
Proposition: $\forall x \in S wx$ "For any x that is a swan, x is white" i.e. all swans are white

A common mistake would be to think that the inverse of this proposition is 'no swans are white'. Here is the inverse when we turn it on its head using traditional logic:

Inverse: $\exists x \in S \neg wx$ "There exists a swan x that is not white" i.e. not all swans are white

By this logic, though we can never prove the proposition since we will never be able to record all swans, we *can* prove its inverse: all we need to do is find one swan that is not white. As a result, though scientific theories may not be verifiable, they are at least falsifiable, and crucially - they are still testable. This method of experimentation can actually be more fruitful than proof by verification as it forces the scientist to re-evaluate the hypothesis repeatedly. Let us return to the case of the boiling water. Say we set out to prove that water boils at 100°C. Of course we know we cannot prove this for certain, but if we are at all imaginative in our experimentation (perhaps we can try the experiment at different altitudes), we might be able to prove the inverse – water does not always boil at 100°C. In fact there are several factors that cause water to boil at different temperatures, including pressure (which varies with altitude). By refining the original hypothesis 'water always boils at 100°C' to 'water always boils at 100°C at 1 atmosphere of pressure', we have corrected the original incorrect hypothesis and can now go on to test (and try and falsify) this new hypothesis. This is how Popper suggests science advances. However, had we only tried our simple test of verification at sea level we would only have gained more confirming instances of the original hypothesis and never discovered the truth that it does in fact vary with pressure. In a way this makes our efforts to undermine a theory much more productive than our attempts to prove a theory.

The growth of our knowledge therefore proceeds from failures and our attempts to solve them. The solutions that we come up with in pursuit of a more accurate theory must go beyond the existing body of knowledge, requiring a great leap of the imagination. Though we cannot prove a theory and 'know' it in the classical sense, we can continue to justify one theory over another, and in this way pursue a more accurate picture of the world – until we (hopefully) get very close to the truth. A good analogy to this is the uncertainty in a measurement, for example the length of a pencil. When we measure it with a ruler we cannot record an exact length, rather we end up with an uncertainty usually of about ±0.5 mm. If necessary we can set up more accurate instruments such as a Vernier calibre and record it to an even greater precision. Eventually we use a method so precise our recorded value is virtually indistinguishable from the truth. It does not really matter that we don't know the length exactly, just that we know it accurately enough for our purposes. The same goes for scientific



Albert Einstein, by F Schmutzer (1921)

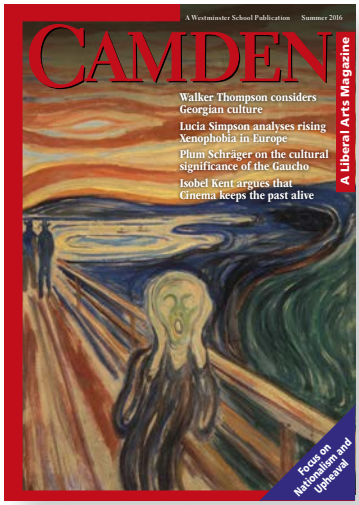
knowledge – we may not know anything exactly, but we know it well enough to consider it accurate for our requirements.

One important example of this was Einstein's refutation of Isaac Newton's laws. Newtonian physics was the pinnacle of scientific achievement, enduring hundreds of years after Newton's death. Everything in the world seemed to corroborate his three simple laws, becoming the cornerstone underpinning all science and technology, from the movement of the planets to the construction of skyscrapers. Yet at the turn of the 19th century a little known patent office worker dared to put forward his own theories and go against centuries of learning. These were of course Einstein's papers on relativity, which explained all of Newtonian physics and more besides. Though Newton had been close to the solution, Einstein's theories were even more accurate. Somehow Newton had been wrong, though a whole era of civilisation had been built upon his work. But if entire centuries' worth of inductive evidence could still not prove Newton's theories, can any theory ever be considered true? Even Einstein himself did not believe in the truth of his own theories and spent the majority of his later life trying to come up with a better one.

Newton's laws are often called laws of Nature, but if they are not inherently true, as we have seen, and do not exist in nature then where do these laws come from? Well, if not, natural laws they must be man-made, a man-made hypothesis Newton himself invented to fit all the facts of his time. His work was the product of his own mind in trying to piece the world together with equations of his own making. He did not discover his three laws: they are not really true so they cannot be discovered – he simply created them. Theories are therefore not bodies of impersonal facts, but are achievements of the human mind. Such scientific creation is not as free and open as art or literature, as it must fit in with what is observed, but it is nevertheless an attempt to understand the world, a similar end goal to even the greatest creative geniuses of history. In this sense, Newton and Einstein are on par with Mozart and Picasso. Rather than observations giving rise to theory, it is in fact theory that gives rise conjectures that give rise to successful observations. At no point does induction come in to the process save for the creation of a theory, which like an artwork, is intrinsically based upon previous experience.

In fact, it does not matter one bit where a theory originates for it to have scientific significance. If a theory works, it works, no matter its origin, whether discovered by accident such as Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin, or whether conjured up in a dream, just as Dmitri Mendeleev's formulation of the periodic table. In some way or another a theory is created by the imagination. Sometimes these come in small incremental steps building slowly upon existing theory, and in other cases come in dramatic re-envisagements of existing problems. There must be some creative, irrational element to make the leap between a problem and a new solution. In a letter to Karl Popper, Einstein agreed "that theory cannot be fabricated out of the results of observation, but that it can only be invented".

Our knowledge is thus entirely the product of the theories that we devise and test, and these theories are merely the products of our minds based on previous experiences. Far from being engaged in opposite activities, the scientist and the artist are both trying to extend our understanding of what they have experienced by use of a creative imagination. Both are exploring the realm of the unknown and recording their findings. Both are seekers of truth who make crucial use of intuition. Just as the artist paints their world on a canvas with a fine brush, a scientist paints their world on paper with new ideas, new theories and new conjectures. To set a limit on imagination would be to set a limit on the audacity of scientists. They may not know everything, but it is this lack of knowledge that entices generation upon generation to go out into the discipline and push the frontiers of the undiscovered world further and further back year on year with new insights and renewed inquisitiveness. It is that childhood curiosity of the unknown that drives us forward. To look up at the night sky and imagine what lies beyond – that is science.



Notes on Contributors

Michael Baron MBE, (OW) found that he owned a book once in Benjamin Vaughan's library. Co-founder and first Chairman of the National Autistic Society, he has been lawyer, campaigner, local historian in Cumbria, and in retirement, poet.

Lawrence Berry (QS) is going up to Cambridge to read Engineering.

Olivia Boucher-Rowe is in the Sixth Form

Jacqueline Cockburn taught at Westminster from 1984-2015. She was Head of Art History from 1997-2013. She also lectured at Birkbeck College, University of London on European Art. As a fluent Spanish speaker, she has published translations of Spanish songs and contributed to publications on Garcia Lorca, the subject of her PhD. She is director of Art and Culture Travel and runs residential courses in Spanish Art.

Tom Edlin (OW) is an historian.

Archie Hall has a place at Harvard University.

Steven Horvath is a successful competitive debater and is proud to have been a founder member of Westminster's Feminist Society. He has a place to read History and Politics at Oxford.

Isobel Kent is applying to read French and Philosophy.

Christabel Mclain will be studying in the USA next year.

Sacha Mehta (OW) is studying Russian and Portuguese at Oxford.

William Neubauer is in the Sixth Form.

Thomas Nightingale (QS) is in the Sixth Form.

Nick Plaut is an enthusiastic rower and has a place at Harvard.

Charlotte Robinson is the Assistant Archivist at Westminster.

Plum Schräger has grown up with horses and has travelled extensively in Argentina. She has a place to read Modern Languages at Cambridge.

Lucia Simpson has an informed interest in International Relations. She will be taking up a place at Stanford University next year.

Nicholas Stone has a long-standing interest in ancient languages, including Hittite. He has a place to read Classics at Oxford.

Walker Thompson (OW) is studying Modern Languages at Magdalen College.

Charles Ullathorne is a keen rugby player and cricketer and becomes Head of Science in September.

Elizabeth Wells is the Archivist at Westminster.

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