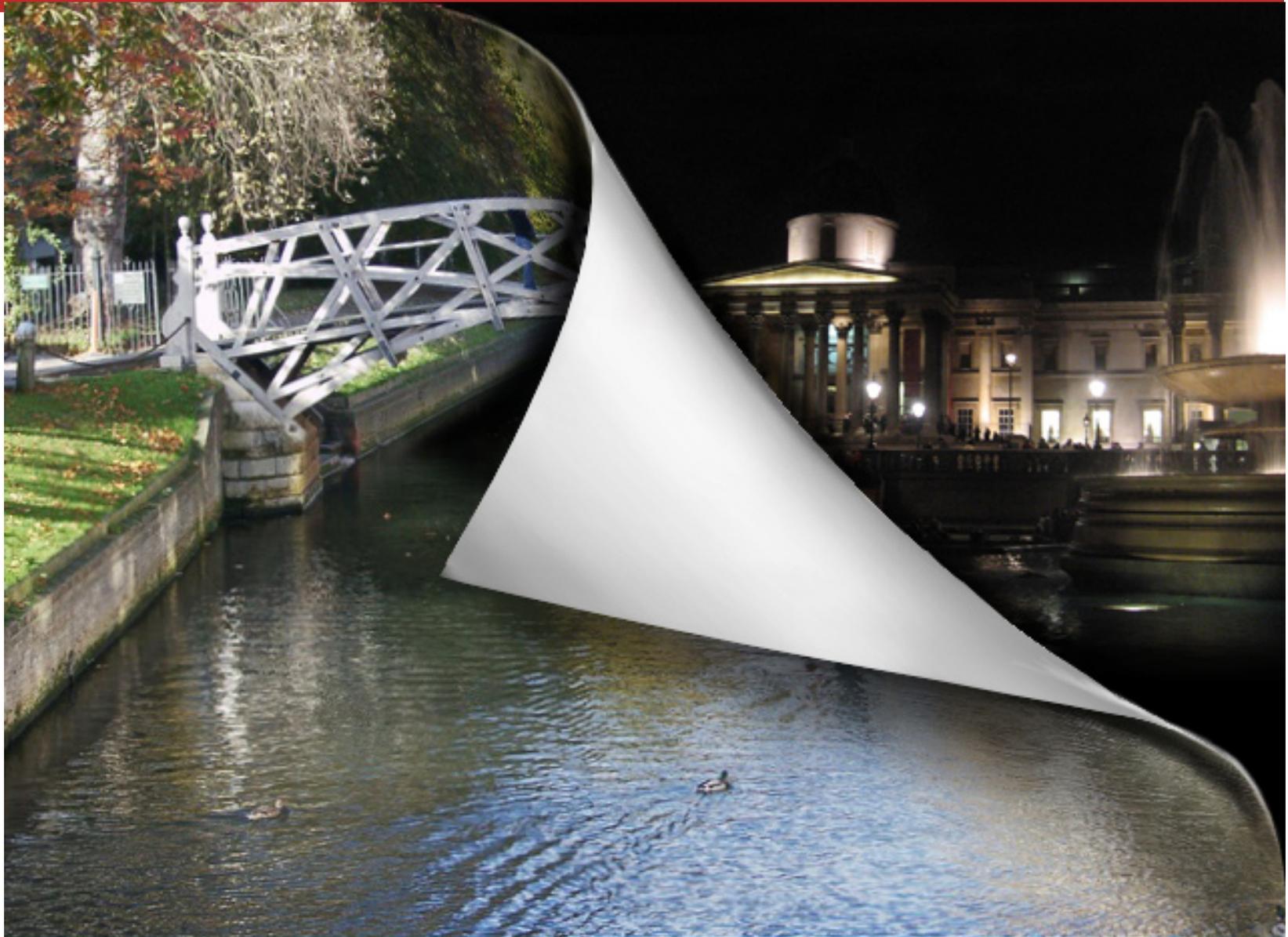


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graduates' OWN

GOWN MAGAZINE ISSUE 11 2008



The Next Step: Life After Cambridge »

Memoirs of an African man »

The Science behind Human Sexuality »

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Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of Gown Magazine (Graduates' Own) for 2008. First published in 2004, a time when the graduate population was struggling for visibility, Gown Magazine became the first publication in the University of Cambridge which was produced by graduates, for graduates.

Graduates in Cambridge live in a richly diverse environment which is informed by sharp contrasts. Barbara Christian's distinction between the high, middle and low world she identified herself to be experiencing, can form a useful analogy for the shifting identities we, graduates, casually slither into. The high world: the books, the journals, the conferences, the Logos, the Knowledge and 'what happens when our immune system attacks our own cells' as Gillian Brodie writes. The middle world: the negotiation, the research, the doubt, Lomborg and the inarticulateness Katherine Grant had felt when she attended his lecture, and the voice she subsequently acquired through her article. The low world: the book-stores, the cafés, the online communication, the 'I know what s/he's talking about' feeling you might get when you read Hetal Patel's column or any other piece of writing in this issue.

Gown hopes that it captures the multidimensional nature of our life in Cambridge and that it speaks in our own voice. This is not an easy task as, by definition, Gown is the magazine of a multicultural mixture of people; however, it is a publication which became a reality due to our common, intense anxiety to ask the right questions and to be seen for what we really are.

The new editorial team is very proud to introduce you anew to this magazine and heartily invites you to speak your opinion and express yourselves through its pages.

Louiza Mallouri

Editor-in-Chief

admin@gownmagazine.com

P.S. I would like to thank Jane Ding, former Editor-in-Chief of the magazine, for allowing me the opportunity to take my experience in working for Gown to the next level, and for guiding me through the whole process of publishing the magazine.

Christian, B. (1990) The Highs and Lows of Black Feminist. Feminist Criticism, in H. L. Gates Jr (Ed) Reading Black Reading Feminist: A Critical Anthology (New York, Meridian), 44-53.

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i-Cam

by Hetal Kiran Patel

Designed by Adam Foskett

Here I am, sitting in a squishy armchair in a multinational coffee store, having been given the chance to write my own column... and I got nothing! Absolutely nothing at all! And I suspect that, apart from making me incredibly twitchy for the next few hours, no amount of sugar, caffeine and chocolate is going to help either.

As I look around, I see a group of CompSci's furiously typing away on their laptops: hardworking and focused yet their quick real-time conversations on MSN messenger spoil that picture. I also see this girl reading an X-men comic, unabashedly ignoring the pile of English Classics next to her and a guy in Harry Potter glasses and mismatched socks pouring over the latest gaming magazine... I cannot help but wonder what all of these people have in common, besides being students at Cambridge... obviously! The first word that comes to my mind (and possibly yours) is geek.

Geeks are stereotypically thought of as awkward, briny, spectacled, untrendy, bookish, socially-inept... losers. Now before you all take up arms (and pitchforks) against me and chase me through the night with burning torches (a re-occurring nightmare I'll have, you know), let me finish! Because that's not what I really see in front of me here (ok, except for the last one and even in this case I can't know how he reacts to social encounter). I am actually happy to report that I am one of them. I just bought a copy of the X-Men comic that girl was reading myself!

"Hail to the Geeks"

Growing up and especially going through high school, it was clear that there was the 'it' crowd, the athletes, the slackers, the pot-heads, the future criminals, everybody else... and then me!

It was only when I went to university that I came into my own and found people just like me. The best experience by far has been at Cambridge. I have lunch with a loveable group of geeks every Friday which has been the source of inspiration for many of my guides published in Gown in the past. I even told them today that, most of the time, I have absolutely no idea what they are talking about, but I wouldn't want it any other way; the people on the one side of the table were discussing the Highway Code and traffic laws in relation to hovercraft and the lot on other side was using internet meme-speak. I'll give you an example, 'I just saw the cutest LOLCats gif ever!', 'oh reily?', 'ya reily!'. Peals of laughter followed... I was actually the coolest person there. That's probably the first time that has ever happened to me!

To this end I want to thank all of the Geeks out there, for crow-baring me out of my shell, for emailing me funny pictures of owls and kittens with strange captions and for singing The Llama Song when I'm feeling a bit down. So I raise my grande hazelnut hot chocolate with skimmed milk, whipped cream and vanilla sprinkles and ask: can someone teach me how to play Munchkin please???

"it was clear that there was the 'it' crowd, the athletes, the slackers, the pot-heads, the future criminals, everybody else... and then me!"

"Dreams cannot be reached without ambition, but ambition alone will take us nowhere"

THE BALANCE OF CHOICES

by Joao Pereira

Everyone has something to say about globalisation, and usually the views are passionate, touching issues such as economic growth and justice for developing countries. But the pace of modern society has touched us all in a much more subtle way, especially in our role as graduate students at one of the world's most important centres for teaching and research. More and more we are asked to go beyond our fields of expertise, of our comfort zone, and venture into ever broader areas of development - let's call it 'transferable skills' which will turn us into versatile professionals and render our profile 'rounder' (i.e. with strong points throughout). But whilst this may be crucial in order to have a competitive advantage in today's professional world, it is not without dangers.

The generally old and common perception of a graduate student (MBA's are exempt though!), is that of a nerdy, focused, almost obsessed expert that gazes at the computer screen until the world outside shuts down; a person willing to spend hours on end in the laboratory or in the library, until that result is obtained or that paper is found. The end product would be a piece of research so dense that few others could understand it. If this were to happen to all of us, we would become so over-qualified in one narrow field that there would be no place for any of us except in academia, and even so it is well known that good scientists are not necessarily good readers. So as a PhD student I must congratulate the effort Cambridge puts into ensuring - or at least in providing the required tools - that graduate students can break out and broaden their horizons and skills. Both the research world and the 'rest' of the world will benefit greatly. Indeed, I would go as far as to say that some more incentives (other than credits) are necessary to make the process more thorough, ensuring that, upon graduation, we are all ready to take on the diverse challenges which await us.

So what is the problem with having transferable skills? Actually, none. The problem lies in the perception of the world outside. It stems from what we believe we are expected to do or to be. I have started this article with globalisation because it is such a broad phenomenon that I can use it to describe one of the great 'diseases' of our generation of graduate students: 'opening options' (others call it 'not closing doors'). In such a fast paced world, we are

called to explore ever further reaching frontiers of ourselves and we are sold the idea that we must be all we can be, and that we can be anything and everything. This is not only unhelpful, it is also dangerous for one's mental balance. Adding to the noise, being at Cambridge comes with a weight I have seen in many people: failure (read lesser success) is unacceptable. This could be fine if success wasn't set so high, and so broad. In the end, many of us end up being chronic choice explorers and door openers: activities and contacts are piled up in order to reach out for all the options we are presented with, and jobs are craved because 'they leave no door closed'. The result is that people not only don't become everything they want to be, they are hardly able to be anything at all. As a former management consultant now working in neuroscience, I had, and still have, a bit of that mindset, but I see more and more the need of closing options. People have nervous breakdowns because they cannot decide between earning a ton of money in investment banking, helping developing nations in an NGO, becoming a sports' professional or going back to research (this extreme example is actually real). Choices need to be made, and choices which carry the weight of long-term commitment. The lightness of the alternative option is unbearable - in a way, Kundera's famous work, 'The unbearable lightness of being', addresses this same issue.

Graduate students need to leave their lab cubicles and get out into the world, very true. A graduate student with broad transferable skills will be an asset in any setting. But if we pull this concept too far the other side of the coin is also a dark place. So much is on offer and so much can be done, and all is so at hand that it seems like a terrible waste to let things go. But we need to. I was once told that a child learns to distinguish the important from the unimportant, but an adult is someone who knows the difference between the important and the very important, and chooses the latter while letting the former go. It is not easy, it is not even meant to be easy, but we need to have a centre to which we stick. Some of us have no issues with this, but I have seen so many similar cases in Cambridge that it compelled me to write about it. Ambition is not a substitute for a dream: a dream entails passion and dedication, while ambition is empty and lacks purpose. Dreams cannot be reached without ambition, but ambition alone will take us nowhere.

The Academia Is the Bridge for Peace – *Don't Burn it*

By Sharon Geva Designed by Adam Foskett

I arrived at Cambridge in October and I was like many other students alone - a foreigner in a new city. Most of you know how it feels: the first few days you walk around town by yourself, eating your lunch alone, until there comes the moment when you know that you have made a friend. The friend I made might seem like an obvious choice, since we have so much in common: We both went to school in Jerusalem, we have common academic interests, and we both love our mint tea sweet, very sweet. How much simpler could it be? But there was also something that distanced us from each other: our national identities which are as far as the earth and the sky... my friend is a Palestinian Muslim and I am an Israeli Jew.

Probably, you will be surprised to hear that my friend is the very first Palestinian I have ever really talked to. In the reality, however, of the Middle-Eastern 'conflict', Israelis and Palestinians do not

have the opportunity to get to know people from 'the other side', to hear each other's thoughts, concerns and distresses, and above all, never a chance to find out how similar we are.

As a multinational university, the role of the University of Cambridge is not only to award us degrees and transform us into good researchers, but also to create a pluralistic community and inspire openness; to bring together citizens of different countries; to help us get to know the 'other' - the ones we may never meet otherwise. We receive the opportunity to rethink our stereotypes, conventions, and even the history written in our textbooks. This opportunity is a treasure. I believe that this is one of the main roles of academia in general, and having numerous foreign students and scholars, the academia in Britain is in a good position to play this role. But are we actually succeeding in accomplishing this?

The University and College Union (UCU) is the largest trade union and professional association for academics and academic-related staff working in higher education in the UK. At one of its meetings, the UCU passed a motion calling for the promotion of an academic boycott on Israeli academia because of the forty years of Israeli occupation dur-

ing which academic and other human rights were denied to the Palestinians.

I believe that academic life is about building bridges, not destroying them; opening minds, not closing them. Boycotts in this sphere are, therefore, a betrayal of these values and detrimental to the building of an academic community. As a scientist, I believe that science and knowledge should be universal, transcending boundaries of politics and nationalism. Thus, it is against the spirit of science to collectively boycott academics belonging to a certain nation. Promoting such sweeping boycotts would lead to the inevitable destruction of the system in which scholars are assessed on merit and actions irrespective of nationality. I do not dismiss, or condone, the tragedy taking place in Israel and Palestine over the past forty years of war and occupation. It is, indeed, a tragedy to which most Israeli governments hold great responsibility. However, I also believe that a boycott on Israeli academia will be counterproductive. Instead of cutting off ties, the academic community should promote cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian academics. Furthermore, academics need to take a clear stance against violence, courageously expressing their views,

asking difficult questions and demanding the protection of human rights, for instance, insisting that the Palestinians should have the same degree of academic freedom enjoyed by Israelis. The academic community can offer the urgently needed voice of reason and a place where each individual's humanity will be recognised, irrespective of differences in ethnicity or in ideology. Left alone, each side will further disconnect from the other, causing a continuation of the cycle of violence and revenge. One brave opposer of the boycott, Prof. Sari Nusseibeh, also President of the Palestinian Al-Quds University, agrees stating that: "An international academic boycott of Israel, on pro-Palestinian grounds, is self-defeating: It would only succeed in weakening that strategically important bridge through which the state of war between Israelis and Palestinians could be ended... Instead of burning that bridge, the international academy should do everything within its power to strengthen it". Boycotting, severing connections and burning bridges is the easy way out. It is much more challenging and important to build up these bridges by promoting academic interactions in a creative way in order to end the unfolding tragedy and advance a just and lasting peace.



Help is at hand thanks to Cambridge Peer Support!

Rachel Ann Jackson - Trinity Hall MCR Peer Supporter

Designed by Adam Foskett

In October 2002 I matriculated with Trinity Hall, coming to live and study in Cambridge for the first time. For me, this was a proud moment and I was looking forward to embarking on a PhD project I found fascinating. Three months into my research studies, however, I became ill with a recurrent condition that threatened my studies – turning my long-worked for career aspirations, and my world, upside down. Unfortunately, I was unfamiliar with the welfare system present in Cambridge University, despite being presented with extensive information booklets at the start of my studies. Even when I did become more knowledgeable, I felt reticent to approach anyone formally about any issues I had.

By the time I was forced to seek help with my Graduate Tutor and other university personnel because I was about to lose my PhD, my personal and academic situation had become quite complicated. Quite frankly, it was a mess! I didn't know if I could continue my studies at Cambridge and I had to change labs as well as research project. As a result, I was upset, confused, even angry – “why was this happening to me?” Furthermore, I felt alone – even alienated at times, because with all this going on I didn't feel like socialising. This deep distress penetrated into all aspects of my life, including relationships at home and work. It was a dreadfully tough and painful time, made worse by the fact

these issues had been festering for a long time. To remain sane, I heavily relied on friends listening to my numerous woes.

In fact, research has shown that the majority of students first turn to a peer to discuss their personal concerns, so I was certainly not alone. However, my friends were not always available, or were unable to cope with the situations I presented them with. A colleague at work suggested counselling, but I shied away from that idea immediately. At the time I thought, “No way am I going down that route!” I have since learned this is a common response of students because admitting to being unable to cope, or having a weakness, is very difficult to do, especially within a highly ambitious environment like Cambridge University. What I needed, however, is exactly what a Peer Supporter could have helped me deal with.

So, what is a Peer Supporter? A Peer Supporter is a student who has been formally trained by Cambridge University Counselling Service in skills such as non-judgemental, confidential active listening; assertiveness, and recognition of difficult problems needing referral to professionals. Identifying students willing to support the welfare of others means fellow students can recognise people who can help with their concerns. A Peer Supporter's formal training means they are prepared for dealing

with issues effectively.

In 2004, Cambridge University Counselling service received 3 years funding to launch a Peer Support Scheme, training students in skills to complement other welfare roles present in Cambridge University. Since then, they have trained 64 students as Peer Supporters from 8 of the 31 Cambridge colleges (Clare Hall, Homerton, Jesus JCR, Pembroke Graduate Parlour, St Johns JCR, Trinity MCR, Trinity Hall MCR and JCR, Wolfson). All 8 colleges participating in the pilot program have confirmed their support for continuing the Peer Support scheme and a further 3 colleges have also expressed interest. So, what would you contact a Peer Supporter for? The type of situation appropriate for Peer Supporters to deal with is just about anything that concerns you – no matter how serious or trivial. “Common problems are people wanting to talk through a relationship or work issue, family problems, and homesickness”, reports Jane Cooper, Peer Support Coordinator and Counsellor from the University Counselling Service. However, concerns may also include finances, health problems, or even worries about a friend. “Peer Supporters are also trained to recognise more serious problems (eg. depression and suicidal feelings) and help people find professional help for these”. Peer Supporters are also taught to respect that different cultures deal

with issues in different ways, and that non-UK students might encounter unique difficulties – especially when coming to reside and study in an unfamiliar country. Therefore, Cambridge Peer Support is represented by Peer Supporters of a range of nationalities, including a Cantonese-speaking student.

As a result of the academic, health and emotional tribulations at the start of my PhD, I decided I wanted to help other students experiencing difficulties. Therefore, I enrolled in the 30-hour Peer Supporter training course in February of this year. The transferable skills I have gained since taking this course have already helped me tackle my own concerns, as well as those of my peers, more effectively. Likewise, fellow peer supporters also report gaining invaluable skills from training such as “learning to be more patient”, “making new friends” and generally feeling more confident with tackling difficult situations.

Therefore, I write this article, not only as a graduate who has experienced difficulties while studying here in Cambridge, but also as a recently trained Peer Supporter. Looking back, if peer support had been established when I experienced problems, I would have benefited greatly. Dealing with concerns as they arise helps keep problems simple and minimises distress.

Rachel Jackson is a PhD student in the Physiology, Development and Neurosciences Department.

So, if you just want to get “something off your chest” or want guidance on handling an issue, contact a Peer Supporter! Our details and more information are available at: www.peersupport.cam.ac.uk.

Interested in implementing peer support in your college? Or, want to become a Peer Supporter? Please contact the scheme coordinators: Jane Cooper (jc307@cam.ac.uk) or Carol Dasgupta (cd218@cam.ac.uk).



Memoirs of an African Man

Written by Siza Mtimbiri designed by Tianqi Yu

Dreams come true; without that possibility, nature would not incite us to have them.

-John Updike



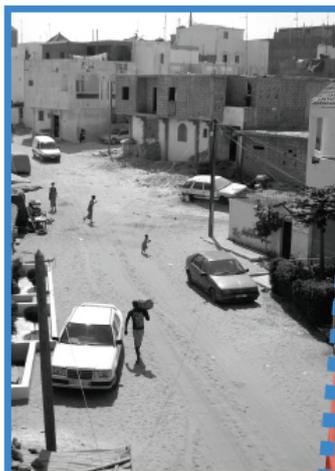
Dreams. We all have them. Some are passing; some we've held since we could remember; and yet others are simply inclinations, albeit strongly held. Have you ever had a dream that seemed so far-fetched that when it actually happened you wondered if it was real or if you were still engrossed in the dream? When you finally realized that it was indeed real, what did that do to your perception of future dreams? *I tend to associate dreams with clouds. As a child I used to look at the clouds and imagine what they could be: rabbits ... birds ... crocodiles with mouths open. Sometimes I imagined simply sitting on the cloud...*

The University of Cambridge was a cloud that I never thought I would ever touch, let alone explore. Towards my last years in high school I had heard about this 'heaven' for academics and had wondered what this place would look like. I would have been content to visit and possibly buy the T-shirt as a souvenir. I must confess that this wasn't even a dream because it seemed beyond my wildest expectation. As time went on, however, it became an inclination ... just an inclination.

I was born in Pumula, a small high-density town in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. The country

was called Rhodesia then. During that time black people were not allowed to live in certain areas of the country, particularly the low-density suburbs. As a child I had no clue what the difference was, and I was content to live in our two-bedroom house, complete with asbestos roof, wooden stove, and a kitchen that doubled as a living room. I was the youngest of four children in a family that later ballooned to six boys and one girl. All my brothers before me went to crèche, but for some reason I didn't, so my first experience with school was when I started first grade at the age of seven.

Everything in me had looked forward to school. I had always envisioned school as a place where I could meet all the township kids in one place and play all day. However, my first days were a huge disappointment. There were lots of kids, of course, but the whole environment left me disheartened, even at that tender age. After a 20 minute walk barefoot in the cold to make it to school on time, I quickly realized that the classroom had no door. I remember looking for the hinges to see if there had been a door; or if the door would ever be brought back. But there were no hinges. This was the way it had been designed – a hole through which to enter the class. There were no real windows either – just two square holes on each side of the room. The floors were uneven,



with a visible crack, large enough to harbor a large spider and its entire family. More than forty kids quickly piled into the class, more to evade the cold outside than to learn. We all sat side by side on old rickety benches behind long wooden tables – ten to twelve on a bench. It was OK for a few minutes, since being so close helped us to keep warm – especially for the kids who had neither shoes nor sweaters. I remember the bench shaking because the kid sitting closest to the window was shivering incessantly from the bitter cold. The rest of the day was spent memorizing and chanting the alphabet. A week later we were introduced to writing. It was awfully difficult to write anything on the tables. You had to know where the holes were on the table to avoid making a hole on your paper – a punishable offense. There were about 10 – 12 pencils in an old jam-tin to be shared by each group. These pencils were not to be taken outside the classroom at any given time. The same went for the few tattered books the school had. At recess most of the boys played soccer – the only sport - with a ball made from plastic shopping bags. The toilets were disgusting: nothing but a hole in the ground. The smell was suffocating. The few times I did go I would hold my breath. It didn't help much – the pungent smell tended to hang about you for a while. I always wondered what would happen if a kid fell through the hole into the horrid abyss filled with worms and who knows what else.

Midday was most kids' favourite time. This was usually before home-time and each child would be given a cup of 'choco-



late' milk. We would stand in a long line – all 40 of us – and take turns drinking from a bucket, using the same cup.

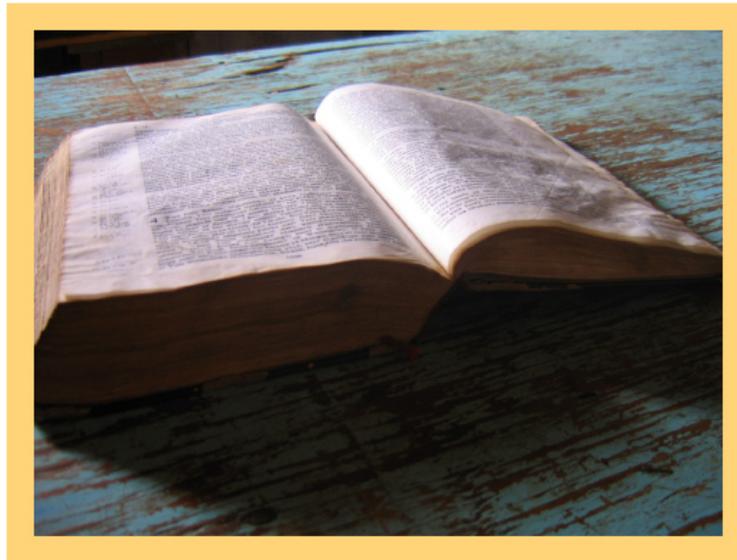
The milk, however, didn't taste like chocolate, as I discovered later. Since I was usually at the end of the line – I couldn't be bothered to run to the line to be

first as I always figured there would be some left – by the time I arrived, most of the students would have dipped their soiled hands in the

bucket and hence the otherwise white milk became 'chocolate'. Aspirations in the school ranged from being cooks to garden boys and even bus drivers – for the smart ones. Once a girl said she wanted to be a doctor and everybody laughed. Another kid promptly reminded her that she would have to be white – and a man. Our environments, I learned, determine, to a large extent, where we end up (or, more precisely, where we don't end up) in life.



By age ten, school was becoming a real drag and I had had enough of school. The country became independent in 1980 and, fortunately, my parents moved to the low-density area since the white government was no longer in power. I was amazed by our new home. There were four bedrooms! There was a large space whose purpose I wasn't aware of (a living room which we never had); the kitchen had an electric stove (we wouldn't have to buy wood and smell like we had just survived on a fire all the time); and there was a refrigerator ... no more dried meat! The house was simply too large, so for the first week all five boys slept in the same room – we were not yet used to having our own rooms. The first school my parents took me to, Hope Fountain Primary, was just as awful as my last, with crumbling walls that threatened to fall if more than one student sneezed at the same time, except that the toilets were worse. I refused to go back the following day, so my parents took me to Waterford Primary School.



Waterford Primary

School was very intimidating at first, as I was one of two black students in a class of 15 white students. The floor was smooth and shiny – I later found out that it was cleaned every day. Their toilets were more than just a hole in the ground and smelled even cleaner than my previous classroom. There were taps where you could wash your hands after using the 'bathroom'. Each student had his or her own desk and chair. Boys wore light blue shirts, khaki shorts, long gray socks, black shoes, a blue tie and a blazer. Girls wore a blue blouse, gray skirts with matching gray socks, black shoes and a blazer as well. Students here had a particular smell – sweet and fresh – and

it was then I discovered deodorant. Later I was taken to a room full of books – I had never seen so many in all my life. What's more, you could actually take one home! Noticing my surprise and wonder, the only other black student in my class leaned over and whispered, "It's just a library – stop staring." He spoke like the white kids and would not speak to me in my vernacular Ndebele. They played more than soccer at this school – cricket, tennis, netball and rugby. Swimming too was a sport. They had other activities such as trivial pursuit, chess and public speaking. Their aspirations were different: they spoke about being doctors and engineers, lawyers and scientists, veterinarians and dentists, most of which meant nothing to me then, except for

doctors – I knew what that meant. Soon I had learned far more in six months at Waterford than I had learned in five years at Pumula Primary School. At the end of seventh grade, which marks the end of elementary school in Zimbabwe, I knew I wanted to go to a 'good' high school – preferably

private, having discovered the difference. My cousins from Pumula Primary were already settling into their jobs in the suburbs. One was going to be a cook and the other a garden boy. In the meantime, my aspirations had changed, and I began to think I could be more than a bus driver ...

My first two years of high school were at a government school – Gifford High School. It was a neat school then with some of the best rugby fields and sports facilities; however, it lacked the culture of learning I had 'tasted' at Waterford. I longed to find another 'Waterford' for high school. I later attended a private high

school – Christian Brother’s College (CBC) in Bulawayo, where most of the students regarded university as the ‘next logical step’. Since I only became part of the college in my third year, most students were already working a year or two ahead of me. Expectations, however, were very high. I discovered then that there are certain institutions of learning where education is done in a very different but purposeful way. Certain schools have, over time, created structures to impart particular kinds of social capital that give their students an upper hand. Being at CBC did just that. I knew then that I had to get a university degree.

I’ve had the privilege since then to ‘pass through’ and even sit on various other clouds: the University of South Africa, the University of Illinois at Champaign, Harvard, Oxford Coming to Cambridge, however, remained an elusive dream for many reasons which would need more space than I have to explain. Needless to say, I’m here and I’m delighted. I hope to study the impact of AIDS on schooling to find ways to create effective models to educate

the emerging and increasing AIDS orphan population. I hope to return to my country and work with schools like Pumula and Hope Fountain, to give those students an opportunity to be educated; to become critical thinkers who can challenge the structures that are built and sustained to oppress them; and to become agents of change themselves. I hope to meet some like-minded people who realize how inequality begins much earlier than we think, and how we can work to ensure that students, at an early age, have the necessary education and resources to compete. Even though being in Cambridge is certainly one of my biggest dreams fulfilled, the greater would certainly be to have the honour of working within the education system in my country and to wrestle with issues of education and poverty. That’s the dream I’m hoping Cambridge will enable me to accomplish.

Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave.

Lord Brougham



The next step: *Life after Cambridge*

by Anne Henochowicz and Louiza Mallouri
Designed by Adam Foscett

After my BA I plunged into my graduate studies with great enthusiasm and optimism about the future. The University of Cambridge would provide me with a posh postgraduate title, and afterwards I could return to my country and commence my working career.

I spent a wonderful year here; my course, the university, the academic environment exceeded my expectations. I came across new people and cultures which reshaped and reinvented me. Nevertheless, during this wonderful year the promise to go back kept whispering in my ears; my eyes looked back as I wished for the familiar.

Now that the wondrous journey is almost over, my expectations have turned into bold question marks: What's next? Am I ready for professional life? Having both an offer to continue my studies here and an open invitation home, I face a dilemma. The siren song of return is not so appealing now, yet the time, energy and money a PhD requires is equally unalluring. Choices, pictures and voices whirl in my mind.

While working on this article I was struck that many Cambridge graduates had no hesitation in talking about their future plans. Some of you even have a master plan; you are not anxious or reluctant to enter the real world.

What happens with those who still don't know what to do with their lives?

– Louiza Mallouri



»» Continuing Education

Maybe you've always wanted to be a professor. Maybe you stumbled across your academic passion. Maybe you just want to stick around Cambridge. We have all sorts of reasons for going on to complete one or more post-graduate degrees. Below are some of your reasons why.



Ruth Taylor
from Manchester, UK
BA History
MPhil Education, Approaches to Children's Literature

I decided to opt for another MPhil after my degree, mainly because I was very interested in the academic content of my chosen degree, but also because I wanted to remain a student for a while longer. I

had no clear idea as to what I wanted career-wise, and I thought that a further year of study would give me the time to decide and would teach me useful research skills. It was quite difficult to come to this

decision as I felt that there was some pressure to get out into "the real world" and to embark on a career, but I am glad that I made the decision that I did.

Letty Stott
from Malvern, UK
BA Music MPhil Musicology

Work. Job. Career. Whichever word you use to describe it, the future doesn't sound particularly thrilling. At least, that's what I thought, when in order to stave off the inevitable, I applied for the far more fun-sounding MPhil.

Not that the fear of slowly sinking into the stereotypical City Drudge was the only factor in my choosing to study for a further year. In point of fact, I love my subject; musi-

cology, whilst gently mocked by many ("Musicology is to music as gynecology is to love," according to the great musicologist himself, Roger Parker), is in my view a brilliant field, interweaving in true Bakhtinian style with anything and everything even vaguely related to music. My MPhil worried my already anxious parents; closed, narcissistic and decidedly academic, musicology qualifies one only for its own study.

But my MPhil, chosen because of my superb supervisor, errs most definitely upon the practical; music cognition, a minor field even within musicology, investigates music as a human activity with its capacity to aid memory, facilitate language and even accelerate healing. The power of music, dismissed, forgotten and little-considered, is becoming a major resource today in hospitals, schools and care homes, and it is within this field that I

hope to continue my research. Music therapy is becoming an increasingly important avenue for children with learning difficulties, those trying to overcome drug dependence, and those suffering from long-term illness. Much work remains to be done. Should I choose a career in this field, it will by no means be a dull one.



Michael Fordham
from Cornwall, UK
BA History PGCE

Michael decided to teach history in an 11-18 state comprehensive school in Huntingdon and study part-time for a Masters in Education at Cambridge.

Teaching is rarely seen as a profession for intellectual development. The popular

perception is that teaching is vocational, and learning to teach involves learning how to act in front of a class, how to plan lessons, how to mark books. Good teaching, however, also involves good thinking. To teach well, one must ask difficult and philosophical questions about what it means

to understand a subject, and what it means to get better at it. Many Cambridge graduates are interested in understanding their discipline at a fundamental level, and being a teacher gives you the opportunity to grapple with that.



Constantinos Xenofontos
from Limassol, Cyprus
BA Education
MPhil Education, *International Perspectives on Mathematics Education*

I have applied to continue to a PhD in Cambridge. This was my aim from the beginning. However, I wasn't sure whether I would be able to stay during this academic year, mainly because of financial reasons. There are limited opportunities for funding as

far as studies in the humanities and social sciences are concerned. I am going to take out a loan in order to cover my fees and maintenance expenses. It wasn't an easy decision, even though my parents are really supportive. I have two younger brothers who

are going to study too, and I don't think it is fair to ask my parents to cover my doctoral degree expenses. There aren't many possibilities to work as an academic and/or researcher in Cyprus; so, in the future, I would like to work abroad if I have the opportunity.

»» Work in the U.K

Despite heavy doses of rain and toads-in-the-hole, Great Britain has a charm that keeps some of us here long after we've graduated. You may stay on for a few years to earn some money and work experience, or you may hope to settle down. With busy cities and quiet towns to choose from, a job in the U.K. can be as exciting or laid-back as you want.



Yi-Shan Tsai
from Taiwan
BA Foreign Languages and Literature
MPhil Education, *Approaches to Children's Literature*

After graduation, I will work in the U.K. for a year in order to gain some experience of working abroad. The reason why I decided to work instead of continuing my PhD studies is because I want to gain some

practical experience which I believe will help me to understand the theory I have learnt. Also, living here for another year will help me practice my spoken English. What is more, since the culture and

educational system in the U.K. is very different from that in Taiwan, I believe that working here will broaden my horizons and offer me invaluable experience.

Anonymous, China

For people with a science or engineering background who decide not to become a banker in the City "enjoying" 18-hour working days, Cambridge is probably the best place in the U.K. to look for an alternative career path. Starting up your own company here has never been easier. With seven science parks in the region host-

ing the offices and research centres of almost every world class company, as well as a range of services offered by St. John's Innovation Centre, to become your own boss all you need is a brilliant idea.

In the third year of my PhD, I started two companies. The first one was an education consultancy company. The

second was a technology company promoting a car safety device which I developed after experiencing an accident. Because of immigration laws and restrictions, I could not work full-time on either business. They are on hold for the moment, but they both have great market potential.

When I started my study in Cambridge, I saw myself as a banker in the city. In fact, a peaceful and civilised place like Cambridge is much better suited to me.

»» Returning Home

Actually, the charm of rain and toads-in-the-hole has worn thin. You've had an intense, enriching time at Cambridge, but you're ready to go home. Or perhaps you will miss the U.K., but want to be near family and give something back to your country. Besides, you'll be able to afford restaurants again.



Gabriel Mandujano
from Philadelphia, USA
BA Urban Studies
MPhil Land Economy

Gabriel spent two years in the U.K. on a Marshall Scholarship, earning degrees from the London School of Economics and Cambridge.

After Cambridge, I accepted an offer to serve as the chief executive of a small community development corporation that does neighborhood-level regeneration in distressed areas of Philadelphia. In the end, the decision wasn't hard, but it took a long time to make. When I came to the U.K. two years ago I really

missed home, but I'm glad that I left. I had spent a fair bit of time outside of the U.S. before, but living in London for a year was a great way to remind me that there's a whole world outside of Philadelphia.

After two years in the U.K., I've come full circle. The U.K. has all sorts of opportunities for urban planners, urban designers, and urban economists to fly all over the world, literally building entirely new cities in the Middle East and East Asia. For a bit, that sounded

appealing and glamorous and I may still do it some day. For now, though, what I miss most are my roots.

I'm a bit terrified of what's to come. The Board of my organization took a big risk by hiring somebody without much experience to lead it, and I don't want to let them down. I have lot of great support, though, and a lot of people who will keep me in line so I'm optimistic about what we'll be able to accomplish.



Christina Loizidou
from Nicosia, Cyprus
BA Physics
MSc Environmental Change and Management MPhil
Management

This is my fifth (and final!) university year. I plan to move back home to Cyprus to train for the ACA (Association of Chartered Accountants) with PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC). I deferred this offer twice as I truded through two one-year master's degrees. I cannot say that I am feeling serious doubts about another three-year quest for a profes-

sional qualification, including three years of preparing and taking exams!

The positive aspects of my move back home give me some hope that all will turn out well in the end. Many of my friends are already working in Cyprus, some of whom are already being trained for their ACA (Cyprus produces ACAs like other countries do footballers or rock stars). The

weather is beautiful, the pace of life more relaxed and agreeable, the sea is crystal clear and inviting. There are worse fates than mine I am sure!

Andrea Poyiatzi
BA Education
MPhil Education, International Perspectives on Mathematics Education
Nicosia, Cyprus

After obtaining my degree, I plan to go back to my country. I will continue the job I had before coming to Cambridge. Making this

decision was not easy; I wasn't sure whether I should return to my country or stay here to continue my studies. I had to consider the advantages

and disadvantages of both possibilities. Although I want to obtain a PhD, financial and personal reasons made it impossible this year. I hope

that in future I will be able to overcome these difficulties and continue my studies.

Tzeh Ming Loo
from Malaysia
BA Mechanical Engineering
MPhil Management

"My concern is whether or not I can work where I want to"

I had always wanted to return home to Malaysia after graduation. This was the case even during my second year at Sheffield. Malaysia is still a developing nation and needs every hand it can get from its citizens. Many would say that it's better to work in the U.K. for a few years before returning home, not only to get experience but also to enjoy the exchange rate. However, I believe that if you know that you are going to end up in a certain place, why not start early? Money is meant to be made and lost. Tony Fernandez, founder of AirAsia (Malaysia's no-frills air carrier) once said that Malaysia is a place full of opportunities, you just have to look for them.

My concern is whether or not I can work where I want to. Big companies normally give unimportant and simple kind of jobs; for example, PriceWaterhouseCoopers Malaysia gives photocopying jobs to freshers before engaging them in real business matters. As far as I am concerned, if I cannot contribute and learn, then that's a waste of time. But I see how important persistence is at the beginning of a career.

I have been studying all the way through high school to college, finishing my undergrad and now my masters. I've certainly had enough of studying and can't wait to start work. But at the same time I hope the ride will not be too bumpy. No more afternoon naps, just coffee every morning, obedience to my superiors and the standard 8-hour shifts! But if you have to do it, you will persevere naturally. Therefore I'm hoping to take it with open arms. Just like Brian Tracey says, "If it's to be, it's up to me."



» Interview with Mario Dehesa, Senior economist at the International Monetary Fund

Mr. Dehesa is from Mexico City. He completed his second Bachelor in Economics at Cambridge in 1981. He has worked at the IMF for nine years. Previously, he was the Chief Economist at Financial Group Serfin, and a lecturer and researcher at the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics (CRTE), both in Mexico.

What brought you to Cambridge?

I worked at CRTE before coming to Cambridge. About 95% of Mexicans who studied abroad went to the United States. I wanted something different.

Did you enjoy your time here?

Definitely. The tutorial system works best if you have a well-thought-out project in mind, but I still gained a lot of general knowledge. I took Japanese history as part of my course. You learn a lot by doing unexpected things. It changes your approach to your subject.

What about your social life?

That was also good. Cambridge has the advantage of being cosmopolitan and open.

Were you ready to graduate?

I was clear on the next step. I had no formal commitment to CRTE, but I chose to return to it. I took the summer off after graduation, then went back to Mexico.

Have you been back to Cambridge?

Yes, twice. Cambridge has changed a lot, and in positive ways. The development on Market Square and around Churchill College is quite good.

I also have colleagues who have just left Cambridge, including someone who finished his PhD last year. From my contact with them, it seems Cambridge is keeping up with advances in knowledge, and is also keeping its academic programmes updated. They had just started restructuring the economics programme when I was there. It's more organized now.

Do you have any advice for those of us about to graduate?

Work hard! There's a lot of tough competition from all over the world for jobs. A university's brand name means less than it used to; graduates from Indian universities, Swedish universities, and other places are getting top jobs.

Also, the openness and thinking-out-of-the-box atmosphere at Cambridge is very useful. Keep that mindset after graduation. During times of accelerated change in our world, you have to be open to alternatives. My years at Cambridge certainly enhanced my abilities in that respect.



IMF mission to Panama City to assess the authorities on their economic program. From Left to Right: Mario Dehesa, Rafael Romeau, Alfredo Macia, Wayne Lewis (mission chief).

Facebook I love thee, I love thee not

by Adeline Hong

Designed by Adam Foskett

7.30 p.m. Status Update: Adeline Hong is going to try to abstain from Facebook long enough so as to complete her article for Gown magazine.

I have struggled with several love-hate relationships in the past, but never am I more ambivalent than in my current engagement with the newest spider on the world-wide web, Facebook. Brought to this ecosystem by a Harvard graduate, Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook's birth marked a revolution in the way society functions and, no, this is not an exaggeration. Bear with me for a bit longer and you may soon see how that is so.

I must admit that I have much to thank Facebook for. For one thing, it has helped me reestablish many broken links and ties from my past, and it has also served as an almost permanent link to current and future contacts. As this virtual socialite extends its influence over more and more parts of the world, I find myself receiving 'friend requests' from people with whom I have lost contact over the years. I have also gradually, but steadily linked myself up with even more friends whom I had long given up hopes of ever meeting again. Now, I am actually saying hello to them, finding out about their lives through their profile updates and so on.

Of course, what Facebook could do and actually did for me went beyond just keeping the contacts intact within my radar zone. Facebook's multi-purpose capability is almost limitless, stretching as far as human mind and computing skills extend. The fact that anyone can upload newly-minted applications onto it for the public's usage meant that lots of functions, both useful and useless, are available on Facebook. For example, I have a birthday calendar which reminds me of the special dates of my beloved friends, two walls through which my friends can communicate with me anytime, three quotes applications which provide me with my daily doses of amusing or inspirational phrases, four different gift corners displaying



my friends' appreciation and so on. It also serves as an extremely convenient means of sending post-party photos to all people concerned, and, at the same time, share the moments with other friends. All one has to do is to upload the photos on Facebook, tag the relevant individuals, and Facebook does the notifications for you. Just how much easier can it get?

Besides its micro-usefulness, Facebook has also been a blessing to many organizations as it enables companies to reach out to some of their more tech-savvy clients to come together for an informal gathering. It has become not just a ground to round up all Cathleens of the world: "It's Cathleen, not Kathleen!", but it is also used by environmentalists and many other

social and political groups to collate numbers for their many campaigns, to raise awareness and garner support for a myriad of causes, ranging from the senseless, such as "Who took Ren's 6 spicy wings?????", to the sensational, for instance: Bring back freedom of speech to University, Support the Monks' protest in Burma, FREEDOM FOR BURMA and the like. You may get the idea of how diversely this 'social utility' can be appropriated. Once upon a not-too-distant time, some infuriated Facebook users launched an anti-newsfeed campaign, protesting against the invasive nature of the feature when it was first released. A backlash from Facebook users over Facebook within Facebook! Clearly, freedom of speech and expression is not forbidden: one of the more recent

'Cause' invitation I received cried out: "Enough with the @\$#! Facebook Applications Already!". I wonder if this group will receive as much attention as did the campaign to remove the mandatory 'is' restriction on one's status updates.

All the praises heaped on Facebook seem to be making it appear too wonderful to be true. Before you think that this article is a hymn to Facebook, I should probably say that I do identify many weaknesses and drawbacks concerning its use. The site's immense attraction is one major source of problem on its own. Like several addicts, I was 'peer-pressured' into joining Facebook, naively convinced that I will not become hopelessly dependent on it. I approached this new creature with the belief that it will not serve more than functional purposes in my life (to get photos, retain contacts...) but I am now as addicted as the next Facebook user. Though Chris Hughes, the leading spokesperson for Facebook, claimed that "people spend an average of 19 minutes a day on Facebook", a casual poll of the people around me suggests just how modest Mr Hughes had been. Friends of mine purportedly leave their Facebook pages logged on during the entire day, refreshing it every half-an-hour or so to reply to a new wall post, send gifts, or to check out the status of friends. For me, even till now, a day is not complete without at least 4-5 login sessions on Facebook.

Indeed, my friends would readily vouch for this: I have tried to wean myself off Facebooking many times, only to be subsequently drawn back to it by a whole host of effective excuses, such as my need to check if there are any forthcoming birthdays, my promise to upload some pictures which friends had been requesting for, or even to do research for my article. Ermm...ok... the last one is obviously an ill-formulated excuse but good enough to guarantee me permission to surf the net of private lives of friends and acquaintances for a couple of hours.



Yes, but just how bad can it get?' you might wonder. Well, I abstained successfully from MSN a couple of months back, hiding behind the invisible mode that comes with the newer MSN version, only to replicate real-time conversations, on Facebook's walls. It seems that I have become an inevitably shackled prisoner to modern communications: I can run but I can never hide from the others; new technologies like Facebook annul the excuses of inconvenience generated to justify the lack of communication with the rest of the world. And I am not alone: 701 members from my previous university alone openly acknowledge this fact through our common membership of the group Facebook is Eating away at My Life, and MSN Is Polishing off the Remains. You have to admit that these virtual piranhas are ferocious creatures indeed.

Unless you are still caught up in the many wonders present in the world of Facebook (or perhaps, may not have heard of George Orwell), you may have noticed, as I did, how Facebook is redolent of some of the Big Brother features mentioned by Orwell in his book 1984. Basically, if you have ever worried about how Friendster is revealing too much of your personal life to the world via uploaded photos and testimonials, interest lists and so on, you will most certainly gag at the efficiency of this more advanced artificial intelligence: Facebook is endowed with the newsfeed feature which publicizes your recent activities to the whole world; every action taken by you is instantaneously logged, either you trouble yourself with the task of deleting the reports one by one, or you choose, by default, to leave behind a trail of records on how you wasted your past hour on Facebook. Orwell's 1984 may well become a reality in 2084 if technology progresses at the current rate, stripping us off our prized privacies and announcing our activities in the way that Facebook is doing.

What I find frustratingly reminiscent of Orwell's fictional 1984 society is how human beings are willingly submitting to the dictatorship of this Big Brother of the 21st century. Even though people may be fully aware of how Facebook is seizing control of their lives and may even attempt to

resist it sometimes, this 'animal' feeds both consistently and confidently on our weaknesses of procrastination and curiosity and is thereby treated with great fervor.

One final malaise associated with Facebook even has a name coined for it, the so-called 'Facebook envy'. It is characterised by the inferiority complex experienced by some users of Facebook when they compare the 'quantity and quality' of their friends against that of their peers via the information available on Facebook. Applications like 'the entourage', 'top friends' and 'hotness indicator', just to state a few, are serving the informal roles of social thermometers; no doubt, the measurement and comparison of popularities leads to distress for some. I have had several friend requests by complete strangers which cite: 'hi, please accept the request. I am looking to increase my Facebook friends' list.'

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, according to

a latest count done and reported on wikipedia (yes, here's my best friend with statistics again), membership of Facebook is currently more than 12 times the population of my home country! Membership is actually growing at a rate that is much faster than what my nation can ever hope to achieve! Facebook therefore becomes a new kingdom of its own, for which I propose the name of procrasti-Nation. Doesn't statements like: 'I'll reply that wall post, tag that picture, check out this friend, wish that housemate a happy birthday, give this gift, change my status, before tackling the actual task at hand, sounds scarily familiar somehow?

Still not convinced of the revolutionary influence of Facebook? If so, ask yourself these questions:

Do you find yourself feeling grateful towards Facebook when you realise how it solves your dilemma of wanting to keep in touch with the cute girl you briefly met at the party? Is 'reply to Facebook message/ update Face-

book profile' on your to-do list right now? Did you realise how phrases such as 'I was Facebooking' no longer draws stares of incomprehension but are, instead, met with knowing nods of compassion from more and more people around you?

My point is simply this: Facebooking is a fad that is fast becoming a feature of the 21st century, slowly but surely edging out its rivals, such as Friendster, through the embodiment of many of the functions separately provided by them. In a nutshell, Facebooking appears to be a trend that is here to stay. That is until a Bigger, Bolder and Bossier Brother comes lumbering across the web to take its place.

"Facebook therefore becomes a new kingdom of its own, for which I propose the name of procrasti-Nation"



Today 1.25 am. Status update: Adeline has completed her article!

And she notes with glee how one campaign carried out on Facebook about Facebook has paid off - she is no longer constrained to inform the world of what she 'IS' thinking or doing, or just thinking of doing. The Facebook status update has finally attained its right to an unshackled freedom of expression... And, wait a minute, ..., wow, 6 minutes and 4 seconds ago George Brown and Mary Scott became friends... Cool?

How eco-tistical are you?

by Katherine Grant
Designed by Hang Le

Ten years ago the Internet bubble had techno-freaks bouncing off the walls. Today climate change and global warming are all the rage. Everything is 'sustainable this' and 'renewable that'. Face it; if you are not up to scratch with environmental jargon, you really are not going to have much to say at dinner parties these days.

Well, there is no quick fix for complete ignorance of the world in which you live, but here is a handy guide that will attempt to give a crash course in the buzz-phrase 'global warming'. Who knows what interesting debates you might find yourself in if you offhandedly toss a couple of these buzz-words into a conversation.

Are you a Lomborganist?

If you are already a green veteran, you may have attended a talk given by Bjorn Lomborg at the Graduate Union Society during Michaelmas term. Lomborg is the author of a controversial book entitled *The Skeptical Environmentalist*. In his book, Lomborg manipulates various data to illustrate that global warming is not such a hot priority (sorry, I had to). He examines various environmental challenges facing society today and, after dissecting the evidence, concludes that things are not as bad as they are made out to be.

The Graduate Union audience bristled under Lomborg's slick and well-crafted attack on the real benefit-to-cost ratio of the Kyoto Protocol. Lomborg spurned the Kyoto Protocol as an ineffective, financially unsound tool for combating climate change. His argument was that the Kyoto Protocol curbed economic growth and cost countries far more than if they simply put capital into adjusting their infrastructures to compensate for climate change. According to Lomborg, most of the world's problems (including water shortages, deforestation and AIDS) were directly linked to poverty. Therefore the solution was to stimulate growth in the economies of developing countries so that they could combat directly the symptoms of poverty.

I think many at the Union felt frustrated at being incapable of standing up and asking Lomborg an insightful question which would have caused the audience to nod and applaud in appreciation. There was an awkward feeling of suspecting that you were being robbed, but not feeling sure enough about it to cause a scene.

Do you believe in economic growth?

Lomborg's argument is dangerously reasonable: why curb economic growth, for surely that would be self-defeating? However, the scary thing that Lomborg does not seem to acknowledge is that although poverty, health and general human welfare are indeed primary challenges, they are not the root causes of our problem. In other words, if economies continue to grow at their current rate, with a blatant disregard of environmental impact, the world will not have the natural capital to sustain humanity.

You can model economic growth to the heights of heaven, but you only have to take a look at your feet to realise that the world is finite. In fact, as Edward Wilson states in his book *The Future of Life* (2002); 'For the rest of the world to reach United States consumption with existing technology would require four more planet Earths'. One might argue that in the past, human ingenuity has been such that technological breakthroughs have allowed societies to overcome disaster and

adjust to the scarcity of resources (indeed Lomborg used this argument when questioned on the broader issue of resources running out). This could be described in terms of economics as the Endogenous Growth Theory (Pearce and Barbier, 2000): basically, a healthy, growing economy allows capital to be invested in research, development and technological innovation. The role of technology is to ensure that resources are used with increasing efficiency. Theoretically, therefore, an economy can sustain indefinite growth rates. But can the environment?

The Endogenous Growth Theory assumes that the necessary institutions and capital are available to allow human ingenuity to

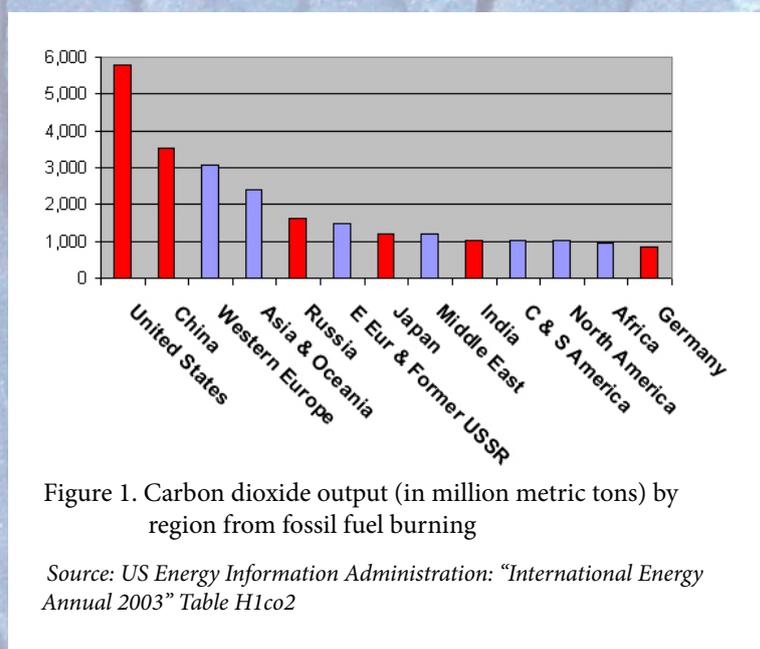


Figure 1. Carbon dioxide output (in million metric tons) by region from fossil fuel burning

Source: US Energy Information Administration: "International Energy Annual 2003" Table H1co2

be exploited. This is not the case, however, in many developing countries, where government policies and infrastructures are not in place to promote the research and development required to give them a boost in the sustainable development arena. Thus you have the problem of developing countries having to implement developed restrictions, with developing budgets, in their race to achieve developed economies.

The Kyoto Protocol attempts to solve this problem by exempting transition and developing countries - such as Brazil, China and India - from the carbon emissions restrictions. This in itself is dangerous, as China is well on its way to equalling America in its carbon emissions (see Figure 1).

Lomborg seems to think that money is being swindled when it is spent on the environment. He describes the extinction of increasingly large numbers of animals as 'non-catastrophic' because their loss will have no effect on our economies.

The truth is, Lomborg is a well-versed and persuasive speaker. In fact, in 2004, TIME Magazine voted him one of the top 100 most influential people. So he has a wide audience of policymakers who understand money better than the benefits of rescuing a species of particularly rare snails.

OK, so what is the Kyoto Protocol?

The Kyoto Protocol is an international treaty which aspires to facilitate the 'stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system'. Or, to use Blairism: the aim is to reduce our carbon emissions so that our kids aren't cheated by global warming (Ok, so I have tweaked Blair's description of sustainable development somewhat).

Technically, climate change is a natural phenomenon that the earth has undergone since land was first separated from the seas. However, the term 'anthropogenic' is used to define dramatic climate change currently taking place, 90-95% of which is believed to be a consequence of human actions.

How will the Kyoto Protocol be implemented?

The objective of the Kyoto Protocol is for all industrialised countries (referred to as 'Annex I Countries' in the Protocol) to reduce, by 2012, the combined emissions of dangerous gases to 5% below emission levels recorded in 1990. The Protocol encompasses the reduction of six gases; carbon dioxide, however, is the easiest to measure and regulate.

The actual reduction may be impossible for several countries without seriously curtailing their economies, so options are put into place for excess emissions to be offset in various ways.

These include:

- Joint Implementation - Countries gain 'Emission Reduction Units' by financing specific types of projects in other developed countries. This allows them to offset excess carbon emissions.
- Clean Development Mechanisms - Countries can sponsor accredited emissions reduction projects in developing countries. These projects act as carbon sinks and allow the sponsoring country to be allocated a certain amount of 'Certified Emission Reductions.'
- Emissions Trading - Countries can 'buy' carbon credits from other countries that have emissions below their allowed carbon emission limits.

An example of this sort of scheme is the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme, which was established independently of the Kyoto Protocol.

In order for the Kyoto Protocol to come into effect, the following conditions had to be fulfilled:

- It had to be ratified by at least 55 countries partaking in the convention.
- It had to be ratified by Annex I Countries, whose total carbon emissions accounted

for at least 55% of the global carbon emissions measured in 1990.

On 16 February 2005 the Kyoto Protocol became a legally binding agreement, 90 days after the last condition was fulfilled. As of June 2007 there are 172 countries and other governmental entities party to the Protocol, accounting for 61.6% of emissions from industrialised countries.

The classification of countries

The Kyoto Protocol acknowledges that industrialised countries are the major historical contributors to greenhouse gases currently in the atmosphere. Additionally, the per capita emissions of developing countries are still very low. For these reasons, developing countries can be signatories to the Protocol without being obliged to restrict emissions. They must, however, monitor and report on their emissions. This ruling holds until 2012, when the Protocol will be reviewed.

Annex I Countries are called on to assist the developing countries in the common task of reducing emissions. Assistance is given in the form of support for the Clean Development Mechanisms mentioned above. These are projects which have

Greenhouse gas and carbon dioxide emissions

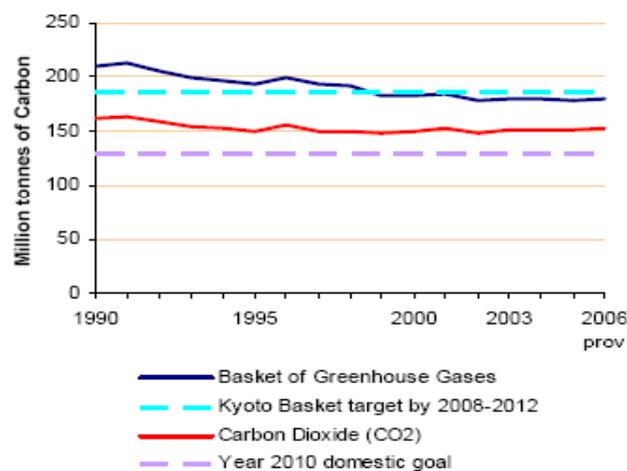


Figure 2. The UK's current status in terms of emissions reduction

Source: 2007 UK Meeting the Energy Challenge - A white paper on energy

been accredited by a committee and which actively reduce carbon dioxide. Developing countries also have the incentive of being able to sell their carbon credits if they reduce their emissions below their assigned limit.

Exceptions to every rule

The USA (responsible for a quarter of the world's carbon emissions) and Australia stand out as notable exceptions to the growing list of countries that have ratified the Protocol. The USA's and Australia's main argument for not ratifying the agreement is that their economies would be seriously handicapped by the restrictions. In addition, Bush refused to ratify because China, whose emissions are set to equal America's in the next year or so, is not classified as an Annex I Country and would therefore have no restrictions on its carbon output. China's argument, however, is that their per capita carbon output is still far below the USA's.

Despite not ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, the USA and Australia are still committed to reducing their carbon emissions. They have in fact signed the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, an agreement to share knowledge and technology that can be used to reduce emissions. At a more local level, hundreds of U.S. mayors have adopted Kyoto targets for their own cities.

How does the UK fit into all of this?

The UK has taken the Kyoto bull by the horns and jumped enthusiastically into a rodeo of White Papers and bills. According to 2007 UK Energy Sector indicators, the UK is set to meet its target for the reduction of greenhouse gases as defined in the Kyoto Protocol. However, carbon emissions are still higher than the pledged goal of a 20% cut by 2010 (see Figure 2). The UK Energy White Paper, published in May 2007, set out as one of its goals the aim of cutting emissions by a hefty 60% below 1990 values by 2050.

Despite these efforts, various environmental groups are arguing that the cuts are still not enough, while the industry sector is watching with horror the rise in capital required to meet the prescribed targets. Nevertheless, the U.K. is one of the few countries to have taken drastic measures in the fight against global warming.

Conclusion

It should be pointed out that the Kyoto Protocol has its flaws; governments cannot accurately estimate how fast their economies will grow, and therefore know exactly how many carbon emission allowances they must negotiate for. In addition to this, rules and methods for enforcing compliance and carrying out audits have not been detailed. It therefore comes as no surprise that the Kyoto Protocol been denounced by many, with Lomborg a particularly vocal critic. It should be acknowledged that the Kyoto Protocol is not THE solution. This was not that the intention of the international team of policymakers who took several years to create it anyway. Rather, it is the first step in a process of getting countries to acknowledge that we are indeed facing a problem which requires global alliances and communication to solve. It is a blueprint for far more regulated and detailed policies that still need to be established.

Disclaimer:

By writing this article, the author does not lay claim to being a specialist in any of the areas discussed here. Any comments or arguments are welcome.

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The Science Behind Human Sexuality

By Miko Tatalovic

Designed by Adam Foskett

Female sexual fantasy, masturbation, pornographic images, promiscuity, sexual coercion... These sound like something you would encounter in an adult video store, but all these terms are actually featured in literature on the evolution of human sexuality. This intriguing field of evolutionary biology and psychology dwells upon our obsessions with sex, illustrating just how big a role sex has played in our evolution, and just how much of what we do is down to what our ancestors have been selected to do by forces of sexual selection.

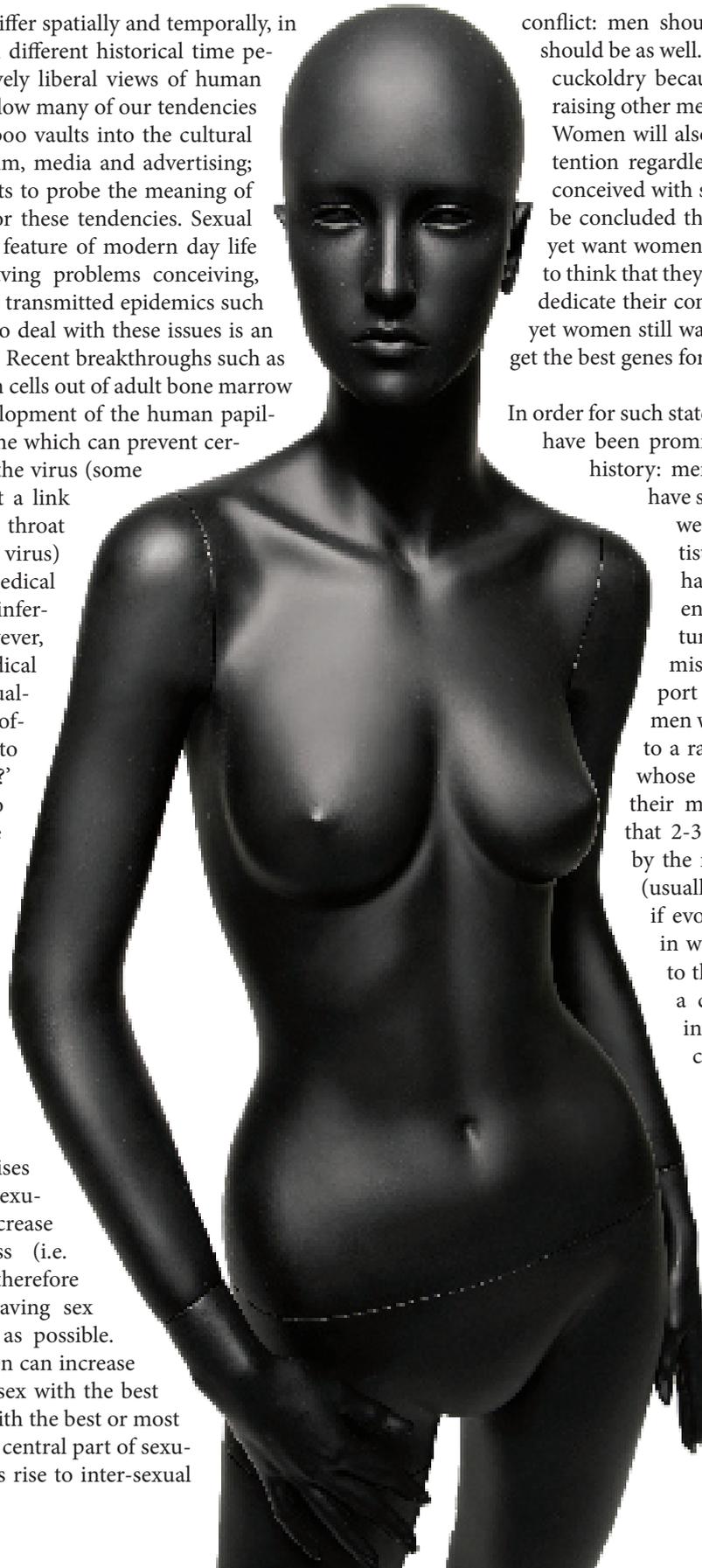
“up to 30% of women report having had sex with two or more men within 24 hours”

Attitudes towards sex differ spatially and temporally, in various cultures and in different historical time periods. Currently, relatively liberal views of human sexuality in the West allow many of our tendencies to emerge from the taboo vaults into the cultural mainstream through film, media and advertising; they also allow scientists to probe the meaning of and possible reasons for these tendencies. Sexual health is an important feature of modern day life with many couples having problems conceiving, and with many sexually transmitted epidemics such as HIV; knowing how to deal with these issues is an important medical task. Recent breakthroughs such as the production of sperm cells out of adult bone marrow stem cells and the development of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine which can prevent cervical cancer caused by the virus (some researches even suggest a link between oral sex and throat cancer caused by HPV virus) raise hope for future medical interventions to treat infertility and STDs. However, apart from the medical implications, our sexuality has much more to offer to people who dare to ask the question, ‘Why?’ Why do we enjoy sex so much? Why are people jealous of their sexual partners and why do we dislike infidelity so much? Why is the penis shaped the way it is? Why do we women experience amazing orgasms? Why do we waste time masturbating?

One of the main premises of research on human sexuality is that men can increase their biological fitness (i.e. number of children, therefore genes produced) by having sex with as many women as possible. At the same time women can increase their fitness by having sex with the best quality men (i.e. men with the best or most compatible genes). This central part of sexual selection theory gives rise to inter-sexual

conflict: men should be promiscuous, but women should be as well. However, men will try to prevent cuckoldry because if this happens, they end up raising other men’s children at their own expense. Women will also want to keep their partner’s attention regardless of whether the children were conceived with someone else. In a nutshell, it can be concluded that men want to be promiscuous, yet want women to be faithful; women want men to think that they are faithful so that these men will dedicate their concern to them and their children, yet women still want to be promiscuous in order to get the best genes for their children.

In order for such state of affairs to evolve, women must have been promiscuous during our evolutionary history: men can only be unfaithful if they have someone to be unfaithful with. Yet we cannot go back in time, so scientists, using various questionnaires, have tried to quantify women’s present propensity to be promiscuous. It turns out that women are quite promiscuous; up to 30% of women report having had sex with two or more men within 24 hours. This in turn leads to a rather high percentage of children whose biological fathers are different to their mother’s husband: it is estimated that 2-30% of children are not fathered by the man who thinks he is the father (usually mother’s husband). Naturally, if evolution has favoured promiscuity in women so that they can give birth to the fittest children, then there was a conflict with men’s evolutionary interests, which would have them care only for their own children and avoid being cuckolded in the first place. Indeed, many studies have found that fathers take better care of and develop a better relationship with children who resemble them more. Also, blue-eyed men prefer blue-eyed women as mates, which may be an evolved strategy of paternity assurance: if blue-eyed female partner sleeps with a non



"Rape may be yet another biological adaptation evolved in men to increase their number of sexual partners"

blue-eyed man her children will not have blue eyes, this will then be an obvious cue for the blue-eyed man that he has been cuckolded (if he is the father, all of the children will have blue eyes). Furthermore, infanticide rates are higher for stepfathers than biological fathers, again supporting the idea that men have evolved to avoid cuckoldry, and if this fails, to then avoid taking care of the children of other men.

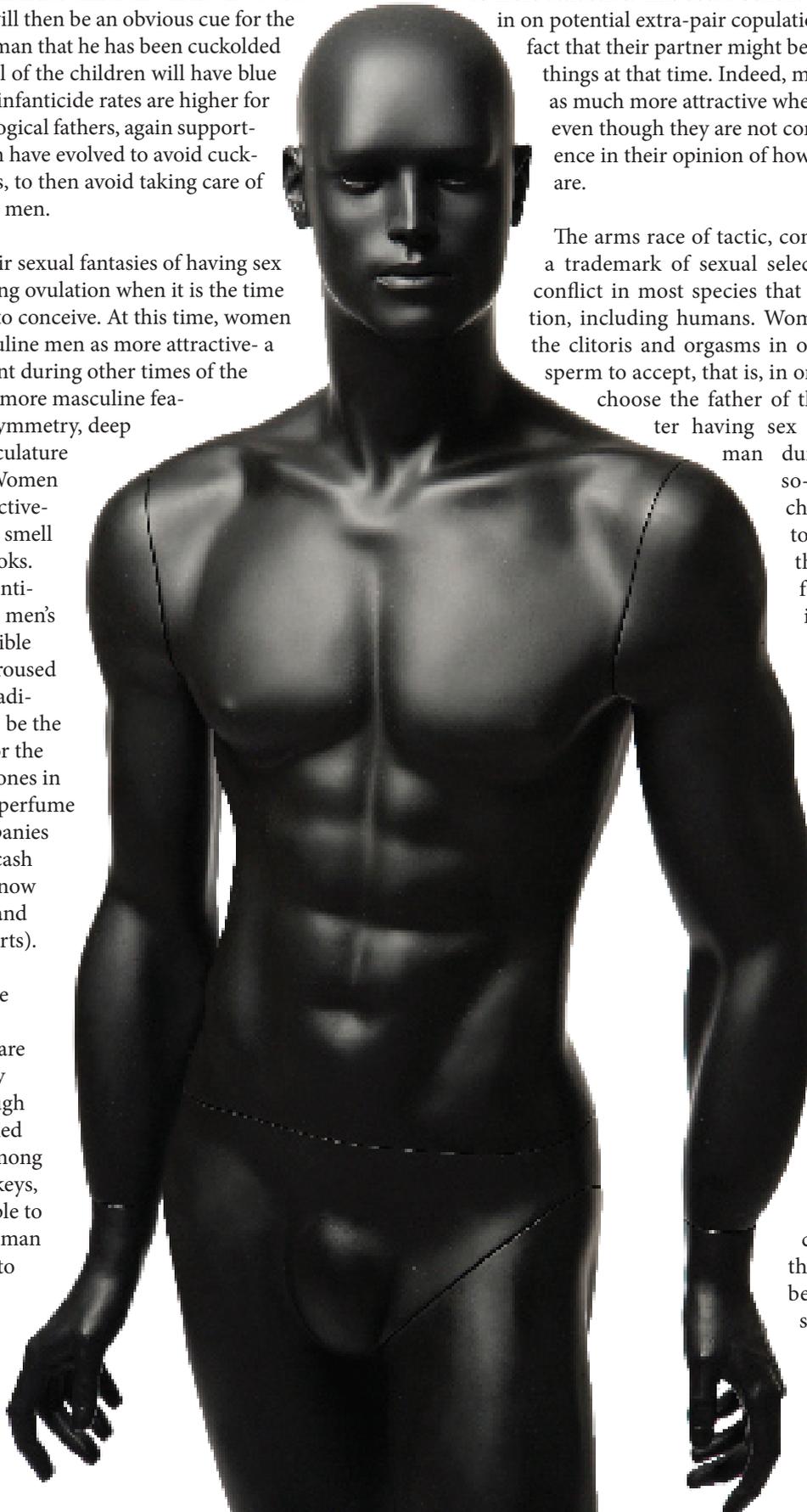
Women increase their sexual fantasies of having sex with other men during ovulation when it is the time they are most likely to conceive. At this time, women also rate more masculine men as more attractive- a preference not present during other times of the month. Presumably, more masculine features such as facial symmetry, deep voice and body musculature reflect good genes. Women can distinguish attractiveness by men's voices, smell of their sweat and looks. One recent study identified a molecule from men's sweat that is responsible for getting women aroused and excited: androstadienone. This seems to be the first firm evidence for the existence of pheromones in humans; something perfume and deodorant companies have been trying to cash in on for some time now (think of Axe effect and the recent Lynx adverts). But, as nature has it, men have evolved the ability to recognize when their partners are at this, for men, risky time periods. Although women have concealed ovulation, a rarity among other apes and monkeys, men seemed to be able to detect it in how a woman smells. When asked to rate the attractiveness of women's sweat scents, men rated ovulating women's scents

as more attractive. This could benefit men by cuing them in on potential extra-pair copulations as well as on the fact that their partner might be up to mischievous things at that time. Indeed, men rate their partners as much more attractive when they are ovulating, even though they are not conscious of this difference in their opinion of how 'sexy' their partners are.

The arms race of tactic, contra-tactic evolution is a trademark of sexual selection and inter-sexual conflict in most species that use sex for reproduction, including humans. Women may have evolved the clitoris and orgasms in order to choose whose sperm to accept, that is, in order to subconsciously choose the father of their children even after having sex with more than one

man during ovulation. This so-called 'cryptic female choice' allows a woman to fool her partner into thinking that he is the father, whilst the truth is somewhat different.

Women have more simultaneous orgasms with more attractive and more symmetrical men (proximate cues of good genes); simultaneous orgasms seem to help to get the sperm closer to the egg by a physiological action of the cervix which dips into the deposited sperm and brings it deeper into the woman's body. So, female orgasms may be an evolved feature allowing women a post-coital choice in the father for their children. This may be perhaps why men get so upset when they find that their partner has been faking orgasms with them...



Apart from the cryptic female choice, men can also have a say in how their sperm fair in the face of the competition for the limited resource: women's ovum. Men may have evolved penises such that their morphology allows them, when having sex, to extract the sperm of rival men and get their own sperm as close to ovum as possible. Research suggests that the penis, shaped as it is with coronal ridges and a frenulum, extracts significantly larger amount of previously deposited sperm than a smooth penis-like model of similar size. The fact that humans have a large penis and testes compared to less promiscuous gorillas (but not as large as highly promiscuous bonobos) suggests that there is an intermediate degree of sperm competition taking place in humans. Sperm competition is predicted to evolve when female mates with more than one male in a short period of time. In humans, this time period is 2-9 days (longevity of sperm once ejaculated). Again, some studies suggest that many women (up to 30%) do engage in sequential sex with different partners in such short time periods, thereby allowing the potential for sperm competition in humans to evolve. Many women fantasise about sex with men other than their current partner and with more than one man. They are also more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours during ovulation. Men's jealousy, appetite for sexual variety and fantasies of sex with more than one woman can all be interpreted as adaptations in response to promiscuous behaviour in women. Interestingly, individual differences in human sex drives may be dictated by our genes.

In an environment where sexual competition continues post-copulation, to ensure their competitiveness, it pays for men to evolve adaptive mechanisms in sperm competition. In humans, the perception of a high risk of sperm competition may increase sexual arousal which in turn increases the volume and quality of sperm ejaculated. Seeing other men copulating would be perceived as a risk of sperm competition: more men, higher the risk. Internet pornography sites contain more images of one woman with two or more men than the other way around; men also report such images to be more arousing. Some even interpret the popularity of swinging and 'dogging' as a by-product of evolved tendency to be aroused by women having sex with other men in order to 'gear up' for the sperm competition ahead. Men may even have evolved behavioural adaptations to sperm competition pressure: copulation that takes place after prolonged periods spent separated from one's partner or after arguments (situations in which there is a potentially increased chance of female infidelity) are more vigorous with deeper and faster thrusting movements; both of which may result in more of the rival's

sperm being removed while one's own sperm is brought closer to the egg.

Rape may be yet another biological adaptation evolved in men to increase their number of sexual partners. It is important to separate biology from issues of morality. Many make the fallacious assumption that evolved behaviours must be morally acceptable, but this is not so. Between 10 and 17% of women experience rape by their husband, while about 9% of women are raped by their partners in long-term relationships. This type of rape, forced in-pair copulation (FIPC), may be another anti-cuckoldry adaptation and a sperm competition tactic allowing men to compensate for their partner's infidelity and ensure they are investing in their own children. Research supports the hypothesis that FIPC occurs more often when the woman in the pair is unfaithful and when the man is generally more jealous, showing many mate-retention behaviours (such as holding hands, not introducing a partner to his male friends etc.). While the damaging practice of rape is often tolerated in couples, there has traditionally been a strong taboo against masturbation, which does not harm others and may even be evolutionarily adaptive: masturbation by men may be a tactic to get rid of old, slow sperm to better prepare them for sperm competition should the opportunity arise. This is evident in that the quality of masturbatory sperm ejaculates is lower than that of the copulatory ejaculates and this fact may be used to increase the success of artificial inseminations.

Research on the evolution of human sexuality is full of fascinating and elucidating ideas: cryptic female choice, sperm competition, pheromones... All of these have been widely documented in various animal species, and now more and more research suggests that sexual selection also played an important role in human evolution: it may well have shaped many aspects of our morphology, physiology, psychology and behaviour. Even the biggest evolutionary riddle, altruism (i.e. helping others at an expense to oneself), may have evolved by means of sexual selection. Recent reseraches show evidence that humans are more altruistic towards more attractive members of the opposite sex and that we find more altruistic people of the opposite sex more attractive. Thus, helping others may have been beneficial because it brought us more attractive, better quality mates. Study of sex in humans can explain various aspects of our biology, psychology and sociology. From altruism to rape, evolution through sexual selection may have shaped our behaviours from those that make us proud of being a human down to those that we are most ashamed of.

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Stretch your writing blues away with yoga flex

by Dr Nita Martin, **Yoga Flex**

Designed by Adam Foskett



1. Place your hands behind your back and hold the palms together in the middle of the back.

Are you stuck in front of a computer writing or programming hour after hour and day after day? Then chances are that you'll be very familiar with the mental and physical toll this takes. These long monotonous periods can cause pain in both hands and back and make it difficult to focus on the task at hand. If it wasn't difficult enough to get on with writing, great summer time weather offers even more distractions and you itch with desire to be outdoors far from your desk.

If you find yourself in this kind of situation, then it is well worth considering whether exercising through yoga would be of benefit to you. Benefits of yoga exercises include:

- » Full body workout
- » Refreshing the mind
- » Non-competitive training
- » Focussing on individual development

Common misconceptions

Many students are put off yoga because of the impression that it is all about meditation. Not all classes are the same and even though some sessions may focus on this area there are others that will not touch upon it at all. Another common misconception about yoga is that it is easy, hence popular with women. In fact, yoga can be very demanding. Of course, it is easy to skive through the exercises, but then again, if you do then you also won't reap the rewards.

Often, even the most active and sporty people are surprised with their lack of flexibility in doing what they consider to be the simplest of exercises. For example, how long can you sit cross-legged comfortably on the floor?

Clearing your mind

One of the great things about yoga training is that it is a really good way to help you stop thinking about work. Not least, it will help you stop becoming too obsessive over punctuation in your pieces of writing! The yoga poses require complete concentration and it is advisable to work at it conscientiously. The great thing about this is that it helps clear the mind from all other worries. Most yoga lessons will finish with a short period of relaxation offering a blissful time to reflect and prepare yourself for the rest of your day.

I have often found that it can help creative thinking, particularly useful if you are suffering from writer's block. And, for these reasons this makes it an ideal activity to take up during times of great stress; it can help you feel physically and mentally refreshed and ready to return to work.

Summertime stretching

Despite opposing views, summer time is an ideal opportunity to start a training regime. You're probably wondering why stretching in the summer is better. Well, because it's easier. And, that is all to do with the fact that stretching is more effective when you are warmer. It makes it just that little bit easier to reach further and to get into more difficult poses. The final result is a greater level of satisfaction. For many students, their improved flexibility during the summer surprises and motivates them even further.

Staying active

Yoga Flex classes focus on improving flexibility, strength and balance. This gives the classes a clear objective on getting a workout that students value. After all, they are interested in getting some exercise too. These classes have helped students to:

- » Explore the range of movement
- » Identify individual development needs
- » Appreciate the importance of maintaining and improving flexibility

If you are interested in trying out Yoga Flex classes, then we recommend that you book yourself into one of our taster sessions, held each month. You can book online at www.yogaflex.org.uk. Training is held in the heart of Cambridge at The Leys School Sports Complex on Trumpington Road. If you would like to get in touch, then you can reach us at info@yogaflex.org.uk.

Exercises to try at home

Many yoga exercises can be incorporated into your daily routine. These arm exercises are examples of stretches that you can try even sitting at your own desk! (See figures 1, 2, 3)



1. Place one arm across your chest and the other arm along your back. Then, try to reach so that you can clasp the hands together.



2. Place both arms behind you and link the fingers. Then, keeping both arms straight, raise the arms up.



3. Place one arm above your head and one arm along your back. Then, try to reach so that you can clasp the hands together.

We helped a drinks company
raise their glasses.
It makes you think.

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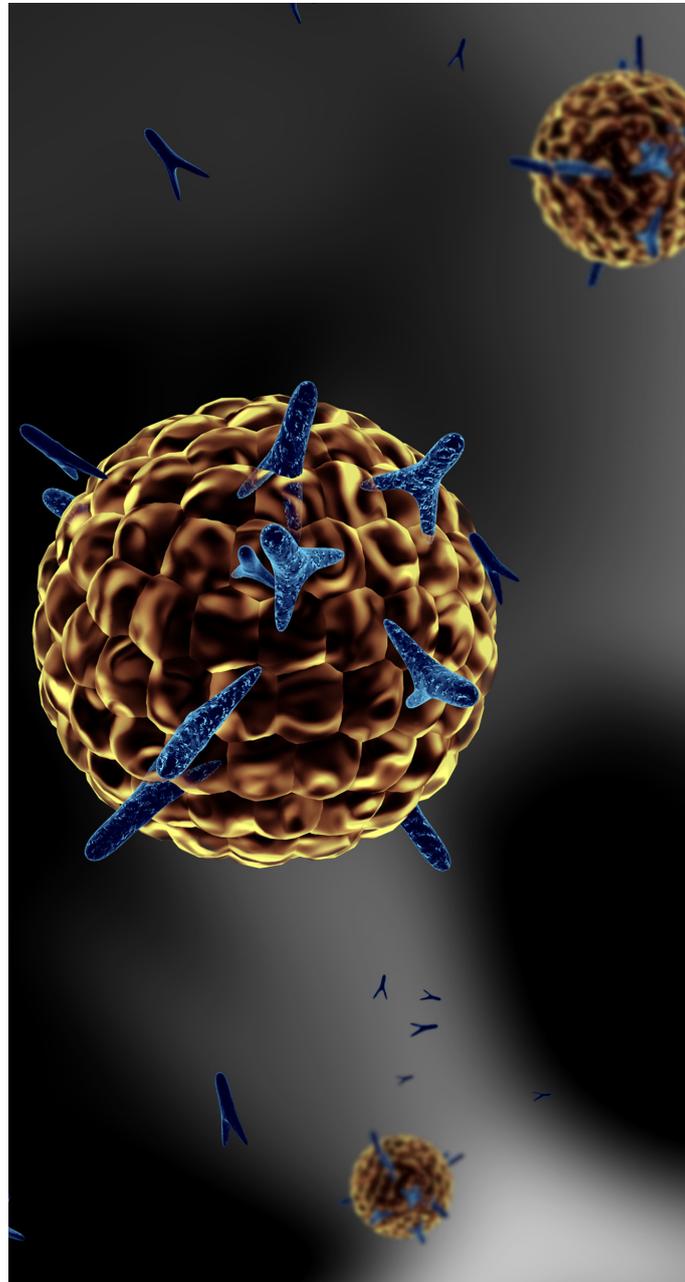
When our immune system attacks our own cells

by Gillian Brodie

Designed by Adam Foskett

Why study type 1 diabetes (T1D)? Surely there are more worthy, life-threatening conditions to research. People are dying every day from cancer, heart disease, HIV; why not fund work on these major killers rather than a disease for which we already have a 'cure', the administration of insulin? Of course, scientists throughout the world are investigating these conditions, but by no means should we become complacent and view less urgent matters as trivial. Whenever I talk to someone about my job, the first thing they tell me is someone they know has diabetes – this is clearly an extremely widespread problem. I hope that one day, my little contribution could potentially help people the world over. I will never be able to entirely appreciate the major impact it has on one's daily life; it's sometimes necessary to take a step back and look at the bigger picture, remembering why this research is important. But why is that exactly? T1 diabetics endure a focused attack on the insulin-producing beta cells of the pancreas by their own immune cells. Investigating the mechanisms underlying this condition, allows us to delve into the possible workings of many other autoimmune conditions. Several occur through the same basic principals although their manifestations are very different, whether it be a degeneration of the myelin sheath surrounding nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, as in the case of multiple sclerosis, or an attack and swelling of the joints in rheumatoid arthritis. All autoimmune conditions are disabling in their own specific manner.

Our bodies have developed a highly sophisticated immune system, which specifically identifies and destroys invading microorganisms. This dynamic network of interacting cells and molecules is so versatile, it can recognise and destroy many billions of potentially deadly foreign bodies. Certain immune cells have the unique capacity to rapidly mutate upon en-



countering foreign proteins resulting in a minutely altered surface structure capable of a perfect interaction. Its efficiency in dealing with completely unknown pathogens means most infections are rapidly dealt with and eradicated from our bodies without so much as a sniffle. With such an adaptable system, impeccably stringent controls must be in place to enable these fighter cells to distinguish between foreign and self. If they are able to change their surface configuration

to engage perfectly with pathogens, what's to stop this occurring when they meet our own tissues? Immune cells endure rigorous control processes, the most gruelling being at the point they are made in the thymus where they're taught to ignore self-proteins. A mere 3% of immune cells formed are of a satisfactory standard to enter the blood stream. The remainder don't make the grade and quickly die off because they either don't work, or work too well in that

they recognise self-proteins. This would make them highly dangerous if they were ever to leave the thymus. If these autoreactive cells do manage to escape, further protective mechanisms come into play, such as the recently discovered cell group Tregs, whose function is to track down dangerous cells and curb their action.

Having said all this, evolution is far from perfect; it has not yet managed to rid our society of autoimmunity with many of us still harbouring defective genes that make us more susceptible to the leakage of these hazardous cells, or the inability to control them in the body. Thus we end up with the paradoxical situation whereby our own tissues are attacked by our allies, the very cells developed to protect us from harm. Further research is necessary to discover why certain individuals are more inclined to possessing high numbers of autoreactive cells, what stops them being controlled and why they single out certain organs over others. We do know that combinations of genetic and environmental factors are at play here. Bearing genes that makes one susceptible to an autoimmune condition does not necessarily mean the disease will unveil itself. Some scientists speculate that infections bring on autoimmunity in predisposed individuals by causing tissue damage and inflammation in certain organs. Consequently, immune cells infiltrate the affected area but can become confused and suspect the injured tissue to be the pathogen.

Finding answers to these problems will provide invaluable information for future treatments. Massive advances in our knowledge have been made over the past decade but the jigsaw is not complete. If we discover the exact mechanisms at work, we may soon be able to cure or even prevent these illnesses before they occur instead of simply moderating their

David Lynch

INLAND EMPIRE

by Emilia Wilton-Godberfforde

Designed by Adam Foskett

"A Woman In Trouble"

INLAND EMPIRE (director David Lynch insists on the full capitalisation of the title) is disturbing and utterly compelling viewing. If you thought the double-narrative structure utilised in *Lost Highway* and *Mulholland Drive* was difficult to follow, then prepare yourself for this intricate and vertiginous plot line which caves in, doubles up, triples and even quadruples itself, to much perplexing effect.

The film opens in a hotel room where a Polish-speaking prostitute, whose face is blanked out, informs her client that she does not have the key; another girl cries in a hotel room as she watches a flickering screen; human bunnies in a sitcom-like setup talk enigmatically amidst inappropriate canned laughter and applause; two men in a hazy image talk about the possibility of an 'opening'.

The story becomes seemingly more comprehensible when it swiftly moves to California. Nikki Grace (Laura Dern), an actress, married to a controlling and wealthy Polish man (Peter J. Lucas) is eagerly awaiting to hear whether she has been cast in a new movie. A visit from a bizarre new neighbour sets the tone for strange, and uncanny happenings. In a heavily Baltic accent she asks Nikki if the new movie is about a marriage and whether it involves a brutal murder, although she seems to already know the answers. She also recounts an enigmatic folktale about a little girl who gets lost behind the market place in an alley which leads to the 'palace'.

The next day Nikki is told she is to star in 'On High in Blue Tomorrows' and thus begins the film within the film. Despite rumours that the screen-play is cursed and stern threats from Nikki's jealous husband, the film is still being shot. However, it suddenly dawns on Nikki that her character Susan who is having an adulterous affair with the lead male character is not a role she is playing but actually her 'real life'. After this, Nikki (and indeed the viewer) get very lost. 'Susan' seems eventually to be replaced with another 'Susan' a hardened and abused prostitute with a grim story to tell but there are also numerous sub-plots and characters lurking in the shadows.

"prepare yourself for this intricate and vertiginous plot line which caves in, doubles up, triples and even quadruples itself, to much perplexing effect"

We enter nightmarish sequences of Nikki (or Susan?) seeing herself outside herself, trapped inside another story and another life, bloody murders, hideous grimacing faces, dizzying camera movement and strange dance sequences. These images are rendered even more powerful through the camera work which is shot on consumer digicam (Sony PD-150). This gives it a gritty, cheap aesthetic and the brutal close-ups show that outside the glamorous world of the Hollywood studio there exists a real, dark and seedy landscape. The industrial roars and the heavy breathing that Lynch captures as sound effects also contribute to the disquieting quality of the work.

There are many Lynchian motifs throughout the film: short-circuiting light bulbs, darkened stairways, in-between spaces with velvet red curtains, strange hotel rooms, darkness both literal and metaphorical and characters with shifting identities. But this is not to say that Lynch is unimaginatively using old material. On the contrary, the familiar combined with this mysterious new terrain furthers the 'unheimlich' feel of the spectacle before us. This film's inscrutability may be frustrating but it has a deeply hypnotic effect and begs to be seen again and again.

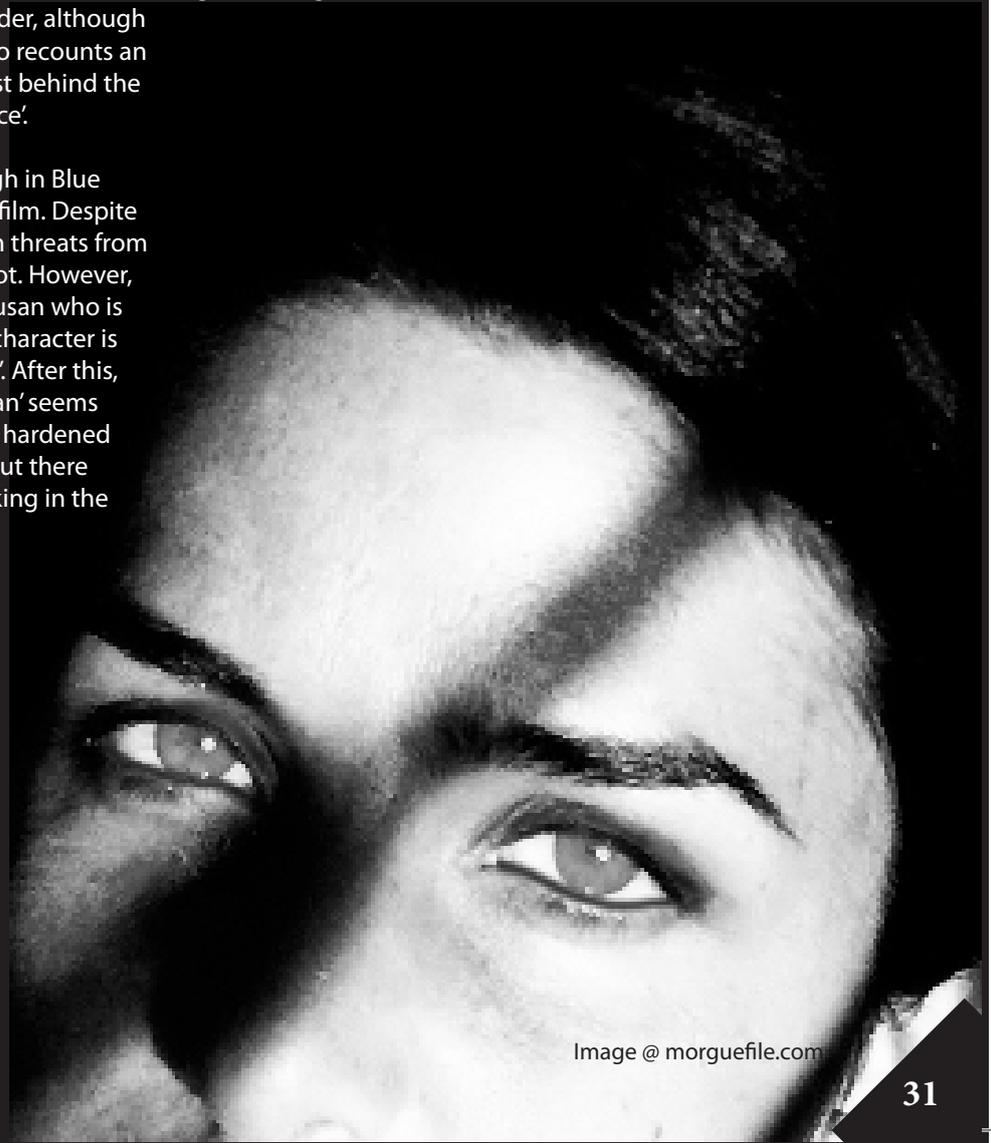


Image @ morguefile.com

Antal Szerb: A Controversial Writer

A review of Szerb's *Journey by Moonlight* and *The Pendragon Legend*

by Peter Basile
Designed by H. Le

Journey by Moonlight and *The Pendragon Legend* were published by Pushkin Press in 2000 and 2006 respectively. The books were translated in English by Len Rix who had read English at King's College, Cambridge. Len Rix also taught at Manchester Grammar School and is now retired, living in Cambridgeshire.

Antal Szerb makes sense if you have never felt entirely normal. He was born in Budapest in 1901, and in a family of Jewish descent, he was raised as a Catholic. By the age of 32 he had already compiled important scholarly collections of drama and poetry in Hungarian, German and English, in addition to having served as the elected president of the Hungarian Literary Academy. In 1944 he was imprisoned by his country's military regime; he perished in a forced-labour camp right before the war ended in 1945. His novels portray characters who prefer fantasy to reality and who would rather die than submit to doltish conformity. They paint the picture of a crazy, sometimes hilarious world in which an existential crisis is what accompanies your morning coffee and smoke and your simultaneous considerations of committing suicide or having an illicit love affair. As a reader, you are struggling to decide whether to pity his characters' naïveté or feel contempt for their extravagant conceit. Either way, Szerb seems to do little to dispel the cliché that the central European psyche is plagued by self-indulgent angst. If you have little sympathy for Woody Allen and his neurotic musings then you may not care for Szerb. If you find Camus odd, Waugh contrived and Kafka overrated, chances are that Szerb will disappoint. However, if you enjoy reading about individuals that are not afraid to admit they have never really overcome childhood fears about sex, death or the meaning of life, then Szerb should strike a chord.

Transylvania was still part of Hungary when Bram Stoker secured its notoriety in 1897. Szerb returns the favour by giving gothic horror a British home in 1934 with *The Pendragon Legend*. This novel is a detective story crammed with spooky castles, concealed passages, creepy henchmen and hidden treasure. Its victims always die in mysterious circumstances, while murder suspects tend to be exotic and unlikely. If the horsemen of the Apocalypse are not called for questioning, then chances are that the police are on the lookout for a medieval Welsh ghost, the knights templar or amphibian mutants thought to have escaped from a mad scientist's laboratory... Naturally, in order to solve a series of heinous crimes the hero has to find an undead seventeenth-century alchemist, retrieve a stolen manuscript and discover the secret of eternal life. Be assured that a virtuous damsel and a femme fatale are on hand to provide some sexual tension... This is the film Ron Howard should have made instead of wasting his time on *The Da Vinci Code*... The critical ingredient, and the quality that

Dan Brown's effort sadly lacks, is Antal Szerb's wicked sense of humour. This book pokes fun at the early twentieth-century's obsession with the occult and newfangled pseudo sciences like psychoanalysis. It affectionately lampoons Britain's fading aristocratic elite and revels in the cheesier aspects of the English literary tradition. Despite its fascination with ancient chronicles and archives, *The Pendragon Legend's* underlying premise appears to be the belief that the only thing one learns from studying history is that people never learn anything from history.

Journey by Moonlight was written in 1937 and in many ways it is a superior work. It tells the story of a young man who manages to lose his wife while on honeymoon with her in Italy. Instead of panicking, he recognizes that this represents a temporary reprieve from recently acquired adult responsibilities; therefore, he decides to take a journey back to his former life in order to re-evaluate adolescent dreams. Alarming apparitions reveal themselves in this novel too, generally in the form of flesh-and-blood ghosts from the young man's past. He sets out to find his high school chums but it soon becomes clear that this is not going to be a happily ever after story of old friends' reunion. One of those friends has become a religious mystic, cloistered in an Umbrian monastery. The other is haunted by the memory of her gap year during which she helped her brother commit suicide. The third has become an international playboy, spy, conman and gangster. Szerb clearly has Cocteau's *Les Enfants terribles* in mind as he recalls bizarre childhood adventures in the voice of his psychologically scarred narrator. This is a hardcore modernist self-doubt in the tradition of Thomas Mann, Italo Svevo and Samuel Beckett. Szerb's spiritual nomads struggle to find meaning in an apparently immoral, unreal and irrational world as they move through a landscape that quietly weeps for the traumatised nations of war-ravaged Europe. They feel uncomfortable in the present, pessimistic about the future and betrayed by a past that refuses to give away its awful secrets. Nevertheless, *Journey by Moonlight* spurns perseverance in futile sorrow or regret. Its subtle irony and wry wit give it the saw-toothed playfulness that has made it one of Hungary's all time popular novels. Read in English, Szerb never achieves the penetration of D. H. Lawrence or the lyricism of Virginia Woolf. However, Len Rix's translations make his work accessible, appealing and deeply satisfying.

Near Dark DVD

by Richard Armstrong Designed by Adam Foksett

Certificate: 18

95 minutes

Optimum OPTD0648/A/B (2 discs)

Extras: Living in Darkness documentary, director's commentary, poster/stills gallery, Behind the Scenes stills gallery.

They Live by Night...

There is a scene in the 'horror western' *Near Dark* in which a cowboy suckles blood from the wrist of a young blonde in a Texas field as oil pumps suck crude from the dusty earth around them. Ever since meeting this woman, the cowboy needed blood like a baby needs milk. Bringing along with her love the gift of everlasting life, Mae is his link to a world of darkness and hunger.

Released in 1987, *Near Dark* was director Kathryn Bigelow's breakthrough film, an atmospheric genre hybrid with a visceral punkish sensibility shot on the dirt plains outside Coolidge, Arizona and earning Bigelow a retrospective season at New York's Museum of Modern Art. It has now appeared on DVD and the transfer is a treat. Bigelow's rise was as startling as her decline: *The Weight of Water* (2000) and *K19: The Widowmaker* (2002). Compared with the indie-friendly '90s, the '80s was an era of corporate caution in Hollywood, making Bigelow's success all the more striking. Co-authored by Eric Red, the screenplay aided in impressing Oliver Stone, who was riding high with *Platoon* (1986) and *Wall Street* (1987), and securing a deal in which script approval came with carte blanche to direct the film herself. "This show had a lot of pizzazz to it" recalls Executive Producer Ed Feldman in this DVD's accompanying documentary.

Being one of the few women directors of Hollywood, Bigelow's has been a unique trajectory. Works such as the post-feminist cop flick *Blue Steel* (1989) and the surfing thriller *Point Break* (1991), along with Bigelow's debut, *The Loveless* (1981), a biker movie tribute emphasizing all the leatherwear and carnality that

'50s movies couldn't show, suggested a mistress of 'low' genres, a grindhouse sensibility usually the province of boy 'auteurs'. *Strange Days* (1995) was a millennial sci-fi drama, a big-budget project with a B-movie premise but starring A-list actor Ralph Fiennes. Like *Blue Steel* and *Near Dark*, *Strange Days* also featured a strong heroine in Angela Bassett's feisty black chauffeur Mace.

In Jenny Wright's elfin vampire Mae, Bigelow created another woman living on the edge of two worlds. But whereas Mace and Jamie Leigh Curtis' woman cop in *Blue Steel* are career women negotiating the contradictions of family life, Mae falls for the cowhand Caleb (Adrian Pasdar), as if preternaturally drawn to a sweet and settled life after centuries of roaming. Meanwhile, the sounds of the night – "ennui" Bigelow calls it – and Mae's ancient feral family haunt her. For Bigelow, the "beautiful complication" of these lives is that Caleb wants what every man wants when he loves a woman, while Mae aches to tell him about herself. On the night in which they meet on the boardwalk outside a prairie bar, she licks an ice cream in slow motion, and they live out the impossibility of this liaison when over the skyline night meets day.

Near Dark lives in this liminal space, cinematographer Adam Greenberg using those ten or so minutes at dawn and dusk that cinematographers call the 'magic hour' to get the effects of dying light and spreading darkness that permeate this transfer. In her commentary Bigelow relates how the actors lived in nocturnal conditions for significant parts of the shoot, blacking out their environment as Mae's renegade family did when they fled to a holiday cabin. Bigelow is full of praise for her actors: Lance Henriksen's ancient patriarch Jesse, cocking his head like some animal as he listens to the night. Like a Texan good "ol boy on amphetamines", Bill Paxton's Severen is a diabolical fiend living on blood and viscera: "finger-lickin' good!" Joshua Miller's little big man Homer is an old soul in a young body, and Jenette Goldstein's Diamondback, with her white trash peroxide hair and chorus girl corsage, resemble unearthly survivors from American frontier history (Listen to Jesse's Civil War backstory, rehearsed by Henriksen in the documentary!). The sense of being beyond the pale seems reinforced by Henriksen, Paxton and Goldstein's appearance in James Cameron's *Aliens* (1986), an "intact family" uniquely straddling both films.

Although Caleb's 'family' seems well-adjusted, you begin to wonder what happened to his mother after seeing *Near Dark* for the second or third time. Then it dawns on you that, offering her fluid to the helpless suckling, Mae – the name seems down home, picket-fence – is the lover and the missing mother, in Freudian terms both the source of nourishment and the Oedipal love object for the young roustabout. Then you realize that *Near Dark* has another boundary to cross: that between boyhood and manhood. As Caleb enters the stable in which Mae awakens from deep sleep, her "bad blood" drained and replaced by his father according to ancient lore, you are reminded how responsibilities begin in dreams.

Hetal's Guide to 24 Hours in a Graduate's Life – *This Is The Longest Course Of Your Life*

by Hetal Kiran Patel Designed by Adam Foskett

12.00am

The college bop is finally winding down, although you are good to go for another 4 hours. You also think you still look pretty attractive right now, but what do you really know anyway!

12.17am

You passed out into bed still wearing your smeared make-up/shoes. You really don't have the same stamina you did as an undergrad.

3.15am

Your strange housemate wakes you up as s/he decided to have her/his dinner early in the morning. They are either completely nocturnal or aliens. You suspect that your PhD has made you more paranoid than usual.

3.48am

You can't sleep so you decide to check your email quickly.

6.29am

You have been surfing the web all night and still can't remember doing anything productive. You fall back into bed for 10 more minutes of sleep.



10.09 **am**

You realise that you've over-slept and you now have 20 minutes left before you give a presentation to your research group. You panic!

10.38 **am**

You arrive late and realise that everyone has been waiting for you. You are thankful that you managed to finish your presentation yesterday but wish you could actually remember what you were planning to say. You try reading the words off the slides but your pounding hangover is making the words blur. Your supervisor hates it.

12.30 **pm**

You go off to have a quick lunch with a few friends from your group.

1.49 **pm**

You come back from lunch and check your email.

2.00 **pm**

You go to afternoon tea break.

2.36 **pm**

You surf the web to see if the BBC website has been updated in the last 3 minutes.

3.01 **pm**

You finally decide to do some work. You begin a chemical reaction that will run by itself overnight and attach wires to your instrument that takes 10 minutes to perform and 24 hours to dry. You feel smug that you have taken a huge step forward in your research. In actual fact you have taken 3 steps back as you've forgotten to add a key chemical to make the reaction work and have attached your wires using pritt-stick. You will not discover this for another 2 days.

3.37 **pm**

You decide to catch up with the latest developments in your field. This involves staring at the same paragraph in a single research journal and still not understanding what it is actually trying to tell you.

3.42 **pm**

You fall asleep. You think you are being discreet by having your head down over your work to look like you are really concentrating on it. Your head nodding and snoring are a dead giveaway to the other people working around you though.

4.55 **pm**

You wake up, strangely feeling more tired than before. You decide to do some paperwork for the rest of the evening and plan the experiments for the next day. You might as well not bother for all the good it will do you.

7.35 **pm**

You go back home believing that you have had a hard day's work when in fact you have done very little. You still feel like you have been hit by a truck. Your big plans for going to the gym have suddenly evaporated into thin air.

9.00 **pm**

You sit down to watch a little bit of TV. This means that you will not engage your brain for the next 3 hours tonight.

11.55 **pm**

You sit down at your computer to write a bit more of your literature review. You will work until the wee small hours, fall into bed and come into the dept the following day around lunch-time. I never mentioned that a graduate student's day was the same length of time as a normal persons, did I!?!

24 Hours in an Arts Graduate's Life
12.00 am – 12.00 pm
Eat... sleep... read... repeat.

greater expectations

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