

# Gown

graduates' own

The University of Cambridge  
Magazine for Graduate Students

GOWN MAGAZINE ISSUE 12 2008



- >> Cambridge Diaries
- >> Understanding The Appeal of Barack Obama
- >> At The Edge of Science: Researching The Paranormal



## Editorial Team

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Louiza Mallouri

**Design Editor**  
Klaudia Bartel

**Managing Editor**  
Michael Gladwin

### Writers

Nitu Duggal  
David Edwards  
Lampson Fan  
Michael Gladwin  
Tyler Hester  
Leo Shidai Liu  
Christoforos Mamas  
Hetal Kiran Patel  
Joao Pereira  
Amy Renton  
Mico Tatalovic

**Designer**  
Adam Foskett

## Editorial

Welcome to the twelfth edition of Gown (Graduates' Own) magazine. We hope you enjoy reading Gown as much as we enjoyed putting it together. Our writers bring you a variety of topics which we hope will be of interest to you. In this edition, Joao Pereira opens up avenues into entrepreneurship, while Tyler Hester offers us an insight into Obama-mania. Amy Renton reports on working graduates while Christoforos Mamas provides an account of the way his epistemological struggles in Cambridge informed his life and orientation. Whereas Michael Gladwin is our tour-guide in the British Library, Hetal Patel offers us a guide to effective procrastination methods. As this issue comes out at the beginning of another academic year in Cambridge, our team wishes you a productive year and the best of luck in your future endeavours. On behalf of the graduate population we also heartily thank Leo Shidai Liu, former president of the Graduate Union, for his work for the graduate community, and we congratulate Siza Mtimbiri for his election as new president.

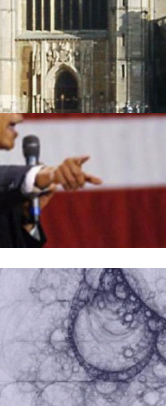
*Louiza Mallouri*  
Editor-in-Chief

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# i-Cam

It's the little things in life...  
by Hetal Kiran Patel

designed by Klaudia Bartel

It's official ... I am in Hell! And what makes it worse is that I had actually asked to be here! See, while the thesis-related weight kept accumulating, the fact that I had just managed to finish the introduction was creating a bleak future scenario and was forcing me to take up a physical activity. I therefore relied on vague yet pleasant memories I had had of rowing, and decided to join my college's rowing team after two years' break.

When I had first started, however, the sun was blazing hot and it never rained: we would go out on the water and actually have a nice time. But now, this isn't even remotely like that. Right now I am cold, wet, hungry, tired, sweaty and desperate for the loo. I am wearing so many layers I can barely move; I must look like an ice sculpture of the Michelin Man! I have been yelled at so much I get the feeling that we are one whip short of a slave galley! Also, I think a couple of swans just overtook us!

And you know what? I have only myself to blame! I chose this; I wanted this; I have willingly entered Hell and locked the gates behind me. I am an idiot! Why on earth am I here!?! What could ever make this worthwhile???

And then, faster than I can explain or even understand, I forget about everything. All the cold, all the aches and pains, all the misery; it just pales into insignificance. The sound of the blades splashing onto the water, the quiet isolation in this part of the river, the companionship of seven other people synchronizing with one another, the sheer beauty of the sunrise here; I am at peace. We glide over the water with each stroke so that it almost feels like flying. As we head back to the boathouse, I am actually happy to be here. It really is the little things in life that make it worth living.

Now that I am cycling home, dreaming of a shower hot enough to blister (and the loo!), I am glad I decided go back to rowing. This does not mean I am not going to moan about the next outing though! I am just not going to complain about it in writing, that's all.



# Be your own boss

by Joao Pereira

designed by Klaudia Bartel

In November last year Cambridge witnessed an important event that may have passed unnoticed by most of us. Silicon Valley Connect was a conference on entrepreneurship, held at the Judge Business School, which included a debate at the Cambridge Union Society on the motion: "This House believes that Europe, not Silicon Valley, will become the best place to build the future billion dollar companies". This event attracted great names within the industry, including a Google VP, a LinkedIn co-founder, and many successful investors. The question the reader may be asking now is "Why should I care?" ... The answer, I hope, is below.

Graduate students are usually very focused on limited career options. Most of us want to become academics; others want a career in industry; some just want to get out of this place and earn big money in the City. Few actually think that there is the option of becoming an entrepreneur, or that Cambridge is probably the best place, at least in the UK, to become one. For those of you who still haven't noticed this, Cambridge is the heart of a technology cluster called "Silicon Fen". And this is no simple bunch of companies that happen to be close together and are hence called a cluster. With over 1,500 companies generating 40,000 jobs and over 3 billion pounds in yearly revenue, this is one of the hottest spots for technology development in Europe. With the University at the centre of the action, it generates a lot of ideas and forms people with skills to implement hard (i.e. scientifically novel) innovation. A great number of these 1,500 companies are founded by local students and academics. Names such as ARM and Plastic Logic may mean little to you, but they are examples of hugely successful Cambridge-based ventures. As an example, ARM sells more microprocessors than Intel, but, as they are for other applications rather than PCs (e.g. mobile phones), its name escapes mainstream public knowledge. This lack of recognition contrasts with the well-known Silicon Valley players, such as Microsoft and Google, who were also once shy start-ups, but we are still talking about self-made millionaires who were once exactly where you are now.

Entrepreneurship is not for everyone, but an entrepreneur isn't born. An entrepreneur is made. If you happen to have a great idea, or know someone who has one, it is certainly a possibility to explore. But once you choose to go down that path, be ready for some serious commitment. The rewards can be great, but the effort is by no means small. When a choice is made, many others have to be put to the side.

Cambridge will provide you with the resources you require to take such a step, and graduate students are in a privileged position to take advantage of them. Cambridge University Entrepreneurs (CUE) puts together workshops and business plan competitions, in which you can win grants of up to £5k. Some colleges also have in-house competitions, with Downing Enterprise giving you access to up to £20k. The Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (CfEL) provides workshops (Enterprise Tuesdays) and entrepreneurship courses, and Cambridge Enterprise manages the transfer of intellectual property from the University to the industry. The examples go on, but the main theme here is that every structure is in place.

Graduate students, especially (but not exclusively) science PhD students, can draw on their extensive research knowledge and decide that all the work undertaken for the thesis can be used for commercial application. In some cases, however, such as the very successful Cambridge Temperature Concepts, founded by Shamus Husheer while he was finishing his PhD in chemistry, the concept doesn't even relate to the thesis at all – it is just something you happen to know something about, and you get the right people around you. Many other students, from MBAs to MPhils in all sorts of subjects, come together to form multifaceted teams in order to reach a common goal that sprung from a (hopefully great) idea that someone had. In some cases even model agencies were started. Many have failed, but most of the ones that succeed have met failure along the way as well. The lesson is: don't be discouraged by scare stories.

A graduate student is, as Stelios from Easyjet put it, in that prime time of life in which risk can be taken. There is not much to lose yet, and you already know something more than you did when you were just an undergraduate. Whether related to our thesis or not, whether with or without any brilliant ideas to take over the world, any of us can attend the myriad available workshops and see if we like it or not, if it resonates within or not. If it does, then it can be a simple matter of time until someone asks you, "Do you know something about...?" in one of the networking events, and off you go to have your own company. Or you can be the one asking those questions and trying to gather a team to make something happen. Don't worry if you haven't any ideas yet, as they tend to come when we least expect them. Just be attentive and open your eyes to an alternative that is so close, and yet is so disregarded.

# Letter from the Graduate Union

The returning Officer of the Graduate Union, Leo Shidai Liu, reports on the work of the Graduate Union for 2007-08

by Leo Shidai Liu  
designed by Adam Foskett

## Evolution at the Graduate Union

The Graduate Union (GU) provides representation and facilities for the entire graduate community. Yet in the last few years, the issue of connecting the GU with its own members - the graduates themselves - has become the GU's most urgent area of focus. The GU has a close relationship with many different divisions within the University, but to my way of thinking, it is imperative that we develop our relationship with graduates through the colleges and MCRs.

## Constitutional changes – strengthening the GU

In light of this, the current GU Board is implementing a plan to engage the whole graduate community. First of all, we have proposed a set of constitutional amendments to strengthen the GU infrastructure. This plan builds upon knowledge and experience gained over the last three years.

Following the constitutional changes, we will also propose new job descriptions for elected officers and standing orders on finance. This will clarify the division of labour for the elected officers, as well as maintain and further develop the organisational strengths of the GU.

Building upon our financial success, we intend to set aside part of our income from the shop and café to establish a foundation to support individuals and societies in promoting educational activities. In the first year, £5,000 could be allocated for this purpose.

## Environmentalism – a contemporary issue

Responding to feedback from GU members, we have created a new position in the GU to represent the interests of the environment. Coinciding with the 800th anniversary of the University, the GU is launching a one-year awareness campaign on sustainability and the environment. Distinguished individuals will be invited to speak to the graduate community and symposiums will be organised to discuss environmental issues at a regional level.

## Feedback

Surveys on college life and supervision for postgraduate students will become part of the GU infrastructure, thus allowing less dependence on the President, who, of course, changes annually. This, along with other long-term projects and marketing plans, will be made possible through the creation of a full-time post for the Executive Assistant.

## Communicating with MCRs

In order to expand and improve communications between the GU and MCRs, we have created the new position of Liaison Director, who will serve as the GU ambassador to colleges. The Liaison Director will discuss issues with colleges and provide feedback in return, thus creating effective two-way communication. He or she will also set up informal occasions for MCR committees from different colleges to socialise with one another.

## Informing you online

We are developing a new style of website and bulletin. The GU bulletin has long served the community, although up to now it has been almost wholly occupied by social events. It is being revised to communicate issues arising from the 25 committees at which the GU has representation. The new website will be based on the University's new house style, but with a GU twist. On the whole, it will be a much more informative and improved way of communicating.

## Looking Forward

The past year has been a memorable experience for me. I have had the chance to become better attuned to my fellow graduates' problems and difficulties, whilst striving to make a difference in their lives. I wish all the very best to the newly elected President of the Graduate Union. I am aware that experienced individuals have been in the contest, and that each of them are able to carry the good work forward for another year. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to all those who have contributed in making the past year a successful one. Finally, on behalf of the Executive and Board of the Graduate Union, I wish you success in your studies and safety in your travels.



# It's better to light a candle than curse the darkness

by Christoforos Mamas

designed by Adam Foskett/ Klaudia Bartel

In October 2005 I arrived at the University of Cambridge to pursue a postgraduate degree in Educational Research. I am currently heading towards the completion of my doctoral thesis and, consequently, the end of my graduate life. During these three years I have been researching the social inclusion and participation of pupils identified as having special educational needs in mainstream primary education in Cyprus. I am specifically looking at the social relationships and friendship networks of these pupils with their peers, and examining how pedagogy can enhance the social status of the former.

I remember that in the very beginning of my graduate life I was overwhelmed by a mixture of conflicting feelings ... I arrived at this place with many preconceptions, some of which soon proved themselves wrong, while some others were right. In academic terms, during the first two taught terms of the MPhil, I remember myself struggling to make sense of the different concepts, paradigms, strategies and theories of educational research. Ontology, epistemology, post-positivism, postmodernism, symbolic interactionism, grounded theory and phenomenology still whirl around in my mind. What is more, the war of different paradigms and academic tribes in the field of research extended my confusion. Over this contentious battle of ideas I had to choose my own particular way of viewing the world through my research.

“Caught up within all these theoretical struggles, I soon started to identify and integrate the distinctive and unique ethos and culture of Cambridge’s graduate life in my research”

Caught up within all these theoretical struggles, I soon started to identify and integrate the distinctive and unique ethos and culture of Cambridge’s graduate life in my research. Admittedly, this was the first time I had to think in a systematic way of why I choose to do certain things instead of others. I had to decide why I do research and what its purpose is. Looking back on my educational, social and other experiences I realize that they have been valuable in shaping my decision. The fact that I am the fifth child of my family, out of six boys and one girl, and that I was brought up in a rural area where agricultural life is thriving, has been both a ‘blessing’ and ‘curse’ for my personal and professional development. Reflecting on my childhood, I have come to know the importance of having opportunities related to educational development, as I have been occasionally deprived of them. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the issue of social justice and equal educational opportunities strikes a chord with me. People who live in comfort often take a lot for granted. However, not everyone has the privilege of being able to dream, and, most importantly, being able to achieve that dream. Along with my past experiences, the Cambridge ethos has been a catalytic inspiration for my research and overall development. This blend of personal values, along with the University of Cambridge as a source of inspiration and knowledge, have enhanced my understanding and shaped me as a person.

To my great surprise and content, I could now see things that I previously could not. Now, I could see injustices inherent

in the educational system and wanted to do something about this. In due course, the concept of transformative research emerged in an embryonic state, implying that the intention of my research would not be to provide a descriptive account of society but to contribute towards a society that is based on equality and democracy for all its members. Its purpose would not be to understand phenomena but to attempt to transform them. In particular, my research seeks to bring about greater social democracy through empowering the disempowered, redressing inequality and promoting individual freedoms. This kind of research is concerned with praxis – action that is informed by reflection, aiming to emancipate and directly addresses the politics in research by confronting social oppression at whatever levels it occurs. Therefore, it is transformative because it helps unshackle people from the constraints of irrational and unjust structures which limit self-development and self-determination.

Due to my commitment to this transformative way of thinking and viewing the world, another internal battle of ideas has started. Now, the question of how my research is going to transform the lives of the participants has been agonising. Inevitably, being young and enthusiastic can sometimes raise expectations too high, even to utopian levels. Not long after, I realised that transformation in whatever sense, takes time and requires effort. Furthermore, there has to be momentum towards it, meaning that the more people are involved, the more efficient their work is. Of course, my PhD thesis itself can act as an agent of transformation by raising the awareness of participants and stakeholders in respect to social justice and social participation issues, by acknowledging the issue of social exclusion and by generating ideas on how the education system can be more responsive to all pupils’ needs and interests. In my view, these actions can be characterised as transformative in their own right. Beyond this stage of transformation, however, I wish and feel obliged to keep the journey going or the candle alight for much longer period of time.

And this is how the idea of a non-governmental, non-profit research and educational organization was born. Allive, as such an organization, is the ‘vehicle’ to keep the journey going and candle alight. Allive’s vision is to bring people who share common values and beliefs together in order to stand up for democracy, social justice, human rights and societal transformation. Allive seeks to give voice to people who want to be heard and advocacy for their rights. As stated on the relevant website ([www.allive.eu](http://www.allive.eu)), Allive is an organisation based in Cyprus, yet its scope is international, seeking to advance human rights, social justice and democracy. Our activities include inspiration, advocacy, campaigning and many other exciting and fulfilling activities. The overall mission of Allive is to serve civil society, to strengthen and encourage participation within society, to increase public awareness and understanding of societal issues and problems, and to provide a platform for transformation and empowerment of groups of people who are vulnerable or who have few opportunities.

This idea has been conceived in 2008 and is still in the process of development. Inspired and motivated people are urgently needed to provide oxygen to the flame of Allive’s candle. Ideas and experience are also required to lay the foundations properly. Everyone is welcome to join our team and supply some oxygen! We look forward to collaborating with you. You are welcome to join online at [www.allive.eu](http://www.allive.eu). It’s free, and making a difference to people’s lives comes as a bonus.

# Working Whilst Studying:

## Can you have it all?

by Amy Renton

designed by Adam Foskett/  
Klaudia Bartel

80-hour weeks, 14-hour shifts, innumerable cups of coffee and permanent dark eye circles are usually associated with either the lifestyle led by a first year undergraduate or that of a well-paid, slick city banker.

The myth seems set! Nevertheless, if you were to ask random graduate students in Cambridge, they would confess that many of their weeks mirror similar tight schedules. More and more students are supplementing what funding they have (if any) with part-time work. An increasing number of graduate students are flouting the well-known, but much debated, Cambridge rules which restrict the amount of paid work allowed during the official terms of study. There are, of course, opportunities within the university which can help to supplement one's income - either through college bar work, participation in other graduates' research experiments (which often involves biscuits and tea as well as financial reward), supervising and helping out at careers events. It is worth keeping an eye out on the Careers Service website ([www.careers.cam.ac.uk](http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk)) and any emails they send out.

The Graduate Union bulletin is usually a good source of information for ongoing research experiments - these can range from scientific perception experiments to surveys on your political/religious/social inclinations. All studies are anonymous and you will usually find that those conducting the research are incredibly grateful for devoting a certain amount of your time!

Supervising is a great way to gain teaching experience and broaden your knowledge of areas not directly relevant to your topic of study. What is more, it will look great in your CV. It is also essential experience for those wishing to pursue a career in academia. Cambridge is one of the few universities within which teaching responsibilities for fellows and lecturers still allow for a large degree of individual research; if you end up working at any of the other top universities in the country, or abroad, you will find that teaching will comprise a large part of your time. Therefore, the sooner you begin to supervise, the better.

For many graduate students, however, these small extras are simply not enough. In many universities the combination of academic study and paid work is the norm. From bar work to shop assistants, from secretarial posts to radio presenting, all types of work are covered. For many vocational courses part-time employment is a prerequisite. So why does Cambridge frown upon it?

Graduate students are often required to be in Cambridge for longer periods than the residence terms required by University regulations whilst some of them travel regularly for data collection purposes or conferences. Consequently, the opportunity for uninterrupted periods of employment is

impossible. So are there opportunities to work for some time during term time? The answer is yes, but only minimal. Official guidelines state that a 'full time graduate student reading for the PhD, MSc or MLitt Degree may undertake teaching work for the Colleges ('supervisions') or your Department or Faculty for up to 6 hours a week including necessary preparation.' A further four hours a week including preparation (ten in all) may be undertaken if agreed with your supervisor. For most graduate students, however, the amount of money this would provide would barely cover the cost of a night out. What is more, since master's graduates and first year PhD students are not allowed to take on this type of work without permission from their supervisor and the university, it is hardly surprising that more and more graduates are looking elsewhere for employment.

**"For many vocational courses part-time employment is a prerequisite. So why does Cambridge frown upon it?"**

Whereas an article in one of the Lent Term university newspapers implied that large numbers of undergraduate students were turning to prostitution or work as escorts in order to supplement their income, a totally random survey of graduates suggests that extra-curricular work might be much more mundane. I spoke to three graduate students, each of whom holds down a different type of job. Jenny, a third year PhD Historian works at a bar in town every weekend; Tim, who is studying for an MBA works in a local music store and Lucy, a second year graduate medic, writes for the controversial 'Oxbridge Essays' company (names have been changed on request). The consensus from all three was that the extra hours were worth it - and not simply for the cash. Tim ultimately wants to start his own record label and says his exposure to the music industry and the contacts he has made through his job will prove 'invaluable' for his future business. Jenny, on the other hand, says that working at a bar in town provides a break from the bubble of Cambridge life. 'Rather than feeling like a typical student, I actually feel like my home is in Cambridge. I have got to know the locals and it is very grounding when I have the pressure of deadlines. It reminds me that there is more to life than studying!' Lucy, who admits that many other graduate students have moral issues with the essays she writes, and gets paid for,



says that it enables flexible working hours and the choice of when to work or not: 'I would never be able to hold down a job with set hours – my schedule just wouldn't allow it, but writing for Oxbridge means I can choose what I want to work on, when and if I decide to accept an essay. The money's not bad either!'

As anyone who has languished long and hard over online job application forms and questionnaires will know, the number of times you are asked for examples of 'leadership, responsibility, time-keeping, perseverance business acumen, commercial awareness...etc..etc..' are countless. For those graduates who decide academia is simply just an unappealing and never-ending cycle of books or experiments, part-time work can be very handy when answering those 'key-skill' ques-

A point to note for students not from the UK: for international students there are often greater restrictions – and greater penalties if you are found in violation of your visa status. If you have a student visa and you are on a course for more than six months you should have been issued with a 'restriction' rather than a prohibition. Before even thinking of undertaking work, check out the status of your visa and any restrictions you have, or you could face expulsion from the University and, at worst, deportation.

Finally, for those of us who cannot stomach the idea of paid employment or surrendering to the corporate world, the university can be a pretty good source of funding – you just need to know where to look. If you are struggling financially, the best bet is to talk to your college tutor as they are mines of information on little-known trust funds. A

**"If you are struggling financially, the best bet is to talk to your college tutor as they are mines of information on little-known trust funds."**

2nd Year PhD medical student recently received £250, to his amazement, simply because he was from Devon! Look at the Cambridge Reporter for names of potential funding sources. College hardship funds are also available if something unexpected comes along – one graduate enthusiastically told me that his college had paid for him to get taxis everywhere after breaking his leg in a bike accident. The Graduate Union also has information on the website: [www.gradunion.cam.ac.uk](http://www.gradunion.cam.ac.uk) or you can contact the welfare officer for specific issues.

So to answer the question: yes, you can have it all. Just don't expect much free time or tell your supervisor that the reason your thesis draft is late is because you were serving vodka shots to a group of 20 corporate businessmen at 3am on Saturday morning ...

tions. As companies are increasingly looking for more than just a first-rate academic career, students who can evidence experience of employment – whether part-time, as an intern, or as part of their studies- often have the upper hand. The bottom line is, if you need money, some ways are better than others. Working while studying can be exhausting, but in the words of one MPhil student, 'It's not ideal and I haven't been able concentrate as hard as I should on my university work, but it's all worth it. I am shattered, but it's either that or work 60 hour weeks in the city. Either way it is tough but I know which I would prefer to do'.



# Cambridge Diaries

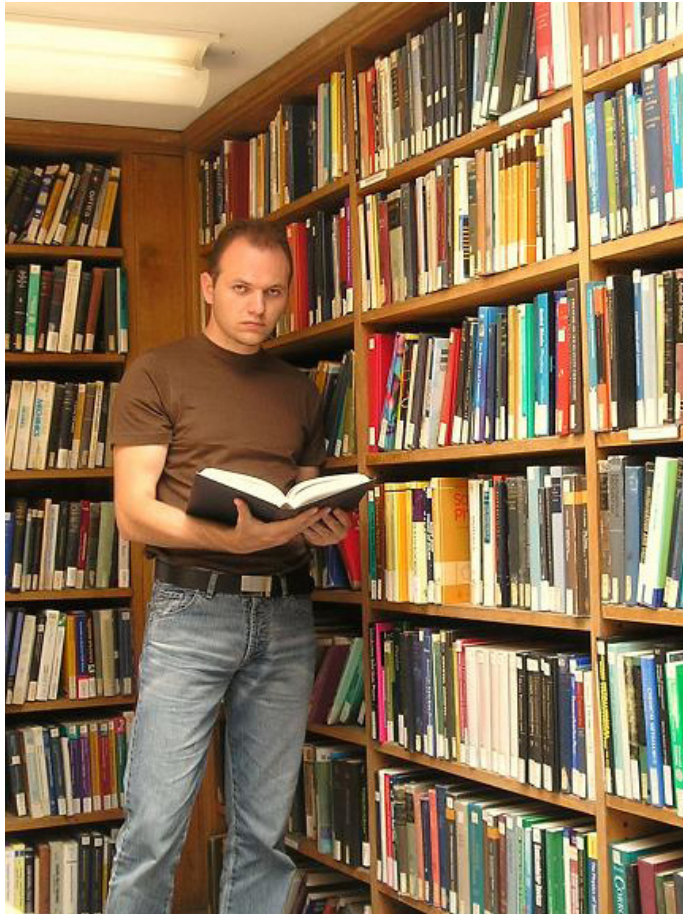
By Louiza Mallouri  
designed by Adam Foskett



**M**aybe you've been here since you were 18, or arrived just this year for a one year masters' course ... Cambridge has offered you countless thrills and experiences difficult to describe. You were, perhaps, many times on the verge of abandoning your studies and leaving. But now that the time has come, and you are finally one step away from graduation, are you ready to leave? In this issue, graduates open their diaries and share their first impressions, their likes and dislikes while in Cambridge and their plans for the next step.







## Themistoklis Charalambous

is from Limassol, Cyprus. He matriculated at Trinity College in 2001 to study Engineering. He graduated in 2005 with a BA (First Class) and an MEng (Distinction) in Electrical and Information Sciences. He continued his studies at Cambridge University as a PhD student in the Control Laboratory of the Engineering Department and he is currently heading towards the completion of his doctoral thesis on 'Power Control of Wireless Ad Hoc Networks'.

“Taking into account the history of Cambridge and the illustrious scientists who lived and flourished here suggested that my first impression was probably wrong”

### Too quiet and depressive

The first time I visited Cambridge was when I had my interview at the university. My very first impression was that this place was far too quiet and depressive as most of the students had already left (it was off-term period) and the weather was bad. However, by the end of the visit I had the chance to meet some friends who had been studying here, so I thought that Cambridge cannot be that bad after all! Also, taking into account the history of Cambridge and the illustrious scientists who lived and flourished here suggested that my first impression was probably wrong.

### Away from Mediterranean homeland

My life in Cambridge was completely different to what I was used to before joining the university. I come from a sunny, Mediterranean island which, as far as philosophy of people, way of living, weather and food are concerned, stands in sharp contrast with Britain. In Cyprus, I used to live ten minutes drive from the beach, in mostly warm weather conditions, where people are very expressive and friendly. In Cambridge, the living conditions are very different in this sense. However, there are other things to compensate such as the friendly environment in my college, the multicultural character of the people living in Cambridge, the high educational standards and the opportunity to work and collaborate with distinguished scientists.

### Ideal student life

The structure of the educational system along with the efficient organisation of the university is among the things I admire the most here. In addition, the existence and support of all the societies within the University provide students with the opportunity to get involved in whatever they find interesting. Here, the life of a student is made as easy and as pleasant as possible; finding great accommodation at a reasonable price and access to all sorts of facilities is not something every student enjoys in the UK and the world. Furthermore, in Cambridge the distances are short and people move around on foot or bicycles. What is more, the fact that there hardly exists any criminality is a great asset of life in Cambridge. Nevertheless, my expectations regarding the teaching standards were not met. Even though the level of expertise of professors and teaching material is very high, I found that in some instances, at least in my field, the teaching standards (both in terms of quality and quantity) were quite low. What is more, I occasionally felt that the progress of students usually depends entirely on their own diligence, which is not always a good thing.

### Ready to explore other lands

After seven years of studies in Cambridge, I gained amazing experiences that are strongly connected with Cambridge itself and are impossible to forget. I think now I am ready to leave, ready to explore new places, new approaches to academia and lifestyles. I will definitely miss the friends that I will leave behind, the moments I have experienced here and the long walks along the river.



## Siza Mtimbiri

is from Zimbabwe, Africa. He obtained his Bachelor degree in Education and Geography from the University of South Africa. Later, he studied Social Sciences at Harvard University where he also pursued a Masters degree in Technologies of Education. has recently completed an Mphil in educational research at the University of Cambridge. Siza has served as the Treasurer of the Graduate Union for 2007-2008 and he is now the new elected president of the Graduate Union.

“The idea of the university with a city in it (as opposed to the university within a city) was, and still is, very appealing to me”

### First impressions

When I first arrived here I found Cambridge alluring in its beauty: there is a mind-stimulating freshness in its beautiful colleges with their evergreen gardens (or do they dry up in the summer?). The academic community is far friendlier than I had expected – especially in my college and faculty, where I spend most of my time. The idea of the university with a city in it (as opposed to the university within a city) was, and still is, very appealing to me. I have not noticed a ‘gown and town’ divide in Cambridge – something that I value (though I must note that I have only been in Cambridge since October and so I might be oblivious to some strong undercurrents that long-term residents know more about than I). Cambridge seems very safe and I could see how my family could live here while I am studying.

### A total contrast?

My life here is not totally different, though there are some notable contrasts: I study longer and meet more with classmates and friends to discuss work; I pay more attention to detail and I feel more focused – the short eight week terms do not allow much room to procrastinate, which is great for me; I walk more here – I used to drive almost everywhere when I lived in the States; and I enjoy riding my bike to school and around the city.

### A unique experience

The supervision and tutorial system has been priceless! To be able to have a supervisor who is an expert in the field of my research, and spend hours focusing on my work, has both motivated and inspired me to do even more. The depth and excellence that is called for in any work here in Cambridge was unsettling at first, but once I got into the ‘swing’ of it I found it exhilarating. It’s the only way to do anything that is of any importance. I feel surrounded by a highly motivated student body that is driven to achieve at the highest standards. This has meant that feedback from my colleagues is something that I appreciate as they take their own work and that of others very seriously. In addition, there is a vibrant international community here that makes it an ideal place to learn about people from other cultures. I thoroughly enjoy hearing stories from people who come from Singapore ... Cyprus ... Ghana ... Scotland ... China ...the list is endless! The accounts of their own countries are usually more interesting than anything else I read or hear. I also like the formals. Apart from the good food and atmosphere of a formal, meeting new people from different colleges is something I enjoy. What is more, I have only just learned how to row and I thoroughly enjoy it as a sport, as well as a means of getting to meet and know people from my college.

During my first year here I have had the privilege of serving as the treasurer for the Graduate Union, and enjoy being part of an organization that is always trying to find ways to meet the needs of its graduate community. In my opinion, the universal health care system here is a huge advantage. Coming from a place where the health insurance card was a must before getting decent health care, I have cherished being able to be treated first and foremost as human, rather than as cash. I have not yet had negative experiences here (or perhaps am I still too new?). There are, however, realities like the cost of living in Cambridge, which is easily double that of where I lived before coming here. The exchange rate of the US dollar to the pound meant that whatever savings I had were immediately halved – that’s no fun! Good food is available in restaurants around Cambridge, but is very costly!

### If I were to leave

I would miss the intellectual stimulation in the midst of beautiful surroundings; the many friends whom I have met; and what I presently call the Cambridge mystique: there is something so beautiful, so alluring and charming at the same time. I am glad I have an opportunity to be here much longer as I pursue further research!





## Alex Dutson

is from Leeds, U.K. He pursued his first degree at York University where he studied Philosophy. He spent his second year of study on an exchange scholarship at UC Berkeley in California. Having worked for two years as an English Teacher in a high school near Kyoto, Japan, he returned to Britain, where he read for an Mphil in International Relations at the University of Cambridge.

“Among other things, the diversity and talent of the other postgraduates has really been the foundation for how much I have enjoyed being here”

### From Kyoto to Cambridge

I came to Cambridge straight from teaching English just outside Kyoto, Japan, so it was a fairly large change in surroundings— from life in a small industrial town with a few, very close friends to college dorms with a lot of acquaintances who you often don't get so intimate with. Before coming to Cambridge myself, I had a good idea of what the workload would be like as a lot of my friends have done their undergraduate degrees here. The MPhil in International Relations I am studying at the moment is very broad and multidisciplinary and tries to take full advantage of the range of perspectives that its (mostly international) students bring to the table.

Obviously, Cambridge has a lot going for it cosmetically; the punting, willows and may balls all have their charm. But what surprised me the most about being here is how much life in Cambridge really does not depend on all that for its richness. Among other things, the diversity and talent of the other postgraduates has really been the foundation for how much I have enjoyed being here. You have the chance to meet people with such a wide range of experiences and opinions that it is hard not to feel better off for it.

### Towards catering a wider range of musical tastes

One thing Cambridge could do with is an overhaul of its music scene. I say that sincerely. It is hard to see how anyone with a particular taste in music is going to be satisfied with that hybrid blend of Chuck Berry & The Village People you hear so often. As an undergraduate I spent a year in California and put a lot of time into dee-jaying. One of my biggest regrets is that I had to sell my turntables and mixer to fund study here; otherwise, I would have loved to have done something to change things in the right direction.

### Old vs New

In general, the old, institutional aspect of the University is both its best and worst feature. In the single year I will be here I have had the chance to experience things like formal halls and the boat race. Nevertheless, I think that the University and departments can get a bit set in their ways with the kind of students they prefer to take and how they make decisions on courses to their own disadvantage. In some cases, people just need to let go of tradition. Having said that, it has been a really memorable year, and I am convinced that coming to Cambridge was the right thing to do for me, helping to consolidate a lot of international experiences before I move on to the next stage - life in the city!





## Fivi Antoniou

is from Limassol, Cyprus. She studied Pedagogical Sciences at the University of Cyprus aCyprus and she later pursued an MPhil in Arts, Culture and Education at the University of Cambridge. She will be progressing to a PhD in Education this Autumn.

“I don’t think I feel ready to leave Cambridge and my life here yet. Hopefully, I will continue as a PhD student here. However, I generally believe that it is important to have the strength to move on when there is a need to”

### Waking up in Wonderland

I arrived in Cambridge quite late at night, after a whole-day journey, so the first thing I wanted to do is go to bed to rest. On waking up the following morning and opening my window, I had the most beautiful surprise! The sun was shining and the streets were covered with a colourful layer of autumn leaves which had fallen from the trees. Suddenly, a squirrel running from one side of the street to the other caught my attention. It was the first time that I ever saw a squirrel in my life so that was an exciting experience for me! That moment I thought that I was so lucky to be in Cambridge and felt that some really beautiful moments were waiting for me here!

### Changes

The first major change in my life since I came here had to do with the language. Even though I adjusted immediately to the new environment, the new people and my course here, I found it very difficult to get used to speaking in English. It took me weeks or even months to start feeling more comfortable communicating in English. The second change was the weather. Coming from a Mediterranean country where 10 months of sunshine is the case, the sudden rains and the low temperatures of Cambridge were unusual for me.

### Sharing spaces

What I enjoyed most since I came here was the fact that I moved in a house which I share with 14 other students from all over the world. Sharing common areas, interacting with each other and learning about each other’s customs and lifestyle was a big challenge for everyone, since almost all of us had just arrived at Cambridge. However, everything happened very smoothly. We became really good friends and spent countless hours together. From watching a DVD together, to having fun at college parties or organising our own ones at home made us all feel that we have a second family here.

### Ready to leave?

Hmmm... Quite difficult to answer. No, I don’t think I feel ready to leave Cambridge and my life here yet. Hopefully, I will continue as a PhD student here. However, I generally believe that it is important to have the strength to move on when there is a need to. Of course we should always try to take advantage of the opportunities which will help us follow our dreams but also be able to adjust to any unexpected or unpleasant events. If I were to leave, I would miss everything! My friends, my moments here, the town, my college, my course, my bicycle, the squirrels, the rain, everything!



## Scott Knackstedt

is from Washington State, U.S.A. He pursued his first degrees at the University of Portland, attaining a BS in Biology and a BA in German Studies. Later he received a diploma from the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna where he studied on a Fulbright Scholarship. He has completed an MPhil in Environment, Society and Development at the University of Cambridge last June.

“Although every major institution has its bureaucratic processes, I feel that Cambridge’s organisational and bureaucratic systems are at times a disservice to the university itself”

### An American in Cambridge

When I first got here I was amazed at the general atmosphere of the city itself. Composed of so many students, scholars, and professors, and enclosed within such beautiful, ornate architecture, Cambridge felt like the right place to study and enjoy the experience of academia. What is more, the history of the city and the traditions of the university spoke volumes about the unique world I was entering into. In comparison to my undergraduate university in the United States, the format of lectures has been very similar as has the social experience with so many wonderful people to interact with. Last year I was studying in Austria, however, where things were indeed totally different from here, both in lingual and academic demands, and thus difficult to compare.

### Celebrating cultural diversity

I have really appreciated how diverse the graduate student population is, hailing from every corner of the planet. To develop friendships with so many people from such disparate countries is an invaluable opportunity and one that has no comparable substitute. It reflects a positive facet of globalisation, where we become the immediate global community, integrated and exchanging ideas both in and outside of the classroom.

### Encounters with bureaucracy

Although every major institution has its bureaucratic processes, I feel that Cambridge’s organisational and bureaucratic systems are at times a disservice to the university itself. No doubt it is difficult to manage so many students, their expectations and needs, but with the reputation that Cambridge has as a centre for high-level discourse I was quite surprised to experience how slowly the wheels turned here and the lack of communication between the different administrative arms. I never found this level of inefficiency in American universities and I am thus a bit unaccustomed to it, I suppose.

### Taking the next step

When the time comes I am sure I will find leaving to be difficult, particularly since I have forged so many solid friendships with so many wonderful people. At this stage in life it becomes more difficult to maintain these connections, and as we all disperse around the globe our level of contact with one another will become more limited. I will miss my friends the most. You can sit through a lecture, read a book, or write a paper anywhere, but the people you share it with are responsible for making the experience enriching and worthwhile. I am excited to see what interesting directions everyone will go in, but it is always hard to say good-bye to an entire circle of friends. Furthermore, my participation with the university’s sports programmes, particularly the Hare & Hounds, has been an integral dimension of my time here. Therefore, in addition to missing the company of my team mates, the excitement, emotion, and adventure of competition elsewhere will not have the same calibre of history, tradition and camaraderie as I have found here.

# Understanding the appeal of Barack Obama:

## How his speech on race grants us insight into his improbable success

by Tyler Hester

designed by Adam Foskett

Barack Obama's campaign to become President of the United States has generated passionate interest and enthusiasm all over the world. Half black and half white, half Kenyan and half Kansan, raised in Indonesia and Hawaii, Obama differs dramatically from the typical presidential aspirant. Yet at the moment of writing he appears to have successfully vanquished the seemingly inevitable candidacy of Hillary Clinton, raised record-breaking amounts of money and galvanized a new generation of younger Americans to engage in the political process. Whether the first-term senator from Illinois can clinch the nomination of the Democratic party or win the general election in November remains to be seen, but there is no doubting his enormous appeal.

What, people often ask, explains his capacity to draw such support? Much ink has been spilled in the effort to discern the reasons for Obama's improbable rise. So, rather than rehashing the explanations of political pundits or tracing the events of the past year, I will attempt to understand his appeal through considering just one of his speeches, entitled "A More Perfect Union," which focuses on the subject of race in America. Delivered at a politically precarious moment in the campaign and widely hailed as a resounding success, the speech, I believe, highlights some of the most compelling aspects of Obama's candidacy.

I must admit, however, that I am an Obama supporter. I have worked on his campaign in various capacities, and I believe strongly in the argument that fuels his run for the presidency: that we must move away from caustic partisanship and instead work to forge a new majority that will enable us to achieve meaningful reform of healthcare, education, and the environment, among other pressing issues. My support for Obama should not disqualify me from speaking to his unique appeal; on the contrary, it probably improves my ability to do so. My challenge, though, is to do so accurately and without succumbing to the hagiographic impulse that is strong among many of his supporters. Whether or not I achieve that is for you to judge.


One of the most perilous moments of Barack Obama's campaign came this past March with the eruption of a story about the inflammatory rhetoric of his former pastor, Reverend Jeremiah Wright. Wright is a black man who leads a church that proclaims itself to be "unashamedly black." Among the numerous sound-bites that gained widespread notoriety was Wright's urging that "God damn America", rather than the conventional "God bless America."



Among the numerous sound-bites that gained widespread notoriety was Wright's urging that "God damn America", rather than the conventional "God bless America."

Additionally, cameras captured him preaching that the government of the United States had invented the HIV virus "as a means of genocide against people of color." These and other comments raised the ire of millions of Americans. Moreover, Wright's words caused many to wonder whether Obama, who had attended services with Reverend Wright for about twenty years, might be sympathetic to these extreme claims.



 Prior to this incident the issue of race, always lurking in the background, had not taken centre stage. This is partly because Obama rose to national prominence on a platform of racial unity that deemphasized race, declaring in his breakout speech to the 2004 Democratic national convention that “there is not a Black America and a White America ... there’s the United States of America.” By carefully avoiding lengthy or prominent discussions about his African-American heritage on the campaign trail, Obama had hoped that his candidacy might transcend race rather than become inextricably tied to it. Many recognized that too close of an alignment with “black” issues and causes would have diminished his appeal to non-black voters, and, by most measures, he succeeded in avoiding this fate. Obama roared back from defeats in New Hampshire and Nevada after voters reacted negatively to comments from Bill Clinton that seemed to minimize Obama’s candidacy as merely a black phenomenon. His dramatic 28 point victory over Hillary Clinton in South Carolina was interpreted as a rebuke to the former President’s arguments. While Obama lost to Clinton by wide margins among white voters in certain states, he claimed majorities of white voters in others. Supporters at his rallies could be heard chanting “Race doesn’t matter. Race doesn’t matter.” After over a year under the harsh spotlight of the presidential campaign, Obama had seemingly resisted becoming too closely aligned with the issue of race. Until now.

Despite Obama’s immediate denunciations of Reverend Wright’s comments, the controversy persisted. The media firestorm appeared to have the potential to label Obama “the black candidate,” undoing all of his efforts to broaden his appeal beyond racial lines. Recognizing the gravity of the threat posed by his association with Wright, Obama determined that the proper response would require not just the typical campaign counterpunch or a more forceful denunciation, but a substantive explanation. After hesitating “uncomfortably long,” according to the New York Times, Obama removed himself from the campaign trail and began to craft an address he hoped would meet the challenge that he faced.


Criticized by some as insufficiently critical of Wright, the speech was hailed by many as the most impressive speech by an American politician since John F. Kennedy’s 1960 rumination on religion in America. I will argue here, however, that the speech was, to a certain extent, business as usual for Obama. It was compelling and fresh, yes, but it also relied on two of the strategies that fuelled the success of his campaign more generally: an appeal for unity, and an insistence that we embrace complexity and nuance in our public debates.

The central importance of unity becomes clear by looking no further than the title of Obama’s speech: “A More Perfect Union.” Where Abraham Lincoln used that same phrase, originally from the U.S. Constitution, to refer to the preservation of the nation against the South’s attempt to secede, Obama is here referring to the twenty-first century equivalent: the coming together of America’s constituent racial groups. The way to achieve racial reconciliation, Obama argues, is through a greater understanding of our common destiny. African-Americans, he says, should “embrace the burdens of our past” and continue to “insist on a full measure

of justice,” but they must do so through “binding our particular grievances...to the larger aspirations of all Americans.” The search for “better health care, and better schools, and better jobs” is accelerated when those who are struggling to make something of themselves recognize the stake that they have in each other’s successes or failures. Through a greater unity of this kind we might create a world where differences in race are no longer viewed as competing and antagonistic, but rather as complementary and additive. The imagery that Obama uses throughout the speech underscores this point. He characterizes the problem of race in the United States as a “racial divide” and a “chasm of misunderstanding.” The spatial nature of the depiction encourages the listener to picture a physical gap, at times widening and at others narrowing. This particular formulation of the problem portrays racial groups not as essentially different but rather as apart from each other, an understanding of the issue that lends itself to resolution. He suggests that this racial divide, which manifests today in the form of the academic achievement gap and the disproportionate representation of minority populations in jails, among other ways, is not an ineluctable fact. Just as Lincoln rejected the notion in the years prior to the Civil War that the North and South were engaged in an “irrepressible conflict,” so Obama suggests that the “profound mistake of Reverend Wright’s sermons is ... that he spoke as if our society was static.” The problem of race is not intractable, he argues. We can bridge the divide.

Long before this speech, however, Obama had made unity a central pursuit. Discussing his successes as a state legislator in Illinois, Obama is quick to bring up his experience working across the aisle with his Republican counterparts. In his 2004 speech to the Democratic national convention, Obama denounced the reductionistic dichotomy of “red states” (Republican) and “blue states” (Democratic), and encouraged Americans to focus instead on shared concerns. For a country that is riven by the gridlock of partisan politics and in which presidential contests are largely decided by swing voters, this is a winning message.

Yet what separates Obama’s recent oration from his earlier dramatic appeals to unity is that in this case he does not simply assert its importance, but rather provides substantive arguments. This fact leads me to my second main claim: that, to a great extent, Obama’s insistence that we sophisticate our national debates is responsible for the success of this speech in particular and his campaign in general.

Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of Obama’s commitment to having nuanced arguments is the fact that he even delivered this speech at all. Some of Obama’s advisors argued against giving it, suggesting that the speech would make race more of an issue than it was already. Ultimately, Obama disagreed. Implicit in this decision to give a 37 minute speech, largely devoid of applause lines, is the assumption that Americans are capable of rising to the occasion. The content of his arguments sheds more light on this call to complexity. He argues that while we should condemn Wright’s comments, we must not stop there. At the same time, we must consider Wright’s upbringing in an era when “segregation was still the law of the land and opportunity was systematically constricted.”
  This is not to excuse Wright’s comments, Obama



suggests, but rather to ensure that our dialogue about these issues “[reflects] the complexities of race in this country that we’ve never really worked through – a part of our union that we have yet to perfect.” We strive towards perfection, then, by searching for greater understanding. It follows from this that the promotion of a particular social policy or an entirely new multicultural attitude would have failed to heal the wounds that resulted from Wright’s remarks; indeed, both of those solutions would have been inadequate. On the other hand, Obama’s insistence that we consider the painful historical genesis of contemporary divisions and the inadequacy of knee-jerk recriminations has proved to be remarkably successful.

And yet, as with his calls for unity, this demand for more complex debates has been a hallmark of the entire Obama campaign. Early on, journalists remarked that people who went to Obama’s events showed up expecting to be inspired and would leave slightly deflated, having heard a deliberative former law lecturer rather than a fiery orator. Many attribute his relatively poor debate performances to the fact that he refuses to deliver crowd-pleasing applause lines because they almost invariably oversimplify the situation. A final manifestation of this theme has been Obama’s repeated insistence that he will tell people “what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear.” For instance, Obama delivered a speech to automobile manufacturers in Detroit in which he said, to stunned silence, that they would have to make cars with greater fuel efficiency and that the process of this transition would not be entirely comfortable. He did the same when he mentioned in front of the National Education Association, traditionally hostile to plans that would link teacher pay and performance, that as president he would investigate the possibility of “merit pay.”

Commentators on both his race speech and his campaign in general reflect the success of this approach. One prominent editorialist argued that the “real novelty was to find a politician who didn’t talk down to his audience, but instead trusted it to listen to complete, paragraph-long thoughts that couldn’t be reduced to sound-bites.” Another, in a quote that could also refer both to Obama’s speech and to his campaign more generally, considered that the candidate “talked up to

voters rather than down to them; he challenged them rather than pandering to them.”

To put this in perspective we must recall that relatively high-minded appeals to unity and nuance are by no means a formula for surefire electoral success in American politics. Whereas all of these traits are now desirable, they may not have been during another election cycle. It is not entirely surprising that, after a presidency seemingly allergic to nuance and dogmatic in its pursuit of divisive policies, the qualities that Obama offers are in high demand.

This might also explain some of the antipathy people feel towards Hillary Clinton’s campaign, which appears to believe that we achieve political progress purely through winning policy fights. One of her advisors put it well: “it’s not a question of transcending partisanship. It’s a question of fulfilling it.” Obama’s campaign, similarly intent on winning, sees a fundamental reconsideration of the manner in which we conduct our political debates as a critical antecedent step. Reflecting on the impact of his March 18 speech, Obama remarked, “I have no idea how this plays out politically.” While he may have had doubts, Obama also knew that this address represented the quintessence of his core beliefs. The speech, like his campaign, was premised on the notion that Americans desire unity and are capable of engaging in more complex, substantive debates than those that politicians typically offer up. Polling since the address has vindicated Obama’s intuition, suggesting that the speech staunched the bleeding of his support and allayed many of the fears stirred up by the Wright controversy.

So why is Obama appealing? Part of it is surely due to the timing. The destructive, fear-based, and deeply partisan Bush presidency has created a hunger in Americans for the very principles that guide Obama’s candidacy. Yet while his arguments may indeed suit the times, this explanation is not sufficient to account for his remarkable success. We must also consider the enduring appeal of unity and meaningful dialogue. Not always sought out by the citizens of the United States, they are nonetheless two of the most basic elements that have sustained and nourished the union throughout its history. Here’s hoping that they can do so again.

# At The Edge of Science:

## Researching the Paranormal

by Mico Tatalovic

designed by Adam Foskett/ Klaudia Bartel

**A** Cambridge graduate is one of the leading researchers into paranormal phenomena that is now a trendy, if not yet well respected line of scientific research. Some scientists now believe that the existence of telepathy and other similar phenomena has been demonstrated in experiments and the need arises to explain and incorporate these phenomena into mainstream science. Others refuse to even engage in serious debate about the issue. Who is right?



## Introduction

Rupert Sheldrake studied natural sciences at Clare College, University of Cambridge and then philosophy at Harvard University. He did his PhD in biochemistry at Cambridge, where he was later a fellow of Clare College and Director of Studies in biochemistry and cell biology. His research was initially focused on plant molecular biology but currently focuses mainly on the investigations of paranormal phenomena such as telepathy. Some of his current research is funded by Trinity College's Perrott-Warrick Fund for research into 'the unexplained human and animal abilities'. Because of the nature of his research, he receives a lot of media attention and has taken part in various TV and radio programs, as well as newspaper interviews. Although an established scientist with degrees from some of the best universities in the world, many of his mainstream colleagues are not so convinced by, or even interested in, his research. Many in the scientific community consider paranormal phenomena to be fantasies and fraud, so anyone researching these issues risks ridicule. This is as much a philosophical issue as it is scientific.

Sheldrake believes that healthy skeptics are those who are open-minded and accept evidence obtained by application of the scientific method, regardless of the topic of research. On the other hand, he says, dogmatic skeptics hold a priori beliefs that paranormal phenomena do not exist and so dismiss research that attempts to shed light on these occult or taboo issues. But should not the scientific method be employed for furthering our understanding of all natural phenomena? Even those which we now see as supernatural? Would not many of the technological achievements we nowadays take for granted—such as space travel or mobile phones—have been considered paranormal some 200 years ago?

## Telephone and e-mail telepathy

Recently Sheldrake and his colleague Smart empirically tested the claims that some people make about the existence of telepathy: that they often think about someone just before they get a phone call or an e-mail from them, or that they can guess who is calling them. The usual scientific explanation for such phenomena is that people think of others often, but forget those instances and remember only the instances in which that person called them while they were thinking about them. For this reason many scientists do not believe in the existence of telepathy. However, Sheldrake and Smart

**“Nevertheless, his results suggest there really are individual differences in telepathic abilities among people, with some participants constantly scoring no better than if they took random guesses, and others constantly over-scoring”**

argue that maybe telepathy really does occur, but “the means by which it operates is not yet understood. Its existence or nonexistence is not a matter of belief but of evidence”. (2)

In this test for e-mail telepathy, one person nominated four other people, one of whom was randomly selected to e-mail the nominator. The nominator then sent an e-mail to the researchers one minute prior to the nominee's e-mail to try and guess which one of the four nominees was going to e-mail him/her a minute later. Basically, people had to guess one out of four possible people who could e-mail them within the next minute. Overall the correct guess rate was 43%, significantly higher than the 25% guess rate expected by chance only. As in other studies, distance between the two people e-mailing each other did not seem to play a role in the rate of correct guesses, but emotional relationship between the people did. Similar results were obtained for telephone telepathy (a 53% guess rate).

The author admits that he did not sample the population at random: the fifty people who took part in the email experiment applied after reading an advertisement about it. This means that those people probably thought of themselves as telepathic or were at least interested in telepathy in the first place. However, Sheldrake did not ask them if that really was the case because he believes that it is to be expected that different people will have differing telepathic abilities, just as vision, hearing or olfactory senses do not all work as well in all people. Sheldrake thinks that a randomly chosen sample of people for such an experiment would not yield results supporting the existence of telepathy because many people do not have a good telepathic sense.

Although this study seems at first to be a good support for existence of telepathy, one big issue on which the author focuses much of his discussion is the fact that the people involved in the study could have cheated in various ways, such as by receiving information from the e-mailer in advance or re-setting their computer clocks. Given his conviction that those people are a priori interested in telepathy, this gives them an incentive to cheat; yet he dismisses it as unlikely.

## Extended mind and the sixth sense

Due to the lack of precautions to prevent such fraud it is difficult to accept the telepathy results as trustworthy. But even if one did, what would this tell us about telepathy? Perhaps that it exists but does not always work? If it works some of the time it could still have been selected by natural selection, if indeed it is or was an adaptation during our evolutionary history. Just as any vision is better than none, any telepathy may be better in predicting the uncertain future and so help individuals in survival. Evolutionarily, then, telepathy may make sense. But how does it work? What is the non-verbal, non-visual medium of transmission of thought from one brain to another? The answer to this question remains unanswered, despite research into the issue. The obvious candidate, electromagnetic radiation, has been excluded and

Sheldrake thinks the medium may be morphic fields, part of his theory of morphic resonance. These fields are thought to extend from our brains in a similar way to that in which the electromagnetic field extends around the Earth. Yet there is no firm evidence for the existence of morphic fields and the idea of morphic resonance as a means of animal communication has been discarded as too complicated; simpler mechanisms have since been found, and provide a better explanation (if we apply the philosophical principle of Ockham's Razor). Although no textbook on animal behaviour will mention telepathy as a way animals can communicate,

**“Sheldrake and his colleague Smart empirically tested the claims that some people make about the existence of telepathy: that they often think about someone just before they get a phone call or an e-mail from them”**

Sheldrake maintains that they do use this method. In a special supplement to the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, he presents evidence for the existence of yet another parapsychological phenomenon: the sense of being stared at, or the 'sixth sense'. Although the first two papers on this issue (one of which was published in *Science*) dismissed its existence, subsequent research has consistently found evidence for the existence of such a sense, as people and animals have scored above the level of chance in guessing when someone is staring at them from behind, through binoculars or even CCTV. There is some experimental evidence for the existence of telepathic abilities in animals and humans, and perhaps this is as far as biological research can take us with regard to understanding these phenomena. If they indeed exist, their benefits to the organisms could readily be explained evolutionarily. But just how they work may be a question of quantum physics rather than biology.

## Research into the paranormal: genius or heretic?

Professor Brian Josephson, Nobel prize winner from the Theory of Condensed Matter Group at the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge, thinks that the current scientific evidence for the existence of paranormal phenomena justifies further research in the area. He also suggests that better understanding of quantum theory may ultimately explain phenomena such as telepathy. He believes that a problem with many mainstream scientists is that because of their dogmatic beliefs and narrow-mindedness, they often overlook the empirical evidence for the topics that are on the fringes of science. Dismissal of an idea without even looking at the evidence supporting that idea is not how open-minded scientists should behave; and yet some do. Professor Joseph-

son's website has a link to a separate website dealing with his research into, and media treatment of, parapsychology. Intriguingly, there are articles that discuss exactly these issues and show how some media, even journals such as *Nature*, appear to mislead their readers deliberately with respect to evidence for parapsychology. People like Professor Josephson insist on accepting the possibility of the paranormal, while maintaining the rigour of the scientific method and abandoning such claims if they are clearly shown to be false. The need for open discussion of paranormal phenomena led to a multidisciplinary conference at the University of Cambridge in 2000, at which many prominent scientists discussed ideas that are regularly featured in peer-reviewed journals such as University of Bournemouth's *European Journal of Parapsychology*. Scientists who are open to research into parapsychology, homeopathy and the like are concerned that mainstream science is becoming an authoritative apparatus which refuses to look into issues which have not traditionally been considered legitimate; and makes claims about such phenomena without an empirical basis. Open-minded scientists think that although we do not know how paranormal phenomena work, there is now ample evidence that they do work and need to be explained by further research. Should we view these people as heretics or geniuses? Only careful empirical investigation can resolve this issue.

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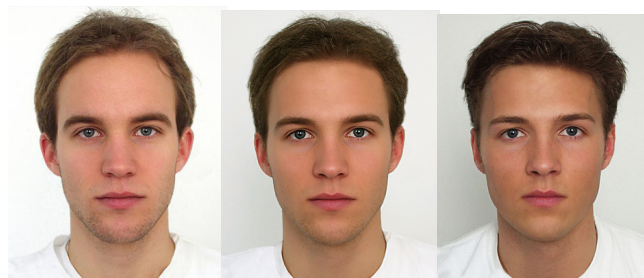
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# The Laws of Attraction Vol.1

by Lampson Fan  
designed by Adam Foskett/ Klaudia Bartel

It was a Saturday afternoon, the usual Cambridge December afternoon when the rain pours mercilessly down on unsuspecting tourists and the music from street musicians drifts softly across the manic shoppers desperately doing last minute Christmas shopping. It's the sort of afternoon that conjures in those of romantic orientation the image of a soft fire, a furry rug (from some unlucky animal) and your loved ones. Sadly, all I had with me was an unruly colleague and a cup of coffee. Thankfully, this was interrupted by a new arrival at the café, and, judging by the sudden looks of interest from my colleague, mostly likely of the good-looking kind.

“Mirror mirror on the wall, who is the most attractive of them all?”

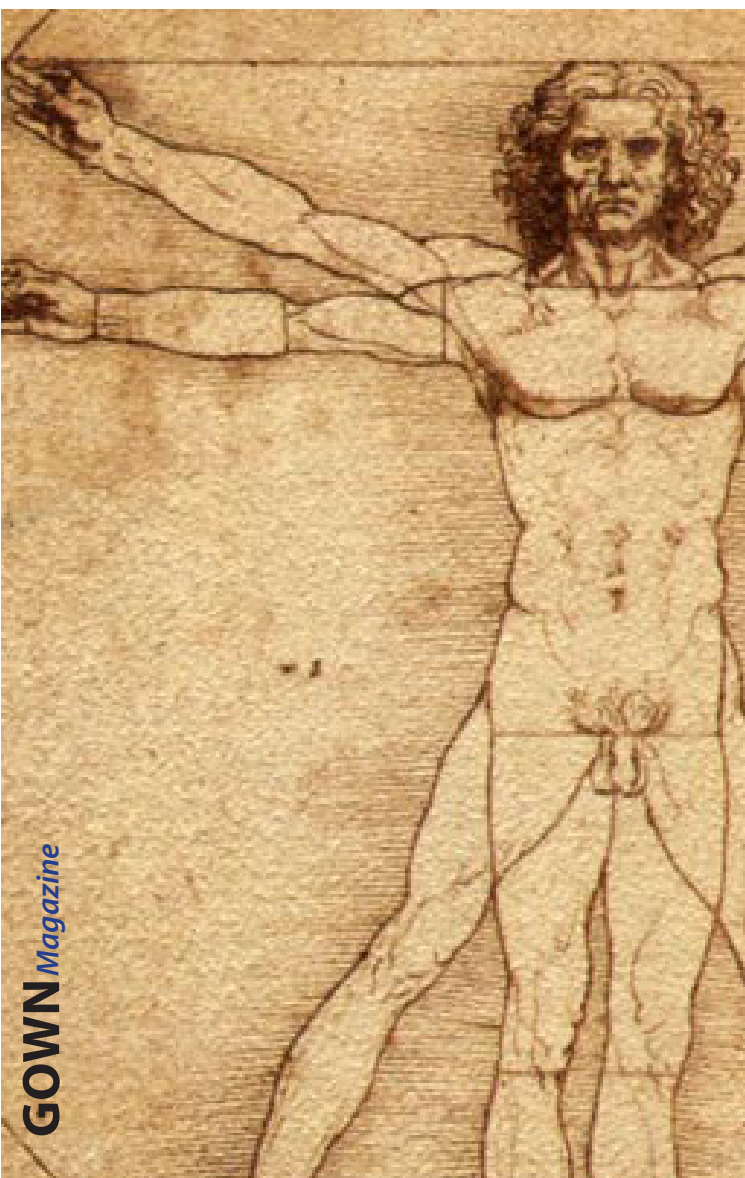


“Wow she is gorgeous,” breathed my colleague. Despite my best effort to keep interested in the coffee, curiosity turned my eyes towards the object of his admiration.

“Oh my goodness... she is ugly,” was the first thought that came through my mind. As if by telepathy or perhaps my look of disapproval, the colleague replied: “No, you idiot ... not that one ... the girl behind.”

Oh ... oops ... and I have to admit she did have a pretty face and a slim figure, but she definitely was not on the “wow” scale. My colleague, on the other hand, thought she was Christmas coming early. The marked difference in opinion got me thinking about the meaning of attraction and what makes person A to attracted B but not C. There is, of course, the obvious physical aspects, as most individuals would not willingly go for what is conventionally regarded as an unattractive person unless they were drunk and/or in Cindys, but there must be qualities other than looks.

What are these qualities? This is a question which generates a great deal of confusion, with intense debate amongst the scientific community, psychologists' conflicting theories of social evolution, the media's usual fascination with sex-related issues and commercial companies' willingness to sell you anything 100% 'guaranteed' by a random, embarrassed medical professional. It therefore comes as no surprise that there are thousands of articles on the internet, magazines and scientific journals making it very difficult for a reader





to decide what is true and what is not (a note of warning: Google at your peril ... the thousands of results become millions with 'Free love' or 'dating'). In this article, I'm going to attempt to summarise some of the characteristics that make a male attractive to a female.

## Men – God's ultimate gift to women?

Once upon a time, when we were all very hairy and ran around in skins borrowed permanently from our dinner, the indicators of attractiveness in a male were quite simply physical. The taller, stronger, fitter and more aggressive male tended to be more successful at the mating game because he was conceived as a potentially better provider and reproductively more competent. Over time, as we became less hairy (well, most of us), more intelligent and less concerned about nutrition, other factors came into play. A woman now has a greater range of qualities other than the physical – such as wealth, power, position, jobs etc – to distinguish between the guys vying for her attention. Many would in fact regard these qualities as far more important indicators of attraction compared to the physical. However, evolution is tenacious and no amount of culture, sophistication or intelligence can drive away the instincts of our ancestors. Therefore, attraction is the result of a complex interplay between physical and non-physical qualities.

## Physical determinants of Attraction

There have been many studies looking at perception of physical features and despite significant variations, there has been a surprisingly good degree of agreement between different cultures as to what is considered to be attractive. One study, using infants as subjects, found that they prefer faces which adults find generally attractive. As infants are not yet influenced by cultural or societal concepts of attractiveness, it would imply a significant part of attractiveness is determined physically.

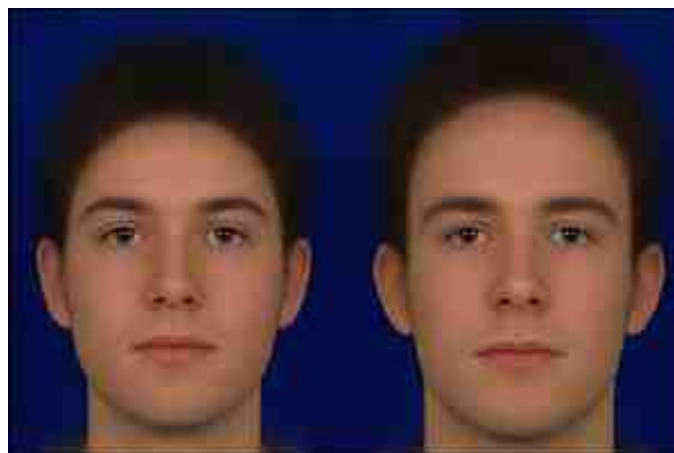
## Physique

In the archives of sexual behavior, questionnaires to women indicate males with broad shoulders, muscular chests and slim waists (what kind of nut cases did they send the questionnaires to?) tend to score higher in the attractiveness stakes. There is also a preference for muscularity, but it is worth noting that the male tends to overestimate the amount of muscle considered ideal by women (by as much as 30 pounds according to a Taiwanese study; I must admit I'm quite baffled as to how they estimated the weight of the muscle from the guys. If you have any ideas, without killing/maiming the subjects, please email: [muscleman@hotmail.com](mailto:muscleman@hotmail.com)).

Another generally universal attractive feature of physique is the V-shaped torso: narrow waist combined with broad shoulders.

## Face

There has been some interesting debate recently regarding the relationship between the type of facial features and the menstrual cycle: women prefer masculine men during fertile periods of the cycle and feminine men in the less fertile periods.



Feminine man

Masculine man

You might want to keep this factor in mind next time you approach a girl!



## Symmetry

We generally find symmetrical objects more pleasant to look at, so perhaps it's not surprising that we find that the same applies for faces. However, in the case of men, pleasantness does not equal attraction, judging from a study conducted by Braun, Gruendl, Marberger and Scherber (2001). They have found symmetry to be only a rather weak indicator for attractiveness. This contradicts the general scientific consensus, but, like all studies of this type, there are no definite conclusions and it's up to the reader to make up his/her mind.

## Height

Tall men are generally found to be more attractive to women and this is enhanced by an erect posture. These features are translated by females as demonstration of power, physical

strength and confidence, which in evolutionary psychology terms meant better protection and therefore, better evolutionary fitness. Additionally, height is correlated to status in almost all cultures and societies which is beneficial to all women, especially those of a gold-digging nature. This is supported by an article from the venerated *Cosmopolitan* magazine, whose painstaking research (ahem) states that women are most attracted to men who are 1.1 times their own height. The article had also found this preference depended on the ( ... drum rolls ... ) MENSTRUAL cycle. The general agreed consensus for height is that women desire men who are at least the same height as themselves or taller.

## The Pill

The pill deserves to be mentioned here, as it apparently changes women's taste in men in a few studies. One study from St Andrews and Stirling Universities presented women with images of different types of men and asked them to pick out potential long-term partners. They found those taking the pill were more likely to choose macho men, and to rate men with more feminine and softer physical features as a turn-off. The reverse is seen in those women not taking the pill. The researchers believe that the effects are caused by blockage of the natural process of ovulation (as if the pill does anything else – great deduction, Sherlock!) Psychologically, because they can't get pregnant while taking the pill, these women are sub-consciously more attracted to sexy, macho men rather than to men who are more likely to make a sensible, long-term mate. The women on the pill also appeared to make more inappropriate choices when picking a man for a short period of sexual relationship. So ladies, next time you are caught cheating, you can blame it on the pills.

## Non-physical factors

Most women would argue there is more to a guy than just looks (hmmm ... ), and other qualities such as personality, charm, status, wealth are all important factors, if not more so than the physical. Unsurprisingly, most of these qualities are hard to measure and as a consequence, there is very little evidence available. They are also heavily dependent on individual preference and it would take forever for me to describe them all, so I am just going to concentrate on status and wealth.

## Status and wealth

This is determined by a variety of factors including profession, social networks, success and whether you can trace your gene to the very limited gene pool of the royal family. It is correlated closely with the attraction of all types of women. A perfect example would be celebrities: they are women-magnets because of their status and wealth. It's highly doubtful whether Casanova would have been as successful as he was, had he not been of noble birth and extremely wealthy.

Interestingly, a research article from the University of Central Lancashire made headlines last year when it stated that women prefer an average type of man, rather than "high-

flyers". The study involved 186 female students from the university, who were asked to rank photos of 60 men without knowing anything about their personal details. The 60 were separated into 3 groups: good-looking, average-looking and unattractive, from which 6 were chosen from each group. The researchers then added personal details to each of the men, including their profession and what they were looking for in a partner. The most attractive men selected at the end of the study were those who were good-looking but with average jobs, such as travel agents and teachers. This is surprising as you would expect the good looking men with high end jobs to be judged the most attractive. One explanation a consultant psychologist gave was that Mr Average will have more time for the family and children, which many women would consider to be extremely important. It would be interesting if the study were repeated on an older population. I suspect they would get very different results.

So there you are – a quick run-through of the qualities that make a man attractive to the ladies. The majority of these qualities and the studies supporting them are subjective and often of a dubious nature, so please do not jump out of the window if you are one of the unfortunate few who do not have any of the above qualities. There is hope out there! In the next article I shall look at women and all the things that we men love about them.





## THE SHADOW OF THE WIND

This is a magnificent novel. The title alone conveys something of the depth, thoughtfulness and emotive force of Zafón, a Spanish novelist and former Hollywood scriptwriter, the latter an occupation that has contributed, he himself feels, to a cinematic approach to writing. This is not Zafón's first novel—he has written four books for young adults—but it is the first one to have been translated into English from the original Castilian, which in itself caused something of a stir upon the book's release, given the story's setting within Barcelona, also Zafón's native town. The translation by Lucia Graves, daughter of the poet Robert Graves, is written with verve, conveying Zafón's meaning with elegance and lucidity.

The book opens upon the scene of a father taking his 10 year old son Daniel, the protagonist of our tale, to the evocatively named 'Cemetery of Forgotten Books', a labyrinthine library of old, rare books in the heart of 1940s Barcelona. The episode highlights the importance of books to both the novel and the novelist: 'The Shadow of the Wind' is itself the title of a book, written by the enigmatic Julián Carax. It is this book that Daniel selects as a life-long memento to commemorate his first visit to the mystifying library. Zafón sets this book at the centre of his story: as Daniel's childhood unfolds, his book attracts increasing, often discomfiting attention. Daniel's consequent curiosity, coupled with a prior deep empathy for the book, leads him into a tense, emotional journey of discovery and self-discovery as he races to uncover the potent truth behind the book's words and to save those people whom Carax left behind.

Zafón's book is labyrinthine in itself: the plot twists and turns through the close, cobbled streets of Barcelona, a grey-washed back-drop to post-civil war Spain. The suspense is skilfully sustained throughout: Daniel's narration ensures that the reader is as ignorant of the next page as our endearingly human protagonist. The city itself is alive at every corner, every junction. Daniel's wanderings from place to place are as integral to his metaphorical journey as the discoveries he makes at each of his destinations. Barcelona takes on a worn, faded character, wearied and discomfited by the menacing presence of Franco's Nationalists, a constant threat lurking in the shadows.

Set against this brooding situation are the hopes, fears and dreams of our young hero. Daniel's naive yet optimistic perspective serves to jolt the story from its slumber: the 'wind' of the title is at once a veiled reference to the "wind of change" blowing through the socio-political topography of Barcelona, and through Daniel's maturity from a boy into a young man. This adolescent transition is handled with honesty, and Zafón does not shy away from addressing some powerful themes in this arena. Daniel, along with his audience, is treated to important life lessons in love, friendship, trust, commitment and loss. One powerful medium for such lessons is Daniel's dialogue with other characters, and here Zafón excels: Daniel's tender relationship with his father and camaraderie with the garrulous Fermín are special highlights. His connection with Fermín is particularly heart-warming and joyously, riotously funny. It is difficult to categorize Zafón's work: 'The Shadow of the Wind' is at once a gothic thriller, a love story, a socio-political commentary, and a tale of adventure. To pigeon-hole the novel is to do Zafón and his abounding creativity a disservice. The joy of the work, as with any piece of literature, is simply to read it and engage with it on any number of levels. A number one bestseller worldwide since its publication in 2002, many have tipped the novel to become a classic. Zafón has revealed that the novel is the first of a planned set of four, all based in Barcelona, though not necessarily in chronological order; the second book will be set in the nineteenth century. For those who have read 'The Shadow of the Wind', news of further compositions will be welcome.

by  
David Edwards  
designed by  
Klaudia Bartel



# Cambridge Wordfest review

designed by Klaudia Bartel



## Yasmin Alibhai-Brown *Nowhere to Belong: Tales of an extravagant stranger*

by Louiza Mallouri

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown appeared on stage wearing a brightly coloured sari which matched the multi-coloured flowers from Uganda, centrally placed on stage. The origin of this powerful woman of the British media was clearly indicated. Yasmin with the hyphenated surname, however, slid between spaces: the fictional Shakespearean worlds and the harsh, less colourful realities of her childhood; her country of birth and her country of residence. Yasmin took us through various periods of her life, describing the turbulent relationship with her father, her dream to become an actress and all the obstacles she encountered while growing up in a society where the fear of 'the Other' is strong. Her performance was so compelling and captivating that we almost felt heartbroken when we had to step out of her narrative.

## Debut Writers

by Hetal Kiran Patel

Three new writers, each with a distinctive style and genre, introduced the audience to their books and read a ten minute excerpt before a general Q+A session. Sadie Jones's novel, *The Outcast*, started life as a film script that refused to end and so became her first novel. It tells the story of Lewis Aldridge, a young boy in 1947, and his turbulent relationship with his over-bearing and abusive father following the

Wordfest, one of the youngest literary festivals in Britain, took place last March at various venues in Cambridge. Now in its sixth year, Wordfest has grown in reputation and status to become an inextricable part of the city's cultural life. Once again it has offered an eclectic range of workshops, readings, panel events and seminars delivered by Britain's most famous writers, debaters and rising literary talents. GOWN reviews two of the festival's highlights.

death of his mother. *The Outcast* has made the long list for the 2008 Orange Prize for fiction and has been read out on BBC4.

Aravind Adiga grew up in India and has lived all over the world since the age of fifteen. His book, *White Tiger*, has sold in sixteen countries and received rave reviews in *Publishers Weekly* and *The Sunday Times*. The main character, Balam Halwai, is a chauffeur for a rich landlord. Through a series of letters detailing the truth about India, from vast wealth to back-breaking poverty, he arrives at his ultimate decision to escape his poor roots by murdering his boss. Jacqueline Walker came to the UK in 1959 from Jamaica. Her book, *Pilgrim State*, describes a family's move from Jamaica to America, Canada and the UK over a period of 80 years. It focuses on the mother, Dorothy, and her struggle to keep her children even though she suffered terrible mental illness. What makes it so poignant, however, is that the story is based on the authors' life and started out as a way of narrating her past to her children. Being an avowed supporter of geeky persuasion, I will freely admit that I wouldn't normally choose to read any of these books. Having the authors read chosen excerpts to me, however, seemed to make the words come to life in my mind. I have not had anyone read me a story in a (very) long time but sitting in that lecture theatre, in rapt silence, reminded me of a childhood spent on my father knee with a mountain of books beside us and his warm voice filling my heart. I left the event and headed straight to Borders and Waterstones and ended up buying a stack of books, rediscovering the joy of being transported to another time and place, even if it is only for a little while. What more can you ask for?

Do not miss the first Winter Wordfest! This will take place on Sunday 30th November at The ADC Theatre. Cambridge Wordfest 2009 has been scheduled for 24-26 of April. If you would like to become a Wordfest volunteer, send an e-mail to [admin@cambridgewordfest.co.uk](mailto:admin@cambridgewordfest.co.uk)

# The British Library

## a guide for Cambridge graduates

by Michael Gladwin

designed by Adam Foskett/ Klaudia Bartel

One of the great advantages of graduate study at Cambridge is relatively easy access to one of the great repositories of world knowledge, the British Library. As an MA student I had the good fortune of being able to do most of my historical research there, and found it to be a wonderful resource with collections that range across all disciplines and span the entire history of literature. Chances are that you may need to use the BL at some stage, even if only to gain access to the most recently published monographs (the University Library, for all its virtues, can take a long time to get new titles on to the shelves). You may want to visit its superb exhibitions, take in its controversial architecture—Prince Charles famously compared its design to an academy for secret police—or possibly even read its books. Like any large institution, the BL has its fair share of rules and idiosyncrasies. So here are a few inside tips and tricks to help you take full advantage of the BL's riches.

The first step is to arrange membership and a visitor's pass. The Library is strict regarding access, so you'll need to arrive with a letter from your supervisor or Faculty. The letter should outline the kinds of materials you'll need to have access to (e.g. manuscripts, monographs) and how long you'll need to use the Library's reading rooms (PhD students are automatically given access for the duration of their course).

Library tours and information sessions are well organised and tailored to specific disciplines—well worth the initial investment and will save you a lot of time in the long run, particularly as some of its systems are specific to the Library. Ordered books take between 70 minutes and 48 hours to arrive, so a great way of saving time is to order books on the Library's website before you arrive. I often order them the day before. That way I find them waiting for me, like old friends in a quiet arrivals lounge after my struggle to King's Cross on the incessantly crowded tube or a London bus driven wildly by some urban cowboy. Keep in mind, however, that books can only be ordered during Library opening hours (even on the web) and can only be read in the reading rooms. Opening hours vary, depending on the day of the week, so make sure you check them on the website. 8pm closing between Monday and Thursday is particularly helpful for the night owls among us.

Everyone has their favourite place to sit; some people even get a little territorial here. My favourite place to study is the Rare Books Reading Room; it's a little quieter than the others and you can always find a seat. It's hard to go wrong, however, since the design of all the reading rooms creates a wonderful sense of airy light and space. Be warned that

the reading rooms fill up very quickly in the summer with the arrival of overseas scholars and undergraduates, so try to arrive early to claim a seat. Pens are not allowed in the reading rooms, so be sure to bring a pencil. Like the UL, all equipment must be placed in clear plastic bags; however, at the risk of sounding like I've spent too much time in libraries, I prefer the BL's bags because of their sturdier reinforced handles. They're also free, unlike the UL's charge of 20p per bag. And make sure you always have a pound coin handy for the lockers.

The British politician Lord Samuel once remarked that 'a library is thought in cold storage'. His thought is particularly apt because the temperature of the reading rooms is kept quite low to preserve books. A jumper is therefore an essential piece of kit on even the balmiest of London's six days of summer.

Outside the reading rooms you may want to join the serried ranks of the über-cool laptop set, who lounge in sleek, black leather designer couches, sip lattes and take advantage of the many hotspots around the Library's central atrium. They look like they're studying hard, though I suspect that Facebook and Youtube are getting more of a workout than Google Scholar.

Perhaps the next most important issue is that of sustenance. For those of you whose poison of choice is coffee, it's a happy quirk of divine providence that the Library serves possibly the best coffee in central London. This is largely because the baristas at Leith's (as the café and

restaurant are named) all know how to make a real coffee with enough kick to push you past the inevitable post-lunch malaise. Many a time have those double shots of espresso saved me from the ignominy of falling asleep at my desk and contributing a snail-trail of saliva to the nation's most important intellectual heritage. A few extra tips: order your coffee upstairs to avoid the downstairs café's long queue, and remember that the minimum purchase is £4.95 if using a Switch card (though there's also an ATM downstairs). Food is on the pricey side, though the restaurant's generous serving of soup and bread is relatively cheap and a welcome alternative to a packed lunch.

Having studied, updated your Facebook profile and supped, you might want to have a look at the Library's exhibitions, not least because selections of the Library's considerable literary treasures are on view. The Library is also a great place for people-watching, as many of its denizens might well qualify for the permanent collections. After a year I was almost on nodding terms with two immaculately dressed elderly gentlemen—occasionally dressed down in Tattersalls and cords—who never ceased to delight me with their clipped Oxford accents, regal bearing and arrival and departure at exactly the same time every day. Such are only a few of the charms and riches of one of the world's great libraries, a mere 45 minutes on the train from Cambridge and five minutes' walk from King's Cross Station. Enjoy.



# Press Release



designed by Adam Foskett

**A new company set up by two Cambridge alumni is giving Cambridge University students and recent graduates a unique alternative to finding a job in the City.**

talentburst™ is a new company which offers university students and recent graduates the opportunity to gain experience working in growing, entrepreneurial companies on flexible, temporary placements throughout the year. These companies range from small high-tech start-ups which have recently received funding, to larger, more established companies hoping to increase their pool of talent.

Co-founders Emma Yap and Kunal Patel decided to set up talentburst™ in response to what they feel is an unmet need in the recruitment market. Emma, who graduated in Economics from Christ's College, says, "We know from personal experience that very few alternatives exist for students and graduates who do not want to work in large multinationals, or who simply do not know what they want to do after they graduate.

We also realised that growing companies have a real need for new talent to help them expand - recruiting bright, talented people is essential if they are to build on their success and sustain their growth. However, due to a lack of time and resources, these companies often find it difficult to gain access to such people."

According to the two founders, talentburst™ is the perfect solution. talentburst™ provides students and recent graduates with a career option which is a viable alternative to working in the City and which is interesting, challenging and looks good on a CV, while also enabling growing companies to attract the best and brightest talent without the need for a costly recruitment campaign.

Kunal, who graduated in Engineering from Robinson College, says, "Many of the companies we are working with are keen to recruit talented postgraduates. Our placements allow students to really get involved in the business, and make a difference. The work environment is usually very dynamic and fast-paced, and candidates have a lot more responsibility compared with working in a typical internship programme. There are no boundaries on what you can achieve and you have the chance to really feel like a part of something.

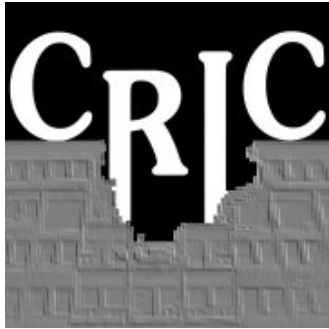
Many of the companies we work with are ultimately looking to make permanent job offers to candidates who make a good impression during their placement, and if you do decide to stay on with the company, the long-term benefits could be very worthwhile."

Placements at talentburst™ are highly flexible, and can take place at any time during the year. They may last from two weeks to twelve months, with an option for part-time work. This allows students to organise their placement around their other commitments and to even work on a talentburst™ placement while applying for permanent jobs after graduating. Kunal feels that talentburst™ may be of particular value to students who are interested in starting a business of their own. "Setting up a business straight out of university was definitely a challenge, but at the same time, incredibly rewarding," he says. "The best way to learn about business is to spend time in start-ups and around entrepreneurs who've been successful. I know that I would have jumped at the chance to gain such valuable experience if it had been available while I was at university!" Both Kunal and Emma acknowledge that starting a business straight after graduation is not a step that would be taken by the majority of Cambridge graduates.

"Entrepreneurship is definitely not considered seriously as a career option by the majority of students at Cambridge," adds Emma. "Students at Cambridge tend to be drawn into working for large corporations and avoid the risks involved in starting up a business, without thinking about the satisfaction of working for yourself and the longer term rewards. However, I think that the image associated with starting up your own business has definitely received a revamp due to the popularity of television shows such as Dragon's Den and The Apprentice. One of the key things that we've realised from starting our own business is that if you have a business idea, the best thing that you can do is to go out there and make it happen. Being at Cambridge certainly helps as there is a lot of support available within the University and the local community, but ultimately you have to just get out there and give it a go."



# Press Release



## IDENTITY AND CONFLICT :

### Cultural Heritage and the Reconstruction of Identities after Conflict

designed by  
Adam Foskett/ Klaudia Bartel

The European Union has awarded a group of Cambridge based researchers a four-year grant totalling EUR 1.2 million to run a project entitled: "Identity and Conflict : Cultural Heritage and the Reconstruction of Identities after Conflict" (CRIC). The project will be conducted by an interdisciplinary and international team of researchers from the departments of Archaeology, Social Anthropology and History in Cambridge. Dr Marie Louise Stig Sørensen, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Archaeology and convener of the graduate programme in cultural heritage studies, will direct the project.

This project will investigate the ways that destruction and selective reconstruction of cultural heritage after conflict impact the formation of national and regional identities. It will focus on five European case studies (Spain, France,

Germany, Cyprus and Bosnia) to provide historical breadth and depth, while developing shared methodologies that will ensure that the results of this research will be extendable to other contexts.

Partnering universities, research institutes and NGOs across Europe, the CRIC initiative will address the following questions: What conditions and ideologies inspire the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage? What are the consequences at local, national and regional levels of this destruction, and what measures can be developed to better inform reconstruction processes?

Further information can be found at the CRIC website: [www.arch.cam.ac.uk/cric/cric.html](http://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/cric/cric.html)

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Thursday 16th October 2008 from 6:30pm

Doubletree by Hilton (formerly the Garden House), Granta Place, Hill Lane, Cambridge

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# Postcard from India

by Nitu Duggal

designed by Klaudia Bartel

Those of us who come from different countries often find Cambridge beautiful and picturesque, yet so different than our own countries. In this edition, Nitu Duggal offers us a glimpse of India's rich fund of history and folklore as she describes Kanya Kumari, a place very special to her in her home country, India.

My favourite place in India is called Kanya Kumari. It is the southern most tip of India where the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal meet. The view is excellent as one can actually see three different colours of waters from the different seas. We can see water hitting a small rock in the middle of the ocean from three different directions. On each side of the small rock, the colour of water is different...

Kanya Kumari gets its name from the temple of the virgin goddess that overlooks the shoreline. According to the legend, the wedding of Kanya Devi (Kanya in Hindi means girl and Devi means Goddess) and Shiva (One of Hindu Trinity) had to take place here. However Shiva did not reach the place at the auspicious time and the wedding could not take place. The rice and cereals meant for the wedding remained uncooked. Stones that look like rice and cereals are available in the market as symbolic of the legendary wedding that was not solemnized. Kanya Devi thus became the virgin goddess who blesses the visitors to the temple. The deity of Kanya Devi has an exceptionally bright diamond on her nose ring which is supposed to shine out to the sea. The deity also stands with a rosary in her hand as if in prayer. Kanya Kumari is thus a place of pilgrimage for the Hindu.

Not far from the Kanya Kumari temple is the Gandhi Mandapam. When the ashes of Mahatma Gandhi were split in

portions and sent to all states for immersion, Kanya Kumari was selected as the place of immersion in the state Tamil Nadu. Gandhi Mandapam was constructed at the spot where the urn containing ashes of Mahatma Gandhi were kept for public view before a portion of its content was immersed in the three seas. We are told that the mandapam is designed in such a way that on the Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi that is 2nd October, the sun's rays fall directly on the place where the urn was kept before immersion. In this way it is a result of great engineering skill. The structure of the Mandapam is the famous Oriya style of temple architecture.

On a rock that emerges out of the ocean some 500 meters from the mainland, there is a Vivekananda memorial that was built in 1970. Vivekananda was a sage and an influential social reformer of the 19th century who introduced Eastern Vedic thought at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. Vivekananda swam across the ocean in Kanya Kumari to reach the rock. He sat in deep meditation on this rock. But there is a conflict if he sat there for three days or for one day. Nowadays, there is a ferry service to the rock and visitors can meditate in a meditation hall attached to the memorial.



Kanya Kumari is known for its amazing sunrises and sunsets especially on full moon days. The best day for viewing the sunrise and sunset in Kanya Kumari is the full moon day in April also known as Chitra Purnima. On this day the sun and the moon are face to face in the same horizon. There are both rocks and sand on the beach making it beautiful as a tourist spot. A big light house to direct the ships in the seas is another prominent feature. So Kanya Kumari on the whole is a wonderful place to visit if you plan to visit India.

# Hetal's Guide To Procrastination

## Ways To Stay Sane In Cambridge

by Hetal Kiran Patel

designed by Klaudia Bartel

**E**veryone knows that all work and no play makes students go nuts. This is why regular doses of procrastination are vitally important, especially for graduate students faced with never-ending demands for dissertations, essays and thesis chapters. This guide aims to provide a few hints and tips to help you get your recommended 5-a-day (of procrastination of course)!

**Instant Messenger** – What better way to procrastinate than with your fellow students. Here, you can discuss pointless issues and swap in-jokes to your heart's content whilst everyone else around you can only hear the sound of furious typing from your keyboard. Be careful not to burst into laughter randomly, this will only increase the curiosity of others and make them want to find out just what is so funny!

**Internet Memes** – These are Internet Phenomena that make the rounds on over the web via email and word-of-mouth. Think you haven't seen any? How about The Star Wars Kid? The O RLY Owls? The Numa Numa Guy? The Lolcats? The Dancing Baby? The Ultimate Showdown of Ultimate Destiny? Oh my god! What do you mean "no"!!! Are you brain-dead or something!?! Google them right now!

**News Websites** – View frequently and repeatedly throughout the day to give you virtual omnipotence. You will know everything that takes place on earth at all times. However, it will not give you the answer to your thesis/dissertation work. Shame really.

**Internet TV** – Spent too long at last night's bop and missed your favourite show? Never fear, with more and more TV download sites popping up daily, you'll never miss anything again! Plus, to others around you, it will look like you are concentrating extremely hard on a data spreadsheet/PDF journal instead of watching Prison Break!!!

**Emails** – Your email inbox can provide hours of procrastination, from clearing out the spam and junk mail that has piled up for the last few months, organising your emails into

clearly defined folders or even clicking on the Refresh button every 3.75 seconds just in case you have any new emails you haven't read yet.

**Facebook** – Spend every waking moment adding every single person you have ever seen in your whole life as a friend, join random groups for no apparent reason and post the most embarrassing photos you can get your hands on, this networking site was made for procrastinating. And it does it so well too!



**Organising** – Neatly organise everything in your life, from arranging your CDs by alphabetical order, chemical samples by colour order, shoes by high heel length or your cheese collection by degree of mouldiness, there is always something to sort.

**Solitaire** – The original and best method for wasting time. So good that it comes with every PC pre-installed. See, even Bill Gates doesn't want you to get any work done!

Write articles for GOWN – Umm ... I think this one is aimed at me!



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