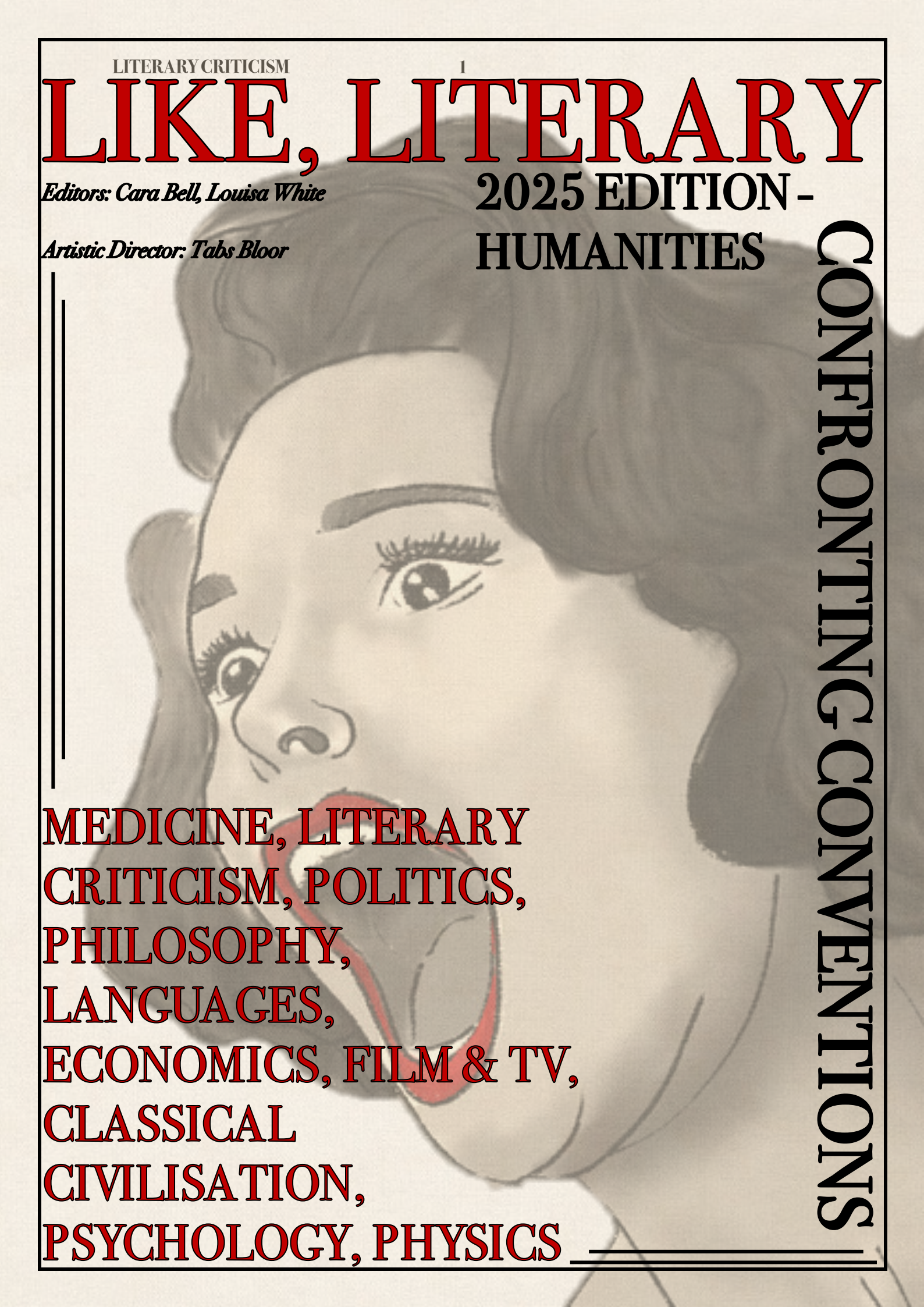
LIKE, LITERARY

Editors: Cara Bell, Louisa White

Artistic Director: Tabs Bloor

2025 EDITION - HUMANITIES

CONFRONTING CONVENTIONS



MEDICINE, LITERARY CRITICISM, POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY, LANGUAGES, ECONOMICS, FILM & TV, CLASSICAL CIVILISATION, PSYCHOLOGY, PHYSICS

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FOREWORD

The power of the written word is a well-established trope. Perhaps the most famous (and arguably over-used) phrase "The pen is mightier than the sword", taken from an early 19th century play but reflecting a sentiment echoed by writers for centuries, suggests the physical impact that words can have. Personally, I prefer the sentiment evoked by the Roman poet Horace in the final poem of his third book of Odes, in which he states: "exegi monumentum aera perennius" ("I have built a monument more lasting than bronze"). For him, the power of his poetry was its perpetuity. The everlasting status of our words is perhaps even more pertinent in the modern age, when the internet has created a vast stockpile of information, some of which perhaps doesn't deserve immortality!

The articles in this edition, covering such a wide range of interesting and relevant topics, certainly do merit such lofty status and will certainly stand the test of time. They also demonstrate how passionate the writers are about their individual and varied topics. I invite you all to read and enjoy!

- Mrs S. Capewell
Head of School

"Writing allows us to turn words into things, to freeze them in time and space" – Thomas Eriksen, Norwegian Anthropologist

Conventions act as invisible strings that weave together traditions, genres and expectations; they give us structure rhythm, and a foundation upon which to build. Literature not only thrives in following these conventions but also in bending, breaking, and reimagining them as our global society aims to advance. The 2025 edition of 'Like Literary' intends to explore the liminal area between literature and the fluctuating factors that craft the lens through which we view it. In reinterpreting our preconceived bias, ingrained stereotypes, and accepted norms, we have aimed to make a collective commentary on the evolution of our human community. It is this exploration that ultimately led us to the title 'Confronting Conventions', a broad theme which has allowed our diverse sections, led by passionate individuals, to flourish. They have delved into a diverse evaluation of how society's rules have influenced it for the better or worse throughout time, and perhaps how this could evolve in the next generation. As editors, we hope that this year's edition of 'Like Literary' will draw attention not only to existing conventions but also bring awareness around reinforcing stereotypes or perpetuating a misguided perception, and the impact that it can have. This edition should serve as a reminder that our global society is vastly distinct in its culture and stages of growth and encourage us to look beyond a bubble of advantageousness that is all too often taken for granted. We would like to thank all of the section editors and contributors to this year's literary magazine for their tireless dedication and effort put into this project, with particular gratitude to the artistic director Tabby Bloor, who has brough our collective vision to life, and Mrs Roberts, who has facilitated and coordinated our efforts, without whom we could not have constructed this unconventional magazine.

- Cara Bell and Louisa White
Co-Editors

LITERARY CRITICISM

"Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become." - C.S Lewis

"As we jump into the literary section, it makes me think about how literature isn't just stories - it shapes how we see the world, and how we understand ourselves. Take the Handmaid's tale, for example, where the regression of women's rights feels both haunting and sadly real, or Lady Chatterley's Lover, which pushed the boundaries of British literature by tackling class, sexuality and freedom in revolutionary ways. Literature challenges us to think about identity, power and society.
In this section, we will also dive into Greek tragedy and explore how wealth and status shape lives in We Were Liars. Furthermore, we will look at Spain's most well-known literature. All of these articles display different portrayals of society throughout time."

-Daisy Ogden, Lower Sixth
Section Editor

Breaking and Reinforcing Conventions: The Role of Literary and Social Norms in 'The Handmaid's Tale' and Their Parallel's in Modern Society

Louisa White

Many believe that society's views surrounding women are regressing. Being placed in a bubble of advantageousness where women can thrive makes it hard to put ourselves in the feet of other women, in the feet of the 12 million young girls who are forced to marry before they turn 18 every year, of the women under new legislation which restricts their rights to education completely, and the women dying daily due to the ban on contraceptives in many countries and lack of abortion procedures, which now impact women in the USA as well. At the time of its publishing, in 1985, there were many mixed reactions to the novel 'The Handmaid's Tale'. Some saw elements of truth in Margaret Atwood's words and saw it as a firm warning for the future, but others saw it as purely fictitious; Western society was on the up! The time for subjugating women was 'over,' and their equality had been granted. However, I believe the novel's warnings hold ever-increasing parallels with modern society.

Arguably the most prominent image in 'The Handmaid's Tale' is the handmaid's red floor-length clothing accompanied by white wings. The significance of the colour red symbolises blood and reminds them of the 'reason' they exist; the clothing reduces the handmaids to objects to reproduce, whilst also taking away any of their individuality and identity, like their new given names. The control of women's clothing is something that dates so far back in history; the belief that a woman wearing revealing clothes excuses or provokes someone's harassment, rape or abuse is becoming ever prevalent in modern-day society. To contrast this belief, many tribes all over the world live with free and liberated women whose culture surrounds their lack of clothing. A primal example of this is when the Taliban gained control of Afghanistan. They created several new laws that restrict women from moving around without the company of a man and from going outside without fully covering their face and body, and another that forbid girls from attending secondary schools, all of which have led to an increase of forced marriages for underage girls to over 1 in 3. The control of women's bodies is also under increased scrutiny and regulation in the West, especially in the US after the recent reversal of Roe vs Wade (during which only 3/9 of the court was female, all of whom voted for the law to remain but were inevitably overruled by the majority vote, all men) and poses the real question about the power of the people and how quickly it can change, echoing the ideas and moral of those who rule in Gilead and decree that the women there have no say about what happens to their bodies.

Gilead, the name of the new nation created by high-ranking men in 'The Handmaid's Tale' is based mainly on a distorted version of Christianity. To justify its brutal social conventions and its control over women, religion is weaponised to enforce conformity amongst the women in the novel, but also the men, who we hear do break the rules as we see them hung on 'the wall'. This is an example of when politics mixes with religion, which is currently happening all over the world, including in

America where politicians and the political nation will justify their opinions and votes based on what the bible 'says'. This is especially valid with the current president Donald Trump claiming that 'God alone' saved him from an assassination attempt in June 2024, practically claiming that he was divinely appointed for that role. In many other countries' laws are preventing same-sex marriage, transgender procedures and prohibiting women's rights to travel due to beliefs spanning from religious doctrines, reflecting the manipulation of religion in Gilead. Conventions created by religion are carried and believed all around the world; due to the lack of prominent female leading roles in the bible it is assumed that men are the workers and providers who hold the power, and it is women who are expected to fill subservient stereotypical roles of wives and mothers. This stereotype has existed as long as humans have and still does in many cultures; women of many faiths like Christianity, Hinduism and Islam feel the pressure to adhere to these gender norms which are habitually spread through many women across the globe, taking on a life of domesticity due to these stereotypes.

Despite the oppressive regime that Offred (the main character) and the other characters live in, they still show their hope for change by resisting and rebelling against Gilead's norms. Throughout the book we see her make small acts of resistance such as reading and meeting with Nick in secret. The women in the novel also work together using a 'Mayday' movement which directly opposes the regime. In modern-day society we see huge protests and resistance to different countries′ rules and cultures: the Black Lives Matter, #met`oo and LGBTQ+ movements are all examples of how individuals and groups can challenge social norms and fight for freedom and equality, highlighting the exact issues that Margaret Attwood criticises in 'The Handmaid's Tale'.

How D.H Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover revolutionised British Literature, culture and politics.

Oliver Lee Sheldon Feehan

David Herbert Lawrence was an English novelist, short story writer, poet, playwright, literary critic, travel writer, essayist and painter. Lawrence's strong political credence and colourful writing style earned him a controversial reputation within the industry; his pieces became a contentious matter for their candid treatment of sex and psychological depth. Human psyche and relationships were predominant subjects which he explored with great intensity. Additionally, he developed a very distinct, lyrical style, often using nature and the landscape as metaphors for emotional and psychological states. However, the creativity of his work had rather severe repercussions and Lawrence had to endure significant contemporary persecution and public misrepresentation throughout his career, much of which he spent in voluntary exile.

Lady Chatterley's Lover was Lawrence's final and most notorious novel. He initially published it privately in Florence in 1928 and then in Paris a year later. An unexpurgated edition was not released in the UK until 1960, subject to an obscenity trial against the publisher Penguin Books. The story centres around Lady Chatterley, also known as Constance Reid, the young wife of Sir Clifford Chatterley, an aristocratic man who is paralysed from the waist down following a severe injury from the First World War. It explores Constance's complex emotional and physical exigencies as she struggles to reconcile her marriage and growing affection for Gamekeeper, Oliver Mellors. Constance finds herself isolated and dissatisfied as her husband fails to fulfill her sexual desires. Consequently, she begins an affair with Mellors, who is a man of lower social standing. Mellors is presented to withhold more intense levels of emotion and expresses deep connections with nature. Their dynamic becomes a source of liberation for Constance, allowing her to experience romance and intimacy in a manner absent from her marriage. A pivotal theme is Constance's realisation that she cannot live with the mind alone; stemming from her heightened sexual experience that she has only felt with Mellors, ultimately suggesting that love requires the elements of both the body and the mind. As the relationship continues to bloom, both Constance and Mellors expand their understanding regarding the interrelation of the mind and the body. Learning that intimacy, in their instance, is more than a shameful act and physical love comes with spiritual challenges. The affair defies social norms, class structures and expectations about love, sexuality and marriage. Furthermore, it highlights the existing tensions between intellectual pursuits (represented by Clifford) and physical, emotional fulfilment (as shown by Mellors). The novel is not merely a tale of infidelity, it is a critique of the societal and moral constraints of the time.

Lawrence died on the 2nd of March 1930. However, his literature remains immortalised and in 1960, Lady Chatterley's Lover was published in the United Kingdom. The sexually explicit content of the novel swiftly attracted the ire of the authorities. Under the Obscene Publications Act, which had only been passed a year prior, Penguin Books faced charges on the grounds of publishing obscene material. The Bill was first put before

Parliament in 1955 as a private member's bill in response to the seemingly failing common law offence of obscene libel. Roy Jenkins - The Bill's sponsor - cited five prosecutions in 1954: underscoring the present ambivalence of the law on obscenity. The basis of existing law, The Hicklin Test / R. vs Hinklin, would consolidate literary censorship. Effectively, the modernised law generated specific provisions for a defence of public good, chiefly defined as a work of scientific or artistic merit. This Intended to exclude literature from the scope of law whilst permitting the prosecution of pornography or similar work which did not align under section 2 of the Act - "tend to deprave and corrupt persons likely to read it". Nevertheless, booksellers were provided with a defence of 'innocent dissemination', which helped limit the penalty of conviction. On the 18th of March 1960, an inquiry was made to the Director of Public Prosecutions seeking advice regarding the publication of the book, yet there was no evidence of publications. As of August, legal proceedings were instituted as Penguins had presented 15 copies of the book to the authorities. A summons was issued on the 25th of August at Bow Street Magistrates' Court. The trial, R. vs Penguin Books Ltd, became a landmark for freedom of expression within the literary industry. An incendiary conflict over artistic freedom and moral decency. Penguin books were able to push Lawrence's piece through the legal system to defy social normalities and loosen censorship over freedom of speech.

generating global debate regarding what should be considered obscene. In the United States, the novel had faced further censorship battles. As a consequence of the victory at home, publishers and defenders of free speech were galvanised into action. A court ruling in 1964 declared the novel not obscene. International shifts in legal normalities outlined the shift towards elevated freedom of expression.

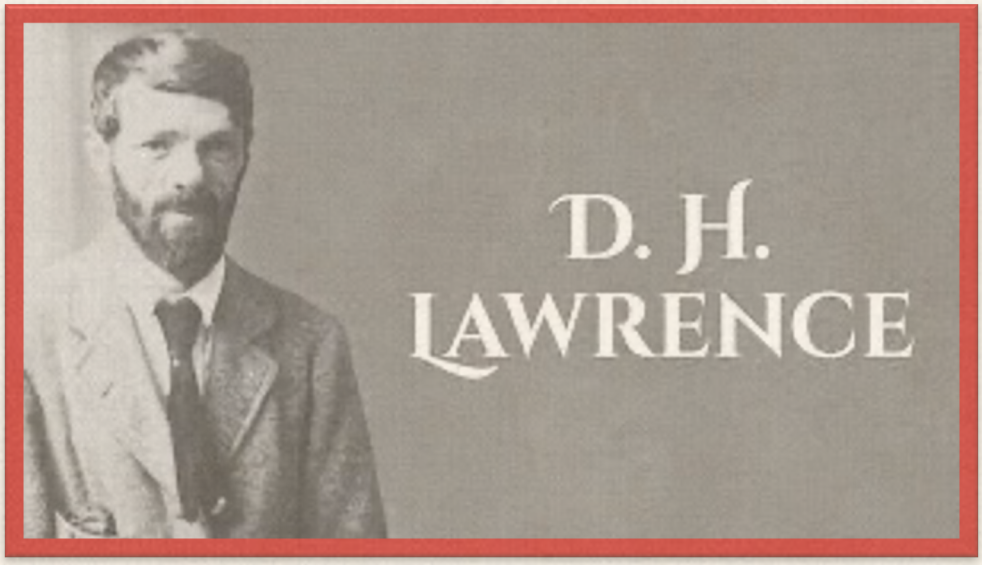
Penguin constructed a vigorous case, contending that the novel held significant literary merit and therefore should not be banned based exclusively on its provocative content. Overall, the prosecution's main argument was that the intent to corrupt public morals is inferred from the act of publication, that presumption itself is a matter of fact and rebuttable. The defence argued that Lawrence's work transcended mere vulgarity, offering profound descriptions of human intimacy and social classes and boundaries. Additionally, there was no clear evidence that there was intent to deprave. The trial culminated in a historic verdict. On the 2nd of November 1960, after an intense 9-day battle, the jury returned a unanimous verdict of not guilty and Penguin was cleared of all charges. Following the acquittal, the book was allowed to be sold freely in Britain, highlighting a major turning point in the country's relationship with censorship. On its very first day of official publication it sold all 200,000 copies printed.

The success of the trial was a landmark victory for freedom of expression. What made the case so remarkable was the fact it was the first time in British history that a major literary work successfully defended its artistic value in the courtroom. The jury was adamant that the novel had significant literary merit. A more liberal era in British publishing had been established. The case of R. vs Penguin Books Ltd had resonated far beyond British shores,

Beyond the courtroom, the trial expedited the cultural upheavals of Post World War Two Britain. During a period where sexual mores were traditionally restrictive and conservative, the explicit depictions of physical intimacy in Lawrence's novel became a flashpoint. It emerged as an emblem for broader sexual freedom and the cultural revolution sweeping across the Western World in the 60s. Publishers began to squeeze the boundaries of what was considered acceptable in literature to even greater extents. Work consisting of

taboo subjects was no longer automatically deemed unfit for publication. Subsequently, waves of books that had previously been censored were rebirthed, enriching the literary landscape and invigorating more open dialogue over complex human experiences. Furthermore, the novel's critique of class divisions - specifically the relationship between Constance and Mellors - challenged entrenched social hierarchies. Britain was still very much retaining the rigid class structures of the past; the novel was a subtle, yet powerful rallying protest for greater social mobility and the ruination of dated societal fringes. Symbolising social reform and encouraging the erosion of class-based prejudices.

D.H. Lawrence's, Lady Chatterley's lover fundamentally altered British society's engagement with art, sexuality and social order. It is a novel that has helped define laws concerning freedom of speech within British literature, which are still in effect today.



‘Daddy’ Sylvia Plath.

Eleanor Thomas

‘Daddy’ is a controversial and highly anthologised poem by American poet Sylvia Plath. This poem was originally written in October 1962, a month before her separation from her husband and just four months before her death by suicide. Her suicide may reflect childhood trauma, further suggesting why such strong themes can be seen throughout the poem, such as fascism and patriarchal views, social disillusionment and psychological trauma, and oppression and abuse. The poem is deeply complex, shaped by the poet’s relationship with her deceased father.

‘Daddy’ consists of 16 cinquains; the use of regularity, frequent short lines, repetition and end rhyme contribute to a sense of tight control in the poem. This control crafts a claustrophobic atmosphere, which echoes the speaker’s feelings of being constrained by her father’s memory and her place as a woman in a patriarchal society. ‘Daddy’ does not have a rhyme scheme, however the poem heavily relies on the use of end-rhyme and assonance (over half of the poem’s lines end with an ‘oo’ sound). The intensity of sound acts as a propulsive force in the poem, perhaps reminiscent of the sound of a steam engine train, a significant image in the poem. The heavy use of end-rhyme, combined with the poem’s short lines, and the repeated use of the word ‘Daddy,’ contributes to the childlike tone of the poem. The speaker feels trapped within a childlike awe of her father, possibly trying to break free of her father’s hold on her, and also break a generational cycle of abuse.

‘Daddy’ implies that women are subjected to repressive rules and violence at the hands of men, limiting their autonomy, self-expression and freedom. In the society of ‘Daddy’, men hold most positions of political, social and moral authority; Plath sets a dynamic in which a male figure is venerated, while the female speaker is infantilized by addressing her father with childish vocabulary. Sylvia emphasises the imagery of the sheer violence of her father’s hold over her, presenting the inability to communicate due to oppression. The poem talks about the Nazis, and how Sylvia’s father conflates with them; she identifies herself with the Jewish people. The Nazis were fascists, who violently squashed any dissent, therefore this may highlight the brutality of her father’s presence. The Nazis also created solid boundaries in society, creating divisions between people. The poem shows the power imbalance between men and women, and also draws attention to the normalisation of violence against women (women can only be seen to ‘adore,’ their oppressors).

Identity is a recurrent theme in the poem, as Sylvia progresses through her emotions, and comes to understand her childhood. She decides to let go of his memory and free herself from his oppression forever. The speaker, traumatised by the death of her father at an early age, develops an obsession with mortality. She dreams of bringing her father back to life, and when her prayers go unanswered, she even tries to join him in death. After her failed suicide attempt, she chooses to bring her father back to life metaphorically in the form of a husband who resembles him. She attempts to recreate her father by marrying a man like him, yet later she becomes aware of the true brutal nature of the relationship. This may show the lack of the speaker’s identity, as they’re feeling lost without their father, and perhaps are struggling to find their place in society. The speaker begins to fixate on death as the image of her father dying stays with her. Plath’s husband in reality turned out to be an unhealthy fixation for her, like her father’s death, crafting a clear autobiographical nature

to the poem. Imagery of an unhealthy marriage, which drains the speaker of life perpetuates. Such events have such a hold upon the speaker's life, that it becomes clear she must attempt to end her fixation: she ends her marriage, knowing it will destroy her father's memory too, an act that allows her to finally break free of her trauma, and potentially create a new sense of vitality and belonging for her.

A very important theme in the poem is life and death; without her father living as he did, and dying when he did while Plath was still young, this poem would not exist as it does. Life and death is a theme shown throughout the play, Plath's father's life and death, the Holocaust, and her divorce from her husband, which has a sense of new life. Plath imagines a vampire-husband has impersonated the dead Nazi-father for seven years of marriage, drinking his wife's blood until she has finally put a stake through his heart in the final stanza. The word 'vampire' may be used in a more colloquial sense, to refer to a person who preys on or otherwise exploits other people by draining them of vital resource. Plath uses the vampire metaphor to emphasise how terrible and evil her husband was. Some critics have pointed out that some of Sylvia's language, such as 'I'm through,' is ambiguous and could suggest the speaker is done with life and finally defeated, therefore potentially, we may see the metaphorical death of her, through her exhaustion.

Overall, the message created by Plath in this poem is that some women, due to early conditioning, find themselves without the tools to deal with oppressive and controlling men. In 1965, the year of publishing, 'Daddy' would have been controversial in society as Plath challenges the dominant ideologies present in the later 1960's society. She employs the use of overtly masculine depictions of her late father to criticise the patriarchy. Throughout the poem, identifiable traits and characteristics of the patriarchy are discerned through male-controlled, male-dominated and male-orientated actions and structures that disadvantage women. At the time of Plath's suicide in 1963, a predilection of second-wave feminism was on the rise. Plath supports feminism throughout the poem as she throws her voice against the patriarchy and she protests for her oppressed female identity under the social system dominated by men. However, her willingness to be subjected to the torture of others through subjugation demonstrates her acceptance of the violence in her life, perhaps opposing feminist ideals as she allows for her own exploitation. Although some may praise Plath for speaking up regarding her family trauma, it would still be seen as unusual at the time for her to talk about her trauma so candidly. Her poetry and prose come under the wider umbrella of confessional writing: a literary movement pivotal in bringing typically 'taboo' personal or emotional subjects such as suicide and trauma. If Plath's method of successful suicide hadn't been so unusual, perhaps her mental state wouldn't overshadow the discussion of her writing so much.

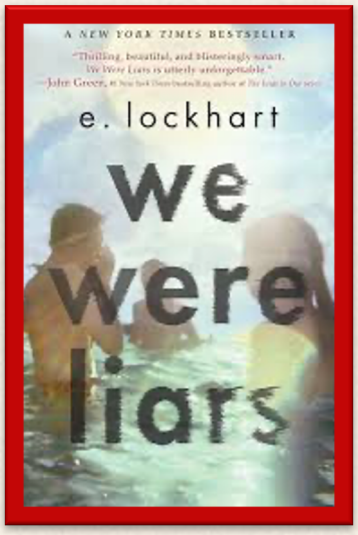
The Cost of Perfection: Exploring Wealth, Class, and Identity in 'We Were Liars' by E.Lockhart

Daisy Odgen

This insight serves as a stark contrast to the Sinclair family in We Were Liars, whose immense wealth breeds not happiness, but a dangerous cycle of unrealistic expectations, emotional distance and loss of their sense of self. The novel examines how wealth and class influence personal identity and family dynamics, exploring the pressures that accompany social expectations. These themes are comparable to real-life societal structures, where wealth shapes opportunity, behaviour and relationships.

In We Were Liars, the Sinclair family epitomises the old money aristocracy, living in an exclusive and isolated environment on a private island. Their wealth is not just a material asset, but a force that shapes their actions and interactions with others. The Sinclair's life is governed by the cultural expectations of their aristocratic class - preserving appearances, maintaining social standing and protecting the family's legacy/ traditions. These expectations manifest in the family's seemingly perfect behaviours and their focus on status over substance. For example, Cadence, the protagonist, is pressured to embody the ideal Sinclair – beautiful, elegant and problem-free – despite the trauma she faces after the death of her cousins. The disconnect between appearance and reality mirrors a broader societal situation where the wealthy are expected to maintain an image of perfection, often despite their deteriorating mental well-being.

In real life, these cultural implications of wealth are evident in how individuals from wealthy backgrounds are often expected to conform to societal ideals of success and happiness, regardless of personal struggles. For example, many high-profile families, such as those in entertainment or political industries, frequently appear flawless, whilst the pressures to uphold that image can lead to emotional burnout, substance abuse and broken relationships. Drew Barrymore, for example, made headlines when she announced her struggle with addiction at just 13 years old. Among the celebrities who went to rehab, Drew came from a renowned family of actors who also struggled with addiction. She states she began using cocaine at age 12, saying her drug use was a coping mechanism for her childhood stardom. Similarly, studies show that children of wealthy families often experience heightened levels of anxiety and depression due to the pressure of meeting their family's high standards, as well as feelings of isolation caused by a sensation of disconnect from the real world. Just as the Sinclair's lives are distorted by wealth, these real - life scenarios demonstrate how affluence can create a culture of superficiality and emotional disconnection.



Furthermore, in the novel, the Sinclair family's overwhelming privilege is a mixed blessing. On one hand, their wealth provides them with a sense of security and power. However, on the other hand, it creates a sense of entitlement that blinds them to the needs cousins. The family's refusal to confront the truth, instead burying it under layers of denial, reflects the emotional distance created by their privilege. Their wealth affords them the luxury of pretending that their mistakes can be erased or ignored. This sense of entitlement, that their wealth and social standing place them above consequence, is a central theme that shapes the novel's events. For example, the way that the family continues their carefree, luxurious lifestyle despite the horrors of their past underscores how wealth allows them to avoid the reality of their situation.

In reality, the consequences of privilege and entitlement are similarly profound. For example, wealthy individuals and families often exhibit a lack of empathy toward those less fortunate, sometimes seeing their success as a reflection of their superior abilities. The concept of 'white privilege' is one real-world example, where individuals born into generational wealth or certain social positions may not be aware of the struggles faced by marginalised groups, as they are sheltered from the hardships of the less privileged. A high profile case like that of the college admissions scandal in the United States, where wealthy parents used their privilege to secure spots for their children in top universities, demonstrates how entitlement can skew moral boundaries. The individuals involved were able to exploit their financial resources to bypass rules and gain an unfair advantage, showing how privilege can perpetuate inequality. Similarly, in the corporate world, executives often enjoy secure financial packages, while employees face job insecurity and stagnant wages, preserving a culture of entitlement that overlooks the realities of those in the lower classes. Much like the and suffering of others. This entitlement is demonstrated in the family's inability to acknowledge the consequences of their actions, particularly in relation to the tragic events surrounding Cadence's

Sinclair family's denial of the consequences of their privilege, these examples highlight how entitlement and wealth can shield individuals from the impact of their actions.
Throughout We Were Liars, the Sinclair family's wealth creates a profound divide between them and the outside world, starkly symbolised by their mere possession of a private island. This physical and social separation from the rest of society reflects a broader pattern of wealth disparity and social stratification, where the wealthy live in isolated bubbles, removed from the struggles faced by those in lower socioeconomic classes. The Sinclair family's ability to escape to a secluded island, away from the pressures and realities of the mainland, mirrors how the ultra-wealthy often have access to spaces that seclude them from societal issues such as poverty, inequality and injustice. This divide is not only physical but cultural – Cadence and her family are not just economically separated from others, but socially distanced as well, as their world revolves around maintaining their legacy, power, and status, rather than engaging with the realities of everyday life for most people.

Real-life examples of wealth disparity and social stratification are everywhere in modern society. One of the most prominent examples is the difference in access to education. Families with wealth can afford private schooling, tutors, and university tuition, ensuring that their children have an upper hand in life, while those from lower-income backgrounds often struggle to access quality education. This division perpetuates social inequality, as the wealthy continue to pass on their advantages, whilst the poor face greater barriers. In the United States, for instance, the top 1% of households control a

disproportionate share of the nation's wealth, and this inequality is only widening. Studies show that social mobility has decreased significantly in recent decades, meaning that the children of wealthy families are far more likely to remain wealthy, whilst children born into poverty have limited opportunities to improve their circumstances. This trend is echoed in the Sinclair family's situation, where wealth not only separates them physically from the outside world but also emotionally and socially, preventing them from forming genuine connections with those who do not share their level of privilege. The cultural barrier between the Sinclair's and the rest of society mirrors the broader social stratification seen in real–world settings.

In the novel, the psychological toll of wealth and class on personal identity is starkly illustrated through Cadence's internal struggles. Although she is born into privilege, Cadence struggles with feelings of isolation, trauma and a sense of fractured identity. The pressure to uphold the Sinclair family's perfect image leaves little room for self-expression or emotional processing. This disconnect is emphasised by her family's emotional detachment and refusal to confront the consequences of their actions. Cadence's amnesia and the family's ongoing denial illustrate the toll of trying to reconcile personal grief with societal expectations. The contrast between the expectations of wealth and her own trauma creates an inner conflict that distances her from her family and ultimately, herself. The narrative suggests that the more Cadence tries to conform to her family's ideals, the more she loses a sense of her own identity. the more Cadence tries to conform to her family's ideals, the more she loses a sense of her own identity.

In reality, the psychological toll of wealth and identity is often seen in the struggles of those born into affluence, particularly the emotional strain of living up to societal expectations. For example, many children from wealthy families experience identity crises because their personal desires and ambitions conflict with their family's expectations to maintain a certain lifestyle. One case is the phenomenon of "rich kid syndrome" where young adults from privileged backgrounds may feel a lack of purpose because their wealth insulates them from everyday challenges, inhibiting any personal growth. Paris Hilton, for example, has spoken publicly about her struggles with identity and self worth, despite growing up in a life of luxury. Hilton's public persona as a socialite and reality TV star was often a reflection of her family's expectations and public image, not her true self .

Spain's best - known story.

Valentina Pisano

"In a village of La Mancha, the name of which I have no desire to call to mind, there lived not long since one of those gentlemen that keep a lance in the lance-rack, an old buckler, a lean hack, and a greyhound for coursing [...]".
With these words begins the most famous and well-known story in the history of Spanish literature. A seemingly simple tale narrating the adventures of a mad knight and his humble companion Sancho Panza, moving around Spain in search of quests. In the book *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha* we are introduced to Spain's most famous character, a somewhat older gentleman who we are warned tends to rave. This character's longing has always been to resemble the heroes of his favourite books. He grew up reading the so-called novels of chivalry, a very famous genre at the time, the xvi century. These novels told the stories of heroic and invincible knights who faced any kind of real or fictitious obstacle to gain honour, always defending the people, the Church or the King. These fictional heroes also used to fight on behalf of a beloved, a prototypical beautiful woman of the time with whom the knight was madly in love.
In this context, we might think that Don Quixote is presented to us as just another knight in this type of novel; however, his originality lies in the fact that he is a parody of this type of character. Don Quixote, as I have said, was an older man who had grown up reading these novels and dreamed of being, like his idols, a knight protagonist. Such was his illusion and obsession that one day he decided to create a suit of armour, take his horse and tell a humble shepherd of the village to take his things and come with him, because he had decided to go on an adventure and face different calamities in order to become a hero that the whole village would remember. At the same time, Don Quixote also assures a young girl in the village that everything he achieves and conquers will be dedicated to her and her beauty, thus considering her his typical

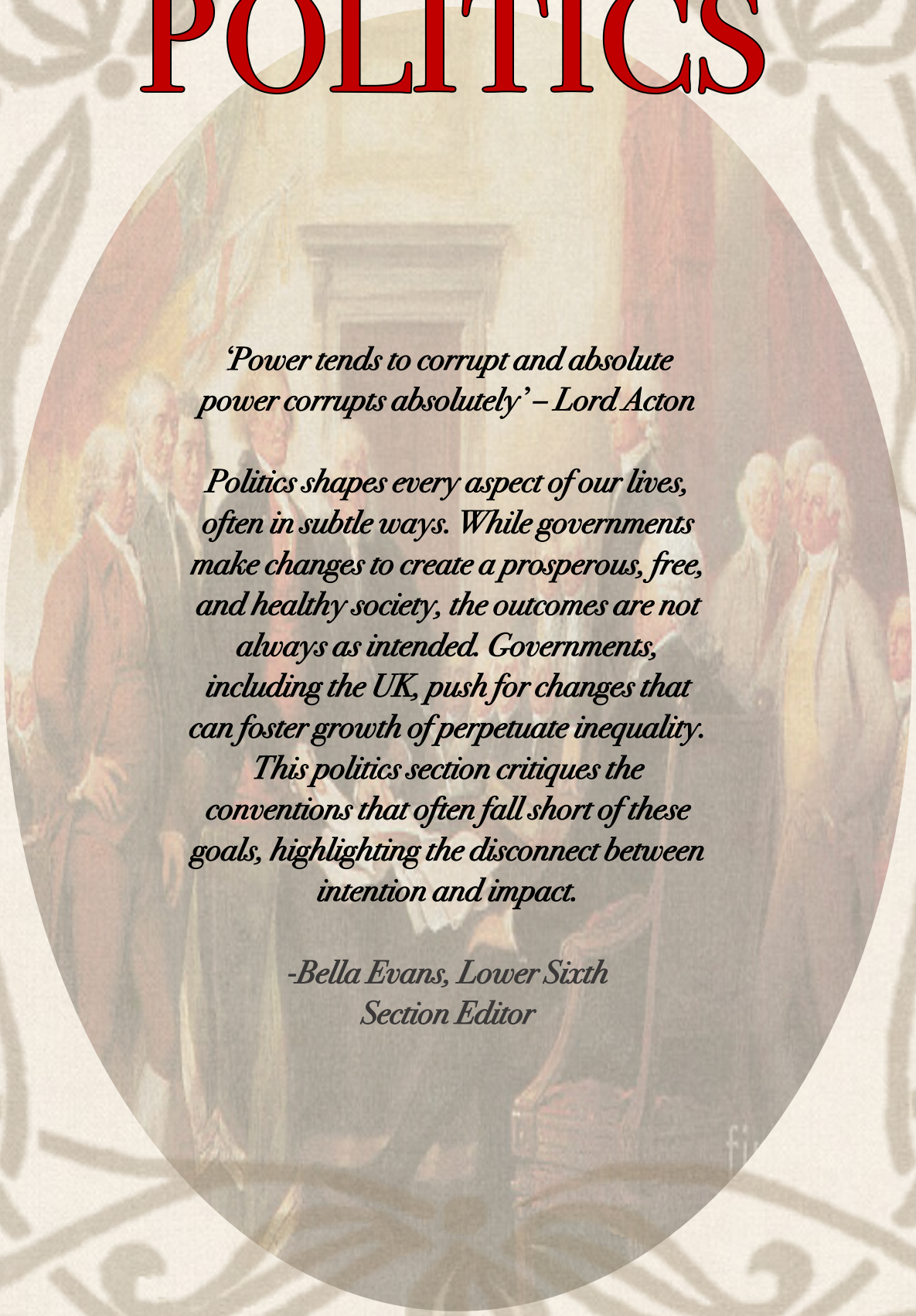
beloved in the novels.
This is how a long novel begins, in which, instead of reading heroic quests carried out by a handsome young knight, we are treated to an older gentleman on a scrawny horse and his lazy, fat companion on a poor donkey as they ride through the Spanish countryside looking for something to confront. The protagonist's madness and his obsession to become a knight will reach such a point that he will begin to have visions and see enemies where there are none. One of the most famous episodes in this book is the one in which, in the middle of the Castilian countryside, Don Quixote sees windmills in the distance. He is so eager to be able to confront something that he imagines

they are mythical giants who do not want to let him continue his way. While the protagonist tells us his adventurous and heroic point of view in which he confronts two large fictitious creatures, his companion, Sancho Panza, makes Don Quixote and the reader understand that what he is facing is nothing more than a windmill and that those large arms that approach the protagonist are nothing more than the blades that turn repeatedly.

In this way, throughout the reading of this amusing novel, we participate in the madness that Don Quixote imagines and invents, and in the stream of reality that Sancho Panza perceives. But the most original and profound aspect of this novel is that the author takes advantage of this context to denounce and make fun of many aspects of his time. On the one hand, he takes a stand in favour of the genre of chivalry, which had long been criticised by many people who considered it a distraction and literature of poor quality, as it did not contain a profound or Christian message and was often written in vulgar or informal language. He denounced the fact that all the literature of his time was exaggerated and perfectionist, and that everything always had to carry a Christian message and represent perfection. The author wanted to show that an absurd and amusing book like the one he was publishing could also entertain the masses while teaching them something. Finally, the author made enemies of several writers of the time, as he explicitly denounced several authors whom he considered pedantic, who used very difficult language and wanted to flaunt their knowledge and vast vocabulary, making the novels a very complicated read that very few could understand. With the publication of Don Quixote, Cervantes demonstrated that vulgar language was not synonymous with bad literature and that his book hid as many references and knowledge as any other of his time without the need to use complicated language.

All this, while being able to give the public a book that was easy to read, that they could understand and that entertained the masses. This is how Cervantes created the most famous book in Spanish literature, still celebrated and important to this day and with which all children grow up in Spain.

POLITICS



'Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely' – Lord Acton

Politics shapes every aspect of our lives, often in subtle ways. While governments make changes to create a prosperous, free, and healthy society, the outcomes are not always as intended. Governments, including the UK, push for changes that can foster growth of perpetuate inequality. This politics section critiques the conventions that often fall short of these goals, highlighting the disconnect between intention and impact.

-Bella Evans, Lower Sixth
Section Editor

Broken conventions and shameless scandals: How can society trust it's government when members are subverting constitutional norms?

Bella Evans

Constitutional conventions are essentially unwritten rules that guide political behaviour and ensure the functioning of governments. While these conventions are not legally binding, they serve as a vital framework for maintaining public trust and political accountability. Unfortunately, due to their lack of enforceability, these conventions are susceptible to manipulation, enabling politicians to disregard and break them. Behaviour such as this often fuels the perception that politicians are inherently prone to dishonesty. However, when these conventions are repeatedly disregarded by those in power, it raises an important question: how can society place its trust in their government?

A clear example of this lies in the leadership of Boris Johnson from the years 2019- 2022. Whilst the precise number of scandals he created and conventions he has broken is debatable, his tenure as Prime Minister was undeniably marked by significant controversy. One of the most notorious breaches that violated legal and ethical rights is known as the partygate scandal, ultimately leading to the demise of Boris Johnson. This refers to gatherings that Johsnon and several other officials attended that directly violated the very COVID-19 restrictions they had imposed on the public.

Despite strict measures in practice which prohibited people from leaving their homes, on May 20th, 2020, Johnson and several of his cabinet ministers attended a gathering in the garden of 10th Downing Street - an event that directly contravened the rules in practice. This was shortly followed by several other gatherings, further embedding the public's distrust in his leadership. Concurrently, during this particular time, the UK was experiencing the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, with an alarming 232,112 total deaths in the UK attributed to this destructive virus. So whilst the public endured stringent lockdown measures, for example, the inability to visit loved ones in hospitals or attend funerals, Johnson and his ministers were hosting parties in clear defiance of the rules they had imposed. The subsequent photographic evidence, alongside testimonies, left no doubt that Johnson's actions were not only reckless but also callous, showcasing a complete disregard for the public's suffering.

However, some may argue that Prime Minister Boris Johnson should not face such harsh criticism and animosity from the public, as he was not the only attendee at these events. While this raises a valid point, for many in the UK it permanently scarred his image as a disrespectful figure with little care for the country. Ultimately, Patygate was the leading factor in the damage to his popularity - both with the public and within his own cabinet - which played a significant role in his downfall. However, he committed further immoral acts including breaking conventions, bringing his inevitable resignation closer. This included his views and opinions which he made rather boldly known, particularly through his misogynistic and borderline racist remarks. A prominent example being his reference to women wearing burqas as

″letterboxes″ and ″bank robbers″ in a 2018 column for The Daily Telegraph. His comments were widely condemned as Islamophobic and misogynistic, further underscoring the pattern of broken conventions during his time in office. Not only did he engage in unethical behaviour, but he also violated the core principles of respect and equality that are fundamental to democratic societies.

This fuels the fundamental question: When a powerful leader such as the Prime Minister breaks conventions, how can the public continue to place their faith in the political system? Johnson eventually resigned as Prime Minister on September 6th, 2022, primarily due to investigations from the Commons Privileges Committee into the “Partygate” scandal. However, he did not immediately step down from Parliament as an MP until June 2023. This delayed resignation highlights the uncomfortable reality that, even when public trust is severely eroded, powerful politicians often remain entrenched in office far longer than is appropriate.

Moreover, ministerial resignations are not uncommon and consequently, those involving blatant disregard for rules seem to occur more frequently. For instance, Health Secretary Matt Hancock resigned in June 2021, after breaking his own Covid-19 regulations by engaging in an affair with his aide, Gina Coladangelo. Similarly, Gavin Williamson resigned as Minister of State after sending inappropriate text messages following his exclusion from the Queen’s funeral.

A more recent example is in the labour government of 2024, where WhatsApp messages containing offensive remarks were leaked from several MPs, revealing a deeply concerning culture within Parliament. One such message from Labour MP Andrew Gwynn mocked a 72-year-old woman who had written to her local councillor about bin collections, expressing a hope that she would soon pass away. This kind of behaviour undermines the integrity of the role of an MP and alienates the public, particularly minority groups who may feel betrayed by their elected representatives.

These scandals illustrate the failure of political oversight bodies, such as the Public Accounts Committee, to hold MPs accountable for their actions. So, how can the public ensure that the government is being held responsible? Public protests, social media campaigns, and petitions are often used to express dissatisfaction. While these actions may seem invaluable at first and, in many cases, true, they do not always lead to meaningful change; it can bring about attention and publicity to critical issues. This awareness serves as effective scrutiny, as it may alter a minister′s public image and significantly affect their popularity, which over time can lead to real change.

However, such actions can be inconsistent therefore highlighting the need for stronger, more independent oversight mechanisms such as Independent bodies with the power to investigate and impose consequences. I am strongly of the opinion that in order to rebuild trust, politicians must be held to higher ethical standards, and robust systems must be in place to ensure that they are held accountable when they break conventions.

So, what systems and reforms can achieve this desired effect? I am personally in favour of an Independent Oversight Board, which would oversee actions and behaviours of all government officials, ministers and civil servants. Hopefully, it would provide strong enough grounds for an independent mechanism for scrutiny, so that scandals can be prevented from escalating. This would ensure politicians are susceptible to some form of accountability and will enable the public to regain their trust within the political system - trust that many in the UK have been deprived of for years.

Royal Authority and constitutional consent: The role of monarchs in law-making throughout History

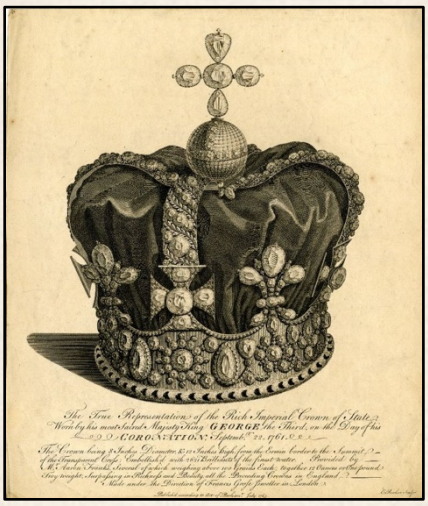
Florence Hughes

In the UK, the role of the monarchy in law-making has diminished over the centuries. Historically, the monarchy was the main figure in governance, but nowadays, the role is more symbolic, with power residing strongly in parliament.

In the early stages of the monarchy, it had significant power over law-making. Sovereigns had the authority to issue royal decrees, and even create laws, a prominent example being Henry VIII, who passed a law which transferred religious authority from the pope, Catholicism, to the English crown, Church of England. This is known as absolute authority. The power that monarchs held also allowed them to make Royal Assent, in which their approval was required for any law to be passed in parliament. Although Royal assent is now still needed, it is more of a ceremonial step of tradition, with all real power stripped. A recent example of Royal assent is shown through the Financial Assistance to Ukraine Act 2025: Provides for loans or other financial assistance to the government of Ukraine. This received Royal Assent on 16 January 2025.

In 1215, the Magna Carta was signed, one of the first steps of restraining monarchical power which began the change in constitutional laws in England. Subsequently, there was a rise in parliamentary sovereignty, replacing the importance of the monarchy, known as the "Act of Settlement", strengthening parliament's importance and dominance. Presently, there isn't as much importance placed on the monarchy in comparison to the past. Instead of monarchical supremacy, the monarchy is expected to conform to the needs of parliament. A memorable example of this was shown through the lack of rejection of Royal Assent, the last rejection being Queen Anne's reign in the late 18th century, which clearly portrays the monarch's role transforming into a constitutional formality.

The decay of monarchic power has been evident, through the shift in roles and expectations, from parliament. A huge breakdown of the monarchy's power and role in law-making is shown through the role of the Prime minister, due to parliamentary democracy. The PM is responsible for creating laws, setting policies and leading the country, in comparison to the huge leap in the past, where now the monarchy is used as a tradition, no decisions made on their personal discretion, at most a matter of constitutional convention. Prime ministers evolved quickly as it became more apparent the disagreements people had surrounding the Crown and unfair advantages through being born into a title. Over time, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries, ideas about democracy and popular sovereignty became more widespread. The Enlightenment, in 1685 to 1815, with philosophers like John Locke and Montesquieu, argued that the power of government should come from the people, not from divine right or royal blood. This laid the intellectual groundwork for more democratic forms of government.



Although many may state that Royal Assent is only a matter of formality, it can be argued it plays a crucial role in adding an extra layer of protection to the UK Parliament′s legislative process. While it marks the end stage in the passage of a bill, the requirement for Royal Assent ensures that the monarch's formal approval is given before any legislation becomes law. This constitutional step reinforces the principle of parliamentary sovereignty, highlighting that no law can be enacted without the will and cooperation of Parliament being fully respected. By maintaining the tradition of Royal Assent, the UK ensures a clear and protected method for passing laws, where Parliament′s decisions are safeguarded through this ceremonial approval.

The Crown in other countries has some similarities to the UK in their role in law-making, with bills in Canada and Australia also requiring Royal Assent. However, in Sweden, unlike the UK, where the monarch retains a nominal political role, the monarchy is purely ceremonial. The King or Queen of Sweden has no formal political power or duties within the government. The role of the Crown is largely symbolic, with the monarch attending state functions and representing Sweden in diplomatic relations. The Swedish monarch doesn't participate in the legislative or executive branches of government, and Sweden operates under a parliamentary democracy with a head of government, the Prime Minister, who holds executive power. Furthermore, Japan's emperor has no political power and plays no role in government, significantly changing through history. The devolution of powers has created an interest in the disposal of power in the UK. The UK′s political landscape has already shifted with devolution, granting more power to the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Parliament, and the Northern Irish Assembly. Further devolution or changes to the constitutional structure could affect how laws are made at different levels of government. For example, issues like regional independence or more localised governance might require new ways of creating and enforcing laws.

Law-making in the UK has transformed from a process dominated by royal authority to one that is deeply rooted in parliamentary democracy. This evolution clearly reflects the broader shift towards a system where laws are created through debate and the will of the people, ensuring that the legislative process is both transparent and accountable. It is heavily endorsed by governing bodies that the public should have access to a voice, living freely in a democracy that is not controlled by people who are entitled to their positions due to blood. Although the Monarchy is still a clear indication of the archaic history of the UK, it is not permitted nor needed to help make developments in the political field. The decision making by important bodies, required through time has fluctuated heavily, there being successes and failures, however nowadays the political system is in a clear place, participation being accessible to everyone. This alludes to the fact that overtime conventions have been altered in order to upkeep with modernisation and laws have passed from the Monarchy to the Parliament.

‘Visible and Invisible Bars’ The modern slavery that incarcerates us all

Cara Bell

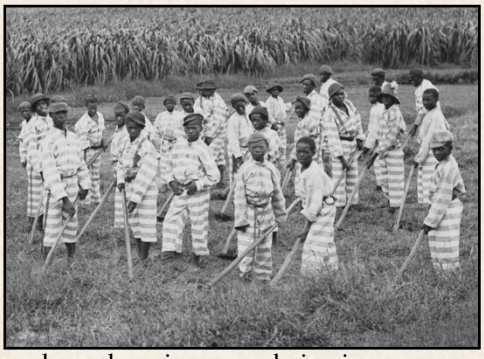
‘Slavery by another name’

We are confronted with a prison epidemic. When did the rehabilitation of prisoners become undermined by retribution?

With the birth of the state as a form of social organisation came the birth of punishment; detention facilities are thought to have coexisted with agricultural capitalism and even feudalism since its origin. Yet somewhere between Plato and Putin, we seem to have lost our way. The history of incarceration is polluted with hatred and vengeance, marred by its reputation of public spectacles during the Middle Ages, metal cages located in sewers during the Roman Empire, and banishment from Chinese society during the Qing Dynasty. Even to this day, death penalty abolitionists often argue that imprisonment is a more apt punishment, as it forces a convict to suffer and is in effect, worse than death. Prisons reflect a tangible public desire for a new form of punishment that forces criminals to live with the consequences of their felonies, being deprived of their own rights as a result of violating another’s. Therefore, in moving away from capital punishment, public executions and military retribution, are we in fact becoming a more unjust society?

The United States of Segregation

Home to 25% of the world’s prisoners, the United States hosts the highest rate of incarceration globally. Over 1 in 5 citizens have a criminal



record, yet the prison population is disproportionately represented by its minorities, specifically the black community who simultaneously represent 6.5% of the national and yet comprise 40% of the prison population.

With the conclusion of the US Civil War in 1865 came the liberation of 4 million slaves and the abolition of their abhorrent trade; this colossal, forced labour had been an integral part of the production system. The 13th amendment followed, prohibiting slavery and involuntary servitude ‘except as a punishment for crime’. Many consider this both a ‘loophole’ to slavery and a disregard of human rights that consolidate the foundation of modern diplomacy. As a result, mass incarceration became common for petty crimes such as loitering or vagrancy, founding the US penal system as we know it today and fuelling the reconstruction of the Southern economy. American detention facilities remain an outlet for frustration and resistance to black autonomy. Certainly, there is a profound symbolism in former slave plantations being repurposed as prisons and disproportionately filled with black people serving life sentences, often for nonviolent crimes. The US penal system can reasonably be interpreted as a sophisticated form of racialised control, functioning in a similar way to the legally enforced racial apartheid of the ‘Jim Crow’ segregation laws in effect from the 1870s to 1950s.

Detention facilities craft a cycle of poverty that inhibits many from escaping stereotypical presentations as criminals, utilised as a facade for the malevolent prison industrial complex. The concepts of both bail and plea bargains target marginalised communities, encouraging less fortunate people to admit to crimes regardless of their culpability, in turn adding another body to

this country's 2.3 million-strong indentured slave population and providing incarcerated labourers to work in depressed regions. Ultimately this ensures the continuation of plutocratic dynasties, producing approximately $11 billion in commodities per year. Rather than prioritising educational or rehabilitation programmes to better support convicts upon release, arduous manual labour props up sinister enterprises while permanent criminal records prevent prisoners from gaining employment in these same industries upon release, leaving this superpower with the highest rates of recidivism globally.

With all of this in mind, it is clear that the US prison system upholds the institutional segregation and modern-day slavery embedded in its history and must be rectified if we are to progress as a global society.

New Zealand's Not-So-New Colonialism

Maoris and other minorities comprise approximately 20% of the country's population, yet over 52% and 67% of the male and female prison population respectively, making them the fastest growing demographic of the nation's burgeoning incarceration system. This Pacific nation also faces a huge obstacle of structural racism, translating into poverty, limited access to education, and the legacy of having incarcerated parents. This is an impact of 'Native Schooling', a project from 1816 to 1969 to 'educate' the aboriginal community and forcibly assimilate them into an English-speaking monoculture. Provision of racist gendered education exacerbates a cycle of underachievement, resigning Maori women to roles of domestic servitude and unskilled labour. The heritage of colonisation haunts the island, evidenced by a 7-year disparity in life expectancy and aboriginal children being almost 5 times more likely to be in state care than other New Zealanders.

A myriad of historical and contemporary experiences make Maori women particularly vulnerable to social harm, and therefore the criminal justice system, as argued by academic Khylee Quince. Maori have lost legal and political status under the form of tikanga, a set of rules and principles which governed daily life for indigenous Maori. Women particularly have suffered from patriarchal Couverture laws, losing lands and resources which compounded their repression. As argued by Sociologist Helene Connor, the

historical loss of language and identity for Maori manifests itself in destructive behaviour such as substance abuse, violence and crime. Second and third generation urban Maori often perceive a limited ability to participate in a Maori identity, yet feel rejected by surrounding Western society, so potentially feel deserted by both sectors of society, resulting in a destruction of sense of self, and ultimately participation in criminal activity.

Saudi-Arabia and homosexuality: religious autonomy or outright autocracy?

The persecution of the LGBTQ+ community is not a new or unique phenomenon: continued collective responsibility lies with the 70 nations that imprison citizens for their sexual orientation. Saudi Arabia is a poignant example of this issue in relation to the prison system, with the Sharia law prohibiting same-sex sexual activity for both men and women and equating this 'crime' with the death penalty in the most extreme cases.

Additionally, transgender people may also face prosecution for failing to adhere to strict dress codes imposed. Originating in Islamic law, many argue that this religious legacy is abused by contemporary governments as a political device to prevent growing activism and modernisation, that in the western world have ultimately resulted in cultural globalisation and a transition away from secular society.

In 2020 a Yemini blogger living in Saudi Arabia was arrested for advocating for equality for LGBT people. He was eventually sentenced to ten months' imprisonment and a fine, followed by deportation, under 'public indecency' laws. While in detention he was subjected to solitary confinement, beatings, and torture. This is not an isolated case, and while the exploitation of incarceration as a method of warping religious guidance and controlling a population continues, surely this must be accounted for as another failure of the global prison system.

Nazi Germany

Political imprisonment was an indispensable aspect of the terror of Hitler's Third Reich, incarcerating hundreds of thousands of political opponents, criminals, 'racial aliens' and other general outsiders. Between 1933 and 1945, Nazi Germany and its allies established over 40,000 camps and incarceration sites, utilised by perpetrators for a range of purposes during the Holocaust, including forced labor, detention of supposed enemies of the state, and ultimately mass murder.

The dictator's orchestration of a judicial system to compliment his malevolent political policies explicitly crystallises the dangers and fatal flaws of incarceration, as they can be, and often are, abused for personal or systematic socio-political gain. The implementation of 'protective custody' legalised arrest, without judicial review, of potential opponents of the regime, deporting these 'convicts' to concentration camps under exclusive authority of the SS. The formation of makeshift legal structures aimed to prop up Hitler's heinous persecution, such as the
'People's Court' (Volksgerichtshof) solely reserved for political cases and condemning tens of thousands of resistors to an untimely, excruciating demise in concentration camps. And yet, with far-right nationalism in Germany at its most significant peak since the end of the Second World War, who's to say that our apparently just and trustworthy prison systems will not yet again fall victim to the whims of dictators. Arguably they already have, as seen with China's ongoing persecution of the Uyghur Muslim community, and thus these systems will continue to fail modern society if they are not reformed.

As long as our justice system remains fallible, so does our prison system, functioning as a microcosm of the prejudice, discrimination and bigotry that permeates the 'liberated' society surrounding it. Globally, the criminal justice system exacerbates disparities and historical power imbalances between communities, while simultaneously undermining potential for marginalised communities to transcend their stereotypical and institutionalised confines.

Regardless of a convict's length of incarceration its impacts serve a life sentence, damaging wider society, creating a culture of violence and hindering future economic opportunities. This ubiquitous disruption to social cohesion reshapes family and community structures across generations, temporarily incapacitating its victims yet having a remarkably tenuous link to crime deterrence and the formation of a more civilised society.

We are confronted with a prison epidemic. Let's hope it's not too late to stop it.

Crumbling Conventions: How the Talibans legislation has created political and economic instability, majorly affecting the lives of women.

Mia Brown

The Taliban's rise to power has become an increasingly important topic over recent years. Much of this can be traced back to the Cold War. Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, resistance groups collectively known as the Mujahideen were formed to combat soviet forces. These groups were supported by global superpowers to prevent the Soviets from gaining influence in the region; leading countries, such as the US, provided weapons, funding and training. This foreign intervention would prove to be a grave mistake, as the subsequent civil war broke out after the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan. With the US largely disengaged, Afghanistan was left in a state of instability. In the midst of the chaos, the right-wing extremist group emerged, promising order and strict Islamic rule. Taliban harboured Osama bin Laden despite the US's demands for extradition, the US invaded Afghanistan, deteriorating the Taliban's government. However, the Taliban continued to fight over the following 20 years, ending with the US withdrawing and the Taliban swiftly regaining control in 2021. This highlights how America's involvement helped shape their rise to power. In recent years, the Taliban has transformed the political and economic stability of Afghanistan. For instance, no county has formally recognised the Taliban as Afghanistan's legitimate government. This widespread rejection reflects the damaging effect they are having on Afghanistan and its people.

Furthermore, the economic state in Afghanistan continues to decline as its economy has previously relied on foreign grants. These have subsequently been cut off following the Taliban's ascension, due to their negative diplomatic reputation. Furthermore, all foreign aid has also been withdrawn from Afghanistan due to the Talian, leaving their healthcare system in ruins. Not only are they damaging relations with other countries, but also with their own people. They have issued various controversial laws, reducing women to property of their husbands and fathers, stripping them of their basic human rights. The UK's deputy political coordinator released a statement during the UN security council meeting saying that "the UK unequivocally condemns the so-called 'vice and virtue' law issued by the Taliban.". Their extremist policies have weakened their governing rule and fuelled corruption, which has ultimately led to a fragile and unstable political system.

After the Taliban regained control over Afghanistan in August 2021, the lives of women have been severely affected in nearly every aspect of society. They have effectively been removed from the public sphere, pushed out of view and freedoms severely restricted. Firstly, the rights to education have been nearly completely stripped from women with all girls being banned from attending secondary school and universities. Not only will this prove to have detrimental repercussions in later years, when almost half their

population will be unqualified, or simply not allowed to work, but many women feel very strongly about their basic rights. It is now nearly 3 years since the law passed, but the women of Afghanistan continue to fight for basic rights in secret. By posting videos dissenting the actions of

the Taliban online, these women are desperately attempting to bring awareness to their struggle. Reports show those caught in such activities beaten, locked away, and treated like animals until they are released. One of the biggest issues at hand is their restriction within public life and general mobility. The prejudices towards women are having an unprecedented impact on their daily lives. A new law from August 202 stated "if a woman must leave her home out of necessity, she is obliged to cover her face and body and her voice must not be heard". The shocking law nearly completely immobilised women, stripping them of any identity and reducing them to invisible objects. Although, this law contains some religious principles and follows to some of their beliefs, this is being thoroughly abused as their legislation is passed and enforced. They are treated like children, unable to make journeys without a 'male guardian'. The silencing of their voices reinforces their oppression and prevents them from advocating for their basic rights.

Additionally, basic activities have also been taken away. Many public spaces such as parks and gyms are now completely closed off to women. The Taliban have effectively made Afghanistan a 'man's world'. A reporter from the BBC, Yogita Limaye, visited Afghanistan and spoke to various women, having to keep their identities hidden for fear of retribution. They shared their feelings of entrapment under Taliban rule "Every moment you feel like you are in a prison. Even breathing becomes difficult", "We are like dead bodies moving around, we can't talk, we can't do anything.". The fact that so many feel so strongly about how their lives have changed, yet none have the access to freedom of speech highlights their oppression. The same reporter met a man from the Taliban government, Hamdullah Fitrat. He refused to be seen with a woman or sit directly in front of the female interviewer. Extremist right wing islamic principles have been completely distorted, with men in essence displaying petty behaviour. These are the same men running the government which 'looks after' both men and women. Access to healthcare has also been impacted, as they face difficulties due to their multiple mobility restraints and depleting number of female healthcare workers. Mental health problems such as depression and suicide has increased among women, unable to fully access help.

Repercussions have been felt though all sections of Afghan society. As previously mentioned, due to the 75% of Afghanistan's budget being cut off in 2021, it has led to financial crises. This has had masses of social impacts on the ordinary people in Afghanistan, who are still suffering from the consequences of this. Due to this loss of relations and resources from other countries, the families which survived on food aid are now suffering. With this, over 90% of Afghans are struggling to afford food as the economy continues to shrink. This mass decline in the economy has led to millions being pushed to extreme poverty and famine-like conditions. This poverty has left families in poor provinces with no choice but to give away their young daughters for money.

During a study, the BBC reported on one of Afghanistan's poorest provinces in the central highlands. It shed light on the number of families resorting to giving away their daughters just to feed their families. One family gave up their 6-year-old daughter for roughly $1000. Despite the relentless crying and resistance, the mother had no choice but to stand and watch her daughter being dragged away from her. As many women have been pushed out of jobs, the number of healthcare workers has massively decreased, leaving the healthcare system in ruins.

This is due to lack of funding and workers. Many have fled the country due to the economic crisis. Medical supplies are scarce, and many are having to sell everything they own just to afford the treatment that would have otherwise been given to them for free. Afghanistan's dying state has led to mass migration, many fleeing the country as they have no opportunities. Furthermore, the loss of women's financial independence has left families in dire states, having to rely on only one income source. Loss of female workers already cost the Afghan economy $1billion by 2022. Just one year of women out of the workforce has helped to cripple the economy. Widespread job losses and bans on female employment have left many families with no income at all. The lack of economic stability and healthcare has led to humanitarian crises.

Overall, the subversion of conventions has led to social, political and economical crises within Afghanistan leading to detrimental impacts upon minority groups such as women. They have done this by changing their conventional laws to benefit their beliefs in which they claim to have religious principles. In summary, the Taliban have eroded basic human rights thus creating a toxic environment for women.

Navigating shifting gender norms

Daisy Ogden

"Gender is not something we are born with, but something we learn" – Judith Butler

Gender norms, which were once firm, traditional, and widely accepted, have been the subject of intense change in recent decades. These societal expectations and conventional roles for men and women have evolved significantly, particularly in the workplace and across cultures. As the world becomes more inclusive, how we perceive gender, both internally and externally, continues to shape the way we navigate life. This shift in gender norms impacts every individual's experience, both at work and in society. From breaking barriers in the workplace to challenging traditional family roles, understanding these transformations can help us recognize the broader cultural implications of gender today.

Historically, gender norms were rigidly defined, with men expected to be the primary job holders and women confined to domestic roles. These societal expectations were not only reinforced by law and religion but were also established into everyday life. For instance, women in the United States couldn't vote until the 19th Amendment was passed in 1920, and even after that, many were still relegated to home and family duties. According to Bem's Gender Schema Theory (1981), these gender roles were deeply embedded in the cultural psyche, influencing how individuals internalized behaviours and expectations associated with their gender.

However, over the past century, movements advocating for women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and broader gender inclusivity have generated significant shifts in public perceptions of gender norms. The feminist movement of the 1960's and 1970's, along with more recent social justice movements like #MeToo and the fight for transgender rights, have all challenged the traditional view of gender.

Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok have further accelerated this transformation, providing a global stage for activists and influencers to share their experiences and promote discussions about gender fluidity and equality. For example, Caitlyn Jenner's public transition in 2015 sparked conversations about gender identity and helped normalise transgender experiences in mainstream culture. These advancements are reshaping how gender is understood, inviting more fluid, inclusive perspectives on an issue that was once narrowly defined. As time progresses, gender norms are being deconstructed. However, this isn't the case globally, under figures such as Donald Trump and the push for abortion bans, gender norms are being reinforced rather than deconstructed, forcing women and marginalized communities to bear the weight of outdated and restricted expectations.

Moreover, gender norms in the workplace have shifted dramatically over the past few decades, though the journey is far from finished. Historically, men dominated leadership roles whilst women were largely relegated to administrative, teaching or caregiving positions. The rise of feminist movements, alongside legislative changes like the Equal Pay Act of 1963, marked the beginning of a shift toward greater gender equality. However, true change accelerated with initiatives such as the radical feminism movement, which brought widespread attention to issues of harassment and inequality in professional environments.

At the same time, gender- neutral policies, such as gender-inclusive bathrooms and flexible parental leave, are becoming more common in response to evolving expectations. Despite these advancements, the workplace still grapples with a deeply embedded gender pay gap, with women earning, on average less than their male counterparts, and leadership roles remaining disproportionately male. For example, educational professors in the UK have a 14.4% gender pay gap, with 77% of these jobs filled by women. Nevertheless, the ongoing push for equality in the workplace continues to challenge these longstanding norms, in both individuals and organisations working toward more inclusive and representative environments.

Gender stereotypes vary significantly across cultures, with deeply rooted societal expectations shaping the roles of men and women. In Western cultures, gender norms have evolved to embrace more fluid and diverse expressions of identity, with greater acceptance of non-binary and transgender individuals, influenced by movements like feminism and LGBTQ+ advocacy.

However, in many Eastern cultures, traditional gender roles are still prevalent. For example, in Japan, women are often expected to fulfil domestic responsibilities while balancing professional careers, despite increasing participation in the workforce. Psychological theories, such as Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987), suggest that these gendered behaviours are socially constructed, with societies assigning roles based on expected characteristics, such as men being assertive and women being nurturing. In contrast, cultures like Saudi Arabia and India have historically enforced stricter gender norms, though these have begun to shift in recent years. The 2019 Indian Supreme Court ruling decriminalizing homosexuality is one example off changing attitudes toward gender and sexuality, challenging rigid cultural expectations in the country. At the same time, religious and cultural factors often complicate these shifts, as seen in Saudi Arabia, where despite legal reforms allowing women to drive and work, societal pressures still favour more traditional roles. Cross-cultural psychology highlights how gender roles are not biologically determined but rather shaped by socio-cultural influences (Heilman + Okimoto, 2007), which explains why individuals' experiences of gender can vary dramatically based on their cultural contexts. These shifts reflect an ongoing, global redefinition of what it means to be masculine or feminine.
While significant progress has been made toward gender equality, challenges remain, often rooted in deeply settled societal and psychological factors.

The feminist movements of the 20th century, alongside landmark legal changes such as the Equal Act Pay and women gaining the right to vote, marked essential milestones in the battle for gender equality. More recently, women have increasingly broken into leadership positions such as Jacinda Ardern becoming the first woman to lead a gender-equal cabinet in New Zealand in 2020. However, the fight for true equality is far from over. Psychological research, particularly Eagly, highlights that despite formal equality, subtle stereotypes still influence how women are perceived in leadership roles. The "glass ceiling" phenomenon persists, where women are often overlooked for promotions or leadership opportunities in favour of men, even when they are equally qualified.This can be due to systematic biases and social stereotypes, often creating a perception that they cannot reach the top tier of an organization, even though it appears accessible. The gender pay gap is another ongoing issue, with women earning on average 20% less than men. Social Role Theory suggests that these imbalances arise not only from structural inequalities, but also from enduring stereotypes regarding gender roles, where women are often perceived as less competent or more suited for caregiving than leadership.

Additionally, intersectionality, a concept introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989),

underscores that women of colour, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds face even greater challenges in achieving equality. These combined obstacles demonstrate that while legal and societal changes have paved the way for gender equality, deeply embedded psychological and cultural biases still create significant barriers.

In conclusion, while gender norms have evolved significantly, with progress in both the workplace and society, challenges remain. Legal reforms and movements have raised awareness of gender inequality, but deeply ingrained stereotypes continue to shape perceptions and practices. Psychological research shows that gender roles are socially constructed, offering hope that change is possible. To achieve true gender equality, continued efforts are needed to challenge traditional views and promote inclusive environments.

PHILOSOPHY

'Philosophy can be a tricky thing to define; it is seen to some as an ethereal matter and the only way to truly obtain knowledge, and to others merely pointless questions that Aristotle already figured out 2,000 years ago. However, a more fitting definition may be the systematic and critical study of fundamental questions, ranging from existence to morality. With all of these questions having almost no definitive or agreed-upon answer, philosophy is the freest flowing, subjective matter. This is shown through these submissions, challenging regular assumptions and conventions which govern our lives, from exploring the meaning and role of social and linguistic conventions, contradictory elements of religious conventions, the exploration of anarchism and the amount of freedom we have under politics. Ludwig Wittgenstein demonstrates the importance of examining the ordinary as "A man will be imprisoned in a room with a door that's unlocked and opens inwards: as long as it does not occur to him to pull rather than push." And that "Nothing is so difficult as not deceiving oneself. " Therefore, I propose that we capture this sense of scepticism and do not walk idly into a life decided for us.'

-Samuel Sutton, Lower Sixth

Invisible Rules We Conform To: The Relevance of Social and Linguistic Conventions in Philosophy

Samuel Sutton

Social and linguistic conventions form many areas of social thought and discourse, from etiquette and language to morality and law. Conventions are generally considered norms of some kind to commit or not commit a certain action in a given circumstance. These operate in diverse social contexts, as no matter cultural and geographical differences, conventions exist universally. This is because conventions are what form almost all aspects of societies no matter how modern or primitive; e conventions provide a consensus of meaning. Imagine a society without any pre-established general agreement: there would be no language, as the meaning of words would not be agreed upon. There would also be no currency, as money only arbitrarily has value because of conventions of institutional facts e.g. people all agreeing it has practical value even if it doesn't intrinsically. A society without social and linguistic conventions therefore is almost inconceivable and, even if it is conceivable, it would be the lowest and most primitive of all possible societies. This is why exploring these conventions through examining their purpose, the idea of social contracts, if they reflect objective morality, the meaning of language and the value of institutional facts, is so important. Conventions can be shown through the argument:

P1 There is a group of people, P that normally follows R in circumstances C.

P2. There is a reason, A for members of P to follow R in circumstances C.

P3. There is at least one other potential rule, S, that if members of P followed in circumstances C, then A would have been a sufficient reason for members of P to follow S instead of R in circumstances C.

This is partly because S is the rule followed instead of R. These rules are such that it is impossible to comply with both of them in circumstances C.

C1 This indicates that conventions are arbitrary or path dependent and that the reasons provided are compliance-dependent, the reason for following a conventional norm depends on other people following it. S would be followed over R due to conventions not because S is intrinsically more justified but because it is a social norm.

In Leviathan 1651, Thomas Hobbes paints a grim chaotic image of life without conventions. In his idea of the "state of nature", individuals are driven only by self-interest leading to a world characterised by mistrust, conflict and perpetual danger. For Hobbes, conventions arise out of necessity, rational individuals collectively agree to surrender certain freedoms to a sovereign authority, such as a government, in exchange for security, stability and peace. This means exchanging individual freedoms for collective freedoms, e.g., the right of a person to harm another may be outlawed by a government to preserve the community's right not to be harmed. This is the idea of the "social contract".

This invites scepticism as the question arises "Are all conventions imposed from above and how much freedom should individuals sacrifice to maintain order" this is seen on the political spectrum as some parties such as the liberal democrats may emphasise individual liberties so question the social contract to an extent while labour may be more in favour of the contract as it promotes collective rights and trust towards institutions over individuals who may act selfishly.

David Hume approaches conventions differently. In "A Treatise of Human Nature" he argues that conventions, particularly moral conventions, are not products of rational calculation or an objective moral truth but are instead created through shared emotional responses to actions. Justice, for example, is not a universal principle with one fixed

meaning but is used to maintain order and depends on social and cultural norms, e.g. in Uganda, prosecuting and imprisoning people for homosexuality is seen as a form of Justice. In the same way, prosecuting people for stealing is Justice in other countries. Morality is not universal rules, but practical solutions made in societies.

This means that what we perceive as perhaps fixed morality, is instead evolving social conventions. Yet this adaptability is open to scepticism as if moral conventions are malleable it is easy to see unjust and oppressive conventions as truly moral due to fitting the needs of society. This seems intuitively incorrect, as most people generally have ideas that some actions will always be wrong, and if conventions lead to these actions being seen as moral maybe we should reject certain conventions, seen through protests against government action on moral grounds, opposition to moral conventions.

Social conventions are only half of the story; without language and forms of common meaning, our shared norms, values and institutions would collapse. Linguistic conventions, the agreed meanings of words and structures of communication serve as the scaffolding of communication and general society.

Austin introduces speech act theory in 'How to do things with words. He argued that language doesn't just describe reality, it can actively shape it. For example, the statement "I now pronounce you husband and wife" is not merely a description but an act that creates a new social reality. This does not have any inherent difference between any other phrase, but due to conventions we interpret it as more meaningful, having effects beyond the words itself. This framework distinguishes between 3 types of acts. Utterance is used instead of words, as words constantly have changing meanings, which can only be found through a specific utterance, e.g. the same words with different tones can indicate different meanings, sarcasm for instance.

1. Locutionary acts- the literal meaning of an utterance

2. Illocutionary acts-The intended force behind an utterance e.g. promises, command or declaration

3. Perlocutionary acts- The effect the utterance has on its audience

Through this lens, words are merely vessels for meaning, which shape perceptions and actions. This shown by legal measures against hate speech, no assemblance of letters can physically be harmful, but the hateful meaning that can encourage and incur violence is why it is condemned. We acknowledge how words cannot be simply taken at face value, and even the individual who uttered said words must be considered, e.g. the perceived moral difference of a black person saying a harmful slur vs a White Supremacist saying it. This shows how even when we have an established language it is not the words that provide meaning or change, but how we come to interpret them due to conventions, the world would be incredibly different if words were taken at their face value ignoring the 3 types of acts JL Austin recites.

John Searle expanded on Austin's ideas by distinguishing between brute facts, which represent objective truths like ''the Earth orbits the sun'' and institutional facts, which represent socially constructed realities which are governed by conventions like the statement, this currency has value. Institutional facts depend entirely on collective recognition; they only exist and are true because we agree that they are, e.g. if we all believe a coin has value then the statement ''this coin has value'' is true, if we all believe the coin doesn't have value then the statement becomes false. This occurs with a surprising number of items and concepts and creates arguments on to what extent we have control over our ideas as even our general truths are epistemologically decided for us and it is almost impossible to not conform to these, e.g. imagine living without using currency or using a completely different time zone to the country you are in.

Social and linguistic conventions evolve to enable cooperation despite human selfishness. They require scrutiny, as they prioritize efficiency over absolute truth, unlike philosophy. This makes them difficult to analyse, as seen in contrasts between Kantian morality and societal views focused on welfare. Their adaptability fuels ongoing debate

Anarchism and the deconstruction of convention:

Will Hadfield

According to Max Weber's sociology, a legitimate political regime is one in which its participants have certain beliefs regarding it; he writes that "the basis of every system of authority, and correspondingly of every kind of willingness to obey, is a belief, a belief by virtue of which persons exercising authority are lent prestige". People may have faith in a political order as it is what they have always known, due to the appeal of a charismatic leader, or because they trust its legality. However, we must interrogate whether this is an apt theory for determining whether our political system is coercive in a justified way. Not needed

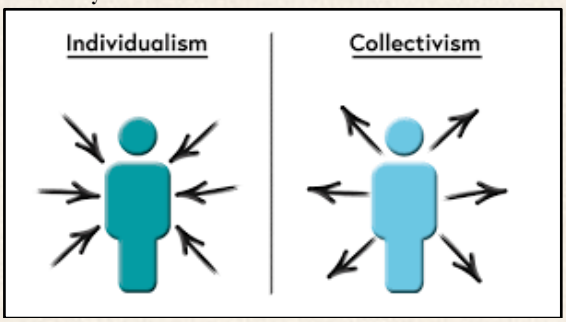
Anarchism is often understood as a theory of skepticism about political legitimacy , it is defined as non-rule or rule by no one. This could, also, take the form of rule by all, as a consequence. However, a common misconception is that state anarchism leads to 'chaos autonomy' which assumes that it is in human nature to be ruled, and true self determination leads to chaos and a loss of order and societal cooperation. Anarchism doesn't intend to promote a lack of order but instead a type of order away from modern convention, with the idea of a society governed by spontaneous order, one organised through voluntary cooperation rather than imposed restricting rules. Many assume when they hear the term anarchism, that the theory proposes a society in which there is a complete absence of order and structure, completely dismantling any form of democracy. This is not the case. Anarchism proposes a vision of 'organised autonomy,' a decentralised form of government in which there is no hierarchical control, with decisions coming about through direct democracy. Anarchism, as a theory, is not about abolishing all order, it's about replacing imposed hierarchies with non-coercive, democratic cooperation.

Political Anarchism critiques the state, viewing centralised, monopolistic coercive power as illegitimate. Bakunin summarises this succinctly and poetically : "If there is a state, there must be domination of one class by another and, as a result, slavery; the state without slavery is unthinkable".

The theory offers a critique of political governance and economic conventions, viewing them as symbiotic. It does this by providing alternatives to these coercive, exploitative hierarchies which they argue are created by capitalism, where a small elite group controls the majority of resources and wealth, whilst the working majority are forced to sell their labour to survive. This is similar to the Marxist critique of capitalism, however, Marxists argue for a state-led transition to socialism while anarchists think that both capitalism and the coercive state should be abolished simultaneously. From the anarchist perspective, (as that is what is being focused on, not Marxism) this opposes the 'bosses' power over the workers as it destroys autonomy; workers are forced to obey the power hierarchy or risk starvation. Similarly to this domination of the classes, anarchists believe that landowners benefit from 'passive domination', in which they profit purely because they 'own' a piece of land, not because they contribute any labour. This is a glaring example of just how hierarchical capitalism is, there is inherent domination of classes within this system, as Bakunin said the workers and the people are 'slaves' to the capitalist state. This hoarding of resources creates 'artificial

scarcity' which drives up prices and keeps necessities out of reach.

Anarchism promotes concepts like commons-based economies in which resources are collectively owned and managed; anarchists argue that capitalism cannot function without the state's coercion. This is done through using the police and military who are employed by the state to crush strikes and protect corporate interests. The state also allows capitalism and its inherent hierarchies to prosper by creating laws that favour the wealthy while ordinary people struggle to survive and are forced into debt to afford basic human rights such as healthcare, education and housing. An economic system, which would remove many of these problems according to anarchists, is a decentralised economy in which decisions are made at a local level through federations and worker councils instead of being dictated by the state and corporations. For example, the Zapatistas in Mexico run their local economy through cooperative farming and bartering. The people should not be beholden to concepts like 'rugged individualism' where they are led to isolation and absolute dependence on corporations, as this is where we lose our humanity.



Anarchist critique of the state and economy also intersects with political and social anarchism. Capitalism and the state that supports it, perpetuates forms of oppression like racism, sexism and colonialism. Corporations and Western powers exploit poorer countries by extracting labour and resources, worsening economic conditions and exacerbating wealth divides. The gender wage gap is another economic example of coercive hierarchies dictating how people interact with each other within the confines of a capitalist society. More abstractly, capitalist concepts such as patents and intellectual property restrict the free exchange of ideas, limiting art and social critique. Therefore, further feeding into the capitalist system and agenda.

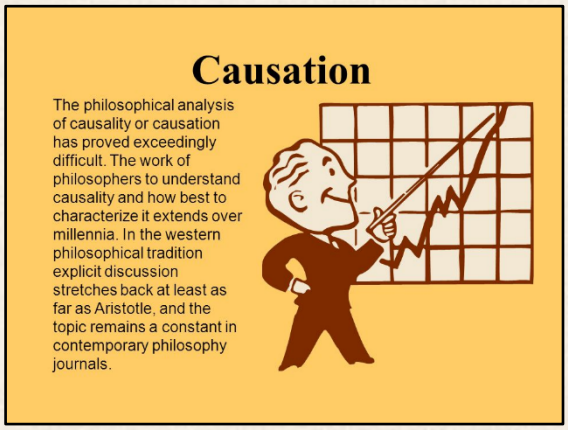
However, Anarchism also takes form under the perspective of social critique. Its critique of authority can also apply to conventions such as gender and racial hierarchies. This is perhaps more interesting under the idea of wanting to erode convention. Under a society that encourages self-interest (adversely to human nature) a concept of the perpetual want and manifestation of domination will always lead to an illegitimate, abstract hierarchy. Anarchism in itself is not necessarily a fully fledged ideology in the way that it has specific views on policy and parties that show these views through manifestos, it is instead a direct form of opposition to general political conventions and available ideologies. It is the political view which is most possibly against conventions, which is why it is formed only by the breaking down of conventions and general politics shown by its occurrence in revolutionary catalonia and not from stable democracy.

Free Will, Predetermination, and How Their Dispute Challenges Religious Conventions

Lara Jamil

Does free will have the ability to coexist with predetermination? The free will debate between is an age-old query in philosophy that continues to encaptivate and intrigue people to this day. This problem targets one of the key aspects of human existence by putting it under scrutiny. Many people believe that we are merely acting out a destiny that has been pre-written by a superior being that we can't see or successfully prove the existence of without any limitations. Believers of free will think that we have the power to act without the constraint of anything external. Our existence is free from the laws of nature, allowing us to choose and take control over the outcomes of our lives with our own discretion (free will). These two contradictory views are tough to link and make reconcile with one another, often leading to disagreements between religious groups, for example, Catholics believe that our actions which we choose to express with free will decide whether we enter heaven or hell in the afterlife whilst Calvinists believe our actions have already been predestined, so our spiritual future isn't determined by our free will, or actions.

Predetermination is the belief that everything (past, present, and future) has been inevitably planned by either the laws of nature, or God and other external powers. These forces have planned out our lives, taking it out of our control. Barron D'Holbach was an atheist philosopher who argued that we weren't created by a god, therefore we cannot have a soul. As a result, it makes us beings that are controlled by the laws of nature, just like any other physical object. All of our future actions become consequences of our past actions. Due to this, many believe it shows we actually don't have free will as if you trace back to the actions leading up to our births, we will come to find out we aren't responsible for our own existences. We were born against our free will, so we don't have complete free will over our lives. John Locke too believed against free will but had an alternative approach to it than D'Holbach. He stated although we get the feeling that we have free will, we are wired in a way that we choose to act how it's been destined for us.



He gave the example of a man waking up in a locked room which he's unaware of being trapped in. He may choose to remain in that locked room, when in reality he had no other option other than to stay there. What he's suggesting here is that even though we may believe to have the opportunity to act otherwise in situations, Our actions have been predetermined, so we have no ability but to take part in what's already been planned.

Free will is the idea that individuals have the ability to choose their own destinies single handedly, without the interference of any external forces that may influence our decisions. This means that our actions have the ability to directly impact what comes ahead and that we have complete autonomy over our decisions and the resulting outcomes. Those who believe we have freedom believe that it's a vital part of being human as it allows us to develop as characters and learn from personal experiences. This aligns with the libertarian view that us humans have the power to make choices that haven't been already determined by divine influences and external powers. Jean-Paul Sartre was a French philosopher that claimed there is no objective purpose that determines how we act because 'existence precedes essence'. This means that we come into existence before our fates have

been determined, we need to define our purpose ourselves. This shows that we have the freedom to establish what our own free wills are. Sartre's stance has psychological implications as he claims that people often look for a purpose/fate in life as they're too afraid of not having a purpose and are worried about the outcomes that having individual freedom to determine their own purposes can have. What if you choose the wrong destiny for yourself? Some would much rather allow an external force determine what is right for them, rather than having the daunting authority of decision making. He completely denounced the thought that we're all born with a specific purpose (telos), therefore we have 'radical freedom'. It's blissful ignorance to admit that our wrongdoings are results of what superior, external forces have planned for us rather than to admit they're consequences of our own mistakes.

A middle ground between these opposing views is compatibilism, the belief that free will and predetermination can coexist. Compatibilists believe that although our fates may have been predetermined by prior causes, or divine powers, we still have the ability to make decisions that reflect our characters and moral values. We have complete autonomy over how we choose to achieve each of our own telos', but the telos itself has been predetermined. Our choices affect how we achieve our predestined fate, therefore free will still exists to some capacity, but not fully. We all exist with an intended purpose that we need to fulfil during our lifetime. This end goal is the only predetermined fate in our lives. The way we choose to accomplish it is then self determined by our own free will, not a superior being. The 18th century philosopher David Hume placed a distinction between internal and external causes that control us. Internal causes being personal thoughts and beliefs, and external causes being physically forced against our will. All of our actions outcomes are determined, so our freedom is constrained. He stated that our free will is controlled by our internal causes, so our sense of moral responsibility as humans prevents us from using the full potential of our free will. There isn't an external being that determines our future and how we achieve it, but our consciousness and feeling of guilt shapes our actions.

Ultimately, the debate between free will and predeterminism is a complicated and multifaceted concept which requires a large amount of metaphysical thinking. It allows us to gather an insight surrounding all of the complex matters that individualise us as a human race, such as the nature of our existences, morality and whether or not we should have total responsibility of ourselves, and the belief in the divine. The perceptible contrast between the two forces us to examine our decisions and the nature of our actions, whether or not they were results of our free thinking, or a result of an external force with supreme powers that control us. The understanding of this helps us to understand our own natures and gives us the chance to analyse our past actions that have led up to where we are now in existence. This shows how often we take conventions for granted, it's very difficult to exist without believing you are responsible, almost fully for your decisions, despite strong arguments from notable philosophers and theorists claiming otherwise. It also shows a clash of conventions, from traditional religions, such as Calvinism and some Muslim views of predestination with modern liberal thinking and general secular views towards free will. There are many contradictory conventions and norms that must be decided, with free will being a prime example of this.

Are we free to break conventions and define our own futures in a late-stage capitalist society?

Lucy Johnstone

Over thousands of years, philosophical thought has not shied from straying outside of convention, from our certainty in the very existence of the world around us, to our perceptions and our core beliefs. There have been many attempts to deviate from typical lines of thought, ways of living or seeing the world, some more influential than others. Overall, the ability to question one's instinctive beliefs-premises which we have presupposed the truth of, lifestyles which we adhere to without challenge- is a founding aspect of philosophy as a whole. Arguably, philosophers are united in their willingness to break convention and this remains vitally important today, despite difficulties presented by late-stage capitalism.

One advocate for our individual capacity to break conventions, Jean-Paul Sartre, known in his time as the "Pope of Existentialism", rose to prominence post-WW2 as a fervent advocate for radical freedom, for breaking conventions, and living authentically to ourselves. He argued that every human is inherently free to define their own version of morality, and as such, every human should recognise and champion their own individuality and capacity to break conventions.

In order to understand how it was that Sartre believed we could be radically free, and why he endowed the responsibility of embracing our inherent freedom upon us, an understanding of the groundwork and key aspects of his theory is required.

Firstly, Sartre's existentialism was rooted in phenomenology, the theory that we should analyse the world according to phenomena- that which the mind is conscious of- rather than, say, the approach of an empiricist, focused around our experiences. The phenomenologist's aim is to understand the world as it really is, its essential nature.

Secondly, Sartre believed in the importance of the 'cogito': the concept of the self as devised by René Descartes, which he subsequently attempted to use to prove the existence of a world external from our own minds. Though, since its inception, Descartes claim that "I think, (therefore) I am" has been widely discredited in its capacity to achieve its primary aim- to effectively respond to global scepticism about the mind-independent external world- for Sartre, Descartes' recognition of the self, as an independently conscious and autonomous being was of paramount importance to his further philosophical theories.

Thirdly, perhaps most crucially, Sartre was an atheist: he didn't believe in a conception of a supreme being, some sort of artisan designer. This founding belief of his theory allowed him to further extend and develop his central idea that, unlike other objects, human existence precedes essence:

P1) if an object has been designed for a purpose, then its essence precedes its existence

P2) for a human to have been designed there must have been a divine creator

P3) there is no divine creator (according to Sartre)

P4) therefore humans have not been designed

Conclusion: human existence precedes our essence, and we are absolutely free

Unlike objects (Sartre uses the example of a paperknife), created for specific purposes (to open envelopes or sealed letters), he argued humans weren't created for a purpose. Our existence, our being in this world, isn't dependent on some function we can provide that is contingent on our being human; therefore, we must, and are in fact obliged to, forge our own paths in life, no matter how difficult, as we are "condemned to be free" (Sartre, Existentialism is a Humanism).

In this sense, Sartre's conception of freedom is radically different from many conventional philosophical beliefs which often seek to define a universalised human nature: in contrast, he believes in no objective moral values, no confines to our metaphysical freedom. Though radical, Sartre is not arguably not completely unrealistic in this claim, explaining that our 'facticity' means that we are limited in some respects, such as race, age, psychological state or environmental origin; however, these factors don't negate our ability to transcend our current situation, to live life as free conscious? beings.

Furthermore, for Sartre, living a life which neglects embracing our freedom, is a life lived in "bad faith" (mauvaise foi). To be inauthentic to ourselves and renounce our ability to be free reduces our humanity and our 'being-for-itself' (conscious, an existence which precedes essence) to a 'being-in-itself' (unconscious, with an essence preceding its existence)- we become autonomous, machine-like. If we fail to be transcendent of our conventional circumstances, we evade our responsibility to be human and genuine to ourselves.

Consequently, societally-imposed conventions which we subscribe to are founded upon false notions of human nature, of some misconstrued idea of a universalised inner essence or some quality which makes us human.

However, Sartre's ideas of our potential to be true to ourselves, our duty to defy and transcend the societal norms we find ourselves situated within, arguably struggle when confronted directly with Marxist ideology, and when undertaken in a late-stage capitalist society. How can we be radically free under the systematic oppression of late-stage capitalism? How can we hope to truly understand the notion of the "self" when it is so compromised? How can Sartre claim that humans have no design, no purpose, when in fact our very function is to support and prolong the success of the self-destructive apparatus of capitalism?

Though his work was produced far earlier than Sartre's own, Marx seems to directly counter many of the claims prolific in Sartre's work. Where Sartre argues there is no limitations upon our ability to be free, at least in our ideological beliefs and expressions of them, Marxist doctrine responds with the premise of 'false consciousness': we are given the illusion of choice, of freedom regarding our ideological beliefs, but these are merely purported by the bourgeoisie, the

ruling class, in an effort to uphold capitalism, to prolong its longevity. Sartre may think we are free to hold ideas of democracy or rights or to select the political ideology we think best suits our belief systems- in reality, this freedom is deluded. Whereas Sartre sees a human as a "being-for-itself", where he roots his philosophical thought in the grounds of phenomenalism, the cogito, the conscious self, Marxism would propose that this is mere naivety: false consciousness.

Additionally, Marx was firmly committed to dialectical materialism: the advancement of society is propelled, fundamentally, by changing contradictory states (derived from Hegel's dialectical analysis of society) centred around our material conditions (a variation of Feuerbach's materialism), contrasting directly with Sartre's phenomenalist stance. For Sartre to claim that humans are inherently free, when a capitalist society's progression is itself reliant on economic principles and, in late-stage capitalism, on our technological development, to the extent that even human labour is commodified, from the perspective of a Marxist would be deeply flawed.

The Commodification of human labour, Marx would argue, ultimately leads to the self-alienation (Entfremdung) of each individual within society. We are alienated from others, each condemned to work for their individualistic interests and we are alienated from the products we buy, produce, and sell. Thus, we are alienated from ourselves, and we are not free to exist outside of conventions as Sartre would like to believe.

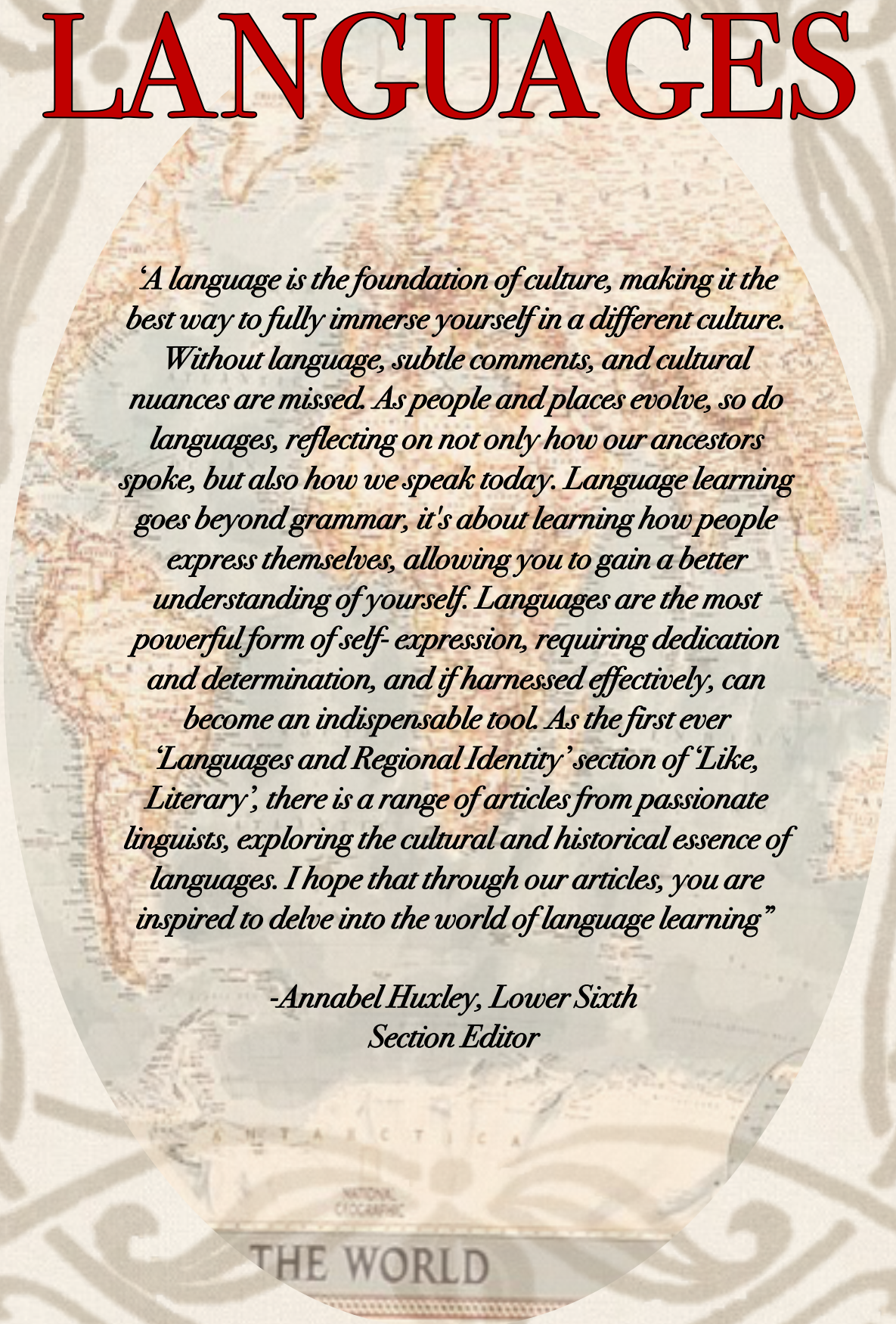
To become automaton-like is not "mauvaise foi", nor is it possible to be radically free when we live in a capitalist society which forces us to conform whilst giving us false hope of self-awareness, a misled sense of autonomy. Sartre's ideas are, according to Marx, a well-functioning product of the system of capitalism- the idea that we can even hope to be authentically ourselves whilst continuing to exist in such a society is itself an example of the efficacy of capitalism's self-preservation.

Ultimately, both Marxist and existentialist theories are reflective of the period from which they originated from and both could not have hoped to have foreseen the realities of today's capitalist society. Marx's bleak degradation of capitalism and exposure of its self-destructive tendencies, though flawed, presents an interesting challenge to the seemingly optimistic theory of Sartre's existentialism. In fact, Sartre himself, later in life, would revert to a position of acceptance of elements of Marxism, of the materialistic nature of society as opposed to his initial phenomenalist humanism. However, at least on an individual level, Sartre's beliefs about the necessity of authenticity, of breaking conventions and not squandering our lives through merely existing as an unconscious being, an automaton, still holds great relevance today.

LANGUAGES

'A language is the foundation of culture, making it the best way to fully immerse yourself in a different culture. Without language, subtle comments, and cultural nuances are missed. As people and places evolve, so do languages, reflecting on not only how our ancestors spoke, but also how we speak today. Language learning goes beyond grammar, it's about learning how people express themselves, allowing you to gain a better understanding of yourself. Languages are the most powerful form of self- expression, requiring dedication and determination, and if harnessed effectively, can become an indispensable tool. As the first ever 'Languages and Regional Identity' section of 'Like, Literary', there is a range of articles from passionate linguists, exploring the cultural and historical essence of languages. I hope that through our articles, you are inspired to delve into the world of language learning"

-Annabel Huxley, Lower Sixth
Section Editor



Esperanto : Uniting Cultures Through A Universal Tongue

Annabel Huxley

While Wikipedia defines a language as "a structured system of communication that consists of grammar and vocabulary", as a linguist, I believe that a language incorporates far more than just verbs and tenses. The French word 'la langue' means the language, but they also have the word 'le langage', which means the words within a language and how we use them to express emotions. Language is a powerful platform for self-expression that allows us to share not only our words, but our emotions, values, and cultures.

Language is the foundation of culture, all of our stories, past, present and future are shared through this form of communication. From global dialects like English or Mandarin, to the complexity of regional languages like Basque, each has its own unique character. Although some languages seem very similar, each accent and each subtle inflection links the people of today to the people of the past, the ancestors who walked in the same places, and more importantly, spoke the same languages.

As a native English speaker, I often hear people saying that if we all learnt English, life would be so much easier. When we travel abroad, it is often expected that everyone in that country will adapt to our linguistic deficiency to suit our needs, yet I always find that English speakers are still the first to say "In England, you speak English!". I'm sure that sometimes, when you are on holiday in a foreign place , unable to find the nearest supermarket and no one speaks English, you wish that we all just spoke the same language? As a matter of fact, so did L.L Zamenhof, in the late 1800s, which is why he created Esperanto. Zamenhof had no intention of making Esperanto everyone's first spoken language and erasing their culture; Esperanto was designed to serve as a second language, uniting the globe through eliminating these barriers of communication. You may think that this sounds amazing, and are wondering why we don't all speak Esperanto today, but it's not that simple.

Although the idea of a universal language seems ideal, it was not interpreted as such by many people. The Soviet Union did not appreciate the idea of a universal language as they deemed it necessary for each country to have its own revolution in its own language before social unity could occur. Moreover, Hitler did not approve of Esperanto as he feared the Jewish people would use it to achieve 'world domination', therefore he ordered the Gestapo to search for any descendants of Zamenhof. Likewise, Franco did not approve of Esperanto. Franco's goal was to maintain Spain's traditional values and language, thus causing him to ban any regional languages like Galician. It was said that many Spanish people, upon having their regional language banned, would turn to Esperanto as it sounded similar enough to Castilian.

Zamenhof had always been passionate about languages, and was raised a polyglot, as he was able to converse in numerous languages. He finished working on the first copy of Esperanto at only 19, but his father burned his book in an effort to make him focus more on his studies- which he did. Zamenhof studied medicine and became an ophthalmologist, specializing in eye and vision care. However, he did not forget the notion of Esperanto, and came back to it many years later. He was not the only person who tried to create a universal language; Volapük was created by Johann Martin Schleyer. He created a language based on extremely modified forms of words from English and Romance languages, and Schleyer even founded The International Academy of Volapük with the intention of promoting his language. Unfortunately, its failure was caused by Schleyer himself, who refused any criticism, leaving many dissatisfied by its unnecessary complexity. Nevertheless, Zamenhof designed Esperanto with this mind : it could not be too complex, or people would not want to learn it.

Zamenhof created Esperanto in an attempt to erase communication barriers prevalent worldwide; he aimed for us all to speak a politically neutral, culturally free standard language.

However, you would think that it would be impossible to make a language that is accessible for all people, no matter their mother tongue. Some languages have different alphabets, different grammar points, gender and tones. Zamenhof took all of these factors into account when designing Esperanto. Unlike many other languages, Esperanto is fairly gender neutral. With only one word for the ('la'), there is no need to remember if the word for 'table' is feminine or masculine. Although you can show the gender of nouns using suffixes, the inanimate nouns such as bed, phone or book don't categorise by gender, so less time is spent remembering if the 'chair' is feminine or masculine. Furthermore, verbs are simplified in Esperanto. In Spanish you would say, : como,comes,come,comemos, coméis, comen to show :I eat, you eat, he/she eats, we eat, you eat (in a polite form) and they eat.
You can see how although the stem (com) is the same, the ending of each verb differs depending on the person, meaning in order to learn Spanish, many verb endings must be memorised, for every tense. On the other hand, Esperanto does not do this. They have one ending to show the tense, and indicate the person through the pronoun. For example you only need to know that 'as' shows the present tense, and then know the word for I, he, she ect and you can put any verb in the present tense. Zamenhof also took into consideration irregular verbs, and tried to minimise them where possible, so no random verb conjugations need to be learnt separately.

Esperanto is accessible not only though avoiding memorising genders and verb conjugations, but also through its structure. It only has a nominative and accusative case, meaning letter indications are only used in order to show the subject of a sentence (the thing doing the verb) and the object (the thing receiving the verb) and can avoid other cases through the use of word order and prepositions. This makes it very accessible for both people like the Hungarians who are used to 18 cases, and people who are not used to the idea of cases, such as English speakers who avoid the need for specific cases with pronouns and word order, like in Esperanto. Moreover, Esperanto's pronunciation rules highlight that unlike many languages, each letter represents one sound, and no letters are silent. Pronunciation is one of the hardest aspects of learning a language. My personal favourite example of pronunciation difficulties is George Bernard Shaw's alternative spelling of the word "fish", using the word "ghoti" in order to highlight the difficulties for English learners, as shown in the photo.

Esperanto had many challenges, the most obvious being that it is artificially designed. It therefore had no links to a certain culture, country or ancestors. This made it less attractive to language learners. In learning a language, you do not just study vocabulary, you explore the rich culture behind a language, which Esperanto does not have. Although Esperanto has not ultimately achieved global success, as we don't all speak it, that's not to say it was not successful. It is estimated that 2 million people speak Esperanto and over 25,000 books have been translated into it, from the Bible to Shakespeare. There are also many learners of Esperanto due to its availability on language platforms such as Duolingo. There are even people who possess Esperanto as their mother tongue, and although that wasn't Zamenhof's intention, it means that the language will be passed on through generations. Esperanto is still classified as the most successful artificially designed language, and no one knows what its future holds. In the next few years, we could all be learning Esperanto. Zamenhof wanted to remove the stereotype that "language learning is impossible" and create something globally accessible to promote language learning. He defied many conventions of traditional language rules in order to create a universal tongue.

Gibraltar: A Crossroads of Cultures, History and Identity

Señora Psaila

As a child, growing up with Gibraltarian parents whilst living in England always felt somewhat special: home where more than one language was spoken, distinct culinary smells filled the air and a unique mix of traditions were celebrated. It was something of which I was immensely proud. Gibraltar is a small but complex territory nestled at the southernmost tip of the Iberian Peninsula, where the Mediterranean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean. With its towering rock, often topped by a blanket of cloud known amongst the locals as "The Levanter," and its strategic location at the mouth of the Mediterranean sea, it has played an essential role in world history. Gibraltar is, however, more than just a geographical landmark - it is a melting pot of cultures, languages, and histories that have shaped its identity that is truly one of a kind.

The Great Siege Tunnels

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Gibraltar grew in importance and served as a key naval stronghold during the Napoleonic Wars and World War II, with the famous "Siege of Gibraltar" in 1779–1783 being one of its most notable moments of resistance. The Rock itself, with its vast underground network of tunnels, became a symbol of endurance and military power.

What about it's culture?

Ibrahim-al-Ibrahim Mosque

The current cultural make-up of Gibraltar is a reflection of its diverse and sometimes tricky past. Over the centuries, the territory has been home to an eclectic mix of ethnic groups and is often said to be an "example to the world". This diversity is particularly visible in Gibraltar's population, which, whilst predominantly of British descent, includes significant numbers of Spanish, Moroccan, Maltese, Italian and other Mediterranean origins. Religions also live harmoniously alongside each other and although the main religion is Christianity, majority Roman Catholic, there is a long established Sephardic Jewish community, a number of Hindu Indians and a large Moroccan Muslim population.

National Day 2023

This cultural blend is also reflected in the territory's architecture and daily life. The presence of British customs, such as red phone boxes, pubs, and cricket matches, coexist with the influence of Andalusian and Moroccan cultures, visible in the Moorish Castle, the vibrant street life, the music,

and its festivals. Gibraltarians are known for their distinct identity, which draws upon both British and Mediterranean influences. Despite being a British Overseas Territory, the people of Gibraltar have developed a fiercely independent spirit and a deep sense of local pride, celebrated every year at their National Day on 10th September.

Calentita

Gibraltar′s food culture is a perfect example of its rich history and multicultural heritage. The fusion of British, Spanish, Mediterranean, and North African culinary influences makes Gibraltarian food diverse and flavourful. Local dishes like ″calentita″, a savoury chickpea flour dish similar to a Spanish tortilla, and ″hojuelas″, a traditional pastry-style sweet treat, reveal the blend of British, Spanish and Arabic traditions. The Genoese also played a huge part in Gibraltar's culinary creations with some of my childhood favourite dishes like "rosto" ,a pasta dish cooked with a tomato based sauce and various meats, or "minestra," a vegetarian pasta dish using pesto as one of its key flavours, at its heart.

Language

One of Gibraltar's most distinctive features is its language, and is possibly one of the main reasons I became a language teacher as an adult. Whilst English is the official language of the territory, spoken by the vast majority of the population, Gibraltar is a truly multilingual society. The Gibraltarian dialect, known as ″Llanito,″ blends English with Andalusian Spanish, creating a unique and colourful spoken language. This "Spanglish" draws on elements of both languages, as well as taking words from Italian, Maltese, and even Moroccan Arabic, reflecting the territory′s complex cultural history.

"Llanito" is spoken fluently by Gibraltarians in everyday life and although English remains the dominant language in business, education, and government, Spanish can be heard spoken frequently as you pass through the streets. This bilingualism creates a vibrant, dynamic atmosphere and the two, or sometimes three, languages flow in and out of conversation seamlessly. In many ways, the ability to switch between languages mirrors Gibraltar's ability to adapt and navigate its role between two worlds: Britain and Spain. Toddlers are brought up knowing that the minute they cross the border into Spain, they must speak in Spanish to be understood and vice-versa – an amazing thing to witness!

The Controversy

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect of Gibraltar's story is the ongoing dispute over its sovereignty. For over 300 years, Spain has sought to regain control over Gibraltar, arguing that it rightfully belongs to Spain despite, hypocritically, still claiming ownership of Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa . This dispute has remained a point of tension between Spain and the United Kingdom for many years. In 2002, a referendum held by Gibraltar's government showed overwhelming support for remaining British, with over 98% of the population voting to stay under British sovereignty.

Spanish Protesters

For Gibraltarians, the issue is not just about territorial control, but about identity. Most residents of Gibraltar see themselves as distinctly Gibraltarian, with a sense of loyalty to Britain but also a deep attachment to their local community and way of life. The conflict over sovereignty has not only been a political issue but has also shaped the cultural and social dynamics of the territory.

Referendum 2002

Brexit has added another layer of complexity to this issue, as Gibraltar's status as a British Overseas Territory within the EU came to an end in 2020. The future of the territory in relation to Spain, the UK, and the European Union remains uncertain, with discussions continuing about the status of the border and the movement of people and goods.

In summary

Gibraltar, with its remarkable blend of history, culture, and identity, is a place like no other. It is a territory where British tradition meets Mediterranean flair, where the past is as obvious as the Rock itself, and where debates over sovereignty are shaping the future of a proud and resilient people. The controversy over its ownership may never be resolved, but Gibraltar's rich diversity, from its food to its language, continues to thrive, forging an identity that is uniquely its own.

Losing Their Tongues: The Consequences of Globalisation and Immigration on Indian Culture

Cara Bell

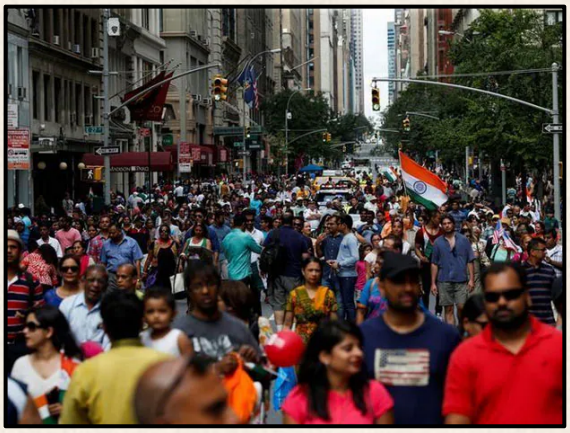
The concepts of identity, culture, and linguistic autonomy have become more problematic than ever before, with 281 million international migrants recorded in 2020. For the first time in human history, almost every culture seems to have a trace of 'western' infiltration. From an anthropological perspective, the central paradox of globalisation is that it has made the world both larger and smaller simultaneously, with fears that mono-culturalisation will result in the erosion of individualism. Ethnic and cultural fragmentation and modernist homogenisation (reduction in diversity) are two fundamental trends in our global reality, with India as an ideal example of this. India is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, with over 1600 languages and dialects spoken. The Indian diaspora, over 35 million people, comprise the world′s largest overseas diaspora, as well as the country now being the most populated in the world. So, how does this nation battle the balance between integrating itself into global society, while retaining its distinct cultural and linguistic identity?

A key event in establishing Indian culture was the Partition of 1947. India became part of the British Empire in 1858; the nation was a blend of religions and cultures, the three largest being Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. Thus this modern day superpower has long been pervious to British influence, from colonial rule to their parting 'gift' in 1947, splitting India into Pakistan, East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and India. The partition led to one of the largest mass migrations in history, with millions of Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims moving across the newly established borders, including my Nana - this is an Indian way of referring to Grandad.
This facilitated the exchange of cultural practices, traditions, and languages between the nations, accompanied by widespread communal violence which left deep scars on the collective memory of the people. Undoubtedly the unprecedented violence, which continues today with border disputes over territories such as Kashmir, often led to the destruction of cultural heritage sites, temples, mosques, and other places of worship. Moreover it also played a significant role in shaping India's national identity, leading to the development of distinct national narratives and cultural expressions on both sides of the borders.

Perhaps as a consequence of the disrupted lifestyle and perpetual religious tensions caused by the partition, global Indian culture in recent history has largely been transient and continually evolving . With the 'Windrush' generation in Britain, many Caribbean and West-Indian immigrants were invited to relocate to the UK in order to help rebuild the post-war economy. HMT Empire Windrush brought the first 1027 passengers and has now become symbolic of the generation of Commonwealth citizens who came to live in Britain between 1948 and 1971. My grandparents, my Nani and Nana, arrived in 1963 having grown up and studied medicine in their

home country. My Nani was brought up in Amritsar, in the region of Punjab, a hubbub of Asian people, language and culture, and as a result can speak Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi. Contrastingly, where my Nana was raised in Bombay (Mumbai) after migrating from Lahore at age 8, he learnt the more local dialects of Marathi, Gujarati, and English. My grandma told me how, when they first met, they would communicate in English rather than a common Indo-Aryan dialect. This is both the legacy of India's colonial history, and evidence of English as a global mediator and means of interaction. For many immigrants, especially of the late 20th century, the pressure to assimilate into a foreign society takes precedence over a desire to retain cultural integrity.

As a second generation immigrant, born in the UK in the 70s yet distinctly, not 'British' by contemporary standards, my mum, who went to a London school, was taught only English, with European languages more of an infrequent addition or optional course. Despite being taught Hindi to an adequate proficiency by her parents, she recalls her being discouraged from utilising these linguistic skills. As a result of this, my Nani details how upon visiting Indian family members, they would laugh at the childrens' pronunciation. At a time of exponential growth for telecommunications, Indian culture was certainly becoming popularised through the likes of Bollywood, yet this was far from integrated into mainstream 'British' childhood. My mum describes her and her older sister introducing their parents to Christmas after classmates talked about their presents, while cultural celebrations of Holi and Diwali became fewer and less frequent. This certainly cannot be said for all British migrants, but is particularly prevalent for this generation. 'We migrated individually rather than as families' says my Nani, 'so it was much more difficult to maintain culture'. Yet she affirms that this loss of linguistic diversity is natural, suggesting that 'after 2 or 3 generations even they will lose their culture.'



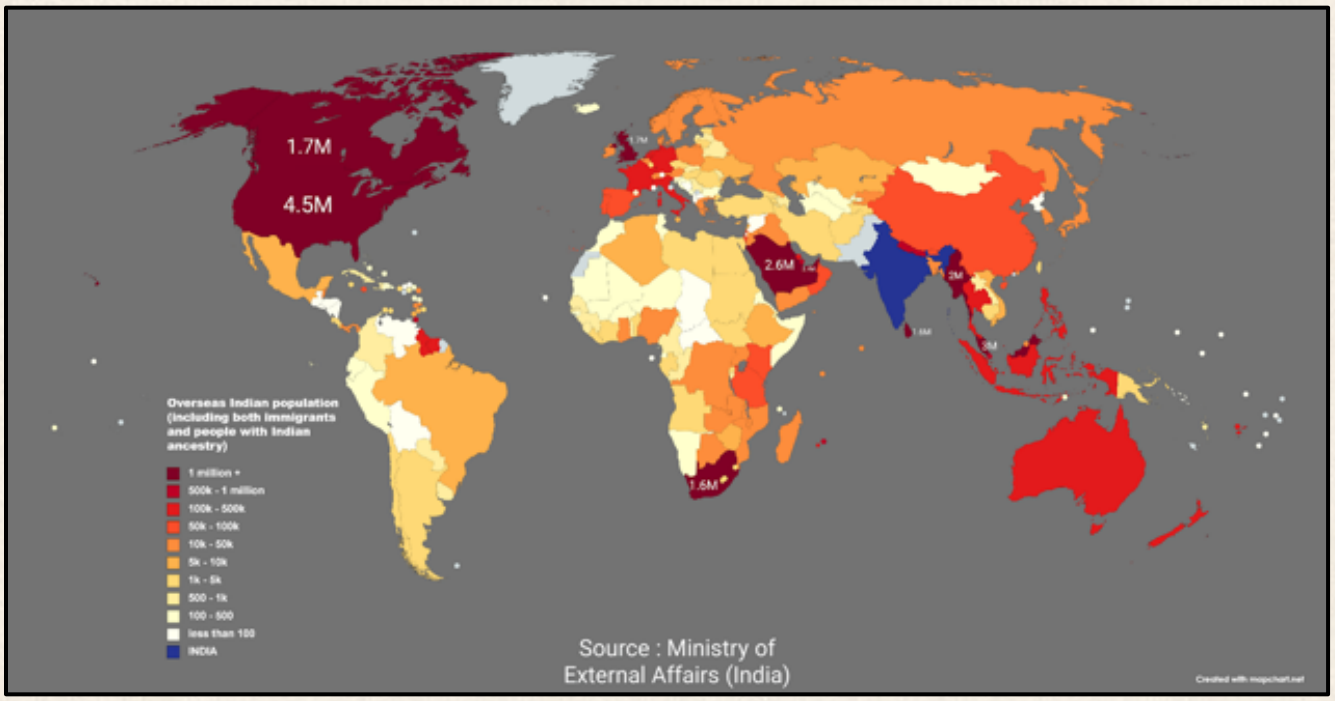
Nowadays written Hindi is largely gone as a present-day means of communication, with 'Hinglish' a much more popular multiethnolect. The language involves a hybrid mixing of Hindi and English within conversations, individual sentences and even words, with the Devanagari segmental writing system superseded by Latin script. Could this be the continuation of British imperialism, with urban areas especially encouraged to prioritise English proficiency over that in their own language in order to fill much-coveted call centre or telecommunication positions? India has the second largest English-speaking population in the world, larger than the UK itself at over 125 million, with fluency is socially prestigious and important for job success and upward. But acquiring fluency requires rich and consistent exposure, largely limited to urban upper classes, promoting this communication style which is available to the masses. The Hinglish population has evolved to fill a niche between monolingual Hindi and full bilingualism because it responds to the need for a modern, yet localised way of speaking.

From my personal experience, I can certainly express a distinct feeling of 'un-indian-ness' and disconnect from my heritage in daily life. Aside from a few words and phrases, my Hindi proficiency is wholly lacking, and I would much more readily define my childhood culture as distinctly British, rather than ethnically associated.

Though this is arguably self-inflicted, it can be argued that this is a result of societal expectations and a desire to conform. Many writers persuasively blame the British for the gradual erosion of shared traditions since the 19th century. As Alex von Tunzelmann observes in her history "Indian Summer," when "the British started to define 'communities' based on religious identity and attach political representation to them, many Indians stopped accepting the diversity of their own thoughts and began to ask themselves in which of the boxes they belonged."

So, what's next?

Anthropologist Marshall Sahlins put forward the notion of 'the indigenisation of modernity' with cultures taking introspective glances to preserve their values and traditions, even through the commodification of culture, for example through media and tourism. Globalisation can be viewed as a dialectical process, where processes leading to the weakening of cultural boundaries inevitably
result in bids to strengthen them again. This is certainly evident through the establishment of micro-diaspora, such as the large Asian population of Rusholme, Manchester. Perhaps in the 21st century our nation's, and our globe's, geopolitics allow for strengthening of minority communities and thus the continuation of regional languages.



Reviving a Legacy: The Survival and Revival of Guaraní in Paraguay

Mr McClafferty

Paraguay is a country not many people in the UK pay much attention to. This small South American country with a population of just under 7 million people nestled in between Brazil and Argentina is often forgotten about in terms of culture, sport and politics. Even amongst the other South American countries, Paraguay is on the receiving end of many jokes about how no one lives there or how no one knows anything about them. However, linguistically Paraguay is unique, not only in South America but across the world.

Paraguay's linguistic story starts out like any other country with a history of colonisation. The land we now know as Paraguay was once dominated by the Guaraní people, an indigenous group that had been there more than a millennium before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores in the 16th century and the founding of the now capital city Asunción.
However, the story of Guaraní, the indigenous language spoken by these people defies all typical patterns. While most indigenous languages across the colonized world were marginalized, erased, or replaced by European tongues, Guarani became an exception, it not only survived, it thrived. According to a study by the University of Oviedo in Spain, when the Spanish arrived in Asunción in the 16th century, they had an amicable relationship with the Guaraní, in contrast to their relationship with the Incas and Aztecs. Many Spaniards took Guaraní wives, and their children became bilingual, starting a blending of indigenous and European culture that is still so evident in the country today. Furthermore, on their missions to convert the native people to Catholicism the Jesuit Spanish standardised the Guaraní language and created a written form.
The relationship between the colony and the native people would soon deteriorate. In 1770 King Carlos III of Spain vowed to 'extinguish' all native languages and made many subsequent efforts to ban Guaraní from public spaces, including education, politics and work. However, thanks to the efforts of its people, the Guaraní language survived and became the exception it is today, rising to a status where it is spoken by people of European descent alongside Spanish. In fact, Guarani is the only indigenous language in Latin America that has remained widely spoken by both indigenous populations and people of European ancestry.

It took until 1992 for Guaraní to be recognized in the Paraguayan constitution as an official language with equal status to Spanish. This change was crucial for Guaraní's survival in a new technological world. It allowed the language to transfer from language of everyday conversations into a language of politics, education and business. It is now required that all schools in Paraguay are bilingual in both Spanish and Guaraní. Amazingly, according to the latest figures, 87% of the population speak Spanish while 90% speak Guaraní. Guaraní is truly the last thriving indigenous language in the Americas.

However, despite a thriving language, for the indigenous people whose ancestors spent their lives fighting for the survival of the language, life has become very hard. The Guaraní continue to struggle with land dispossession, as much of their ancestral land is being taken over by agricultural and commercial enterprises, leaving them with limited access to resources. This land loss has led to overcrowded and underdeveloped communities, where Guarani people often live in poverty. In addition, social exclusion, poor access to healthcare, education, and employment, combined with marginalization from mainstream society, continues to hinder the Guarani people's overall development.

To support the Guarani people in Paraguay, comprehensive measures are needed. A focus on securing land rights, preserving culture, and improving access to education and healthcare are of vital importance. The government must enforce land reforms to prevent further land grabs whilst ensuring the Guaraní can reclaim ancestral territories. This will enable not only the Guaraní language to survive, but also the people and culture.

Tracing the Roots: The Transformation of the Spanish Language

Florence Hughes

The Spanish language has changed over many years, being shaped by culture, history and political forces.

Before the expansion of the Roman Empire to the Iberian Peninsula, the region that is now modern-day Spain was home to a rich variety of pre-roman languages, including Celtic, Iberian and Basque. The Basque language, known as Euskera, is a unique yet ancient language spoken in the Basque country, spanning parts of the northern region of Spain and even France. What creates the uniqueness of Euskera is that it is a language isolate, meaning it has no known relation to any other language in the world. Despite its long and mysterious history, it endured many centuries of oppression and predominantly outside influence such as the Guernica bombing in 1937. Today, Euskera is experiencing a revival, with people making great efforts to preserve and promote the language and culture through media and education, making it one of Europe′s most resilient and ancient languages.

This went on to influence early Spanish, with vocabulary such as ‘brega’, meaning to struggle or to fight, deriving from Celtic roots of ‘bregare’. The Romanisation of the Iberian Peninsula in 218 BCE brought Latin, which had a transformative impact, replacing local languages and evolving into several different dialects, one of which became the closest ancestor to modern day Spanish known as ‘Vulgar Latin, spoken by common people’. Spoken in the regions of Hispania Tarraconensis and Hispania Baetica, particularly in the central part of the Iberian Peninsula, it is considered the closest local Latin to Spanish. The Castilian dialect, which developed there, became the dominant form of Spanish as the kingdom of Castile expanded in power. After the fall of the Roman Empire in Spain, gradually over the course of the 5th century, the Iberian Peninsula was ruled by Visigoths, followed by a Germanic tribe. Although they didn’t have a large influence on the Spanish language, now called “Spanish” or “Castellano”, their contribution to military and governance was acknowledged with great respect. The Visigoths had a significant influence on military tactics in Spain during their rule, blending traditional Germanic warrior techniques with Roman military practices, adapting to the Iberian landscape and incorporating local knowledge. Their forces relied on cavalry and infantry, with a strong emphasis on mounted combat, which became a defining feature of their military style.

The Arab influence and Mozarabic period from 711 AD to 1492 AD was a time which shaped the Spanish language heavily, leaving a clear hereditary reminder of their heritage through food, religion and architecture such as the Alcázar in Sevilla, considered as one of the finest examples of Mudejar architecture (a style that blends Islamic and Christian elements) in Spain. Although it was originally built as a fortress for Muslim rulers in the 10th century, it was expanded by subsequent rulers. The palace features exquisite Islamic tiles, arches, and gardens with geometric patterns that reflect Islamic aesthetics .The Moorish conquest of 711 AD resulted in around 4000 Arabic words being integrated into the modern Spanish language, such as ‘barrio’ (neighbourhood), from Arabic ″barrī″ (meaning outer area or district). During the Arab rule, Mozarabic was spoken by Christians, a form of linguistic blending between cultures, known as multilingualism. The Iberian Peninsula during the Moorish period was characterized by this. While Arabic was the dominant language of the ruling class, the majority of the population continued to speak Latin-based languages. Over time, after the Arab period, Latin had evolved into many regional romance languages, such as Castilian, Catalan, and Galician.

Catalan is the language of Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands, emerging as a distinctive romance language, yet again stemming from vulgar Latin, whilst being influenced by Occitan. This was spoken from the North to the South of France, encouraging Catalan to spread even more during the rise of the Kingdom of Aragon. The dialect spoken in the Kingdom of Castile, (Northern

Spain), became the dominant variety, known as Old Spanish. La Reconquista from 711 AD to 1492 AD, was the reconquering of the Iberian Peninsula from the moors, causing the Castilian dialect to spread south to Andalusia. The marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, the first king and queen of a unified Spain, further strengthened Castilian as the official language. Isabella and Ferdinand decided to centralise their monarchy by consolidating power under the crown. They wanted to create a national identity that would transcend regional differences, including linguistic diversity.

During the Golden Age, which was the late 15th century to the mid 17th century, there was the expansion of the Spanish Empire to the Americas, influencing indigenous languages whilst absorbing words too, some being Guarani, originating from the Guaraní people, who are indigenous to the Paraguay, northeastern Argentina, southern Brazil, and Bolivia regions. An example of Guarani is the word 'tomate'. As Spanish- speaking countries grew, regional variations flourished, with different countries and regions developing with specific accents and even vocabulary. When the Spanish arrived in the early 1500s, they encountered powerful Mayan city-states across what are now parts of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador. The conquest, especially the violent confrontations between the Spanish forces and the Maya, led to the destruction of Mayan cities, mass killings, and the disruption of the Mayan social and political systems. The collapse of Maya cities and the loss of Mayan rulers and political structures severely weakened the cultural continuity of the Mayan civilization. This collapse affected the social use of the language, as local elites lost their influence.

Under the dictatorship of Franco from 1939 to 1975, regional languages in Spain, such as Catalan, Basque, and Galician, faced suppression as part of Franco's broader agenda of creating a centralised Spanish state. His regime emphasized Castilian as the sole language, and the use of regional languages was heavily restricted in many areas of public and cultural life. Public education under Franco was strictly in Castilian, and the teaching of regional languages in schools was prohibited. Children were required to learn Castilian as their primary language, and textbooks, curricula, and academic resources were all in Castilian. Due to this ban, there were issues with a loss of cultural identity. Regional languages are not just ways of communication; they carry the history, traditions, and literature of the people who speak them. The banning of language learning cut the connection between individuals and their cultural roots. For many people, their language is tied to their sense of belonging and heritage, and its suppression led to a loss of this vitally important aspect of their lives.

With Spanish being the fourth most spoken language globally, consuming more than 460 million speakers, it continues to evolve, incorporating new words from other languages, adapting to global trends and welcoming other cultures. The more recent influence of the English language on Spanish demonstrates its ability to adapt. Many Spanish speakers use English words like 'smartphone', or even have picked up small English expressions through the media which have become a part of their daily vocabulary. As technology develops, it is becoming more common to use the original English word instead of creating new Spanish words, hence the use of the word 'smartphone' or 'email' in the Spanish language. The Spanish language has had an impressionable growth, and it is a language steeped in culture, reflecting the different groups of people that speak it today, as shown on the map below. Through its evolution, the Spanish language has defied linguistic conventions, whether it be its ability to adapt and develop through other cultures, or its ability to narrate Spanish history through its vocabulary.

FILM & TV

"Cinema is the most beautiful fraud in the world...no boundary, it is a ribbon of dream...an art that films life: the cinema is something between art and life" – Jon Luc Godard, Orson Welles

For centuries, filmmaking has been a monumental element of the world. It has granted permission for innumerable people to showcase their artistic and creative talents, bring mere dreams and idea to life, spread wide-open or underlying messages around the globe, educate millions about things unseen or forgotten, provide cultural and historical wisdom, but ultimately display great beauty. Filmmaking is an art form that transcends mere entertainment, blending storytelling, technology, and human capabilities to create experiences that resonate across cultures and generations. Behind every frame lies a masterful mixture of creativity, technique, and innovation, where the director's vision takes shape through the camera lens and the force of a dedicated team. In this section, we will delve deep into the multifactorial nature of filmmaking, from it's historical roots to its contemporary evolution, uncovering how the medium not onlt reflects society and culture, but shapes it. By exploring the crucial elements that create a film; from scripts to emotion, this section aims to expand our understanding of how filmmaking serves as both a mirror and a catalyst for technological and cultural expression.

Jamie Rogers, Lower Sixth
Section Editor

The Techno-Cultural Spark of CGI in Cinema

Jamie Rogers

"I think children invented CGI. We invent worlds. A stick can become a sword. Or a bowl of stones can become a bowl of tomatoes. That's what children do, and that's what CGI enables us to do." – Rhys Ifans

CGI, short for computer-generated imagery, is arguably one of the most useful and significant digital tools used in filmmaking history. It has opened up a wide range of tech-specialist jobs, helped to create cinematic masterpieces, and may have even inspired the development of AI generated models around the globe.

CGI initially began making its mark in cinema in the late 1970's through to the early 1980's, with a notable feature in George Lucas's famous science-fiction classic Star Wars: Episode IV: A New Hope (1977), where visual effects artist John Dykstra and his team incorporated early computer graphics for certain scenes. This included forming the famous Death Star and Millennium Falcon. However, without the core of advanced technology they struggled to create high-definition or realistic imagery. Although CGI had not truly broken ground yet, it was still a marvel for audiences across the world.

CGI really got its grasp in cinema through the making of Tron (1982), which is often classed as one of the first films to use extensive CG

visuals, combining animation from the use of traditional designing and computer sources. Despite this, CGI hit a major milestone in 1993 with Jurassic Park, directed by world-renowned director, Steven Spielberg.

The success involved a variety of resources, time, effort and investment with techniques spanning from motion capture and digital composition to animatronics. Physical modelling became less and less of a focus in cinema as years went on, with the majority of components, primarily the dinosaurs, being designed and modelled using 3D computer graphics software such as Wavefront and Alias. The velociraptors for example were unbelievably detailed, with their complex movements and anatomy being captured perfectly. After building the models, they were 'wrapped' with textures such as skin, scale and teeth designs to make the beasts appear more realistic. This was incredibly challenging as the texture maps (templates) had to look lifelike under different lighting conditions, like sun, moon and artificial light. After this, motion capture was used to record real animal and human movements, rendering these prehistoric creatures real and believable. For instance, a number of the dinosaur movements were inspired by animals of the reptile family, particularly lizards and birds such as Komodo

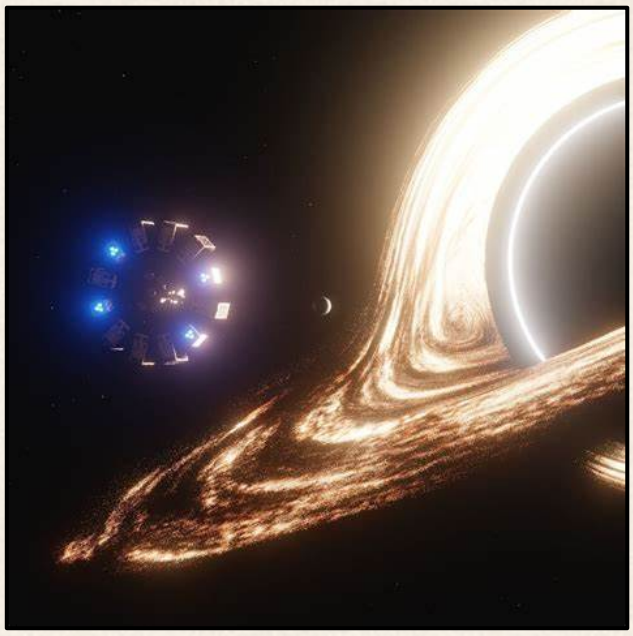
dragons, crocodiles, and quite surprisingly, chickens. This was still reasonably accurate considering they are key descendants of the archaic creatures. Finally, microscopic keyframe animation techniques were used to fine-tune the dinosaurs' expressions, movements and behaviour, ensuring they performed suitable responses to these dramatic, tense scenes, ultimately allowing Spielberg's team to produce a frighteningly life-like blockbuster which generated a colossal $914 million, the highest grossing movie of its time.

The 2000s was a revolutionary decade for Computer-Generated Imagery, marked by significant advancements that revitalised the entertainment, advertising, and gaming industries. A standout of the movie industry, The Matrix: Reloaded + Revolutions (2003) displayed modernised CGI techniques, especially in action sequences and digital doubles. Films like Spider-Man (2002), The Lord of the Rings trilogy (2001-2003), and Harry Potter (2001 onwards) utilized CGI for both creature design, like Gollum, the Green Goblin and Voldemort as well as visual effects that lit up storylines. Persistent inspiration and technology released iconic films such as Pirates of the Caribbean (2003-2017), King Kong (2005) and Avatar (2009), with both leaders such as James Cameron and inner machine cogs like Disney animator Glen Keane sharing equal importance in steering CGI in the right direction.

Particularly important within gaming cinematics, rendering scale and speed improved due to the emergence of better processing power; cloud computing has enabled the sharing of such power and the evolution of software like Houdini and Renderman, allowing for photorealistic visuals. Advances in global illumination, ray tracing, and other algorithms helped filmmakers achieve more realistic lighting and shadows in CGI environments. Television also saw the rise of CGI in shows like Battlestar Galactica (2004-2009), which used CGI extensively for space battles, and Heroes (2006-2010),

which used CGI to bring superhuman abilities to life. Gaming gems that followed included the Assassin's Creed series (2007-2023), Red Dead Redemption I and II (2010 and 2018) and GTA V (2013), all containing dynamic and captivating graphics and motion.

Ultimately, CGI transformed conventional filmmaking by breaking free from the limitations of physical effects and set designs. Before CGI, filmmakers were constrained by the realities of what could be achieved with miniatures, props, and live-action stunts, often relying on dangerous choreography and manual craftsmanship. CGI expanded this by allowing filmmakers to create entire worlds, fantastical creatures, and complex visual effects that were previously unimaginable or immensely expensive. It displayed how CGI could blend seamlessly with live-action



footage, pushing the boundaries of visual realism and offering filmmakers complete control over their stories. Moreover, CGI reduced the need for practical sets or dangerous stunts, making filmmaking more cost-effective and opening up new avenues for creativity. This break from tradition allowed directors to craft more ambitious narratives and action sequences, forever changing the landscape of cinema. By transforming how stories could be told visually, CGI not only extended the scope of filmmaking but also led to the rise of entirely new genres, including fully animated films like John Lasseter's Toy Story (1995) and the hybrid live-action/CGI films such as Interstellar (2014) that are now staples in modern cinema. In other words, it went outside of the constraints of convention into a whole new universe of possibility.

By the end of the second decade of the 21st century, the line between live-action and CGI was blurred to the point where audiences could no longer tell where one ended and the other began, hopefully setting the stage for further groundbreaking developments in years to come. CGI continues to dazzle and intrigue millions; its true limits are undefined as of yet.

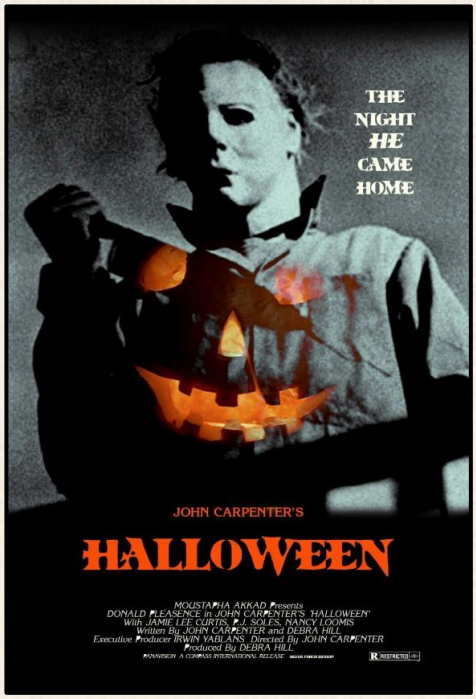
The Famed Final Girl Trope in Cinema

Hannah Reeves

The 'Final Girl' is an iconic horror convention embodied by strong female characters who survive countless terrifying situations thrown at them. Film studies expert Carol J. Clover coined the term in her article 'Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film' (1987). By studying Slasher films from what's considered to be the golden age of the horror genre (1970-1990,) she found the Final Girl to be the sole surviving member of a group of people who are hunted by, and get a final confrontation with, a villain. Furthermore, she normally has an implied moral superiority. Since the article and to the present day, the trope has been continuously evolving within cinema alongside subgenres and characteristics.

Providing a new perspective for the audience, the Final Girl shifted how women were written in cinema. Before the trope, female characters were generally crafted as promiscuous, vulnerable and useless. As Clover found, this presentation offered a fresh perspective on the horror genre; the films would start from the male gaze - who was usually the killer- and then the narrative would flip as the audience identifies with and roots for the Final Girl. The introduction of a strong female protagonist grew increasingly popular as the horror film genre grew exponentially from the 1970s. From this era, all Final Girls met a criteria: "She's intelligent, watchful, level-headed; the first character to amiss and the only one to deduce from the accumulating evidence the patterns and extent of the threat; the only one, in other words, whose perspective meets our own deeper understanding of the situation." A key characteristic of the early Final Girls was to be morally superior to the other victims as well as the antagonist at hand, because this addressed the concerns of society at the time - the late 1970s and 1980s saw the rise of teen youth culture and sexual freedom which manifested itself in the likes of slasher films. She would be the only one of her group that refuses sex, drugs or other perceived immoral behaviours,unlike her companions.

Laurie Strode, played by Jamie Lee Curtis in John Carpenter's "Halloween" (1978) is the quintessential Final Girl. Perfectly portraying the aforementioned traits, she's a straight A student who's terrified of asking a boy out, she wears conservative clothing, and smokes some of her friends' weed in an uncomfortable manner, indicating that she's never done it before and likely will never voluntarily do it again. Micheal Myers, a masked psychopath, stabs and strangles his way through this group of reckless teenagers, until he comes against the pure driving force of the film, the babysitter who stayed in on 'Halloween' (Laurie Strode.) This encapsulation of the Final Girl was continually utilised in films such as 'Friday the 13th' (1980) and 'The Texas Chainsaw Massacre' (1974), but the recurrent use of the classic Final Girl attributes meant that horror films began feeling repetitive. Many critics felt that suspense was lacking as it was obvious if a character was going to be the last one standing since she fit all of the Final Girl characteristics.



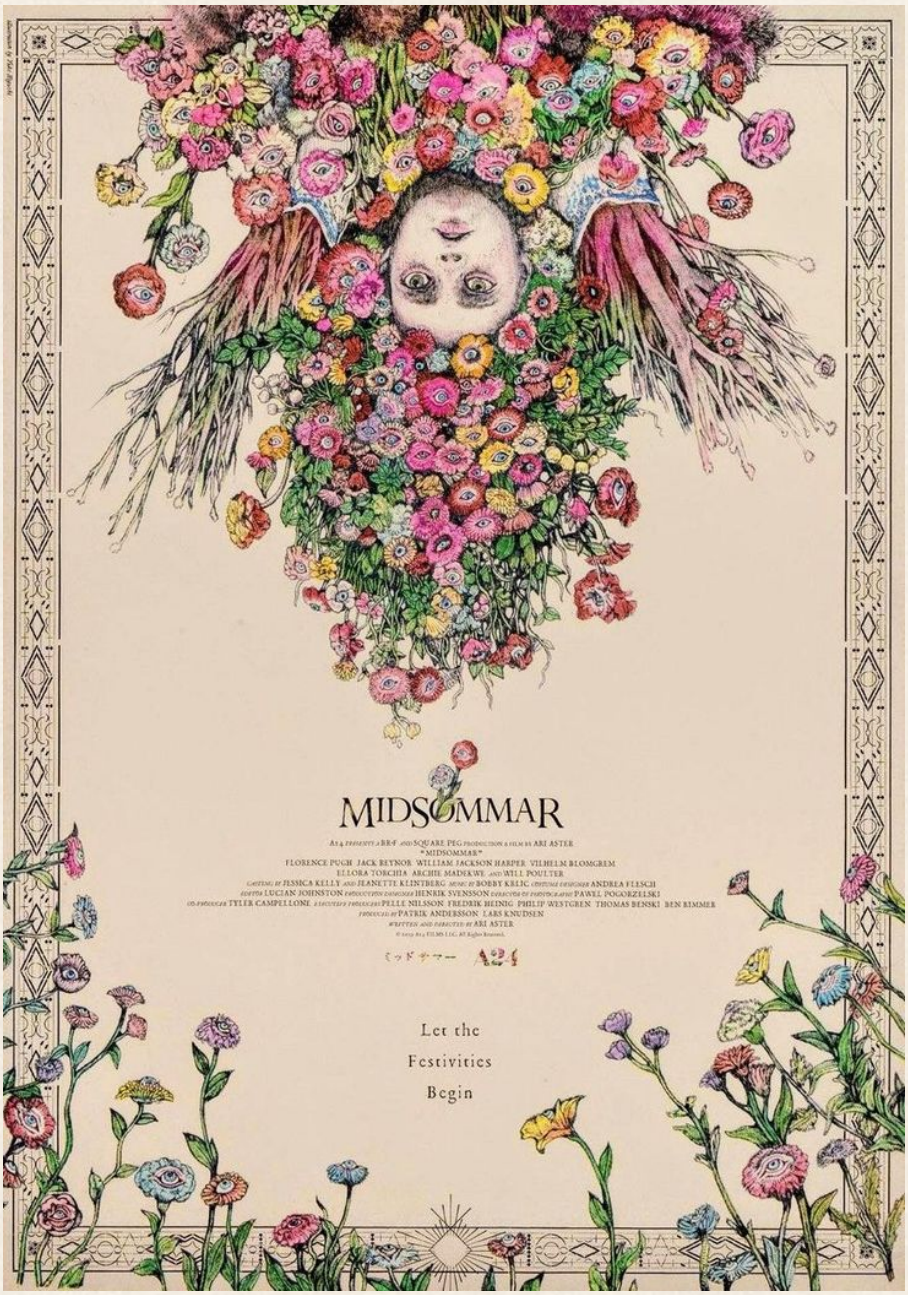
Leaving the 1980s era of horror, it became apparent that the final girl needed change because of her two-dimensional personality and the predictability it brought, undermining a deftly crafted atmosphere. Wes Craven's horror classic 'Scream' (1996) shifted the stereotypical Final Girl. Sydney Prescott, played by actress Neve Campbell, stood out from the previous Final Girls, especially at the climax of the film where she pushed a TV that was playing a scene from 'Halloween' onto a killer. This moment marked great significance because the TV displayed Laurie Strode hiding; physically and metaphorically she shattered this embodiment of the role's stereotypes. Pushing the TV symbolises that the standards of this trope aren't necessary for its survival. In a way, 'Scream' was spoofing the genre and essentially directing the film industry to perform to a higher quality in horror and slasher films. As the horror genre has progressed, the Final Girl has evolved to be more complex; now the trope is mainly just the last girl standing and she's no longer defined by her traits.

Ari Aster's 2019 dark, disturbing psychological thriller 'Midsommar' is a powerful example of how the Final Girl has completely transformed. The film follows Dani Ardor (Florence Pugh) who's grieving the death of her mother, father and sister who died due to her bipolar sister, Terri, filling their home with carbon monoxide. Dani, Christian, and their group of friends travel to a Swedish Harga; an uncanny cult that performs alternative pagan rituals and where Dani's journey of grief is unveiled. Dani grieves in isolation as she has an unsupportive group of friends and boyfriend. After witnessing a deeply distressing scene of Christian cheating on her, she runs from the cabin away from the crowd in order to grieve alone. The women of the Harga follow and surround her, starting to mimic her and mirror her emotions - for once

she's not grieving alone.

This marks the ultimate turning point of the film as we realise she's the Final Girl not by escaping the cult, but by escaping her toxic inner circle as well as finding the community who empathise with her. The film ends with a ceremony where the Harga must sacrifice nine souls in an attempt to rid their commune of

evil. Her four friends have already been selected, and now Dani must make the choice between her paralysed boyfriend or a member of the commune to be burned to flames. She picks Christian. A seemingly happy yet disquieting smile creeps along Dani's face, and the film concludes with a flair of drama and wonder. In an unusual way we as the audience root for her, despite the fact that she doesn't escape the typical horror-based circumstances or even possess the typical traits of a Final Girl. Dani's complex character exemplifies how evolution of the trope has steered away from the classical genre and stereotypes, and has bloomed into a myriad of inspiring and unique new ideas.



An Unprecedented Blend of Dangerous and Seductive: The Femme Fatale

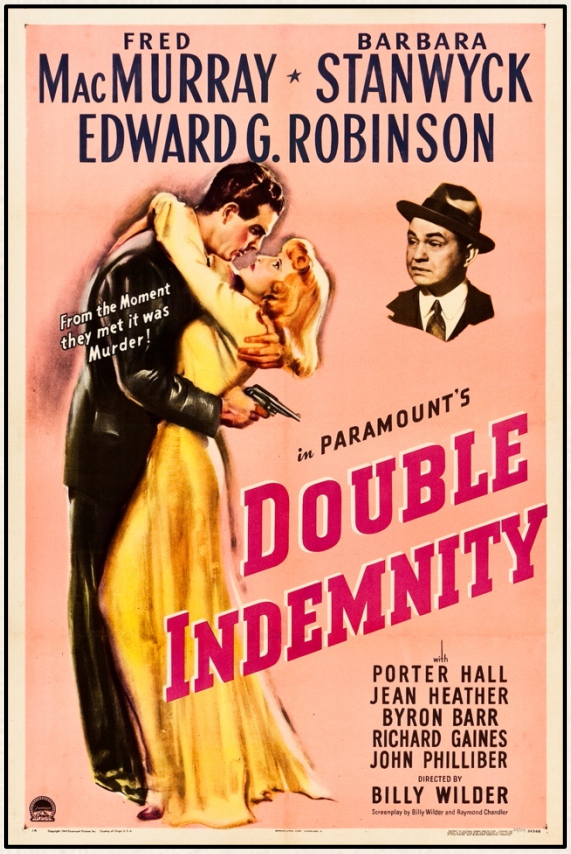
Lily Noone

Defined as a mysterious and seductive woman who lures men into dangerous or even destructive situations, the Femme Fatale has become a symbol of both power and peril. She is often portrayed as a figure who manipulates those around her for her own personal gain, yet her motives are not always clear-cut. The enigmatic female figure uses her feminine allure and sexual charm to achieve her hidden purpose, with common examples of the Femme Fatale dating back to figures such as the Bible's Delilah, or in ancient Greek mythology, characters like Medusa and Sirens.

The Femme Fatale's ability to control and manipulate is often a reflection of the male anxieties about women gaining power in a repressive system that benefits from their submission. The origins of the Femme Fatale can be traced back to ancient myths where powerful women used their allure and beguiling powers to control men or influence their fate, most notably including Circe, Medea and Clytemnestra.

The Film Noir movement in the 1940s and 1950s is when this depiction truly became an iconic global symbol. The film movement, often characterised by its dark themes, morally ambiguous characters, and fatalism, provided ample grounds for the Femme Fatale to evolve into an epitome of sexual empowerment and dangerous coercion. Her role in these films often involved leading men into morally compromising situations or even their own demise. Film Noir solidified the Femme Fatale as a paragon of dangerous female independence, challenging the conventional norms of female inferiority, passivity and subservience in society. These films were also products of their time, reflecting the anxieties of life post-war, where traditional gender roles were being questioned. Notable characters from this era are Phyllis Dietrichson in 'Double Indemnity' (1944) and Brigid O'Shaughnessy in 'The Maltese Falcon' (1941).

The Femme Fatale was significantly attached to the idea of the 'New Woman' in the 19th century. With the changing socioeconomic conditions post-war, self-sufficient female figures, particularly signified through the women's suffrage movement (1840-1920), who challenged traditional societal norms, represented the shift in how women were portrayed and understood in society. The "New Woman" was often defined by her rejection of traditional, passive femininity in favour of an active, assertive identity. She was educated, self-reliant, and determined to live a life of independence. The archetype was seen as challenging the conventional "angel in the house"



ideal, which dictated that women's primary roles were as dutiful wives and mothers. Both the Femme Fatale and New Woman emerged in response to the evolving roles and expectations of women during this period of social change, but while they often seem to represent opposing figures, one dangerous and seductive, the other independent and emancipated, they are deeply intertwined. These archetypes encapsulate the complexities of proto-femininity, the negotiation of power, and the challenges to traditional gender roles.

In modern media, the Femme Fatale is often redefined and made more complex. Rather than simply being provocative and manipulative, she is more often depicted to be multifaceted, with her own motivations and desires. She remains morally ambiguous and alluring just as she's been defined over centuries, yet the new Femme Fatale allows for a greater psychological depth and exploration of true motive. Recent examples are Amy Dunne in 'Gone Girl' (2014), Iris in 'Companion' (2025), Jennifer Check in 'Jennifer's body' (2009) and Natasha Romanoff in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

From the seductress of myth to the morally complex characters in modern films and TV shows, the Femme Fatale continues to captivate audiences by challenging traditional gender norms and embodying gender norms and embodying the darker side of human desire and ambition.

2001: A Space Odyssey – Something Beyond the Screen

Oscar Reeder-Hirst

"I tried to create a visual experience, one that bypasses verbalized pigeonholing and directly penetrates the subconscious with an emotional and philosophic content." - Stanley Kubrick

The late Stanley Kubrick worked his whole filmmaking career to redefine what could be seen as "film". He relentlessly pushed boundaries, constantly challenging the limits of cinema by breaking traditional rules and crafting his own. His nonstop mission for innovation and perfection meant he would go on to be viewed as one of the greatest directors of all time . Up until his death in 1999, Kubrick fundamentally changed the way that films could be seen and made forever. He achieved this through his experimental style, discovering groundbreaking ways in which he could tell his stories, and delving into creative realms that were once thought impossible to capture on screen. Even today , acclaimed directors such as Christopher Nolan, Wes Anderson, Paul Thomas Anderson, Brian de Palma, Martin Scorsese, Ridley Scott, the late David Lynch, and countless others have echoes of Kubrick within their style, creative process and thematic subject. His visionary ideas created masterpieces that still hold relevance now, some more than they ever had, with many of his films becoming iconic across all genres of cinema. Stanley Kubrick used his talents to tell important philosophical stories and ideas, which he believed could only be done through a visual medium on a cinema screen. And I think his greatest success is his timeless 1968 Sci-Fi Epic - 2001: A Space Odyssey.

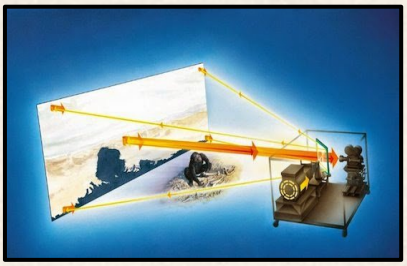
The film can be divided into 4 main chapters - The Dawn of Man, showcasing early humans and the appearance of an unearthly black monolith which seemingly propels them to discover weapons. There is the iconic transition into The Mission to The Moon where we watch as spaceships float around, dancing along to The Blue Danube as one docks to the other, following Dr Floyd on his journey to the moon to discuss classified business. We soon come to find out that another monolith has been discovered on the moon. The film then jumps 18 months later to The Jupiter Mission, during which Dave Bowman, Frank Poole and their AI pilot HAL 9000 are on a mission for an unknown reason. Along the way, HAL malfunctions, turning on Dave and Frank, leaving Dave no choice but to disconnect HAL. We then come to the final chapter - Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite. Upon arriving at Jupiter Dave finds another monolith and is taken into the monolith, drawn into a psychedelic experience, finally winding up in a cage (likely created by those who created the monoliths) where time doesn't move regularly, rapidly accelerating Dave's age. As he lies on his deathbed, a final monolith appears, transforming him into a godlike entity, placed back to watch over Earth as a guide for the next step of humanity. This journey can be interpreted in many ways; an intentional design by Kubrick who purposely never explained what the film means, rather allowing any interpretation to be one's own - whether religious or something of wider spirituality.

The significance of 2001 for filmmaking cannot be overstated. Its total deviation from any previous films allowed it to stand out as its own body of work, so its groundbreaking techniques of crafting a film could be seen in isolation, showing their intricacy. There is no aspect of filmmaking that 2001 does not do differently or alter; it is a body of work sculpted from complete innovation. The most striking of these are the visual ones. The cinematography and camera work are the

backbone of this film, and is to many the most memorable aspect. Despite not being behind the camera, Kubrick was a meticulous director of his cinematography, being involved in every possible aspect of filming, crafting what was on the screen to create exactly what he envisioned, whether through choice of camera lens or his framing perspective and anything else in between.

For 2001, Kubrick pioneered new methods, paving the way for directors in the following decades. The revolutionary motion control camera rigs used to film the model spaceship exteriors allowed for minimal motion blur, making shots as crisp and defined as possible. Shots could also easily be done and re-done - this was perfect for Kubrick′s perfectionist way of working, and made capturing details of the models simple. This is part of what gives 2001 its timeless look of quality, with it hardly looking dated for a film that came out before we landed on the moon, and only 10 years after CGI was created. The motion control rig would later go on to be used by George Lucas in *Star Wars,* 9 years later. Kubrick′s visual pioneering did not stop there; for the first 15 minutes in the *Dawn of Man* chapter, Kubrick used front projection (placing a projector in front of a screen instead of casting an image from behind a translucent screen) for establishing shots and backgrounds. Whilst not being Kubrick′s own invention, he adapted it into his own, using it on a scale never seen before, the screen being 40 ft by 90 ft (the largest of its type) as well as the film crew having to create custom projectors to match massive scale screens. 9 years after, George Lucas and ILM (Industrial Light & Magic Company) used blue screens on *Star Wars*, however about 20 years before the green and blue screens became common practice, front projection was the way to create a realistic background with a convincing depth of field.

Stanley Kubrick employed a meticulous approach to photography for his film, sending a dedicated team to Africa to capture images in a desert landscape arranged on a grid. Unlike traditional directors who allow teams to operate independently, Kubrick dictated camera movements from afar to ensure his precise vision was realized.



His innovations in cinematography for 2001 are notable, introducing techniques such as the Slit-Scan for the ″Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite″ segment, later influencing iconic sequences in ″Star Trek: The Next Generation″ and ″Doctor Who.″ Additionally, he implemented wedge testing for lighting and utilized vivid colors to convey emotion, a technique mirrored in subsequent films like ″Suspiria.″ Kubrick's signature low-angle shots heightened tension, a style later echoed in ″The Empire Strikes Back.″ His creative ingenuity extended to practical effects, most notably seen in the floating pen sequence, achieved without wires through a clever combination of glass, tape, and camera angles. On a grander scale, interior shots of the Discovery spaceship employed a large rotating set designed to facilitate seamless actor movement, resulting in visually striking scenes highlighting the collaboration between Kubrick, Geoffrey Unsworth and John Alcott. Kubrick's technical innovations were not limited to cinematography- the audio and sound design is stunning, influencing the use of sound as a tool. Arguably, the most iconic scene of the film and perhaps in cinema is the opening title - is not

remembered so much for its incredible visuals, but rather for its accompanying score: *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. If not recognised by the title, the opening horns make it instantly known. This isn't the only inclusion of classical music in 2001, another use is *The Blue Danube* and the waltzing spaceships sequence, as well as my personal favourite - *Gayane's Adagio* and the *Jupiter Mission*. The use of this much classical music was not common in the 60's with the classical days fading away into rock and psychedelic pop. The use of classical music ties together a mixture of humanity's past and future, blending familiarity and the unknown, creating a feeling of fantasy and harmony. However, perhaps what is most impactful of the sound design is the moments where there is none. Kubrick and Winston Ryder included long stretches of pure silence; these moments come mostly in the *Jupiter Mission* adding to the tension and highlighting the endless vacuum of space in which Dave and Frank are trapped. The use of silence means the story has to be told only on screen, unable to rely on dialogue or music in climactic scenes. Another bit of innovation was the use of diegetic sound to cut through the silence. Often the sound of a device beeping or machines whirring is in the background of scenes, or even something so simple as the noise of breathing through a space suit. These noises - again particularly in *The Jupiter Mission* add to the tension, creating a sense of fear just by hearing Dave's breathing rate increase, or the airlock scene with the eruption of noise as the air floods in. I think the film's sound is what creates the psychological impact Kubrick wished for, doing so much with so little. A subtle yet impactful use is the low, eerie hum heard from HAL when on screen, an ominous motif of its sinister plotting. Kubrick and Ryder's subtleties changed the way sound could be used in film, how it could tell a story in its own right. Their work is echoed over the decades following, such as in the *Star Wars* original trilogy or *Interstellar*.

The storytelling of 2001 is something completely new and extraordinary, with meanings and themes not explored by Hollywood. Its non-linear narrative, which itself was not new having been used by Alfred Hitchcock in *Psycho* and *Rebecca*. Kubrick however, pushed this technique to the extremes, beginning the film with the dawn of humanity, jumping to 2001 and then ending in an unspecified time in the future. He takes non-linear storytelling and pushes it as far as it could go. For the actual plot, Kubrick worked with Sci-Fi author Arthur C. Clarke to create the screenplay; the *Mission to the Moon* chapter is loosely based on Clarke's short story *The Sentinel*. Whilst the film deviates largely in the following chapters, the meanings remain similar, although the book delves deeper into some rather than others explored in the film.

Released in 1968, the film broke conventional cinematic boundaries, inspiring future generations and leaving an indelible mark on pop culture with its iconic visuals and sounds. ″2001: A Space Odyssey″ remains a unique masterpiece that resonates profoundly with contemporary issues surrounding technology and existence.

The Conventional 'Dumb Blonde', and her Adaptations Throughout Modern Cinema

Amy Yates

The 'Dumb Blonde' is a stereotype seen throughout many movies and has become a common archetype of modern movies adding a sense of comedic relief alongside more dimensional characters.

The 'Dumb Blonde' convention began in 1775, in a French satire called "Les Curiosités de la Foire", about a blonde courtesan and how she is intellectually substandard, yet sexually independent. The courtesan the play concerns, Rosalie Duthe, would take long pauses before she spoke, leading the audience to assume her comprehension to be below the upper, highly educated class surrounding her. She is the first recorded dumb blonde in history.

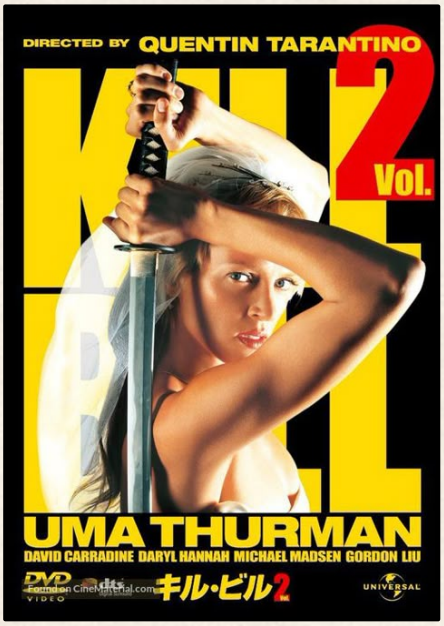
The 'Dumb Blonde' genre saw a resurgence during the 1920s silent Hollywood era as they were seen to be subservient, adoring yet fragile subordinate, at the mercy of their dominant male counterparts. The stars who encapsulated the idea perfectly were Shirley Chambers, Mae West, and Jean Harlow, who portrayed the dumb yet beautiful girls of the silver screen. Harlow even starred in the 1933 movie The 'Blonde Bombshell' cementing the belief in the difference between the seemingly 'intelligent' brunettes and the 'Dumb Blondes'. Then in 1925, the book 'Gentlemen Prefer Blondes' written by Anita Loo was released with the infamous Lorelei Lee, a simple-minded seductress who only wanted money and was determined by any means necessary to achieve this objective. The book was an instant classic, receiving acclaim from many of the most celebrated writers of the period: F. Scott Fitzgerlad, James Joyce and Edith Wharton. Lee's famous line from the novel "I can be smart when it's important, but most men don't like it." emphasises the belief that a blonde woman's view was already disregarded due to the cult-belief structured around them; whatever they had to say was not comparable to what the other individuals around them thought. It also shows how the Dumb Blonde narrative is tailored for the male fantasy, as she refrains from talking to men about intellectual matters so that she can remain alluring to them, further showing the damaging stereotype that blonde women were forced into. Lee's companion in the book, Dorothy Shaw, a brunette, is seen to be intelligent by comparison because she hasn't adopted the same naive nature that Lee has.

The 1953 movie of 'Gentlemen Prefer Blondes' encapsulated the sultry, yet naive nature of the previous Hollywood actresses, with a star of the screen Marilyn Monroe portraying Lorilee Lee. The movie rose to high acclaim and fully cemented The Dumb Blonde stereotype in films, extended to a transatlantic, tangible caricature. Monroe's famous scene as Lee was trying to put the tiara on around her neck; after being told it was for her head, and exclaiming 'I love finding new places to put tiaras!' These simplistic yet undeniable clues lead us as the viewer to

subconsciously see fairer characters in a certain light. Movie makers in the 20s left the impression that the female love interest was incredibly desirable, but simultaneously chaste and coy, which further helps to keep the allure of the 'Dumb Blonde' character altogether.

Many classic teen flicks of the 90s and 00s play into this convention. 'Clueless' and 'Mean Girls' are renowned for these stereotypes, with the dumb yet loveable characters of Karen Smith and Cher Horowitz bringing the cliche into the next decades. The two hit movies, which are still favourites to the masses, reinforce the stereotypes. Karen remains one dimensional, providing comedic relief to the tension that was surrounding the main characters. Whilst Cher does grow out of her naivety throughout the movie, the beginning is enough to understand how she was going to be portrayed for most of the movie

Despite these notions created by the past, movies have been breaking out from the norm throughout this period. In 2001 Legally Blonde came out. The story follows a young woman, Elle Woods. Seemingly intelligent on the surface, she is focused on getting married to him but when things go awry, she realises her heart's true desires and becomes determined to prove the extent of her capabilities by attending her ex's school, Harvard Law. But the shift in her character throughout the movie allows her to influence and break away from the norm of the dumb blonde as even though she uses scented papers for her works and dresses exclusively in pink, she is intelligent and wins the student case that she was chosen to do. The name of the movie is even a play on the phrase 'dumb blonde' subverting its meaning into a sense of reclaimed pride and ownership rather than a negative label, mirroring Woods' character development through the movie.



The beginning of the manipulation of the genre was Hitchcock's capitalisation on this view of blonde women in his movies to help create more mystery, as the popular view of blonde women of the period fed into this narrative. He used the persona of the 'Dumb Blonde' to his advantage to throw viewers off the scent of the criminal in the movie, for example Grace Kelly in 'Dial M for Murder'. Tarantino's cult-classic Kill Bill follows 'The Bride' and her odyssey to get avenge herself from her ex-boss as he tried to kill her, with the assassin group, the deadly six, at her wedding ensuing a bloodbath. She breaks from the social view of blonde women as she forms a Machiavellian scheme so get her revenge, subverting the very idea of the Dumb Blonde, as she also takes action against her ex-boss causing her to fall out the generic stereotype of the Dumb Blonde as she actually took steps in ensure that the issues she had were dealt with and not solved by using a

companion of hers to fix it. The narrative of the movie shows the self-development of 'The Bride' and shows the development of the stereotype and how by the end of the movie she juxtaposes the very idea of the 'Dumb Blonde'.

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

Welcome to this Issue's Classics Section! It has been a thoroughly enjoyable and engaging process to write and edit for the first ever Classics section in the 'Like Literary' magazine. I am a firm believer that the ancient world holds "the secrets of present, past and future" within its history. As our study of it is constantly evolving, it is important every now and again to check in on the fascinating information that comes to light concerning the 'life of the ordinary' and the culture of those who lived before us. In this year's section, we explored the theme of conventions in the ancient world and dove into four captivating realms– Pompeii, the once-thriving Roman city frozen in time, the stars above, whose mysteries and secrets have beckoned to us since the dawn of civilization and Greek tragedy with a modern twist. Whilst their culture and ways of life are something, we can only marvel at, I think it is safe to say that our fascination with ancient history will never cease. So, for now, from all the writers and myself, Happy Reading!

Maizie Farrar, Lower Sixth
Section Editor

Unveiling Pompeii: The 'Once in A Century' Discovery in the City Frozen in Time

Maizie Farrar

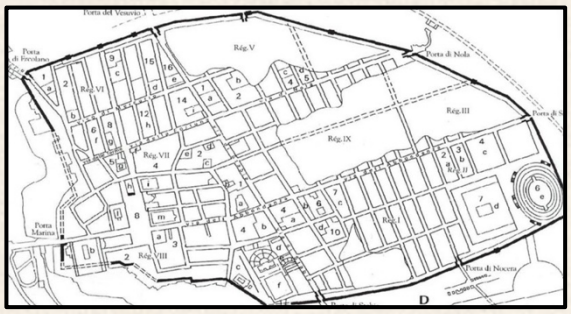
Pompeii has been a subject of human fascination since its rediscovery in the 16th century. Its sudden and tragic demise is a renowned story in the modern world, with the eruption of 79 AD leaving an unparalleled preserved city that provides us here today with a snapshot of life in Ancient Rome. Its rich history, along with numerous new discoveries, fuels our continued passion with a city that holds the secrets of present, past and future buried under ash. Before diving into the latest secrets unveiled in Pompeii, it is only fitting to start with the city's end. One fascinating aspect of the eruption was its various stages, from an initial ash cloud to devastating pyroclastic flows that obliterated Herculaneum and Pompeii, trapping them for 2,000 years. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius on 24th August 79 AD was documented by Pliny the Younger, who provided a detailed

account of the events. He reported the catastrophe hour by hour, beginning around noon. The first phase, called the Plinian phase, followed several days of tremors, typical for Campania, where Pompeii is located

At 1:00 PM, pressurized gas in the magma chamber caused the volcano to violently erupt, sending a column of heated gas, pumice, and foam 20 miles into the air- darkening the sky over Pompeii. The ash solidified at high altitudes and fell as pumice stones, covering the city. Six hours later, the ash column reached the equivalent height of two Mount Everests and those who had sought shelter from the falling pumice found themselves trapped under layers of volcanic material. Thirteen hours after the eruption, the monumental cloud of ash began to collapse, sending waves of material onto the city. Nineteen hours after the initial eruption, Pompeii was hit by numerous pyroclastic flows. These flows, with temperatures of 537°C and speeds of 750km/h, destroyed everything in their path, including those who had taken shelter. For those who had returned to collect possession and the people who had remained they suffered the same fate. The flows overwhelmed the city, capturing and preserving what we have today exactly in the moment it all happened. The rapid burial shielded Pompeii from external elements, allowing it to remain well-preserved for two thousand years, frozen in time.
One of the first discoveries of this ancient city was made in the late 16th century by architect Domenico Fontana. Excavation did not begin until mid-1700s, but one of the earliest finds was an inscription on the amphitheatre: "Rei publicae Pompeianorum" - the state of the Pompeiians- which told archaeologists one of the most important things: the name of the city.

At the start of this excavation journey, work was dangerous and required a meticulous level of precision and expertise so when Italian archaeologist Giuseppe Fiorelli came into the director's position, it was conducted in a

careful, organised manner to ensure maximum preservation and documentation. The city was divided into nine regions with each "insulae" (block) designated a number so that it could be easily identified with 3 Roman Numerals. To this day, that method of identification is still in use.



Now, the next puzzle piece of Pompeiian life has just been uncovered, freed from the ashes by a dedicated team of archaeologists who have been working on this specific block for the past two years, tackling the most extensive dig in a generation. What started as an initial excavation at Regio IX, Insula 10, turned into the unearthing of not only a splendid residence, but a once thriving business thought to be owned and managed by Aulus Rustius Verus – a prominent political figure in Pompeii, and one of the wealthiest at the time judging by the extent of his property and businesses. The most recent discovery at 'Insula 10' was described as the "discovery of the century", assumed by experts as potentially the largest bathhouse ever found. Dr Zuchtriegal, who is the director of the archaeological park in Pompeii, told the BBC that the residence is also one of the only houses in the city to have had a private bath complex. Complete with hot and cold pools and a huge plunge pool, this spa is an archaeological gem that can tell us so much about the life of the aristocracy at the time of the eruption.

The complex itself comprises a bakery, bathhouse, laundry room and large private home. The bathhouse includes several rooms, lavishly decorated with vibrant red walls and complex mosaics inlaid into the marble floor- the contemporary epitome of wealth. Residents lucky enough to experience the bathhouse would have undressed before making their way into the first of the rooms. The caldarium, or 'hot room', is the equivalent of today's sauna. The Roman's innovation in underfloor heating allowed this room to be heated by hot air flowing underneath the suspended floor and within the walls, creating a steamy, hot room. The next room was the Tepidarium. This room was the "warm room" in which bathers would cool down and enjoy oil-based massages to cleanse the skin. The next room is arguably the most spectacular. Its name was the frigidarium, or to us today, the cold room. Frescoes adorned the walls, along with marvellous red columns to surround the large plunge pool in which a maximum of 30 people could comfortably fit in. It would have been a place of relaxation and social interaction to those allowed to enter. But why is this discovery so vital to our understanding of Pompeii? This discovery is crucial to our understanding of both the lives of the extremely wealthy and perhaps the poorer who lived and worked inside these complexes.

Life in Pompeii for the rich was one of luxury. At the top of the social hierarchy, the elite came in the form of landowners, politicians and cultural patrons. The power of these few was displayed dramatically through ostentatious demonstrations of their wealth in the form of estates, courtyards and bathhouses. This bathhouse not only exhibits the architectural prowess these homeowners could afford, but it also embodies a key aspect of life for the richer Romans. The significance of this discovery introduces a newfangled perspective on the relevance of bathhouses to the Roman upper class. From the size and scale of the plunge pool room, we can assume that this was a place of social interaction and relaxation for the privileged. It was a place where people of the same class could converse and enjoy a range of services provided for them by multiple slaves working there. There are three main insights into what the bathhouses tell us about Roman life. This includes bathhouses open to a larger demographic of people. They were used as a place of social interaction, a fun day out if you will, a communal space that held political discussions, weekly meetings, business and much more under its mosaicked roof. It was a place of health and hygiene as its main purpose was obviously bathing; Romans deemed cleanliness and hygiene as vital in society. They viewed it as a way of maintaining a relaxed state of mind with the therapeutic benefits they believed bathing held. Bathing was also seen as a ritual, with the purity to the water often associated with deities such as Neptune (God of the seas) and Salus (God of healing); these two gods were among the central aspects of bathing culture. Now we know that not only were bathhouses a place of socialising, but they were also a place of worship, integrating both Gods and cleanliness into the same space, and therefore making both more accessible. Additionally, perfectly preserved elaborate frescoes and art adorning the walls of this 2,000-year-old bathhouse, as put by Dr Gabriel Zuchtriegel, make it seem like ″- it′s almost as if the people had only left a minute ago,″.

However, there is a darker side to this extravagant life. Behind the scenes of this extraordinarily luxurious lifestyle, lie the boiler rooms, fuelling this display of social divisions and the reality of the class gap. Further investigation and excavation of this site brought to light the perhaps more unseen lives of those who would have worked in the bathhouse itself. Directly behind the hot room is a boiler room. The system within this room is incredibly modern with valves to regulate water flow. Water came in through a pipe connected to the street with some of this cold water being siphoned straight away into the cold plunge pool while the rest was used for heating the hot rooms. The slaves working back here in cramped, stifling conditions had to keep the entire system running. The conditions must have been unbearable.

If you were a rich Pompeiian, you would have most likely owned or been in charge of a number of slaves. These slaves bought at auctions did not originate from the surrounding area, often being shipped in from as far as Africa. Bodies found at the two sites attest to the difficult manual labour they endured at such young ages. Unfortunately, the lives of these slaves are often very overlooked; we know they were there and that they existed, but the reality of their life in Pompeii remains somewhat of a mystery. A typical Roman household may have had anywhere between 4-8 slaves to do all the behind-the-scenes jobs and keep the house running. Most of these slaves are mere

footnotes in the history of Pompeii, with their names often lost and with that, their stories. However, due to this recent discovery, we can collate more information as to what the life of a slave was like.

In the bathhouse of Aulus, the slaves oversaw running the bath system, keeping the water flow high and maintaining the fire.The two totally different worlds of the poor and the wealthy were separated only by a plaster wall. Conditions were drastically different depending on which side of this wall you were on. The bathers enjoyed a spa-like experience in a beautifully decorated room while the slaves laboured hard, just beyond the walls, in rooms ridiculously hot, often with minimal breaks or ways of cooling down.
Unfortunately, there is not much known about the individuals who worked here partly due to the recent nature of the discovery. As more evidence from the site is excavated and analysed, learning about the slaves who ran this whole operation would fill in the blanks when it comes to the history of the ordinary and overlooked.
This fantastic discovery not only shines a light on the exclusive luxury one could have access to in Pompeii but also the cultural significance and links to religion that bathing had in the ancient world. On our theme of conventions, I saw it fitting to explore the cultural significance of this amazing discovery as bathing was such a popular custom not only of the Pompeians but also of the wider Roman population. Despite its luxurious feel, this bathhouse will help to further add to the 'history of the ordinary', revealing the extent of the struggle Pompeian slaves had to endure. While more information pours out of this discovery, I for one am hopeful that this won't be the last incredibly preserved piece of antiquity that will rise from Pompeii's ashes.

The Secret History: How One Unconventional Character Defines This Contemporary Greek Tragedy.

Tabby Bloor

"He, in some senses, was the author of this drama and he had waited in the wings a long while for this moment, when he could step onto the stage and assume the role he'd written for himself"

Donna Tartt's debut novel is a modern reimagining of the classic Greek tragedy, a 21st-century tragōidia, conveying the inevitability of the fate that awaits us all. Amongst an enigmatic group of classics students, there is one key and pivotal character who stands out as an instigator of almost all events that ensue, the person who shapes the contemporary Greek tragedy; Henry Winter.

This unconventional, mysterious character is initially presented as a representation and embodiment of stoicism and leadership, however when it is revealed this is only a façade, he is truly presented to be a conniving, and deceiving person, whose hubris is ultimately his hamartia.
Initially, Henry Winter is introduced as a phlegmatic leader, perceived as almost omniscient, with a masterful understanding of Greek, and solutions to seemingly all of the clique's problems. His aptitude and intellect allow him to assume the position of leader and to an outsider such as the narrator Richard Papen, he is easily idolised and revered. In such a position, Henry's character is able to initiate the ensuing events and begin the story in which he can assume his desired role as the tragic hero. The key characters in this novel are Henry, Richard, Francis, Bunny, the twins Charles and Camilla, and their professor Julian. Amongst them, it becomes evident that Henry is not formally stated, but generally recognised as their leader. As such, he can lead himself, Francis, and the twins into what is the pivotal moment of the story, the point at which all of their fates are sealed, and a series of irreversible consequences are triggered: a deadly Bacchanal.

A Bacchanal is an ancient Greek ritual dedicated to the God Dionysus, and by participating in it, Henry and the others went to the extreme - drugging and poisoning themselves to achieve a state of ecstasy. This moment marks the point at which Henry can be seen as guiding their descent into hedonism, and a collapse of their sense of morality. As the leader, it is clear that Henry had the intellectual capability to leverage his position, directing and steering the others to the point at which the manslaughter that follows the Bacchanal was accepted and somewhat normalised. Furthermore, his assurance that murdering Bunny was justified and necessary, and the only way to protect themselves, instigated his murder, allowing him to fool the others with his façade of

prescience and care for them, solely in an attempt for his self-preservation.

With Richard, the progression and development of Henry's character is clear, as he devolves from an omniscient, almost godly person, to a deceiving, manipulative, and selfish sociopath. From their first introduction, Richard is instantly captivated and taken aback by Henry's intelligence, charm and his innate ability to command respect effortlessly, *"I was immediately fascinated by Henry's manner, his air of distinction, his aloofness, his total indifference to anyone's opinion."*. It is this profound impression that Henry has upon Richard which blinds him to the truth, leaving him almost totally oblivious to the anarchy circulating him, up until the moment where Henry allows Richard to discover what had been happening – the bacchanal and manslaughter. It is Henry's meticulous planning concerning when and how Richard would discover the truth that highlights just how unconventional and sociopathic his character truly is. In Richard's moment of anagnorisis, he realises that all along Henry had been deviously dictating and controlling their relationship, so that when the time came,

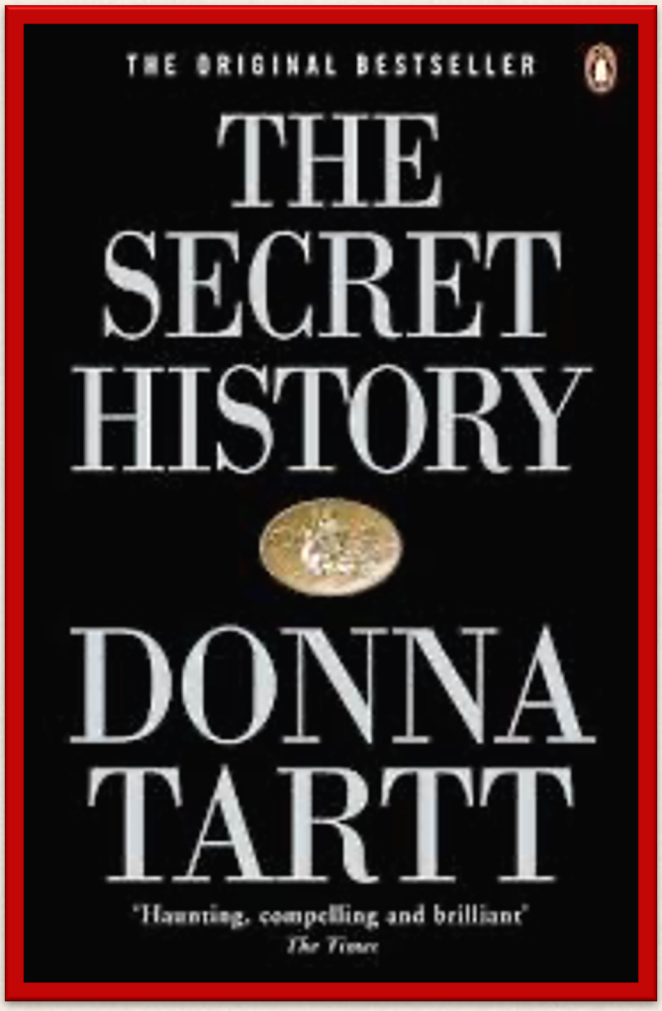
he could use Richard to protect himself. It is through this 'friendship' that parallels can be drawn between Henry and the ancient Greek king Oedipus.

Oedipus was a selfish person, whose hubris and pride were ultimately his downfall, as he believed he was able to outrun the fate that he was foretold. Similarly, Henry believed he was able to control and manipulate reality and would use and take advantage of others to achieve this, however, he ultimately failed and sacrificed himself. This connection between the tragedy of Oedipus and the character of Henry Winter is a clear example of how he moulds the novel into a Greek tragedy, playing the role of the 'fallen hero'.

Henry Winter's love is a defining feature of this novel, as it encapsulates him, and gives an insight into his unconventional character. Love is an ancient theme, often causing one to go to extremes, ending in heartbreak, death, and tragedy; it is a theme perfectly represented through Henry Winter. The most obvious example is his intense, and profound love for Greek, leaving him anguished that he exists merely as a mortal in the present, and not in the idealised and picturesque world he is so enthralled by. Ancient Greek is not only a distinguishing aspect of all the novel's characters but is also closely intertwined within the structure of the novel, perhaps reflecting how agonising and overwhelming Henry's passion and love for Greek is.

The novel follows the structure of ancient Greek plays – it begins with the *prologue*, followed by the *parados,* then *epeisodia*, and finally the *exodus*. Typically, the *exodus* is the finale of the play, the point at which another character will die, and fittingly this is Henry, as he shoots himself and commits suicide. On the surface, this may seem like a final attempt to escape conviction for the murder of

Bunny, however, I believe this can be seen as a final homage - an attempt to embody the duty and sacrifice so revered by the ancient Greek gods, his chance to enshrine his legacy as the tragic hero. In the novel, Richard states his disillusionment toward the platitude, '*amor vincit omnia*' – Love conquers all – expressing that *"whoever thinks it... is a fool"*. However, to me in Henry's case, this seems perfectly applicable; his love for Greek not only conquered his life, friends, and actions, but eventually himself. It is his dangerous love for Greek that makes this novel so reputable as a contemporary Greek tragedy.



Henry Winter is arguably the most significant and crucial character in the novel, as his manipulation, exploitation, and sociopathic mind allowed him to shape it into a Greek tragōidia and let him inevitably assume his desired role of the tragic Greek hero. This unconventional character with an unwavering desire and wilful determination to transcend reality into an alternate dimension of Ancient Greece can be perceived as the root cause of all the events which ensue. From his skilfully deceit of Richard, to the orchestration and instigation of Bunny's murder, he can be recognised as the character who truly influences the plot of this contemporary Greek tragedy.

Stargazing Through Time

Iwan Barrowcliff , Grace Setchfield

Across various cultures throughout human history, the skies above us have served as a beacon for curiosity and mythology. Everywhere in our history there is evidence that we looked upwards for answers and purpose. In the days of Ancient Greek and Roman civilisation, this was a curiosity of a largely spiritual and mythological sense as they tried to explain things they could not yet understand. Still, however, aspects of this culture and belief remain today as no matter how much we learn, many questions remain unanswered - still giving many people reason to turn to space spiritually to look for answers and guidance.

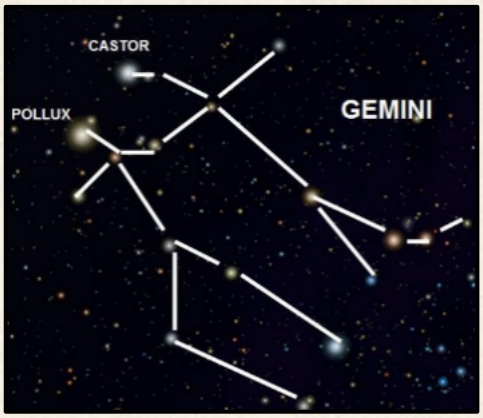
Ancient Greece

In Ancient Greece, it was widely believed that the Earth was the centre of the solar system and that other celestial bodies - including the Sun, Moon and planets - orbited around the Earth. Due to this Geocentric belief, Greek mythology is frequently based around constellations in the sky.

One such Greek myth references the Pleiades, the seven sisters who were companions of Artemis - the Goddess of the Hunt. In the story, the sisters encountered Orion - a giant huntsman - as they were travelling across a region of Greece. Orion wanted to capture the sisters for himself so they ran from her for seven years. When Orion was close to capturing them, Zeus took them to the sky and turned them into stars.

Another myth in which Orion appears is when he claimed he was the greatest hunter in the universe. Orion claimed to be able to kill any animal in existence. His overconfidence would lead to his downfall as Gaia, the personification of Earth, would send a giant scorpion to challenge him. Ultimately, he was unsuccessful and succumbed to the scorpion's sting, yet Zeus would still immortalise him in the stars. Unfortunately, this means that the Pleiades did not escape Orion for long, as he can still be seen chasing them across the sky.

Another constellation which appears in Greek mythology is Gemini which is made up of two twins: Pollux and Castor. When Castor died in battle, Pollux begged Zeus to make him immortal. Zeus honoured this request and granted both twins immortality by letting them spend half their time on earth and the other half in the heavens. The Greeks looked up to these twins as protectors of sailors which, due to the dangerous nature of sailing, meant that the twins were greatly revered.



Another famous constellations in Greek mythology include Ursa Major (the great bear) which represents Callisto, a

beautiful sea nymph who Zeus took an interest in. Together they had a son called Arcas who is represented by Ursa minor (the little bear). When Hera, the Queen of the Gods, found out Zeus, her husband, had cheated on her she was furious. To protect both Callisto and Arcas, Zeus turned them into bears and placed them in the sky to immortalise them.

Roman Empire

Across the Roman Empire, it was believed that the sky was the gateway to the heavens. It was believed that the Gods could make their will known through signs and omens, causing astrology to be extremely prevalent in many aspects of culture and life. Planets and stars were seen as divine messengers and embodiments of their gods.

Astrology was followed by citizens from all over the Roman Empire, with a notable example being Emperor Augustus who used his star sign, Capricorn, on the Roman coins; he claimed that his rise to power was predicted by his horoscope, which is a brief prediction for people born under a certain star sign. However, this strong belief would also work against him as it could predict his death and so in 11 AD, Augustus banned the reading of horoscopes and even exiled astronomers from Rome. Furthermore, his successor, Emperor Tiberius, used his own astrologer to cast horoscopes on other important men and executed any who might ever have a plan of betraying him. This clearly displays the belief the Romans had that the skies were divine as they trusted the horoscopes completely.

The night sky also makes prevalent appearances in Roman mythology with myths largely based around constellations. One of the most prominent constellations is Canis Major. This constellation includes the brightest star in the night sky, Sirius A, and is said to be Custos Europea, a dog who was guarding Europa, a Phoenician princess, from abduction by Jupiter which ultimately failed. Another constellation which makes frequent appearances in Roman culture and mythology is Libra, one of the Zodiac constellations. The Roman writer Marcus Manilius said Libra was 'the sign in which the seasons are balanced, and the hours of night and day meet each other'. It was said that Rome was founded while the moon was in Libra, giving Romans a feeling of pride as if Rome was the balance which was needed.

Ancient Egypt

The Ancient Egyptians believed that the sky was created by the gods to house the spirits of the dead. When a person died, they believed they would ascend to the pole stars as these stars were associated with the eternity of the Gods' rule from the sky.
Nut was the goddess of the sky and heavens. She is depicted in a very overarching and protective position over the Earth - representing the sky with her body covered in stars. She is also touching the four cardinal points on the Earth (North, South, East and West) who were thought to be the children of Horus, the god who guarded the deceased organs. The Ancient Egyptians believed that Nut swallowed the sun as it set and gave birth

to it as it rose the next day.

The Ancient Egyptians, much like many other ancient civilisations, used horoscopes to predict the outcome of their newborns and their destinies

in life. They did this by looking at the positions of the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. They also used twelve zodiac signs which used specific dates to show attitudes. A Greek and Roman astronomer, who lived in the time of Alexander the Great, helped develop the horoscope side of astrology which was adopted by both Egyptians and Babylonians and became the foundation of western astrology.

The Pyramids of Giza (Menkaure, Khafre and The Great Pyramid) are the most famous and well known relics from Ancient Egypt. One theory regarding the positioning of the pyramids is that they are linked with the position of the three stars in Orion's belt. These stars are linked to the god Osiris who was the god of the afterlife and the dead. However, this theory is unlikely as the alignment of the pyramids with Orion's belt today may be a coincidence and may not have been the case in around 2500 BC, the time when the pyramids were built. Another theory is that they were positioned with the North star (or Thuban, the north star at that time) as it was important for travel and navigation.

Modern Day

Much like our early ancestors did, people today still look towards the sky for guidance and answers. In the modern day, astrology is widely considered a pseudoscience, yet it still remains an influential spiritual system for many people - just like it has done for millenia. While no longer viewed as divine, the skies above us still inspire a great sense of awe as new developments in technology let us look further into space than ever before.

The ancient speculation over the meaning of the stars and planets and how they appeared in the sky in the first place pushed mankind to pursue the truth and inspired countless generations of scientists and philosophers.

"Luxury Must Be Fought": Moral Anxiety and Social Control in Fighting Hydra-like Luxury

Emanuela Zanda

When I began my PHD research that would eventually become my book *Fighting Hydra-like Luxury: Sumptuary Regulation in the Roman Republic*, I was struck by the sheer persistence of anti-luxury sentiment in Roman political discourse. Repeatedly, Roman statesmen and moralists condemned luxury as a corrupting force, a symptom of decline, and a threat to Roman virtue. It was not the possession of wealth that caused alarm, but the ways in which that wealth was made visible—in clothing and public ceremonies but especially in banquets. This condemnation of luxury was fierce, emotional, and repetitive, as though Roman society was locked in an endless struggle with an enemy that kept returning in new forms. Hence the metaphor I adopted: luxury as the Hydra—the many-headed, resilient monster who was threatening the morality of Roman and therefore the established order.

What initially appeared to be a phenomenon of no importance –a series of outdated laws on excessive dress or feasting—soon revealed itself to be something more profound. I came to understand Roman sumptuary legislation as an institutional expression of moral and political anxiety: a fear that the main symbols of distinction of the ruling class could be copied, exaggerated, or inverted, and that such inversions would destabilise social hierarchy. In writing this book, I was interested not only in what the Romans condemned, but *why* they did so.

In Roman context, luxury was almost always discussed in what we consider to be moral terms. It was associated with softness (*mollitia*), effeminacy, indiscipline, and decay. The **lex Oppia**, passed in 215 BCE at a moment of military crisis during the Second Punic war, restricted women's access to gold and fine clothing—not because these items were economically unsustainable, but because their display seemed incompatible with the virtues of austerity and sacrifice expected during wartime. The **Lex Fannia** (161 BCE) set strict limits on banquet expenses and banned exotic dishes to encourage simplicity. The **Lex Didia** (143 BCE) extended these restrictions across Italy and made both hosts and guests liable for violations. The **Lex Aemilia** imposed more detailed spending caps for meals—no more than 10 asses on regular days, 30 on market, and 100 during festivals—and banned luxurious foods like peacocks and shellfish. The **Lex Licinia** (circa 55 BCE) reinforced previous restrictions and may have limited the extravagance of public spectacles. Under **Augustus**, these laws were folded into broader moral legislation, such as the *leges Juliae*, which sought to regulate public morals by distinguishing social classes through clothing (like the *toga praetexta* and *latus clavus*) and promoting modesty in both public and private life.

What makes Roman sumptuary legislation so interesting is that it rarely targeted luxury in a comprehensive or economic sense. Wealth itself was not inherently suspicious—many senators were enormously rich—but it had to be expressed in ways that conformed to traditional ideals of restraint, masculinity, and civic virtue. Lavish banquets, especially those hosted by ambitious *nouveau riche* politicians, were often morally condemned. The real danger was not the expense of the food, but the impression it gave: that politics was becoming a theatre of indulgence rather than a forum of discipline.

At the heart of the Roman condemnation of luxury lay a profound belief that **external appearances mirrored internal character**. in Roman times, morality and politics were deeply intertwined, so much so that they were almost indistinguishable. This reflects a core feature of Roman political thought, where the personal virtue (or *virtus*) of a leader was seen as directly reflective of their ability to govern and serve the *Res Publica* (the public thing or state). To dress modestly, eat simply, and live with visible restraint was to demonstrate moral virtue. Conversely, to appear adorned, indulgent or extravagant was to court suspicion, to signal that one's internal compass was corrupted. In this

way, luxury became not just a matter of taste but a public statement of values.

This is why sumptuary laws—though often mocked or ignored—continued to be proposed and debated throughout the Republic and into the early Empire. Augustus, in his own legislative reforms, carefully linked luxury with demographic decline and moral collapse, suggesting that only a return to ancestral values (*mos maiorum*) could restore the strength of the Roman people and therefore *Make Rome Great Again*.

As I worked through ancient sources, I began to wonder whether this moral anxiety around luxury was unique to Rome or part of a broader cultural pattern. Therefore, I extended my research into other historical contexts—medieval and early modern England, Tokugawa Japan, and the Italian Renaissance city-states. What I found was that, although the specific targets and cultural expressions of luxury varied through time and space, the moral language surrounding it remained remarkably consistent.

In England, sumptuary laws frequently targeted the emerging merchant classes, restricting the wearing of silk, gold, or fur by anyone below the rank of nobility. The justification was often cast in moral terms: clothing should reflect one's natural station in life. To dress "above" one's station was seen as an act of deception, vanity, or ambition.

In Tokugawa Japan, the regulation of luxury took on a more systematic form. Guided by a Neo-Confucian worldview that emphasized harmony, hierarchy, and the proper performance of social roles, the Tokugawa shogunate imposed detailed restrictions on every aspect of life from clothing to architecture. Wealthy merchants were particularly scrutinized, their outward signs of prosperity seen as morally suspect and politically destabilising. Again, luxury was seen as a performance that could undermine the natural order, and moral condemnation served to mask the political interests behind these restrictions.

In the Italian city-states of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, the rhetoric surrounding sumptuary laws was deeply tied to Christian moral teaching. Luxury was equated with pride, vanity, and a failure of temperance. Laws targeting women's dress and dowries were justified not only in terms of social control but as acts of spiritual discipline. Yet here too, the anxieties were not purely religious. These laws emerged at moments of social instability, when upward mobility, political instability, or gender shifts threatened traditional elites. Condemning luxury allowed political leaders to reaffirm their own authority as moral exemplars.

What unites these cases is the connection between the control of extravagance and socio-political issues. Whereas the early modern laws targeted dress in an attempt to maintain hierarchical distinction through appearance, the Romans targeted mainly banquets to control competition among members of the ruling class and to prevent the use of wealth to increase the political power of an individual within the ruling class. Sumptuary laws were the weapon of self-defence used by the ruling class to defend the basis of its own power.

In each society, luxury became a very challenged form of expression, and moral condemnation served as a rhetorical tool to contain it. The argument was rarely with wealth itself, never considered inherently wrong, but with the ways it was displayed—especially when such displays disrupted social hierarchy, clashed with moral expectations, or challenged traditional values. This moral lens is crucial to understanding the true significance of sumptuary laws. They were not merely quirky or outdated regulations about clothing or dining habits; rather, they played a key role in shaping how society defined and enforced its moral and social order. By controlling luxury, these laws did more than limit excess—they functioned as tools through which the elite asserted authority over the symbols of status and virtue.

Through the careful regulation of consumption—what people could wear, eat, or display—those in power established clear boundaries around acceptable forms of ambition and self-expression. Sumptuary legislation served as a social codebook, identifying which displays of wealth and personal aspiration were considered noble and respectable, and which ones threatened the established hierarchy by suggesting moral decay or social climbing.

Luxury, then, was never just about objects. It was about social codes—who could wear what, eat what, live how—and about moral judgments that reinforced existing power structures. When the Romans condemned luxury, they were expressing more than moral discomfort. They were articulating a vision of society in which virtue was visible, measurable, and enforceable. That this vision was often more aspirational than real does not diminish its power. Rather, it shows how moral ideals become tools of governance, and how the condemnation of luxury has long served to define not only what is acceptable, but who belongs.

In writing this book, I sought to show that sumptuary regulation was a form of political performance, shaped by deep-seated fears. It was about maintaining order in a world where wealth, appearance, and identity were increasingly unstable. The Hydra of luxury could not be slain—but it could be named, feared, and legislated against. And in that naming. Societies revealed their most intimate concerns about virtue, visibility and control.