

EXiA

EXCELLENCE IN ALL

"LET THEM EAT CAKE"

The reclamation of a
woman's history

PEOPLE & PLACES

Get to know our *community* -
from their favourite meal deal
to their album of the year

THE CHEMISTRY OF LOVE

Exploring the science of one of
life's most confusing *emotions*

Photograph by Olivia White (Y13)





"Since the extinction of Neanderthals, we have created culture, tradition, and religion, each as a desperate attempt to define who we are, and perhaps to explain why we are alone."

WHEN WE WEREN'T ALONE, PG. 13

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"The growth of toxic productivity has only been exacerbated since the start of the pandemic"

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A Letter from our *Editor in Chief*



Mabel Lea (She/her) (Yr 13)

A source of great pride amongst many pupils at CNS is the strength of our student voice. Over the last few years, it has truly bloomed into a force to be reckoned with, establishing an atmosphere of celebration around our **interests** and **passions**. This is only our second edition of EXiA magazine, and it has rapidly become one of the most valuable and exciting spaces for student expression within our community.

EXiA was founded on exactly that – a wave of impassioned upstanding across our student body. In response to the harrowing rise in gender-based violence in early 2021, including the murder of Sarah Everard, the student body knew that our voices needed to be louder. On 25th March 2021, the first of many annual **Red Thursday** events was organised. This included a vigil, charity fundraisers and student-made posters, with staff and students across the Sixth Form wearing red to show their support.

It was a display of unity that, at the time, seemed so uniquely strong and one-of-a-kind. However, we could see the momentum and we ran with it, creating this wonderful, positive new space within our community as a result.

In this edition, we wanted to celebrate **empowerment** of the self and the diversity of our passions. These foundational values have shone through our magazine this year in so many interesting ways, from activism and politics to artistry and podcasting. We have welcomed many new members to our collective this year, from a variety of ages, subject-specialisms and walks of life. Each member of this hardworking, creative and outspoken group has defined their own **self-expression** differently through these pages, with a vibrancy that proudly reflects our community.

We hope you enjoy this edition of EXiA as much as we have enjoyed creating it!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the CNSA, who have funded the printing of EXiA editions past and present, and who enable CNS students and the community to access this magazine. Thank you to Ms Nichols, for always championing EXiA and offering her support, and for her work leading previous issues of the school magazine. Thank you to Bea Harrison, EXiA's first editor in chief in 2022, for her creativity and drive that went into the establishment of this magazine. Thank you to Olivia White, who took on the post of EXiA's first Creative Director this year, and who has worked tirelessly to bring the ideas of this collective to life in so many exciting ways. Thank you to anyone and everyone who contributed to this issue and made it such an inspiring celebration of your creativity and passions. Finally, thank you to Miss Wilson-Parke, who has dedicated so much of her time to this magazine as its staff lead, and who is responsible for building this empowering creative outlet for the students of CNS.

Meet the TEAM of *EXiA*



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 Rose Burill *CREATIVE TEAM*
 Earl Murdoch *PODCAST*



WITH Sophie, Earl & Lana

‘ Get ready to find your inner roar as you enter "The Lion's Den!"

I don't know about you, but I feel like a range of stereotypes has emerged around my generation being 'rude and lazy', which seems to influence how we are viewed and silence so many. I'm here to tell you that the student voice is powerful and needs to be used!

Join me in the den alongside Earl and Lana as we discuss anything and everything, to give you the empowerment you need to show you can make a change too! From mental health to climate change and our future, we will show you the power of our generation and how we won't be silenced.

Explore some of our favourite podcasts using the QR codes. ’



DON'T LET YOUR MIND BULLY YOUR BODY

We live in a society which tells us that our bodies are never perfect- we're here to tell you that they are! It's time to celebrate our bodies for all the incredible things they do for us- dance, run, jump and take us anywhere we want to go.

SPEAK UP AND BE PROUD

Why are teenagers viewed as being 'rude and lazy'? We need to break down these damaging stereotypes and realise the importance of us as the next generation. We have a voice, so why not use it?



'JOURNALISM CAN NEVER BE SILENT'

Ever wanted to gain a back- stage pass into the life of a journalist? Sophie is joined in the den by Connor Southwell, the Chief Reporter for Norwich City Football Club. She discovers how he entered the world of journalism, what it means to him and his views on the media today.

COP27 - HOW WILL IT AFFECT US?

As the world population reaches 8 billion, it's time to ask- are we really ready for this? Our world is changing constantly and we need to notice what we are doing to our environment. Join us in the den as we discuss the recent COP27 conference, climate change and what we can do as the next generation to help our future, before it's too late.



'EDUCATION IS OUR PASSPORT FOR THE FUTURE'

Are exams the best way to be assessed? Do we need uniforms? And, should phones be banned? These are the questions we ask about our education, but what are the real answers? Join us for a new debate style episode, focusing on controversial topics in schools. Tune in to see if you agree with us too!

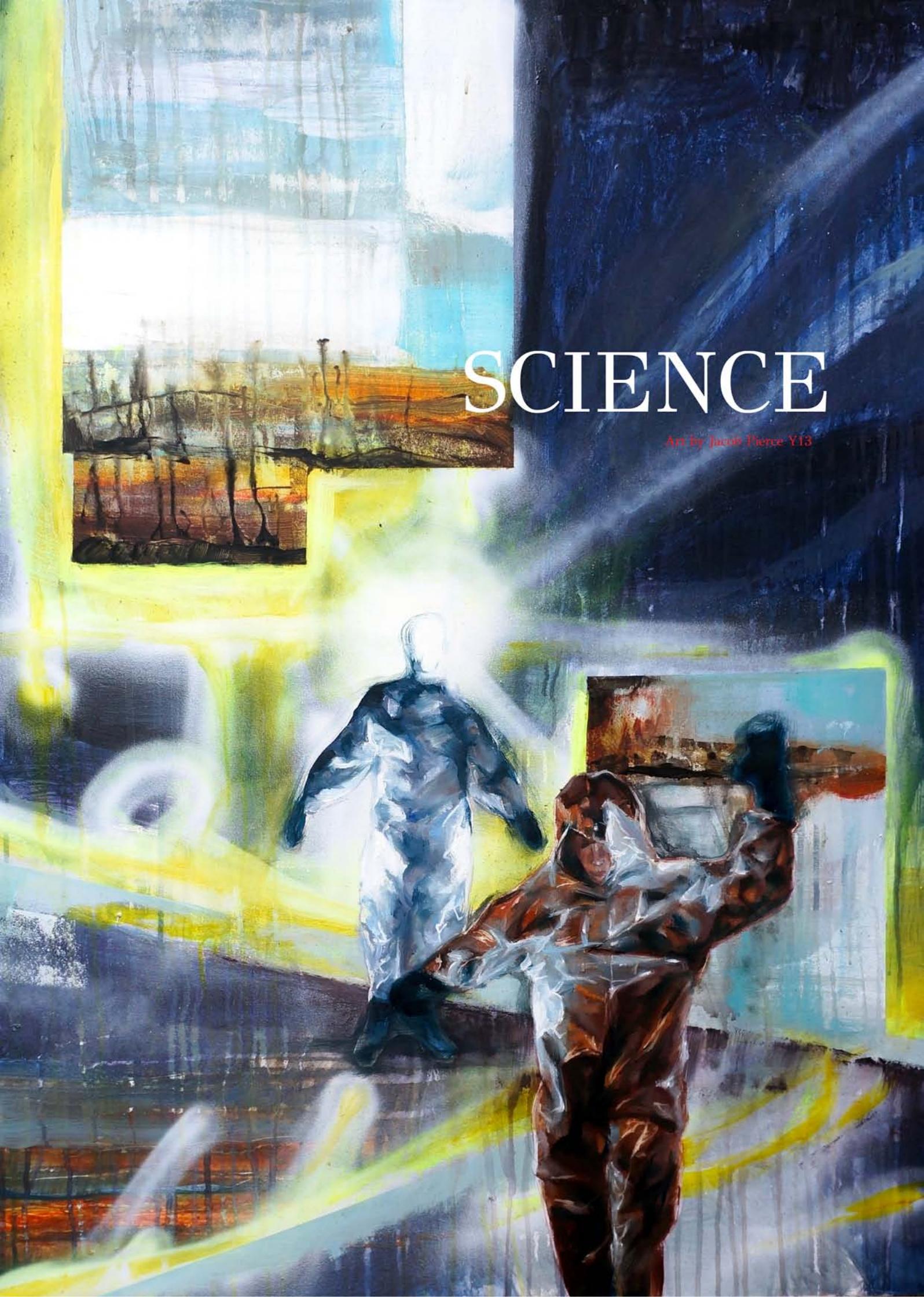
RECOVERY ISN'T LINEAR

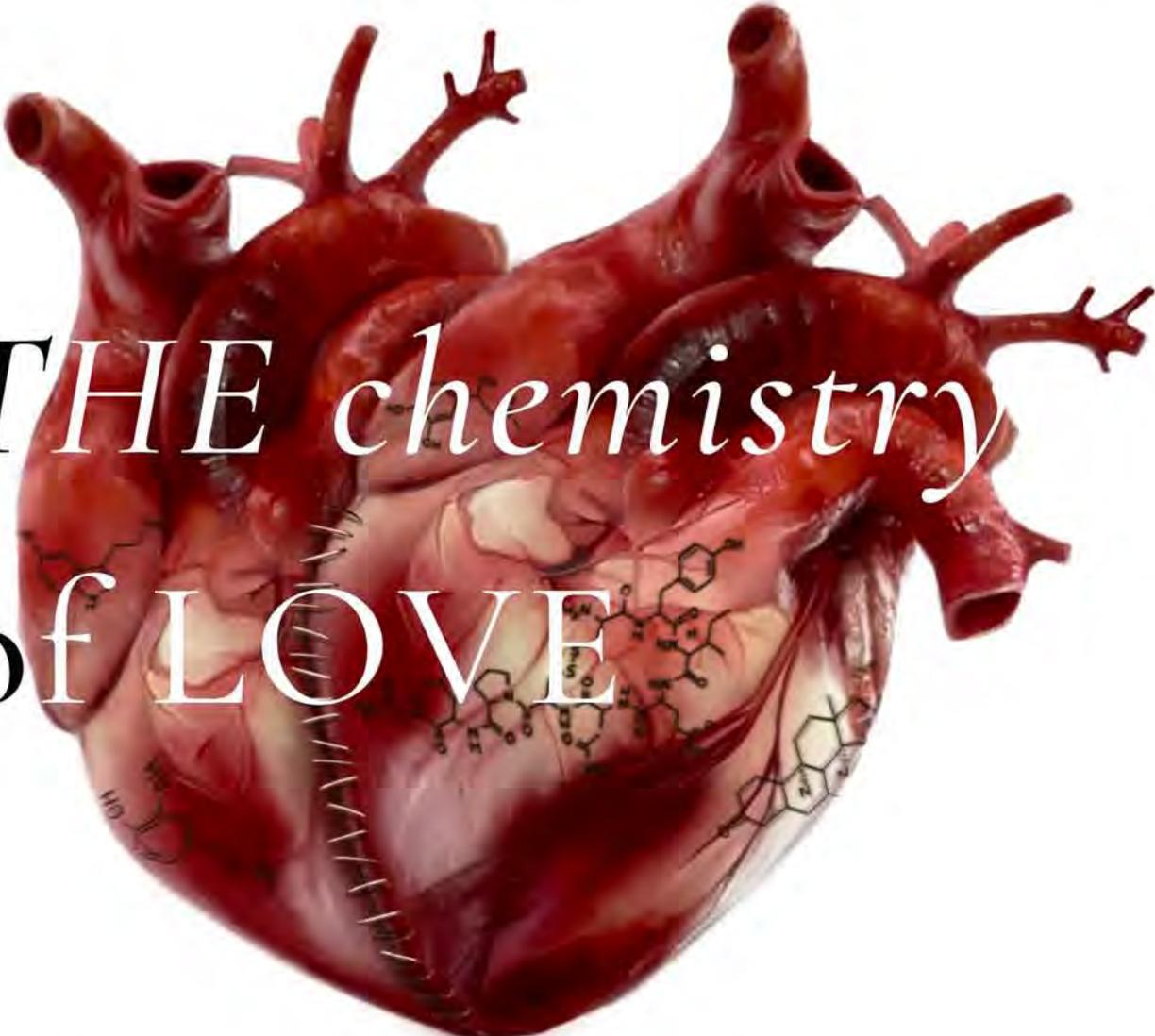
Why is there such a pressure in our society to be a 'better version' of yourself? Why do we never notice the strength we already possess? Join Sophie as she breaks down the stigmas associated with the new year and 'needing' to lose weight, to recognise the beauty of us all!



SCIENCE

Art by Jacob Pierce Y13





THE chemistry of LOVE

What is love? A question that not many can yet feel that so many know. A jack of all trades; love travels from pen to paper, mother to child scientist to poet. A master shapeshifter, at times it can be your worst enemy: inducing sweaty palms and awkward stares. In reality, those dreamy trances can be explained by a bundle of elements.

So, what actually is love? To this messy network of bonds and structures we give a name: oxytocin. Zooming deep into its chemical structure you see a vast complex of atoms forming an expansive 3D network of bonds and bridges. Like everything in our body, it is comprised of amino acids, tiny proteins that are the building blocks to everything life provides. Together, these nine amino acids interact with each other in harmony, producing a unique shape shared by no other chemical.

Its powers emerge in the brain, where it is secreted into the bloodstream and awarded the title of neurotransmitter. In order to gain this title, it must pass a gateway called a synapse. Molecules of it are packaged into little bundles called vesicles, together they move across a neuron and are released, where their special structure lets them bind to a detector specific to them, allowing the journey to continue.

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This detection starts something called a positive feedback loop, where more chemical secreted stimulates more and more of its production, rapidly accelerating your mood and explaining your 'head over heels' behaviour. A complex journey of traversing through your veins and vaulting through synapses, accelerating your heart and impeding your speech is simply a response to a stimulus.

But love isn't simply attraction, the concept of self-love can be little more subtle yet a lot more influential. It can be described using the word 'nice'. Here we meet Oxytocin's little brother: Serotonin. A measly molecule in comparison, made of a single amino acid called tryptophan.

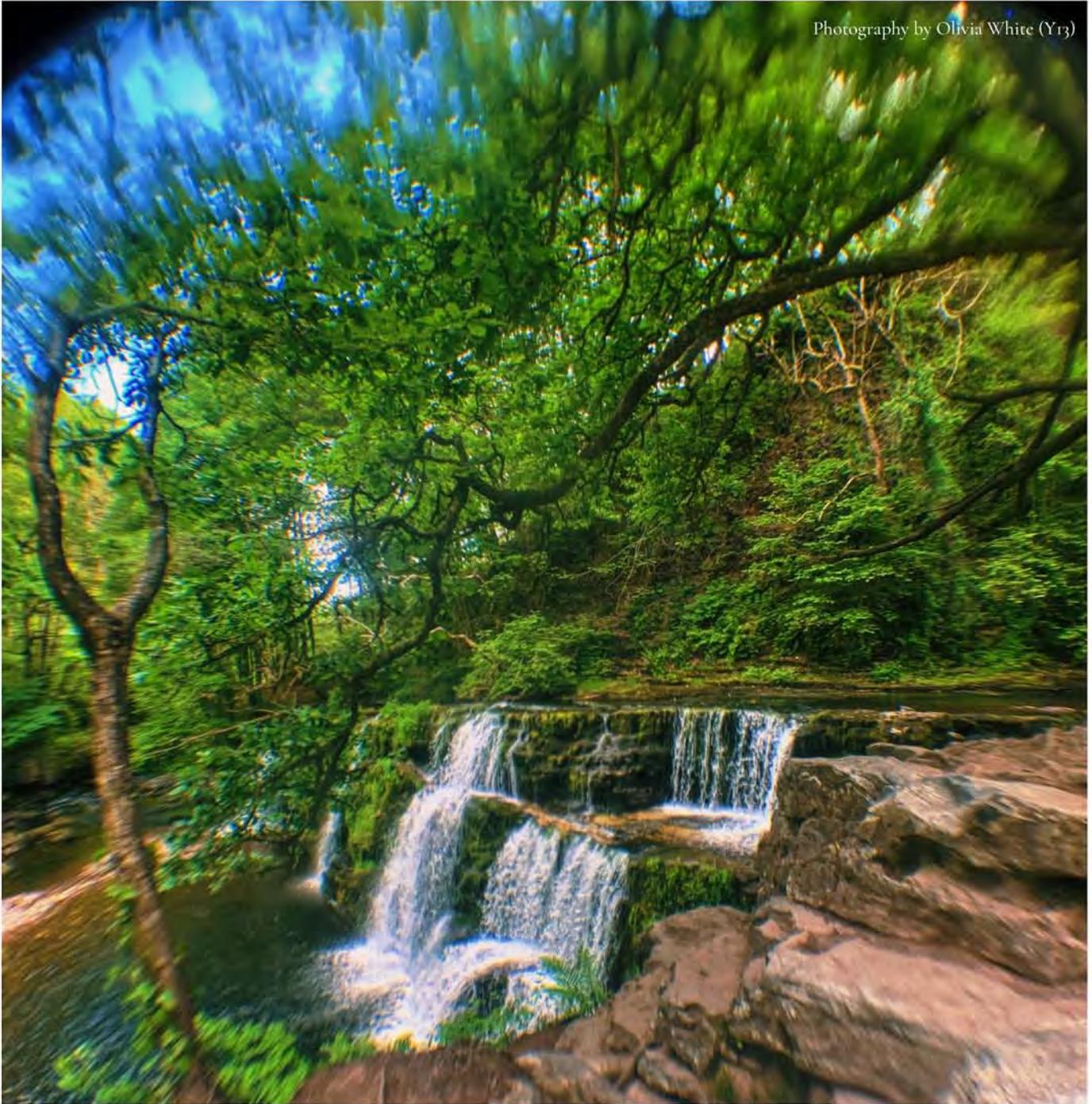
This amino acid is something we call an *essential* amino acid, meaning that it exclusively comes from the food that we nourish ourselves with; the saying 'you are what you eat' becoming relevant even on the molecular level.

The molecular level also exposes the relevance of chemistry firsthand. Serotonin, unlike tryptophan, contains an additional hydroxyl group, a tiny branch of an oxygen atom bound to a hydrogen. Seemingly insignificant, this addition transforms the happiness fuel into a much more reactive molecule; allowing only itself to bind to specific receptors in the synapse.

This detection provides a different feeling of happiness; instigating subtle responses of satisfaction then rippling waves of excitement through your brain, after doing things you love, with people you love. Now take a step back and think what love means to you. Our knowledge of chemistry initiates the chance to 'hack' our brains; accelerating the production and release of these valuable molecules to our advantage. To one person this may include channeling self-love through exercise; that golden feeling of achievement and success. To many the scientific benefits of hugs are prominent.

In times of being bombarded with world destruction and suffering, it is often easy to believe that these things aren't real. That we're pitted against each other. Yet the truth is, if you look for it, I've got a sneaky feeling you'll find that love actually is all around.

By Justin Podlipskij (he/him) Y13



Photography by Olivia White (Y13)

The EARTH in colour

How does
colour sustain
life on earth?

50 years ago, when the first "Blue Marble" photograph of Earth was taken from space, the world saw our planet in a new light. A multi-coloured sanctuary of life, miraculous and solitary, with great swathes of rich green tropics, pearly-white poles and clouds, sandy deserts and enormous, deep blue oceans. The unique and carefully balanced beauty of the Blue Planet was loud: it is a home for millions of species, each existing as part of one immense, vibrant ecosystem. In fact, it is the minuscule splashes of colour within this spectrum that often play the biggest role in keeping it together, and which tend to be overlooked.

Green has classically been seen as the colour of life throughout literature and art, dating right back to The Bible. This is no coincidence. Almost all plants contain chlorophyll, a pigment that, as well as giving them their green colour, essentially keeps them alive.

It allows plants to create their own food using light (via photosynthesis), which makes them a special kind of organism known as a producer.

Every existing food web begins with producers, most often plants, both on land and in the oceans.

It is fair to say that every ecosystem on Earth depends on plants in some way: so in fact, green really is the most life-giving colour, both in science and in art.

But plants don't just stop at green - the plant kingdom employs many different shades to survive and reproduce. The most common example is the colouration of flowering plants, something we see every day but rarely consider the biology behind. The pigments in the petals - some of which are ultraviolet and invisible to the human eye - attract pollinating insects, helping the plants to distribute their pollen and reproduce. While we admire our vibrant flower gardens and bouquets, those colours are only there to help plants create new life.

A particularly ingenious use of these colours can be found in the flowers of the Rangoon creeper. It has evolved to change the colours of its petals from white to pinkish-red, to signal to insects where its most fertile flowers are.

Butterflies and moths pollinating the creeper's flowers use the visual colour key to avoid the older pink flowers and favour the newer white ones, which will have the richest nectar and also the most fertile reproductive cells.

By doing this, the Rangoon creeper ensures its chances for successful reproduction are higher, since the best reproductive cells are being selected and spread by the pollinators.

While plants perhaps rely on colour the most out of all organisms, many animals are just as vibrant and use colour just as extravagantly. Any David Attenborough fan would be familiar with the flamboyance of tropical birds and their vibrant mating rituals, but the science behind their plumage is rarely explored. On top of being visually striking, the colours of a bird's feathers have unspoken messages, just like the petals of the Rangoon creeper.

Most frequently in male birds, loud colours and ornamental feathers have been found to be a large factor in their competition for territory, resources and mates. Bright colours can be a signal to other birds that a territory is already occupied and that its defender is prepared to fight to keep it.

Other studies have discovered that richly coloured plumage indicates a healthy bird with a knack for finding the best, most nourishing food.

Many of the nutrients in the prime seeds and nuts lead to higher concentrations of feather pigments. This means a female seeking a mate is more likely to select the most colourful male to ensure she gets the best culinary service around.

Researchers have recently unearthed a new dimension to the avian world; the eyes of a bird can see ultraviolet light and register far more colours than humans. If you've ever noticed that many European birds seem duller than tropical species of parrot or toucan, this is not strictly true. A male European starling, for example, possesses a startling array of "invisible" ultraviolet shades amongst his seemingly muted feathers, which heavily influence a female's choice of mate. For birds of all kinds, vibrance equates to dominance, strength and survival – once again, colour allows living things to exist, and to thrive.

From microscopic molecules like chlorophyll to entire species of birds, evidence of colour supporting life is everywhere in the natural world.

However, as beautiful as this is, none of it is permanent.

As humans, we have a tendency to see the "Blue Marble" as a fact of life, a constant, when it is in fact the opposite. Since its birth, the planet has been continuously changing and evolving; beginning as a grey cloud of dust, which collected into a glowing red mass of molten rock, before cooling and darkening. Ages upon ages of rain formed our oceans, which froze to white at the poles. Land emerged, spreading masses of red, brown and yellow, waiting the aeons until the first green plants surfaced and slowly unfurled across the continents.

We cannot know the next set of colours that the Earth will take, but we do know that its changes are being accelerated. Coral reefs are being chemically bleached; forests are becoming burnt wastelands; the polar ice caps are fading as they shrink. Is the vibrancy of earth dwindling for good?

We can all agree on the breath-taking natural beauty that our planet boasts, that the chances of it even existing are so low and so miraculous. But is not there for us and our enjoyment. It is simply trying to survive.

By Mabel Lea (she/her) Y13



Photography by Olivia White (Y13)

From *Rocks* to *Riches*: How Geology Has Shaped Our Lives

Geology rocks! We all know that, but how often do you consider the vitality of our earth's composition? The exact structure and build of our planet has allowed for life on earth, and yet the topic of geology and physical geography isn't given enough credit for the impact that it has on us.

The world as we see it today, the 7 continents, the 7 seas, it's all still relatively new. Some 200 million years ago, in the late Triassic era, Pangea the supercontinent began to move apart. Pangea consisted of the same landmass that is on our current earth, just all connected as one rather large island surrounded by one even larger sea, Panthalassa. The crust of our planet is divided into 7 major tectonic plates and many more minor; each plate, similar to a jigsaw piece, interconnected and all moving in varying directions (at about the same speed that your fingernails grow). If you take a good look at a map and the shape of the east of South America's coastline compared the west of Africa's, you'll spot that they're complementary and fit each other's coastal contours perfectly. This is evidence of how Pangea broke apart which led to the earth we see today. Obviously, the movement was incredibly gradual, with each continent breaking apart at different times. The final divisions were between South America, Antarctica and Australia, where upon two seas converged to create the Antarctic Circumpolar Current. This meant that no warm water reached the coast of the continent and consequently led to the deep freeze of Antarctica (which is now the largest desert on earth.)

With this in consideration, it's pretty amazing how these changes are out of human control but have allowed us to live how we currently are.

Almost every aspect of how a country is is somewhat due to geology, each element is intertwined as gears which have the final say of what occurs. Say in Britain, the movement of tectonic plates and eustatic change (rising sea levels) has led to us as an island, with a temperate climate practically perfect for living in. There are mountainous areas in Wales and Scotland which force rain onto largely agricultural areas, supporting the primary economy and allowing for further development into secondary manufacturing, which could only be of use due to our supply of steel (again – geology). This means that as a country, we have been in a fortunate position as to the speed of our development. This resulted in Britain exploiting our powers and colonising countries, stunting their development and initiating the development gap we see in our present world.

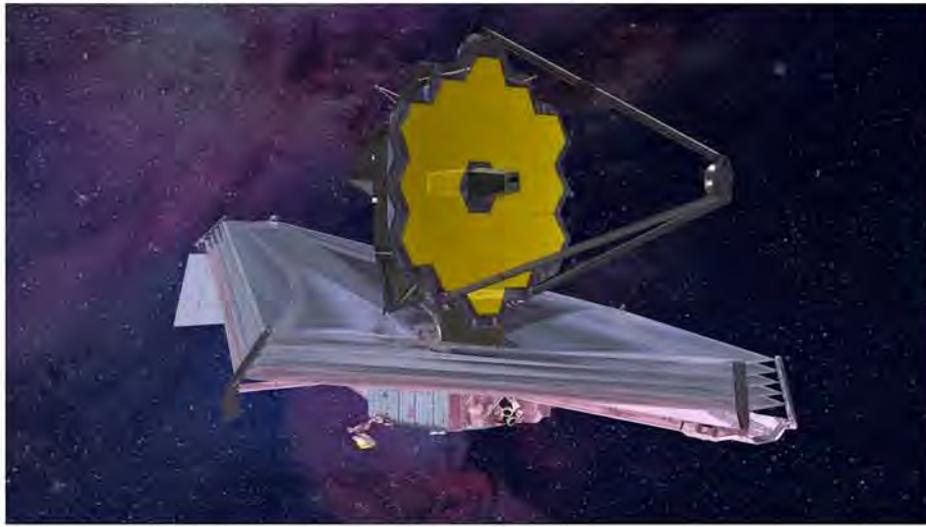
In contrast, areas such as Saudi Arabia receive ocean currents with warmer air, creating an arid desert and limiting the ability for humans to live comfortably without technological developments. However, Saudi Arabia has vast quantities of oil (owed to its geology) and can be connected to mainland areas of Europe through the Suez Canal for trade; this is a perfect example of how humans can positively interact with geology to help the position of a country. Even the simplest of geological features can completely transform a country's ability to function as a cog in the world's machine: India, for example, has a deep-water port in Mumbai which has led to increased trade from the position of Trans-National Corporations, and triggered rapid economic development.

If any part of the geological composition of our planet had changed, who's to say what would've happened? Would there be regulation of the global climate? Or enough deep-water ports to allow for successful mass trade? Would more varied areas be living in poverty? Would there even be a development gap? It's questions like these which really highlight how impactful geology is in our life – it ultimately determines how we get our water sources, our income, our imports, and overall, the general quality of our life.

By Lucy Squires (she/her) Y12

The JAMES WEBB telescope:

An invention that could *shape* the FUTURE



Digital illustration by Elena Jarrald, Y12



Have you ever heard of the Hubble space telescope? Then you may have heard of the James Webb space telescope, a new invention put in the spotlight that may just be able to answer one of humanities big questions: are we alone?

The James Webb space telescope, an improved version of its predecessor Hubble, is a revolutionary piece of equipment assigned with one main mission: to analyse and collect information about the of a certain spectrum of light-infrared light- which is invisible to our eyes, unless aided with certain equipment. The scientific term for this is infrared astronomy, a certain field of study which could help bring new revelations and inventions for science as a whole. Even more excitingly, it could help us with the long-lived search for another habitable planet, where we could thrive and develop into an even smarter species.

Though the missions of both space telescopes may be similar in their key goal, the design of them are polar opposites. Hubble had the traditional shape: a simple rectangular form finished off with a dull grey colour. The workings inside Hubble allowed it to see 238,855miles (roughly the same distance between the earth and the moon), whilst providing black and white pictures of its surroundings and detecting most infrared light.

The evolution in technology and advances in the space industry have let the new telescope to possess precise, high-tech appliances, such as small but extremely powerful mirrors as detailed as a cat's eye. Making the main shape of a disembodied semicircle, it can be split into 2 parts. Gold-coated mirrors constructed of lightweight beryllium form one large mirror measuring 6.5 meters, the size of a small school bus. The second part is then a metal base, which holds the mirror in place.

Due to the expanse of mirrors, it has a much larger range of vision all the way to 930,000miles, which is then accompanied by increased sensitivity to infrared light.

You may be asking, why has it been given its name? Who was James Webb and why would they name it after him? Just as Hubble was named after American astronomer Edwin Hubble, the James Webb space telescope has also been named after an important figure who contributed to Nasa. James E. Webb was a committed government official who ran NASA from February 1961 to October 1968, a fledging agency at that time compared to now. As someone who was originally reluctant to join due to his gap in knowledge regarding science and engineering, he became surprisingly interested and dedicated to the job. Throughout his career, he dramatically helped in advancing the growing organisation with fresh ideas such as developing robotic spacecraft, with the premise of a balanced program.

It was launched on 25th of December 2021 in French Guiana, making news in recent weeks with eye-catching images already being sent back to earth. The telescope was expected to be operational for the moderate time of 5 and a half years until it was found to have enough fuel for more than double the time. During its lifetime, the telescope would have indefinitely travelled galaxies away, producing millions more images to earth for us to analyse and learn from. Though the telescope may be called "aged" as time progresses, it's still certain to say that the James Webb space telescope will be one of the greatest appliances ever made to shine light on a subject never fully explored until now.

Perhaps it could finally answer the question that has perplexed humanity for as long as it existed: how did we come to be here?

By Jessica Browne, Y10



Digital illustration by Elena Jarrald, Y12

WHEN we weren't ALONE

A time when your neighbour was of a different species to you sounds futuristic, and yet, it was the time of our ancient ancestors.

Our species – Homo Sapiens – have only walked the earth for around 200,000 years. Considering our ancestral line split from other primates some 6 million years ago, the era of modern man is minuscule, and even more so, is the period we have spent alone. The very last neanderthal dwelling indicates a final extinction of the species only 40,000 years ago, meaning our ancestors spent millennia with other humans not separated by ethnicity, nor culture, but by species. Since Homo Sapiens emerged, at least 7 other human types have inhabited the earth. For the first time in our history, we are the only ones left. It's an odd time in human evolution.

60,000 years ago, when the harsh climates of the last ice age began to recede, Homo Sapiens tribes were able to travel north, out of Africa and into the West Asian forests. Here they encountered a different species - Neanderthals. Sapiens' large brains and adept hunting skills were mirrored within this species, however we differed physically, genetically, and physiologically. Despite this, fossil evidence suggests a peaceful coexistence. For around 20,000 years, H. Sapiens and H. Neanderthalensis co-occupied regions of Eurasia with little violence or direct competition. On the outside, the differences between the two species were small, and probably hidden by animal pelts and our own, thick hair. Rather we differed in the makeup of our brains, and complexity of our social lives. Therefore, when a Sapiens tribe encountered a Neanderthal community, they were distinguished less by what they carried – infants, spears, and stone tools mostly – and more so by their invisible genetic differences.

Before this mass migration, there had been numerous attempts by H. Sapiens to leave the continent, but each time the migrating population was stamped out by disease, climate, or some unknown variable. So, what changed? It is the belief of some evolutionary anthropologists that it was in fact interbreeding that supplied our survival. Due to our African homeland, Sapiens' anatomy and physiology was adapted to ward off the effects of extreme heat, which left us floundering in the cooler regions we migrated into. Fortunately, DNA acquired from Neanderthals may have supplied us with thicker hair and skin, as well as a specially localised immune system to protect from regional diseases foreign to our ancestors. Due to this, non-Africans today tend to display around 2% Neanderthal DNA. If it weren't for this sharing of genes, we may never have been able to survive out of Africa and monopolise the world as we since have.

One may associate the term "Neanderthal" with a dim-witted, ape-like caveman. However, as our closest relatives in the human family tree, they were instead intelligent beings with an advanced culture and larger brains than even modern humans.

Throughout their communities, stretching from the warm woodlands in western Spain to the barren tundra of Siberia, close-knit tribes lived rich lives just as we do today. Waking up under a canopy of snow-covered forest, wrapped in animal skin clothing, Neanderthals calved advanced tools out of bone and stone that would be used to hunt the woolly rhinos and mammoth. Should a hunter be injured, the community would care for them and nurse them back to health beside the fire, under the handmade shelters. Forest communities would gather bear teeth where coastal tribes would collect seashells, and each would use them as pendants to adorn themselves with jewellery. Perhaps they were not unlike us in their vanity. They would raise and teach their children; cooperate and coordinate hunting or gathering trips. They were humans – or close to it – and yet, we are a lonely species. Whether it was climatic pressures in Europe, or a lack of resources due to superior Sapiens hunters, Homo Neanderthalensis is no more.

Nevertheless, their culture has been preserved. Within the cave systems of west Europe, the earliest pieces of cave art predate Homo Sapiens occupation of the region, suggesting the earliest artists to leave their mark were those strange cousins of ours.

We claim to have a superior culture, a superior social life, and to be superior beings, and yet whilst we were barely surviving, trying time and time again to make a life for ourselves in the middle east, Neanderthals were creating complex forms of art, illustrating their lives on the rock face. What could they have become?

As the last, lonely branch of the family tree, the continuation of the human lineage falls to us. Since the extinction of Neanderthals, we have created culture, tradition, and religion, each as a desperate attempt to define who we are, and perhaps to explain why we are alone. The need for kinship and a sense of belonging is innate to humans. So, we created stories and myths to explain ourselves and the world around us, to make sense of our lonely existence. We forgot our cousins and the time we weren't alone and decided that we are the product of an ancient god, put on this planet as perfect beings, the sole protectors of earth and its creatures. Whether there is a truth to religion or not, it got one thing right – we are perfect. Maybe man was made in the image of a perfect God, or maybe man was moulded by the cruellest mechanism – evolution. The saddest thing about being the superior species, is leaving all your friends to extinction. We prevailed and evolved, suiting ourselves to our environment, whilst the species we once knew could not keep up. Neanderthals, Denisovans, Homo Habilis, all species left in fossils.

Survival of the fittest leaves no room for mistake, and therefore we are perfect, and therefore we are alone.

Freya Matthews (she/her) Y13





Sustainable FASHION in Norwich



It's no secret that the fashion industry is not kind to the environment. Producing eye-watering amounts of CO₂, pollutants and landfill year on year, change is slow and the term "sustainability" is not much more than a greenwashing buzzword. As a result, many consumers are beginning to explore second-hand and vintage alternatives, but the level of expertise that it seems to need can be daunting. Here are EXiA's tips for shopping more sustainably in Norwich!

Start with charity shops! They are all over the place in Norwich City Centre, meaning you can easily make a day of it and go on a charity-shopping crawl. Stock changes more regularly here than in high-street shops, so if you go regularly, you are more than likely to find pieces you love. You will invariably see vintage and unique pieces for brilliant prices, and all the while, you're donating money to charity!

For stay-at-home shoppers, online second-hand shops such as Ebay, Depop, Vinted and Facebook Marketplace are definite go-tos. These tend to have a LOT more stock than a small charity shop, so sometimes it helps to search for specific brands or the styles of pieces that you're looking for – finding some inspiration beforehand can also be a good move.

Don't set your expectations too high to begin with! Shopping second-hand does take a little patience and perseverance, but once you find your favourite style of sustainable shopping, it becomes such a fun and rewarding alternative to just scrolling for hours on ASOS.

By Mabel Lea (she/her) Y13

Photography by Olivia White, Y13.

A photoshoot where models are wearing all thrifted, vintage and second hand clothing.



A few of our favourite sustainable shops around Norwich:

- Sue Rider Vintage
- Looses Emporium
- Pact Animal Sanctuary
- Earlham Road, NANSAs
- Oxfam Sense
- Bird and Blend
- St Greg's church
- Aladdin's Cave
- Lucy and Yak
- Wood Green charity shop
- Elm
- The Market
- Slay Vintage





AVIAN *Influenza*: What's the FLAP about?

Avian influenza is a term that has been thrown about recently. You may have heard it on the news, on the radio, read about it in the newspaper or even driven past a road sign telling you that you are entering a disease control zone. The media have set about dramatising the zoonotic potential of the disease and even speculating about the possibility of it becoming the next pandemic. So, what is avian influenza, and does it pose a threat to human health?

Avian influenza, also referred to as 'Bird flu', is a highly contagious virus that spreads between both domestic and wild birds affecting the respiratory, digestive and nervous systems. It is a notifiable disease, which means you are legally required to report the disease to the government should you suspect it. If at this point bird flu is discovered, control measures such as control zones will be implemented. Culling flocks of poultry may also occur which, although devastating, is both a common and effective measure.

There are many different strains of bird flu which are classified based on two different proteins found on the surface of the virus particles. These are the proteins hemagglutinin and neuraminidase. Differences in the structures of these proteins can determine the disease subtype and pathogenicity. The name of the strain is constructed using 'H' for hemagglutinin followed by this protein's subtype number and 'N' for neuraminidase, also followed by a unique subtype number, for example, H5N1. The different strains can be classified. A highly pathogenic strain is harmful and may cause severe symptoms such as organ failure, possibly having a high mortality rate. Alternatively, a strain with low pathogenicity is less harmful and may present few or no symptoms.

Unfortunately, several cases of avian influenza have been detected in East Anglia recently. In September 2022, the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus was confirmed on a turkey farm in Attleborough. This was a flock of 64,000 turkeys, all of which had to be humanely culled by law. Control and surveillance zones were established around the premises and those that dealt with domestic and wild birds required to introduce stricter biosecurity measures in order to prevent disease spread.

The virus particles are shed in faeces and respiratory secretions (mucus) of birds. Due to this, it can be spread through direct contact, contamination of feed and water sources and contamination of farm equipment. This also allows the disease to be transmitted across the species barrier from birds to humans. As a result, the people who are most at risk of contracting bird flu at present are those who work with live birds (such as poultry farmers) or those who process slaughtered birds, which are most likely meant for consumption. However, there is no evidence to suggest that consuming infected poultry products can transmit the disease to humans.

Although avian influenza can be transmitted from person to person, this is quite uncommon, and people must be in very close contact for this to occur. The question is, what if the virus were to mutate so that it could spread between humans with greater ease?

H7N9 is a strain of avian influenza that has caused many human infections and disease outbreaks in the past. It is not currently able to sustain transmission between humans but there is concern that it could be able to do this should the virus subtype mutate. The genome of the H7N9 virus has been analysed for possible mutations with particular focus on the gene that codes for the H7 hemagglutinin protein on the surface of the virus. These proteins allow the virus particles to attach to host cells (body cells in this case). H7N9 is specific to the receptors on bird cells but not human cells. If a change occurs in the amino acid sequence of the gene that codes for hemagglutinin (due to a mutation), the protein may be able to transition specificity, becoming complementary to receptors on human cells instead of bird cells. This could mean that the virus is able to sustain person to person transmission much more effectively. H7N9 is just one example of a strain of avian influenza that has the potential to mutate, it is possible that others could also.

So far, these types of mutations have only occurred artificially, under controlled conditions in the lab. The fear is that should these mutations occur naturally in virus particles and allow ease of transmission between people, an influenza pandemic will emerge, much like other human flu outbreaks that have occurred in the past. It is important that the transmission of avian influenza to humans is minimised by implementing the appropriate control measures and that infected individuals are monitored to detect possible virus mutations.

To answer the question 'Does avian influenza pose a threat to humans?', yes, it is a potential threat that could be on the horizon. However, it is not a definite, fast approaching threat and there are still steps that can be taken to prevent virus mutations, let alone an outbreak as widespread as a pandemic.

By Poppy Hewitt (she/her) Y13

Climate change & the individual

Climate change is a serious topic. We will not be able to live in our beautiful world if nothing serious is done about this problem. You may think it is not as bad but when you realise that we only have an estimate of under 10 years left you would think to yourself, "I have just only got my first job" and that is too young to be experiencing these effects of climate change. 'Is it my fault?' No. This is a problem from the past that we must change to make a difference for the benefit of everyone.

We interviewed people on the streets of Norwich about how much they knew about the climate problem on a scale of 1-10; 66% of people did not feel they knew above a 5 or 'reasonable amounts' to do with climate change. This is shocking and frightening given the grave position that we find ourselves in. This issue will only get worse and we must be the change we want to see in the world. This lack of knowledge is reflected in wider studies than ours.



Photograph by Rose Burrill, Y12

A study across 24 countries shows that only 58% of people are mindful about what they do to help impact against the climate problem. However, 85% said they were willing to act against the climate problem (protesting etc). So, I will ask you now, are you a part of that 58%? One way that we can make a simple change straight away is by considering our own school environment.

The Litter Problem

The biggest issue in our school is the litter problem, we, and our planet, suffer from a huge amount of littering. This makes the environment around us feel depressing and wasteful. I think that the main thing we need to do is get some lids for the bins, to stop wildlife and wind from picking up rubbish. Cans, crisp packets, and bottle caps are extremely dangerous as animals get caught up in them, choke on them, and eat them which causes harm to their stomachs and bodies. Another thing you can do to help is walk a little bit further across the field to find an emptier bin rather than trying to jam your waste in a full bin. If it is full, it also is more likely to tip over and spill waste onto our field damaging our wildlife and planet. These can be our first baby steps into saving the environment of CNS. However, the issue is much larger than our school.

What will happen if action is not taken?

The potential future effects of global climate change include more frequent wildfires, longer periods of drought in some regions, lack of water supply, making it harder to grow crops, an increase in food and water prices, and an increase in the duration and intensity of tropical storms.

How do I get involved in a protest?

There are many protests in the UK, so please get involved as it's for your future and mine. They can be found through Google searches and Facebook. There is a group called XR and XR kids and XR Norwich, these are some of the best climate groups where you can take further action to save our planet.

Let's work together before it's too late.

By Jala Drewett (he/him) Y8

A protest sign is held up in a crowd. The sign is white with the text "STOP WAR!" in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters. Below the text is a horizontal band of the Ukrainian national flag, consisting of a blue top half and a yellow bottom half. The sign is mounted on a white pole. In the background, there are multi-story buildings and a construction crane. The scene is outdoors, likely in an urban setting.

**STOP
WAR !**

A large crowd of people is gathered for a protest. In the foreground, a person is seen from the back, wearing a bright blue hooded jacket. To their left, another person is wearing a yellow and black jacket and glasses. The crowd is dense, and many people are looking towards the same direction. The background shows a city street with buildings and a construction crane. The overall atmosphere is one of a public demonstration.

**HISTORY &
POLITICS**

WHY do the RUSSIAN people support Putin?



Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the country's leading independent pollster, the Levada centre, has reported 83% of the Russian public approve of Putin's actions. The commonly accepted Western view for the reason behind this support for Putin is propaganda. With complete control of the media, newspapers, new channels and censorship through blocking websites, and access to the west, Putin can fabricate any story to the Russian people he wishes. The Russian television rambles day and night that the 'special operation' in Ukraine

(invasion) is to courageously fight against the Fascist and neo-Nazi Ukrainian government. Ukraine's prime minister is Jewish. The war is also backed by fear of the West and especially NATO's advancement into eastern countries.

But how can the population of Russia be tricked so easily? Is Putin's propaganda really that effective?

I don't believe so. Although the fear and propaganda does have some effect, if we understand the 10 years of political and economic chaos before Putin's reign, we may gain some sympathy towards the Russians that support Putin today.

The Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991. And for the first time in Russian history, it was replaced by a (flawed) democracy. Its first President, Boris Yeltsin, wanted to convert Russia from Communism to Capitalism. To do this Yeltsin adopted a policy of shock-therapy to rapidly change the system of Russian's economy. Yeltsin's first step in this process was to sell off all the state-owned businesses to private companies. This hasty privatisation without proper planning from the newly established government resulted in individuals to own entire sections of an industry. For example, one person could own all the airlines of Russia. These are called monopolies and allowed individuals to become extraordinarily wealthy. Enter Yeltsin's gluttonous oligarchs.

The second major economic disaster came from Yeltsin ending price controls. This was a communist idea that the state will set a limit for how much a product can cost. For example, a loaf of bread will always cost £2. By ending these price controls, the price of food increased by 500% in a matter of days.

That loaf of bread is now £12. As a result of this inflation, there was increased alcoholism and suicide rates, the life expectancy of men, in just 15 years, dropped from 70 to 60. In 1980 33% of the population was below the poverty line. by 1995 it was 70-80%. 70-80% of the entire Russian population was in poverty. Yeltsin's shock-therapy method established both an extremely rich elite and a poverty-stricken majority.

So, who saved Russia from this economic disaster? Well, the answer is Putin. After a long illness, Yeltsin resigns, and Putin is elected as President in 2000. Although Putin is by no doubt a very corrupt dictator, he did turn the Russia economy around. From 2000 to 2008, Russia began selling off a lot of its natural resources, most importantly, oil. Putin also adopted many liberal economic reforms, such as a strong flat income tax, this helps redistribute money from the rich to the poor. During this period, standards of living increased dramatically, poverty reduced by more than half and GDP increased massively.

Now that we understand the short historical background of Russia, we might start to see why the Russian people support Putin even to this day. Picture this: you are 20-year-old living in 1995 Russia, at the peak of Yeltsin's economic disasters. You are in poverty, food prices are astronomically high whilst wages are getting lower and lower, it is very hard to get by. But, by the time you're in your thirties, under the rule of Putin, all these problems begin to disappear, you can get a well-paid job, the economy is stabilised, and you can begin to enjoy life without the constant stress and having to work multiple jobs. Would you not support the man who brought you out of this economic depression? The man who saved you from an endless life of poverty?

This is one of the main reasons a large percentage of the Russian population support Putin. Many Russians know Putin is an evil dictator, but they also understand that his system and his policies have done what Yeltsin could never. The fear of falling back into the economy of the 90's pushes the majority to support Putin, even in a war on Ukraine.

By John Wood (he/him), Y13

Digital illustration by Lily Crawford (she/her) Y13



'LET THEM EAT CAKE'

A Reclamation of a Woman's History

EXiA

The phrase 'Let them eat cake' had shaped my initial opinion of the last French queen, believing it was a crucial and contributory cause of the French Revolution. This ignorant and disconnected viewpoint had tainted my understanding of Marie Antoinette, making me question her historical narrative. On learning of the overlooked generosity at her public pregnancy announcement, where she donated 12,000 livres to those in prison for failing to pay wet nurses, or when she asked King Louis XVI to pay for 100 poor women's dowries at the birth of her daughter, I understood my knowledge of Marie Antoinette's history had been told by men. So, I asked myself the question, can sympathy for her become defensible with hindsight?

To enhance my perception of Marie Antoinette, I read Antonia Fraser's Historical book *Marie Antoinette - The Journey*, which unpicked each part of the French Queen's life, beginning with the fact she was her mother's fifteenth child. In context, Europe had just emerged out of the Seven Years War, and the Hapsburg Empire needed to build an alliance with France to uphold peace. Although Antoinette's childhood was considered normal by imperialistic standards, by twelve she was looked upon as a suitable candidate for the wife of the future king of France. This would further reinforce the Franco-Austrian alliance, meaning the pressure upon the child was extortionate.

Losing her father at ten years old, Marie Antoinette's understanding of parental warmth was limited. With her mother fixating on the children's marriages, it was thought natural for the girl to undergo a French transformation. By now, Antoinette was fourteen and expected to travel to Versailles and meet her husband. To fully comprehend the commitment of this position, I had to reflect upon myself at fourteen and realized the biggest event I had to endure was what GCSE's I wanted to pick. The position of children in 18th Century Europe was clearly designed to uphold titles and bloodlines, as I learnt the ceremony within the bedchambers that evening at Versailles was critical in symbolizing that marriage.

To a modern audience, it would seem inconceivable to expect a fourteen- and sixteen-year-old to produce an heir in front of an audience of spectators on the first day they met. But in any account of the relationship between the Dauphin and Dauphine (which means heir to the French throne), it is known they did not fulfil the wishes of Versailles that evening. The blame for this was pinned against Marie Antoinette, with the French Court immediately shunning her for not courting Prince Louis.

The saying, which I naively believed was the causation of the French revolution, was never actually said. Through researching the origins of 'Let them eat cake' I first came across the real translation of the French 'Qu'ils mangent de la brioche' which replaces cake with brioche, a form of sweet French bread. Secondly, the phrase was first published in print when Marie Antoinette was still a child, as it was a folklore tale of a great princess. Thirdly, it was assumed to have been said during the 'Flour Wars' across France in 1775, as a shortage of bread caused rioting across the country, when realistically the French Queen had no influence on the politics within her country. Yet this phrase and the nickname 'Madame Deficit' had influenced me to believe Marie Antoinette led France close to bankruptcy.

It is evident that the patriarchal perspective controls and manipulates women's history. As a woman myself, wanting to read History at University, I still struggle with the lack of female narratives explored currently. Questioning the view that I held for Marie Antoinette was crucial in defying the traditional male dominant history I have been taught in school. When eight years of childlessness seemed unimaginable for the Queen of France to endure, I realized why she had desired for a simplistic lifestyle. Despite it appearing like Marie Antoinette fantasied about peasant life, her plain way of living at the Petit Trianon was a refuge.

The demand Marie Antoinette needed to provide France with an heir was incessant. In Fraser's book, she reveals the significance of this event upon Marie Antoinette's psychology. It is said at the birth of her nephew her demeanour was calm and dignified, but once shut up in her inner sanctum she wept bitterly. Fraser's depiction of the cruciality of being a mother helped me understand the role of women in the 18th Century.

Regardless of royal status or not, the taboo surrounding childlessness was humiliating. During 1777, a visit from her brother Emperor Joseph II encouraged both the Queen and her husband to overcome their abstinence. He provided warmth towards Marie Antoinette, a privation in the maternal relationship she had with her mother. Their fifteen-year age-gap, provided a 'quasi-parental, quasi-amorous relationship' according to Antonia Fraser, and Joseph became a confidant for the French Queen. Subsequently, the Emperor's words enhanced Louis XVI's dedication to fulfilling Versailles wishes, and Marie Antoinette delivered their first child in December, an unwanted girl.

Before giving much thought to understanding the history of Marie Antoinette, one of my favourite films had already given me a partial sympathy towards her. 'Poor little girl, you are not what was desired, but you are no less dear to me' was accurately portrayed by Kirsten Dunst in the 2006 film *Marie Antoinette*. Drawing from a personal and intimate narrative of the French Queen, the director Sofia Coppola depicts a feminine and delicate outlook of Antoinette's reign. The pastel cinematography illustrates the graceful aspects of femininity in the patriarchal society of 18th Century France. If visuals help you understand history, then I would recommend Coppola's film as she too uses the historical accuracy of Fraser's book.

Although Versailles was significantly disappointed without a male heir, it demonstrates Marie Antoinette's own happiness with the simplicity of bearing a child. Where royalties were concerned, she was no longer the infertile odd one out, and could relax into the role of motherhood like untraditionally breastfeeding her daughter. Fortunately, she again fell

pregnant and successfully 'fulfilled [their] wishes, and those of France' according to her husband at the birth of the Dauphin.



As it is famously known, the reign of Marie Antoinette coincided with the French Revolution, and the rumours which corrupted her name were beginning to circulate. I cannot deny the evidence Antoinette was an extravagant spender, but 'Madame Deficit' was a result of a male asserting his opinion. The Affair of the Diamond Necklace is an example of a scandal to ruin the Queen's name. This included Cardinal Rohan, a politician she had once excluded from her inner circle. To seek revenge, he ordered a diamond necklace worth 1.5 million livres to be bought in the Queen's name, further enforcing the deficit narrative on her. As a result, it tainted Marie Antoinette's image across her country, disproving to the people she was loyal to them.

Despite Marie Antoinette's innocence, this scandal remained with her for the rest of her reign. The power of one man's voice outweighed that of a woman, proving the patriarchal narrative of a woman's history is inaccurate. She was a victim from the beginning of birth, and with the French Revolution emerging at this moment in time, Antoinette had little chance of escaping blame. The truth behind the French Revolution, as I learned, was due to

the King of France and its tax system. With money going towards the America Revolution, successive years of bad harvests, and taxes that put the weight upon peasants, the French Revolution was not the fault of their Queen. With the eventual overthrow of the French Monarchy on 5 May 1789, it represented the freedom of the people. But this was the freedom of the people's men, as women's freedom would still have limitations.

The moment before Marie Antoinette's death, she accidentally stepped on her executioner's foot, making her final words an apology: 'Pardon, monsieur. I did not do it on purpose.' The patriarchal lens that this history has been told through is a circumstance of its time, just as my feminist lens is a circumstance of being a teenage girl. Tainted by the lies of conspiracy, the actuality of Marie Antoinette is far more simplistic and organic. The scapegoat of the French Revolution lays with the Queen of France, but it was hardly her own wrongdoings that caused the overthrow of the Ancien Regime. Marie Antoinette will always be deemed controversial, but I wish to destigmatize her voice and reason her sympathy, so in her own words, 'if we have committed faults, we have certainly expiated them.'

By Idabell Binns (she/her) Y13

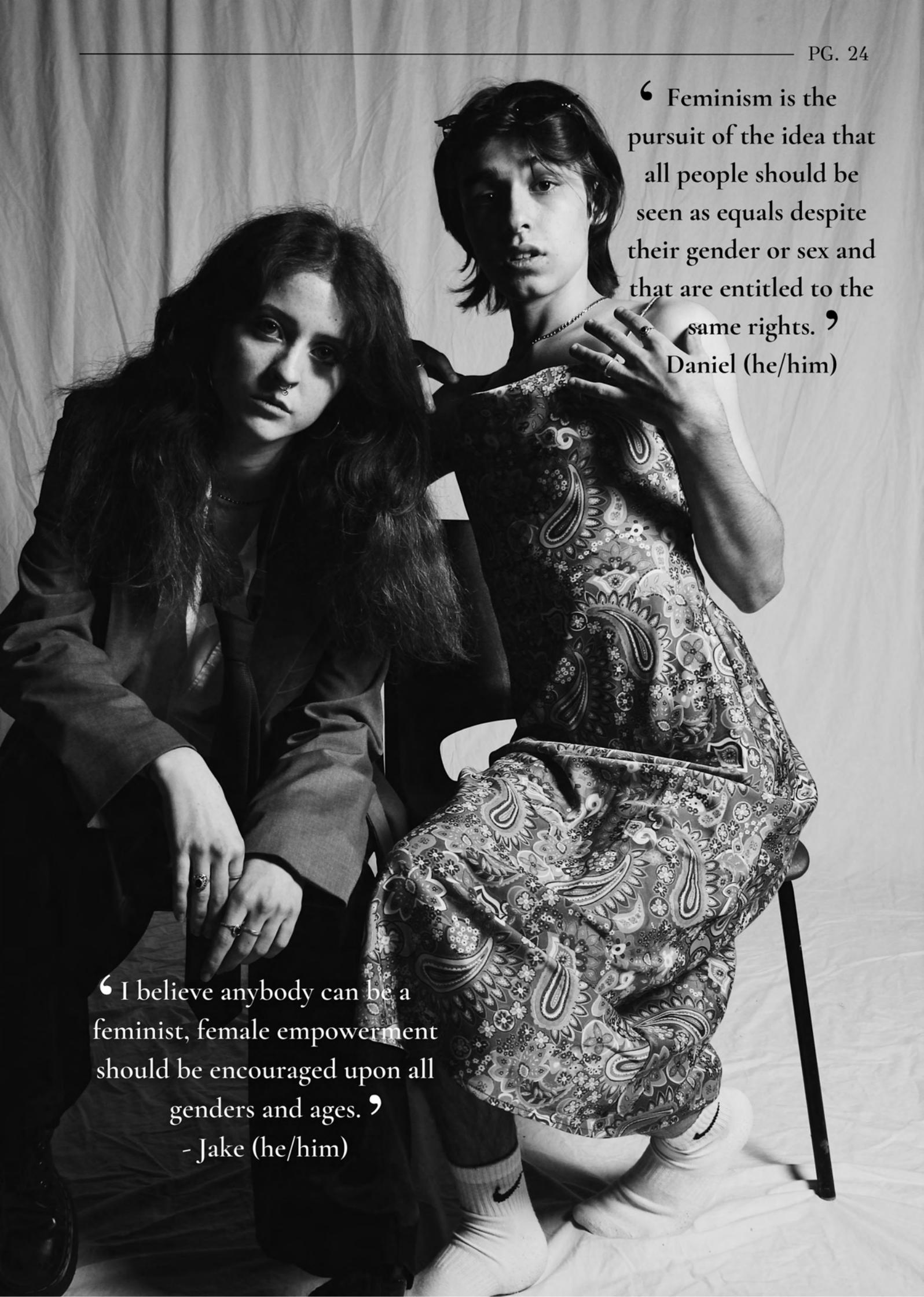
JUST *BECAUSE I'M A FEMINIST,* *Doesn't mean I hate MEN*

By Sophie Rice (she/her) Y13

Feminism by definition 'a range of socio-political movements and ideologies that aim to define and establish the political, economic, personal, and social equality of the sexes.' I do not want the idea of a feminist to be morphed into a woman only wanting self-superiority, instead I want people to realise that feminism is an accessible and equal movement to value the individual, rather than defining someone by their sex.

Feminism isn't a women's issue- it's one for all of society.





‘ Feminism is the pursuit of the idea that all people should be seen as equals despite their gender or sex and that are entitled to the same rights. ’

Daniel (he/him)

‘ I believe anybody can be a feminist, female empowerment should be encouraged upon all genders and ages. ’

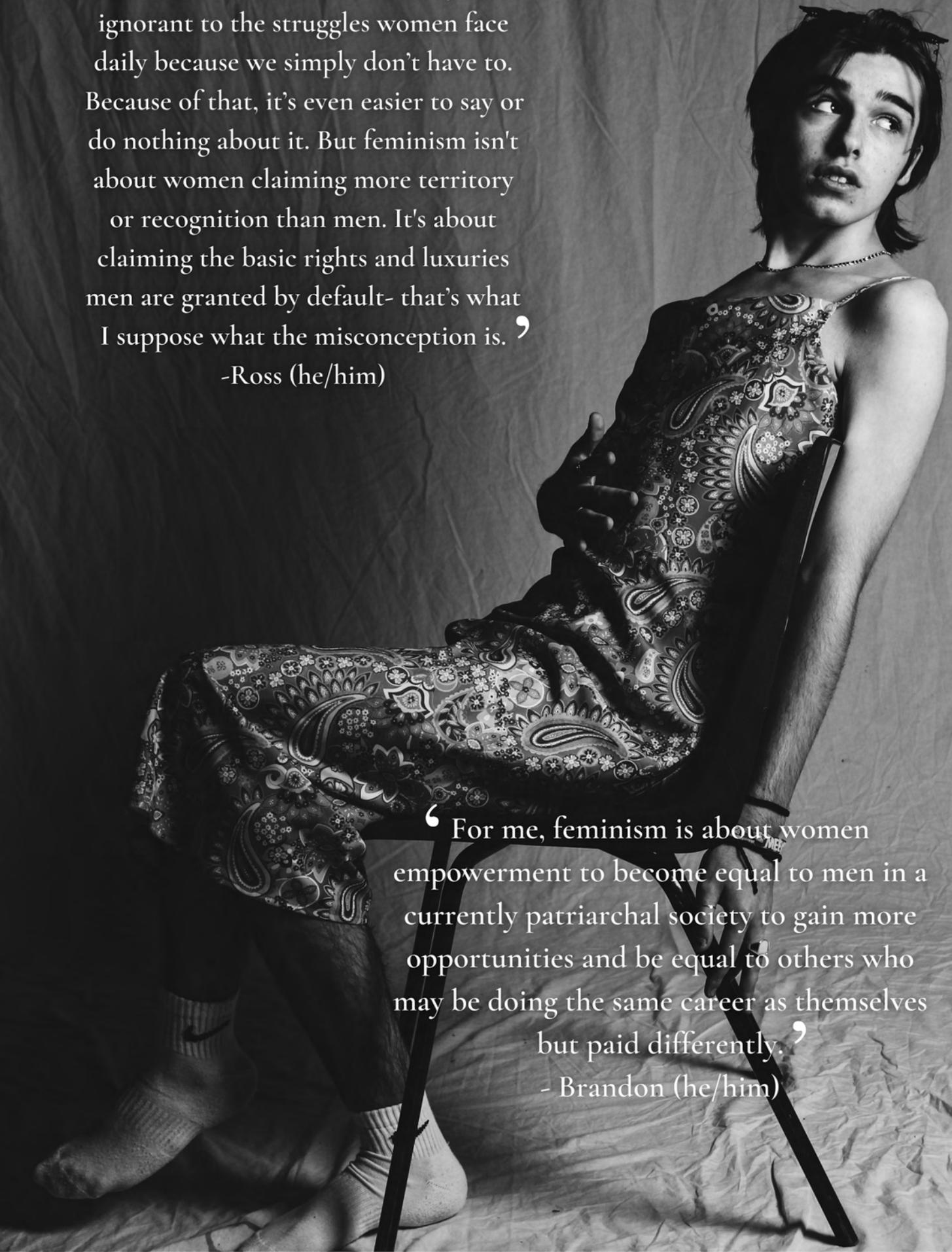
- Jake (he/him)

‘ I’d say feminism is an effort to recognise an equality between men and women overall. Often as a man it’s so easy to be ignorant to the struggles women face daily because we simply don’t have to. Because of that, it’s even easier to say or do nothing about it. But feminism isn’t about women claiming more territory or recognition than men. It’s about claiming the basic rights and luxuries men are granted by default- that’s what I suppose what the misconception is. ’

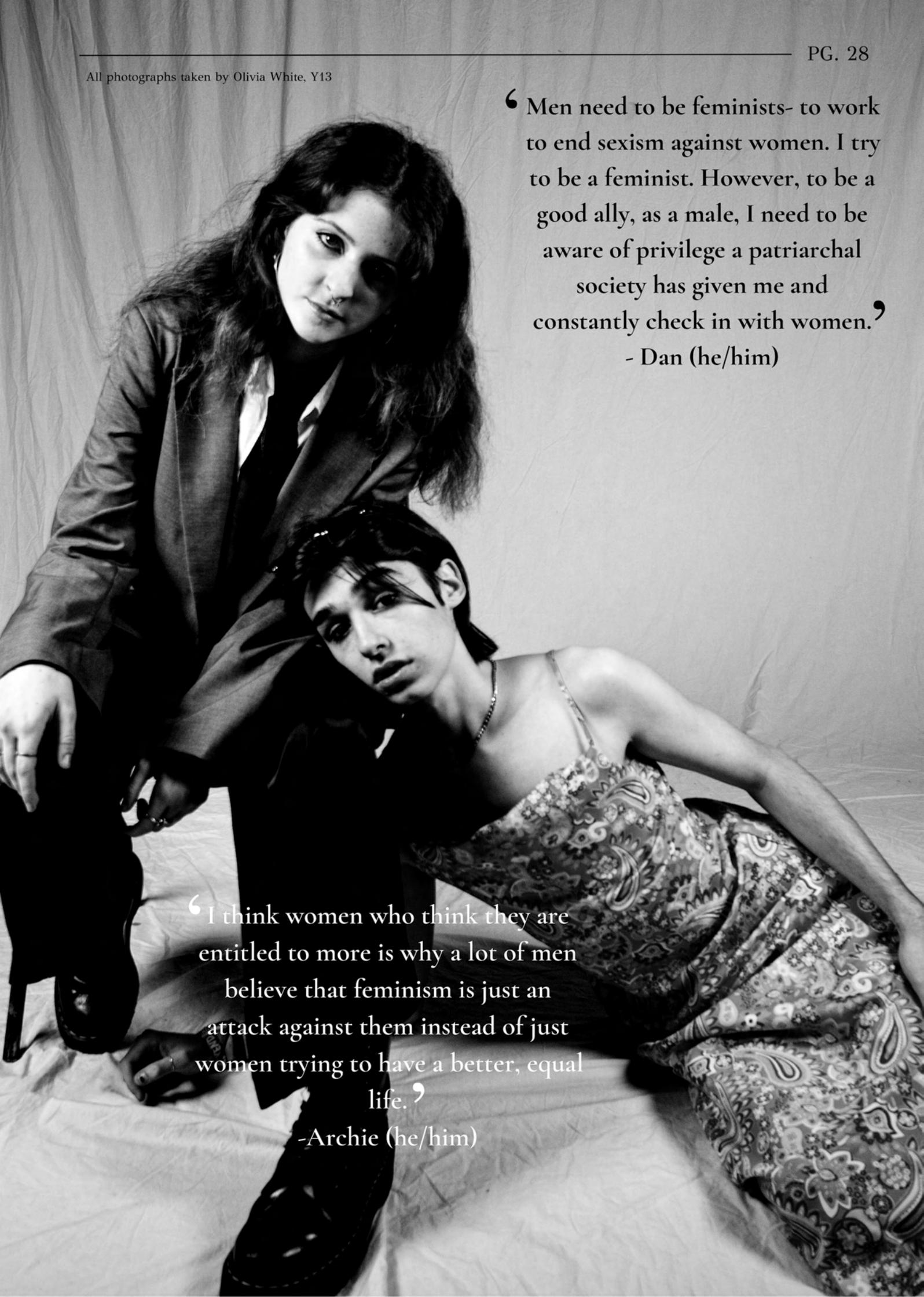
-Ross (he/him)

‘ For me, feminism is about women empowerment to become equal to men in a currently patriarchal society to gain more opportunities and be equal to others who may be doing the same career as themselves but paid differently. ’

- Brandon (he/him)



All photographs taken by Olivia White, Y13

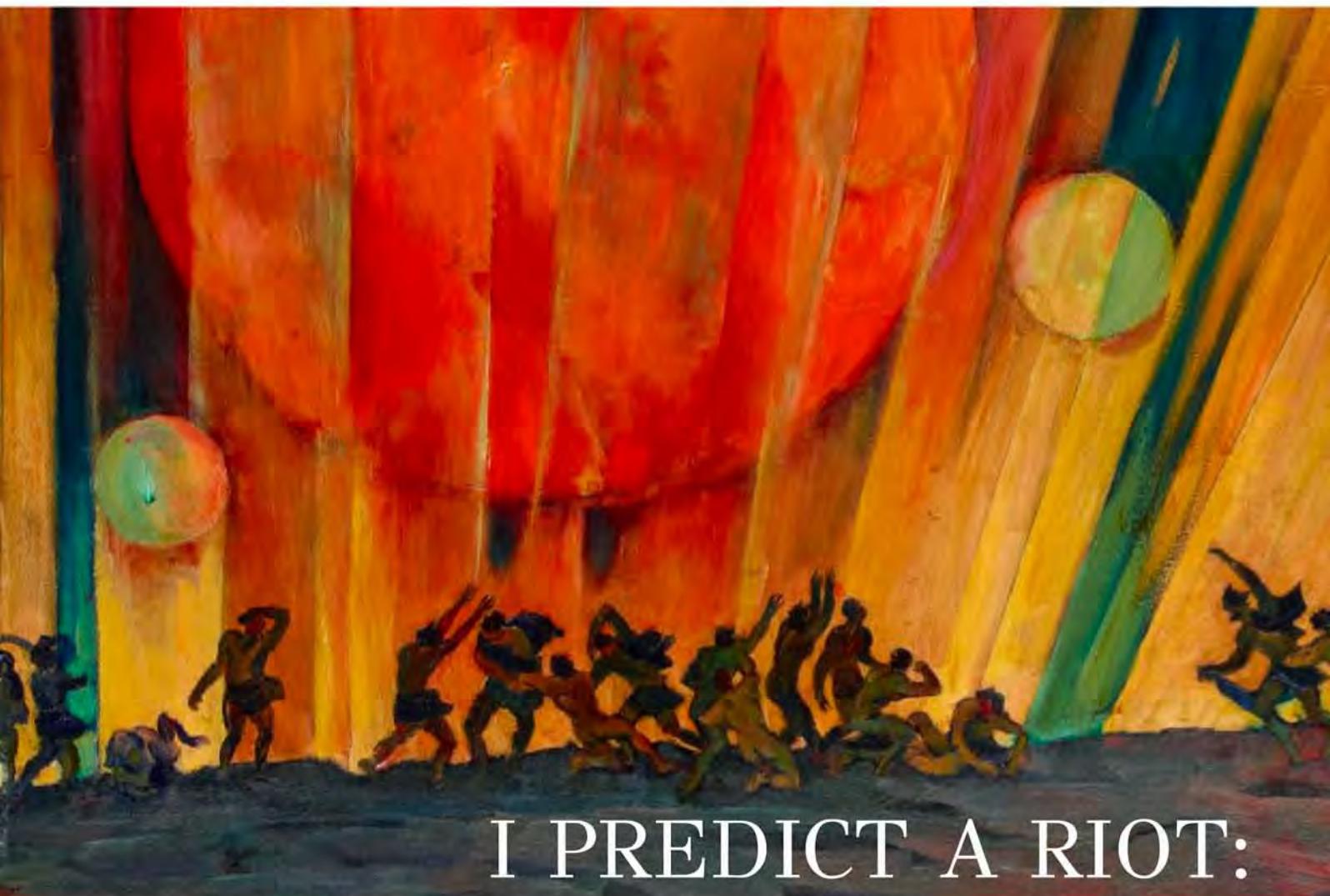


‘ Men need to be feminists- to work to end sexism against women. I try to be a feminist. However, to be a good ally, as a male, I need to be aware of privilege a patriarchal society has given me and constantly check in with women.’

- Dan (he/him)

‘ I think women who think they are entitled to more is why a lot of men believe that feminism is just an attack against them instead of just women trying to have a better, equal life.’

-Archie (he/him)



I PREDICT A RIOT:

Revolutions. Lenin once called them “the festival of the oppressed and the exploited.” From China to the USA, France to the UK, many of today’s most stable regimes have had their own episodes of violent change. But while on the face of it, a mass uprising against a country’s repressive structures of authority appears to be uncontrollable, a blind lunge for freedom after years of oppression, there are trends amongst the chaos. Though it’s not possible to ‘diagnose’ a revolutionary society, certain patterns can be observed which give some indication of what a country looks like just before a revolution. By comparing data on uprisings across the world, it has been found that there is a direct correlation between revolution and literacy.

More precisely, when a country’s literacy rate reaches between one and two thirds of the population, it is most ripe for revolution. A sudden and rapid rise in literacy provides the most politically explosive environment.

Literate people are far harder to exploit and therefore far harder to control. Through the ability to read, you immediately develop a wider understanding of humanity. Your knowledge of history is not simply based upon word-of-mouth tales of myth and legend, but a geographically and culturally wider set of ideas. You may become acquainted with the thinking of critical intellectuals and be in closer touch with radical events occurring elsewhere.

Literacy is inherently critical. Without the ability to store information on paper, knowledge must be preserved in memory. The human brain is not a filing cabinet and naturally has limits on its capacity for the retention of information. A hierarchy of knowledge develops, with ancient traditions taking precedent over unnecessary and burdensome politics. With the ability to entrust knowledge to a medium more reliable than the human memory, room is freed up for analysis and more sophisticated knowledge.

On a purely practical level, literacy facilitates mobilisation. Posters can be put up and letters distributed to rally support for a cause. Messages can be sent that don’t degrade with time, as they would in the human memory.

Literacy opens the possible for abstractness. In an illiterate society, knowledge is passed directly from mouth to ear. It is impossible to separate the source of knowledge from the knowledge itself.

But a written document can be examined apart from its voice, and importantly, apart from the social standing of its author. A society’s strata of classes, once so meaningful to an illiterate peasant, drunk on a blind reverence for his almighty leader, becomes less important than the possibility for new ideas.

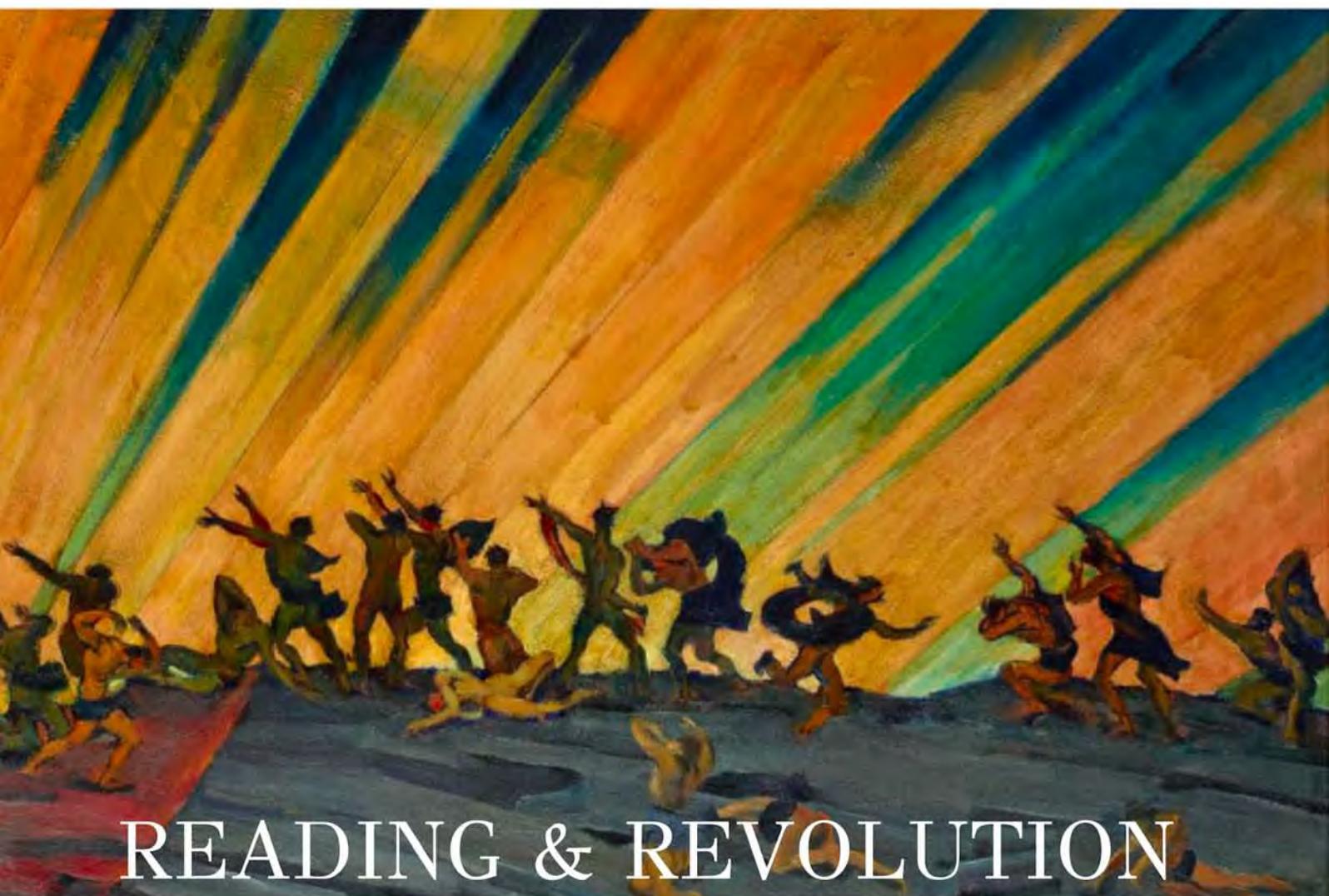
I plan to illustrate how this has played out in real history and real revolutions. I present two different uprisings, both unique, but both conjoined by a common literacy. I begin in the East, about one hundred years before now.

On the night of the 25th of October 1917, an event that was to be branded in the consciousness of the entire world for decades to come, would finally reach its tipping point. The old regime and institutions of the Russian Tsars were completely toppled, and the Bolsheviks established a new world order. The Russian Revolution began over 70 years of communist rule.

Russia just before revolution was not a happy country. Years of economic hardship, political turmoil and more recently WW1, had left the Tsarist autocracy with about as much composure as an intoxicated tightrope walker.

But Russia was also experiencing a social revolution. Years of serfdom had left most of its population having had little acquaintance with written text. Its first printed book appeared a century after it had done in Europe, the same with its first newspaper. In 1870, less than fifty years before the revolution, only 15% of Russia was literate. Faced with the growing threat of the industrialising European powerhouses, the Tsarist Government changed its education policy. Russia went from a society where writing had been reserved for the aristocracy and the Orthodox church to one which began to see value in having a literate peasantry and proletariat. By the beginning of World War one, around half of Russia’s population was literate. This coincided with a relaxation of censorship laws, leading to thousands of Russian newspapers being published weekly. This began to expose ideas of freedom to a population previously prohibitively superstitious, and united in their reverence to their ‘little father’, the Tsar.

Russia is the perfect example of the literacy theory. As education became more widespread, reading rooms opened, where the proletariat read the likes of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, both writers challenging the norms of orthodox society and religion. They became critical of a regime that many realised they had only formerly supported because they knew of no alternative.



READING & REVOLUTION

The Bolsheviks were extremely effective at exploiting literacy as a means of mobilisation; their propaganda leaflets declared the need for “peace, land and bread”. Before mass literacy, social classes in Russia were paramount, to the aristocrat and to the peasant. The Tsar could get away with almost anything, because, in the eyes of the uneducated lower classes, he was ordained to his position by God. The abstractness of literacy was undoubtedly a contributing factor in helping to break down the steel barrier of social classes.

Perhaps it is possible to say that without Russia’s literacy revolution, Lenin’s political revolution may have never occurred.

And this trend is not restricted to Russia. 1500 miles west and 128 years further back into history, a similar pattern occurs. In 1789, France began its journey towards republicanism, embarking on a revolution that would plunge the country into a decades long constitutional crisis.

There’s one overriding story of the French revolution in relation to literacy. There were major differences in the forms of revolt engaged in by the literate and illiterate. Those with at least basic literacy targeted what they perceived to be political and economic threats to their rights as French citizens. Their actions were anti-state, attacking the tax system, the agents of the state and royal hunting preserves. They targeted religious institutions, responsible for collecting tithes (church taxes) and the Gentry, who often heavily taxed peasant harvests. The completely illiterate however, mobilised against rumoured but non-existent invasions. Languishing in the ignorance of their illiteracy, they rallied around not their greatest threat, but their biggest fear. Bandits, townsfolk, aristocrats and foreign armies were all supposed enemies that united the less educated peasants. The ‘Great Fear’ of the illiterate peasants was far less politically motivated than the concerted disloyalty to government and religion than the literate peasants engaged in. So, literacy was extremely significant in determining the nature of the revolt.

Without literacy in France, the spontaneous antics of the illiterate peasantry would surely have never matured into a fully formed, political revolution.

One thing is incontrovertible, if you’re to look back through history, you’re certain to find a lot of revolutions. Sometimes they’re colourful performances of the true human desire for a destiny, sometimes they hopelessly slump into the waste heap of history.

When they succeed, invariably, literacy seems to be involved. It is easy to see how a partially literate nation can be more volatile, more open minded, and ultimately, more willing to change. Or put another way, a person’s ability to make shapes on a page is conducive to a passionate desire to employ the guillotine on one’s monarch.

PROTEST SLOGANS: A FORM OF REVOLT?

From the Iraq war to Black Lives Matter, protest slogans have been used for centuries as a form of expressing dissatisfaction. While most of them aren’t overtly revolutionary, many, including “*My Body, My Choice*” and “*Defund the Police*” have aimed to change the laws of a country, or even change the very nature of how those laws are enforced. Either way, they are a perfect demonstration of literacy being used as a form of dissent. Here are three of my favourites.

· “*1500 and counting*” - devised by writer and performer Siana Bangura, it is a reaction against police brutality and racism, drawing attention to the 1500 black Brits who have died in police custody or after contact with the police.

· “*Bread, Freedom, Social Justice*” - used in the Egyptian uprisings of 2011, it is perhaps similar to Lenin’s “Peace, Land, Bread”, where peace for Russians represents freedom and land represents social justice.

· “*We are the 99%*” - used during the anti-Capitalist Occupy Movement to represent the reliance of the super-rich on those who work in their name.

By Gabriel Moore (he/him) Y13

THE future has no GENDER

'Teach HER that the idea of gender roles is absolute nonsense. Do not ever tell her that she should or shouldn't do something because she is a girl. 'Because you are a girl' is never reason for anything. Ever.'

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Picture this- as you walk down the street, you spot a pram covered in flowers with a pink blanket spilling out of the side. What do you think? Let's be honest, you're going to visualise a baby girl lying sound asleep in it. This is the harsh reality of gender stereotypes and the root of the scar it is leaving on our society.

Gender is 'the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed', and explores the social relationships, which vary between all cultures and countries. However, over time, we have become guilty of creating specific 'images' for either gender to conform to. When we picture women, we begin to imagine a delicate and quiet person who remains in the home, performing domestic roles, whereas men are always portrayed as stronger and more of the 'leader'. These images are becoming harder to escape and break out from, as we constantly live under the glare of these tropes. These gender stereotypes are causing our society to become more oppressed by the day and we need to act now, as they continue to leave a lasting defacement on the future for us as the next generation.

Children develop fastest in the first few years of their lives, meaning images which they are exposed to are rapidly picked up and mirrored in their behaviours. At the age of 3, children establish a gender identity and at age 5, children create gender stability, and begin to express their own identity and beliefs in relation to gender. If we don't act soon, these tropes will be fully engrained into our society and we will be unable to remove this at all. The basis of these stereotypes is from parental behaviour in early childhood. Through direct messages on behaviour, such as parents giving dolls to girls and action figures to boys, or indirect comments on behaviours of others, such as 'she's not very lady-like', we immediately adopt these tropes too and immerse ourselves in the danger of gender stereotyping. Gender biases are constantly mirrored onto us all through these behaviours and we obliviously continue to contribute to this growing issue our society faces.



Illustrations by Olivia White, Y13

Speak out and break these stereotypes down once and for all.

As we are the future, we need to be worried about what these stereotypes could lead to. We need to realise and adapt our society away from the 'shock' of seeing a woman in a position of power and stop expecting those around us to obey these tropes. There is one easy cause of this danger which continues to grow by the day- the media. Through films, books and commercial products we expose ourselves to, we begin to view this as the 'norm' and involuntarily believe we need to replicate this behaviour too. Through seeing toys such as dolls and tea sets being constantly advertised for girls and trains and dinosaurs being shown to 'be for boys', we subconsciously link either sex to specific images and sometimes alter our behaviour and begin to establish beliefs of roles for either gender. Even before we are born, these stereotypes are established through one event- gender reveal parties. As blue confetti soars out of a balloon or a blue cake is cut into, those around begin to form expectations on the child's interests, skills and behaviours and take the first step on the path towards gendered parenting and the stereotypes associated with this. Suddenly, an inundation of action figures, vehicles and Lego will surge in. We are establishing the foundations for these stereotypes to continue to develop effortlessly. We need to become the barrier to help save our society.

Nobody is immune to the danger from these stereotypes. Just the other day, I witnessed my younger cousin being mocked for wanting to play with the boys at her school and run around, rather than sitting with the girls.

The clear presence of these stereotypes from such a young age in our society is frightening. I don't know about you, but this appalls me to know that events like this continue to occur in our society. I want us as the next generation to be blissfully unaware of what it feels like to be discriminated against due to our gender.

IF WE act now, WE WILL soon see a difference.

However, the power of the concept of 'genderless parenting' or acting in a 'gender neutral' way has made the future more positive and optimistic for us all as a potential solution. Through this, we can allow us all to grow up under no gender norms, choose the media we expose ourselves to and use neutral room decoration to prevent us from being forced under these dangerous images. As we achieve this, we will reduce the pressure of having to conform to these strict expectations and remove the importance of gender and shift it towards the beauty of the individual. We will create a future generation full of agents of gender equality, let us all be our true selves, build our confidence and self-esteem and let the power of expression pursue.

The society we are living in now is damaging us more by the day, allowing ourselves to fall into the trap of these stereotypes and obliviously continue to portray these. If we do not act now, we will not be able to stop this immense threat from taking over our society entirely. As I look around, I see the foundations of the frightening scenes of Gilead from 'The Handmaids Tale'. We are the agents which are vital in preventing our next generation are not full of 'Janines' and 'Offreds', confined by their white wings and we need to ensure that diversity can blossom instead.

Break the norm, challenge the expectations and focus on the beauty of the individual instead, so we can all embrace a genderless future.

By Sophie Rice (she/her) Y13

'Gender as an identity and the things associated like positive femininity and positive masculinity can be good as they can help people feel comfortable in their bodies and expressing who they are but it's easy for those to tip into toxicity which creates bad stereotypes, like men not showing emotions meaning they're strong, or that women are overly emotional. They can ruin mental health and leave people who are gender non-conforming stuck in a void where they don't have anything to associate themselves with which makes it easy for them to feel like they're 'broken' or 'wrong' in some way.'

- Nell (They/them)

'So a genderless future might not entail wiping out the concept of gender, but rather being as free and open as possible for people to explore themselves fully. In the context of raising children, this may mean not assigning them a gender at birth and instead educating them about all gender labels and identities.'

-Earl (They/He)

'To me, 'gender' is a combination of three things: how you view yourself, how you express yourself and how others view you.'

—Sophie (She/Her)





CELEBRATING PRIDE AT CNS

The Elkins Centre Pride display is one of my favourite things I've ever participated in within school. Seeing so many friends and peers that I've grown up with creating such a special and personal celebration with one another was wonderful, as was spotting the new designs and slogans that popped up every day. The end result was nothing but an absolute joy to have for the whole month and I can't imagine a more fun way we could have come together as a group.

That it took over the front of the entire 6th form centre felt significant; queer students being loud, visible and taking up space is a fantastic way to celebrate Pride month in school and something we are looking to emphasise in future! In *Expect Respect* this year we are aiming to create a focus on visibility and taking pride in our identities, and we used the success of the June Pride display as a model to celebrate Trans Awareness Week by decorating the windows of the 6th form café.

Particularly at this moment, where the rights of many LGBTQ+ people seem to be areas for public debate and distracted talking points for Tories, these displays give me a lot of hope!

By Finlay Reeds (they/them) Y13

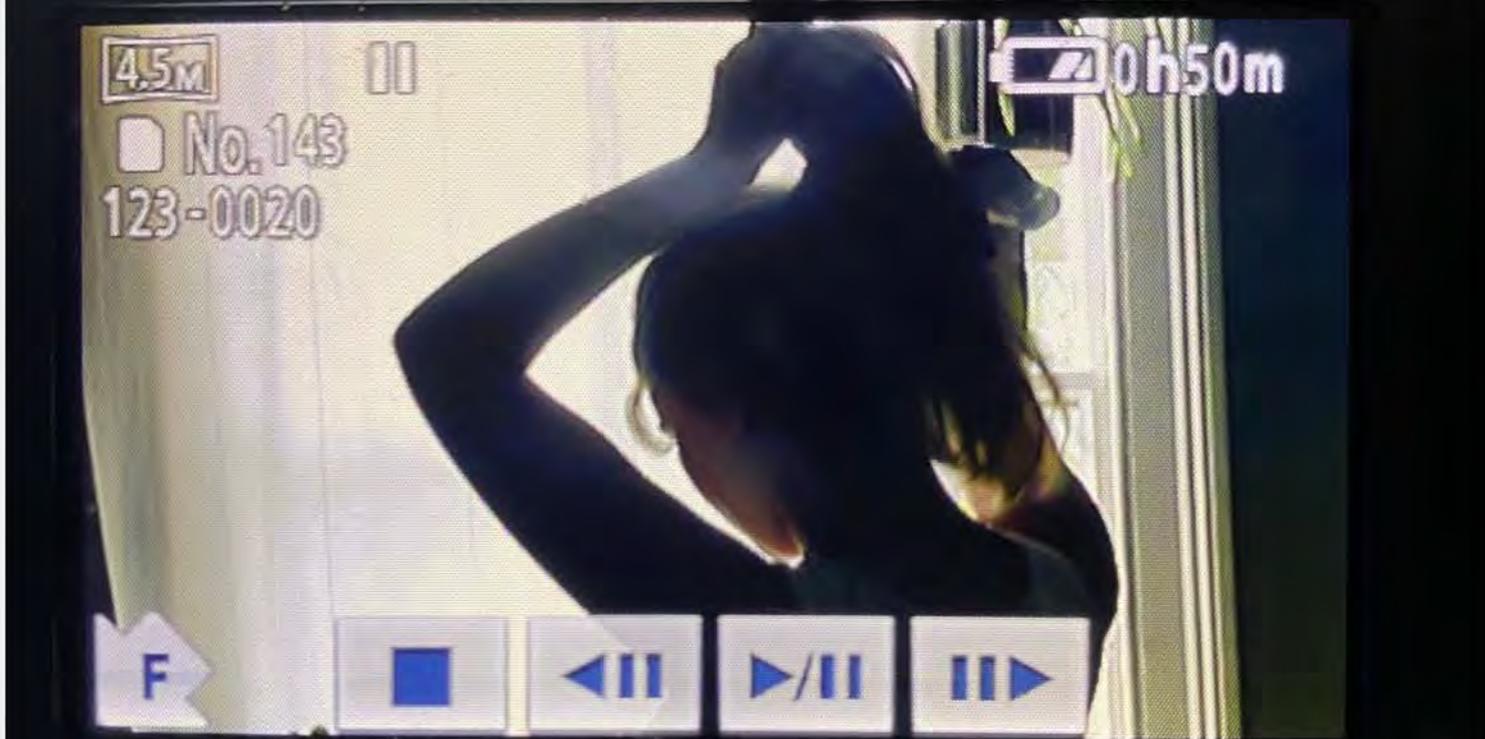


Photo by Rebecca Chapman, Y12

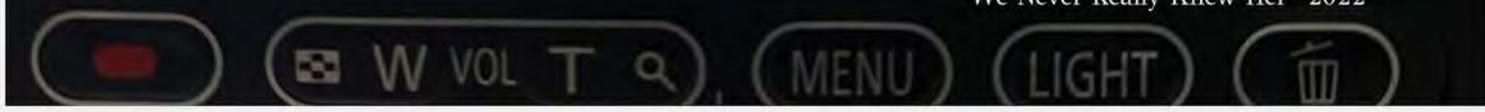




FILM & LITERATURE



Scenes from Emily Young (Y13)'s short film
"We Never Really Knew Her" 2022



An EXISTENTIAL *thought:*



A philosophy to nurture the *human* condition

Artwork and article by [Idabell Binns \(she/her\) Y13](#)

Existentialism is a movement that erupted in the fields of philosophy and literature during the 1960s. It is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as 'the theory that humans are free and responsible for their own actions in a world without meaning'. To break down its meaning, we can look at it in terms of the word 'exist' which means to exist or appear real, having its root in the Latin word *ex(s)istere*. The core principles of existential philosophy emphasise individualism, existence, freedom and exercising choice. As the world is a complicated and irrational place, existentialism helps humans strive to create their own purposes in life, in contrast to essentialism where a god may have preordained our purpose.

France in the 20th Century was the hub for existential philosophers, where the likes of Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Simone De Beauvoir would all gather at Café de Flore to discuss these fundamental ideas. Their works explored the absurdism of life and our human boredom with it, as well as questioning the human commitment to nothingness. These philosophers essentially said that many people are committed to things that serve no potential of satisfaction. Therefore, the question arises that if we don't believe in a God, could humans be lost without a source of meaning and purpose? Existentialism, therefore, serves as a bridge between atheism and the search for the meaning to life: we should strive towards understanding the importance of our actions and their consequences. We are responsible for our own existence.

The first question that arises with any philosophy is how we can begin to understand its importance.

Albert Camus' novel *The Outsider* is the perfect gateway to a simplistic approach to understanding the premise of existentialism. The opening lines succinctly present what it is like to live in a meaningless world: 'Maman died today. Or yesterday maybe. I don't remember.' The novel takes the perspective of Meursault, a man who displays the full potential of human free will as he does not contemplate its impact. This is essential to existentialism as he does not respond to how society wishes he would. It is only by the end of the novel that Meursault realises with free will he has the ability to learn of its impact and use this to bring substance to his life. Realising the consequences of our actions will bring harmony to humanity.

We are responsible for our own existence.

Any literature that has explored existential thoughts can be developed through the philosophical writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone De Beauvoir. Friedrich Nietzsche, although never explicitly mentioning the term existentialism, put forward the suggestion of an eternal return. This on the surface is the concept that the universe and all energy of existence have been recurring and will continue to do so. Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus* naturally explores this proposition in an accessible manner: Sisyphus had been condemned by the gods for eternity to repeatedly roll a boulder up a hill only to have it roll down once again as he reaches the top. This essay is a metaphor for an individual's persistent struggle against the essential absurdity of life. Obstacles, like the boulder that always falls down the hill, get in our way, and we abide by them when they should be challenged.

Sisyphus eventually finds contentment even with his eternal condemnation, suggesting we are responsible for our own existence.

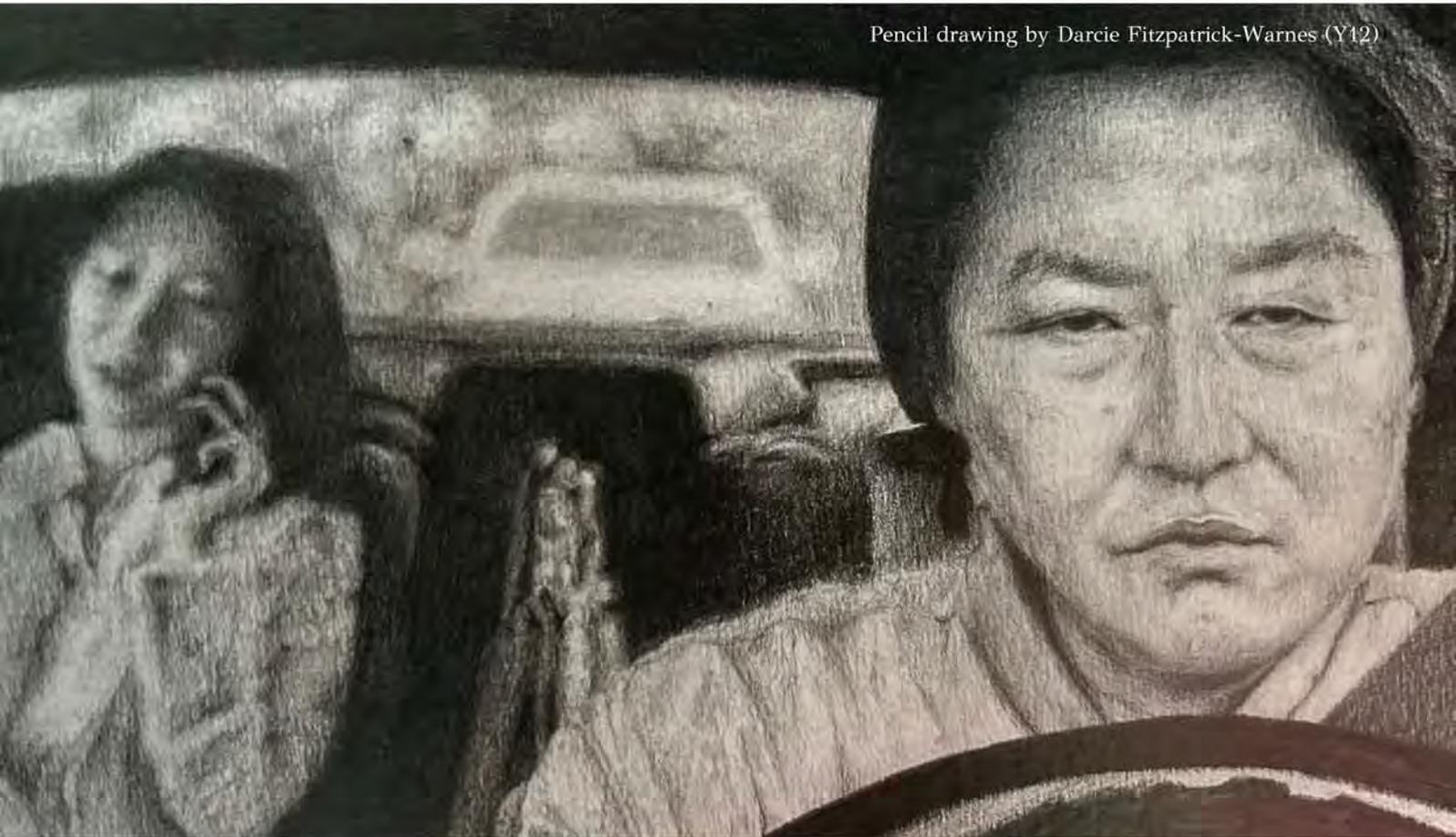
Aside from literary texts, many films throughout the past century have explored existentialism visually. The 1999 film *American Beauty* holds existentialism at its core – the breakdown of a white middle-class suburban man, realising life has no meaning. This then enables the concept of choice and freedom, as he finds the ability to make his own decisions. The cinematography is exceptional in conducting the simple nothingness of life whilst finding the beauty and purpose within it. The scene where a plastic bag is simply blowing amongst leaves can appear pointless, but the beauty of existentialism is the ability to decide its meaning. We are responsible for our own existence; we construct our ongoing meaning and purpose.

In a time where secular thinking is natural to many of us all, it leads to questions arising about the point of life and where we can gain a tangible meaning. If existentialism offers the idea that we are all free to create our own understanding of what is important to us, then our individuality has reason. It is about the freedom to express what is intrinsically key to our own survival without handing the blame to a God or something outside space and time. We are all responsible for our actions and existentialism is a philosophy that nurtures this understanding. It is a thought process that we perhaps exercise subconsciously but have the freedom to live by.

We are responsible for our own existence.

ETHNICITY in *FILM*: *How far have WE come?*

Pencil drawing by Darcie Fitzpatrick-Warnes (Y12)



Ethnic representation within the film industry has undergone a great deal of change through the years, from the blatant racism in films such as 'Birth of a Nation' in 1915 in the earlier years of cinema through to recent decades with films such as 'Parasite'.

Over time, ethnic stereotypes have become increasingly rare within film, and coupled with significant films featuring more diverse casting, it is safe to say that a great deal of progress has been made towards accurate and progressive representation. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case, as stereotypical and offensive representations of cultures and ethnic groups have been present within the industry for decades, reaching as far as the 1980s and in some cases even beyond then. So then, the question stands: how far has ethnic representation come within film, and has it progressed far enough?

The film was controversial upon release and is even more so today, which is a result of the main character's use of blackface for his personal advantage, gaining an entry into Harvard as a result of his Black appearance. The early years of film were riddled with offensive stereotypes, with ethnic minorities often being used for the sake of comedy.

Blackface, the act of a non-Black (usually white) actor applying makeup in order to portray the character of a Black person, was a common practice in the early decades of film and was often used for comedic purposes. Caricatures of Black people were a major form of comedy at the time, its use often present within comedies in the 1920s through to the 1940s, and in some cases beyond then. Perhaps one of the most iconic uses of blackface was in Warner Bros.'s 1927 hit 'The Jazz Singer', the first film with recorded dialogue, although it is often more famous for its use of blackface. The character in the film that used blackface in the film was Jewish in a highly anti-Semitic era of America and used blackface as an attempt to make a mark in American culture by hiding his Jewish background. This use of blackface still lacks moral integrity, however, and is an infamous example of regressive representation at this stage of film history.

Blackface was not strictly used in comedies, though. Its use in 'Birth of a Nation', a notoriously racist film, in 1915 was for the sole purpose of degrading and demonising Black people. The film also re-popularised the KKK as a result of this portrayal of Black people, demonstrating the harmful nature of ethnic representation at this time.

This harmful attitude toward ethnic groups was not only limited to films, however, but was present in the industry itself. Progression of ethnic representation was held back by the presence of codes which restricted inter-racial interaction on set. The introduction of these regulations affected a great deal of actors, one such example being the Chinese-American actor Anna May Wong, as she lost her role of the Chinese character O-Lan in the 1937 film 'The Good Earth'. In her place, the film studio Metro-Goldwyn Meyer cast the German actor Luise Rainer, complying with existing codes. Here again, the dominance of whitewashing within the industry was present, and the lack of progress towards equal and fair representation is made apparent.

The later years of film, specifically the 1960s to 1980s, displayed some progress of ethnic representation, although this was very limited due to the continued use of stereotypes for the purpose of comedy. Despite its decline in use, blackface was still occasionally used in films, 'Soul Man' from 1986 being a notable example. The film was also heavily criticised by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a civil rights group which advocated racial equality, for its racial stereotyping and blackface, which resulted in the heightening of controversy surrounding the film.

Ethnic representation at this time did not only fail Black people, though, as other groups were shown through harmful stereotypes. Japanese people were represented in this manner in 1961's 'Breakfast at Tiffany's', through the character of Mr. Yunioshi. He was a stereotype of a Japanese man: buck-toothed, often displeased or upset, while also being played by a white man, an example of yellowface (a similar practice to blackface, except the actor would be mimicking an East Asian person). While there was a slight increase in ethnic representation at this time, the majority used regressive stereotypes as the foundation for characters, displaying a lack of overall progress from the earlier years of film.

Modern representation has vastly improved from the earlier years of film.

Modern cinema has seen the decline of ethnic stereotyping and the increase of diverse casting, a stark contrast from the position of the industry several decades prior, although there are some examples of a lack of progress. The use of blackface has almost completely ceased, although an important exception is evident in 2008's 'Tropic Thunder'. This use of blackface, however, has been seen by many as far less controversial than its use decades prior. The use of blackface in 'Tropic Thunder' contributes to the satirical nature of the film, as it is a commentary on the unjust nature of Hollywood, meaning that the use of blackface was not intended to convey stereotypical or harmful representations of Black people.

Whereas films that used blackface decades prior attempted to justify its inclusion, 'Tropic Thunder' instead acknowledges its harmful nature, making its inclusion in this film less harmful in comparison to older films. This development is also without addressing the recent growth of the industry outside of America, an important example being the development of the Korean film industry. Recent releases such as 'Parasite' in 2019, which itself was the first Korean film to win the Palme d'Or award at the Cannes Film Festival, have openly displayed the advancement made towards greater ethnic opportunities and representation within the film industry. Both examples demonstrate a departure from the more stereotypical representations of ethnic groups that dominated the industry decades prior, which displays a clear advancement in representation within the film industry.

With this said, I will return to my original question: how far has ethnic representation come within film? Significant progress has been made since the racist earlier years of film, and through film's life the accuracy and equality of ethnic representation has been constantly, though gradually, improving. However, has it come far enough? While an imbalance does exist between white and ethnic representation, perhaps unsurprising considering film's history, this is by no means unchangeable. As film continues to develop, so too will the equality of representation, which will no doubt result in a more fair and balanced industry.

By Finley Kippin, Y13

Art by Olivia White Y13

Special effects in STAR WARS

“Movies are special effects, from Melies to Harryhausen to 2001, visual effects create the magic that makes people want to go to the movies” -
George Lucas

The original Star Wars films were and still are some of the most well-known films of all time. Only, they weren't made in a time when visual effects were as easy as a few clicks on a computer, all the visual effects were practical which posed many challenges along the way.

As they didn't have the luxury of putting the actors in front of a green screen and adding various backdrops digitally later, they had to use a physical backdrop in the form of a matte painting. A matte painting that is done on glass with a space for the film scene to be added later during the editing process.

For what George Lucas liked to call the “dog fights in space” each ship was an extremely detailed model, whether this was the millennium falcon or a tie fighter. According to many of the model makers who worked on Star Wars every single detail on each of the ships was connected to another pipe or lead to another part of the ship. They also often stole parts from tank or plane model kits to finish them off.

In the compulsory bar scene in the original trilogy, many strange creatures can be spotted. Because, like I said earlier, they didn't have the luxury of CGI [computer generated images] each of the creatures were an extremely detailed costume worn by someone in order to make these strange aliens come to life.

The editing process was slow and painstaking. It consisted of taking each piece of film that fit together, for example, a matte painting and a scene filmed by actors, pushing the various pieces together and taking a picture to create a new bit of film with all the pieces as one bit of film.

If you are interested in this topic, I recommend watching the first two episodes of light and magic, a documentary on Disney plus.

By Rosie Ramon, Y9



Why should *we* read DIVERSE literature?

We know that reading is important. It improves memory and communication skills, it can reduce stress, and widen our vocabulary; so why should literature taught in classrooms not reflect the diverse community that we live in? As Rudine Sims Bishop says, "Books are sometimes windows, offering views of other worlds that maybe real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers only have to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When the lighting is just right, however, a window can also be a mirror." Literature can be used as an escape through doors and windows, but it can also help us explore our own identity with mirrors.

In reading about other cultures, we can cultivate respect for others' emotions and varying experiences. When these experiences don't apply to us it can be easy to disregard them, but if they are brought to our attention, we can truly understand and value all walks of life. If we can recognise our similarities in different lifestyles, we can increase empathy and change our attitude towards differences, uniting all different cultures and lifestyles with the strong bond of literature.

Mimi Ronson, the Norfolk Young Poet Laureate, said when I asked her about the importance of reading diverse literature:



Mimi helped source 100 books by authors of colour for the school library.



Recommendations from Mimi:

1. *The Year of the Runaways* by *Sunjeev Sahota* - "A great story of the lives of immigrants who have found home in the UK. Beautifully lyrical and moving."
2. *Edge* by *Sylvia Plath* - "A poem that explores the treatment of women within society and the raw reality of mental illness."
3. *We Need New Stories* by *Nesrine Malik* - "I'm often very picky with non-fiction but I devoured this book. A fascinating look at why it's important we keep looking for new narratives and challenging the norm."



"The world is rich with differences, and if we can't see that in the stories of literature how can we see it in ourselves?" When certain groups aren't represented in books, their cultures and traditions can seem devalued by society, and individuals who are represented can fall victim to ignorance of the multicultural world in which we live.

If we could create a richly diverse scope of literature to explore, our horizons will expand and knowledge of the wider world will flourish with our respect for the many cultures that the world holds. Consequently, an unvaried range of books could be damaging, and lead to a limited view of society and dangerous ethnocentrism.

If diverse literature is so important then why do we have such a lacking range? A recent study found that only 7% of GCSE students studied a novel by a woman and less than 1% of GCSE students studied books by a writer of colour last year, even though 34.4% of school aged children are in a so called 'minority' group. As Mimi said, "It's never been more vital that we continue to push, as students and the future generation, for a truer reflection of ourselves in the work we study. Literature is about change, and I don't believe we can truly evolve if there isn't an open conversation in school about whether the texts we study are there because they have always been, or there because they hold value to us."

However, there are many different interpretations that can be taken from 'diverse literature'. Do I mean a large range of ethnicities and sexualities in authors and characters? Or varied lifestyles and situations portrayed in the text? Or even different forms of literature, such as playscripts and poems? Well, if all of these are fulfilled, it can provide us with a rich and diverse understanding and appreciation of literature from all walks of life, in all its forms. Then we can really see the most that life has to offer. When I asked Mimi Ronson about ways she would like to see cultures presented in literature, she replied "I would love to see more minority characters in key roles within text: often I feel as though the concept non-white or minority central characters won't sell books gets in the way of achieving long-term success for diversity in literature. Also, as much as it is important to represent the struggles of different backgrounds in literature, I'd like to see some more uplifting stories which turn prevailing struggles into a message of power and hope for the future. It's just as important to look forward as to look back"

Perhaps, in reading a rich range of books we can begin to expand our understanding of all cultures, and create a more inclusive community within our school, and the world.

By Edi Lea (she/her) Y11



'YOU WON JANE'

What Reality TV says about us, society and the intentions of those in charge.

*'Dear lord, what a sad little life Jane...'*¹

These words begin what is arguably the most famous meltdown in British TV history. With the speech embroidered on all manner of weird and wonderful paraphernalia, having become a water-cooler sensation almost overnight, it is no surprise that 'Come Dine with Me's Biggest Loser' is not only a pop culture staple, but indicative of how we as a society view and value reality television.

Practically everyone will, on reflection, admit that what was broadcast on the 4th of January 2016 cannot be the same as what happened on the night of the meal. It almost definitely does not bear any comparison to what would have happened in an enclosed situation free of cameramen and the pressure of prize money. However, it is also fair to say that any person willing to act so inappropriately and then finish their tantrum with an Office-esque glance-to-camera as if they had just dropped a particularly witty one-liner, probably does not warrant excessive sympathy, especially when a quick Google search can confirm that their private life has somehow remained intact six years later.

Rigged or authentic, this scene provides what every viewer seeks in the world of entertainment; just that. Watching another make a spectacle of themselves in a way we 'could never' feeds our drama-hungry appetite without damaging our own social circles. It creates a clear good and bad, even when we know the reality is infinitely more grey, letting us take delight in our instant disapproval.

'Expedition Robinson' to 'Bin-gate' - the emotional impact of constant scrutiny.

In 1997, Sinisa Savija became the first person ever to be voted off a reality TV programme. By the time the Swedish survival show, 'Exhibition Robinson' aired, Savija was already two months dead, having

stepped in front of a train in order to end his life only four weeks after being removed from the island. Consequently, 25 years on, suffering and spectacle are irrevocably intertwined. Since 1997, there have been 38 suicides worldwide from ex-participants alone. Predominately, this is down to the careless actions of directors and producers, and their inability to provide adequate mental health support in an industry that prioritises outward appearances, influence and ratings over contestants' welfare. Competitors making a fool of themselves on screen and behaving in a way that attracts criticism is one thing, but the countless others who through cuts, retakes and poor working environments have been twisted into malevolent false personas, only to attract harassment from an increasingly anonymous base of critics, are surely another.

Arguably, it took until Love Island presenter Caroline Flack's suicide in

February 2020 for real attention to be paid to mental health in the reality TV industry. It wasn't until Love Island's 7th season in 2021 that a team of therapists and clinical psychologists were brought in on-set, with 8 compulsory therapy sessions per islander, despite the suicides of contestants Sophie Gradon and Mike Thalassitis occurring years previously, in 2018 and 2019. Why action wasn't taken sooner to mitigate harm caused by a programme that places so much pressure on its contestants, is a mystery.

Producers are said to be doing all that they can to protect the welfare of their contestants, but in a world where social media holds so much power under the guise of networking and promotion, it is difficult to see what producers can change to prevent the bullying of the virtual world. Only three months before her death, Sophie Gradon remarked in an interview with Pulse News that 'No one anticipated [Love Island's] success...We became public property overnight and everyone had an opinion, good and bad'.

What's more, these are not just sentiments expressed by competitors on high-conflict programmes like Love Island, Big Brother or TOWIE. Even the most wholesome corner of reality TV, the Great British Bake-off, is not free from its fair share of internet drama. Season 5 (2014), has become inseparable from 'Bin Gate', an incident in which Iain Waters threw away his melted baked Alaska after it had been taken out and left on the side by a fellow contestant, Diana Beard. He then stormed out of the tent and was asked to leave the competition, a moment of catharsis uncharacteristic of Bake-off's light, easy tone. However, it was Beard that bore the brunt of the Internet's anger, with accusations of sabotage escalating into threats and personal criticisms that blew the whole event out of proportion.

The Internet is truly a catalyst for even the tamest of moments in Reality TV, adding a level of familiarity between contestants and viewers that seems only applicable when 'holding people responsible' for their behaviour (no matter how insignificant the contestant's actions). It is as if contestants are seen as human enough to be criticised and 'humbled' for their mistakes, but not human enough to be allowed to make them, apologise, and move on.

'I Wanna Marry Harry' - how far is too far?

Whilst to some, Reality TV's charm lies in its relatability, to most, it, like any piece of entertainment, must centre around some sort of suspended disbelief. 'I Wanna Marry Harry', a niche 2014 dating show in which 10 American girls compete for the affections of a man who looks vaguely like Prince Harry through a series of increasingly bizarre challenges, fits the latter bill perfectly.

It has been described as 'a masterclass in gaslighting', and it is just that- the show's draw is that none of the contestants have any idea that this man they are competing for is not Prince Harry. Its manipulation is only achievable by providing viewers with such intense feelings of intellectual superiority - 'How could these girls be so naïve and stupid that they genuinely believe this man is Prince Harry?' - that almost no room is left for the audience to empathise with the contestants. By entrenching this divide between the viewer and the viewed deep into the format of the show, the producers were arguably able to get away with a lot more than if contestants were seen as anything other than their gullibility. In order to execute something with so much room for error, the contestants were not told anything about the show until flying to the UK, where they were secluded in a country estate with no connections to the outside world whilst being filmed.

The biggest fear amongst the production team seemed to be the contestants discovering that Matthew Hicks, an environmental consultant from Exeter, was, in fact, not Prince Harry. This led them to fabricate conversations outside the contestants' bedrooms and strategically separate those who seemed to be cottoning on to the premise. They even went so far as to hire a 'therapist' for the contestants who was in fact simply a producer, who would say the same thing to each girl if they expressed any concerns- 'you must learn how to trust your mind... it's not good for you to keep questioning'. Of course, it is an entertaining watch, filled with second hand embarrassment, moral inconsistencies, 2 dimensional personalities and a complete lack of believability. The gaslighting was eventually addressed by Fox, who pulled it off the air after 4 episodes. It was, from conception, a car crash of a programme.

And yet, it encapsulates the purpose of reality TV, reflecting back at us a version of reality that makes us feel better about ourselves, putting the viewer on a pedestal at the expense of the 'stupid' contestants.

'I'm A Celeb' 2022 - Reality TV in the here and now.

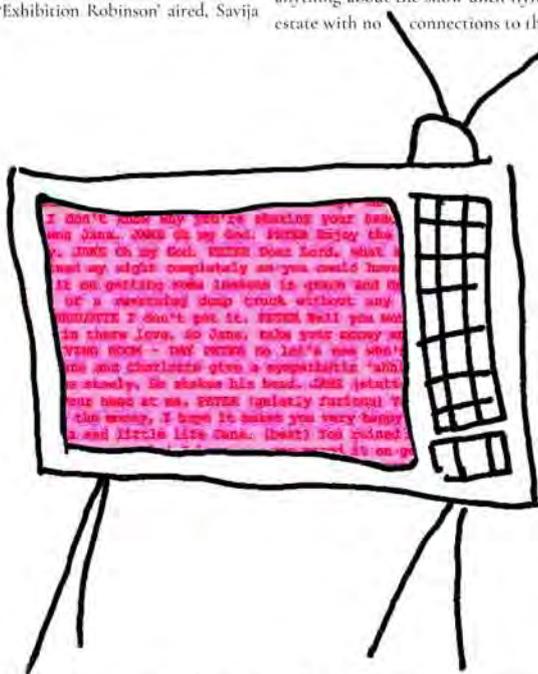
As I write, the former Health Secretary Matt Hancock, arguably responsible for the messy handling of a pandemic which resulted in over 200,000 deaths, who resigned in disgrace after breaching his own social distancing laws to have an illicit affair with his aide Gina Coladangelo, has just debuted on ITV's 'I'm a Celebrity. Get Me Out of Here'. His reasoning? That the government is now 'stable enough' for him to do so. Because it's just so important for his side of the story to be told.

There really is no length producers and directors won't go to to try and elevate viewings, and no-one they won't platform to pique public interest.

Reality TV is far from harmless, and yet no-one can deny that it is reassuring to watch external drama and scandal unfold. The need to shed responsibility, even if only for 40 minutes, is a core part of being human, and ultimately, who are we to deny ourselves of that?

'So, Jane, take your money, and get off my property.'

By Megan Howard (She/Her).
Y12



MENTAL ILLNESS:

Behind The LINES

By Emily James (She/Her), Y13



Images: Idabell Binns (Y13)
& Emily James (Y13).
Inspired by 'The Bell Jar'
by Sylvia Plath. Photo by
Alex Sleeuw (Y13)



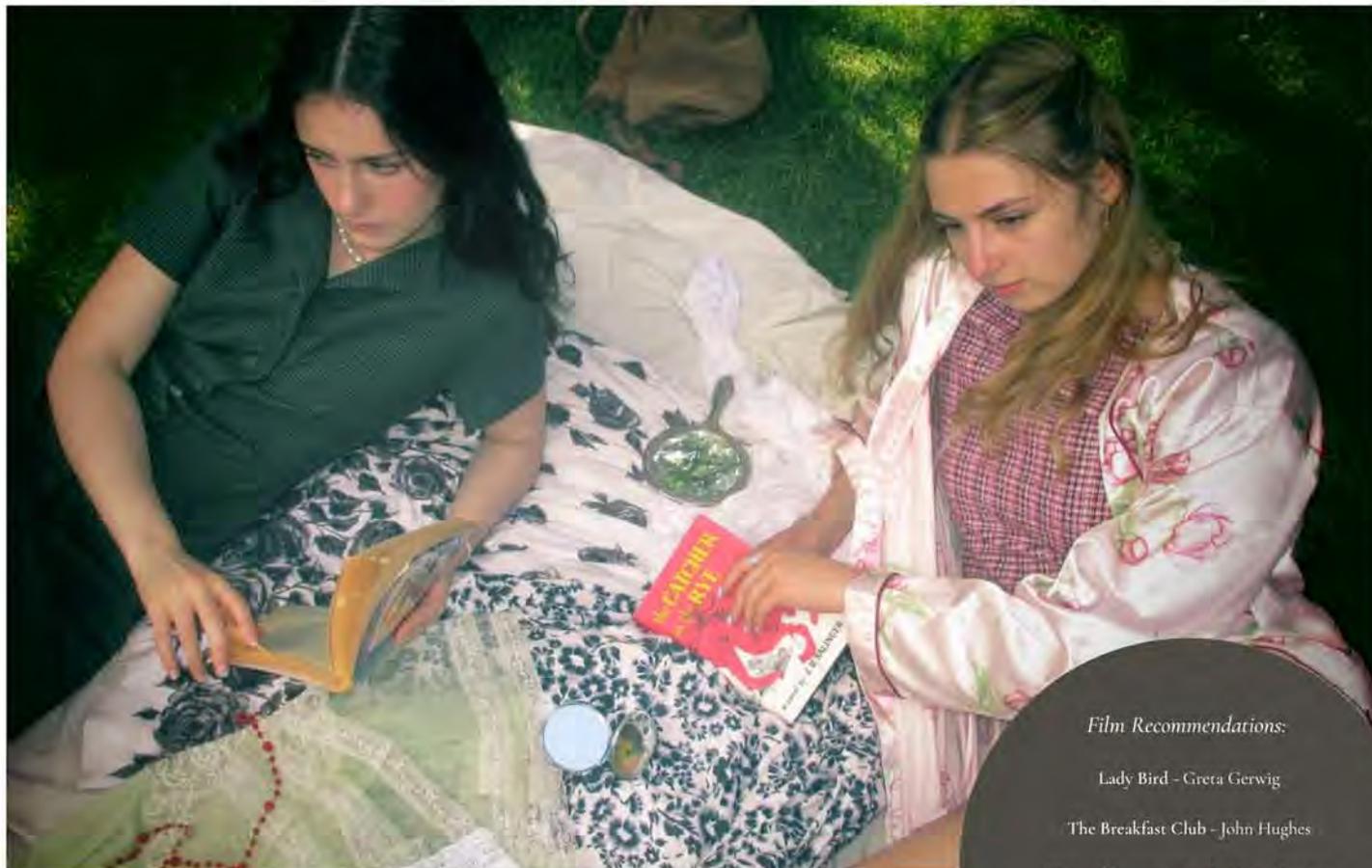
It is not uncommon today for social media stars, Hollywood actors and even politicians to voice their own struggles with mental illness. However, literature is the place where societal taboos were first challenged, and the emotional issues of teenagers explored, as they attempt to thrive in a society that is designed rigidly to control their lives, and that ignores the bridge between childhood and adulthood. Authors such as Sylvia Plath, J.D Sallinger and, more recently, Iain Banks explore how individual struggles with mental illness act as an insight into how our society can progress to support those in need and how figures of so-called "insanity" provide alternative perspectives that for those who do not suffer from mental illness would not otherwise observe. Their characters mirror their own battles with mental illness and interrogate the societies they grew up in, creating their characters as more relatable beings with true human experiences.

Usually, fear stems from what we perceive as unusual, and something that threatens the regularity of our lives. For the characters of Holden Caulfield, Esther Greenwood and Frank Cauldhame, their mental instabilities act as a stimulus of fear as they challenge the rigid boundaries laid upon them and see through the cracks in the key pillars of society such as growing up, the expectations of the role of women, and the idea of self-identity; unsettling conformists as they could disrupt the safety of their compliance.

J.D Salinger's 1951 coming of age novel "The Catcher in the Rye" follows sixteen-year-old Holden Caulfield, who suffers from anxiety and depression, as he navigates the trials of growing up in 1950's America. Holden sees adulthood as though he is "standing on the edge of some crazy cliff" and aspires to protect the innocence of children from the impending danger of adulthood.

Holden's scepticism and anxiety about ageing allows him to identify the threat of growing up before others do. He proclaims himself as the "catcher in the rye" who will act as a guardian "to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff" as society offers no such protection or care towards teenagers as they progress into adulthood. This was part of the rise of a teenage cultural revolution in the 1950s and the recognition of unique issues and self-identity of teenagers that was not seen before this time, as there was no gap between childhood and adulthood. When I first read this book, Holden acted as a figure of comfort and reassurance that you don't have to know everything about the world at the age of sixteen. The topics focused on within this novel can be seen to influence our modern coming of age films, as it was one of the first pieces of literature to be published that focuses on the life of a teen, perhaps this is why over one million copies are sold every year to this day

Sylvia Plath's autobiographical novel "The Bell Jar", explores the harm of the impossible expectations of women in the 1950's.



Film Recommendations:

Lady Bird - Greta Gerwig

The Breakfast Club - John Hughes

Kings of Summer - Jordan Vogt-Roberts

Girl, Interrupted - James Mangold

The Perks of Being a Wallflower - Steven Chobsky

Esther Greenwood battles with psychotic depression as she deals with what it means to be a woman within a society dominated by aesthetics. *The Bell Jar* symbolises to women that they do not have to appear happy all the time and Esther's mental illness critically questions why a woman should have to conform to the façade of society, as it is clearly incredibly damaging for women. Esther Greenwood's ability to voice her opinions in her poetry and in a therapy setting perhaps allows her to express views that someone who is not journeying through mental health issues would not, positioning mental illnesses as revealing "taboo" subjects: "The trouble was, I hated the idea of serving men in any way. I wanted to dictate my own thrilling letters". *The Bell Jar* being one of the first feminist novels I read inspired me to question the expected societal roles of women, as why should we as young girls have to attempt to grow in a world restricted by gender norms? Esther's depression causes her to question why she feels the way she does, and she is therefore able to identify societal problems, breaking down the stigma towards sharing internal struggles in society, and acting as a gateway to our modern world that allows for freedom of feeling.

It could be said that even a modern British society functions on ideologies which appear outdated.

Iain Banks' 1984 novel "The Wasp Factory" explores how individualistic tendencies are criticised by a world that thrives on the population adhering to a sense of common identity. Frank Cauldhame's twisted and immoral outbursts towards his bleak habitat are no doubt horrifying, but they also question what it means to be a teenager in a society that expects us to have everything set in place from a young age. Society usually categorises people as one thing or another, but for Frank: "Sometimes the thoughts and feelings [he] had didn't really agree with each other, so [he] decided [there] must be lots of different people inside his brain"

This discovery of Frank's true self -identity, positions him as a threat to others, as he has eliminated the outdated idea of a person being destined to live a life of certainty and has the potential to alter the standards of society because of this. As a teenager today, this book has encouraged me to follow my own desires in life, rather than being restricted to one pathway in life (perhaps not by creating a "wasp factory" though).

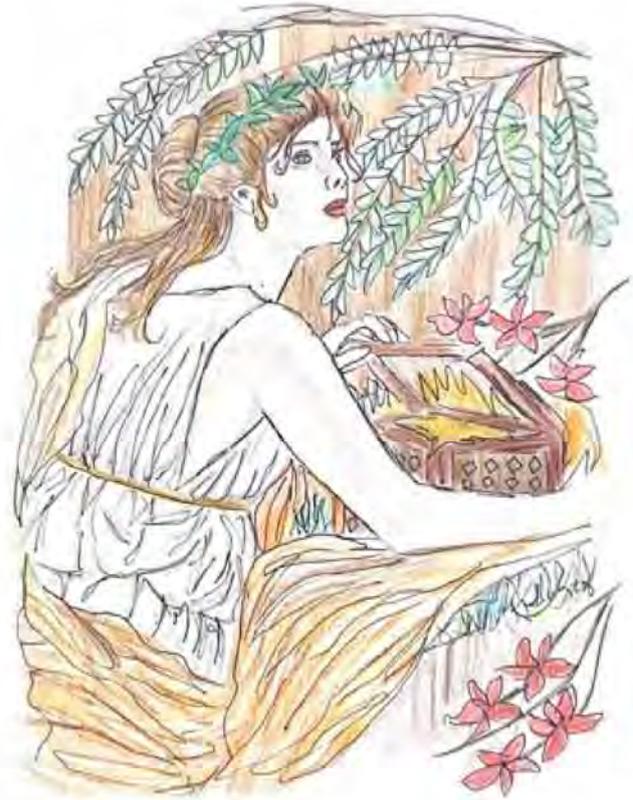
"The silence depressed me. It wasn't the silence of silence. It was my own silence."

-Sylvia Plath, The Bell Jar

The influence of these characters cannot be explored without recognising the ingenious minds from which they were created. They could not be produced without a reasonable cause, which for Plath, Salinger and Banks, the activation was their feelings of entrapment within their own lives from a young age.

With their writing they identified a possibility to console the minds of those suffering similar experiences and provide a sense of comfort to many young people who felt as though they did not belong in a world ruled by adults. For all people who feel they cannot share their emotions, the act of writing is a release for their negative thoughts, like a form of narrative therapy to keep them "sane". These novels have acted as a guide to me through "teen hood" and have allowed me to understand how to truly be an individual in our modern world. They have provided me with hope for the evolution of our society because of their eccentric minds, and I hope they do the same for you too. Great literature has the power to introduce new ways of life to society through fictitious characters, making it easier for society to accept these views.

Women in *GREEK* mythology



Throughout history, Greek mythology has influenced culture and stories of their heroes and monsters in the western world for thousands of years, the tradition has been traced to between 900 to 800 BCE. Iconic heroes battle through works like Homer's 'The Iliad' or 'The Odyssey' which follows King Odysseus' myriad of adventures through his ten-year journey home to Ithaca (in Greece) from Troy, after the ten-year war, having a couple of affairs with women, including a seven year stay with Calypso, and a year away with Circe. The effects of these ancient stories can be seen in vastly different media, from Shakespeare plays like 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' to Suzanne Collins' 'The Hunger Games' which was inspired by the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, where Minos, King of Crete, conquered Athens and had seven girls and seven boys sent to kill the Minotaur. Looking at these Myths in retrospect, many people have looked at the depiction of the female characters have and questioned whether many of them were treated fairly or sympathetically, as most portrayals see them as either cunning and manipulative, or stupid and hazardous because of it.

A woman whose story has, I feel, been callously retold is Pandora. One of the versions of the Greek origin story for humanity involves the 'first woman', this is Pandora. In common retellings, she is blamed for the difficulties of humanity, as she opened the jar she was told to never open. The story is reminiscent of Adam and Eve, where the woman is historically blamed for all wrongdoings, however according to Hesiod's 'Theogony' which is thought to be the oldest recording of this myth, as well as others such as the Greek Gods origins, Pandora was created by the Gods as a punishment for Prometheus who stole fire from the Gods and gifted it to mortals.

Pandora was literally cast up by Hephaestus and given favourable attributes like beauty but also ones deemed dangerous in a woman, like curiosity and naivety, then gifted to Prometheus' brother, Epimetheus, along with a jar containing evils that will curse humanity,

In the way she is offered to Epimetheus, Pandora is being plainly objectified and then rebuked for doing what she has basically been programmed to do. Then, when Pandora opens the jar, and unleashes the evils of the world, she becomes doomed to shoulder the blame of this alone, with many people throughout history ignoring that the reason she was created was to give this punishment to Prometheus, and mortals.

"The Greeks turn Helen into an icon they are fighting for, an idealised woman who's story they, a group of men, control"

A woman from Greek Mythology who may be the most renowned is Helen of Troy, she is the 'face that launched a thousand ships' and has, similarly to Pandora, been blamed for a massive event in the mythological canon, Helen's being the ten-year Trojan war, an event that resulted in the deaths of 240 soldiers on the battlefield, 188 Trojans and 52 Greeks, though off the battlefield many more died. The war started because Helen disappeared from the palace where she lived in Sparta with her husband, Menelaus, this is where the story diverges. Some sources say that Helen was kidnapped by Paris and taken to Troy against her will, others say she willingly left her husband to be with Paris, however in either case Paris, a man whose fate was that he would cause the downfall of Troy, went to Sparta because to win a contest of beauty judged by Paris, Aphrodite promised him Helen, who was hailed as the most beautiful woman on Earth, Paris chose Aphrodite as most beautiful, thus chose Helen.

Again, a woman has been passed around people like an inanimate object and Paris went to Helen's home to steal her because he felt entitled to her, according to many accounts that is exactly what he did.



Artwork by Rosa Hardy-Brownlie, Y12

So, Helen is taken, and her husband Menelaus rallies a thousand ships and unites the Greek states, to take back this woman who they believe has been wrongfully taken.

The way women in myths have consistently been treated can reflect how the women in Ancient Greece were, it is probably no surprise to find out that in most city-states, Greek women had practically no political rights and their lives were controlled by their fathers and then husbands. The main duty of a woman in Ancient Greece was to bear children and run the household. An exception to this is in Sparta, where the women had a reputation for being independent and had more freedom especially compared to Athenian women as they often were given a formal education, but generally women were kept in their homes in the company of other women performing household tasks such as weaving tapestries.

Marriage did not require a young bride's permission, they were usually married by sixteen, as she was deemed as the property of her father and passed from his protection to her husbands. I feel that it is so important to recognise the context of the age where these stories have come from, and question whether these classics can be adapted to the modern world or if they should be recognised as flawed for their portrayal of most of the women in their pages.

Book recommendations :

- *The Silence of the Girls* by Pat Barker

In 'The Silence of the Girls' Pat Barker retells events of 'The Iliad' through the lens of Brises, a girl from the besieged Troy, and offers a perspective left out from the classics.

- *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan

'Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief' begins a series of books that detail the various adventures of demi-god Percy Jackson in a modern world where the Gods and creatures of Ancient Greece are alive, and they are dangerous.

- *Circe* by Madeline Miller

'Circe' is a retelling of 'The Odyssey' where Madeline Miller focuses on the witch Circe (a major female character in 'The Odyssey') and explores her origins and encounters with other characters from myths.

By Mabel Lonergan (she/her) Yr13

Was Shakespeare a FEMINIST?

By Eli Satchell-Mayes (he/him) Y13



Is there any truth in feminist readings of Shakespeare? Or is our need to seek light in the dark ages of renaissance anti-feminism the reality for our impassioned defence of his women? Can it just be chalked up to naivety, as the cause for feminists' rationalization of the beloved bard's un-progressive beliefs?

What is Proto feminism, you may ask? This already optimistic concept anticipates modern feminism in eras where the idea of feminism was unheard of. Some feminist critics believe it futile to try and debate the proto-feminist status of the benefactor of an unequal society. However, the truth is, modern values have hardly reached social equilibrium. The early 1600s brimmed with fanatical anti-women ravings, were scourged with witch-hunts damming feminine sexuality, and ran rampant with religious lies about femininity debasing male triumph. All this hatred stemming from something so 'disarming' as feminine wiles! Despite his damming circumstances Shakespeare, like men today, can still be labelled as progressive. With our society, willing to go back on its steps out of the dark ages, threatening the lives of so many women through 'anti-abortion' laws, men are encouraged to highlight the voices of women without them. Arguably, that is exactly what Shakespeare was trying to do. If men in our society can be classified as feminists, what makes Shakespeare any different?

Cleopatra; a figure renowned as the embodiment of Femme Fatales, known for her instrumental role in Roman politics and generally considered a feminist figurehead. With this modern reverence, you might find it surprising to know that Shakespeare's historical fiction was one of the first written to advocate for her power. Atypical for historical accounts of his period, Shakespeare differentiated his portrayal of the infamous Cleopatra.

In a world of male triumph, standing on the backs of those deemed the lesser sex, the greatest fear of those in power is the corruption of masculine authority. History, in its macho achievements, was contemporarily considered unmarred by feminine influence, and therefore throughout the renaissance period, women were pitted as the defilers of men's power, their femininity a disease on the spoils of masculine success. Something shared in most contemporary portrayals of the Egyptian queen.

This powerful woman is allowed in Shakespeare's writing to embrace stereotypes in a subversive manner. His character, fickle, seductive, and changeable with the quality of God-like beauty, is undeniably the archetypal villain for the Anti-feminist fears of Jacobean England. Shakespeare commonly wrote histories to reflect the problems of his own society, and 'Antony and Cleopatra' is no different.

Or are we reaching in the dark to defend his female characters?

The fear of losing male identity through the attraction to a woman runs rampant in this period. For the Roman soldiers who are to blame for the play's ridicule against Cleopatra, human identity was limited to the male subject, who must resist being seduced or 'feminized' by the changeability of women. In Shakespeare's play, Cleopatra, the last pharaoh of Ancient Egypt, commands distant adoration and love through her inconstant hand. Displaying playful familiarity with her female servants one moment, to striking a slave the next. Once declaring obedience to Antony then performing a grand suicide in the name of his betrayal, and finally at his death she creates an imagined godlike union with him. Her histrionic theatricality knows no bounds. Some might even claim she encapsulates the villain of antifeminist tracts who seduce the heroic male figure and corrupt his virtuous strength.

Shakespeare's Cleopatra, in her humanizing of a cold and unfeeling Roman general, is marked as a witch, temptress and adulterer. With the might of Hercules himself, for Mark Antony to remain a Roman Hero, Cleopatra must be demonized and marginalized as these societally unacceptable labels, for her debasement of his masculinity.

How is Shakespeare's portrayal any different?

Although, this play can be fairly interpreted as a warning against authoritative women (due to Shakespeare punishment of Cleopatra's stereotypical cowardice in battle) his character still has room for redemption. The strength of this character comes not from her rule or influence over others, and certainly not from her ineptitude in war, but through her death. If not, a feminist depiction, it can at least be argued that Cleopatra subverts conventional expectations of female subservience. While it may be claimed that her suicide is committed for the love of Antony and her guilt over influencing his actual death by the pretence of her own, I believe she committed suicide for the sake of her name's longevity. Shakespeare allows Cleopatra to defy Caesar's wish to control Egypt under Roman rule and escape the restriction that would come from being in the empire's clutches. She escapes the confines of that one-sided alliance with true courage and serves herself with her death, something tragically heroic, an end worthy of such a transcendental character. Alike Cleopatra,



Shakespeare's 'King John' has women that transcend the confines of societal expectation. Although there is truth in the claim that Shakespeare's histories alienate women from protagonist status, usually pitting French women against English men, it is not always that simple. 'King John' is the said exception, the main antagonist is argued to be found in the titular character, not the disempowered French aligned woman, as is often the case in Shakespeare's Henry VI tetralogy.

What makes 'King John' so different?

Well, in Shakespeare's history tetralogy, the three mourning queens of Richard III for example, are argued to fulfill a similar function to the chorus of classical drama. Although functioning as radical voices of protest and morality uncharacteristically speaking against the actions of a king through voicing their pain at the murder of their loved ones, they are not allowed individuality.

Their sororal bond unites them despite their different political opinions for one purpose. The inclusion of sororal unity, could support Shakespeare's possible proto feminism, as he understands some aspect of the female experience, its addition doesn't fulfil its potential. In giving no separate aspirations for his characters, they lose their much-needed relatability and individuality, which his male characters nearly always possess. Their quite radical portrayal is undermined by the erasure of a separate female identity. With a war over the throne, inspired by a mother's conviction to provide for her son, the women of the very political, tragic history play 'King John' offer a variety of perspectives and claims of progression. The most notable of which is Lady Constance of Brittany.

The anguished widow, a powerlessly grieving mother of a ten-year-old heir, a role confined to a meagre two acts, completed with a death only theorized to occur off stage. It is hard to imagine that the powerlessness of such a character can be the catalyst for all-out territorial warfare. However, Constance is easily the most complex character in the play, and by far the most emotionally

demanding, perhaps in Shakespeare's whole cannon. Lady Macbeth and Ophelia's haunting presence does not hold an ounce of the dramatic power Constance commands, especially over audience sympathy.

With constant damming monologues, hysterical fits of rage and grief, this otherwise pathetic figure makes up for her powerlessness with her dramatic potential. And reportedly, Shakespeare wrote this extremely complex character, as an outlet for his own grief. In the play, Constance must deal with the imminent death of her son, a lamentation shared by Shakespeare's own loss of his son. In allowing Constance to share this human extreme and potentially express his own feelings through her, it could be argued he sees women as capable of the same emotional turmoil and understanding as men.

Although Constance is demonized by those around her for her extreme lamentations because an indulgence of emotions is contemporarily viewed as ungodly, it could be said Shakespeare is exposing the impossible standards of society, as those demonizing her are the antagonists, held accountable for the play.

So, are we reaching in the dark to defend Shakespeare's women?

Ironically, it is impossible to gauge, however an important question we should ask. As the first signs of Proto feminist sprang into action in early modern England, so did the change in Shakespeare's views. While both royals arguably are punished for their transgressions against masculine authority, the fact they are even given a platform to defy expectations in the first place is standing enough to defend Shakespeare's progressivity. Although it is doubtful Shakespeare can be considered a proto feminist; his writing was still ahead of his time, and only apt for improvement. In having to commercialize his work, there was no easy platform to defend women. These texts were written early in his career, and Shakespeare undeniably progressed, as he grew his own understanding of women's shared humanity. Shakespeare still allowed women the complexity and personality that many modern characters are still not permitted. Studying his texts and understanding the beginnings of Feminist Literature is still integral to modern audiences, and these texts ripe for endless interpretations can only help his case.

ENTERTAINMENT & CULTURE



Photo by Isla-Tay McCluskey Y12



Digital illustration by Vian Muhammad, Y12

The idea that you are living throughout millions of parallel universes has always been an exciting thought, some containing different variants of yourself and your life. A good sci-fi movie always includes a multiverse of some sort, whether it's Spiderman, Dr Who, or Star Trek. However, is this concept just for comic books? New scientific theories say otherwise, supporting the idea of alternate realities and universes co-existing with ours. Quantum physics has displayed that particles can be in two places at once, adding to the idea of a parallel universe. When quantum mechanics was first discovered in the 1920s and 30s, there were a deal of debates on whether objects can exist in several positions at once.

To simplify, let's think of Schrodinger's theory and his famous example of the cat in a box. This box contains a radioactive source, (which can release radiation at any time), and a cat, according to quantum physics, the cat is both alive and dead at the same time until you open the box, and one becomes reality.

Some physicists believe in a different version of multiple universes, so if our universe goes on forever, matter can only arrange itself in so many ways across infinite space. Therefore, the limited number of particle types must repeat a pattern, hypothetically in a big enough space as large as a solar system or galaxy. So, your whole life, shaped down to what you ate for lunch yesterday, could possibly be repeated somewhere else in this universe.

But what does this have to do with déjà vu?

Well, Believers in the déjà vu theory claim that the unsettling feeling you get when you feel you have lived a moment before, met a person before, or had a conversation at a different time is a crossover with a parallel universe. This means that whatever you are doing whilst experiencing this odd feeling is a parallel version of you doing the exact same thing, creating an alignment in between the two realities.

So, somewhere out there, there is another you wishing they made the same choices you just have.

By **Bella Sawyers (she/her) Y9**



HOBBIES in a *HUSTLE* culture

Hobbies are great distractions from the worries and troubles that plague daily living, but what if they are doing more damage than good?

I think we've forgotten what hobbies are for. I know that sounds bold, but bear with me. Hobbies are meant to provide us with a personal outlet, an antidote for this so-called plague - so why has this become so twisted? Do you feel the pressure to impress? I feel like I'm constantly chasing the approval of others more than my own satisfaction, and I know I'm not the only one.

The growth of toxic productivity has only been exacerbated since the start of the pandemic. While jobs were lost, benefits were slashed, and many people had more free time than ever, the nagging question of "why should you waste your time on something if you're not profiting?" became evermore present. The Independent recently estimated that 30% of Brits under 35 are running a 'side-hustle', with half of those sprouting in the wake of lockdown.

A frightening, but overlooked, demographic is that of under-18s. With our ever-growing obsession of social media, we get to watch in real-time as our feeds slowly fill with sponsored posts and self-advertisements, or tips to start your own small business from what you love.

I knit. A lot. The comment I get most (aside from, "that's cute! My grandma used to knit!") is "you should sell that on Esty". The first time I heard this, I took it as a compliment - but as time progressed, my feelings changed. Am I wasting my time knitting if I'm not earning money and online attention? The logical side of my brain tells me to be flattered and move on, but the other side is constantly critical. After all, I see my peers online selling the art they create: their drawings, clothing, music. Shouldn't I be doing the same?

Toxic productivity and hustle culture have tainted hobbies, I think we can all agree. But the root of the problem is a bit more complicated. Professor Steven Gelber, the author of 'Hobbies: Leisure and the Culture of Work in America' attributes the phenomenon of 'hustle culture' to the industrial revolution and the subsequent rise of the middle class: "Hobbies were a Trojan horse that brought the ideology of the factory and office into the parlor." In layman's terms: people struggle to switch off from their occupation and carry that same obligation for output into their personal lives.

It's no secret that picking up a new hobby requires a degree of 'work ethic' - I did not come out of the womb yielding knitting needles, it took me hundreds of hours before I produced my first sub-par cardigan. When people recognize this dedication, it's only natural for them to want to see more.



From here, the cycle begins. We're hard-wired to work - so we work. We want something new and impressive to show off, or something to sell - so we make it.

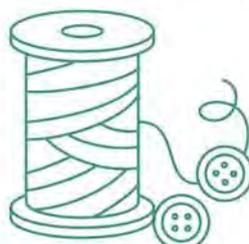
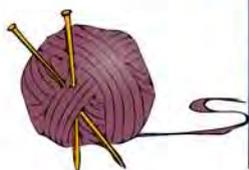
I'm sure you can see how this is dangerous. In the infancy of your hobby becoming an obligation, it's probably beneficial. Knitting has made me realize why people collect stamps - my collection of yarn can best be described as a hoard. I need somewhere to store all of this, so it's easy to be tempted to sell my work - to chase the dream of "doing what I love" while profiting. If I were to do this, how long would it take for my passion to die?

Aside from the obvious benefit of short-term joy, a survey conducted by The Australian Psychological society found that 4/5 respondents viewed a hobby as either moderately or highly effective in managing their stress. This couldn't be more relevant to young people; we all deal with stress at varying levels and find it easy to neglect our need for free time, instead choosing to squeeze in an extra hour of studying or work.

I've concluded after much internal deliberation that we need to reclaim what makes us happy. After all, turning a passion into something greater is a recipe for disaster. I know my life would be endlessly dull without a creative outlet - what would you do if you lost the love for your hobby? It seems silly but I began knitting when I was seven, at this point it's an extension of my personality. Losing my love for it would mean losing a vital part of myself.

The moral of the story is that all have the right to enjoy ourselves. No hobby is pointless, even if there's no social nor financial gain. I am not doing this for the approval of others - I am doing this for me.

By Lana Valentine
(She/her), Y13



EXiA's Guide to becoming a pro knitter

HOW TO: Duplicate stitch

“The moral of the story is that all have the right to enjoy ourselves. No hobby is pointless, even if there's no social nor financial gain.”

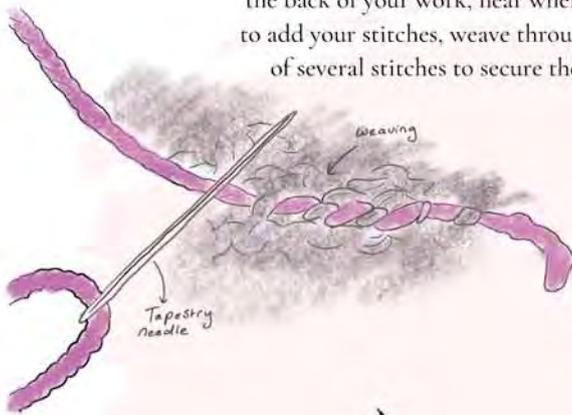
What you'll need:



1. TAPESTRY NEEDLE
2. YARN

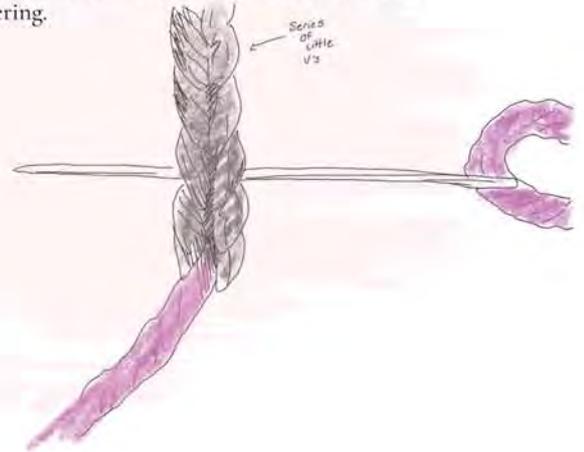
1)

Thread a length of yarn through a needle. On the back of your work, near where you want to add your stitches, weave through the back of several stitches to secure the end of the yarn.



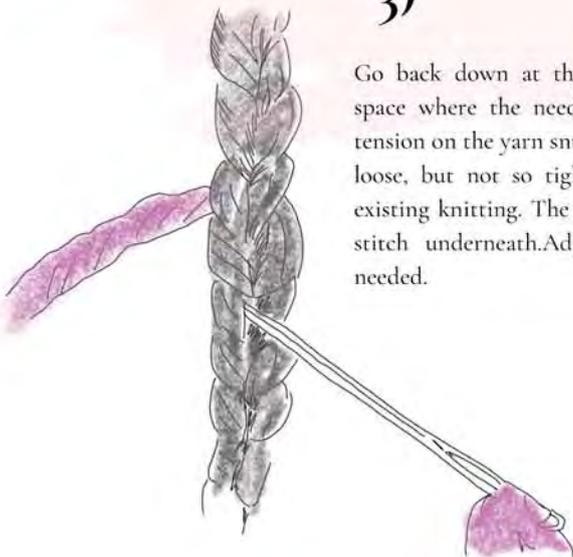
2)

You'll begin to see a series of little Vs. Come up through the knitting at the bottom of the first V stitch you want to work your duplicate stitch over. Slide your needle behind the V that's right above the stitch you're covering.



3)

Go back down at the bottom in the same space where the needle came up. Keep the tension on the yarn snug so the stitch isn't too loose, but not so tight that it pulls at the existing knitting. The stitch should cover the stitch underneath. Adjust the placement if needed.



“We need to reclaim what makes us happy.”



By Lana Valentine (She/her), Y13

A HARSH SOUND

The truth beyond the noise



Photo by Lois Millington-Flack, Y12

FESTIVALS are arguably an inherent part of adolescent culture, offering music, dancing and all round fun. They create a space for expression and exploration of music in all its loud and ever-evolving glory, where clothes are neon and tents are soggy. But why are they shadowed by sexual harassment and how do women take the hit?

I like to see festivals as a little bubble of society but with flashing lights and drugs instead of further education and governmental crisis, but this idyllic façade is broken by this very nature, a bubble that cannot escape the thorn of societies' wider issues, repeatedly featuring the sexual assault of women.

A poll by YouGov in 2018 revealed that almost half of female festivalgoers under the age of 40 had experienced sexual harassment. This clearly highlights the immense disparity between the male and female experience at festivals, which can inhibit the enjoyment of festivals for women and can leave a scar, which distorts their identity and relationship with music forever.

So, why is it such a problem at festivals?

The incline of reports of sexual violence at music festivals can be attributed to many factors including: lack of security, surveillance and help for victims. This scary reality can be closely linked to the nature of large crowds with very few security guards or cameras in relation to the mass of people. These crowds (where most social normalities are ignored in place of a unique physical closeness) accommodate for inappropriate touching to go unseen and for perpetrators to go unpunished. All of this is worsened by the wide spread enjoyment alcohol and drugs which, in courts can have catastrophic effects, resulting in a perfect excuse for male perpetrators and an easy opportunity to silence and scrutinise female victims.

Photo by Rose Hurrell, Y12



For women, this makes festivals seem fatal, but there are ways to adapt. The most common being: attending with male friends and reducing alcohol intake. Simple changes like these remain acts of survival for now, but the rise of new action from organisations creates hope for a safer future of festivals. One of the most influential campaigns is the AIF's Safer Spaces at Festivals campaign that works with 103 UK festivals to spread awareness of sexual violence and teach about consent and bystander intervention. This reduces fear, dread and anxiety for women, making festivals safer and more welcoming to everyone.

Even so, it is vital to recognise that women should never have to take precautions just to be treated with respect. Adapting is a path women are often forced to take, but if they don't, their own actions should never be accepted as an excuse or a motive for male perpetrators. We must work to tackle sexual harassment as a whole, not leave it to women and victims who are so often silenced or disregarded.

So, next time you attend a music festival please, be **safe**, be **aware**, and intervene where it is appropriate or report where it is not.

For further support on sexual violence at festivals visit:

- the NHS website
- rapecrisis.org.uk
- the Association of Independent Festivals.

By Adele Albrighton, Y12

CULTURAL CELEBRATION *AT CNS*

The Cultural Celebration group is a student-led initiative which blossomed in September 2022, pioneered by Year 12 students with a vision of rooting cultural diversity within the CNS community. Aiming to draw attention to underrepresented cultural holidays, the Cultural Celebration group have delivered a multitude of colourful and entirely student organised events to the CNS community, spanning the globe from Black History Month to Lunar New Year.

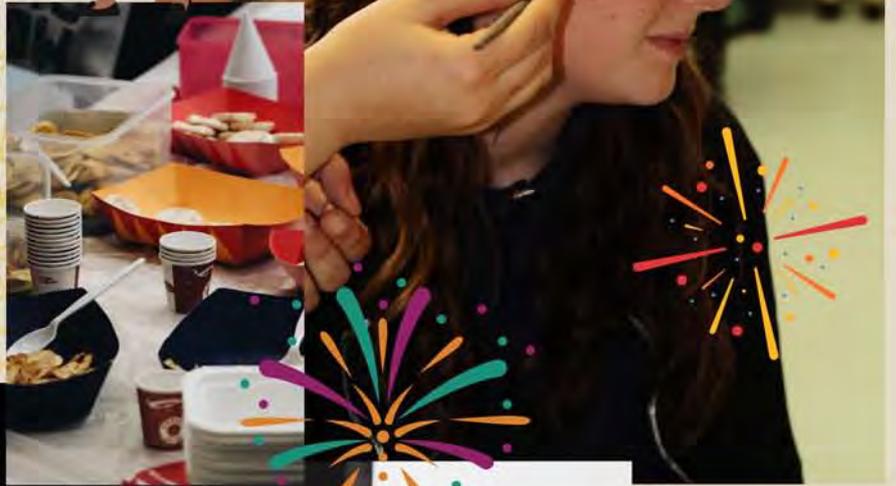


The group chooses one cultural holiday to spotlight per half term, and devises a rich event complete with the corresponding food, music and electric energy which proves infectious to the Fisher Centre auditorium, where their events are routinely held.

Through these events, the group aims to combat harmful prejudice, dispelling racist myths by bringing cultural events to the forefront of student life. Cultural Celebration chair Vian Muhammed says that 'prejudice is mainly due to cultural ignorance, so I think as a school we have this responsibility of spreading awareness, trying to eliminate that ignorance.' Celebrating what is perceived as 'non-mainstream' cultures and festivals by a white English lens teaches previously ignorant students the beauty and complexity of these cultures, as well as shutting down any misconceptions that could potentially be the source of racist prejudice.

Members of the group explained to me how they'd felt othered growing up as a result of lack of mainstream representation of their ethnic identity. Non-white students are often at the receiving end of insensitive and ignorant comments in regard to their heritage which are undeniably damaging.

Malini Bhattacharya said such comments made her feel like 'no one quite understood [her] heritage' and led her to feel she had to justify her culture. It's an isolating feeling which many young students of colour are all too familiar with.



Photos by Olivia White, Y13

The Cultural Celebration group aims to combat the ignorance that motivates insensitive racial comments and hopes to cultivate a space where students feel unapologetically proud of their cultural backgrounds.

The group also donates parts of the proceeds made from the event to charitable causes, impacting not only the CNS community but the world at large.

The Cultural Celebration group advocates proudly for the power of student voice. They have a strong do-it-yourself attitude, never failing to advocate for the change they want to see. They hope the group's legacy will last for years to come, making the CNS community a warmer and more inclusive place for all.

By Hana Wernham (she/her) Y12



Her *living* history



I've always believed that history is a living thing, but I never knew the truest example of it was my own grandmother.

A year and a half ago I began recording my Naniji (Punjabi for mum's mum) telling stories. It began as a folder on my notes, and it expanded to a collection of discussions tracking from her childhood - in the rural Punjab in India - to her life in the UK. Admittedly it started off with me impersonating my idea of a television reporter, but it quickly became evident that our conversations easily took a tangent. It's not so easy to have a linear conversation with someone who's experienced so much life.

The idea was not entirely my own. My mum had decades previously recorded my Naniji talking casually about her growing up in an India in turmoil; her recollections of Partition in 1947, a divided country and the both metaphorical and physical fires in her neighbourhood sparked by religion. The racial tensions in India simmered through decades of conflict between the British Empire's rule of India through the notorious 'East India Company' and those who wanted the right of independence.

To think that she could hold so much history in throwaway comments as she cooked her dhaal and aloo gobi mesmerised me; as though she held a whole country's past in the wrinkle lines of her palm. I suppose it felt somewhat fantastical to me; despite being half-Indian myself, the Punjab felt far away as a dot on the horizon-line.

I wanted to get closer to my own identity, so I pressed 'record'.

And so the discovery began. It's true that the dates were largely blurry – in fact, thanks to poor birth record provisions in rural 1930s India, until a few years ago my Naniji didn't even know the year that she, Gurdev Sardra, was born. My recordings became a flowing channel of language, her slipping in and out of English as she recounted her move to the UK. Her arranged marriage the talk of the village (the most beautiful man, she added) and the move to Scunthorpe in the '50s surprised me – maybe I hadn't listened as a 6-year-old gobbling her roti over dinner, or maybe each time she spoke she remembered new details. I could see her enthusiasm as she recalled, which made it particularly difficult when I tried to record a conversation on building our family tree, where with each name or thought a new strand of gossip or folklore stemmed. Throughout our recording is the underlayer of me and my mum's poorly suppressed giggles.

She is of course, as history, a product of her times. I think what she's found liberating is the space to freely speak and be heard; sifting through the golden stories, I had nothing to say but 'tell me more', something I doubt was said much to her as a young woman in a traditional Indian community. Marriage led to children; children led to housework; housework led to catering for four children close in age and a man who had been raised to expect all from his wife. She never demonises my grandpa (though he was at times a leather-tough man) but simply says he was formed by his masculinity.

And he may have been a man, but they were also a brown family in a white working-class industrial town. My Naniji brushes off the fact that slurs were commonplace on the bus, my mum that racism trickled through her school experience, but from a 21st century perspective I couldn't help but be taken aback. Racism exists

the test of time, it seems. She recalls seeing three Indian families in the steel-work community of Scunthorpe on moving to England; something

intangible for me, having grown up in the cultural melting-pot of North-West London where those of minority ethnicity were actually the majority. She was made fully-aware that she was the 'other', and every scrap my mum got into as a result of Grandpa's 'fight back' policy just proved the loneliness that being something different to the norm can inherit.

Gurdev in 1947, age 14



But to me, my Naniji represents the blissful integration of two very different cultures. When I was younger, her mispronunciations and occasionally unconventional take on the English language reminded me

that she was different. But I've grown to discover, through the adoring comments of my friends, and the way acquaintances alike melt into her company and her stories, that her uniqueness is something that needs to be preserved beyond her life, and mine too. Her history has grown into my roots, and her journey across the world places me writing this article here, at this moment in time.

After all, she is my Naniji, and she is history.

By Mimi Ronson (she/her) Yr 13

We aren't terrorists

'Do not let the hatred of people lead you to injustice. Be just! That is closer to righteousness'- surah AL MAIDAH (ayah 8)

When the Quran constantly mentions the importance of peace, it would be rational to think that Muslims wouldn't be subject to much prejudice. However, many misconceptions and stigmas lie within the connection to terrorist actions commonly reported in the Middle East which eventually accumulates to the spread of Islamophobia across the world. The unfortunate reality is that many are unwilling to learn the truth about Islam, their ignorance taints the media and paints an untruthful light upon Muslims. Those who participate in the faith should not be labelled as terrorists as the Quran doesn't justify terrorism whatsoever. Despite this, why are they constantly being hate crime against for their differing beliefs?

According to statistics, it's said that 25.9% of the British public feel negative towards Muslims and this is the UK's second 'least liked group'. It's also said that, "British people are more confident in making judgements about Islam than other non-Christian religions but are much more likely to make incorrect assumptions about it"

Based on this evidence, it seems that some of the population in Britain fail to educate themselves about the religion of Islam leading to false accusations of Islam being linked to terrorism. It's really disappointing to learn that within a society that preaches about expanding our diversity and accepting everyone from all backgrounds, we fail to educate and spread awareness to those who are unwilling to do it themselves. With the emphasis on the lack of Muslim representation in Western society today, one may question whether people actually want to learn more about Islam and accept it for what it is rather than what people say it is from a non-Islamic perspective. Discriminatory assumptions aren't tolerated on paper yet it's visible in today's media causing future generations to be corrupted with false and misleading information. At the end of the day, people still continue to dislike the religious group for unreliable reasons and this has not been taken into account whatsoever. People are getting away with this.

The real question I'm here to answer is, "is Islam actually linked to terrorism?" as there have been sources of terrorist groups that claim there are the core of Islam and that they represent 'extremist Islamic' ideologies. Well one simple answer I can give you is no; Islam doesn't support terrorism. A statement from Muslim scholars talking about 9/11 can be proof to my conclusion, they have said "The undersigned, leaders of Islamic movements, are horrified by the events of Tuesday 11 September 2001 We express our deepest sympathies and sorrow. We condemn, in the strongest terms, the incidents, which are against all human and Islamic norms. "one of the key things to note here is that Muslim scholars themselves have claimed that this was against 'Islamic norms' providing clarity that Islam is not the cause of terrorism whatsoever.



In addition, if you look to the Quran there are many mentions of peace and the rejection of the action of killing, Surah AL-MA'IDAH page 113 "whoever takes a life-it will be as if they killed all of humanity, whoever saves a life, it will be as if they saved all of humanity." This quote clearly establishes the fact that taking the lives of the innocent is not the core ideologies of Islam but instead it says the quite opposite, the fact that you bare the guilt by metaphorically killing of the rest of humanity by taking a life obviously goes against terrorist groups. Yet some people still have the audacity to comment upon these issues without the proper research and understanding. In addition, the comparison of Muslims to terrorism is very subjective as there have been many terrorist attacks throughout history that have been committed by groups who claim to represent other religions and social beliefs other than Islam.

For example, in the words of National Geographic: "The Ku Klux Klan is a domestic terrorist organisation founded shortly after the United States Civil War ended." This group doesn't promote Islam whatsoever but it does promote white supremacy; however, society continues to label Muslims as the "one and only terrorists". The key message is that no religion should be the blame of any terrorism as the general consensus is that murder is wrong. The media also plays a big role in highly reporting on the Middle East and barely putting any light onto Western terrorism such as school shootings. Instantly people with names that are remotely connected to the Middle East are questioned and stereotyped negatively whereas Westernised names aren't taken into any consideration. It's subtle racism that has been normalised overtime, causing society to be influenced and therefore there is the projection of such ignorance. The truth of the matter is that the world around us and those who expose the information from an un-credible background paint Islam as a dominating and violent religion when it is far from it. We need to realise that as a society it is not the religion that enforces these types of principles it's the environment that people live in that may affect them negatively. This applies to all religions where their key beliefs either may be misinterpreted and ignored by the followers or non-believers and therefore are reflected upon society negatively.

As a society that strives for 'peace and love' it seems hypocritical to pick and choose where that 'love and peace' can be established as clearly it is not being presented towards different religious groups.

First we must develop an understanding and gather knowledge for ourselves before we dare to comment and try and "educate" others about their own religion.

So how can we educate ourselves? We can educate ourselves by trying to watch videos from a Muslim perspective that can answer any questions you have about Islam. You can educate yourself by asking a Muslim classmate (in a non-interrogative way) about Islam but please demonstrate a respectful manner. You can search up articles or explanations on the different areas of Islam and most importantly you can look to the Quran, read and learn from it and enjoy the beauty of Islam.

Artwork and article by Vian Muhammad, Year 12



The language of *flowers* in Pre-Raphaelite paintings

Pre-Raphaelite paintings are vastly suggestive and contain many secrets, which are communicated through flowers, adding a new layer of meaning to the work. From the early years of the nineteenth century, botany and flower cultivation became increasingly popular which naturally led to an increase in the publication of botanical volumes and with it, the use of flowers to convey cryptic messages. Which inevitably became a factor to the Pre-Raphaelites' enthralling fixation on replicating nature. Therefore, to entirely and intricately understand a piece of this period's artwork, one must uncover the language of flowers. The extent to which flowers were ascribed meaning is really quite surprising: entire books detailing the complexity of their various meanings were compiled. Throughout the history of art, flowers have been a symbolic and metaphorical device to communicate ideas, emotions and perceptions, which is often referred to as floriology or floriography, allowing a variety of interpretations as it is not explicitly stated.

Consequently, the flowers within the artwork must be intricately analysed; the smallest details could be of the highest significance. Some flower meanings remain notable, for example, the rose remains an unwavering symbol of love and peonies a symbol of honour and celebrations, often used in weddings and other special occasions – but the majority have been forgotten. John Henry Ingram contemporary text, *Flora Symbolica*, is an interesting text detailing the history of floriography and the complexity of certain flowers.

Ingrams went so far as to state flowers communicate 'a language more powerful, and far more extensive than that of the tongue'. The Pre-Raphaelites felt just as keen, carefully reproducing what they saw in nature, so they studied plants as the Botanists did. Subsequently flowers can be seen everywhere in Pre-Raphaelite paintings, from daffodils, roses and daisies, to peonies, violets and apple blossoms- an intrinsic part of their style and theme.

All with a cryptic and complex symbolism; identifiable to a Victorian viewer, but completely disguised to the contemporary eye.

A brilliant example of the language of flowers is communicated through the painting *Ophelia*, by Evertt John Millias. Of all of Shakespeare's heroines, Ophelia was the compassionate favourite of Victorian audiences. Her poignant demise had fascinated artists before John Everrtt Millias took up the subject, but his decision to present the scene of her death in such painstaking detail shocked many critics. The writer of the 'Athenacum' noted that he "robs the drowning struggle of that love-lorn maiden of all pathos and beauty", he "studies every petal of darnel and anemone floating on the eddy". But to Millias, fidelity to botanic detail was an essential feature in the presentation of Ophelia's tragedy. The withering flowers forecasted her doom, they gave pitiful testimony to all that she had lost.

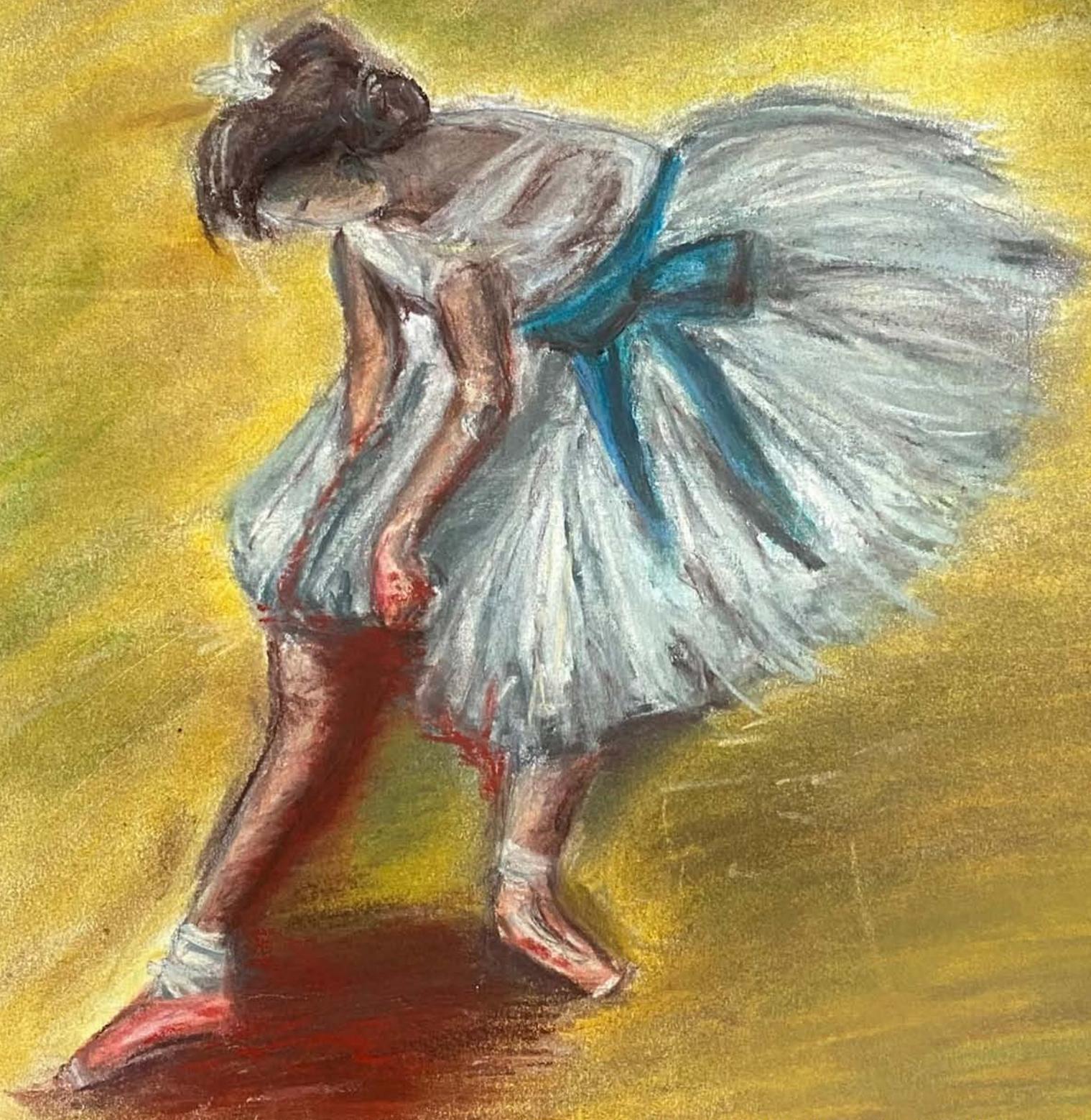
In Shakespeare's *Hamlet* Ophelia's drowning takes place offstage, but Gertrude, who had witnessed the event, gives a horrified account. Millias followed every detail, from the "weedy trophies" in Ophelia's hand, to her gown "spread-wide" that buoyed her as she floated in the rushing current. Every plant that Gertrude mentioned; the willow, the nettle, the daisy, is clearly rendered and their meanings- mourning, pain, and innocence- express a chorus of lament. Recalling her last mad appearance at the court, Millias scattered pansies across Ophelia's dress, which symbolise remembrance and forbidden love, and gave her a necklace of violets. In Victorian England violets communicated faithfulness, but equally of ultimately death in the young and melancholy. He also placed a poppy among the flowers in her hand announcing that her journey would end in death. With ardent attention to the painting of the flowers over the course of four months of concentrated work, Millias left no doubt as to their significance; their message, like Gertrude's words, reflect on the fragile nature of innocence. Therefore, greatly communicating the complex but crucial language of flowers in Pre-Raphaelite paintings.

By Violet Barwick, Y12



BALLET:

At breaking POINTE



Artwork by Lark Binns, (she/her) Y12

I COULD TRY TO EXPLAIN IT – I have tried – but I do not have the words. It cannot be described. It simply cannot. The feeling is of such fulfilment, it is a noise which entirely encapsulates you in a singular and sweet moment, and it holds a sense of serenity, like the noise is so deafeningly silent, that only you can hear it. A performance is an experience of extreme and utter uniqueness, a sense of addictively pure pain.

The practice of ballet, as one of the most undoubtedly powerful art forms this world has to offer, is one of whose foundations are scarred with intense sacrifice. A ballerina's love is what drives them, it is a conscription, no matter how devout you are, you have no choice. You are expected, pedestalled and exploited at the jeopardy of both your mental and physical health – needed to mature in a way unnatural to your age, if not you are the one to suffer. Ballet is obsessed with children. Most, start at the youngest of ages, forced immediately into a pact of which they are now the possession of this art, they are now the ones to be manipulated and moulded into identical copies of one model. You are expected to remain a child forever. Your body should never develop; remain as a minor's skin to hold the brain and soul of an adult, because you need an adult's drive, and an adult's ability to hold your criticism, and the adult ability to know what's best. But you are 8, you are in an environment of such extreme discipline that you can only do as you're told – and if you're told you're too fat, or you're incapable, or you're nothing compared to the girl standing next to you – you believe it.

Ballet expects you to hold your own, to brace yourself entirely independently through whatever it throws at you, and ultimately, whomever you decide to cling to for support has undergone their own similar situations, and conclusively is warped and ruined from their own experiences – it's no help. It's an inescapable reality of which you can never fully understand the extent of, you are still a child, and cannot see the manipulation and toxicity of which is affecting you. You cannot comprehend that immoral and inappropriate comments on your body, your mental health and your personal abilities are not suitable for anyone – bear in mind a minor, who will take anything told to them for gospel. Being offered any opportunity to partake in professional ballet experiences or elite level classes – you find soon enough that the hot topic for conversation is on a child's body or abilities – usually neither positive. This stems from the sexual exploitation of 19th century ballerinas, especially the young dancers of the prestigious Paris Opera Ballet, where wealthy men were able to subscribe to the opera to watch the adolescent girls dance; if they paid enough, they would have private access to watch the girls warm up in only their leotards, and where upon conversations surrounding prostitution were frequently discussed. The young women had no power over their positions – doing all they could for the money to survive, and being a victim to one of the earliest forms of sex workers.

I find it quite frankly disturbing, that ideologies of malnourished and child-like presentation are pushed as a feminine standard within ballet.



There's very few companies representing dancers of size and standard reaching above that of a minor's.

It leads you to ponder whether ballet's obsession and popularity with young girls is what has triggered such vulnerability to them also, is it an untraceable cyclical bondage of needing to be young, and wanting to be young? Is it purely seen that to have tradition feminine qualities of beauty and grace – one must rely upon their silhouette against the stage, and the naivety of their minds to allow an entire industry to fail to mention any issues which may arouse? It's absurd that the image of, and actual being, of a child is exploited by the patriarchal domination of society, to psychologically shape an unhealthy mindset of teens, who are not emotionally developed and mature enough to save themselves from their situations.

As a minor, you are incredibly susceptible to the influence of adults around you, and if those who have responsibility around you are also trapped and woven into the sacrifice of performance, a situation is thus formed where neither in the relationship can comprehend the severity the dangers hold to them. I imagine it is hard to, as an adult, break away from what you were conditioned into believing as a child, and when you continue to enforce these ideas onto the next generation, and degrade and disregard their personal experiences whilst doing so, the cycle will never break. Ballet will always, and forever, be supported with roots which may only survive with the empty bodies of young girls, who must live up to society's feminine standards – but all they can do is live. No more, no less.

By Lucy Squires (she/her) Y12

People and Places

By Eilidh Renfrew (she/her) Y13

Max Macleod (he/him) Yr13:



His food recommendation: Junkyard for a lively atmosphere (an assortment of street food trucks and an outside seating area) especially my own work place 'onetonneburgerco'.

Meal Deal of Choice: I'm a Tesco meal deal lover first and foremost. Any time, any place. My choice varies but I think my pick would be Southern Fried Chicken pasta, sushi snack and a fanta.

His Music Recommendation: My genre would probably be house music and the band to watch for that is 'girlsdontsync'.

If you had a 'me day': Just focus on things for myself really, maybe a trip to the Plantation Gardens with a friend or alone. I always like to rewind with some plants.

Their Food Recommendation: I don't eat out a lot but Bun Box in Norwich market is always lovely.

Meal Deal of Choice: The best meal combo I've ever had is a chicken tikka and mango chutney sandwich with stroopwaffels and a smoothie from Tesco's.

Style inspiration: I think my friend Theo is a constant inspiration, they have the coolest style. I think a lot about my self-expression now, especially in regards to other's disgust and how I present. I enjoy pushing the line out and taking power back in my own appearance.

Their Music Recommendation: Ugly season by Perfume Genius because it IS ugly season right now, and I will be celebrating.

Finlay Reeds (they/them) Yr13:



Lily Pike (she/her) Yr13:



Her Food Recommendation: Lucy's chips on Norwich market.

Meal Deal of Choice: Probably Tesco's. I would pick hoisin duck wrap, an iced coffee and sushi for a snack.

Style Inspiration: I often struggle to be 'inspired' with my clothes. Most of the time it comes from my friends (and their Depop likes)

Her Music recommendation: Either 'Dress up in you' by Belle and Sebastian or 'Loving you' by Wet leg. both amazing bands.

Mr Scott-Carter (he/him):



His Food Recommendation: Kimchi in Norwich City centre.

Meal Deal of Choice: Tesco's sweet chilli chicken wrap with a Nakd smoothie. I can never decide on the snack.

Style Inspiration: Like a cheap Bjork.

His Music Recommendation: My album of the year is Beyonce's Renaissance.

Scher Black (she/her) Yr13:

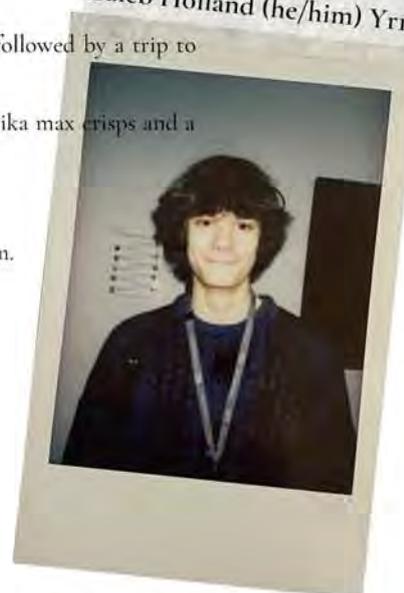


Her food recommendation: Yard near Lower Goat lane. Good pasta for good prices.

Meal Deal of Choice: Tesco's always. Normally, a veggie wrap and an innocent smoothie. Snack choice always varies.

Style Inspiration: I would say I take less inspiration from social media and more from those around me. I love experimenting with my style, being hyper-feminine in my style one day, and hyper-masculine the next.

Caleb Holland (he/him) Yr13:



His Food Recommendation: Haggie, a middle-eastern style restaurant, then followed by a trip to Cinema City.

Meal Deal of Choice: Co-op's. I would go for the mozzarella pesto pasta, paprika max crisps and a blue Nakd smoothie.

Style inspiration: Mainly 90s workwear.

His Music Recommendation: Twin Fantasy by Car Seat Headrest. Great Album.

Karen Mathenge (she/her) Yr13:



Her Food Recommendation: Matane Sushi, a small sushi bar in castle meadow

Meal Deal of Choice: Chicken wrap of some sort, a smoothie and Salt n' Vinegar crisps. It doesn't matter where from.

Style Inspiration: I don't have a single source of inspiration, most of it I pick up unconsciously through my friends and social media. Recently, I have been taking more cultural inspiration though, incorporating more traditional African jewellery into outfits.

Her Music Recommendation: 'Ice T' by the Tems.

Photos by Alex Sleeuw (she/her) Y13

THE *difference* between the Mexican and English *EDUCATION* SYSTEMS

We all know that Mexico and England are completely different countries, different economy, different security and different social space, but what about education? Many people debate that they are two polar opposites, but are they? How different are the schools in Mexico and England?

I arrived from Mexico a few months ago and I have lived there all my life. Leaving Mexico was a more drastic change than I expected because England was a completely different country than the one I knew, which is why I was terrified to go to school. Many people had told me that school was a thousand times harder in England and that I was going to have to work harder than in Mexico, because they had better education and a higher academic level. What I found was a relaxed atmosphere - yes, I had to work, but not as much as I had imagined, and I was surprised to realise that I already knew many things that they were teaching us. That's when I realised that maybe, school is not so different.

Obviously, there were different things, like the fact that in Mexico there is no sixth form, instead there is prep school and it lasts three years. We also do not have A levels, we took all the subjects that we took in secondary school, if not more, and they did not let us decide until third grade to which area we wanted to go. The areas we decide on are very ambiguous, for example sociology, economics, science, etc...

I myself haven't been to a prep school, so I interviewed some of my friends back in Mexico that do go to prep school, to try and figure out what the biggest differences are.

So first of all, let's see how prep school is. Firstly, the amount of subjects that you take is from 11 subjects to 22 depending on the school, all of them compulsory and you can't choose. Secondly, the amount of time they go to school is eight hours from 7am to 3pm. Thirdly they take 3 years of prep school, and those three years are divided on 6 semesters, 2 per year and 3 partial exams per semester. They have two recesses first one 30 minutes and second one 20 minutes. They usually just have one teacher per subject and that teacher teaches all three years. And last but not least, prep school is compulsory, in theory you can't choose whether you want to do it or not, you have to.

So now that we have established that, let's see the main differences. Obviously, we can see that the number of subjects in Mexico is way higher than the three or four subjects in England. Also, you go to school for way more time and you don't get free periods. There is also the extra year of education in Mexico and they are all obligatory for everyone, so we could say Mexican education is completely different... couldn't we?

I think when comparing two things it is easier to compare the differences between them than the similitude, so we simply don't do it, but to answer the question we are asking we need to find something similar, that is if there is something.

Talking by personal experience I think the schools are actually not that different as people say. For example, they both have recess after two hours of learning, they both have at least one piece of homework set every day, but I think the most similar thing is the atmosphere of the school. It might not seem such a big thing, but as a person that comes from another country, it means a the world to find a place that feels like home. Not only do the students help to build this ambience, but also the teachers and staff that have been so nice, helpful and understanding about my situation. Sometimes I feel like I'm back in my country and forget that I am in England, because of the atmosphere that is built within the school community.

In conclusion, I can certainly say that the school system in Mexico and in England are very very different, and for what I have seen, it is not going to change anytime soon. But that is fine: differences are what make each one of us special, it is what makes every culture unique and special. But our similarities makes us more alike than we think, and I think is not only with México and England, it's with all around the world. We are all similar, but at the same time different in our own unique way. But regardless of our race, skin colour, origin, gender, etc, we are still human, and we are all different but the same.

By Julia Wood-Martinez (Y12)



PRIVATE schools from a STATE perspective: *Are we disadvantaged?*

You don't need to be a master sleuth to recognise that there is a problem with education in this country – and there has been for a while. Schools set young people up for life, their quality determining their prospects. For decades, many parents have fought to live within the catchment areas of 'desirable' schools. The more fortunate minority even shell out tens of thousands of pounds a year to send their children to private institutions. At surface level, this seems ludicrous, why pay up to £30,000 (just under the median UK salary!) for your child to receive an education that they can get for free? Of course, we all know that there is more to it than that.

Private schools undeniably have better resources, from significant perks such as smaller class sizes, diverse extra-curriculars, and specialised support. Amongst private school graduates, confidence is higher, prospects are grander, and business connections are endless. These institutions are clearly a breeding ground for success, with their alumni running our country (making up 30% of our parliament). From a state school perspective, it's easy to become frustrated. Why is it that these select few receive the highest quality of education while students and teachers at public schools must battle the challenges of funding cuts: lower pupil to staff ratio, out of date technology, less opportunities for extracurriculars

The Independent recently called these institutions "luxury country clubs with quite nice schools attached" and it's clear how this perception came to be. The opportunities and experiences gained in private schools are a large factor as to why their graduates experience success disproportionate to the rest of us – they get to hone skills unthinkable for the majority. Extra-curriculars such as fencing, horse riding, and rowing perfectly complement the super curricular stimulation which must come from having triple the number of PHD holding teachers, allowing the students to gain a well-rounded (and impressive) experience.

Throughout my education, I feel as if I've missed out on opportunities due to steep competition from my privately educated peers. I often wonder if small things, such as only having 3 computer science classes a week in high school may have an influence on my opportunities (as I am hoping to get a degree in the field). As I am to compete for a university place against private school graduates, am I not at a disadvantage? Then again, maybe it just isn't economically viable for all of us to receive such abundant opportunities – so why allow for the few to succeed greatly, when instead we could redistribute the spending and improve everyone's education?

Admittedly, perhaps that is a tad extreme. After all, the parents paying for these lavish school experiences have (mostly) worked long and hard for this money. They choose to do so because they want the best for their children and have the means to provide it. As jealous as this may sometimes make us, I think we would do the same given the opportunity.

Of course, these institutions can't be flawless. I didn't think it possible for obscenely affluent schools to be lacking in any department, but from reading accounts of private school students and teachers I have come to learn that these institutions have a major flaw: their inability to equip their graduates for the "real-world". After graduating, we will all get to act alongside people from various socio-economic backgrounds. All the schools I've attended have been very diverse, meaning I have had the chance to mix with people who are both similar and vastly different to myself. As well as missing out on this, if I were attending a private school, I would be part of a marginalised minority. Only 1% of private school students come from "disadvantaged" households, which I fit the criteria for.

Amongst private school students, having friends who are a part of the economic 99% can be a novelty. As an anonymous ex-pupil put it: "It was a kind of private school folklore that all state educated people were, for want of a better word, 'chavs' ... I never came into contact with anyone my age from a public school". It's hard to comprehend how damaging this is to a young person. Don't get me wrong, I don't pity these privileged students – but I worry as to how growing up in this atmosphere (where you are at your most impressionable) warps your expectations of life.

Statistically speaking, if you graduate from a fee-paying school, you are more likely to go to a prestigious university and earn a high wage – but it's not a guarantee. On the flip side, at state school we're not expected to conform to the highest academic standards; the school treats us as people, not grades. We learn from a young age that we are more than a number – after all this is the reality of the world. It's not the be-all-and-end-all if we don't win the major competition or quite get the grades for that spectacular university, we will find a way to overcome these hurdles and make a life for ourselves. Of course, we don't all have the same perks available to us, but, if we choose to seek them out, this school has some amazing opportunities to offer. From debating to demanding equality through expect respect, it would be very hard to class ourselves at a drastic disadvantage.

As previously mentioned, 30% of parliament came from a private school – but what about that other 70%? Though we may have a few more obstacles to traverse, we ultimately have the same opportunities. And if we don't make the cut, we have enough experience to get through whatever hand we're dealt. If we were raised in a school with an ethos of superiority and exclusivity, in a family where to 'fail' means to not get a PHD, with the expectation that a good university must be at least 500 years old and we didn't achieve this – what would we do with ourselves?

Going on this research journey has reminded me how lucky I am to go to this school. I feel more optimistic about my future than ever. If I work hard in life, who's to say that I won't get a PHD or be elected to parliament? It's very sobering to reflect on the privilege we all have as public-school students in the UK, and I implore you to take a moment to reflect on this too. Perhaps we are at a disadvantage – but in a way, isn't everyone?

Photo by Amelie Treacy, Y12

By Lana Valentine (she/her) Y13

EXiA's featured ART

- 1) Fashion shoot depicting the work of the Year 12 fashion student's end project on femininity by *Olivia White Y13*
- 2) Photo of a sunset by *Amelie Treacy Y12*
- 3) Photo of a boy playing guitar by *Rose Burrill Y12*
- 4) Oil pastels on Paper by *Ella Evans Y13*
- 5) A photo exploring the themes of female pain by *Hana Wernham, Y12*
- 6) Car engine close-up by *Joe Davy Y13*
- 7) Architectural drawing by *Vian Muhammad Y12*
- 8) Pencil drawing of a movie scene by *Darcie Fitzpatrick- Warnes Y12*
- 9) Portraits by *Olivia White Y13*
- 10) Drawings by *Gretel Gifford Y12*





1) Photograph by *Aston Gibson Y13*

2) Photograph by *Caitlin Sutcliffe Y13*

3) Portrait photo by *Rosa Breeze Y13*

4) Digital cat art by *Elena Jarrald Y12*

5) 'Joiner' Photograph by *Lois Millington-Flack Y12*

6) Portrait photo by *Honey Oliver Y12*

7) hand- made top crafted from recycled/sustainable material by *Isali Nanayakkara Y13*

8) Acrylic on canvas exploring Impressionism by *Ella Evans Y13*

9) Photograph by *Ellen Buck Y12*

10) Painting by *Siena Prewer Y12*



ISSUE NUMBER TWO



Front cover by Olivia White, Y13

Art by Ella Evans (Y13). More of our budding artist's work is exhibited in EXiA's gallery, found on pg. 66-67