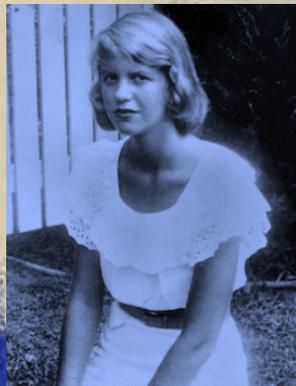
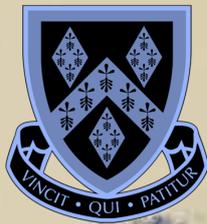


LIKE, LITERARY

THE STOCKPORT GRAMMAR SCHOOL LITERARY MAGAZINE



NHS



EDITED BY CHARLOTTE BRADLEY-
POTTS AND MERRYN SUMMERSGILL

**A welcome message from our
editors**

For this edition of Stockport Grammar Schools Literary Magazine, we wanted to capture the events and experiences that shaped our community in the last year. We kept our design minimalistic but with a message behind it: the blue theme that runs throughout represents the resilience of the NHS when conquering the pandemic, a triumph we strived to feature. The pieces chosen by each section's editors highlight both historical and modern issues that students and teachers alike wanted to explore. 'Like, Literary' demonstrates how members of all ages as part of the SGS community all have a voice to discuss what matters most to them, whether that's writing about their favourite pop song or about a contemporary issue facing today's society. This was very much the labour of love, and we would like to thank all of the people who collaborated to produce such a fantastic magazine that we hope you enjoy reading, and will inspire you to write yourself!

Charlotte Bradley-Potts and Merryn Summersgill

Editors

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Foreword

I am delighted to be able to write a foreword to this edition of the SGS Literary magazine. I have had the privilege of reading the complete proofs and the sophistication, thoughtfulness and passion of the written contributions are deeply impressive. I am most grateful to the contributors and the editors for their time and effort in producing a showcase for the many literary talents of SGS pupils of all ages.

C S Lewis, of Narnia fame, said that, 'We read to know we are not alone'. A voracious reader myself, I read for other reasons too: to enjoy a good story, to wonder at the beauty and power of language, to explore ideas, to understand the culture, experiences and views of people who live far from me in space, time or beliefs or to benefit from the researches of others. All of these delights and more are met within these pages as we move freely from discussions of contemporary issues in literature, through some remarkable creative writing, stimulating book reviews, explorations of lyrics as poetry and considerations of the limitations of film adaptations before concluding with some traditional literary criticism.

I hope that you enjoy reading a wonderful collection of articles and that you will be inspired to read some of the titles explored. At the end of a very difficult few months, which has produced isolation and uncertainty for many people, but also more time for reading, you may find that you are not alone.

Dr P Owen, Headmaster

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Literature is intrinsically linked to contemporary issues. Whilst some writing is more politically focused than others, it is impossible to look at any piece of art without considering the circumstances it was created under and how it interacts with the issues of its time. For this reason it would also be impossible to create a literary magazine without devoting a section to analysing this link and discussing political issues. We live in a very complicated and interesting world in which people are becoming increasingly aware of the need for change within society whether it be in the form of improved gender equality, improved racial equality or solving the ever growing environmental issues that we face. In this section all of these topics and more are covered with articles covering issues ranging from the importance of healthcare workers in protecting the environment to whether the monarchy is a viable institution in the 21st century. Whilst the more serious and political nature of this section does mean that the majority of the pieces are written by older students it is great to be able to include a piece on feminism from a second year student as I do believe that it is important for people to think about these important topics from a young age. I hope that reading this section does provoke some thought and maybe even discussion about the issues raised. Please remember that you do not have to agree with every opinion put forward in this section but I do hope you find all the pieces as interesting as I have. Enjoy.

Editor: Joseph Farrelly

Is there enough diversity in the literature taught in schools?

By Joseph Farrelly, Lower Sixth

During lockdown at the start of this year I found myself with considerably more free time on my hands. Having been somewhat unproductive during last year's lockdown I decided that I should do something useful with that free time this year (admittedly with my CV more than a little bit in mind). This led me to beginning a Massive Open Online Course (or MOOC for short) on modern masterpieces of world literature. I worked on a 12 week course which involved reading and learning about the works of authors from places ranging from Germany to Nigeria to India.

As I read and learned about these works I was shocked by the fact that I had not heard of a single one of these brilliant authors. With this in mind (and far too much time on my hands) I looked back at the literature I had studied during my school career and found that, aside from a handful of GCSE poems, all the writers I had studied had been either British or American. Now I don't believe the exam boards should be forced to include a more diverse spectrum of writers in their courses simply for the sake of it, but I believe that many of the pieces I read could easily be included in a literature course on merit and also contain some very powerful messages that could help our society become more progressive and accepting of different cultures.

During my course I studied a play called "Death and the King's Horsemen" by Wole Soyinka. To summarise, this play focuses on the traditional, ritual suicide of the king's horseman after the King's death in Nigeria and the issues that arise when a British coloniser tries to prevent this suicide. I thought this play was particularly interesting because from my western perspective I did not see any problem with the actions of the British man at first. In my eyes, he was acting with good intentions to try to prevent the premature death of his friend. However, as the play went on and I gained a greater understanding

of the tradition and saw the disastrous consequences of western intervention I was able to understand the perspective of the Nigerian people who upheld the tradition. Literature is a fantastic way to challenge preconceived ideas and to show more sides to a story and thus allow people to form more informed opinions. By introducing a more diverse spectrum of literature into the British school system, literature could be used to educate people on the reasons behind the traditions of other cultures and give them a greater understanding of those traditions. Often racism arises from misinformation, misconceptions and stereotyping, so perhaps literature could be the perfect way of providing the information and understanding that could be so crucial in addressing the current issues within our society.

I also studied a book by Indian writer, Salman Rushdie, entitled 'East, West'. Rushdie lived and studied in both England and India which allowed him to understand the similarities and differences between the cultures and people of the two nations. In the East section of the novel there is a story called 'the prophet's hair,' which focuses on a religious symbol and the issues that arise from the possession of it. Often as a nation we can be dismissive of religious symbols in other cultures and critical of the level of importance attached to such objects. Rushdie challenges this school of thought with a story in the west section called 'At the auction of the ruby slippers.' This short story follows an auction for a pair of slippers that featured in the Wizard of Oz and is set in a dystopian west. Through these two stories Rushdie demonstrates that both Eastern and Western culture place importance on certain objects that the other culture would not understand the value of. This allows people to develop an understanding of other cultures through comparing traditions within other cultures to traditions within their own.

Rushdie himself is critical of placing such high levels of importance upon any object, however I'm not sure it is a necessity to agree with the author's message all the time. In this case I believe the work is most valuable in demonstrating parallels and creating understanding between two hugely contrasting cultures. However, I think it is interesting to consider the author's message and use your understanding to form your own opinion. Whilst Rushdie's novel is biased towards his own personal views it is still useful in providing a greater understanding of different cultures and the inclusion of books like this within the literature taught in schools could be extremely useful in facilitating the forming of more informed opinions for people across the nation.

Perhaps literature is the way forward in creating a more progressive, accepting society. It has a unique ability to provide information and differing opinions in exciting and interesting ways and it is taught to all students in Britain up to the age of 16. It is possible that a more diverse syllabus could provide future generations with a better understanding of other cultures than ever before and therefore make our nation more accepting. To quote Salman Rushdie 'a poet's work... [is to] shape the world and stop it from going to sleep.' And maybe by studying a more diverse array of poets the shape of the world could change and we could all stay awake that little bit longer.



Should the Monarchy Be Abolished?

By Tobin Rose, Lower Sixth

As of 2021, the UK is one of only two countries to have a monarch who has the power to rule alone without the aid of any democratic body with complete legitimacy, the other being Saudi Arabia. Considering the events of late involving the fracture of the family as well as its dual role as the head of our country, being intensely involved in foreign relations, the monarchy in the UK is an out-dated system that is obsolete for the new emerging age of foreign diplomacy. As the scene of geopolitical tensions changes, including the rapid dominance of China on the world stage and the demands for domestic change increase, the Monarchy is a system that embodies the UK's former position which is something we should look to move away from as we progress forward.

Undoubtedly, the monarchy, and the Queen in particular, have been key figures in the UK's orchestration of foreign relations meeting all the US presidents since Harry Truman in 1946. However, that age of diplomacy is long behind us, and we move into a world where the likes of Russia and China are openly threatening their neighbours and causing increasing levels of political instability. For the UK, to adapt to these changing demands and to resolve some of the key issues that we face, it is crucial that we move on and adopt a new, more effective diplomatic bureaucracy; the monarchy is simply obsolete for the modern demands of foreign affairs.

Furthermore, in the wake of recent events, the monarchy has splintered before our eyes and is no longer capable of juggling the dual roles as the figurehead of the nation and its own affairs as a family. It makes the UK look like a backwards nation that is preoccupied with its political infightings rather than addressing the more serious issues. Furthermore, the Monarchy serves as a painful remainder of our colonial legacy, which has left many ex-colonies in a dire state to this day, yet it is still heralded as the pinnacle of the UK's governance sys-

However, many supporters of the monarchy, point to the economic benefits of tourism the monarchy brings to the country and how it helps support the economy. Although this is true, what is often ignored is the enormous tax burden the royal family pose to the UK. The royal wedding in 2018 cost over \$45 million most of which came from taxpayers. This is in the backdrop of the declining funding of public services, such as the NHS which have been so crucial in the least year. That money would have gone a long way to properly supply the hospitals for the surge in extra patients as a result of the pandemic. Such blatant discrepancies in spending have compounded the effects of Covid-19 and are stunting the UK's economic and social progression by sapping funding from other areas that are far more important. Similarly, as we emerge from the grip of this recession, such tax burdens posed by the Royal Family will serve to hinder economic growth by reducing disposable income, and by extension, jeopardising the economic recovery.

Compounding this is the injustices posed by the actions of certain members of the royal family. The unofficial legal immunity that Prince Andrew has been given as a result of his status despite the plethora of evidence in favour of his conviction is an absolute outrage. It highlights the UK's legal system

as ridden with ineptitude and even corruption epitomising our fixation with the past. If we are to pride ourselves as a society free of discrimination and to support the views of feminism and gender equality, then it is a blatant contradiction to support a monarchy that fosters those who have acted in simply unacceptable ways in clear defiance of conventional law, convention being something that those who are fond of the monarchy support.

Ultimately, it comes down to societal progression and how we resolve the fissures and issues that face us now and then move forward for peace and prosperity. The monarchy is a system that fosters backward traditions and views that contradict what we should strive for as a society. Not only are they obsolete for foreign diplomacy, but they represent the UK as its former imperial state ruling over its colonies, something no longer compatible with the diversity of our society today. Hence, to fully progress to a modern society, the monarchy should at a minimum be curbed in size and influence if not abolished.



Literature By Black Authors & The Black Lives Matter Movement

By Yasmine Doyle, Lower Sixth

The Black Lives Matter movement began in America in 2013 and was largely the driving force behind the world-wide protests last summer following the death of George Floyd. The media has become increasingly important in educating society and contributing to social change. Through recent TV series such as *When They See Us*, films such as *Just Mercy* and documentaries such as *The Fear Of 13*, enlightenment about experiences of racism was made possible and the harsh reality demonstrated for all to see. Literature has, and still does, play an essential role in providing this education and much-needed awareness.

The Hate U Give, was written in 2017 and made into a film a year later. The author, Angie Thomas, found inspiration through her own experiences of gun crime and the news coverage of deaths caused by police brutality, such as *Treyvon Martin*, as well as taking influence from African-American pop culture through the music of *Tupac*. This book highlighted the need for change in the American police force and with the stereotypes that lead to racial profiling. Also, through Thomas's writing she expresses an idea that society hasn't progressed as far as we may think, and youths of ethnic minority groups are still having to fight against discrimination. By writing about these topics, especially one as current as police brutality, Thomas found a way to celebrate Black culture as well as enforcing the need for change.

King And The Dragon Flies is a modern novel, reflected in the topics of LGBTQ identity. The author, Kacen Callender, draws on their own struggle with identity to identify as non-binary to inspire the characters with similar struggles finding a balance between their sexuality and their heritage. Callender's work creates a sense of togetherness with young black members of the LGBTQ community while encouraging expression and celebration of their own identity, as well as their culture.

The Color Purple is an older novel, though highlights issues such as the abuse and discrimination against Black women, which is still relevant to the anti-racism and feminism movement today. Alice Walker took inspiration

from the Harlem Renaissance and other Black authors in order to write about her own experiences as a young black woman born into a violent family during a time of segregation. Through her honest portrayal of the treatment and abuse suffered by Black women, which many criticised as too graphic, Walker forced people to see the harsh reality and question their own behaviour as a cause of it. In addition to this, the controversial use of colloquial language in her novel is used to emphasise the inequality in society, that it was difficult for ethnic minorities to receive something as basic as an education, and to authentically express the experiences of far too many.

The Private Joys of Nnenna Maloney is a story by British author Okechukwu Nzelu, as shown by the Manchester setting. The book explores the difficulties of having multiple identities: the character's Nigerian and British heritages. Through the character's search to learn more about Nigerian culture, Nzelu encourages others to learn more about their heritage and themselves as a cause of this. While the book has a comical tone, the topics of a struggle with finding a sense of belonging or a longing to know more about your own ancestry are relevant to many in today's society. Through the normalization of this curiosity, Nzelu encourages education about other cultures and the celebration of them.

In many ways, literature by Black authors is essential for the re-education and the change in mind set of society. The ability to learn about other's experiences as well as how to celebrate our differences as well as our similarities is key to an accepting and open community. In the future, literature will become vital and authors such as Angie Thomas and Alice Walker alike key in creating long-lasting change by using their voices as members of the black community to participate in activism using their writing.



Feminism in society

By Rosa Hughes, 2nd Year

Feminism

Feminism is loaded term in today's society and means many things to many people. To some it has become a buzz word for women's superiority - a word that has become an obstacle to progress. To others, it simply represents equality - a goal which you would think most, if not all, would support. However, I believe, this is not as simple as it might seem. Despite this, many call themselves feminists – meaning someone who supports or believes in this movement. Subsequently, society seems to have progressed in the marathon of equality over the last 100 years, but there are still miles on miles yet to run. The progression sometimes blinds people into thinking the race is over, and therefore not putting any effort into the remaining distance, which hinders the movement and the reasoning behind it. You might be wondering why a 13-year-old girl would choose to write an article on feminism. Well for a number of reasons: I believe that women can do just as much as men and even some things better; despite my age there is still discrimination towards me in 'safe' places like schools with people regarding girls as 'dishwashers' and belonging to the kitchen; women and girls being expected to be what society deems as perfect, being judged on anything and everything; women being called sexist slurs and names on a daily basis; and my list could go on and on. Society today is extremely unbalanced across the world, 'but how so?' you may ask, let me show you just how unbalanced the globe really is.

The world seems to cover up the injustice of the inequality among us as a community, and we seem to overlook just how bad the situation really is:

- Lack of employment equality – only six countries in the world give women the same legal work rights as men. In fact, most economies

give women only $\frac{3}{4}$ the rights of men. Studies show that if employment became a more even playing field, it would have a positive domino effect on other areas of society prone to gender inequality.

- Job segregation - One of the causes for gender inequality within employment is the division of jobs. In most societies, there's an inherent belief that men are simply better equipped to handle certain jobs. Most of the time, those are the jobs that pay the best. This level of discrimination results in lower income for women.
- Societal mindsets - it's less tangible than some of the other causes on this list, but the overall mindset of a society has a significant impact on gender inequality. How society determines the differences and value between men and women plays an important role in every arena, whether it's employment or the legal system or healthcare.
- Lack of political representation - Of all national parliaments at the beginning of 2019, only 24.3% of seats were filled by women. As of June of 2019, 11 Heads of State were women. Despite progress in this area over the years, women are still underrepresented in government and the political process. This means that certain issues that female politicians tend to bring up – such as parental leave and child-care, pensions, gender equality laws and gender-based violence – are often neglected.
- Uneven access to education - around the world, women still have less access to education than men. One quarter of young women between the age of 15 and 25 will not finish primary school. That group makes up 58% of the people not completing that basic education and of all the illiterate people in the world, $\frac{2}{3}$ are women.

- Maternity and Paternity leave – this may seem bizarre but maternity leave and paternity leave have an extremely large difference. Whilst maternity leave is up to a full year, paternity leave is narrowed down to just two weeks. As a married couple you are also allowed to split the year and take 6 months leave each. As a single father the most you would get is however, still two weeks.

However, this list is merely the tip of the iceberg. It may seem as though developed countries like the UK are equal in jobs and pay but in fact, only six countries in the world give women and men equal work rights. If you're a woman and want to be on an equal footing with men, it's best to live and work in either Belgium, Denmark, France, Latvia, Luxembourg, or Sweden.

So how is feminism accepted in our society today?

The feminist movement has effected change in western society, including women's suffrage; greater access to education; more equitable pay with men; the right to initiate divorce proceedings; the right for women to make individual decisions regarding pregnancy; and the right to own property. But other areas of the world are still, as we speak, facing gender inequality issues, and are less progressed than developed western countries. This may be due to the gender stereotypes taught to people from a young age.

There are many inspiring feminists within society, here are just a few that you might know:

- Emma Watson
- Malala Yousafzai
- Michelle Obama
- Emmeline Pankhurst
- Madonna

Did you know?

Over 42% of people don't consider themselves a feminist due to lack of understanding and knowledge on the matter.

The suffragettes

Many people will have heard of the suffragettes – an activist women's organisation started in 1903 under the banner 'Votes for women'. They did ultimately achieve their goal and without them there would still be a large gender divide. They campaigned for votes for middle-class, property-owning women and believed in peaceful protest. The organisation was founded by Emmeline Pankhurst who I mentioned before, as a very inspiring feminist. The organisation had over 50,000 members by the outbreak of the first world war who also believed in women's rights and that women should have the right to vote.



Appearance & Stereotypes

When talking about equality it is important to consider the beauty standards of 2021. As the world spins, the bar is constantly raised for women and girls who are body shamed and called ugly for not reaching the impossible beauty standards of today, and as a result many are left feeling insecure. This is not an experience shared by most men. Our current prime minister has infamously messy hair but receives relatively little criticism for it, if a woman had messy hair and was representing the UK, social media would be filled with cruel comments about her appearance, and many would want her to step down. Teens all over the globe feel insecure due to the constant pressure of having to be the most 'beautiful' girl to be enough and accepted and are constantly ashamed of who they are. We need a society where everyone is proud of who they are because ridiculous beauty standards that you see online are not what you need to be – skinny isn't always pretty, being obese shouldn't be looked down upon. Stereotypes damage our view of ourselves and we need to learn how to block them out. Be and do you, always.

The gender pay gap and modern-day feminists

It comes as no surprise that a lot of young people in the modern-day do not recognise the need for feminism. After all, in the UK, women can vote, have any job they like, and even become prime minister and run the country. Sexism may not be as glaringly obvious as it was 100 years ago, but that does not mean it has been completely abolished. Of course, the gender pay gap still exists. Although this gap does appear to be closing gradually, it will take an estimated 60 years for the gender pay gap to be non-existent. Arguably, this gap is the largest example of sexism that is still around in the UK today. However, women actually face sexism every single day.

From catcalls in the street to not being taken seriously in the workplace, women face these issues on a daily basis. In fact, British feminist writer Laura Bates set up a website named 'The Everyday Sexism Project' which allows women from all over the world to document their experiences of sexism, however big or small they may seem. The website has had many submissions of all kinds, which goes to show that sexism truly is still rife, even today. We need young people to join in the feminist movement so they can help combat this. After all, today's young people are the leaders of tomorrow, we need them to understand, like me, how we as a society can become more equal and we need them to instigate these changes.

In conclusion, until there is equal pay, equal parental leave (and even the abolition of words like 'maternity' leave), feminism will not have ultimately achieved its aim. Having lived in a patriarchal society for many years, such in built, unconscious bias may be hard to overcome. However, the fact that the younger generation are more aware of this issue, can raise this issue, and continuously write about this issue, must surely go some way towards bringing about a more equal society and economy. This gives us hope in the vision that someday the goal will be achieved, and that the women of tomorrow can live and thrive in an equal world.

Confronting Climate Change: Do Healthcare Professionals Have an Obligation to improve the Health of our Planet?

By Maria Marcheva, Lower Sixth

Healthcare professionals are the backbone of society as we rely on them to deliver essential care which saves and better people's lives. They aid our survival and secure our future by discovering new ways to improve the quality of healthcare and revolutionary treatments. However, there is a terrible paradox which exists in the healthcare world.

Although we have been faced with medical emergencies like Ebola, nuclear weaponry, obesity, and most recently COVID-19, climate change is likely the biggest impending threat to human health across the globe. There could be catastrophic consequences involving many deaths, casualties and suffering from extreme weather, shortages of fresh water, disease, wildlife species extinction, shrinking productivity of harvest and relocations of whole towns. Clearly, our health and the health of our planet are inextricably linked and so the paradox is that as hospitals deliver lifesaving care their environmental footprint is harmful to our health. Healthcare facilities were described as "energy and resource intensive enterprises that contribute to climate change" by the WHO, meaning that although they save around 500,000 lives a year on a global scale, their pollution, energy use and waste production contributes to humanities biggest threat. The climate footprint of healthcare in general is equivalent to 4.4% of global net emissions which is close to the annual greenhouse gas emissions from 514 coal fired power plants. Therefore, as the mission of hospitals is to be anchored in health, healthcare professionals have an obligation to improve the health of our planet. They are obliged to do this more than any of us as they possess cardinal skills which will enable them to have a huge influence.

Similarly, there are ways in which medical professionals can help that the average person cannot and so this reinforces their responsibility regarding this issue, for example, they can focus on total health (of a population), build green and reduce hospital waste.

The fact that they are highly respected members of our society and have a level of authority means that they can emphasise the importance of caring for our environment to their patients and lead the way to bettering the health of our planet.

On the other hand, we all contribute to climate change as one person has an average carbon footprint of 5.3 tons in the UK and globally around 4 tons. Therefore, everyone has an obligation to help with this threat and take responsibility for their own actions.

We all have a moral obligation to care for the prime source of our survival (our planet) and should all display our gratitude to our planet by maintaining its health and contributing to it. Climate change directly threatens the lives of all of us particularly children and the vulnerable in society with lots of respiratory issues like asthma, heart and lung disease due to increased smog and air pollution. The WHO states that climate change is projected to increase the percentage of people suffering from hunger from 34% to 64% 40yrs from now. Therefore, it's so important to take responsibility and adapt our lives to help prevent the dangers that we may face not far from now. Simple things like conserving water, using long lasting light bulbs and choosing non-toxic chemicals can make a tremendous difference and no matter how much medical professionals stress this, it's down to us to contribute. Personally, I believe that although healthcare professionals are obliged to help improve the health of our planet, the responsibility should not be placed entirely on them as this could discourage others to get involved. It must be emphasised that we all have a responsibility towards this matter, but the participation of healthcare professionals will help set an example which will guide humanity

along this mission to fight climate change. Facing COVID 19 today, illustrates the adversities we will need to overcome when dealing with global emergencies of such scale in the future including those that are more difficult to perceive and evolve over longer periods of time. It also illustrated that health is a motivating factor for action and that as a society there are things we can do to mitigate and adapt.

Overall, I believe that healthcare professionals do have an obligation to lead us in bettering our planets health as they have the platform to affect many people, resources and authority to spread awareness of this issue. The NHS is the beating heart of our country and that in itself demonstrates how powerful healthcare professionals are and so they can pave the way to a healthier world.

However, we are all obliged to act on this as without involvement on a global scale these efforts will not reach their maximum potential.



CREATIVE WRITING

For this section, inspired by the optimism demonstrated within the school in response to the COVID pandemic, we chose the title 'Dazzled By The Light' for pupils to write a short piece of creative writing based on. We were fascinated by the varied range of responses throughout the entirety of Stockport Grammar – all the way to the junior school with Finn Raynes' take on the title. It was difficult to choose just a few to print in the magazine, but we expect you will enjoy reading them as much as we did, and hope it may even instil an interest in creative writing amongst others. We believe this is of great importance, as creative writing is a way to continue to use your imagination throughout life, by both reading and writing, and it promotes an ability to express yourself using words. During the time of the pandemic, reading and writing as a form of escape from the harsh reality of the real world became even more essential. After the recent success of former pupil Abigail Dean with her debut novel *Girl A*, we felt there was more emphasis than ever on the importance of creative writing as a skill, and we imagine that, with the talent demonstrated in these selected pieces, she will not be the last pupil to have success in the world of literature.

Editors: Yasmine Doyle and Mia Hutchinson

Dazzled by the Light

Finn Raynes, Year 6 in Stockport Grammar Junior School

It was dark in the mine. It was dark when he woke up. It will be dark when he goes to bed. Mafube Mine was dismal, dark and dirty. The fifteen-year-old boy, Langa, felt swallowed by the coal mine, deep down in the gruelling guts of Mpumalanga. Living in the filthy slums, he was on his own: A family strayed in murk; ambitions and hopes eluding him; clothes and a heart like paper, shredded and littered. It was approaching the end of his enervating twelve-hour shift and Langa stared grimly at the stars. Unlike others, the warmth and solace of the sun and light had never touched his eyes. It was hard labour. His mouth was parched and delving for water as he gazed at the slums which were strewn in the distance. His mind reeled faster than his legs could take him, and he drooped down, snoring like a faulty radiator.

Bang. Clatter. Langa rigidly groped to his feet, his eyelids still torn, and slumped down into the coal mine, contaminated from head to toe. His hair was a compost bin, his voice raspy and muffled, whilst his clothes were decrepit and tight. Later that day, the mine felt strangely deserted; something did not feel right. He squinted dubiously at something jutting out of the mine wall like a missing jigsaw piece and gently twisted it out.

Langa bristled with excitement, rigorously grasping the diamond he held in front of his wide, sparkling eyes. He was silent and vigilant but internally a volcano of hope, light and ambition erupted. Despite the diamond not dazzling with colour, he could not stop dreaming of what light it could bring. What aspirations could he achieve? Where could this take him? How could this change his future? Langa energetically leapt out of the mine and slowly breathed in fresh air, watching the sun grace Johannesburg in the distance.

Langa woke to the cry of birds outside like electricity crackling, glancing back to the place where the diamond was in his hands just previously and his exhilarating journey to Johannesburg began. It seemed like only yesterday but his diligent work and effort to get to this point was well worth it and well deserved. Besides, he eventually managed oil the cog grousing for food in his stomach! Langa had always known there was a way of escaping misery;

his parents had, after all, named his after the Zulu name for light!

As much as the new scenery was a world of imagination to his eyes, the word 'ancestor' and 'family' trickled into his mind over the next few days. Langa furrowed himself into a chair and felt like there was no one around him; no one out there in the world – some desperate and struggling but without anyone noticing.

It started to feel not quite so glamorous as Langa expected. What could Langa have achieved if he had not just made himself the centre of attention and had not eluded the anguish in Mpumalanga. What could he do to make others feel better forever? The hovering clouds were a kettle boiling and the birds, ledged on the trees, looked withering and menacing. Carved onto Langa's face was disappointment within himself. He desperately tried to grimace it. His 'fresh start' had not propelled as he wished, but there was much more to attain and achieve now...

It was miserable. The rain lashed. Johannesburg was not what his dreams had foretold him. It was busy and he felt engulfed, as though he was engaged in a small room. The sorrow he felt knowing his family were out there, out anywhere unknown, was deep and hard to accept. He looked at the sky, his mind a shaken snow globe.

Swallowed by the night, Langa's shabby boat creaked and swayed on the tossing and turning waves. It was a rough, strenuous and tedious journey down a narrow river, nonetheless, Langa knew through resilience brought rewards and help to others in need. The moon was a razor-sharp crescent as his eyes melted down for the night. The river widened and, as he arrived, the sun soared up, greeting him to the place he has always remembered and loved deep in his soul: Mpumalanga. The money was there for everyone's use and not to clasp on to individually. It was his time to step out of the shadows and into the light to do something good for the world.

Dazzled by the Light

Elena Patsias, 1st Year

Trees lowered their branches, whispering behind nature-fuelled fingers, given away by the rustle of their leaves. The bitter wind was shrieking against the four gasping walls of the vacant house. Stars twinkled mischievously to their friend, the moon, who shone down upon the vehicle that disturbed the path in its wake.

I could picture the pale oval of Natalie's face, the way her furs hugged her, fighting the frost, and her feet: encased in her mukluks. She was dressed, always, in clothes that provided her with warmth against the cold that rode the wind, working together to push her back and make her shiver.

Her teacher observed her, on her last day of leaving. She was such an inscrutable specimen, all silence and mystery. She could not simply just chat, or play, or interact at all. 'She was an interesting girl', her grandma said. She knew what she liked best: to be forever gazing at the wonders of the world from wherever she stood, eyes raking the sky to discover them. She was a quiet girl: daughter, friend, thinker. A small speechless girl with a dainty chuckle. A girl crafted from gentle material which was no match for the animate adventures within the maze of her mind.

I know that girl. Daughter of two wildlife photographers based in Scandinavia. One never knows where they are headed to next, just know that they are always on the move to capture nature at its best. Her name is Natalie. Underneath the slight smiles, I could always see the lava bubbling beneath her two hazel eyes.

That day her skin shimmered scarlet as she buried her emotions deep down into the treasure chest locked within her heart. Natalie's mouth clammed shut into a firm line as she willingly dissolved the retorts that once rested upon her tongue. Natalie and her parents were moving once more.

Each move was the same as the last. Eventually, Natalie stopped trying. Why should she even try to settle into a new school, a new life, when in less than three months she would be plunged into another? Despite this, she loved her parents, she really did. They loved their job, yet so much had to be sacrificed – mainly her happiness, usually just as she grasped it.

Her parents were over-enthusiastic which did not match her sombre mood. She let her auburn curls shaped her face and tried her best to blend into walls, however uncooperative those walls may be.

Natalie almost cracked a smile when she was confronted with the news that it was the holidays. She had previously been staying at her house in Finland, looked after by her aunt, whilst her parents explored Scandinavia. Her family members were constantly busy, and she was passed from one set of hands to another. This holiday she was to travel with her parents to an area where there was news of a vast polar bear sighting in the North Pole.

After a long boat journey of constant fidgeting and irrelevant questions, Natalie arrived. Her eyes widened as she took in her surroundings: ice stretched until the horizon as the sea below churned at the engines of the boat.

Yet Natalie was not naïve enough to believe this freedom would last forever. She was allowed to explore the boat whilst her parents searched for the reported polar bears. She would then be sent back to the routine of moving yet again. But, for now, she watched in awe as the night fell and the stars came out to play.

Her parents would be back in an hour or so. She had some time. She dragged her feet to the edge of the boat and grasped the chilled railing. Natalie closed her eyes and embraced how sharp the wind felt against her face. When she opened them again, she stifled a gasp.

A channel of green in a lake of black. A path had appeared as if derived from pure love and kindness yet adorned with dreams so strong it was impossible to ignore. She gazed as is bled into the richest of reds. Strings of hope in a world of dark, spectated by stars that glittered their starlight into the graceful sea below. Rippling under the strength of the current, shimmering in the reflection of her eyes were the Northern Lights. The hope was beautiful. Once the hope had arrived, it pumped within Natalie. It enveloped her and ran up her arms as she spread them at the balcony of the boat. Her hair thrust itself into the flow of the wind. She threw back her head and laughed. The joyous sound erupted from her mouth and shattered the locked treasure chest within her heart. She felt warmth, joy, understanding! Then she fell silent, held up her head and stood there, dazzled by the light.

Dazzled by the Light

Rose McDonald, 2nd Year

Golden, glittering sunlight filtered through the rain-bow curtains in the nursery as I cleared paint-splattered tablecloths from worn desks. The paintings done by my class were displayed proudly on the walls. I leaned back in my chair, the days excited chatter and bright, smiling faces that lit up by lightbulbs washing over me. I could not resist smiling as I glanced at the flattering portrait drawn by my five-year-old, Michael. He could never fail to bring a smile to my face.

The birds outside sang sweetly, and I felt the sun upon my face, wrapping me in its warm embrace. The grass outside radiated its neon green glow, as the trees formed a shady canopy over the window. The clock read 5:15pm and I finished cleaning my paintbrushes and washing plastic palettes before my phone buzzed in my pocket.

“Hello?” I murmured. A clear voice answered, “Hello, is this Michael’s mother?”

I replied and the lady told me he had been sick and needed to be picked up from school immediately. I cursed to myself – why today? I had an evening class to mind that started at 5:30pm *sharp*. There would be a horde of angry parents and managers if I failed to attend. Then again, if I were quick, I think I would be able to make it. Frantically, I threw on my coat and hurried to my car, glinting in the dimming sunlight. I reversed out of the parking lot and into traffic so excruciatingly slow it was barely moving. The cars were packed tight like sardines and the deafening chorus of beeping rung in my ears.

Great. Just great.

The car rolled to a sluggish stop in the seemingly endless line, the roofs of vehicles shimmering like beetles as I sat begrudgingly and impatiently, baking in the evening heat.

I drummed my fingers on the dashboard and glanced at the clock: 5:27. Things were beginning to look desperate. I checked behind me; the rear-view mirror reflected a queue that stretched on to the horizon, so reversing was out of the cards. I waited a little longer, weighing my options. Eventually, I shifted into the next lane and onto a side road which was equally as busy but, surprisingly, moving much quicker. The relief was immense, and I relaxed in my seat, however this respite was short-lived. I was just rounding a bend when I saw the

traffic light switching to amber. No! The school was a mere few metres away – I could see the building on the horizon, and these specific traffic lights had a notoriously long waiting time. The clock kept ticking as I gritted my teeth. Wiping the sweat from my palms, I braced myself and floored the gas. The car shot off like a bullet, and I leaned forward in apprehension. The light switched, but I was practically already on the other side of the crossroad. I eased the acceleration and-

The entire world stopped. It felt as though everything existed in slow motion, the faces of fellow drivers contorting into looks of horror and alarm, the var flipping forwards. Even the sound of crunching metal was warped. The impact of the huge truck sent the door flying. I felt the pressure on my chest – the seatbelt, the one thing keeping me from death – rip.

Shards of glass reflected the blinding silver beams of headlights, and I watched in undiluted shock and terror as I fumbled to hold on to something – anything – when the dashboard collapsed, and the windshield shattered like fragments of ice. I was thrown, violently, through the window and I shot out of my seat, dazzled by the light.

Beep. Beep. Beep. The smell was what jarred me awake. The reeking, unmistakable stench of something artificial – bleach or sanitiser.

I heard the scrape of wheels on the floor and a steady, monotonous beep followed by the familiar sound of my husband’s voice. I could feel covers and a stiff mattress, and felt his fingers intertwine with mine. I could smell my sons distinct Play-Doh scent. They were definitely there – I could hear their voices, feel their presence, but... I could not see them. I tried to open my eyes, but my eyelids felt like weights and, hard as I tried, they simply did not open. It was as if they were... sealed shut? I could feel panic rising in my chest like a bird in flight, meanwhile my heart hammered like a drum. I reached up gingerly to see if someone had put a blindfold, or something similar on my face. Instead, I felt something heavy wrapped around it. It was some sort of cloth, tightly bound around my head. Millions of questions whirled through my mind, but they were interrupted by a single, authoritative voice –

“Yes... I’m sorry, the damage is irreparable. I’m afraid she will never see again.”

My heart plummeted.

Dazzled by the Light

Lucy Vine, 3rd Year

It was beautiful. At last, the frantic day of fun was drawing to a close. Peace was descending on the river as I allowed my canoe to be drawn out into the middle of the waterway.

As I drifted further and further away from the water's edge, the voices and laughter of humanity faded away until I could only hear the faint whispers of the tide. The silence was impeccable, apart from the gentle lapping of the low waves at the side of my boat. The occasional drone of a rib engine rolled across the water of the wrapped-up sails and their lines clinking and clanking against the masts of the boats as they swayed in the breeze.

But the light. The light was incredible. Shards of it from the warm evening sun played on the water dancing exotic dances on the surface of the estuary. I stared aimlessly at it, I couldn't help myself and soon I slipped into a trance – like gaze hypnotised by the twinkling lights bouncing on the wave crests.

The soft, setting sun cast an orange line along the water as the light rippled like an effervescent isle, drawing my thoughts on an endless journey towards the altar of the sun. Surely this was heavenly? The pinky-yellow clouds distorted the spherical edge of the low sun that sank towards the waterline and the death of another day. As the sky gradually darkened, stars were beginning to point their lights at me as I looked back in time celestial beings that may no longer even exist.

The tide pushed me among boats moved and bobbing on the waves. Windows of speedboats and bells and metal loops of the fishing boats flashed glints in the evening sun but, be careful not to stare too much at the turning silhouettes because with a sudden sway of the movement, the sun can whip your eyes with the last flashes of the dying day.

A motorboat roared past nearby, nudging my boat into a gentle rock like the cradle of a baby, interrupting my peaceful daydream and bringing me back to reality. It was getting much darker now and as I swayed my paddle in the deep green depths of the river, interfering with the soft to and fro of the waves, the water was lit up by swirling green luminescence. The phosphorescence was like the Northern Lights of the sea. A dim white reflection painted itself along the waves; the moon was beginning to



appear as the last few breaths of the sun that were left were stolen away by an orange cloud drifting across.

Lights continued to dance along the waterline, only those lights were much brighter, almost glaring at the back of my boat. They moved in sync with the low growl of an engine in the distance behind me. I realised that the boat was coming in my direction and I snapped back to my senses, lifting the oar out of the cool black water and paddling off to join my friends.

I took one last glance at my own little heaven but, in the few seconds that I had turned away, it had gone.

BOOK REVIEWS

I chose to have a section on book reviews because I believe reading is a fundamental way to develop English skills. Through reading, we can engage with other perspectives, ideas and cultures. Reading can transport us to different times and lands, giving us rich insights and experiences. It can develop our sense of curiosity and empathy as we meet and understand characters who may not always be similar to us, or hold the same values. Reading is something I passionately love and we hope that, through range of books featured here, you too may find something which may inspire and challenge you, transport and entertain you.

Editor Nikita Arora

The Hate U Give – Angie Thomas

The story follows the typical two-week timetable of a teenage girl's life, only for Starr's experience to be shattered following the shooting of her friend- Khalil- who fell prey to the hands of systemic racism. As the only official witness to this shooting, Starr must combat the mind-boggling array of influences from her neighbourhood, school life, and gangs in her area. As she struggles with her own identity as a young black female, who belongs in a variety of different communities, she finds herself in an impossible position when she must choose between justice for her friend and her own safety.

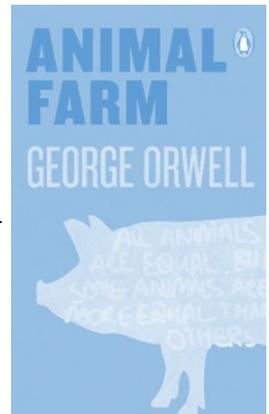
In her debut novel, THUG, Angie Thomas has written a frustratingly familiar, yet deeply compelling modern-day classic, in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. She has successfully articulated and addressed prevalent issues in modern day USA society and examines the way communities use stereotypes to justify violence towards ethnic minorities, and therefore perpetuate racism, whilst still engaging the reader in this soul stirring and influentially enticing novel. Angie Thomas has fuelled each character so vividly, that it provokes questions from the reader to reflect on their own actions and the society which we tolerate. The author draws on her own experiences as a young, black female teenage girl and targets many stereotypes, influences and issues inflicted on both females and ethnic minorities. Furthermore, the foundations of this story have been rooted from the death of Oscar Grant, therefore providing you with a poignant element to this already faceted story. As a debut novel, this story is a thoroughly enjoyable read, as it tackles heavy hearted topics with the perfect balance of humour, heartbreak and happiness.

Priya Burrow, 3rd Year

Animal Farm – George Orwell

The book tells the story of a group of farm animals who rebel against their human farmer, hoping to create a society where the animals can be equal, free, and happy.

As one of my favourite books, animal farm perfectly captures the idea of utopia, power and liberation of society in a political allegory. Whilst the story can be viewed as an enlightening parable, for me it portrays the fundamental aspects within human nature: greed, cruelty and jealousy. The twist from the utopian society that the animals created in rebellion of the cruel humans to the dictatorship of the pigs can perfectly provide a reflection of society and perhaps a warning from history.

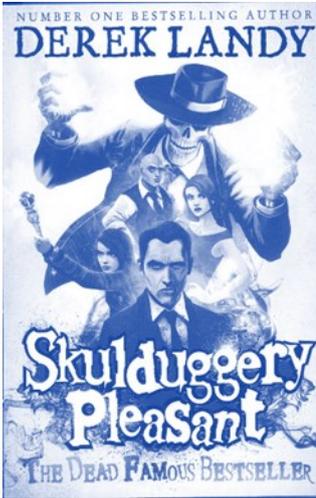


Lucy Thompson, Lower Sixth

Skulduggery Pleasant - Derek Landy

This is the first book in a 15-book series. The main characters are Stephanie, Uncle Gordon, Skulduggery Pleasant, Nefarian Serpine and China. The basic premise of the story is Uncle Gordon is a writer of horror stories but when he dies, Stephanie realises that they certainly aren't just fiction. She decides to try to kill the ghosts and dangerous sorcerer. She finds help from an unlikely source, the skeleton of a dead sorcerer. The reader is desperate to know, will Stephanie succeed?

There are many things to enjoy in this book, but I particularly like how the author initially portrays Skulduggery Pleasant as the villain, but later Stephanie realises that he is actually the hero of the good guys and the most powerful. I also appreciate how Skulduggery thinks of making a reflection of Stephanie so that Stephanie's parents think she is doing her normal jobs such as going to school. However, this doesn't go to plan. When Stephanie is on the beach her father says that she is not acting normally, and her responses are very amusing. Derek Landy's writing style is clever and engaging. There are too many great moments in this novel to mention them all, but one is definitely worth commenting on. In one part of the book Skulduggery and Stephanie look for Serpine when he obtains the key to some caves which hold the Sceptre of the Ancients. The Sceptre of the Ancients is an extremely powerful book which was used by the Ancients to kill the faceless ones. The problem is that if Serpine gets hold of Sceptre he could turn anyone into dust if the light inside it hits anything! The whole reason that Skulduggery is extremely angry with Serpine is because he killed his wife and only child in front of Skulduggery knowing he wouldn't be able to think which made him easier to kill. Critics have referred to this novel as 'A delight' and 'A thoroughly satisfying blend of humour, magic and adventure' and I couldn't agree more. If you are in First to Third year and a fan of Harry Potter or Percy Jackson I would highly recommend this series to you.

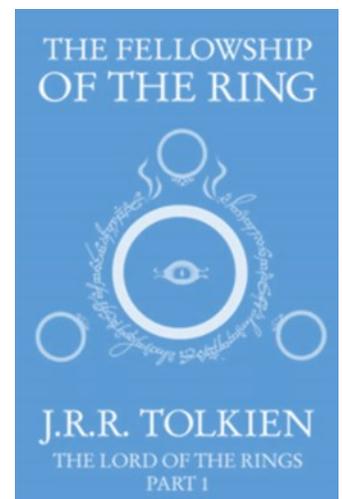


Christopher Parikh, 1st Year

The Fellowship of the Ring – J. R. R. Tolkien

J.R.R. Tolkien's first book in the trilogy: The Lord of the Rings tells the tale of four hobbits. Frodo, leader of the party, is entrusted with a ring of extraordinary power by the Wizard, Gandalf the Grey. Sam Gamgee is Frodo's most loyal and protective friend who is driven to adventure by his love of elves. Pippin, or Peregrin, is a Took and is one of Frodo's oldest and closest friends. Finally, Merry, or Meriadoc, is a Brandybuck, a strange and shunned folk whose family nurtured Frodo when he was young. These four must journey through strange lands to try and hide the ring from the eye of The Enemy. Tolkien takes us on a journey through Middle-Earth, through mountains and forests, rivers and towns. We meet many folk, great and small in this first book of Lord of the Rings.

My favourite place in the book is Lothlórien, as it is beautiful and almost too perfect to be true; my favourite character is Strider; and my favourite scene is set on the River Anduin. J.R.R. Tolkien creates amazing creatures, from Orcs to Elves, from massive dragons to tiny hobbits. He has designed incredible landscapes such as Rivendell, Bree and the Mines of Moria. Tolkien has devised the most epic tale of battles, chases and close-shaves. While a longer read for some, I would recommend this book to any reader from the age of 10 upwards. It can be enjoyed by anyone. It is enthralling, chaotic and mesmerising. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and the beasts, riddles and adventures that went with it.



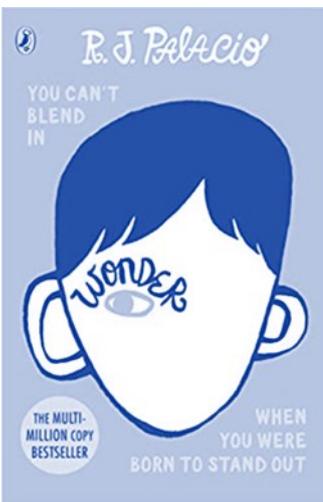
I would give it five stars in terms of creativity and five stars for writing technique. What sets Tolkien apart from other writers is the way that his structure and language add a flourish which is necessary to make this the story it is. Overall, a gripping, enthralling page turner. I enjoyed every bit of it. I highly recommend it to anyone who wants a book that isn't too challenging but thoroughly brilliant.

Finn Haisley, 2nd Year

Wonder – R.J Palacio

Problem. Solution. Treacher Collins Syndrome. Hide it. This is not the way.

'Wonder' is a novel based on the life of a boy who is different. August Pullman, aged ten, was born with a facial difference. He faces the challenge of starting school for the first time after being homeschooled up until the fifth grade. The book reveals the disregarded truth that children can be cruel, yet it shows that kindness is contagious. Whilst reading the book, we follow Auggie's journey of confidence, guided by the kindness of his family and friends. He gradually stops pushing away help and instead, accepts it. Throughout the book, R.J Palacio conveys a message of self-positivity. The eldest child, Olivia is portrayed as a protective sister who feels deep affection for her brother, yet the plot thickens when Olivia has problems of her own as she begins her life at college and having no-one to rely on becomes too much. The perspective of Olivia is considered in the book and highlights the fact that Auggie's situation impacts the people around him. Olivia feels lonely and forgotten since the death of her grandmother and has become envious of the attention Auggie receives.



The character of Julian, a boy not willing to accept a child who is far from ordinary, is perceived as a the stereotypical 'bully'. Perhaps, the perspective of Julian should have been included more in the book as the reason for bullying is often a lot more complicated in the mind of the bully than it may seem. When Julian is first introduced to Auggie, he asks the question, "What's the deal with your

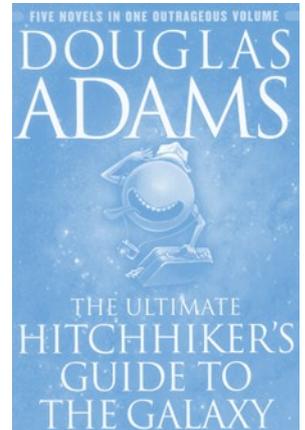
face?", this shows the naivety and perhaps cruel innocence of children. The book constantly questions the definition of "normal". The reactions of Auggie's classmates divulges that they are not willing to accept something different. This leaves the book to be interpreted in many ways by the reader depending on whether they believe it is the fault of the children or their parents. Some upsetting scenes are described and show the impacts of words upon a person. However, on a particular occasion in the book, acted beautifully in the film, Auggie deflects a nasty comment with his humour and a cheeky response, which gives an insight into his personality. The end of the book is extremely moving and shows that life can be lived to its full potential when you are kind, despite your appearance. "You can't blend in, when you were born to stand out". This idea is developed throughout the book by Auggie's personality, bravery and the friends he makes. I believe that this book covers an important issue and has embedded it into a story that for some people may sound familiar and to others, will make them stop and perhaps ponder on the true meaning of "normal". 'Wonder' is the first book in a series which includes: 'Auggie and Me' and '365 Days of Wonder'.

Elena Patsias, 1st Year

The Hitch Hiker's guide to the galaxy – Douglas Adams

The Hitch Hiker's guide to the galaxy starts off on a completely ordinary day that just happens to be the end of the world. To escape imminent death, Arthur and Ford catch a ride from a Vogon constructor fleet ship, which they are then kicked off, after enduring the 3rd worst poetry in the universe. They are picked up by Zaphod and Trillian, who coincidentally, Arthur has met before, on the stolen ship Heart of gold. They arrive at Magrathea with a less than warm welcome, are separated, but then reunite at last for one unique reason. Finally, the book ends with them escaping from Magrathea and going to find a bite to eat, which leads smoothly into the next book: the Restaurant at the end of the Universe.

I really enjoyed the Hitch Hikers guide to the Galaxy because of its comedic style of writing and interesting, quite unexpected plot. Every so often, there is a digression to give the reader some helpful insight to whatever is happening, told as if an extract from the book the Hitch Hiker's guide to the galaxy in the story. There are some subtle deeper questions and indications in it, giving some depth to the story and to make the reader think more about them. There are four main characters in this book: Arthur Dent, Ford Prefect, Tricia (Trillian) McMillan, and Zaphod Beeblebrox. Arthur is an ordinary human being, who is not particularly happy about all these adventures, but would rather be sitting at home with a nice cup of tea. This can make him a bit annoyed and temperamental sometimes. Zaphod is quite exuberant and outgoing to the point he seems crazy; however, it is implied that he is actually quite intelligent. He also has two heads. Ford is relaxed and fairly calm person most of the time, though, compared to other humans, slightly odd and doesn't quite fit in on earth. Trillian is the most sensible by far out of them all – she is levelheaded and clever. Last of all, I have to mention my favorite character, Marvin the robot. He is a robot that is provided with the spaceship Heart of Gold and is meant to have a "genuine people personality" that ironically ends up just making him seem depressed and miserable all the time. However, this is done in a way that makes him one of the funniest characters in the book, which is why I like him. Overall, I think this is a great book, written well, using many techniques.

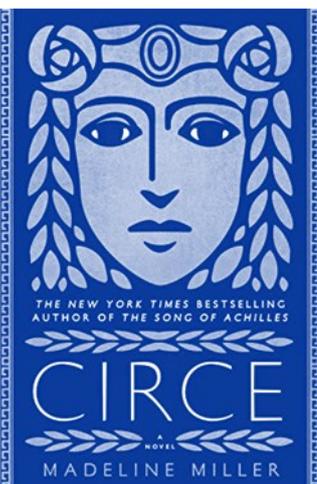


The many twists in the plot engage the reader while the humor keeps it feeling quite light-hearted. I would recommend this book to someone who is looking for an enjoyable, interesting book to read as it is not too complicated, quite easy to read and funny.

Ella Clayton, 2nd Year

Circe – Madeline Miller

This book, written by Madeline Miller, is a re-telling of the story of the Greek mythological character, Circe. The character was originated by Homer in "The Odyssey", in which she is portrayed as a villainous witch, who turned Odysseus' men into pigs. Miller put a twist on this perception, pulling from various mythological tales to create an empowering story written from the unique perspective of the protagonist.



Circe is the immortal daughter of the titan Helios and the ocean nymph Perse. The beginning of the book focuses a lot on the fact that, despite her divinity, she is less skilled and beautiful than the other nymphs whom she constantly rejected by. Her life pretty much has no substance until she meets the mortal human Glaucus and falls in love. Circe, unwilling to let Glaucus go, discovers her magical ability and uses it to turn him into an immortal ocean God.

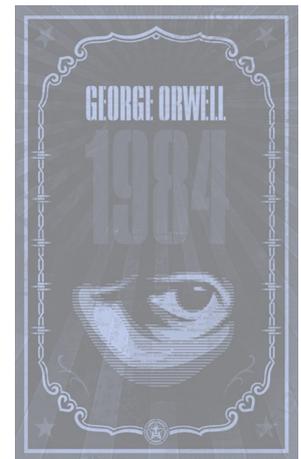
This sets off a series of events on the uninhabited island of Aeaea, where the story then follows her through her multiple adventures, encounters and experiences. I think this book is especially good as Miller uses Circe's story to introduce a whole host of myths such as the Odyssey, the Minotaur, Daedalus and Icarus, the Titanomachy and Jason and Medea.

I really enjoyed reading this book not just because I am already interested in Greek mythology, but because it is written extremely well with the unusual perspective of someone who is not quite human, whose life is not finite. It is a difficult thing to describe the life of an immortal and I found that Miller manages to do this extremely well. The book covers a wide range of topics like feminism, empowerment, and things such as the relationship between father and daughter, sister and brother and mother and son. Whilst this is written about mythical creatures, God and other stuff like that, I still found I could relate to at least a few characters in the novel. I really recommend this book to almost anyone. I don't think that you have to be interested in mythology (though I do think it helps to know a little) to enjoy this book as it is excellently written, has great character development and a super interesting story line. I found myself getting quite invested in the outcomes of the various adventures and characters and I think this book is a really interesting take on the tales of Circe.

Meriel Scott

1984 – George Orwell

1984 was a book written, ironically, in 1948, by George Orwell in Britain; despite its name, many question whether "1984" was actually set in 1984. Set in Oceania, one of three fictional states, comprising of the Americas, the British Isles, Australia, and South Africa: the other states being Eastasia and Eurasia. We get a glimpse into the dystopian future through the eyes of the protagonist, Winston, who explores the oppressive nature of Big Brother, the overarching, yet unseen antagonist. Living in a one-party system, Winston attempts to resist the grasps of society and the government, through joining a secret organization known as The Brotherhood. The actual book spans between 1984 and 1985, but goes back much further, exploring the history of the 20th century, and the consequences of events: WW2, and the early emergence of the Cold War.

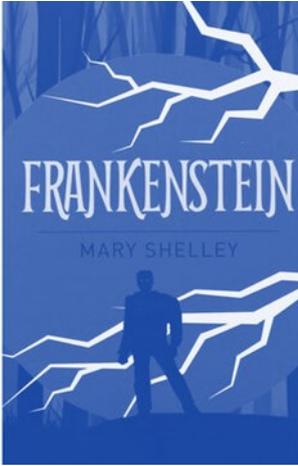


This dystopian novel explores the thoughts of George Orwell, who bases the antagonist, Big Brother, off key historical figures, such as Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin. Despite this, it is heavily argued whether Oceania was inspired of Nazi Germany or Communist Russia, possibly a combination of both. Through this, he explores many themes, such as oppression, independence, and the truth. Many in modern-day society question the purpose of 1984, was Orwell attempting to warn society of the dangers of polarised governments, was he attempting a political polemic, or was he attempting to inspire 20th Century society? In actuality, Orwell was a Socialist, partaking to neither extreme.

In my opinion, 1984 is an essential read for all adolescent people, as it heavily focuses on the human mindset and the extent to which it can be manipulated. Although many may view it as ancient, due to the time in which it was written, it is vital for a key understanding of the possible futures of society if certain actions were to take place. Orwell portrays each character realistically, allowing the reader to further sympathise with them, and consequentially those living in dictatorial governments. Whilst reading, I felt as if each page, each chapter, and each part acted with celerity, every scene persisting in my perplexed thinking. I have no favourite moment, all of them play a vital part in progressing with the story and all of them are exhilarating. No moment in 1984 is the same, there is always some form of complexity, alluring the reader, and possibly mirroring the key theme of independence and the truth which Orwell provides.

1984 may seem as if it has a boundless amount of reading time, however if you put in the work to pull through the opening pages, I promise you that it will be worth it. Overall, I would suggest everyone hoping to explore themselves to read this book: teenagers, workers, grandparents; anyone who loves the genre of dystopian-fiction or science-fiction.

Minh Nguyen



Frankenstein – Mary Shelley

The book I will be reviewing is an extremely popular novel known as Frankenstein and is written by Mary Shelley in the year of 1818. It is about an aspiring young scientist who becomes a bit too ambitious and ends up creating life, but not just any life that of a monster who he neglects not quite realizing the consequences.

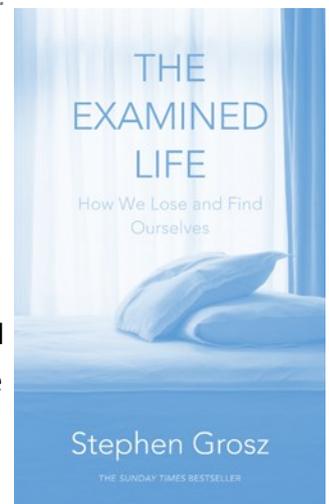
It is an exceptionally good read, I would definitely recommend it and I would rate it 9/10 as it is very ominous, action-packed and thrilling. The writer does very well as she takes a brutal, murderous monster and makes you sympathize with him and almost like him due to a sense of intrigue towards him.

Tom Farrelly, 3rd Year

The Examined Life – Stephen Grosz

A 2013 collection of essays by the practicing psychoanalyst Stephen Grosz.

I recently read this book called The Examined Life and it was a book based on real life events from a psychologists' patients' lives. The names of the patients were changed for privacy purposes, but the book was so interesting. It was quite eye opening about different mental health issues and it was fascinating to read about the journey of these people. There were definitely some serious moments and some quite comical ones but overall the book was written in a very engaging style and you actually learned quite a bit about psychology as well and the human mind as the therapist explained how he diagnosed the disorders and how he helped the individual. I would definitely recommend the book as it's quite different from what someone might typically read yet it's not different in the way that it's just as engaging and entertaining.



Maria Marcheva, Lower Sixth

POETRY IN MUSIC

Music is a continuous innovative media which relies not only on the way it sounds, but also the message it wants to convey – whether that’s simple and ‘poppy’, or meaningful and political. It is there for people through every time, good and bad, and its words stay true in our minds through all our experiences. It can make people feel understood, help people, and bring everyone together. Like the author Thomas Fuller said, “Poetry is music in words, and music is poetry in sound,”: the two go hand-in-hand and together can bring creative language, aesthetics and rhythmic qualities to evoke meanings and understanding between people.

In this section, I wanted people to use their skills of analysing poetry in English and transfer it over to analysing the lyrics to songs that are meaningful to them. The pieces I have included in this section cover a variety of different songs, and create a vibrancy supporting different issues and evaluating the many themes included in the human condition. I have loved reading everyone’s interpretations whilst listening to the songs themselves at the same time, and I hope this section inspires people to look more in depth and analyse why the lyrics of their favourite songs mean so much to them.

Editor Merryn Summersgill

Fine Line by Harry Styles

Merryn Summersgill, Lower Sixth

Put a price on emotion
I'm looking for something to buy
You've got my devotion
But man, I can hate you sometimes

I don't want to fight you
And I don't wanna sleep in the dirt
We'll get the drinks in
So I'll get to thinking of her

We'll be a fine line (x6)

Test of my patience
There's things that we'll never know
You sunshine, you temptress
My hand's at risk, I fold

Crisp trepidation
I'll try to shake this soon
Spreading you open
Is the only way of knowing you

We'll be a fine line (x12)

We'll be alright (x2)
We'll be a fine line (x2)

We'll be alright (x3)



Fine Line is a Grammy and Brit nominated album with a soulful, upbeat pop undertone, described by Stevie Nick's as being "H's 'Rumours'". Released in late 2019, it became the soundtrack to the world's lockdown and was named as one of the best 500 albums of all time by Rolling Stone. Featured is the title track: one of the longest and most eccentric songs on the album and which personifies the spirit of the whole conception.

Firstly, focusing on the song's overall message, the phrase 'Fine Line' conjures the expression "there's a

thin line between love and hate," which typifies the song and goes on to represent the album simultaneously. Harry has quoted that, during this album, "the times he felt he felt good were the happiest he's ever felt in his life" and that, "the times he felt sad were the lowest," which is depicted through this song using the extremity of emotions. The song characterises the need for balance between the highs and lows of love and life in general – of the darkness and light; good and bad; peaceful and tumultuous and the

culmination of blisses and miseries. He is seen as sitting on the fence and treading a fine line between both, and this is established through the lyricism of the melody.

In the first verse, the song starts with “put a price on emotion, I’m looking for something to buy” which highlights from the beginning the importance of human emotions as being ‘priceless’ and becomes the song’s motif. While there are hints of prostitution, I think he is really trying to say that he is numb and in want of feeling. The noun “devotion” which then leads on to “hate” epitomises the ongoing theme of there being a ‘fine line’ between opposite emotions, and starts the thread of biblical language in relation to one interpretation of this song being about the exploration of religion and your relationship with it. In addition, in the second verse he says, “I don’t want to fight you,” which shows him settling for what he has, but then also goes on to say “I don’t wanna sleep in the dirt,” which could be a reference to dying and links to a fear of death (an almost universal characteristic in the human condition, as mortality composes one of the essentials).

Following this, in the third verse, “test of my patience” signals restlessness and links to a poem by Richard Brautigan which Harry has said before is close to his heart: “The Wait” is about yearning for love but trusting the process that everything will work out in the end, which suggests Harry was heavily influenced by this poem when writing Fine Line. Moreover, the phrase “you sunshine, you temptress” echoes Charles Bukowski, whose poetry Harry has used before in songs like ‘Woman’ with “you flower, you feast”. “Sunshine” and “temptress” both infer biblical imagery again, as the Egyptians believed the sun was a god and a temptress is a mercurial, alluring figure, which implies he is captivated but does not want to ‘burn’. The ending of the third verse, “my hand’s at risk, I fold,” then refers to poker, and points towards him being scared and closing off as he doesn’t want to risk anything, which again references him settling and not wanting to be vulnerable and changing.

Next, in the fourth verse, the sibilant and strong plosive sounds in “crisp trepidation” represent the harsh feelings of fear and anxiety he has, as he tries to “shake” his hesitation. Then, the last lines before the repetition, leaves the listener/reader feelings of being shattered, as the song helplessly cries out “spreading you open is the only way of knowing you,” which suggests he is pleading and craving for connection both physically (which gives sensual undertones) and mentally. However, in another interpretation, he may also be talking about himself in the third person, which infers he is angry at himself because he cannot easily open up and connect with people. The iteration of “we’ll be fine line” is then repeated many times, almost characterising a panic attack (intense fear or apprehension) and possibly displays a way of coping, by repeating the same phrase over and over.

Finally, the repetition of “we’ll be alright” at the end, creates uncertainty as we come out of the song’s darkly beautiful haze into a big, semi-hopeful ending. There could be two ways of depicting this: while it could be depressing and fatalistic in that he is trying to convince and reassure himself that everything will be alright (hinting at a tone of uncertainty and despair), it could also be a more uplifting and hopeful ending, as the repetition could be emphasising that he, and his relationship or life in general, will be ‘OK’. Furthermore, the fact that the intro of the song, which begins more hopeless with a mood of melancholy, changes and ends on a high note with prophetic language is additional evidence that people are meant to take away a more assured, slightly optimistic meaning to the song. Similarly, the song could also be objectively describing the human condition, with the undeniable message that as people, we all go through life and love treading a fine line between happiness and sadness; no one person will go without one of the two, and no matter what stage you are at now, there is the indisputable fact that we will all be alright.

Cherry Wine by Hozier

Victoria Millington, Lower Sixth

Her eyes and words are so icy
Oh but she burns
Like rum on a fire
Hot and fast and angry
As she can be
I walk my days on a wire

It looks ugly, but it's clean
Oh mamma, don't fuss over me

The way she tells me I'm hers and she is mine
Open hand or closed fist would be fine
The blood is rare and sweet as cherry wine

Calls of guilty thrown at me
All while she stains
The sheets of some other
Thrown at me so powerfully
Just like she throws with the arm of her brother

But I want it, it's a crime
That she's not around most of the time

Way she shows me I'm hers and she is mine
Open hand or closed fist would be fine
The blood is rare and sweet as cherry wine

Her fight and fury is fiery
Oh but she loves
Like sleep to the freezing
Sweet and right and merciful
I'm all but washed
In the tide of her breathing

And it's worth it, it's divine
I have this some of the time

Way she shows me I'm hers and she is mine
Open hand or closed fist would be fine
The blood is rare and sweet as cherry wine

Hushed indie folk song “Cherry Wine” could easily be mistaken for a pure love song upon first listen, but a read of its lyrics exposes its much more sinister meaning. Accompanied by just an acoustic guitar, Hozier details an emotionally and physically abusive relationship that is almost lovingly excused by the victim. It offers a unique insight from a male sufferer’s point of view and exposes the ‘cycle of justification’ often found in situations of domestic violence. Released as a charity single, all proceeds from its download go to anti-domestic violence charities to raise awareness for the issue.

The first verse immediately paints a picture of the relationship, in which the victim is attached, dependent and blind to the seriousness of his lover’s actions due to his love for her. The abuse is volatile and unpredictable, the abuser’s mood changing fast and often. With the harsh vowel of “eyes” and “icy”, Hozier creates a piercing internal rhyme that presents the abuser’s actions as merciless and unfeeling. A contrast is also created between ice and fire, this juxtaposition highlighting she is both kind and cruel, cold and passionate. Like all alcoholic beverages, rum is flammable and, although this flame may be destructive, dangerous and unpredictable (like her explosive rage), alcohol is also comforting and intoxicating – there are reasons he stays with her. However, he must not upset the delicate balance of their relationship as angering her is like falling from a tightrope. This metaphor could also indicate how her mood changes as quickly as you can lose balance on a wire. To the outside eye the abusive relationship appears “ugly”, but to the victim it is pure, “clean” and something he wants to be in. He downplays the seriousness of the abuse and although he understands it is dysfunctional, he is so strongly attached to her he is in denial of the situation.

In the pre-chorus and chorus, Hozier packs a lot of possible interpretations into just five lines. By begging his mother not to draw attention to his injuries, the victim implies a masculinity issue and the real

urge many men have to hide their emotions and weaknesses, no matter how big. With the pre-chorus, Hozier may be criticising society’s expectations of men to be unaffected by emotional and physical pain, emotion commonly being regarded as a feminine quality. This fear of appearing weak may be why the victim does not leave his abuser. In the first line of the chorus, the victim may be trying to rationalise the abuse as simply “the way she tells



me I’m hers and she is mine” – it is just how she shows she loves him. He is almost fond of her treatment as with it comes a sense of intimacy and belonging. Perhaps it has been going on for so long he is unable distinguish between what is love and what is abuse, which makes both “fine”. The blood and cherry wine are used as similes of each other, this juxtaposition again highlighting that love and abuse come hand in hand in the victim’s mind – the relationship is both horrible and wonderful. Like alcohol, she is intoxicating and addictive, and because of this he doesn’t realise the pain he is in. By describing the blood as “rare”, the victim rationalises the abuse as not being an everyday occurrence. It is “sweet”, and he does not care what she puts him through because he loves her so much and so blindly.

In the second verse and second pre-chorus, the abuser may be accusing the victim of infidelity, despite cheating herself (he is not hers and she is not his like the chorus states after all). Her manipulation is so effective he feels like the guilty one for bringing out the bad sides of her. The description of stained sheets is an explicit sexual reference that could relate back to cherry wine, which can also leave a lasting mark when spilled. Like wine, the abuser will make a mess and, once she has, it is very difficult to get rid of her. However the “calls of guilty” are thrown just as “powerfully” as her punches – the emotional abuse is just as bad as the physical abuse. The “crime” of the second pre-chorus may have three possible meanings – that he wants her despite how she treats him, that she treats him so badly despite how much he loves her, and that he is so dependent on her presence she shouldn’t ever be apart from him. Her not being around may also allude to her infidelity, and abuse is a literal crime that can result in a prison sentence.

The third verse and final pre-chorus describe the way “she loves” outweighs her “fury”. In his mind, the rare positive aspects of being with her make all the negative worth it. He is so in love with her that any attention from her heals his wounds and makes him feel like he is being reborn – there are religious connotations of being “washed in the tide”. However her love is “like sleep to the freezing”, the idea being that if someone with hypothermia falls asleep, it will likely kill them, but sleep is attractive as it is relief to their suffering. She is dangerous, but he is not strong enough to resist her temptation. In the final pre-chorus, we understand there are rare “divine” moments that make it all worth it. He knows her anger and fury will eventually pass and, for “some of the time”, she will embody the person he loves – the bitter moments make the good times that much sweeter. The double entendre of her love being “divine” relates to it being delightful and pleasing, but also has a Godlike sense and suggests he worships her. And finally, the fact that the pre-

choruses evolve from “most of the time” to “some of the time” indicate the abuse is getting worse, or that he is becoming disillusioned to the relationship and realising that the good does not outweigh the bad after all.

In conclusion, the lyrics of “Cherry Wine” are as rich in imagery and metaphors as any modern poem and show that music should not be dismissed as a literary art form. Like much of Hozier’s other work, “Cherry Wine” involves themes of duality with the line between passion and trauma so fine they are almost indistinguishable.

They'll Like Me When I'm Sick by Flatsound

Isabel Marshall, Lower Sixth

Start from the beginning.

Hi, my name is Mitchell Welling
I am nineteen years old
I am a musician
Would you like to hear a song?

Hi, my name is none of your concern
Just listen and judge me for what you think I'm
worth
And you said, I like the way your fingers play the
chords
I like the way you make me feel at home, woah

I heard you're at it again
I just called to say I never left
And good luck, good luck, good luck, good luck,
good luck
I heard you needed some
If your father could see the mess you made, he
wouldn't like it very much
You're playing a game entitled, "Hey they're going
to like me when I'm sick"
Just don't lie in the bed you made yourself and expect
me to tuck you in
'Cause I won't

Because I liked the way my fingers played with
yours
Yeah, I liked the way you make me feel at home,
woah

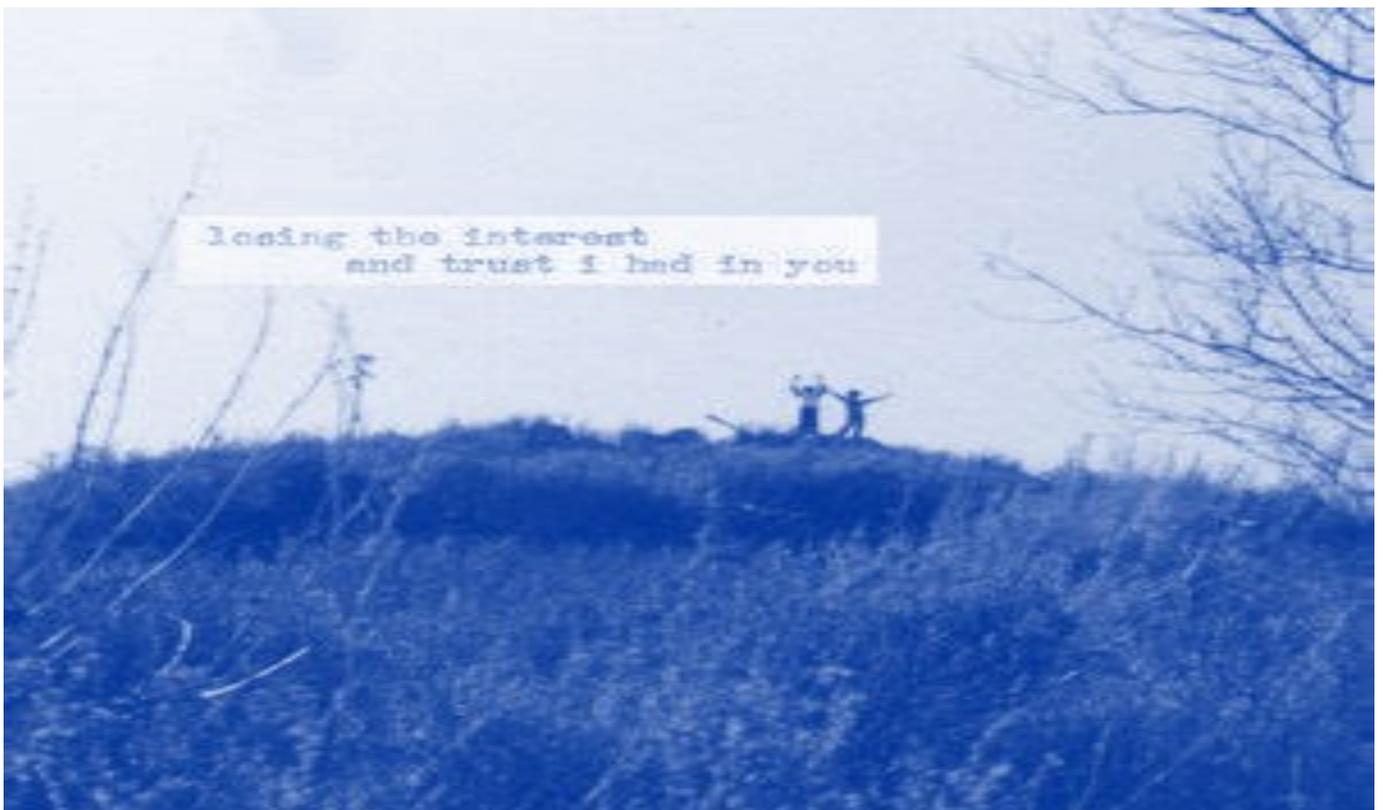
The first stanza helps to establish the personal nature of the song, as though Flatsound is reporting a story he experienced himself. By beginning with spoken word and introducing himself with "Hi, my name is Mitchell Welling," it creates the impression he is introducing himself to strangers, as if they are people who do not even know such basic information as his name, and he does not know them in

return, perhaps creating a sense that this story is so deeply personal Flatsound can recount it only in a symbolically anonymous setting. Additionally, it introduces Flatsound to the listener, creating a personal connection that allows the song itself to invoke emotion in the audience. The verse ends with the rhetorical question "would you like to hear a song?" as if he is inviting the listener into his life and career, to learn more about him aside from simply his name, age and occupation.

There is also a sense of quiet judgement without malice throughout the song, as though he is simply asking the audience for advice or to simply be an ear to rant to. The simple question of "would you like to hear a song?" in the first stanza is an invitation to something more personal, and although it is inevitable that the song will follow, it can still be insinuated that Flatsound is asking the permission of these people to tell his story and explain his frustration, as if the audience are friends who can give him advice or comfort. This is explicitly stated in the following stanza as he declares "just listen and judge me for what you think I'm worth." By imploring the audience to simply "listen," he is requesting their attention, emphasised by the use of "Just" to suggest that they should not speak or ask questions but simply hear the whole story, again making it seem as if the audience is there as a friend to confide in, contrasting against the introductory first stanza that seemed to suggest the audience and Flatsound were strangers to one another. The line "I heard you're at it again" is a part of Flatsound's story which he is now immersed in, referring to his friend's actions. The phrase "at it again" is often thought of as derogatory towards activities that are frowned upon by society, suggesting that this time it is Flatsound's turn to pass judgement, this time towards his friend, emphasised by the fact he "heard" about his friend's actions, suggesting Flatsound had to be told about it by someone else as if he had lost touch with this person he cares about so deeply.

Structure is used frequently to create a sense of the building anger and desperation Flatsound has towards his friend's actions. The lack of distinct verses or chorus in the song makes it seem as if he is venting his frustration in an unstructured, unplanned way that seems sincere and heart wrenching. Enjambment is also used frequently to create a sense of desperation, as though Flatsound is willing the subject of his song to listen to him sincerely. At what almost seems to be the pinnacle of his anger, Flatsound declares "just don't lie in the bed you made/ yourself and expect me to tuck you in/ because I won't," which sounds rushed and emotional, as though his words are spilling out from his mouth. Additionally, the use of the phrase "lie in the bed you made yourself" usually creates an unfeeling, exasperated tone, as though the person saying it has told the person they deserve what consequences are coming to them, however as Flatsound refuses "tuck [them] in" it suggests he still holds a deep unconditional love for his friend, despite the bad choices they made. All of this suggests that Flatsound's story is a source of deep distress for him which further causes the listener to share his sad emotions.

Throughout the whole song, it is only the voice of Flatsound and his acoustic guitar that is heard, with the guitar playing the same simple phrase repeatedly throughout the whole song. The simplicity and unstructured nature of the song emphasises the meaning of the lyrics and makes the song seem more personal, like a one on one conversation between Flatsound and the listener.



I. the Sun by The Microphones

Adam Murray, Lower Sixth

See me waving my handkerchief on the shore
see my arm raised high

see that ship sail off
with its sails aloft
and see me dry my eyes
and see more
salty tears flow
as my house is blown wide
and see me watch the waves roll in from somewhere
see me squint my eyes
see me learn to live without my loved ones
see me scan the skys
and see
the flock of birds goodbye
and turn to go inside
but I feel you
on my neck

you are a bow of fire

see me reach up
see me touch my neck
see my fingers recoil
see the life come into my body
see me living wide
and see me look from side to side
and tiptoe in your light
see me look at you and lose my sight
and while my eyes burned I saw it

oh no

here comes a black ship
rising under red sail
see it fill the sky
see it bellow up
see the their gleaming eyes
hear their scary trumpets on

see me run in terror for the mountain
see me scramble high
and see me burned and blind
and all hopeless and barren
see me sprawled out
see me crawl and whine
see me search for signs
and I see you weird and high

you are a bow
are a bow of fire
you are a bow of fire
you are a bow

From birth to death, Mount Eerie is a journey of two kinds: the literal journey we follow through the story of the album and an emotional one; exploring death, anxiety, longing, and nature, as we follow our protagonist up the mountain. The Journey begins with one remarkable song: 'I. The Sun'

Mount Eerie is a mind-bending concept album by singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, Phil Elverum, released under his moniker of The Microphones. It is the follow up to his 2001 breakout hit, *The Glow Pt.2*, known for its warm, layered acoustic guitars and Phil's emotional, shy and personal vocals that often clash with, and are buried by the harsh distorted bass that persists through the album.

Though many of the key features found in Phil's music is present on Mount Eerie and it remains uniquely Phil Elverum, the album is an extremely different experience to its predecessor, despite picking up exactly where it left off. It is an 'autobiographical' account of Phil climbing the titular Mount Eerie, which is a real mountain near where he grew up (although, it's real name is Mount Erie). The mountain is a recurring theme in his work, and the significance of it is no better illustrated than by the fact the album retroactively became self-titled as he started making music under the name of Mount Eerie later in 2003. His journey to the summit is used to represent his situation at the time, wandering America from gig to gig, still bewildered by early adulthood and battling many personal demons such as his depression and desire to leave an impression on the world. The song I have chosen to analyse is the opening song 'I. The Sun', as it builds the narrative and is the foundation of this album which, in many ways, feels like a single, continuous song.

'I. The Sun' is a seventeen-minute journey, beginning with Phil not yet born, and ending with him beginning his ascension of Mount Eerie. The first thing we hear is a distant foghorn and a slow, barely audible heartbeat. The final song on his previous album 'The Glow, Pt.2', *My Warm Blood*, ended with the same heartbeat that stops abruptly as the album ends. This is used to imply that Phil has died. The

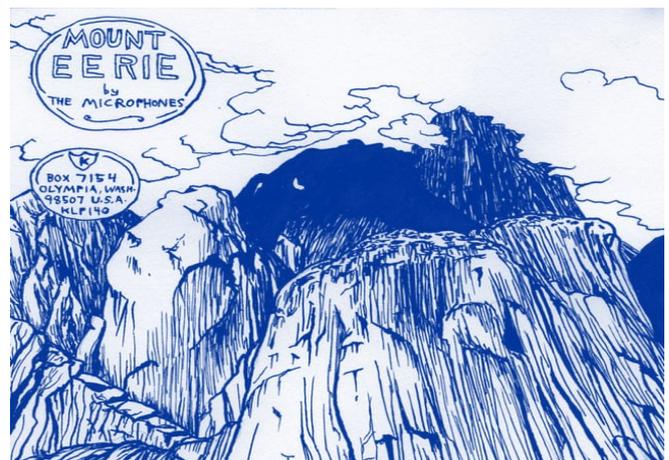
lyrics also allude to this, as he talks about how his "blood barely flows", implying a weakened, aged condition or possibly the absence of a beating heart, as well as him being alone aside from the flies that have gathered as "they know my [Phil's] red blood is warm still", because he is recently deceased. Phil also states, "It's dark", a piece of symbolism which will become important later, and also implies death. There is a quiet sample of the guitar used on the opening song, 'I want wind to blow', that is present at the end of 'My warm Blood' and the start of 'I. The Sun' which further connects the albums. The foghorn was also heard throughout the previous album and represented the looming threat and fear of death. The heartbeat we hear in 'I. The Sun' is Phil's birth (or rebirth), and these are his first heartbeats inside the womb. However, the foghorn is still present. Even before his birth, the inevitability of death is present. The distance of the foghorn could imply it is outside of the womb, or in other words his mother's foghorn showing his mother, like most living things, lives under the threat of death. Phil writes in his booklet 'Headwaters' that accompanies the album: "00 to 4:57 represent the growing up time our main character spends before being born. Womb time... the simple heartbeat growing more complicated and 'worldly' as the baby sprouts fingers, etc." After 4:57 the heartbeat gets drowned out by a samba beat. The next 5 minutes 45 seconds, to again quote from 'Headwaters', is "the sped-up soundtrack to 24 years of life". Three horn swells can be heard at different point in this section, each representing a new dawn, "the sound of sunrise", as he moves through different stages of his life. 'Dawn' I will from now on be using it to refer to a new chapter of his life beginning, as Phil does. The samba drums end abruptly. We are now in the present.

The vocals begin at around 10:43 with “see me wave my handkerchief on the shore”. Phil uses to cliché of waving a ship goodbye to represent him leaving behind his late adolescence and the comforts that come with it, such as his family and friends. These two ‘comforts’ in particular are referred to when Phil says: “See me learn to live without my loved ones”. This line could also be a reference to his breakup with his girlfriend that inspired much of ‘The Glow, Pt.2’, but either way it is clear he is not yet able to do so as he still must “learn”. This parting is not enjoyable for him as he seems to be unable to stop crying despite his best efforts in the line: “see me dry my eyes; And see my salty tears flow”. The earth-shattering consequences of this change in his life are seen when he says: “my house is blown wide”, showing how he feels he no longer has a stable or familiar place to live in this new chapter, or the house could be a metaphor for his life as a whole, now more uncertain and unstable. He continues “And see me watch the waves roll in from (somewhere)”. The word “(somewhere)” is written in brackets, mirroring the many songs he has written entitled ‘(something)’, or some variation of this such as ‘(something)⁻¹’. The brackets show this “(somewhere)” is a place of significance – “(somewhere)” is a specific, single location all the ships are coming from and leaving to, this location is unknown however, hence how ambiguously he refers to it. He is unsure of how and why life progresses the way it does, and all he is able to do is “watch the waves roll in.” This first verse I believe to be a recap of sorts to the feelings explored in ‘The Glow Pt.2’ which were the hardships of this period of his life and the struggle to transition into the next.

After watching “that ship sail off” he begins to “scan the skies” as he has become aware that he can feel the sun on his neck, and we transition into the chorus. The warmth of the sun he feels shows he is in the middle of a chapter at this point in the story. Phil talks directly to the sun now he has been left alone by everyone in his life: “You are a ball of fire!” This is an image of power, and personifies the sun as a ferocious creature. It also serves to contrast the significance placed on it. It dictates every aspect of life on earth; our daily routines, the seasons, years, the tides; yet all it is in reality is a ball of fire. Phil is

not exempt from this slavish sun-worship that he implies, as he pleads to it repeatedly: “See me.”

These pleas change in the second verse to describe his actions as he performs them, for example, “see me touch my neck”. When he does so his “fingers recoil” further demonstrating the heat and power of the sun. The next lines detail his progress since the rise of the last dawn and the sailing of the ship. “See the life come back into my body” tells us he has learned to live with the change, as well as mirroring the transition between the two albums where we literally hear the life come back into his body before he is born. He continues: “See me living wide” showing he has grown accustomed to his new life and situation and is able to still live in the “house” that was “blown wide.” “Wide” in both uses may be more literal, referring to his new lifestyle of constantly touring his music, living in a wide range of places temporarily. However, he still carries the fear of the next dawn coming seen previously. Phil sings “see me look side to side and tiptoe in your light” demonstrating his fear, checking around him and moving carefully as if to avoid another dawn. This fear has become an all-encompassing obsession leading to him staring into the sun to be constantly aware of its position. It is made clear this is harmful to him when he says “see me look at you and lose my sight”; the fear of the future is still affecting and damaging his life despite his new-found comfort in his situation. This constant staring is futile to prevent a new dawn, however, as “while [his] eyes burned [he] saw it” and he exclaims “Oh, no!”



Just as the previous left, the new dawn comes in the form of a ship. The image Phil uses to explain this is one of a ship coming up over the horizon. First the sail appears, followed by the ship itself. He describes it as “a black ship rising under a red sail”. The red sail is a metaphor for a red sun rising over the horizon during sunrise and colouring the sky red in the line “I see it fill the sky!”, which also makes this ship seem very large and imposing. The ship that follows the sail is black, as night is. If day represents life and each dawn the beginning of a new chapter, night and darkness represents death. Death inevitably follows life, as night follows day, and the ship follows its sail. Black representing death is solidified later in the album as the personification of death becomes a character called King Dark Death, who refers to death as “big black death”, who will “breathe on you with his breath”. “His breath” is the wind, another motif he uses later in the album, as well as being what “blows” each ship forwards as if the passage of time and arrival of these new dawns are only to serve King Dark Death, moving him closer. The idea of death is also reinforced by the reintroduction of the foghorn referred to when Phil urges the sun and the listener “hear their scary trumpets!”. Hearing the trumpets coming from the ship clarifies to the listener the three horns in the opening instrumental were similar ships.

This is where the album's journey begins. Phil turns to “run in terror for the mountain” which was a prominent part of his childhood. When he “scrambles high” he is desperately trying to get away from the rising sun and return to his youth. It is clear this is a last-ditch effort through the way he describes himself as “burned and blind and all hopeless and barren”. He is “burned and blind” from staring into and bearing the heat of the sun for so long. The idea of being “barren” is referred to in the next song ‘II. Solar System’, where he “feels his way through the dark” of “the creekbed”, where a stream used to flow, but now there’s only “dusty decay.” This introduces the idea of parallels between him, and his experiences and the mountain used later in the album. His attempt to reclaim his younger years is further strengthened in the line: “see me crawl and whine” as a baby or toddler would. Despite all this, the sun still rises and follows

him. Phil says: “I see you; Weird and high”, which further emphasises the juxtaposition between the symbolic sun we have ascribed meaning to and the real sun which is nothing more than “a ball of fire”. Phil is confused by the power of the sun and wishes to escape it still as the song ends and Phil repeats: “You are a ball of fire! You are a ball of fire! You are a ball of fire!”

I've Had Enough by The Who

Tom Keogh, Fourth Year

You were under the impression
That when you were walking forward
You'd end up further onward
But things ain't quite that simple.

You got altered information
You were told to not take chances
You missed out on new dances
Now you're losing all your dimples.

My jacket's gonna be cut and slim and checked,
Maybe a touch of seersucker, with an open neck.
I ride a G.S. scooter with my hair cut neat,
Wear my wartime coat in the wind and sleet.

Love Reign O'er Me.
Love Reign O'er Me.
Love.

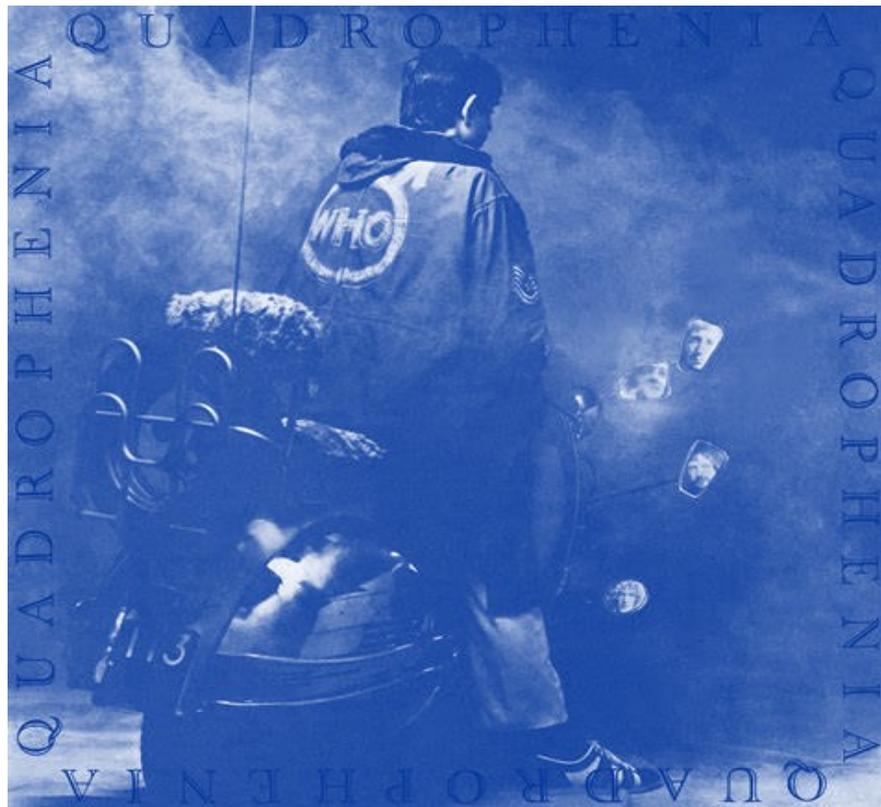
I've had enough of living
I've had enough of dying
I've had enough of smiling
I've had enough of crying
I've taken all the high roads
I've squandered and I've saved
I've had enough of childhood
I've had enough of graves...

Get a job and fight to keep it,
Strike out to reach a moun-
Be so nice on the outside
But inside keep ambition

Don't cry because you hunt them
Hurt them first they'll love you
There's a millionaire above you
And you're under his suspicion.

I've had enough of dancehalls
I've had enough of pills
I've had enough of streetfights
I've seen my share of kills
I'm finished with the fashions
And acting like I'm tough

I'm bored with hate and passion
I've had enough of trying to love



tain.

Written by master songwriter and Who guitarist Pete Townshend, I've Had Enough is the tenth track on The Who's 1973 rock opera Quadrophenia, the story of Jimmy, a member of the youth movement known as the Mods, rivals of the Rockers, in the mid-1960s. It tells of his hardships in work, in love, and the ever-raging war between the four aspects of himself, each one representing a member of the band. In this track, Jimmy is contemplating suicide after being misunderstood by a psychiatrist, rejected by his parents, rejected by his girlfriend in favour of his best friend, finding work boring and monotonous, and destroying his scooter, now finding himself in a train station thinking of throwing himself upon the tracks and ending it all.

In the movie adaptation, this track is much more poignant, as after a similar rejection by everything he has come to know and love and believe in, it plays behind a scene where Jimmy rides his scooter off a cliff, the ending remaining unclear as we only see the scooter fall, and not Jimmy, the heightened emotion of Jimmy clear on the actor Phil Daniels, now a legend among Mods.

This may be hard rock, but don't be fooled by the stereotype of overdrive-drenched guitars and lyrics dripping with love and grandeur – this is musical poetry.

The opening chords and drums set up the intensity of the track, mirroring our protagonist's intensity of emotion at this moment, helping listeners to comprehend more clearly and concisely than words the torrent of boiling emotions coursing through him.

This leads into the initial stanza, where the obvious logic of walking forwards leading you to move onwards being denied lets the listener into how Jimmy feels after his all-encompassing rejection, and how little sense the world seems to make to him at that moment as all of it appears turned against him, by making us feel confused by this literally nonsensical statement. It's not the actual thoughts of Jimmy, rather it seems an illustrative device of his feelings, almost like a comparison, as if Townshend is saying

"Imagine how you'd feel if someone told you this", which is genius to me.

The next stanza shows Jimmy contemplating life under his parents, being given what he sees as "altered information" perhaps to do with his lifestyle and their attempts to curb it with advice such as being "told to not take chances", part of the overwhelming rejection he sees in every aspect of his life that he thought could never let him down. This shows how much thought he's giving to suicide and thus how real of an option it is to him, indicating how broken he is from these experiences. Also, the inclusion of an actual situation of rejection, in this case of his lifestyle by his parents, allows the audience to sympathise with him by imagining how they would feel in his shoes and grasp more comprehensively his extreme emotional state at that time.

In the next stanza, the song changes pace and takes on a more traditional rock feel, as the lyrics speak of Jimmy's perfect tailored suit, a "GS scooter" and a "war-torn" parka coat, the ideal items for Mods. This less intense feel reflects the joy he has had being a Mod, and its inclusion here representing his contemplation of this, again showing how seriously he's considering the suicide and more aspects of his life he feels rejected by, after having been left behind in fashion terms and seemingly betrayed by one of his own when his girlfriend leaves him for his best friend, again hammering home to the audience how many aspects of his life he feels betrayed by, and allowing them to better understand his pain.

This less serious feeling is washed away by rolling, wave-like ostinatos, linking in to an album-wide theme of the sea, perhaps a metaphor for Jimmy himself and his changeability due to his four-way split personality. In this case, it can be interpreted as representing the stormy, crashing waves of his intense emotions as he thinks of the end and of all that has driven him to this moment, crying out, "Love, reign o'er me",

After this, the music builds back up into a repetition of the first section, bar the lyrics. These outline the way Jimmy sees the world of so-called “success” that he has had to toil under, the rules his parents and their generation have given him to live by, and the lifestyle they believe he should lead, when in actuality this is not what he wants. This is yet again another example of Jimmy contemplating his holistic rejection by all he trusts, tying into his serious consideration of the suicide mentioned earlier, and including perhaps his own criticisms of such a life, describing the way he should “hunt” those he wishes to be respected by, this verb connoting animalistic and violent behaviour, implying that Jimmy believes such a lifestyle is wrong, and thusly emphasising his and his parents’ difference in opinion and consequently how distant he feels from them when they don’t accept his way of life.

Subsequently the suit lyrical motif returns again in the following stanza, the repetition of which and of the intense parental theme highlight how much Jimmy is thinking about this, rolling it over in his head repeatedly, tying into the seriousness of his suicidal contemplation.

Another part returns, this time the “I’ve had enough” refrain, this time with a more literal depiction of Jimmy’s life, of dance halls, pills, fashions and the fights with Rockers on the beaches of holiday resort towns, not only giving the listener an insight into the life of a Mod but also extending the more general focus of the last instance of the refrain, making his discontent related to his life as well as life itself, emphasising how personally all that has happened in the album thus far has affected him, another aspect of his grief the audience is now able to grasp.

The song ends with all the instruments cutting out just after starting another bar, perhaps representing the potential life Jimmy could have had, represented in the bar that is suggested to be there but is cut off, and a train zooms across the stereo field. Of course, this is all in his head, as the album does continue on after this, but the fact he imagines this in such detail, going so far as to envision the moment itself, shows once more how desperate he is in how serious he contemplates suicide, resulting in the listener again seeing Jimmy’s agony in full view.

All in all, I’ve Had Enough engages the listener to relate to Jimmy’s struggle through the use of musical metaphors such as the rising intensity of the intro, the literal translations of Jimmy’s view of things to help a listener understand such a view, and the sadness created through the simple music behind the mournful lyrics of the “I’ve had enough” sections implying a determination in him to end it all.

This song is one of many examples of song writing genius by Pete Townshend, part of why I love The Who and this album. I highly recommend giving this, the album and the band’s other works a listen (seemingly the goal of my life at this point is to get everyone to do this), even if you’re not a rock person.



TELEVISION AND FILM

A literary adaptation holds an important duty towards its original piece. To create the same level of detail visually, as is presented verbally, is a difficult undertaking, due to the expectations of enthusiasts, or belief that the 'work has already been done'.

Depictions of novels, will inevitably be criticised for not living up to the writer's intentions. While a book can become deeply personal, due to the imagination it encourages, a film merely hands you one interpretation, and therefore, automatically, limits the scope for creativity. But the joy perhaps lies in this interpretation, through being able to see how a director saw a story playing in their mind.

For this section, we wanted to place more of a focus on adaptations of classic novels, to particularly examine how 'successful' the adaptation was, at relaying the story of the written work. Read on for reviews of, *The Handmaid's Tale* by last year's editor Grace Shropshire, *Fight Club*, and more, as we explore whether or not a novel can translate seamlessly to a screen.

Editor Shanzay Hanuk

The Great Gatsby

Shanzay Hanuk, Lower Sixth

Baz Luhrmann, known for his grand, theatrical approach to storytelling, injects a vitality into his adaptation of 'The Great Gatsby', using the fluid camera motion, and the busy, almost urgent, shots of the film, to excellently convey the supposed revelry of the Jazz Age. Looking back on the events of 1922, Nick narrates his journey through the chaos of the summer, and presents the life of Gatsby, with whom his life gradually becomes intertwined.

While some critics argue that Luhrmann 'trampled over the intricacies of the novel', it can be argued that the way to bring the novel to life, was through a showy, decadent portrayal of the 1920's, with the concept of the cracks in American society, as a level which is always present, but not an active participant, such as the watchful eyes of Dr T.J. Eckleburg. While there were moments throughout the film which felt lacking in scenes, and were conveyed to the reader more specifically in the book, the description of a scene versus the visual representation of it, is, at its root, an inevitable disconnect between mediums, as the argument continues, of how much responsibility a director has to the source material they are adapting. Similar to Greta Gerwig's non-linear story telling in *Little Women* (2019), it can be maintained that Luhrmann took the material he needed from the novel, and created a dramatic piece, rather than a line for line conversion. The claims that Luhrmann 'didn't stay true to the novel' are not well-founded; asking a director to not add their own interpretation on a piece they are adapting, is simply asking them to omit their presence from their work completely.

Utilising rapidly changing reaction shots, a warm, almost hazy colour grade, and extravagant set design, Luhrmann captures the chaos and energy of the Jazz Age, but changes the viewer's position; rather than a critical reader, we have now been invited to Gatsby's parties, immersed in the rose-tinted view of their reality, with 'a tray of cocktails floating

at us through the twilight', while society's pre-war morals deteriorate.

The film utilising the subtle infusion of modern music into a 1920's context was a fresh take, similar to the classical versions of songs such as 'thank u next' and 'bad guy' in Netflix's 'Bridgerton'. Additionally, the costume design, which won an Academy Award, uses the novel's descriptions to envelop the character in their symbolism and importance to the narrative. While Daisy maintains her 'innocence' through, usually, pastel dresses, with whites, creams and lilac, Myrtle's stark contrast to her is highlighted by the use of red and green, alluding to the fixed position of women in literature, either as the epitome of purity, or the 'femme fatale'. Similarly, the prevalence of blue in Tom's wardrobe, is perhaps reminiscent of his Yale days, and solidifies his position as part of 'old money', while Gatsby's ostentatious suits remain true to the novel.

Whilst the film's dramatic adaptation left out some key scenes and in parts, failed at conveying the right tone, such as the desolate nature of Chapter 9, the most important points were dramatic in nature to convey their significance, such as Nick's firework laden first meeting with Gatsby, or the confrontation at the Plaza Hotel. While some critics argued that the film doesn't correctly portray the key themes of the novel, and therefore fails, it is not acknowledged that Fitzgerald never hands the interpretation of this piece to the reader, but rather allows it to be inferred, amidst the frenzied nature of the Roaring 20's. The 'spoon-fed' analysis of American society was neither Fitzgerald's intention, nor Luhrmann's, and therefore, it can be argued that this adaptation of the novel was perhaps the most loyal, conveying the decay of morality, hidden inside the indulgent and lively vibrancy of the decade.

The Handmaid's Tale

Grace Shropshire, Upper Sixth

Margaret Atwood began writing her novel 'The Handmaid's Tale' in the spring of 1984 in West Berlin. In April 2017 the first season of Hulu's adaptation of 'The Handmaid's Tale' was debuted. The show was an immediate hit, earning a 4.7/5 rating on Amazon and a whopping 83% on Rotten Tomatoes. It seemed that the graphically violent and cinematic depiction of Gilead was a car crash from which viewers could not look away, as the series was quickly renewed for a second season. However, amongst the excitement of the premier, I think a few questions remained unanswered. How much of the story had been forgotten? Did Margaret Atwood approve of the alterations to her plot? Had authenticity been sacrificed in the name of garnering more attention? Perhaps. Maybe the original plot being somewhat sensationalised was a positive thing. After all, the writers of the series had to consider the differences between Atwood's initial audience in the mid 80s and the one they were catering to in 2017. It can certainly be argued that, due to the desensitisation of modern audiences, heightened gore



and a more intense plot would be the easiest way of delivering Atwood's original warning of our potential future to society. Surely that is what is important? So, in September of 2020, possibly one of the most disturbingly apt years in which to study the novel, myself and my class were met with the face of Elisabeth Moss, plastered across the cover of

our copies...along with a sicker reading "NOW A MAJOR TV SERIES".

Appearances

One of the most fundamental aspects of creating a hit TV series is casting. This is one area of the Hulu adaptation that exposes the directors' desire to cultivate a very large audience and, consequentially, a very large profit. Can you recall the "arthritic", "hostile" and "limping" Serena Joy, presented to us by Atwood as having a "chin, clenched like a fist"? It seems that the casting director of the TV series couldn't. Instead, we were given tall, slender and youthful Yvonne Strahovski, whose smooth, clear skin and cascading, blonde hair made Serena Joy utterly unrecognisable. After I had worked out that the stunning woman on my screen was in fact supposed to be the tyrannical "Mrs Waterford", my speculation of the characters being glamourised began. Next, I noticed Commander Fred. Similarly tall and slender, the Commander is much younger than Atwood initially intended him to be. With perfectly manicured facial hair and not a stray grey in sight, it is evident that the sex appeal producers wished to perpetuate would also extend to male characters. Furthermore, the LGBTQ+ members of the audience were not going to miss out either as Samira Wiley is cast as Moira. Gaining a large, predominantly queer, fanbase playing Poussay Washington on the hit show 'Orange is the New Black', producers could rest assured that they had covered all demographics when assigning faces to names in their series. The character of Moira is a lesbian in the novel, and I applaud the directors for giving this role to an actress who is openly a lesbian, so surely this is a good choice that makes sense? I would argue that yes, it is. Nevertheless, we must not ignore the tactical choice of an actress who is already known to the queer community as iconic for her previous work, encouraging them to tune in to her newest project.

Finally, we reach Offred. Elisabeth Moss is the perfect age for the part of Offred and she plays the role incredibly well. Her hair is blonde in the series unlike the brunette Offred we see in the novel, however this is trivial and not where my main concerns lie. Let's consider the two different depictions of Offred when she attends the Jezebel's nightclub. In the novel, her makeup is "smudged", her dress is "too tight" and "nothing can be done" about her hair. This realistic portrayal of a woman living in isolation from any form of cosmetics to the extent of using butter as a moisturiser is eradicated by the stylists of the TV show. Offred's slinky sequinned dress that fits her perfectly, combined with her neatly curled hair is a prime example of how the harsh brutality of book Gilead is sacrificed for the sake of aesthetics. Moreover, one promotional image used for the release of the series stuck out to me specifically. In the image, Moss is pictured looking over her shoulder at us with her hair blowing elegantly behind her. The back of her red dress seems to be burning in a 'Hunger Games' type fashion, exposing her shoulders, back and tailbone (historical notes pun very much intended). Next to her is the quote "let us prey", a slogan never once used by Atwood. This image epitomises my problem with this production. It is so deeply ironic that the protagonist of the story, a woman who is sexually abused and systemically commodified, is being overtly sexualised in the name of promoting the show.

Plot changes

There are many ways in which Hulu have altered the plot for the screen. Both the stories of Moira and Janine have been altered –arguably to make them more inclusive and to set their stories up for multiple series. However, it is the protagonist, Offred's story which changes the most.

In the series, Offred successfully conceives Nick's child. This comes after Offred and Nick establish a romantic relationship in the juvenile episode 5. Filled with passionate and cinematic sex scenes chock a block with rippling muscles and beautiful music, their love affair is much longer than that of

the couple we see in the novel. It has been debated as to whether the significant improvement of Offred's life due to Nick, a man, in the novel, undermines it's feminist message. I disagree with this view as I feel that Atwood is highlighting how women are so trapped within patriarchal society that they often can only find liberation with the help of men or through 'bad' behaviour. Furthermore, if having a relationship with Nick allows our protagonist to cope with the torment of Gilead, why should she be condemned? She spends the majority of the novel feeling so isolated that she considers suicide. Therefore it's unjust to discredit Atwood as a feminist author as what she presents to us is realistic. The key difference between this and the series is that the TV show makes use of Nick as a typical 'love interest' to create drama. We wonder about the love triangle between Luke, Nick and June and how this will pan out if she is to escape. We also enjoy the tension created when Nick is forced to facilitate Offred's illicit meetings with Fred. Additionally, we feel a connection to Nick as information about his past is revealed, making us invest in the beloved couple even more. Therefore, when it is revealed that she is to have his baby, our interest in their potential life as a family is ignited. Perhaps this reliance on Nick as a character for keeping the audience engaged is what feminist readings should be critiquing. The character of 'June' is different from the original Offred in many other ways including her name, her rebellious tendencies seen as she attends protests and her embrace of Janine as a pitiful friend. However, her pregnancy is definitely the most absurd alteration to the character.

Honourable mentions

Many slightly more minor characters are fleshed out or changed in the TV series. We learn that Ofglen is in a relationship with a Martha leading to her being castrated by the authorities and assigned to another household. Cora the Martha is given a backstory in which her son was killed in the uprising, creating tension between her and Serena. The character of Luke is seen in his pursuit of finding the rebel cause in Canada and he even manages to communicate with Offred, destroying the suspense created in the book as to whether or not he is alive. We see Serena Joy and Fred living normal lives and going on dates before the Sons of Jacob was created. Whilst all of these changes arguably add to the series as a source of entertainment, they also take away from Atwood's original speculative fiction which specifically emphasised the brutality of Gilead.

So how does Margaret Atwood feel about this? In an interview with Vanity Fair she said: "I think it's a bit of a problem for people that know about real totalitarianism that some of these characters have survived for as long as they did. Surely they would have been shot by now?" I personally think this can be said for Janine, Ofglen and even Offred at multiple points in the series. In the novel, the sacrifice of Moira's integrity as a rebel is a true presentation of the regime's ability to crush even the strongest of spirits. Moreover, June's attitude makeover in terms of her feminist beliefs is a clear example of how producers wished to cater to modern audiences who are relentlessly fed the capitalist beast that is 'Girlboss Feminism'. The Handmaid's marching in slow motion to the tune of 'Feeling Good' after the Particution says it all really. When asked about her influence over the series, Atwood said the following: "I have influence but no power. There's a big difference. I'm not the person who can ultimately sign off on anything." This, I was happy to hear.

So what can be said for this conflict between TV and novel, The 1980s and the 2010s, second wave and modern feminism? I have decided to view these two products as separate works...for my own sanity. I

will not surrender Atwood's great work to the grasps of modern day media as they wish for me to do. This novel is not what encouraged Kylie Jenner to celebrate her birthday in a pair of white wings. It will forever stay in my heart in it's original form, historical notes and all, as a work of complete and utter genius. Yes, the TV show is thrilling and exciting, but it is simply not 'The Handmaid's Tale'.

Pictures of The Wasteland: Cormac McCarthy on the Big Screen

Mr Johnson

At the peak of his powers in 2007, MacArthur Fellow and Pulitzer Prize winner Cormac McCarthy was selected by Oprah Winfrey to feature in her televised book club. He was in surprisingly good company. Eschewing the WH Smith buy-one-get-one-half-price brigade which has plagued many a talk show book club, Oprah went literary: over a five-year period, works by Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and even Leo Tolstoy were dissected by the erstwhile TV host turned royal inquisitor.

Whilst Tolstoy never replied to the production team's request for an interview, McCarthy broke the habit of a lifetime and forged ahead with his first major network appearance. Sitting angularly, speaking uncomfortably, he stumbled his way through Oprah's questions until she struck gold. Writers are rarely keen to explain their inspiration, perhaps for fear of stemming its flow. But when Oprah asked where his 'apocalyptic dream' for *The Road* came from, McCarthy let loose:

'My son John, about four years ago, he and I went to El Paso, and we checked into the old hotel there. And one night, John was asleep in the room – it was about two or three o'clock in the morning – and I went over and I just stood and looked out of the window at this town. There was nothing moving but I could hear the trains going through, a very lonesome sound. I just had this image of what this town might look like in fifty or a hundred years. I just had this image of these fires up on the hill and everything being laid waste and I thought a lot about my little boy.'

McCarthy is a master of landscape, and his writing starts with the physical world in front of our eyes, on which we walk, and refigures it for an array of symbolic and mythic purposes which explore the nature of our existence: his early *Border Trilogy*

gives us the American frontier on the cusp of seismic global change; his breakout Western epic *Blood Meridian* turns the baking heat of the desert South into an infernal liminality, a half-crossed threshold to hell in which success is measured by literal scalplings; blockbuster crossover *No Country for Old Men* takes W.B. Yeats' modernist disenchantment with early twentieth century amorality and plants it in the gun-toting cash-in-briefcase trailer parks of the rural border states; *The Road*, familiar to most as the film which brought us Viggo Mortensen's sallow cheeks, torpid eyes, and dad-at-a-festival facial hair, destroys civilisation as we know it and provides us with a vision of America cataclysmically changed by an unspecified ecological disaster.

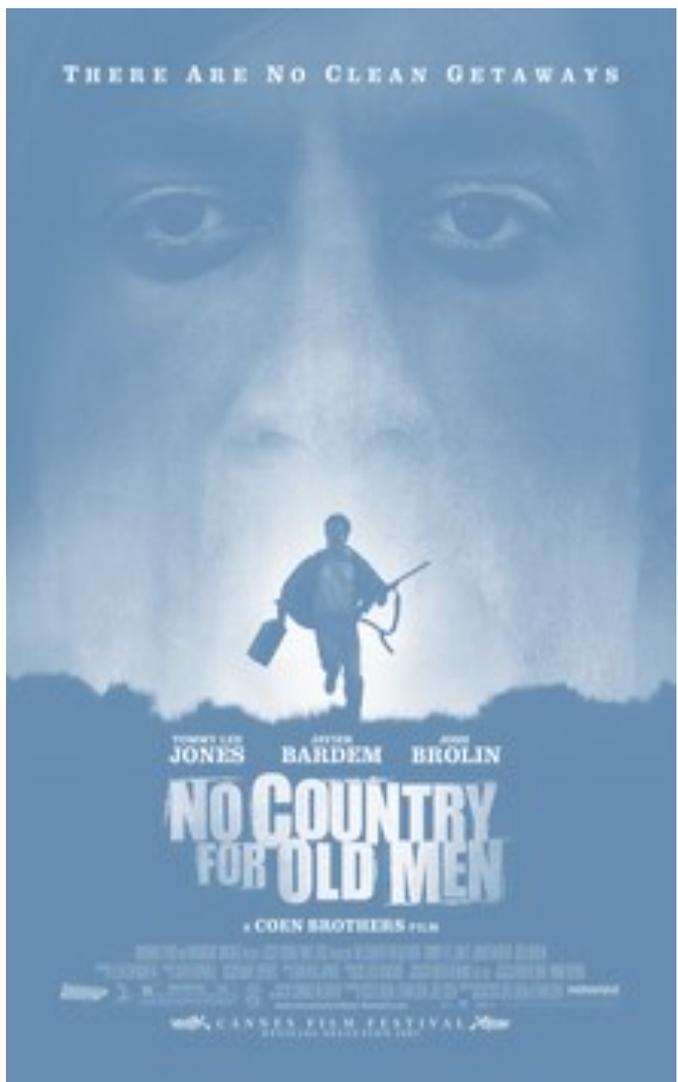
They are beautifully constructed in McCarthy's description, but the idiosyncrasies of each of these places don't really matter. What matters is that they all deal with our literal world – especially the places we have built – being 'laid waste' in order to explore the trials of our inner worlds. His places are all TS Eliot's mythic Waste Land where, as F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote of his generation, 'all Gods [are] dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken.' These barren, isolated geographies serve as the mise-en-scene to the emptiness of modern morality, the franticness of individualism at large, and the capacity for human cruelty when we are uncertain, unchecked, unpoliced.



It works on the page, but it *really* works on the screen. It is perhaps this literal and metaphorical space which has allowed film adaptations of McCarthy's novels to thrive. There are very few authors whose novels can be both so literary and so successful at the box office: John Hillcoat's adaptation of *The Road* took over \$25m at the box office, whilst the Coen Brothers' *No Country* went stratospheric, earning a cool \$170m. There's a simplicity to the formula here which belies the complexity of ideas explored by McCarthy and his directors: wide angle shots cast the characters in opposition to the landscape, small and meaningless dots against the eternity of the natural world; tracking shots of the everyman figure moving through the wilderness suggest the difficulty of avoiding the rank corruption of those around him; close-ups of haggard faces allow us to see the discomfited faces of those struggling to stave off the insanity of perpetual alienation and disorientation. Our heroes are still our heroes, and the villains are still the villains, but McCarthy's characters are also battling the human condition, represented on screen by an omnipresent, indefatigable landscape that broods and looms and threatens. This is modernist thought manifested visually.

The Road's bleak monotone colour scheme is darkly beautiful: a palette of greys transpose the National Parks of the American mainland from outdoorsy paradise to inescapable emptiness, and thus Mortensen has to battle not just cannibals but an alluring and overwhelming sense of the futility of fighting the cannibals, of getting to the coast, of existence itself, where the landscape becomes a symbol of our psycho-social condition. The Coens take are equally uniform with their colours in *No Country*, but the palette is the murky-orange of a desert landscape engulfed in constant flame: Tommy Lee Jones and Woody Harrelson escape the deathly clutches of Javier Bardem's nonchalant hunt, only to find themselves in wasteland after wasteland, an interminable purgatory of life lived just outside the jaws of hell.

When McCarthy's fellow Pulitzer winner Jonathan Franzen was selected to feature in Oprah's Book Club, he kicked up an almighty stink, suggesting that his 2002 family saga *The Corrections* was a 'hard book for that audience.' The literary and publishing world pushed back against the elitist implications of Franzen's statement, but there is a grain of something in there: *The Corrections* is long, complex, and difficult to nail down. It is funny, and eminently readable, but it's never quite clear what the *point* is, and why we should be reading it. This is not the case for McCarthy, where matters life and death are insistently centre stage on page and screen. Perhaps McCarthy succeeded on Oprah for the same reason his novels succeeded in the cinema: the purity of his distillation of the battle within our inner selves, between who we wish to be and who we really are, between where we wish to be and where we really are.



The Color Purple

Isabella Byrne, Lower Sixth

The Color Purple is the film interpretation of Alice Walker's novel about a black woman Celie who endures years abuse and oppression from the men around her. Her story is a sad reflection of gender and race inequalities of the time and the abject poverty of her circumstances.

The audience have an intimate view into over 40 years of Celie's life and the torrid relationships she experiences. In both the book and the film, the depiction of the abuse from her father, agonisingly resulting in two pregnancies and the subsequent removal of her two new-borns is hard to bare. We see her enforced marriage to a man who is many years her senior. We see even in her terrible situation her compassion towards his children and his dominance and her vulnerability. Her character shows shoots of empowerment by the acquiring the gift of becoming literate. She experiences awakening when she meets Shug Avery and takes comfort in her arms and challenges her sexuality. Since the age of 14 Celie has experienced unimaginable suffering, disempowerment, and abuse, despite this she never loses her softness and humour.



Steven Spielberg maintains the authenticity of the novel that Alice Walker created, by ensuring the film like the novel was not a story of Celie's pain and suffering but of her success despite all the obstacles and hardship this woman has endured. In the novel Walker tells Celie's story through letters, many of which were addressed to God. These letters allowed Celie to maintain her voice and sanity in a world of male dominance and oppression of women. The first

time we get to experience Celie's genuine smile is in the presence of singer Shug Avery and this is the turning point in both the film and novel as for the first time Celie realises that love does exist.

Celie's story is also intertwined with other characters such as Sofia who is a strong-willed woman who will not take any discrimination from white people and refuses to be controlled by men. However, unlike Celie life does not get better for Sofia as she is sentenced to prison, her life and free spirit fades and eventually is extinguished. Life ruined Sofia but 'fixed' Celie.

However, whilst Spielberg tries to ensure the movie interpretation is faithful to the book there are a few differences between the film and book. The film presents the relationship between Celie and Shug as very black and white despite the depiction of their relationship in the book being more complex and intimate. This is also seen through the relationships between men and woman as they are stripped of depth and universally portrayed as abusive and oppressive whereas Walker presents the relationships as not so simplistic and even Celie's and Mister's relationship is not purely abusive, there is some understanding and mutual ground between the two.

Overall, the Colour Purple is a novel and film of the traumas and triumphs of Celie growing up and overcoming all that life throws her way. By the end of the novel, she is reunited with her sister Nessie, her husband and has gained independence and fulfilment that 14 years old Celie could only ever dream of. The story concludes with Celie gaining equality and empowering herself, by refusing to accept more oppression, she becomes her own hero.

Fight Club

Joseph Farrelly, Lower Sixth

Fight club (both book and film) has proven to be one of the most successful and enduring pieces of storytelling in recent history. At the time of writing, the film is still ranked as the 10th best of all time by IMDb, and the book has won multiple awards. Furthermore, Fight Club is still endlessly quoted and referenced, with almost everyone knowing the first (and quite possibly second) rule of fight club. Fight club offers complex views on society that are still relevant today (even popularising the use of the term 'snowflake' that is so often used in modern political discussion) and manages to present these views in a captivating (if a little disturbing) manner.

Fight Club is unusual in that both book and film are equally well respected with years of debate, as well as countless internet articles devoted to deciding which is better. In many ways this is unsurprising as the film remains extremely faithful to the novel it is based on. However, there are some crucial changes that the film made on its source material and in this article, I will consider why I think these changes were so important to making the film into the incredible success it has become, and whether they allow the film to improve on the novel it is based on.



Whilst Fight Club is a relatively short book (only 208 pages) it is also quite a convoluted book with a huge number of events, locations and characters packed into the novel. This is not a criticism of the book, as in novel form this style of storytelling works brilliantly. However, it was important for the film to be somewhat leaner and, for want of a better word, simpler. A key example of this is the famous scene in the film in which Tyler drives a car, with the unnamed narrator in

the passenger seat, towards oncoming traffic and forces the narrator to tell him what he would regret if he were to die in that instant. This scene in the film helps the audience to better understand the mind and morals of Tyler Durden and helps to show the increased power he is gaining over the narrator. However, in the book Tyler plays no part in this scene, with it being a member of the terrorist group Project Mayhem instead driving the car. Through small changes like this, the film adapts the story to make it more streamlined and focused. Predominantly, Fight Club is a story about the relationship between the narrator and Tyler, and the film ensures that it always remains focused on this, which is crucial in helping the audience better understand their dynamic in the limited time a film has to tell its story.

Another key change I noticed was the moral differences in the film. In the novel the narrator spirals more and more out of control and actively chooses to make cruel choices as he is slowly consumed by his alter-ego, Tyler. Furthermore, in the novel, the narrator often instigates Tyler's darker actions, whereas in the film he is usually completely oblivious to the things Tyler is doing whilst in control of his body. An example of this is the forming of Project Mayhem, as in the novel the narrator tells Tyler he needs to move on to something bigger just before Project Mayhem is formed, contrastingly, in the novel he is unaware of the formation of the terrorist organisation until after it is done. Tyler is also crueller in the novel as he commits multiple murders. This is toned down in the film and I believe this is crucial to how the film is perceived. The film seems to want the audience to understand and even empathise with Tyler, despite his twisted morals. It is clear that the film wants its audience to think about Tyler's anti-capitalist preaching, even if it does not fully endorse them. If Tyler were to murder anyone in the film the audience would likely dismiss him as evil and not consider what he is saying. I also believe this desire for Tyler to be listened to was part of the reason for the much-loved Brad Pitt being cast to play the character. Similarly, the unnamed narrator does not go to the same extremes as his novel counterpart in the film, in fact, many of his novel lines are given to Tyler in the film. I believe this is done so the audience always see him as the voice of reason who is being unwittingly consumed by his villainous alter-ego, rather than actively embracing it. This allows for a more upbeat and hopeful ending to the film, compared to the ominous end to the book. Whilst I would not say the ending to the film is better, it is certainly more satisfying which is a key part of the positive way in which the film is remembered.

The final key difference I noticed between book and film was the difference in Tyler's goal. In the book Tyler's goal is relatively abstract as he aims to destroy a museum to represent his desire to forget history. His film goal is far more practical as he aims to destroy credit card companies to wipe debt and create anarchy. I personally prefer Tyler's goal in the film as it is far more tangible and the ramifications of his success are easier to understand and quantify. It is also interesting to note that Tyler is ultimately successful in the film but fails in the book. In the book, capitalist America is ultimately victorious as it ominously ends by hinting at the return of Tyler. This could show that Tyler is meant to be seen as the villain of the novel. The film's ending is more ambiguous as the narrator ultimately escapes Tyler, but Tyler's plan is ultimately successful, and the ending is relatively upbeat. It is possible that the positive ending is completely down to the narrator's victory in his internal struggle against Tyler, however, it is also important to consider the possibility that Tyler's success in his anti-capitalist campaign is also part of the reason for this upbeat ending. I believe this ambiguity adds an extra layer to the film that causes the audience to ponder the merits of Tyler's philosophy more than the book.

Overall, both book and film are exceptional pieces of art, and each have their own merits, however, I personally prefer the more focused and stylised approach of the film.

LIT CRIT

Literary criticism is the comparison, analysis, and evaluation of works of literature. Essentially, it is an opinion supported by evidence relating to theme, historical or political context. It usually includes discussion of the works content and integrates your ideas in relation to the piece. Our section covers interpretation of a broad variety of texts explored by a range of year groups throughout the school. As literary criticism is such a crucial part in the study of English throughout the curriculum, this is the perfect area to show how work in the classroom translates into wider reading and exploration of other texts at home. In our section we explore feminism, psychological concepts and social and political contemporary issues. The chief function of criticism is to enlighten and stimulate. "The true critic is the one who is equipped for their task by sound knowledge of the subject." We believe that what makes our writers entries so distinctive is their ability to employ this knowledge by producing articulate and descriptive pieces. We hope you enjoy Lit Crit!

Editors: Charlotte Bradly-Potts and Chrysa Dimopoulou

How can poetry—especially the Romantic poetry of John Keats and Percy Shelley—help us cope with adversity?

Chrysa Dimpoulou, Lower Sixth

When addressing this fascinating subject, the current pandemic must be considered. Although many Romantic contemporary poets like Lord Byron (a rival of Keats) wrote literature about the world around them according to their own perspectives, Keats' most well-known work was written in a single year, some out of his own experience in his fight against tuberculosis (his worst fear as his family had also passed from this), a year before his death in 1820. He died without the marriage or in the presence of his love, Fanny Brawne, and away from his home country. And so, his work tells us as modern readers how he may have coped with his own battles, according to his philosophy. Similarly, writers in Keats' circle including Percy Shelley dealt with adversity as a second nature in their lives, due to the 'radical' beliefs they held compared to their 19th century society, making their work adaptable in present day issues.

One exemplary poem with an almost didactic message of this is Keats' Ode on Melancholy. Here, using imperative verbs, he instructs the listener to embrace their despair. He argues that melancholy 'dwells in Beauty', and therefore it shouldn't be drowned out or lessened. In the first stanza, he begins with death-related and even apocalyptic imagery to persuade against going to 'Lethé'. This powerful lexical choice in the opening sentence is directly related to the oblivion of the underworld, and the continued usage of this acts as a warning about the overwhelming nature of pain. He later contrasts this decaying, hedonistic vocabulary for scenic imagery. This is a typical Romantic style, which was used to spread the message of the power of the natural world, over industry, politics and death. In the second stanza, he explains how being 'glut[tonous]' with natural experiences like a 'morning rose', helps humans gain perspective on the most melancholic

thing of all: fleeting beauty, which in essence Keats used as a metaphor for the preciousness of life.

The simplicity of Keats' message is what makes it so timeless. In other words, he encourages humans to accept their own adversity, because everything is temporary. In his poem 'Sleep and Poetry', even he sees himself/poetry to 'tell the most heart-easing things', reflecting how in his contemporary society and our modern one, people may find comfort in literature. The quote 'Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a soul?', which comes from one of his personal letters, shows his belief that pain/difficulties are necessary to form a 'soul'. With coronavirus, many people have faced loss and sorrow, but here Keats explains how this is necessary for our personal development.

Similarly, contemporary Percy Shelley (as a Romantic) wrote about love, political freedom, beauty and nature, but in essence much of his work was about the 'realization of human happiness'. Perhaps because he was inspired by Keats (as seen by the elegy of admiration, 'Adonais' after his passing), he too used the ode style to convey similar messages. In his 'Ode to the West Wind', the 'Wind' is a powerful force of destruction and death. He too, explains how it should too be embraced, as it brings new beginnings. Interestingly, the speaker addresses the wind, referring to it as a 'destroyer and preserver', a direct reference to the Hindu Gods of Shiva and Vishnu. And therefore, Shelley is portraying this 'uncontrollable' force as essential if the 'sister of the Spring' is to fill 'With living hues and odours plain and hill'. Again, common with the genre, natural imagery is embedded throughout each stanza, both associated with the 'west

wind' and the spring, suggesting their inevitability like the seasons. Most importantly, it is the wind called upon rather than the 'spring' to save him from 'fall[ing] upon the thorns of life!'. This suggests that it's this god-like entity that comes before the 'new birth'. He concludes this tarsal ream with a rhetoric and a tone of almost desperation/hope. Using, the emotive marker 'O', he asks 'If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?'. This final line evokes a sense of hope whilst conferring a deeper message: after the bad, the good must be close. This common neoclassic style can give readers hope about what follows difficult times.

Another poem by Shelley 'To a Skylark' which is referenced, praises the beauty of the natural world, compared to the flaws of the human one. Shelley proposes the superiority of the natural world through the symbol of the skylark, which 'must deem... [death] more true and deep than we mortals dream'. Because the skylark is free from earthly matters like 'hate, and pride, and fear' it is 'joy[ful]'. It's worth noting, the speaker may be jealous of the skylark's freedom, which can be linked to Shelley's own desire of freedom from his society (perhaps achieved in his exile?). Nevertheless, he continues

An exploration of Feminism and Depression **in Sylvia Plath's 'The Bell Jar'**

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The Bell Jar is a beautifully written profeminist work of literature, representing the constraints that modern society placed on women of the 1950s and 60s and the psychological turmoil that came with them. Sylvia Plath herself suffered from clinical depression for most of her adult life and the novel effectively employs the main character Esther Greenwood as a device to provide insight into Plath's own experiences with mental illness. The feminism in The Bell Jar is highly significant, as it is a critique of society imposing idealistic and unachievable standards upon women, to which they are expected to conform. If they do not, they are trapped in "the bell jar" which is a metaphor for being isolat-

to say that even if we were rid of these qualities, we wouldn't achieve the bliss found in the skylark because of problems in humanity's sincerity, and by the final stanza, he begs the bird to share 'half the gladness', or in other words, its happiness. The speaker doesn't want to 'lose touch' with nature, as he suggests it holds the answers to our problems. This pantheist message can still correspond with modern audiences and hence why his/others poetry are still studied today. Yes, our society isn't as restrictive as his was but overlooking superficial matters and viewing the wider picture is still relevant in facing challenges today.

To conclude, this poetry was produced at a time when we discovered technology and began drifting from nature. Themes here went onto inspiring the next Victorian generation of poets, such as Wilfred Owen and Christina Rossetti. Our western society has now somewhat evolved to what these poets described/warned against in their work, but this isn't to say that it cannot still advise readers today about the importance of engaging with nature and the world around us to find solutions.

ed from the world. It is important to note at the beginning that Esther seems to be the perfect straight-A student on the road to success, however Plath emphasises how depression can take a hold of and consume anyone, even the people you would least expect. The pivotal theme of mental illness is particularly significant as the novel was written by a woman in the 1960s yet explores issues still relevant in society today, even more so due to the rise in mental illness in the global population resulting from the global pandemic.

At the beginning of the novel, Esther is a young woman who has won an internship at a prestigious magazine in New York, on her journey to accomplishing an incredibly successful and fulfilling life.

She is meant to be having the time of her life, “and wins a prize here and there and ends up steering New York like her own private car”, yet she grapples with uncertainty and discontent: “only I wasn’t steering anything, not even myself”. Esther, due to her developing depression, cannot control the way her life veers and so she remains inert, unable to make a decision that will positively impact her and her life. Consequently, this young woman who is alone, despite living in the bustling city of New York, begins to feel disillusioned despite the fact that her dream of being independent and successful starting to be fulfilled. Esther feels suffocated, viewing the city as superficial and hallow, “I felt very still and empty, the way the eye of a tornado must feel, moving dully along in the middle of the surrounding hullabaloo.” This suggests a void between Esther and the rest of society, the use of the word “hullabaloo”, evokes the sense of life in New York being disorientating and nonsensical. In addition, the natural imagery of a tornado conveys the absolute lack of control she feels in her surroundings, life almost passing by at a pace she feels unable to keep up with. At this point in the novel, her depression is not fully developed but is just beginning to latch onto her as she tries to navigate her future. Plath presents mental illness by displaying how it can happen to anyone at any moment, no matter how perfect or desirable their life may seem.

A considerable factor contributing to her depression is that she is dissatisfied with society, “the silence depressed me. It wasn’t the silence of silence. It was my own silence.” The use of the personal pronoun “my” is possessive, signifying how Esther’s feelings are hers alone to suffer with. She is beginning to feel almost numb and alienated from her environment and beginning to feel the clutches of the Bell Jar. Her previously distinct, clear path in life begins to seem meaningless, “After nineteen years of running after good marks and prizes... I was letting up, slowing down, dropping clean out of the race.” Plath demonstrates the exhaustion that Es-

ther feels by questioning what exactly the purpose of adhering to social norms and building up this perfect image of oneself only for it to all come crumbling down. Plath is telling the reader that success doesn’t equate to happiness, even if that lifestyle may seem outwardly the most rewarding. Despite all of the success Esther achieved, she cannot help but criticise herself and pick apart everything she does. Feelings of self-doubt begin to develop, and she can’t seem to understand what the exact cause of them are. This absence of awareness of her own feelings and insecurity leads to her internal conflict consuming her from within, ultimately resulting in her depression. Her previous successes all seem to be insufficient, being significant in that Plath portrays the insecurity and how isolated a person with depression can feel in society.

Esther feels moribund as she begins to see men as repellant whilst still grappling with career choices. She despises the idea of having to work for men, “I hated the idea of serving men in any way,” preferring to be in a profession entirely detached from them. Her behaviour is a result of her being the victim of objectification by men like Marco, who sexually assaults her during their first date. The word “serve” has implicit sexual connotations of prostitution, a theme interwoven in literature written and published after the Bell Jar due to the sexual revolution of 1960’s America. The novel, like Friedan’s seminal work *The Feminist Mystique*, can be seen as predecessors of this revolution in feminism and sexuality. Esther, although from an outward perspective is successful, her sense of self begins to decline, “I had been inadequate all along,” reflecting how she struggles with ambiguity and insecurity. This is reiterated by Plath’s metaphor of the fig tree. Each individual fig represents a path Esther’s life could take, “a husband and a happy home and children, and another fig was a famous poet”. At this period in the 60s, fulfilling the role of both a mother and a woman with a career was unheard of, it was either one or the other.

This conflict is represented by this metaphor: “I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest,” and from this point onward Esther seemingly comes to term with her identity crisis. As her academic life was the only thing providing her security, as it begins to crumble, so does Esther’s personal life. She now longer is certain of who or what she wants to be, highlighting how mental illness can stem from a lack of congruency between her concept of self and her ideal self, as well as society’s expectations.

Furthermore, Esther feels as if her body is a sort of hollow vessel that she inhabits, rather than her physical body. When told to smile, Plath conveys the undertone of displeasure and influence of control, “obediently, like the mouth of a ventriloquist’s dummy, my own mouth started to quirk up.” The use of “ventriloquist” evokes an image of a puppet and its master, Esther being the puppet at mercy of the puppet master’s control. This illustration emphasizes the true power that the female stereotype of obedience and subservience can have on the people upon which it is inflicted. Therefore, she adheres to what is expected of her, even when she is reluctant to do so. When dancing with Marco, she allows herself to be led, “moving as he moved, without any will or knowledge of my own,” feeling discomfort as she is simply compelled to as he can’t take no for an answer, similarly to Buddy and the skiing incident. Another shock comes to her as she receives news that she wasn’t accepted to a writing course, it acting as a safety net for her, “a bright safe bridge over the dull gulf of summer.” As realisation kicks in, she sees it disappear before her eyes and “a body in a white blouse and green skirt plummet into the gap.” This metaphor foreshadows her ensuing suicide, with her rejection of the writing programme and her sexual assault being triggers, as her suicide is the only thing that she feels she is in control of.

To conclude, the critical themes in *The Bell Jar* are feminism and mental illness. Esther’s lack of control is framed by her doubt about her future. Plath realistically presents the difficulty of making a perfect

vision of yourself come true and reaching self-actualisation. The societal pressure to be “perfect” are the constraints that society places upon women, and when you do not live up to it, one experiences guilt and disappointment. Her road to success and her direction in life, becomes distorted and her purpose in life begins to fragment. Even religion, that typically gives a person meaning in life, is rendered inadequate: “No matter how much you knelt and prayed, you still had to eat three meals a day and have a job and live in the world.” Plath creates a character who can’t match her inner life to the perfect life she must project, this discordance resulting in Esther’s hardships. Ultimately, the way that Plath presents mental illness is significant as it is depicted in an articulate and purposeful way with Esther feeling disconnected due to the social barriers placed on woman of the time. Through her intense, easily understood, and impassioned language, Plath creates a wonderfully heart-rending modern tragedy, and a tale of falling into the abyss of emotions, as well as the journey to claw her way back out.

How the Western media portrays Africa and its ignorance towards the continent through George Alagiah’s ‘A Passage To Africa’

Josh Kitchen and Rosie Lear, 4th year

Initially George Alagiah’s mind-set aligns with that of the western media which contributes to the constant negative portrayal of Africa, which can be traced back to the root of many harmful stereotypes. However, as then passage develops Alagiah’s views begin to juxtapose those of the media, as he has immersed himself into the reality of Africa where he realises that it is a place of raw beauty.

Alagiah is remarkably candid about his reactions to the undeserved suffering the people of Somalia faced. In one of his anecdotes Alagiah was on his journey across Somalia and came across an old woman who was abandoned by her relatives. The old woman had been shot in the leg and where her shinbone should

have been there was a wound. Describing the old woman and her wound, Alagiah writes "It was rotting; she was rotting." By referring to this helpless, utterly vulnerable, dying woman as "It" Alagiah reveals his extreme ignorance and privilege, which reflects on how the Western media portrays Africa on a whole: useless and ignominious. Moreover, the parallel sentence structure and repetition enforces the reader to absorb and fully comprehend the severe extent of this woman's injury; a part of her body was physically decomposing. Furthermore, the extreme detail of this scene is an appeal to the senses through imagery, which captivates and compels the reader to see what Alagiah once saw. Alagiah then goes on to say that his reaction to everyone else he met that day was a "mixture of pity and revulsion. Yes, revulsion." Despite his extreme insensitivity, some readers may respect his honesty and believe that it gains him credibility, while others may be disgusted by him as he felt "pity" which is entirely different than sympathy, which one would expect him to feel, which reinforces the ideas that the media conveys of Africa. Likewise, the repetition of the noun "revulsion" and the short sentence indicates that this is Alagiah's prevailing emotion when met with the graphic images of innocent people, including children, suffering.

Throughout the passage Alagiah frequently dehumanises the people of Somalia, referring to them as the passive subjects of his work. Through the use of the short, simple sentence "Habiba had died" the reader can conclude that Alagiah felt no sympathy for Habiba and that death is an everyday reality the people of Somalia have to face. This mirrors how the Western media expresses a lack of emotion due to the fact that they do not view people like Habiba as human, as the majority of western society's situation is largely different from Habiba's, so they cannot relate to them, therefore removing their common humanity. When talking about the work of journalists Alagiah wrote that things that may have appalled them when they started the trip "no longer impressed them much." This demonstrates the dehumanisation and predatory nature of journalism

and displays how apathetic people can become. The use of "impressed" seems to suggest that he believes everything is there for his personal use and that he can exploit these vulnerable people for pictures and anecdotes. This mind-set reflects that the media has forced us to believe about the continent of Africa which further stresses how unimpressive Africa is, due to systematic racism which is deeply ingrained in Western society. Moreover, Alagiah wrote that "The journalist observes, the subject is observed." The parallel sentence structure reinforces the selfish and degrading nature of journalism and indicates that journalists believe they are superior to the people they are interacting with.

Alagiah expresses his sympathy towards the people of Somalia through the use of emotive and personal language. In the opening of the text the first thing the reader learns about Somalia is that its citizens are "hungry, lean, sacred and betrayed". The verb "betrayed" serves as a reminder to the reader about the war that happened in Somalia, and that it is the innocent people who were the victims of the civil war and injustice of the deposed dictator. Although, this is said to create a sense of pity for the citizens of Somalia which reflects the negative diction used by the Western media to delineate Africa. On the other hand, Alagiah's sympathy for the Somalians is conveyed by his brief, yet cathartic encounter with the man whose face Alagiah "will never forget." Structurally, the simple sentence is set apart from the text and acts as its own paragraph, this reflects the importance of Alagiah meeting this man and how it played an instrumental part in making George Alagiah into the person he is today. The "Passage to Africa" is concluded with Alagiah directly addressing the man with the oxymoron "nameless friend" and going on to say, "I owe you one." The oxymoron indicates that Alagiah deeply sympathises with the man and regrets never asking for his name, likely because the man completely altered the trajectory of Alagiah's life. Furthermore, the use of the personal pronoun "I" reveals how truly grateful and possibly indebted Alagiah is to his "nameless

friend". Furthermore, his respect for Africa at the end of the passage contrasts his previous perspectives which undermines the media's portrayal of Africa; he is implying that they are lying, and that Africa is only portrayed in such a way due to deep-rooted racism and xenophobia.

On the balance of evidence, the Western media's portrayal of Africa mirrors the initial views of Alagiah. However unlike George Alagiah, the Western media continues to perpetuate false, damaging and inaccurate stereotypes towards Africa and its citizens. Furthermore, after Alagiah encounters the citizens of Africa his ignorant and privileged view is transformed to contrast with the Western Media's constant dehumanising portrayal of Africa.

'East of Eden' as a biblical novel by John Steinbeck

Mia Hutchinson, Lower Sixth

East of Eden is, essentially, a novel regarding the relentless hostilities between good and evil in the human world. Steinbeck utilises allusions to the book of Genesis in the Bible story of Cain and Abel to demonstrate the ideology that not all humans are innately evil, contrary to popular belief. Cain and Abel are surrogates for Caleb and Aron; the sons of wealthy Adam Trask, a former farmer who inherited stolen money from his late father and Cathy, an inherently evil brothel-owner. Cathy and Adam are polar opposites, yet Adam is too pure hearted to see Cathy for what she truly is: a manipulative, scheming, devious woman whom murdered her own parents as a child. Cathy is often likened to the Devil, and it is questioned that "If a twisted gene can produce physical monsters, may not the same process produce a malformed soul?". Cathy seemingly represents pure, Devilish evil; the antagonist Eve figure who succumbed to the tempting power gained from exploitation. It is important to note that Cathy left Adam after she had given birth to twins Aron and Caleb. Aron is not aware of their mother's brutality until later in the novel, where it could be argued the reveal of her evilness is indi-

rectly responsible for his early death. Cal is aware of his mother's immorality after he overhears a conversation regarding her, however he protects Aron by not telling him until later in the novel, as he knows his innocent brother will be destroyed by the knowledge. Here – a prime example of 'innocence is bliss'. Aron alludes to Abel; a pure, good-hearted trusting boy who "sees the good" in everyone. Cal, a token of Cain, is a more complex character who often struggles internally with the evil he believes he inherited from his mother. Cal is often aware of his "meanness" and his jealousy towards his beloved brother Aron, whom seems to be adored by everyone. Both Cal and Aron struggle facing the reality of evil in the world. Aron turns to the church to fulfil his need for morality, whereas Cal often blames and punishes himself for simply being related to monstrous Cathy. Lee, the family housekeeper, makes it a mission to help Cal overcome his self-inflicted torment by teaching him about 'Timshel', the Hebrew word for "Thou Mayest". This word is taken from the story of Cain and Abel. After Cain murders Abel out of a jealous rage, God informs Cain he can choose to renounce his sins (rather than forcing him to). Timshel, the "most important word in the world" gives Lee optimism as he views it as the ideology of free will, which he believes is essential to humanity. Cal overcomes his inner conflicts between free will and predetermined evil at the end of the novel and will subsequently go on to lead a more hopeful life, freed from the burdens the ideology of predisposition had placed upon him.

The biblical ideologies are continued with the idea that the 'Sins of the Father are visited upon the Son'. Adam Trask's father, Cyrus, stole when he was part of the US Army and lied his way up the ranks. His two sons, Adam and Charles then went on the live miserable lives. Charles is an aggressive, unlovable boy whom does not gain much sympathy from readers. Adam is less miserable than Charles, until he is forced into the Army by his father. Adam undoubtedly witnessed heinous murders of hundreds of men and after

returning home he was arrested for being homeless. After Adam finally returned home, he meets Cathy- his monstrous soon to be wife. Cyrus' sins have seemed to percolate down to the next generation, and again onto Adams own sons Cal and Aron, to a lesser extent. Aron meets his untimely death on the battlefield in WW1, where he attempted to evade his family's sins. Cal, arguably the underdog, seems to manage to overcome these sins with help from Lee at the end of the novel, suggesting no one is constricted by sin, but by their individual ethos.

Furthermore, Steinbeck likens religion to the sins associated with prostitution as the speaker describes how the "church and the whorehouse arrived in the Far West simultaneously. ... But surely they were both intended to accomplish the same thing: the singing, the devotion, the poetry of the churches took a man out of his bleakness for a time, and so did the brothels." Here, Steinbeck could be suggesting that both brothels and religion are simply ways of societal release, a form of escapism, however one is deemed unacceptable. Both the church and brothels have good and evil within them. The church system is suggested to be flawed, yet still provides hope for many. The brothels are deemed inherently disgraceful, however they provide a place for men to explore their sexual natures.

Steinbeck often makes biblical references throughout the novel in order to portray the ideas of free will and destiny, good and evil, morality and immorality. Steinbeck makes his point clearly: most human beings are not innately evil and can change with the correct mind-set. This differing approach to 'Sinning' gives hope that people are capable of change, no matter how dysfunctional their family life has been. "Man has a choice and it's a choice that makes him a man" summarises how humans can choose to reject evil.

Visions of Utopian Psychology and Science

Fiction

Mr Buxton-Cope

Psychology has been a passion of mine since I began studying it at A Level, long before becoming a Psychology teacher, but I have always loved science fiction books and films too. However, it is only more recently whilst writing a book of my own that I came to truly appreciate the close links between psychology and science fiction. Anyone studying A Level Psychology today will tell you that the first psychology laboratory was established in the late 19th century by Wilhelm Wundt. He, along with other early pioneers in psychology such as William James, Ivan Pavlov and Sigmund Freud, soon brought psychology to the attention of the world. This was also the time that modern science fiction rose to prominence with the publication of H.G. Wells' pioneering novels, *The Time Machine (1895)* and *The War of the Worlds (1898)*. This common point of origin is no mere coincidence...

Psychology emerged as a distinct science with the ambition of unravelling the hidden mysteries of the human mind in order for it to be understood and – ultimately – controlled for the benefit of society. Many science fiction novels of the time were inspired by this ambition and both psychologists and science fiction writers used their different published works to offer a glimpse of what the future might hold for human societies of the 20th century. These visions of utopia - imagined societies that possess desirable or even nearly perfect qualities for their citizens – touch on all aspects of society including politics, economics, and justice, and lead us to question everything about the way we live.

One psychologist who was greatly inspired by the early pioneers in psychology and science fiction is the renowned behaviourist B.F. Skinner, who was the subject of my recently published book, *Who the Hell is B.F. Skinner? (2020)*. In a career spanning most of the 20th century, Skinner worked largely with rats and

pigeons using his own apparatus known as the Skinner Box. By rewarding the animals with food pellets when they performed certain behaviours such as pressing a lever, Skinner was able to show how an animal's behaviour could be controlled and shaped by its environment with an incredible degree of precision. His breakthrough research soon led to the development of his theory of operant conditioning which he used to argue that, just as the behaviour of the animals in his Skinner Boxes was carefully controlled by their artificially designed environment, human behaviour too was controlled by our natural environment and the societies in which we live.

Having proved the power that the environment has in shaping behaviour, Skinner could not understand why we would allow our towns, cities, and broader cultures to be left to the customs, manners and customs of the past. As the scientific understanding of human behaviour gathered momentum, along with our understanding of the specific kinds of environments which produce happiness, security and knowledge, for example, Skinner argued that we would have the power to design a culture that could produce these effects in everyone.

Whilst Skinner was a prolific scientific writer all his life, it is interesting that perhaps the clearest vision of a Skinnerian utopia that he produced was not in his scientific writing at all but in a work of fiction called *Walden Two* (1948). The title of the book is a direct reference to Henry D. Thoreau's book, *Walden* (1854), which details his experiences living alone for two years in a woodland cabin near Walden Pond where he feels able to acquire all of the necessities of life by living simply in the natural surroundings. Skinner's *Walden Two* is both the name of the book as well as the community it imagines which is described as having all the benefits of living in a place like Thoreau's Walden, but 'with company'. The book follows a soldier who has recently returned from the war as he invites friends and his former psychology professor, Professor Burris, to visit the community which consists of about 1,000

members. They meet the designer of the community, Frazier, who explains how the happy and hard-working community members have had their behaviour carefully shaped using behavioural techniques.

After publication, *Walden Two* received both praise and criticism in equal measure. However, much of the criticism aimed at the book did not concern its style or story so much as its message. It was viewed by many as a political manifesto, advocating the scientific control of society. Skinner was certainly no stranger to controversy and few psychologists have polarised opinion quite as much as he managed to in his lifetime. This may be one of the reasons why he would go on to be ranked in first place on a list of the most influential psychologists of the 20th century (Haggbloom et al, 2002).

As both psychology and science fiction flourished in the early part of the 20th century, the utopian visions both provided were critiqued by two now-canonical dystopian novels. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) describes a global caste society in which hedonism and consumerism have become technologies of non-violent control. George Orwell's *1984* (1949) presents a more brutal world of surveillance and control. Despite their differences, however, both novels paint a picture of a dystopian world in which behaviourist and Freudian ideas are central. For example, in *1984*, when Freudian ideas prove ineffective in promoting fanaticism, then the Pavlovian conditioning of Room 101 steps in.

Whether the works of science fiction throughout this period present visions of utopia or dystopia, the influence of psychology is clear to see. The past century was in many ways an era of psychologisation, in which the discipline managed to permeate all aspects of life in Western society. The fact that science fiction grew in literary influence during this same period was at least partly because of its ability to consider, contest, satirise and even (in the case of Skinner) promote the claims and ambitions of psychology.

Studying, teaching and writing about psychology, I have come to realise that much of my enjoyment of the subject stems from its ability to challenge us by asking some of the big questions in science and society. However, in many ways, science fiction and literature more broadly can do the same. What makes us the people we are? Where are we going as a society? And is this a future I really want?