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RETROSPECT

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FAILURE

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Head of School

Scholars, in common with the rest of society, actively strive for success: they are also sometimes inclined to undervalue the significance of 'failure' as a dominant theme in human experience and history, emphasising instead teleologies of triumph and achievement. This latest edition of Retrospect helps to correct this imbalance, exploring the key theme of 'failure' deeply and widely: it showcases contributions from across the three subject areas of the School, and from both staff as well as undergraduates and postgraduates. We in the School are one of the largest communities of scholars in the United Kingdom engaged in the study of the human past, and we have the ability to range widely in terms of our research and writing. Within the pages of this edition of Retrospect you can read work on themes ranging from the 'the search for our common ancestor' through to the travails of Silvio Berlusconi, and from 'Medea' to Juergen Teller. The contributors engage with the academic aspects of (relatively) popular culture, through reviews of Norman Davies' Vanished Kingdoms, Spielberg's 'Lincoln' or 'Les Mis'. So, as Retrospect shows, we are not only able to take different disciplinary, chronological, geographical and thematic approaches, we can range from complex and highly specialist scholarship to work with wide popular resonance and impact. Once again, Retrospect is a great medium for the talent deployed within your School: once again it's brimming over with stimulus and interest.

AJ

WILL ELLIS

Editor

When choosing the theme for this issue the Retrospect team aimed to challenge staff and students, asking them to explore the awkward concept of failure. I have been astounded by both the breadth of the topics covered by our contributors and the range of interpretations of failure in the human past. Unsurprisingly, this issue is a fantastic read, and I am incredibly proud to have been a part of the Retrospect team. My thanks, as always, go to all of the contributors, designers, editors and supporters who have been indispensible in the production of this issue. After three years, I am now moving on from Retrospect, an experience that has been enjoyable, enriching and, at times, challenging. I encourage anyone with an interest in the study of the past, or in writing, to get involved. Next year's team, headed up by Lydia Willgress and Ellie Byrne, is already shaping up very nicely, and I am eager to see what they produce. Thank you again to all of those who have made Retrospect a lot of fun, and good luck to those involved in 2013/14 and beyond. In the meantime, I hope that you enjoy what follows.

WE

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www.retrospectjournal.co.uk/failure/bibliographies

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SOCIETIES

History Society Winter Ball

Ellie Back and Tom Nash

We decided to hold our traditional Winter Ball in one of the most historic locations in Edinburgh and your very own student union... Teviot! There were numerous requests for locations, with several suggesting the Balmoral – we only wish we had the sponsors of Law Society!

Amidst frantic rushes to set up online tickets, spamming numerous people and doing lecture shout-outs (Tom apologises to everyone in Social History 1.1 who had to listen to his wheezy voice – the result of having to rush there), we managed to sell out! The evening was splendid. We hope you all enjoyed the meal, and we have great admiration for those who managed to keep their Christmas hats on well into the night! For the wonderful post-dinner ceilidh, we have to thank the exceptional Scott Hogg and his band; to teach a large number of non-Scots how to successfully negotiate complicated dances is a skill rarely seen at a ball, especially when too much has been drunk!

© Charlotte Klein Photography

There are some wonderful photos of the evening of everyone all dressed up for the occasion, all of which can be found on the Edinburgh University History Society's facebook page. To keep updated on all our latest events feel free to 'like' the society page whilst you are there! The ball would not have been possible without the help of the History Society committee, EUSA, Charlotte Klein Photography and Honours Catering. We thoroughly enjoyed organising this event, and we hope that everyone who went had a great time – a massive thank you to everyone who came. If you missed it, keep an eye out for next year!

'The Problem of Slavery on May 4th 1861-65'

A lecture by Dr. Paul Quigley

Lisa Bird

Dr. Paul Quigley opened the second round of History Society's lecture series in gripping style. The preview into his forthcoming lecture tour in America was highly inspirational. His easy presentation style was thoroughly compelling, while the topic itself, which is covered to a lesser extent by the American History 2 course, attracted a wide audience.

Dr. Paul Quigley

The lecture covered a number of interesting questions. Dr. Quigley addressed such topics as what the 4th of July meant to slaves; what Independence Day meant to the Confederacy and Union in the Civil War; and what the 4th of July meant to African Americans in the immediate post civil war period. Those in attendance gained a new perspective on the significance of Independence Day; the 4th of July may be an iconic American holiday, but when seen through the eyes of slaves and ex-slaves as well as post-Civil War Southerners, the true tensions of Civil War America are thrown into relief.

After the talk, Dr. Quigley joined us for a wine and chocolate reception, held as ever in the back of the McEwan hall. The discussion continued with more informal questions as well as a conversation about recent films such as Django Unchained and Lincoln. It was exhilarating to have the opportunity to discuss such topics with an American expert.

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C

'Symposium' Event

Rhian Haf Morgan

'For sensible men I prepare only three kraters: one for health (which they drink first), the second for love and pleasure, and the third for sleep. After the third one is drained, wise men go home. The fourth krater is not mine any more - it belongs to bad behaviour; the fifth is for shouting; the sixth is for rudeness and insults; the seventh is for fights; the eighth is for breaking the furniture; the ninth is for depression; the tenth is for madness and unconsciousness.' Eubulus, *Semele or Dionysus*

Luckily for all involved, our latest Classics Society social involved only one krater. In keeping with the tradition of the Greeks, we held a symposium this semester, whipping out our togas once again to recline and indulge in a bit of homemade vino. For the ancients, a symposium was a chance to celebrate victories or introduce new young men into society, and to engage in some cultural and philosophical chit-chat. It would seem that our Classics Society members would happily fit in at such a party, especially if there is a chance to sing along to the Les Misérables soundtrack or some R. Kelly. All-in-all another successful social, here is to many more!

Let's see what else the Greeks thought about their imbibing habits:

'Where there is no wine there is no love.' Euripides
'No poem was ever written by a drinker of water.' Homer
'When men drink, then they are rich and successful and win lawsuits and are happy and help their friends. Quickly, bring me a beaker of wine, so that I may wet my mind and say something clever.' Aristophanes, The Knights
'I like best the wine drunk at the cost of others.' Diogenes the Cynic

Sounds about right.

Innovative Learning Week and Future Events

Rhian Haf Morgan

Innovative Learning Week struck again, this time with a great Classics line-up! Due to its resounding success last year, the Classics Society once more decided to run a week-long ILW magazine, covering not only some of the exciting events, but also giving insight into what is going on in the Classics world today. With interviews, academic pieces and features, a closer look into the working of the department, and student views on courses and studying abroad, we hope we lived up to our previous triumph. As well as society events, numerous department-led seminars, workshops and trips kept us informed and entertained. Students were given the opportunity to travel to various sites of Classical interest, from Hadrian's Wall to Ravenna.

Sophocles' Electra

Certain lecturers delivered some very interesting seminars, such as Dr. Maciver's workshop entitled *Lucian's True Histories: The First Work of Science Fiction?*, which explored the fantastical subject matter of Lucian's stories and their literary and philosophical groundings. For those more traditional, there was also a lecture held by Dr. Richard Rutherford of Christ Church, Oxford, on *Sexuality and Decorum in Greek Tragedy*, which stirred things up a bit!

Classics Society has also planned some exciting events for the rest of the semester, including a karaoke social, a staff vs. students pub quiz, and the hotly anticipated History, Classics and Archaeology Graduation Ball on 5th April! Our second semester play, Sophocles' *Electra*, will be held from the 27th-30th March in the wonderful Summerhall venue and with the success of last year's *Lysistrata*, we are expecting great things!

A

ArchSoc Paul Bahn Lecture

Sam Williamson

As a co-author to the first year Archaeology students' bible, Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice, and rock art specialist, Dr. Paul Bahn's name should be familiar to many. It was therefore no surprise when he drew an audience of over sixty people to hear him speak as part of ArchSoc's lecture series.

Coinciding with the British Museum's fantastic new exhibit on Ice Age art, Dr. Bahn delivered a captivating talk on some of Europe's oldest parietal artwork, produced roughly 40,000 -10,000 years ago. The development of art has been seen by many to be an indication of when we became truly human. It marks not just the ability to think in abstract ways, but demonstrates an awareness of consciousness.

Art is such a humanising feature of our evolutionary history that we cannot help but be drawn to it, studying the sinuous strokes that morph into stalking felines or giant mammoth in caves like Lascaux, Chauvet and Altamira. It was created by all genders and ages – even children as young as four years old – their handprints still preserved in the soft cave floors from stumbles.

Dr. Bahn touched on his own finds at Creswell Crags – the only published work on British Ice Age rock art to date – and discussed how difficult it can be to find anything unless you have a friend willing to risk their neck scrambling up into inaccessible places. As a final showcase, Dr. Bahn described the relatively new and undisturbed Cussac and La Garma caves, rich in incredible artefacts and art. These were the highlights of the lecture, whetting our imaginations on what the future holds for rock art in Europe.

Social events 2013

Tom Gardner

We have had some brilliant social events since Retrospect's last issue. To round up the end of first semester, ArchSoc organised a Christmas meal at Albanach on the Royal Mile. Attended by around 45 staff and students from the society and the department, everyone had an awesome time. The raffle was excellent, with prizes kindly donated by Past Horizons, Doctors and The Green Mantle among others. Unfortunately I did not win the Archaeology 'tool roll', much to my dismay.

To welcome our old and new members this semester, we organised an Aztec-themed pub-crawl. This followed the usual ArchSoc pattern of Teviot, Malone's, Rush and Hive, and contained the necessary attributes of boat races, amazing costumes and lost dignity.

We also managed to have a very civilised social this semester – a wine and cheese night! This was focused on bridging the gap between staff, postgraduate, and undergraduate students. Due to the ninety pounds' worth of cheese served we had an excellent turn out of both staff and students.

There are no words to sum up our most recent social event, an Egyptian-themed flat party, except these choice few; majestic, chaotic, punch-fuelled, and never again. In the future we will be holding more pub-crawls and quizzes, our regular pub nights on Tuesdays, and events to integrate our members more deeply within the department. Like us on Facebook to keep on top. It is going to be hectic.

Academic events 2013

Maya Hoole

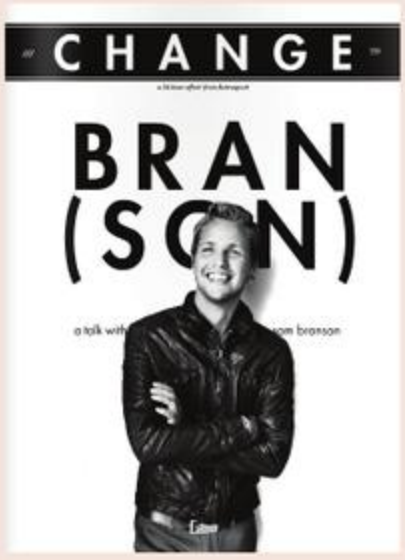
ArchSoc's first lecture was from Jamie Lewis of CFA Archaeology, a professional cultural heritage consultant and contractor, who talked about the commercial side of archaeology. This was an interesting topic, especially helpful to members thinking about their long term goals and careers; our second lecture meanwhile, on Ice Age rock art, attracted a large audience and was very well received.

However, our main academic event this semester was the Information and Fieldwork Fair. Many archaeological bodies and institutions attended the fair, including: Historic Scotland, the Institute for Archaeologists, Archaeology Scotland, British Archaeological Jobs and Resources and Past Horizons, and GUARD Archaeology, amongst others. The event was a massive success, both for the attendees and for the organisations, who all expressed an appreciation of the event and a keen interest to return next year.

Our other academic events have included a fascinating workshop given by Gillian Taylor, a forensic reconstruction artist who conducted an interactive presentation, and a variety of talks and trips organised for Innovative Learning Week. There were two tours of the Vere Gordon Childe collection by Professor Peltenberg; lectures on topics such as Roman toilets; and an excursion to major Scottish 'seats of power' – Cairnpapple, the Antonine Wall and Linlithgow Palace – with Professor David Breeze, followed by a visit to some rock art sites near Morpeth with Dr Tertia Barnett.

'Change': our third 24-hour magazine

Lydia Willgress



Our third 24-hour magazine could not have gone better. Inspired by the success of our first two attempts, members of the Retrospect team put their heads together once more to write, create, design, and edit a 36-page online magazine in 24 hours.

This time, we ran with the theme 'Change'. Students from across the globe got involved, and we were lucky enough to feature Sam Branson, playwright Ella Hickson, jewellery from Amber Atherton's myflashtrash.com, and one of Lord Sugar's Apprentices.

24 hours seemed like a bit more of a struggle than last time, but thanks to the amazing designers at Edinburgh College of Art, we had a larger team and we managed to produce a clean, professional, fantastic magazine - with only one jar of coffee used!

The excitement did not stop there. On the Monday after publishing, Sir Richard Branson blogged about us on the Virgin website, dubbing us 'innovative' and recommending that everyone should read our magazines. We are very proud of this moment which resulted in several excited phone calls and a lot of disbelief!

We are hoping to run another 24-hour magazine in April, alongside a US company who also make them. If you want to get involved in writing, editing or designing, please email: ***info@retrospectjournal.co.uk.***

Retrospect's Pub Quizzes Return

Lydia Willgress

Due to popular demand, Retrospect held two pub quizzes this term. The first saw eleven teams battle it out at Innis and Gunn, with the winning team gaining a much-needed bottle of whiskey. The second was held after our AGM; a chance for the new team to be introduced to the old and for writers to meet the current editors. Both quizzes raised over £200, which will go towards printing Retrospect and a good time was had by all.

HCA Graduation Ball

Tabitha Standish-Hayes

It is safe to say that this semester is one imbued with stress for final year students throughout the university. By the beginning of April, fourth years in the School of History, Classics and Archaeology will be putting the finishing touches to their dissertations (yes, the 'D' word has been mentioned!), and have the opportunity for a bit of a break before the final push. April will be a time for celebrating our achievements; and what better way to celebrate than the HCA graduation ball?

Now in its second year, the HCA ball has this time been organised by Emily Wood, Lauren Webb and Rhiannon Jeffreys, and is hoped will become a traditional event in the School. For £37 per person, finalists will be coming together at the stunning George Hotel on the 5th April, decked in their finest black tie, to be met with champagne, a three course meal and half a bottle of wine each. Better still, a traditional ceilidh and a disco will ensue, assuming that we are still able to walk!

Having a ball specifically for our School (though +1s are of course welcome!) will be far more intimate than the university-wide graduation in July, and the organisers have been putting their heads together to find little extras to make the night special. It will be a night to look forward to, and a fantastic way to mark the end of an era.

FEATURES

BERLUSCONI'S FAILURE

ALEX DENVIR

A whole political class tainted by allegations of corruption, mired in scandal and court cases. A parliament too interested in protecting its own interests to face up to a stagnant economy and a desperate need for institutional reform. Leading figures booed out of office, pelted with coins, and new ministers – many from outside the world of politics – welcomed in to rescue Italy. If that sounds familiar, it is because history has the habit of repeating itself, as Karl Marx once wrote, 'the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.' This was the backdrop for Berlusconi's spectacular arrival on the political scene in 1994, and it is no small irony that in November 2011 he was ousted in much the same manner. The trouble for Italy is that the intervening years were both farcical and tragic.

Today it is difficult to think of Italian politics without Il Cavaliere, the man who has been Italy's longest serving Prime Minister since Mussolini. However, in 1994 he was an outsider who made a surprise entrance into politics only two months before the general elections in March. He was a business man who had built up a vast business and media empire from scratch, and he appealed to Italians who related to him as a self-made man who spoke plain Italian. The centre-right Christian Democrat party, which had led every government since the Second World War, and its coalition partners, had lost all credibility with the Tangentopoli scandal ('Bribesville') which broke in 1992, and the subsequent 'Clean Hands' investigation by magistrates in Milan which uncovered a staggering level of systemic corruption. Their complete disappearance by 1994 left a vacuum. It seemed that the old communists and other parties of the left would fill this void and take the national vote, as they had done in recent local elections. But Italy was full of socially conservative small business owners, who were wary of voting for radical parties. Berlusconi tapped into this sentiment perfectly and provided a party, Forza Italia, which would appeal to those who had previously supported the Christian Democrats. His promise of a million new jobs and a second economic miracle, while generally discredited by the serious press, captured popular imagination. Using his television channels and newspapers, Berlusconi led a very successful campaign, unprecedented in Italy, with American presidential style made-for-TV sound-bites and live debates. The left had no time to react and before they understood what had hit them, and Berlusconi swept to victory.

Berlusconi was therefore presented with a golden opportunity. He had won an election with an entirely new movement, and allied to formerly fringe parties which had never previously been in government. The country was in desperate need of political, economic and institutional reform –with the vested interests of the old parties now no obstacle, and the public firmly in favour of change (demonstrated by a 1993 referendum on electoral reform), the time was ripe for someone to create a legacy of an improved Italy. However, Silvio Berlusconi soon proved that he was not that man.

Initially, it looked as if Berlusconi might become a reformer: he courted Antonio Di Pietro, one of the Clean Hands magistrates who, by summer 1994, was the most popular man in the country, and offered him the position of Ministry of the Interior, with the major task of cleaning up politics. But Di Pietro turned down the offer, and it soon became clear that Berlusconi had other, less noble motives for trying to curry his favour. In November 1994, Berlusconi was given notice that he was himself under investigation by the Milanese magistrates on charges of corruption. The government tried to have the entire investigation wound up by decree, but there was such public outcry that they were forced to back down, and indeed, Berlusconi's coalition allies withdrew their support and his government fell. Soon, the Berlusconi-controlled media began a concerted propaganda campaign to discredit Di Pietro and his fellow investigators as communists and liars. Although no accusations levelled against them were ever found to be true, enough damage was done that Antonio Di Pietro was forced to resign (he would later form his own political party in opposition to Berlusconi.) Opinion began to turn against the investigation - it was seen that it had gone too far into everyday Italian society. Even though Berlusconi was in opposition from December 1994 to June 2001, he remained incredibly influential through his wealth and media domination – he controlled three of the six national television channels and owned several daily and weekly newspapers. Parliament, which was now full of close friends and business associates of Berlusconi, would oppose and slow down the passage of any laws which would disadvantage any of their boss's companies. Berlusconi, meanwhile, used his parliamentary activity as an excuse to delay his own criminal trials for as long as possible, in order for the statute of limitations to expire.

Indeed, Berlusconi's failure lies in the fact that he did little more than govern Italy for his own personal gain. Under his governments, laws were passed that allowed his conflicts of interest to continue unchecked while limiting those of his commercial and political opponents. Further legislation granted immunity from prosecution to those holding high

office (including the Prime Minister), whilst others shortened the statute of limitations for many of the white collar crimes of which Berlusconi and his colleagues had been accused. Another allowed Berlusconi's Mediaset television network to avoid limits on advertising revenue. In the ten years following Berlusconi's arrival in politics, the average criminal trial in the already excruciatingly slow Italian courts had doubled in length. But not only did Berlusconi exploit power for his own benefit, he also failed to deliver on most of his promises. For a self-proclaimed entrepreneur, currently worth $six billion, and once twice as wealthy as that, his business acumen has not served Italy well. Few of the million new jobs promised in 1994 materialised, neither did the many promises made in his famous 'Contract with the Italians' ahead of the 2001 election. He pledged a restructuring of the fiscal system and tax cuts for all – but the complex system remained unreformed, tax avoidance remains an enormous problem, and only the wealthiest Italians paid less. Worst of all, while Berlusconi's businesses flourished under his government's protection, his country floundered. Between 2000 and 2010, the decade in which Berlusconi was most dominant, Italy's average economic growth was lower than every country in the world apart from Haiti and Zimbabwe. Yet despite this, and despite his unceremonious resignation in 2011, Silvio Berlusconi still looms large over Italy. As the February 2013 elections grew nearer, his support in the polls grew stronger. Berlusconi has already been given three opportunities to lead his country, and he has failed each time, without ever demonstrating why he would not do so again. It would be a certain farce if he were given a fourth, and it would doubtless consign Italy to further years of tragedy.

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WHERE ARE THE NARRAGANSETTS?

LIAM CROUSE

Last month, it was finally agreed in Rhode Island, after years of delay, deferral, and quiet protest, that a small parcel of land off the Salt Pond, in coastal South County, was to be developed. The owner had finally won his case to begin clearance and eventual construction for his proposed residential estate. Since the late 1980s, when the site was first identified as a pre-contact Native American settlement, this profiteer has seen a lot of grief. At this small, overgrown plot, bordering the largest of the fertile, biodiverse salt ponds in the area, a few Indian burials were uncovered, halting any advance in construction. Another few years on, archaeologists from a local firm were called in to investigate the features of the site; what they found astounded them. Encompassing forty acres, the site, a pre-Contact Narragansett (our local tribe in Southern Rhode Island) village and burial ground, produced features and artefacts including post-holes, shell middens, refuse pits, hearths, and possibly more burials, dating from c. 1000 AD to 1700 AD. The Narragansett Tribe, who had been closely involved with the survey, drafted a letter to the Town Council describing the paramount importance of the site (RI Site 110), identifying it as the chief sacred site of a branch of the tribe. The site gradually became to be accepted by the archaeological and local community as ground-breaking and unique. It is certainly the largest known and most intact pre-contact settlement site in New England. Jay Waller, the local archaeological expert on the site, has equalled its importance to Werowocomoco, Virginia - the principal political centre of the Powhatan Chiefdom. For those not acquainted with Native American history, this is Pocahontas' home village, made famous by the Disney film of the same name. Previous to the discovery of RI110, the American archaeological community considered intensive maize production in the north east to be a trait which developed amongst the indigenous population post-European contact, believing the Native Americans to subsist primarily by hunting and gathering. This theory was also supported by the lack of evidence from maize processing in the record - that is, until the Salt Pond site was uncovered. Evidence from RI110 has completely reversed these theories, leading to a demonstrable indication that native populations intensively cultivated maize and other vegetables pre-contact. Evidence has been found of 'The Three Sisters' agricultural technique used by the Narragansett Tribe of growing free-standing maize stalks coupled with beans which would ascend the shoots and squash which would grow at ground level, deterring weeds. When Roger Williams, Rhode Island's founding father and close friend of the Narragansett population, came to South County, he was told that the location where the Narragansett had grown from the Earth could be viewed from Sugarloaf Hill. Indeed, this site, located about 4,000 feet (1,219 m), may be this very spot: the womb of the Narragansett world. This site, which has grown so prominent in certain circles, has barely graced the minds of much of the modern local populace. Certainly, this is one of the reasons that the profiteering developer acquired the right to resume construction on the site last month. Those who do know about the site, including a few 'white' locals, are outraged at the destruction of a site so significant to the essence of the town, local Indian nation, and wider archaeological scholarship. Therefore, in the past few weeks, locals have been organising a stand to protect the site from development and to preserve it as a park. However, much of it has been disconcerted and dislocated. Earlier in January an article emerged stating that the destruction of the site was imminent. Since then, efforts appear to have stalled, perhaps thanks to the petition circulated by some locals. There are a few talks organized and articles appear erratically in the local papers, intending to spread awareness of the importance of the Salt Pond and its archaeology amongst the population.

However, all through this process, a reoccurring question emanates from the mouths of the 'white' residents campaigning: 'If this site is so important to the Indians, then where are the Narragansetts?' The presence and participation of even one tribal member would lend a legitimacy of a far more secure nature than that which is enjoyed by the current 'campaign'. The site, the terrestrial womb from whence the Tribe issued, is being threatened with destruction. So then, where are the Narragansetts?

The answer is, simply, that the Narragansett Tribe is weary. They are so tired of the defeat and the loss and the hurt spanning four centuries that they simply do not want to fight any more. The tribe has been abused by the State of Rhode Island to such a degree, that when the honourable and vital fight to protect their physical heritage presents itself, they shy away and shut themselves off from the world. Indeed, numerous 'white' locals have tried to contact the tribe, to include them in the campaign. But perpetually, their incitements are met by a fatigued ear.

The history of Narragansett and State Governmental relations in Rhode Island is undoubtedly one of abuse and maltreatment. In the early part of the seventeenth century, when perceptive Narragansett Sachem (chief) Canonicus detailed his fears of permitting the English settlers into the locality to settle and live peacefully, a genuine, honest Roger Williams appeased his worries about English intentions in the land. The Colonists and Narragansett Tribe lived in relative peace and harmony, often as allies, until the King Phillip's War of 1675, when the two populations were dragged into a mass conflict which engulfed southern New England. To this day the conflict remains the bloodiest war per capita in American history.

The war sounded the death-knell for the autonomous tribe. On defeat, the State of Rhode Island came down hard on the tribe. Many were sold into slavery, locally and abroad. The remainder of the tribe were banished to the deep forests and hill country in the south of the state. From then on, a long record of avaricious and malicious behaviour to demean and destroy the indigenous peoples ensued, and continues to this day.

Under these circumstances, with tensions and relationships worn so thin between the Narragansett and the rest of the state, who can blame the tribe for being suspicious and apprehensive about this situation? On the one hand, many rightly do not trust the intentions of the state, and on the other, they are tired of losing. However, this time, the failure to act, may just mean the destruction of their Jerusalem.

'THESE UNFORTUNATE MASTERS'

The Missing Half of the Abolition Debate in the Historiography of British Abolition

PAULA DUMAS

When one thinks of British abolition, the mind turns to the familiar names of activists who stood up in Parliament and denounced the institutions of slavery and the slave trade, who identified the horrors of plantation slavery and the middle passage, and who took the fight for abolition to the British public. With such overwhelming evidence of inhumanity in an institution now denounced in almost every area of the modern world, it is almost unimaginable to believe that there were individuals who opposed this movement. As Abraham Lincoln once remarked, even schoolboys knew of William Wilberforce and Granville Sharp, whereas no one could name a single member of the body of anti-abolitionists just a generation after the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. But there was opposition to abolition and emancipation: strong, powerful, convincing opposition. This opposition was a significant part of the reason why it took twenty-five years for abolitionists to achieve an end to Britain's participation in the slave trade and another thirty for slavery and apprenticeship to come to an end in Britain's colonies. From the earliest histories of abolition to twenty-first century bicentennial commemorations, however, Britons have chosen to remember the triumphs of the abolitionists over the needs, actions, and motivations of the failed West Indian interest and their supporters. This has left us with an incomplete understanding of the process of British abolition.

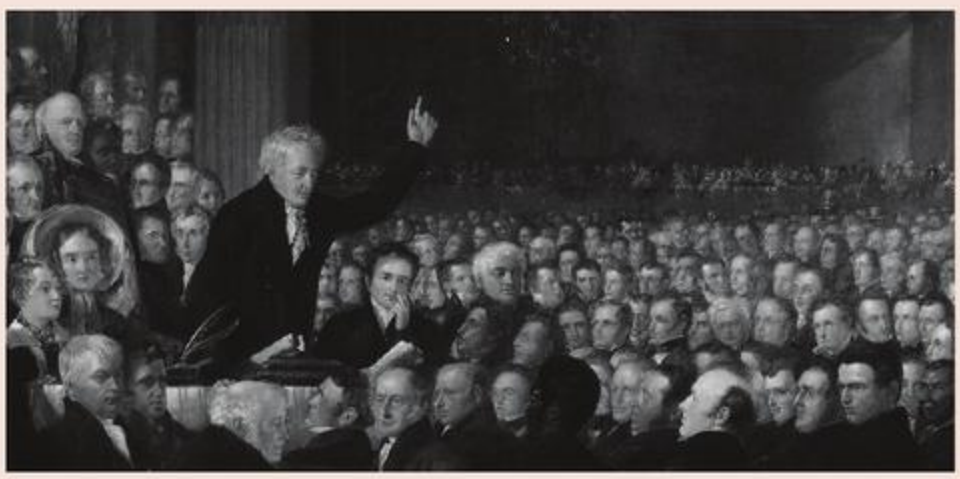
There are several factors that have contributed to proslavery Britons and West Indians being left out of the traditional narrative of British abolition. From the very beginning, the history of abolition has been a history of the abolitionists. Their struggles and successes were documented and published as early as 1808 in Thomas Clarkson's The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by the British Parliament. A prominent abolitionist, Clarkson placed the actions of abolitionists at the centre of both the popular abolition movement and subsequent parliamentary action to end Britain's participation in the slave trade. He depicted abolition as a great humanitarian achievement of which Britain could always be proud. This interpretation influenced generations of historians of British abolition. For example, Roger Anstey's influential study, The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition 1760-1810, was considered to be following in the Clarksonian tradition by his contemporaries because it portrayed abolitionists as good men overcoming ruthless commercial interests and accomplishing a great step forward in human progress. This familiar narrative of British abolition was reinforced by the bicentennial celebrations of the abolition of the slave trade in 2007 which left little room to explore the opposition to abolition or the role of the slaves in ending the slave trade.

Anti-abolitionists in Britain made a smaller material contribution to the abolition debate. For example, in contrast to the abolitionists' petitions with hundreds or thousands of signatures drawn from the general public, anti-abolitionist petitions to Parliament had fewer signatures and were usually created by specific segments of the West Indian interest. Anti-abolitionists criticised the mass petitions for abolition and emancipation and complained about the abolitionists' efforts to gain support from the general public through supposedly misleading speeches, demonstrations, and pamphlets. They also published fewer pamphlets and received less column space in British newspapers. The West Indian interest and their supporters made a concerted effort to influence Parliament and were not as concerned as the abolitionists with swaying public opinion.

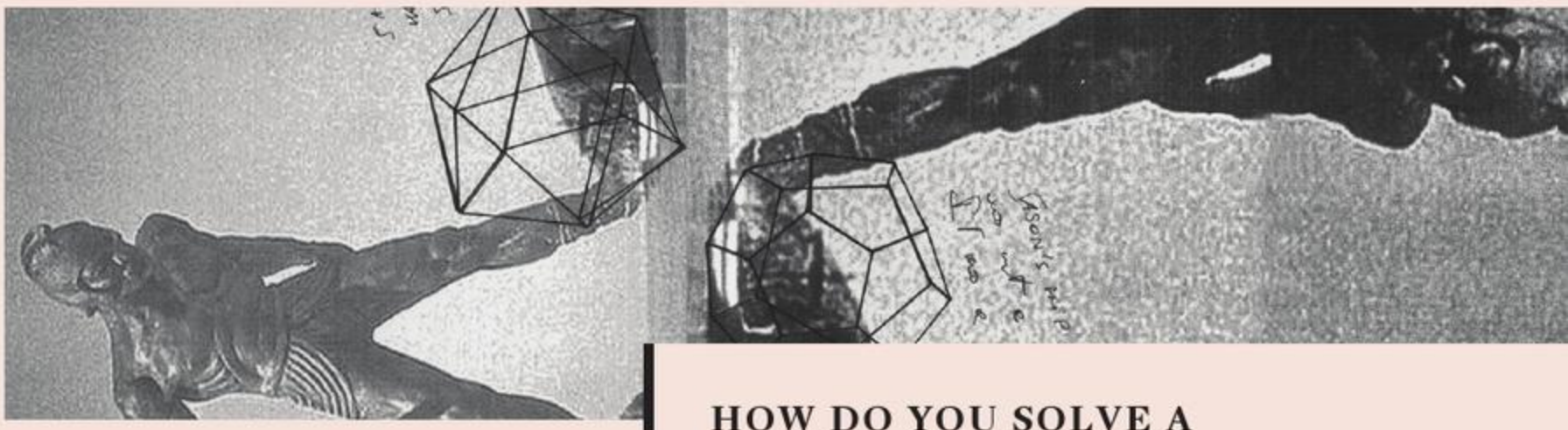
Perhaps the largest obstacle that has prevented the West Indian interest and its supporters from being remembered in the historiography is that, from a contemporary viewpoint, their position and their arguments are not pleasant to recall. Racial arguments and contemporary beliefs about the inherent inferiority of the African race informed the proslavery position. Anti-abolitionists used religious justifications for slavery, classed slaves as private property (instead of human beings) deserving of the state's protection and possessing monetary value, and attacked the abolitionist position both in Parliament and in written materials. They charged abolitionists with misleading and lying to the British public, having dangerous ulterior motives, and harbouring a hatred of the colonies. The anti-abolitionist vision of Britain's post-slavery future was one in which the empire had crumbled, her European neighbours had taken over her role in the slave trade and gained her colonies, and her prosperity was a thing of the past. The proslavery position remains as an unwanted reminder of an out-dated way of ordering mankind.

So why have the anti-abolitionists failed to be included in the story of British abolition? From the very beginning the story of the British abolitionists has been presented as though it were the complete story of abolition. The anti-abolitionists made less of a material impact and influenced far fewer members of the British public. Support for British slavery and the slave trade was centred upon (although not strictly limited to) those with an interest in the trade or connections to the colonies. Proslavery MPs, writers, and activists slandered abolitionists and derided their efforts. But perhaps the most important reason why the anti-abolitionists have failed to be remembered is because they failed in their efforts to maintain the institution of slavery. I would argue, however, that their story is not one of failure. Their arguments were convincing and persuasive enough to postpone and prevent the abolition of the slave trade for a period of twenty-five years and the abolition of slavery for another twenty-five. Even when abolition did occur it contained important elements to appease the proslavery lobby. They succeeded in securing several more years of guaranteed labour through the apprenticeship scheme and an unprecedented amount of financial compensation for their property in slaves. These successes demonstrate that contemporaries found their arguments and position to be valid if not exactly liked. The West Indian interest and its supporters may have failed to stop abolition, but they impacted the timing and nature of the eventual abolition of slavery in the British Empire. They were a significant part of the slavery debate.

The Anti-Slavery Society Convention, B. R. Haydon, 1841, via Wikimedia Commons



Jason and the Argonauts, 1963 via nurtureart.org



HOW DO YOU SOLVE A PROBLEM LIKE MEDEA?

© EMILY RUSHTON

Female limitations in the ancient world were often products of set male boundaries, and the success of a woman was often weighed upon her ability to bear offspring. Greek tragedy gave voices to the otherwise silenced females, and the loudest is that of Euripides' Medea. Possibly the most famous tragic heroine, the eponymous sorceress from Colchis was, herself, bewitched by a man, which culminated in a monumental collection of failures, from the murder of her brother to the betrayal of her homeland.

Her only perceived success was the catastrophic vengeance she wreaked on her ex-husband Jason by murdering her two children. There is wide debate as to whether this action can only be viewed as another tremendous failure, or, for once, a rather twisted success. Her victory as a female avenger could arguably outweigh her spectacular failure as a mother, but it also may be impossible for her to ever succeed as a female, having disregarded the most womanly of roles. If you consider Matthew Reid and Grant Gillett's

« DIFFERENT SELVES OF FOREIGNER, MOTHER AND SCORNED WOMAN »

strongly contrasting view that Medea wished to save her children from her limited future, the murders could be seen as a humane act; her motherly instinct would imply her need to protect them from her own dire situation. One must explore the different characterisations of Medea as a foreigner, a Mother and a scorned woman in order to justify her actions, and whether there could be one defining answer in a character with so many divided 'selves.' Was Medea mad, or was she simply getting even?

Considering that Ancient Greece at the time was thought to be 'both sexist and racist,' for Medea, the 'foreign Mother from Colchis', it was never going to be easy. The stressful manner in which Medea entered Corinth would culminate in unease and negative connotation to her new home. Also, as Medea's husband left her and took 'a royal wife to his bed', her entire outlook on her own capabilities could be changed. Lena Šimić, the Croatian playwright who reinvented Medea in modern Liverpool, suggests that in her own personal experience, being regarded as a Mother helped to integrate her into a new society where she was originally viewed with contempt. Whereas Šimić is facing different prejudices in the modern day, her want to succeed in a new country strongly mirrors Medea.

Whereas, one may argue that Medea believed Motherhood was a hindrance, Šimić portrayed her own children as her successes, rather than her failures. By having her children by her side, Šimić was able to be move up in society, whereas Medea, even with her children, back tracked. When Medea wished to move on in her life with Jason, the only way she achieved this was by killing her brother. Reid and Gillett suggest that Medea may have committed infanticide to remove her children from the stigma of being the offspring of a hysterical woman, and detach them from the foreign stereotype she was burdened with. However, Helene Foley proposes that there is a personal struggle between the 'maternal Medea and the avenging Medea' which culminates in her rejecting her maternal instincts to defend her feminine strength. We can evaluate Medea's success by comparing her arguments with Jason and her lament about her children. Her convictions are unsteady when discussing the potential infanticide, whereas her passion is indisputable in her damnation of Jason. This comparison between doubt and absolution emphasises Medea's true intent to avenge her lover, rather than to protect the legacy of her children.

As a scorned woman, the feeling of jealousy and replacement comes paired with an overriding desire for revenge, which as Francis Bacon rightly stated 'is a kind of wild justice.' If you could summarise Medea's character in one quote, I believe Bacon is unquestionable in his conclusion: the suggestion that seeking revenge in such an animalistic fashion, yet also having a bizarre sense of justice epitmosies Medea's story entirely. There is difficulty in singling out one specific event that she is seeking revenge for, but her dismissal by Jason for 'a passionate love' in Glauce, certainly sparks her need for action. Medea, the foreign Mother, finds herself replaced by the young Glauce, a childless native and the daughter of the masterful Kreon. Jason therefore, in stating that he 'chose the fate that made him a distinguished man', implies that he could only become distinguished with Medea's total opposite, which scholars like Foley suggest spark Medea's intense 'sexual jealousy.'

Medea's internal conflict with parenthood is also incited by Glauce, acting as a reminder of the things she no longer has: her father or her youthful innocence. This envy of youthful innocence would have also been mirrored in her children, and we should not rule out that Medea's infanticide could stem from ignited resentment. If this were to be the case, we should view Medea's actions as failures as they have simply satisfied her own angst rather than avenging Jason. Then again, if this incitement originated in the craving to deprive Jason of these things, then Medea has in fact entirely succeeded. Considering that Jason partly undertook Glauce 'for an alliance with the king,' and that Medea had to destroy her alliance with her father to save Jason, Medea could gain the upper hand by removing the one alliance they now shared: the children. Therefore, being in this mindset, Medea could justify her actions, as rightly or wrongly she was tenuously fulfilling Jason's wishes, by removing any past foreign alliances that could hold him back from his new life.

To assess the intentions of Medea as a singular character is arguably impossible. The intricate way in which her different selves of foreigner, Mother and scorned woman, can survive both separately and intertwined, allow there to be several different, simultaneous conclusions. Above all, Medea cannot be categorised as either a success of a failure, as although she almost definitely failed as a Mother, it is virtually impossible to brand someone as a failure when through their deception and devious behavior, they manage to make infanticide, in certain situations, seem almost justifiable.

SCOTLAND'S LOST COLONY: *THE DARIEN SCHEME*

KATHRYN DUMM

Few national ventures begin with such lofty goals and end in such spectacular failure as what has become known as Scotland's Darien Scheme. One of the country's greatest disasters, it directly led to the Act of Union of 1707, a move that is still controversial today, some 300 years later.

At the end of the seventeenth century Scotland was a nation just emerging from nearly 100 years of intermittent civil war that had depleted the population and left the economy in ruins. Traditional industries were no longer viable and Scotland's shipping business was minimal thanks in large part to limits imposed by England during various Navigation Acts of the seventeenth century, acts that aimed to restrict trade with the colonies to England.

In 1695, in an attempt to lift Scotland out to the abject and widespread poverty it was experiencing and to break into the increasingly mercantile and international world of eighteenth-century economics, the Scottish Parliament chartered the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies with the support of the English crown. The Company was set to raise capital and establish a trade route on the Isthmus of Darien, a narrow strip of land that separates the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Most of the information that the Scottish people had about the Isthmus of Darien was from one source, a privateer by the name of Lionel Wafer, who painted a rosy picture of the conditions on what is today known as the Isthmus of Panama and was hired by the Company as an adviser.

The Company of Scotland initially raised money in England, Germany, and the Netherlands. After a substantial amount had been procured through subscriptions abroad, the English government came down on the Company and required them to refund any capital they had raised abroad. This was largely because of pressure from the East India Company, which had a monopoly on England's foreign trade. Scotland had to make the decision to either abandon the idea or raise capital within Scotland.

The Scottish people were overwhelmingly supportive of the project. Propaganda spread through sermons, and national pride became the main driving force behind the tide of the support. Within a few weeks, subscriptions worth over £400,000 had been raised, roughly equivalent to £42 million in modern currency. This impressive amount of money represented between twenty and fifty percent of all capital circulating in Scotland at the time. People from all levels of society pledged, but the majority were those from lower classes of society. As it became more and more of a platform for Scottish national pride the nature of the project changed, and by the first voyage in 1689 the goal was no longer merely a hand in global mercantilism, but a leap into the European race for colonies. Scotland was to start a colony on the Isthmus of Darien, seemingly ignoring the fact that Spain, an exceedingly powerful nation, held claim to the Isthmus.

To say that the Company was ill informed about almost every aspect of the venture is to put it mildly. Remember that almost everything the Company knew about the Isthmus of Darien came from a single man: Lionel Wafer. According to Wafer, the native population was comprised of happy-go-lucky, longhaired people of exceeding vanity living in a land of milk and honey. Based on this information, the Company provided the first expedition with trade goods.

The first five ships left Leith harbor on 4 July 1698 with 1,200 passengers. The journey was fraught with hardship, with yellow fever spreading amongst the crew. However, the colonists remained optimistic and landed on Darien four months after their voyage began. They set about building a colony on land they dubbed New Caledonia. They toiled to build a settlement and cultivate the land for nearly two months before they finally came to terms with the fact that the land they had chosen was little more than a malarial swamp. They moved to higher ground and started over, but soon came to realize that this land, too, was unsuited for agriculture. The natives were not interested in the trade goods they brought and by the time the equatorial spring rains arrived the colony was beginning to feel the need to replenish supplies. All five of the ships were sent to trade with the English colonies in the Caribbean. Four returned empty-handed with news that English colonies were forbidden to trade with the Scots; the fifth was captured and never returned. Disease set in in spring 1699 and by March 200 settlers were dead.

Between the disease, famine, and hard work of building the colony, which the settlers persisted at despite the appalling conditions, the death toll rose and the settlers looked like 'so many skeletons,' in the words of one young gentleman who wrote about the ordeal in his journal.

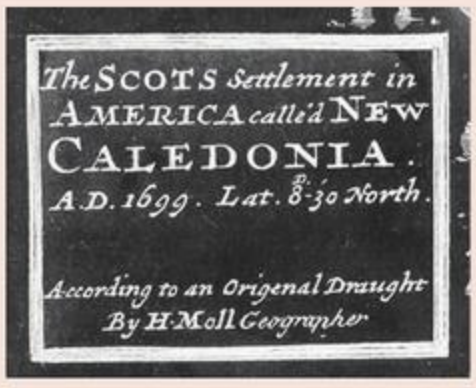
The next blow came in the form of threat from Spain. All-powerful in the Americas and unwilling to humor the upstart Scots, an attack was planned on the colony. The colonists learned of this and fled to their ships, with no other desire than to return to Scotland. Of the four ships that flew the colony only one ever returned to Scotland, carrying only 300 of the original 1,200 colonists.

Meanwhile, a second and third expedition, of six and five ships, respectively, left Scotland carrying around 1,300 new colonists. They had no way of knowing what had befallen their brethren.

They arrived at Darien to an utterly abandoned colony. They worked to rebuild but conditions and morale quickly deteriorated. In what could be viewed as a moment of madness, the colonists decided to attack a nearby camp where Spanish forces were gathering. While the attack was a fabulous, if surprising success, it only proved to incite a full-blown Spanish attack on the colony. The colonists were completely overwhelmed and surrendered in March of 1700. They were permitted to return to Scotland on their ships but only a tiny fraction ever made it back to Scottish shores.

Of the sixteen ships that set out for Darien, only two returned, carrying with them the shattered dream of a Scottish empire. Scotland was financially ruined and had been cowed by the experience, and in 1707 accepted the Act of Union, creating Great Britain for the first time.

Scotland dared to dream of empire but met with ruin. The lasting effect of this national catastrophe of the late seventeenth century is still felt today as Scotland approaches the 2014 referendum, which may determine whether Scotland is ready to shed the union that came about after the spectacular and heartbreaking failure of the Darien Scheme.



« THE SHATTERED DREAM OF A SCOTTISH EMPIRE »

ABSENCE *of* DEMOCRACY

Britain's Failure to Establish Suffrage in Hong Kong

DAVID RICHARD SAUNDERS

A whole political class tainted by allegations of corruption, mired in scandal and court cases. A parliament too interested in protecting its own interests to face up to a stagnant economy and a desperate need for institutional reform. Leading figures booed out of office, pelted with coins, and new ministers – many from outside the world of politics – welcomed in to rescue Italy. If that sounds familiar, it is because history has the habit of repeating itself, as Karl Marx once wrote, 'the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.' This was the backdrop for Berlusconi's spectacular arrival on the political scene in 1994, and it is no small irony that in November 2011 he was ousted in much the same manner. The trouble for Italy is that the intervening years were both farcical and tragic.

Today it is difficult to think of Italian politics without Il Cavaliere, the man who has been Italy's longest serving Prime Minister since Mussolini. However, in 1994 he was an outsider who made a surprise entrance into politics only two months before the general elections in March. He was a business man who had built up a vast business and media empire from scratch, and he appealed to Italians who related to him as a self-made man who spoke plain Italian. The centre-right Christian Democrat party, which had led every government since the Second World War, and its coalition partners, had lost all credibility with the Tangentopoli scandal ('Bribesville') which brok Hong Kong rose to global prominence in the latter half of the twentieth century as an economic powerhouse and a cultural microcosm, with the laissez-faire system of liberal economics serving to characterise its intrinsic vibrancy and prosperity. However, the mechanics of the capitalist society and its successes did not run deep; a lack of political freedoms and Hong Kong's position in the late twentieth century as a relic within the waning British colonial enterprise served to taint any perceptions of liberty.

So why did Hong Kong never become a democracy? Other British colonial territories eventually came to enjoy the same levels of political freedom as can be observed in the United Kingdom. So it is interesting that suffrage was never realised in Hong Kong. It was certainly not for want of a greater, more prosperous society, for the densely populated colony represented the archetypal modern, cosmopolitan city. Britain, as its colonial ruler, was a liberal democracy, so that fails to provide direct answers. It is thus necessary to delve deeper into the socio-political reality of Hong Kong in the years leading up to the transition of power to the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1997. The Handover, as it was popularly termed, was a period of marked anxiety for many in the country; people cherished the relative social and economic freedoms.

Public perceptions of the PRC were severely damaged during the late 1950s and early 1960s, with this changing relatively little as time progressed towards 1997. This was particularly due to the role of communist ideology, and its perceived threat towards Hong Kong, which was essentially a beacon of liberal capitalism in Asia. Perhaps the most significant event in the 1960s for Hong Kong was the Cultural Revolution that took place over the border in the PRC. It is arguable that the movement, from 1966 to 1976, had a profound impact on Hong Kong's sense of security, the ideological sentiments of its people, and impinged on the road to democracy. The removal of capitalist elements of Chinese society through the enforcement of core communist ideals saw thousands of political dissidents and refugees flee south towards Hong Kong. The threat posed was made very real to the Hong Kong public, when in 1967 a crisis emerged with the advent of a pro-communist and anti-colonial movement during a period of intense rioting and mass dissensus. The 1967 Riots impacted society on two levels; the violence and chaos of the communist and anti-democratic movement along with the longstanding legacy of mistrust and bitterness; the British Government prioritised maintaining public order and control. In essence, democracy was not a viable option at this stage.

It can be suggested that democracy was neither popularly desired nor strategically logical for the British Government to implement. Universal suffrage would provide a legitimate political mechanism for the communist leftists and other political dissidents to express their views and have a say on future leadership – something that would be categorically disadvantageous for the colonial rulers. Moreover, the majority of the population resented the leftists and the disruption of the 1967 Riots, perhaps explaining a feeling of contentment for British rule, and a general lack of popular desire for democratic change.

Additionally, at this stage, there was relatively little public awareness about the fact that Britain was bound by the conditions of the 1898 Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory, whereby Hong Kong was leased to Britain for a period of 99 years. In short, the repatriation of the Hong Kong territory to the PRC in 1997 was inevitable. Supposedly, it was believed, the widespread fears that ran parallel to the dissent and unrest in the PRC during the 1960s-70s would be realised.

Perhaps most critically, this serves as a key reason for understanding why democracy was never actually realised in the colonial territory. The terms for the 1997 Handover were discussed and finalised at the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which took place in Beijing in December 1984. The declaration reaffirmed the PRC's intentions to assume sovereign control over Hong Kong in 1997, and Britain willingness to assent. During this political meeting, the terms and conditions were agreed upon, and it is generally accepted that the PRC's decision to maintain the laissez-faire system of liberal capitalism, and to allow the relative level of political freedoms to exist for a period of 50 years, under the 'One Party Two Systems' policy was generous. It can consequently be suggested that this was the result of diplomatic wrangling – a necessity to ensure that Britain would agree to the terms of the Handover. Likewise, it is possible that Hong Kong may never have viably maintained a democratic system of governance with the looming prospect of the Handover; it would have likely sparked political discord and would certainly have been abolished soon after 1997. It was in Britain's best interests to ensure that the status quo within Hong Kong was maintained well into the future, even under the sovereignty of the rapidly developing communist giant.

So if the lack of democratic progression in Hong Kong was down to a combination of political limitations and attempts to maintain the status quo, then surely the absence of suffrage would be an accepted facet of society? For many in Hong Kong, it is. However in recent years following the Handover in 1997, the lack of democracy has become more apparent and attempts have indeed been made to progress towards what many see as a basic right; intrinsic to the archetypal modern city. The PRC's ascendency in the political sphere in Hong Kong is increasingly prominent, as evidenced by the contentious Chief Executive elections in 2012, which saw allegations of political interference met with a marked public outcry. Ultimately, Britain did fail to establish democracy in Hong Kong, but due to the political realities of the 1960s leading up to the 1990s, it is also fair to say that it would not have been a natural political course of action. Democracy should have been established long ago, in conjunction with the advent of free-market capitalism, which has come to characterise the cosmopolitan city of Hong Kong.

ALGERIA: FRANCE'S FAILED BATTLE

ELIZABETH PEET

On a bleak October day in 1961, Paris, the historic city of revolution and popular power, was in turmoil. A mass demonstration of thousands of young Algerians had gathered on the banks of the Seine to protest peacefully for Algerian independence from France, which had ruled the country since 1830. The calls for liberty were met with horrific repression. In an act of appalling barbarism, dozens were thrown into the river and drowned, while many more were beaten. Around 12,000 people were deported to Algeria and the streets became stained with blood. Official reports listed only a handful of casualties, but recent death toll figures have been estimated at around two hundred.

Seven years earlier, in 1954 the French had sent troops into Algeria to put down a nationalist rising and restore colonial authority, in what would become known as the Algerian War, or as the French referred to it until 1999: The 'Operation for the Maintenance of Order'. This eight year war would bring down the Fourth Republic and call into question the very essence of French national identity.

The tensions between the two nations had been heightened by two key events. The first was the Great Depression, which strained the economic situation in Algeria and forced thousands of young Algerians into the French cities in search of jobs. They found themselves the victims of racism and discrimination, being denied any educational or employment rights. Unsurprisingly, hostility towards the French grew, and many young Algerians embraced nationalist politics as a solution to their woes. The nationalist Algerian People's Party (PPA) was established in 1937, which would evolve into the National Liberation Front (FLN) in 1954 and lead the battle for independence.

The second root of the crisis lay in the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. French weaknesses were brutally exposed after the Nazis invaded in 1940, further heightening Algerian hostility towards the French, and making a nationalist victory seem ever more possible. It was in this context that war broke out in 1954, and the situation soon escalated out of control.

The 'pieds-noirs', white French settlers in Algeria numbering roughly a million, immediately attacked the conciliatory approach of France to the crisis, deeming any concessions to the nationalists as a direct threat to their position of dominance. The government changed tack in 1957, when the FLN threatened a general strike in Algiers. Emergency powers were handed to General Jacques Massu, the Paratroop Commander, who proceeded to wage an increasingly desperate campaign of terror against the rebels. The use of torture and illegal executions became widespread under Massu's command. As the scandalous conduct of French soldiers was slowly revealed, support for the war dwindled as it became clear that France's 'liberating and civilising mission' in Algeria was a sham. Indeed, the use of such tactics questioned the very essence of French identity itself, as a nation which prided itself on the concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Back in France, the young Fourth Republic buckled under the pressure. By 1958, a new constitution was being drafted which would create a much stronger executive under the control of a powerful president. Charles de Gaulle, sworn in as president in 1959, had decided that France would be unable to restore full sovereignty over Algeria, as the torture scandal from 1957 onwards had significantly damaged French opinion of the conflict. He proposed self-determination for Algeria, while still in formal union with France. In 1961, 75 per cent of France voted in support of Algerian self-determination in a referendum.

The pieds-noirs panicked. For them, any drifts towards independence would mean they would be both cut off from their natural mother country, and would become a powerless minority in an Arab-controlled Algeria. Following the 1961 referendum, the Secret Organisation of the Army (OAS) was formed, a coalition of pieds-noirs and right wing soldiers who saw de Gaulle's proposal as treacherous. The OAS used extreme violence to try and keep Algeria under French control, including several assassination attempts on de Gaulle himself. This violence spilled onto the mainland, notoriously demonstrated in the massacre of Algerians in Paris in October 1961. Consequentially, French support for Algerian independence grew, with many proclaiming that 'the cause of the Algerian people is the cause of all free people'. In March 1962 a ceasefire was agreed, with 90 per cent of metropolitan French voters and 99 per cent of Algerian voters approving Algerian independence from France.

via Wikimedia Commons

« FRANCE'S 'LIBERATING AND CIVILISING MISSION' IN ALGERIA WAS A SHAM »

The war had exposed many French failures. Most obviously, the French had failed to accept the reality of post-war decolonisation. A stubborn insistence on clinging to whatever remnants of global prestige they could was part of the wider problem of chronic French insecurity in the wake of the Nazi invasion of 1940. While Britain could self-congratulate itself in 1945, the French could only reflect on their own defeat and humiliation at the hands of the Nazis. The French quest to retain global prestige, and the determination of the settlers in Algeria to retain their position, resulted in France failing to ensure a peaceful solution to the crisis of 1954.

France emerged from the war physically bruised – her global power had undoubtedly been further eroded. But perhaps more important was the psychological damage inflicted, in the betrayal of principles which had made generations of Frenchmen proud of their nation. It was a tragic irony that French liberty and civilisation, the spread of which had been heralded by many as the reason why France should fight to retain Algeria, had been exposed in that very conflict as a sham. The historian Robert Gildea argues that in their quest to spread French liberties, Frenchmen 'had resorted to methods of barbarism which allowed them, the people of 1789, to be attacked for being no better than Nazis'. Surely that is the greatest failing of all.

SERIOUSLY HILARIOUS: BECKETT *and the* ART *of* FAILURE

SOPHIA MORRIS-JONES

NO MATTER. TRY AGAIN. FAIL AGAIN. FAIL BETTER.

- Worstward Ho

Failure is a slightly dispiriting subject, and it seems this is why journalists have used these lines to give a positive spin to a range of stories, from sporting failures to banking ones. *The Economist* asserts in a 2006 article on Samuel Beckett that the lines 'Fail again. Fail better' are funny. And you know what *The Economist* says is true. Presumably any bankers reading would have felt briefly comforted that their monstrous ineptitude is kind of amusing really. Schadenfreude also comes into it. We like to hear about other people's failures. However, in normal society there are standards: failures we consider funny and those that we don't. Part of the joy, or horror, about Beckett is that those standards rather dramatically vanish. No failure is that serious.

Beckett's theatre was originally dubbed 'the art of failure'. This captures both the 'failure of art' motif that runs through so much of his work and his obsession with what it might be to fail in life. Most of his characters fail, have failed and are failing at all times in all ways. There is failure to communicate, failure to urinate, failure to commit suicide, failure to remember, and, perhaps most importantly, failure to actually define failure at all. The tramps Vladimir and Estragon are not represented in moral terms as if to say, 'don't end up like these fellas'. For that to happen, we would have had to empathise with their plight. Instead, we are simply invited to laugh at their attempts to do anything.

This is typical of the detached style of Beckett's writing, which avoids didacticism at all costs. This detachment enables us to laugh at the characters more easily since we do not feel any empathy for them, but at the same time suggests something slightly darker. Beckett's peculiar brand of humour arises when you think about the essential hollowness of life's performances. And that idea is not exactly a laugh-riot by the usual standards of society.

Beckett's obsession with failure reflects the philosophical movement of existentialism that was blossoming in Paris at the time when Beckett was living there in the 1940s. For Sartre and Camus, existentialism was rooted in the conviction that there is no concrete identity. This supposedly generates a moral imperative to create one's own self, and to do it with commitment and integrity. That in turn means that failure is a very serious matter. Obviously, Beckett's work in general blows a giant raspberry at such pompous dictates.

Yet, despite producing the kind of art that must surely have inspired suicides all over the world, Beckett himself led a respectable, productive life. His early years were plagued with difficulties. At constant war with an overbearing mother, he had an affair with his first cousin, which unsurprisingly aggravated his mother even more. Post-graduation, Beckett tried and failed at lecturing, or what he called 'teaching others what I do not know myself'. After exiling himself from his native Ireland, he met James Joyce in Paris and became his protégé. He was swamped with admiration for Joyce, to the extent that his own creativity suffered. Over this period in 1930s - living between Dublin, London and Paris - the majority of Beckett's attempts at publication for novels and poetry were rejected. Upon returning once more to Paris, Beckett was stabbed by a pimp, very close to the heart. Beckett later described these years as 'a period of lostness'.

Then came the formative moment: the second world war, in which Beckett (with his future wife) fought for the French Resistance, dramatically escaped being captured by German spies, and was awarded two military medals. Immediately afterwards, back in Ireland, he had an epiphany that he should break out from the influence of Joyce. He later admitted 'only then did I begin to write the things I feel.' The result was a trilogy of books known as *The Trilogy*, and a little play he wrote on the side, known as *En Ettendant Godot*. From there his career took off, and he had money for the first time since moving away from home.

Sartre, who advocated the importance of morality and commitment, also fought for the French Resistance. Ironically however, it was he who effectively switched sides after being captured by the Germans. After being released from a cushy set up in a German 'prison' during which time he made a great translation of the Nazi-philosopher Heidegger, Sartre happily took up teaching job in France which had belonged to a Jew who had been exiled under Vichy Law.

All this goes to show how Beckett rejected Sartre's whiney vacillating attempt to carve out an authentic identity and cut straight to the business of living. And possibly it was Beckett's ability to use humour, rather than angsty philosophising, that allowed him to do it.

Worstword Ho was written late in Beckett's life, long after the clutch of post-WWII plays that made his name. The title of this prose piece is said to have been inspired by Edgar's speech in Shakespeare's *King Lear* 'the worst is not so long as one can say, "This is the worst"'. Or in other words, if you are capable of saying 'this is terrible' then at least you still have some measure of what is good and what is bad. That gives you something from which to build.

All Beckett's works are underpinned by an unasked-for compulsion to carry on despite the apparent pointlessness of our small human efforts. Accusations of nihilism, according to the ODNB, 'ignore the persistent need of his characters in his fiction and his drama to go resolutely, stoically on'. As Beckett puts it in Worstward Ho, 'So on. Somehow on.' Beckett's life is in every way an exemplar of this positivity. Perhaps this is why his art, despite its irreverence, retains some of the spirit of Shakespearean humanism. The theme of failure as liberating, and even, at the end of the day, funny, is also found here.

To be worst,
The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear.
The lamentable change is from the best;
The worst returns to laughter.

King Lear

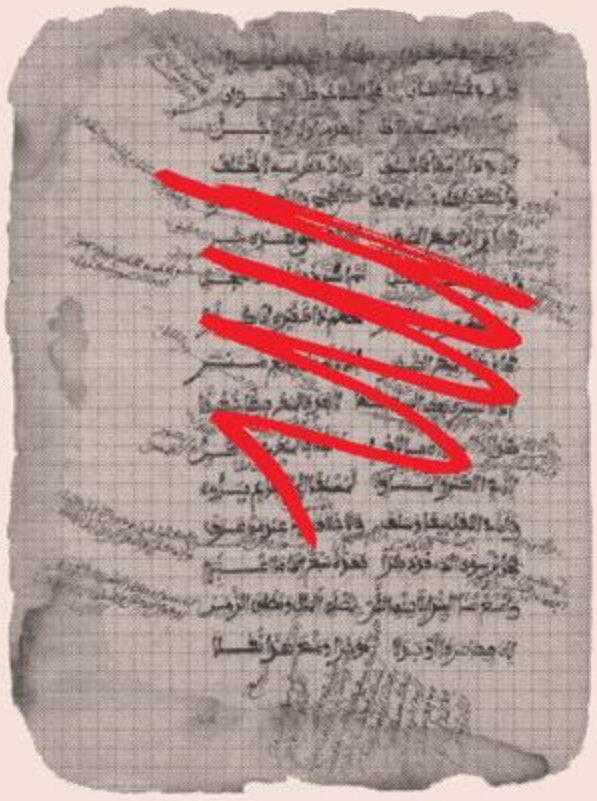
ACADEMIC

Mali and the Failure of UNESCO

Chance Survival and Possible Prevention

Tom Gardner

H / A



via Wikimedia Commons

In 1975 the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia instituted a policy to bring about a 'Year Zero' in which they attempted to demolish and eradicate all traces of cultural heritage prior to their seizure of power. This involved the destruction of 3,369 Buddhist temples and many other religious buildings of different bodies, including, but not limited to, Catholicism and Hinduism. These acts were instrumental in their policies of genocide and sectarian violence, and were intended to wipe out the claim of any cultural group to the area by destroying their past. When this case was finally brought to court in the early twenty-first century, it became apparent that it was legally complex to prosecute the Khmer Rouge regime on the basis of destroying cultural heritage. There was no set protocol established to deal with cases such as this; where the destruction or damage of cultural heritage is used as a form of 'cultural genocide'. The laws set up by The Hague in 1954 and the International Criminal Court (ICC) for the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) were not sufficient. This could potentially be overcome by clarifying the laws in the ICC regarding cultural heritage; hypothetically spearheaded by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Following the destruction of important manuscripts in Timbuktu in January 2013 media and public attention was again focused on the issue of cultural heritage. The overall reaction from the Western world to the damage caused by the North Malian conflict of shock and shame. Fatou Bensouda, Chief Prosecutor of the ICC, suggested that such actions should be considered war crimes. However, this suggestion aside, all the international community offered the case of the Timbuktu Manuscripts were empty words. This issue is clearly within the remit of UNESCO, and yet the general secretary, Ban Ki Moon, only condemned the act and took no further action.

UNESCO was formed in 1946, as a subset of the United Nations (UN), to manage and protect any sites, cultural landscapes or items which they designate of 'Outstanding Universal Value:'

'Protection and management of World Heritage properties should ensure that their Outstanding Universal Value, including the conditions of integrity and/or authenticity at the time of inscription, are sustained or enhanced over time.' *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention IIF. 96.*

By considering the case study of the destruction of the Timbuktu Manuscripts this January in

Timbuktu, Mali, it is apparent that UNESCO policy failed again to protect that which it had promised. It was only due to the intervention and bravery of certain residents and academics in Timbuktu that the damage inflicted to these priceless resources was minimized. There needs to be a change in UNESCO policy to establish a set protocol for this type of case, involving the coining of the term 'cultural genocide' and it's designation as a war crime. The term 'cultural genocide' would incorporate the destruction or damage to cultural heritage for sectarian, political, ideological or expansionist means, but would not cover the destruction and looting of cultural heritage for profit or personal gain. It would also have to be shown that the cultural destruction was a part of a regime of genocide in a region where there was a state of conflict, as for other social and cultural change without either of these pre-requisites is just a natural dynamic rather than an act of aggression.

The defence of cultural heritage, regardless of where it is or what section of humanity it represents, is the duty of all humanity. Thus, even if cultural heritage is threatened in a conflict between two nations not included in the UNESCO, it is still everyone's responsibility to defend said cultural heritage. This is perhaps best argued by Sarah Thomas:

'Destruction of cultural property affects not only the people of that cultural group, but serves to decrease the cultural diversity of the world. History has witnessed the poignant fate of many nations and peoples following brutal and intensive cultural mutilation. Some have ceased to exist while others have had their identity deeply and irreversibly altered. As such, it is important to prosecute the crime of destruction of cultural property.'

One of the major issues with current cultural heritage crises is that above condemning any actions of militant groups, there are very few powers in place to prosecute such acts. By coining cultural genocide as a war crime we add a layer of deterrence to its use, which seems the only feasible move to better protect cultural heritage in the future.

Although this argument involves the creation of a new class of war crimes, it is not stating or implying in any sense that the destruction of cultural heritage is a greater or equal travesty to the loss of human life or suffering. These are, of course, far more important. If there is ever a choice between minimizing or ending human suffering, and protecting cultural heritage, then every international organisation should choose the former.

Returning to the Northern Malian Conflict, two acts of cultural genocide have been committed by the Ansar Dine Islamist regime which until recently occupying Timbuktu. The first of which was the destruction of Sufi shrines and tombs in summer 2012, when an Ansar Dine spokesperson stated they would destroy all Sufi monuments 'without exception,' and that 'the destruction is a divine order.' Occupied Timbuktu constitutes a war zone, and the destruction of the Sufi tombs constitutes sectarian aggression. Therefore this act, rather than just being condemned by UNESCO and the international community, could be defined as a war crime. This would allow the ICC to use a set judicial protocol to accompany any other war crimes which Ansar Dine would be charged with when the conflict ended. Hopefully, this would be far more efficient than the years of uncertain protocol involved in the Khmer Rouge prosecution.

The second act of cultural genocide was the recent threat posed to the Timbuktu manuscripts this January, which accrued much media interest. It was in this case that the failure of the International community and UNESCO became most apparent. The Timbuktu manuscripts are a collection of around 300,000 documents from the thirteenth century through to the twentieth century. They cover a range of topics from medicine and science, to art, and early copies of the Quran. The international importance of these documents led to their registration as UNESCO world heritage in 1970. Thereafter they have been slowly studied by the Timbuktu Manuscripts project (2000-2007) and the Tombouctou Manuscripts Project (2003-present).

On the night of the 20th of January 2013, hours before French troops entered the city, militants of the Ansar Dine made one last ditch attempt to destroy another priceless portion of Timbuktu's history. They entered the Ahmed Baba Institute which held around 10 per cent of the manuscripts, by pretending to be there to protect them, and then torched any of the documents they could find. Although UNESCO had issued a warning of this threat to the French and Malian liberation forces, they failed in protecting the Manuscripts from destruction. The news was splashed across the headlines on the 21st and 22nd of January, hence the dismay of the public.

However, it emerged over the next couple of days that where UNESCO had failed, others forced by their passion for Timbuktu's heritage, had succeeded. Upon the occupation of the city in spring 2012 many local academics and concerned civilians had taken it upon themselves to store and conceal many of the manuscripts; either in secure secret locations, burying them in the desert, or hiding them in their own homes. So it was that the Ansar Dine managed to destroy fewer than 2,000 historic documents in Timbuktu, as the Ahmed Baba Institute was practically empty:

'Preservationists said that in a large-scale rescue operation early last year, shortly before the militants seized control of Timbuktu, thousands of manuscripts were hauled out of the Ahmed Baba Institute to a safe house elsewhere. Realizing that the documents might be prime targets for pillaging or vindictive attacks from Islamic extremists, staff left behind just a small portion of them, perhaps out of haste, but also to conceal the fact that the centre had been deliberately emptied.' Vivienne Walt

The care and bravery of those who risked both careers and lives to rescue these documents is indicative of the faith which they placed in their cultural heritage. It does, however, throw into sharp relief the issue's with the legal systems in place to defend this heritage, and to bring to justice those responsible in the future.

« Where UNESCO had failed, others forced by their passion for Timbuktu's heritage, had succeeded. »

The Ansar Dine's attempt to destroy Timbuktu's heritage can be described as 'cultural genocide' as it tried to wipe out the legacy of the Timbuktu Manuscripts; that of tolerance, hope and learning. This was indicated by UNESCO itself:

'The attack on Timbuktu's cultural heritage is an attack against this history and the values it carries; values of tolerance, exchange and living together, which lie at the heart of Islam. It is an attack against the physical evidence that peace and dialogue is possible.' Ishaan Tharoor

Although the attack, inspired by sectarian hate, may not have been preventable by either UNESCO or the people of Timbuktu, it is important that the individuals who are responsible are brought to justice after the Northern Malian conflict ends. By constituting 'cultural genocide' as a war crime, it would be possible for UNESCO and the ICC to carry out the prosecution efficiently.

The case of Timbuktu is only one example; there are many throughout recent history of the destruction of cultural heritage being used as a weapon in modern conflicts. These include, but are not limited to, the destruction of the famed giant statues of the Buddha in Afghanistan's Bamiyan province in 2001 and the attacks on Sufi sites in Egypt, Libya and Pakistan systematically targeted by the Taliban over the last two decades. Thus, the ICC and UNESCO need a set protocol which can be brought to bear against offenders in cases such as these. The classification of 'cultural genocide' as a war crime, while needing much further study and definition, could provide the basis for this template. Hopefully then, with efficient international law established, these war crimes will either be deterred or at least properly prosecuted and punished.

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When Prophecy Fails

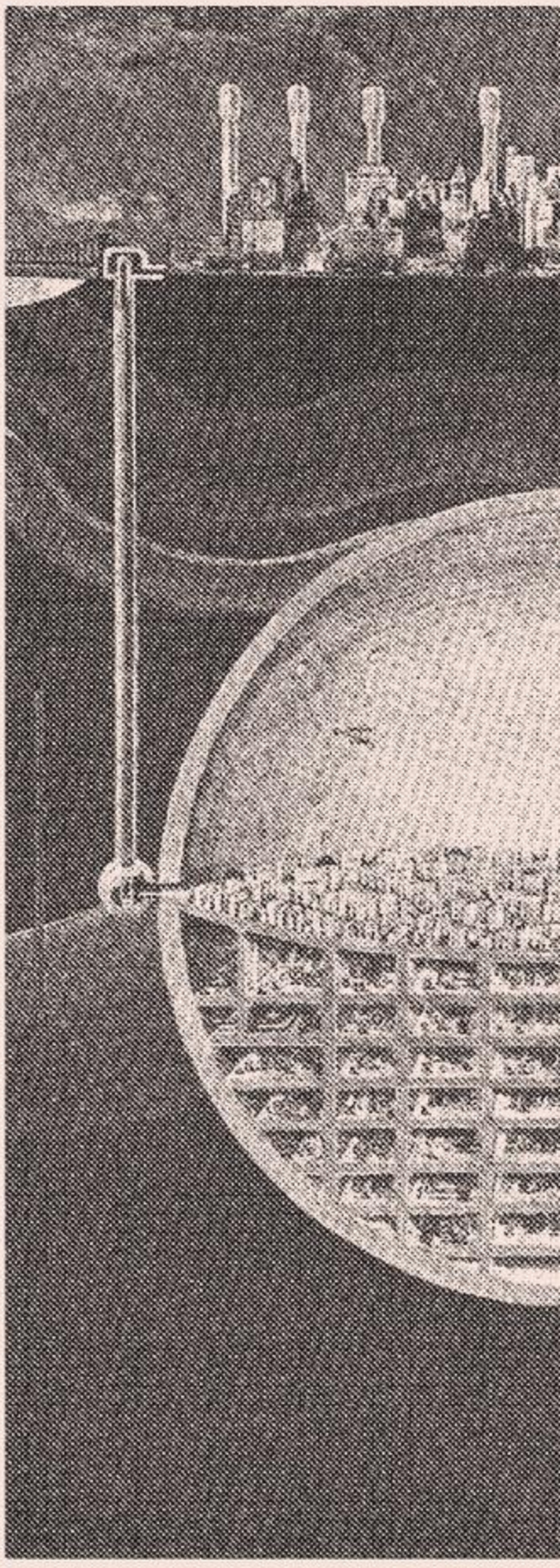
Dr. Stephen Bowd

As we were reminded shortly after the last stroke of midnight on 21 December 2012 when the 'Mayan calendar prophecy' passed unfulfilled, reports of the end of the world have been greatly exaggerated. Panic buying in some parts of Russia and China has been linked to fears of the imminent apocalypse last December, but the attitude of the authorities to annihilation was generally characterised by bland indifference. For example, when he was asked about the date of the end of the world President Vladimir Putin said that he thought it would occur 'in about 4.5 billion years.' Many people were rather less relaxed about global catastrophe in the decade preceding the year 2000 when it was widely expected that the 'Y2K bug' would plunge modern society into a pre-technological twilight zone as computers struggled to cope with the new year. As it happens, the year 1900 was preceded by a feeling of decadence and decay that coincided with, and was spurred on by the impending end of the century, and in 1899 the French novelist Emile Zola wrote: 'I wonder if we're not moving towards some final cataclysm [...] I expect a catastrophe, I know not what, in which we shall all be swallowed up ... I really believe in the end of everything'.

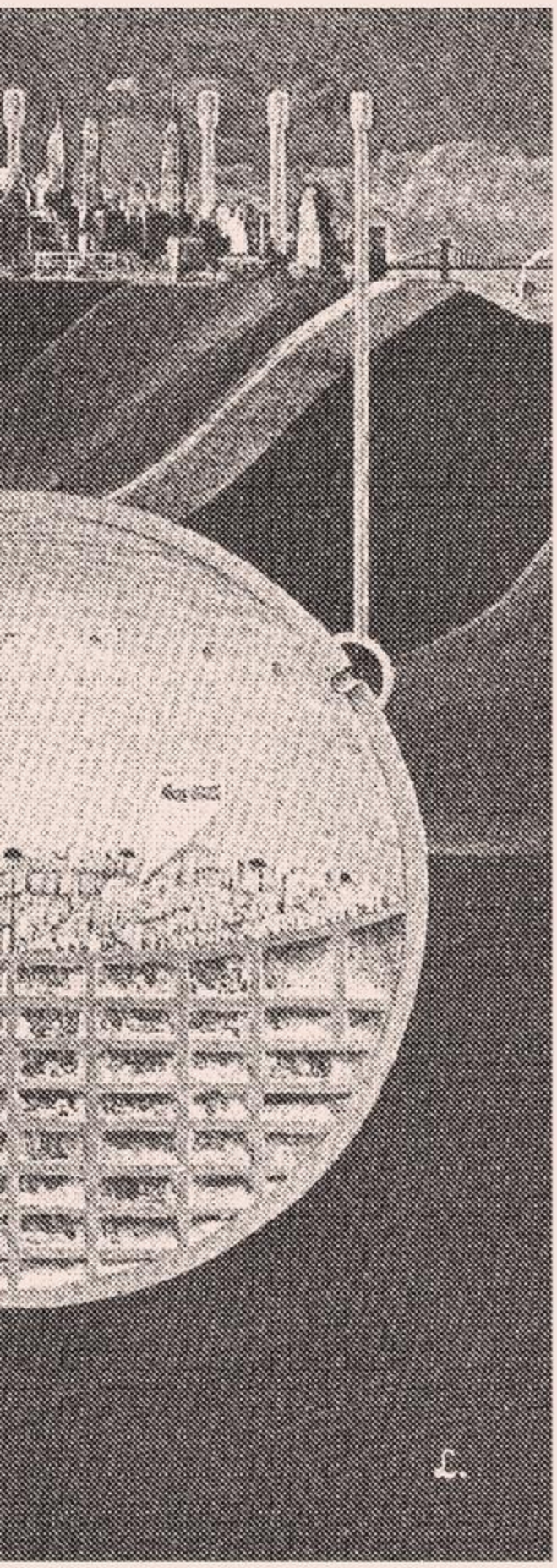
The persistence of apocalyptic unease despite the repeated failure of prophecy and the decline of formal religious belief in the West requires some explanation. Prophecy is possible where there is belief in a divine being with some plan or purpose in creating the universe. The historians Robert Lerner and Bernard McGinn have gone so far as to argue that millennial or apocalyptic beliefs were fundamental to all Christian belief, and that it was not possible for people to believe in God without believing in his intervention in men's affairs (providential signs) and the return of Christ. Christians impatiently guessed at these divine plans for the universe and looked forward to a 'final age', or some other earthly paradise preceding the everlasting bliss of Heaven. Terrestrial salvation or earthly bliss is perhaps the single most important aspect of 'millenarianism' – the scriptural suggestion of a period of one thousand years (millennium) during which Christ and the saints will personally rule on earth (see the Revelation of St John 20: 40).

The medieval historian Norman Cohn suggested that millenarianism was a 'convenient label for a particular type of salvationism', which he defined as being collective, terrestrial, imminent, total, and miraculous. The 'chosen people' or the 'elect' – often socially disadvantaged groups who found the idea of future bliss highly attractive as a compensation for their present troubles – were swept up in waves of expectation in Europe from around 1000 and the idea that it was necessary to prepare for the reign of God on earth by destroying the representatives of the Antichrist became very important. The notion of earthly rewards for the ancient Israelites in the form of a promised land was adopted by medieval and early modern Christians and formed one potent source for nationalist ideologies in the modern world. An important characteristic of the groups of the 'chosen' was a leader claiming prophetic powers and divine illumination, or an image, symbol, or text that was imbued by followers with prophetic power. Many prophets predicted the imminence of the Last Judgement or saw themselves as playing a personal role in the dramatic events (as the Messiah himself) that would precede it according to the Revelation of St John. Their activities reflected the widespread belief that, in one form or another, the Kingdom of God was at hand.

In general, prophecies are by nature obscure enough to be applicable to many different groups, and political and social circumstances, and concrete enough in their imagery or language to seem to an individual to apply to their particular world. Prophets and prophecies typically play on emotions of fear and expectation, hope and dread, which are aroused by severely unsettled social and political conditions, or by personal misfortune. The destruction of Babylon predicted in the Revelation of St John may seem to some to refer to Rome – to others London. Linked to this belief in the imminence of Doomsday was the view that when it happened, the end of the world would be heralded by a series of spectacular and symbolic events – including the conversion of the Jews, the defeat of the Turks, the fall of Rome, and the personal rule of Christ with his saints. The



Oscar Newman, Proposal for an Underground Manhattan, 1969, via Wikimedia Commons



'end-time' was heralded by other political events such as the execution of King Charles I in 1649. Fifth Monarchy men in England argued that the reign of King Jesus would follow this event, and in 1656 the Quaker James Naylor proclaimed himself the 'new Messiah' and rode into Bristol on a donkey accompanied by seven followers (mostly women) chanting 'Holy Holy'.

Surely people got wise to the repeated failures and gave up hoping for Christ's second coming? The distress of the Millerites, who expected the return of Christ to earth in August 1844, was severe but they dealt with the failure of their prophecy by redating the appointed time and then, when that strategy failed, by proselytising more strongly than ever in the hope of reinforcing their own wavering beliefs and with an understanding that Christ would only return when the earth was more fully purified and prepared. The mid-twentieth century UFO cult of Chicago followed a similar pattern. When a suburban housewife received messages from aliens about an imminent catastrophic flood on earth she gathered a local following around her. However as the date of the cataclysm came and went without incident the group and its leader were forced to reinterpret the alien messages. According to the social anthropologists who studied the phenomenon the leader was comforted by the thought that the alien warnings would, at least, awaken people to God, and that they served as a kind of dress rehearsal for the big event. As with the Millerites the 'elect' drew closer to each other to confirm their beliefs and to reject the mockery of others, and they worked harder than ever to convert the doubters and to deal with their 'cognitive dissonance'.

Richard Landes – former director of the Centre for Millennial Studies at Boston University – has outlined a timetable of apocalyptic time that explains how prophetic belief may rise and fall. In the sine wave of rising expectation, he says, the prophet-roosters run about pointing excitedly to the signs and loudly proclaiming the end. Many people – the owls – laugh and smile to themselves because they are secure in the wisdom that these Cassandras of doom will once again be proven wrong. At the peak of the sine

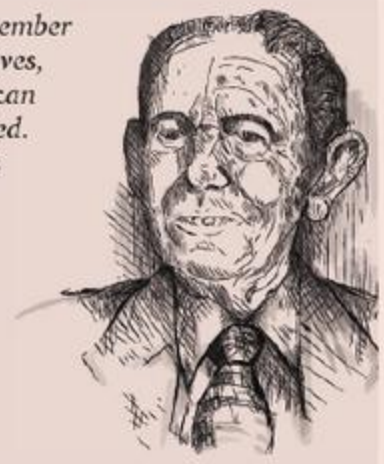
03

Failed Prophets

[01]

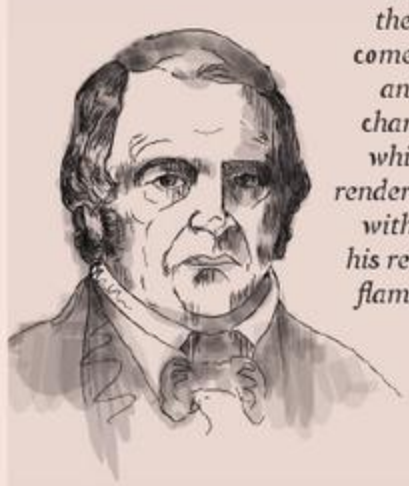
HAROLD CAMPING

"When September 6, 1994, arrives, no one else can become saved. The end has come."



[02]

WILLIAM MILLER

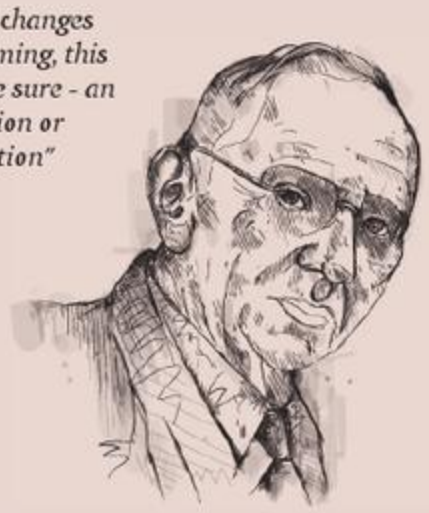


"For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire."

[03]

EDGAR CAYCE

"... for changes are coming, this may be sure - an evolution or revolution"



wave of expectation, days or even hours before the doom that has been foretold, some wavering owls may be drawn in and join the followers of the prophet-rooster, but as the assigned date for terrestrial salvation passes without major incident and momentum fails these owls defect quickly and millenarian groups of the 'elect' disintegrate or move elsewhere. The roosters reshape their message to suit new circumstances and the owls reassert the course of secular non-apocalyptic time.

The rise and fall of the sine wave is, by mathematical analogy, uninterrupted and it is possible to discern the nature of its peaks and troughs throughout history and in different places. For example, Ottavia Niccoli has argued that prophecy and the interpretation of 'signs' reached a peak of interest in Italy between 1450 and 1530. She attributes this heightened Italian apocalypticism to a conjunction of different events: the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the westwards advance of the Muslim Turks, the French invasion of Italy in 1494 and subsequent Italian wars, and the emergence of schism in the Roman Catholic church after 1520. These events placed Italy at the heart of the drama of the 'end time', and many Italians, relying on the Revelation of St John, identified new messiahs or new Jerusalems and Babylons in their own backyards. As Niccolò Machiavelli observed, probably with some cynicism: 'How it comes about I know not, but it is clear both from ancient and modern cases that no serious misfortune ever befalls a city or a province that has not been predicted either by divination or revelation or by prodigies or by other heavenly signs.' As he noted elsewhere, his hometown of Florence was especially prone to such soothsaying. Machiavelli had personal experience of failed prophets. The fiery Dominican preacher, Girolamo Savonarola arrived in Florence in 1491 and quickly won a reputation as a preacher and prophet. He warned the Florentines that God would punish Italy if the people did not repent their sins and live righteously. When the French invaded Italy in 1494, his status as a prophet seemed to be confirmed, while his political power was enhanced by his negotiations with the French king who kept his army out of the city. Therefore, he attracted a number of Florentines to his cause, which involved a moral purification of the city through preaching and bonfires of the vanities. He claimed that God was about to establish the New Jerusalem in Florence, and that the city would be ruled by 'King Jesus'. However, his alliance with the French and his attacks on the pope contributed to his excommunication, and eventual execution. In the century after his death, the Florentine authorities continued to be concerned with the veneration of his memory, and even of his relics among his followers – known as the piagnoni (literally 'the weeping ones').

In sixteenth-century Italy, the consummation of the age was time-tabled according to a triangulation of prophetic signs which incorporated the appearance of heresy, the discovery of new lands, or astrological events; the actions of ecclesiastical and lay power; and the hopes and fears and world view of the reader, viewer, or listener. The precise date of consummation was a moveable feast dependent upon the co-ordination of all these markers. However, Niccoli's own dating is somewhat suspect for the Turkish threat continued to stimulate prophetic revelation and interpretation in the later sixteenth century. For example, in a 1596 edition of the prophecy of Mohammed, it was suggested that the period for the destruction of the Turks would begin in 1591, 1617, 1621, or 1631. The increase in war with the Turks in recent years suggested that the time for their defeat was in fact quite close, and soon, God willing, the world would be reduced to unity – to one shepherd and one flock. The editor of the 1589 Vaticinia was quite cautious, and assigned the end of time to a far distant date. After 1700, he said, a calamitous time would come until the consummation of the world in the year 2097. Given the persistence of religiosity in the sense of a human desire to understand life's deeper or ineffable meanings, and given the flexibility and durability of millenarianism in the face of failure, it seems more than likely that apocalyptic fears will persist even when the year 2097 ends without disaster.

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Exploring Our Ancestors

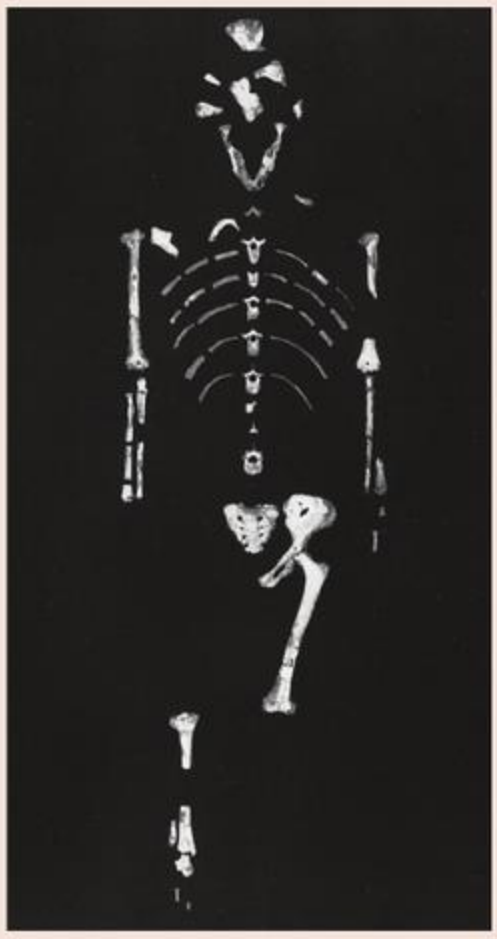
Why have we not found our common ancestor?

Ashleigh Wiseman

A

Humans have long possessed the urge to explore and understand their past. From the Roman foundation myth of Romulus and Remus, to the Leakeys excavating hominin remains in East Africa in the 1950s; the question of where we come from has always been hotly debated. Since the late nineteenth century archaeologists have been uncovering human-like skeletons, claiming their discovery is the 'long lost link' of our own evolution. Today, we are lucky to live in an age of science and discovery, and many believe that with advanced dating techniques, we should be able to understand the long stage of human evolution, and our ancestors. Unfortunately, scientific progress has only come so far, and a constant battle continues as paleoanthropologists claim their own discovery is the missing link from our split with chimpanzees. The study of phylogeny will hopefully shed light on this debate in the future and assess the evolutionary lineages between hominins dating from 5.8 million years ago (mya) to 1.4 mya – a period in which most paleoanthropologists agree that we diverged from our closest cousins. So, why are different phylogenetic relationships presented by paleoanthropologists, and why have we failed to find our ancestors?

In 1974 Donald Johanson was excavating in Hadar, Ethiopia, when he discovered one of the most important finds of the latter half of the twentieth century – a hominin species that resembled Homo sapiens, yet still retained ape-like features. Dubbed 'Lucy', A. afarensis, dating to 3.2 mya, made headlines as many believed we had found our ancestor. A quick search on Google today will produce millions of results claiming Lucy is our long lost ancestor. However, her discovery has sparked even more controversy as it has opened up many questions concerning her place in the evolution of hominins.



The phylogenetic relationship between Lucy and other living hominins during this period can be hard to distinguish. It is important to analyse all lines of evidence when debating if hominin species living in Africa during this period are directly evolved from one another. Another issue concerns whether the variations in species which do overlap could be the result of sexual dimorphism, or if it constitutes more than one species. Furthermore, can we adapt the sexual dimorphism hypothesis to distinguish between the Plio-Pleistocene hominins if these taxa vary geographically and temporally across Africa? Lucy is an example of temporally affected taxa within a geographical boundary, and by studying her skeletal morphology it may be possible to use this species as a baseline for studying such variations within hominin samples that encounter similar traits. Consequently, the sexual dimorphism hypothesis plays a vital role in attempting to infer the phylogeny of these species, especially as this is still present in gorillas and chimpanzees today. Male and female gorillas differ greatly in skeletal proportion but the ramus (mandible) remains identical – this is the same as A. afarensis. In chimpanzees sexual dimorphism plays a role in the morphology of the ramus, with the skeletal proportions remaining identical. With this in mind, David Pilbeam concludes that the skeletal differences found in A. afarensis, and other living hominins in this region, are due to sexual dimorphism and do not infer two distinct species – however, this is hotly debated.

Donald Johanson and David Cameron discuss the traditional research into the variations between extant species and how this can be applied to the fossil taxa of this period. If fossil samples belonging to two different extinct species are examined and the variation in the samples falls within a certain range then it is concluded that the fossil specimens constitute a single species. Alternatively, if the range is exceeded then it would appear that the fossil taxa are comprised of more than a single taxon. Timothy Bromage and Friedmann Schrenk state that the 'Recognition Concept' can allow paleoanthropologists to understand why problems of allocating fossil taxa to a particular species can arise. It is based on confusing modern-day definitions of 'species' with the process of evolution, as these fossils may have belonged to the same clade and were prone to sexual dimorphism, as discussed above. Distinguishing between sexual dimorphism and distinct species can also prove to be problematic.

In the fossil taxa of this period we tend to find an increase in the mandibular size over time with the basic morphological proportions remaining the same. 'Phylogenetic polymorphism' assesses the temporal variation in a single species and analyses that change found in the mandible size over time is the result of 'anagenic change' – the trend which causes the mandibles to increase in size. According to Johanson, ignoring this 'anagenic change' could lead to the inaccurate assumption that there were more than one species present in East Africa at the time. For example, the mandible of A. anamensis, who dates to 4.2–3.9 mya, is far more primitive than that of Lucy. Interestingly, the molars of Lucy have evolved into bicuspids (this is what we find in humans today), whereas in A. anamensis the molars are found to be unicuspid, suggesting a phylogenetic link. As such, A. anamensis is a 'potential ancestor' for Lucy as numerous similarities between the two species must result in an evolving lineage from 4.2-3.0 mya. With this is mind one can see how it can be difficult to infer the phylogeny between these species, as there are notable differences (although many features do remain the

same over such a long time span). It is crucial to characterise these morphological changes, as it will then be possible to trace the evolution of these traits and determine which species are ancestral and which species are 'sister taxa'. This would define the phylogenetic relationships between these hominins, and answer the question of why these lineages occurred.

Some scholars are of the opinion that there were only four hominin species in Africa during the Plio-Pleistocene era. These scholars assert that this is because the differences found skeletally, behaviourally and genetically are the results of a slow process of evolution, rather than numerous species living in Africa during this period. Statistics show that the genetic distance between the genus of Pan and Homo is 1.6 per cent and, by dividing this by the fifteen recognised hominin species, the genetic distance between these species equates to just 0.07 per cent. This supports the hypothesis that there were four, not fifteen, hominins

« A quick search on Google today will produce millions of results claiming Lucy is our long lost ancestor. »

of this period. However, this research is based on the theory that all hominins were direct ancestors of Homo sapiens and does not consider that these taxa vary geographically and temporally. One must be aware of the fact that there must have been a number of hominin species in Africa during this time that did not play a role in the evolution of Homo sapiens, giving credit to the widely accepted theory that there were more than four species during this period that led to a number of different evolutionary trajectories. Consequently, it is easy to recognise the long standing debate of human evolution, as scholars are unable to agree as to how many hominin species were present during the divergence period. Before any study can be done to analyse the missing link of our own evolution, scholars must first agree on the amount of species present during this period, regardless of whether they played a role in our evolution.

To be able to infer the phylogenetic relationships between the hominin taxon of this era, we will have to wait for a greater sample record from 2.5-3.0 mya and from 4.0 to the early Pliocene when apes and hominins shared a common ancestor, as there is a lack of adequate fossil records dating to this period. This greatly hampers investigations of early hominin phylogeny. Berhane Asfaw has stated that hominin phylogenetic studies can be difficult to distinguish between as taxon can be 'independent and susceptible to parallel evolution. More than one species could have existed in this era, but without further samples there are no morphological reasons to distinguish between hominins with a temporal overlap. There is also the problem of distinguishing between sexual dimorphism and establishing if there were more than one species. Unfortunately, the half-life of Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is only 521 years, which limits testing DNA and genetic relationships to only 1.5 mya. We are then unable to test if these species were phylogenetically related and must rely on other evidence such as skeletal remains that are fragmentary in the fossil record.

There are many reasons why archaeologists and scientists alike have failed to understand hominin evolution, as it can be difficult to infer the phylogenetic relationships of any species of hominin due a lack in the fossil record. With advanced scientific techniques and further excavation we will hopefully be able to someday determine the exact evolutionary lineages of these hominins.

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The Classification and Explanation of

Monstrous Births

Lydia Willgress

A 'monstrous birth' covers a multitude of disfigurements, both imagined and real. The term relates to a birth in which a baby is born with an abnormality, deformity or disability. However, a 'monstrous birth' can also be a product of religious eschatology, or a fervent imagination. From the late sixteenth century, arguably the start of the early modern period, until the late eighteenth century, there was a growing interest taken in the bodies of those people with dysmorphogenesis. First recorded in Germany and Italy, the notion of a 'monstrous birth' spread across the rest of Europe in the early sixteenth century. 'Monstrous births' are particularly significant, as they were not allowed to lack meaning; the cycle of birth and death is predictable, thus the failure of this natural process resulted in centuries of revised classifications and explanations. As the body is unique to humanity, it is unsurprising that cultural anxieties, prejudices and beliefs are attached on the body. I will begin by exploring different sources to analyse, explore and critique 'monstrous births.' By understanding the limitations of the various historical sources, one can use the obtained information to the best advantage. I will then determine the ways 'monstrous births' were explained in early modern England, France and Germany.

Much of the early information we have about 'monstrous births' is sourced from broadside ballads. On one hand, broadside ballads are a useful historical source; they reflect popular contemporary beliefs and attitudes because they tended to adopt a popular voice. They also included detailed, up-to-date information about the 'monstrous birth.' This included the particular place and date of the birth, the physical form of the baby and an explanation of why the 'monstrous birth' occurred. The explanation had to be verified in order to maintain the credulity of the author and this could be done in a number of ways, but the broadside ballad still had to have a moral, religious or a political meaning in order to sell. Whilst it is clear that broadside ballads offer insight into how 'monstrous births' were explained and perceived by the common person, they were also mediated through the market place and infused with the contemporary religious and social morality. Consequently, broadside ballads attempted to impose meaning and significance.

Originating in Germany, wonder literature had many similarities to broadside ballads; both secularised monsters through clinical descriptions and had to have a selling point in order to be popular. Many of the problems with using broadside ballads as a source are also significant when analysing wonder literature. It was not until the late sixteenth century, that scientific journals began to extensively research 'monstrous births'. It is at this point where more accurate information can be garnered. Overall, the journalistic quality of the broadside ballad means one has to be careful when analysing the information they provide.

At the beginning of the early modern period,

monstrous births' were predominantly explained through religion. However, God's role in 'monstrous births' changed as the period progressed. Initially, monsters were seen as a sign of God's omnipotence, but as the Protestant Reformation sent large parts of Europe into religious turmoil 'monstrous births' became synonymous with divine punishment. This

idea is reflected in the intellectual work of the period and the broadside ballads which kept the vast majority of the common public informed. Ambroise Paré, a French surgeon, was one of the first to provide a comprehensive explanation of the causes of 'monstrous births.' He argued that the two main reasons for a 'monstrous birth' are God's glory followed by God's wrath. Later writers were also influenced by this idea and in 1600 Calvinist Casper Bauhin similarly classified monsters by cause, separating monsters caused by God with monsters caused by astrological influences and unfavourable winds. Whilst Bauhin includes other causes, it is clear that God was still the primary higher cause for monstrous births. The idea that 'monstrous births' were part of the miraculous and inexplicable mysteries of God is also seen in the broadside ballads of the period. In Herefordshire in 1600, a 'monstrous deformed infant' was born and a pamphlet writer claimed: 'it pleaseth God . . . to work wonders . . . as plague, pestilence, war, famine . . . monsters of man and beast.' By listing 'monsters of man and beast' along with 'plague' and 'war', 'monsters' become part of a collective entity which cannot be explained by nature so therefore must be the work of God. It is clear that at the beginning of the period 'monsters' were commonly seen as evidence of the power of God and the irresistible will of divine providence.

'Monstrous births' were also seen as God's punishment, either towards individuals or a community, with the word 'monster' originating from the Latin word monere meaning 'to warn.' In the mid-sixteenth century, sins such as pride, sexuality and avarice were seen as punishable by God in the form of a monstrous birth. Margaret Mere of Maidstone in Kent gave birth to a 'monstrous child' in 1568 and it was ascribed to her promiscuous behaviour as she 'being unmarried played the naughty pack' and represented 'filthiness and iniquity.' It was not just in England that the idea of divine retribution was seen. In 1512, the Florentine apothecary Luca Landucci wrote that a 'monster had been born at Ravenna.' 18 days later, he added that after a monstrous birth 'it seems as if some great misfortune always befalls the city;' the city had been sacked by a combination of Papal, Spanish and French forces. These examples highlight the fear that 'monstrous births' instigated on European society, as well as proving that in parts of Europe 'monstrous births' were seen as a warning. However, as religious turmoil hit Europe, 'monstrous births' were used by Protestants and Catholics in the propaganda wars. This meant that instead of sins such as sodomy and pride being warned against, 'monstrous births' became a warning to more serious sins such as blasphemy, heresy and sedition. For example, in the 1520's, monsters became the staple images of propaganda between supporters and opponents of Martin Luther. A 1523 broadside ballad created by Luther depicted a 'monk-calf,' a symbol of the corrupt monastic orders and the imminent ruin of the Catholic Church. With this broadside ballad being printed in Dutch, French and English, the extent to which monsters were used in social and moral battles is shown. Furthermore, sixteenth century Catholic literature used 'monstrous births' as polemics against Protestants. In England, when a butcher's daughter in Leicestershire allegedly gave birth to a cat, Catholic propaganda depicted the cat as evidence that God was displeased with the Church of England. Overall, it is clear that as European culture became socially and politically charged due to religious reformation in the sixteenth century, 'monstrous births' were used as evidence for divine retribution. As such, it could be argued that the explanation of a 'monstrous birth' depends heavily on external circumstances, as well as popular contemporary belief.

In the seventeenth century, monsters became the focus of much intellectual work. Consequently, as classifications worked to integrate the natural causes of monstrous births into systems which also acknowledged a higher cause, monsters began to be explained as a product of natural wonder and scientific delight. This resulted in monsters no longer always being seen as a sign from God, but as a

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product of nature (including human sexuality). In 1620 Bacon radicalised the classification of monsters, as he placed 'monstrous births' in his tripartite schema for the study of natural history; monsters were preter-natural and represented the link between artifice and nature. Furthermore, Fortunio Liceti only considered 'lower causes' in his classification of monsters in De Monstris, as he split monstrous births into 'uniform' and 'non-uniform' categories in accordance to species and sex. Both of these classifications highlight the start of a move towards 'monstrous births' being rationalised. However, Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston argue that the change in classification resulted in an intermediary period, in which monsters were caught in the struggle between 'Protestant reformers and nascent scientific meaning.' These ideas are corroborated by the broadside ballads of the period; a 1560 German broadside on parasitic twins claimed that 'with such signs God warns us, even though they [were] naturally born.' It can be argued that as a more natural explanation came into light, 'monstrous births' became devoid of the moral component they were initially linked to. This resulted in a change in public attitude and understanding; 'monstrous births' became a source of wonder and entertainment. For example, the author of the 1562 Sussex broadsheet saw the deformed children as a source of idle entertainment and 'thousands of people came from all places' to see 'monstrous' children born in Kent. Whilst 'monstrous births' were still seen as evidence of divine providence in the late sixteenth century, they were also beginning to be accounted for through a number of natural causes.

Accompanying the change in public attitude towards monsters was a change in the medical profession. With the development of anatomic study through a heightened interest in human dissection during the sixteenth century, and the advances made in physiology during the seventeenth century, new attitudes towards 'monstrous births' appeared. Originally, medical professors only partook in post mortem where no comparison was made between normal and monstrous bodies. Whilst the first dissection of a monstrous body occurred in 1533, the Hispanic female Siamese twins were only used for an organ count. This meant that although there was a medical intervention was made, it had no impact on the explanation of 'monstrous births' until the late seventeenth century. In 1671, the first dissection was made on a body which was not a 'double monster' (Siamese twins). From then on, dissections were considered individually and began to be related back to normal organisms; monsters became clarifying counter-examples to normal embryological development. These findings were then recorded in various scientific publications including Histoire et Memoires de l'Academie Royale des Sciences and the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. The change from 'monstrous births' being recorded in broadside ballads to scientific journals highlights the shift in public attitude; monsters began to be understood and explained in rational terms. Furthermore, Park and Daston argue that 'monsters' were normalised in the sense that they became related to a 'functional standard.' Overall, it is clear that the medicalisation of 'monsters' resulted in a better understanding of 'monstrous births.' Whether it is because dissections normalised 'monsters' by showing that they have a similar anatomy to normal babies or because the increase in science resulted in a move away using abnormalities as evidence of God; the late seventeenth century saw a move towards explaining and understanding 'monstrous births' in rational terms.

It is clear that in the early modern period there were a multitude of ways in which 'monstrous births' were classified and explained, as they could not be defined in the same way as 'ordinary' pregnancies. In the early fifteenth century, God was seen as the source for all monstrous births. However, as the period progressed monsters became the subject of natural wonder and scientific delight. It should be noted that these explanations are not mutually exclusive; people still believed that 'monstrous births' were a sign of God's wrath until the late eighteenth century. Overall, whilst we can account for many of the reasons that 'monstrous births' changed in classification and explanation, we must make sure we do not explicitly separate them; how a person explained a monster depended on their own psychology, biology, religious, social and moral standing.

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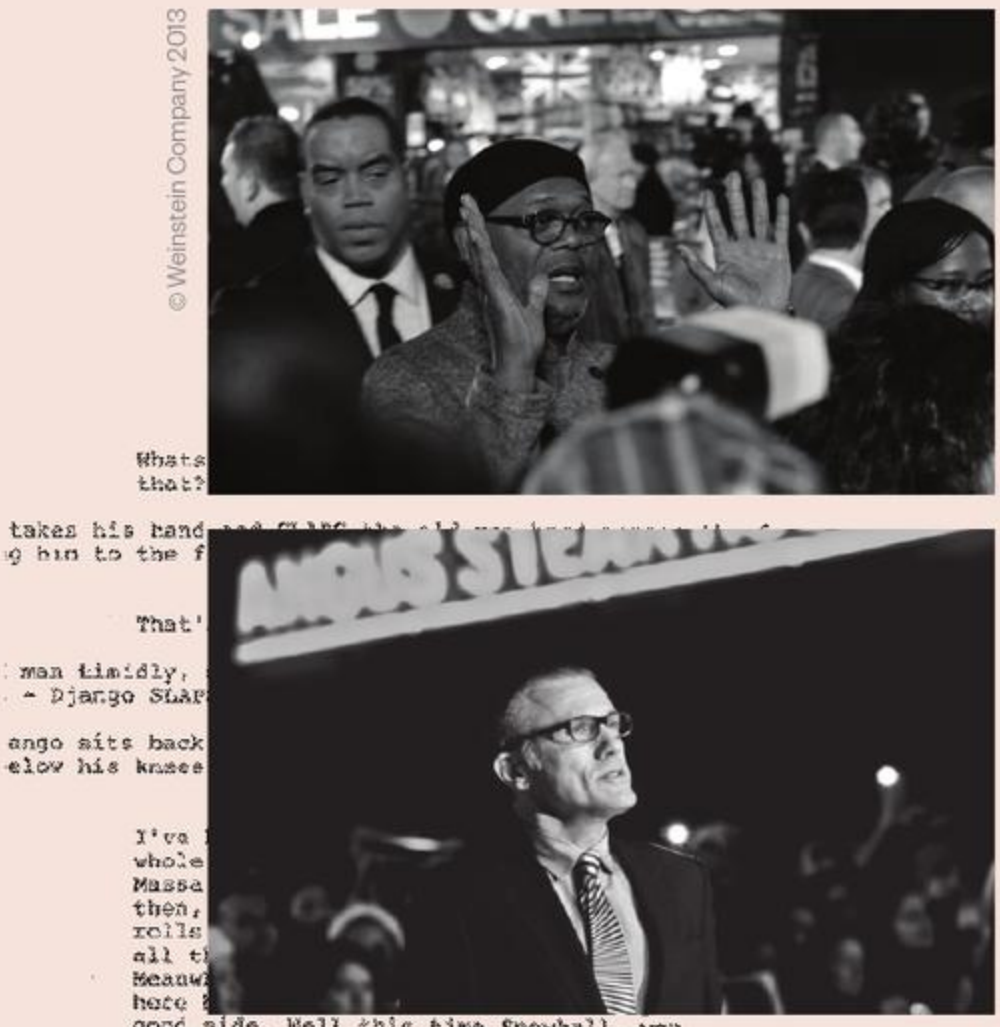
REVIEW

FILM

Django Unchained

Peter Butler-Way



Let it not be said that Quentin Tarantino lacks courage. In *Django Unchained*, a great, sprawling odyssey of a film, he seeks to drive his wagon across the thorny grounds of racism, slavery and oppression whilst retaining his trademark and somewhat controversial approach. The three hour running time gives full reign to the grandeur of his tale, a grandeur that is perfectly complimented by the Appalachian majesty of his locations.

Christoph Waltz and Leonardo DiCaprio give scene-stealing performances as King Schultz and Calvin Candie. The latter, a compelling but borderline pantomime villain is, I think, narrowly but decisively edged out by the former, a cool, sophisticated man gradually and heartbreakingly broken down by the horror of the world in which he finds himself. Both characters, however, take a step back as the film courses down towards its final stretch, allowing Foxx's Django, sometimes in danger of being overshadowed earlier on, to truly make the film his own. Django's stature is mirrored by that of Samuel L Jackson's Stephen, whose wintry, malevolent cunning is a far greater threat to our heroes than any of the shallow viciousness summoned up by Candie.

Much of the power of *Django Unchained* comes from Tarantino's ability to take stock forms and reinvent them. The Myth of Siegfried rescuing his beloved from the fire breathing (or in this case cigarette smoking) dragon is made as fresh as it was when the Volksung was the big new thing around the Germanic campfire. This theme is extended into the direction, with a series of clichéd genre shots transformed here into towering monuments to African-American dignity. By the end it is not just one woman's hero who appears silhouetted in the doorway, reflected in a mirror or emerging from the smoke of an explosion, but the hero of an entire people.

Some of the film does make unsettling viewing. The everyday outrages that were the reality of slavery, made more shocking by their very banality, are combined with acts of violence both righteous and not so righteous from 'our' side. However, freedom, as history has shown, may be just and glorious but is seldom nice. Although an undeniably risky proposition, *Django Unchained* is definitively a failure averted. Never has so much violence, humour, fake blood and cheesy genre cliché been used for serious social and historical commentary. And never has serious historical and social commentary been quite so much fun.

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BOOK

The Vanished Kingdoms: The History of Half-Forgotten Europe by Norman Davies

Jon Vrushi

The Vanished Kingdoms is a general work of European history aimed at history enthusiasts and students. It tells the stories of kingdoms that are no more, half-forgotten and more often than not ignored by modern historians. Of the hundreds of dead states in the 'old continent', Norman Davies has chosen to tell the stories of fifteen of them. It is a book written with breathtaking scholarship and a rich literary style.

The premise for the undertaking of this substantial piece of work is Davies' concern that some historians start their enquiry based on the current political map, seeking the roots of the present, and thus risk reading history backwards. 'In 2010', explains Davies, 'there were 380 books written on the Third Reich alone'.

All of the work's chapters are divided into three discernible parts, each starting with a quick introduction of the given 'vanished kingdom', its present territory and modern political status. Each chapter's second part is made up of the history of the dead state, with a focus on its high points and decline. Finally, Davies' assessment of how each of these 'vanished kingdoms' has been remembered, or forgotten, by modern historians concludes each chapter.

As *The Vanished Kingdoms* is a very general work, it is also very fast-paced and not always comfortably so - especially in chapters that tell the history of 'vanished kingdoms' that existed for centuries before their demise. The chapter on Burgundia, for example, spans 1384 years of history (c. 411-1795) in a mere sixty-six pages.

Although fast-paced at times, the pages fly due to the delightful prose and rich descriptions of the geography, customs and culture of these former states. By describing these features so vividly Davies transports the reader to the land he describes, facilitating a better understanding of its history.

What makes this book unusual for a work of history is the fact that not only does it tell the stories of certain dead states; it also sets out to design a general typology that can be utilised in the social sciences, such as international law and political science.

For the history enthusiast, this eclectic and erudite book will provide plenty of interesting information and snippets of trivia to bring up at the dinner table. On the other hand, for history students and budding historians *The Vanished Kingdoms* should be thought provoking and make us question the way we think about the study of history.

FILM

Les Misérables: The triumph of hope amidst the failure of rebellion

Kerry Gilsenan

Flickr

In the wake of The French Revolution, *Les Misérables* embodies immense human sacrifice for a higher cause; the anti-monarchist June Rebellion of 1832. Tom Hooper's big screen adaptation of the renowned musical follows Jean Valjean (Hugh Jackman) in his pursuit of an honest life after a nineteen year prison sentence for petty theft.

Despite his rise to prominence as a mayor and factory owner, Valjean is unable to escape his past failings due to the attentions of policeman Javert (Russell Crowe). Valjean's path to freedom and redemption is continually threatened by the unbending rule of the law and the authoritarian attitudes of nineteenth century France; desperate crimes create dark, failing futures and thus the plight of the people continues. Yet Valjean's sense of justice prevails as he shows mercy to his oppressor, casting doubt in Javert's mind; the realisation that the law fails to absolve a now irreproachable figure provokes Javert to take his own life.

However, the failed dreams of Anne Hathway's character, Fantine, are perhaps the most poignant given her determination to support her illegitimate daughter Cosette (Amanda Seyfried) in spite of her own suffering. Selling her hair, teeth, and body in a downward spiral of degradation and prostitution shows a persistent spirit comparable to the strength of Valjean. Nevertheless, only in death does Fantine find peace after her agonising struggle for survival, but in death she fails to support Cosette despite her selfless devotion as a mother. Her misery represents the powerless of the poor at the hands of a failing monarchical system.

Sparked by the death of General Lemarque in 1832 -a popular figure amongst the lower classes - students Marius (Eddie Redmayne) and Enjolras (Aaron Tveit) make a spectacle at his widely-attending public funeral. The June Rebellion encapsulates the republican discontent with the replacement of Charles X of France with Louis-Phillipe, preserving the monarchy despite the 1830 July Revolution. Unable to persuade their fellow Parisians to join the June Rebellion, the crushed student-led upheaval results in a number of bloody deaths, with the outnumbered revolutionaries failing to overthrow the king's men.

Throughout *Les Misérables*, the unfortunate and forgotten show admirable strength regardless of their failing personal dreams and political goals. Ultimately, the spirit of the French Revolution endures throughout in the face of individual suffering and misery, along with the spirits of fallen characters who remain hopeful at the barricade.

'Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise.'

EVENT

Creative Writing, Reading Night: The Future of Imagination in Reality

Abena Ansah

Having awkwardly sat through one poetry slam and failing to 'get' any of it, I was reluctant to go to a Masters students' Creative Writing, Reading Night. However, after much persuasion, I eventually agreed to go, although I could not shake my preconceptions; my lingering memories of being asked to 'snap not clap' in response to uncomfortably revealing personal narratives at said poetry slam remained with me. Two hours, five short stories and a few poems later, my scepticism was banished and I was proven wrong.

These were excellent writers, budding Faulkses and McEwans, and aside from my awe at the sophistication of their writing and the clever plot lines, my appreciation was two-fold. Firstly, being told stories aloud was like having the authors climb into my imagination and paint every word into a moving storyboard; hearing their stories, in their words, but seeing them the way I'd imagine it. It was an artistic partnership: they controlled the story and the images painted, but my mind was the paintbrush.

Secondly, although some stories were clearly personal, I came to realise that no matter whether these stories were based on personal or constructed realities, we had essentially been given three or four minute passes to the inner workings of the writers' imaginations, with them as tour-guides. Instead of this being awkward, it was clearly liberating for them and humbling for the rest of us who could only sit back and admire their mastery of their own ideas.

One particular story struck me most. It cleverly used a scientific back-story to create a narrative of bursting colour, emotion and truths that were never overtly stated but laid out like a map for us listeners to reach the conclusion ourselves. By doing this, all the stories flattered our intelligence while simultaneously stretching our imaginations, which most modern entertainment frankly fails to achieve.

Today's culture is expressed through media that increasingly encourages us to passively 'relax,' rather than encouraging readers, listeners or viewers to challenge ourselves. This current attitude also fails the next generation of fiction writers, as the increasingly limited avenues for challenging self-expression narrows the gap for their very existence. Fascinating events like the Creative Writing, Reading Night need support both to showcase people's creativity but also to stretch people's imaginations. Fortunately, there are still groups hosting these events, and at the Creative Writing, Reading Night I was lucky enough to meet some of the talented people with their stories at the ready, eager for you to give them your mind's paintbrush.

These were excellent writers, budding Faulkses and McEwans.

Flickr

EXHIBITION

Juergen Teller at the ICA

Oliver Giles

When you walk into photographer Juergen Teller's exhibition 'Woo!' at London's Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), there is one piece that immediately catches your eye: a monumental portrait of then sixty eight-year old fashion designer Dame Vivienne Westwood. However, this is a portrait with a difference: the flame-haired grand dame of British fashion is completely nude, with her legs splayed, smiling mischievously into the camera. The central piece in a vast triptych of nude portraits of Westwood, this elderly British icon appears by turns coy, confident and relaxed in front of Teller's lens.

Whether we like to admit it or not, the image is provocative for an audience raised in a culture that unashamedly prizes youth. However, it is also a perfect introduction to Teller's work, which stands defiantly apart from that of other contemporary photographers.

In fact, by the photoshopped standards of today's art world, Teller's photographs are aesthetic failures. The word most often used to describe them is 'raw': his subjects are typically barefaced, appear to be caught off guard and are often nude; his photographs are almost invariably overexposed, and his glaringly bright flash is a constant presence.

Despite this lack of technical perfection, Teller is consistently hailed as one of the world's best photographers. Uniquely, he also has both the music and fashion worlds clamouring for his work, which has graced everything from Vogue to the cover of Sinead O'Connor's single 'Nothing Compares 2 U'.

His first solo show in the UK for over a decade, 'Woo!' is successful because it shows how seamlessly Teller moves between different creative worlds. The most successful section of the exhibition is the ICA's Reading Room, in which the walls are plastered from floor to ceiling with a selection of Teller's commercial photography in the same way magazine cut outs adorn teenage bedrooms; with Brad Pitt, Kate Moss and Pamela Anderson all appearing, the subject matter is not too different, either.

Commercial work is often dismissed by the art world, but this room proves that it should not be; Teller's 2 advertising campaigns for Marc Jacobs are just as impressive as his art. They also showcase Teller's unique ability to coax his subjects into revealing previously unseen sides of themselves: both emotional and physical.

In the ICA's larger rooms, the exhibition's layout can feel jarring, with some of Teller's more traditional landscapes exhibited alongside provocative images of supermodel Kristin McMenamy doing naked pilates. However, although this constant leaping between subject matter feels odd, it also reflects Teller's output of work in such varied areas.

Although his subjects vary hugely, there is one thing that links all of Teller's portraits: the trust that clearly exists between the sitter and Teller. Caught in his bleached-out bright photos, Teller's subjects may appear to be caught off guard, but their trust in him makes his photographs consistently fascinating.

Explaining how he persuaded Westwood to pose nude, Teller coyly admits: 'I'm a very curious person and I'm interested in all these different people. I can be charming if I want to be.' In an art world striving for perfection, it is Teller's charm and never-ending interest in human imperfection that makes his work standout.

Despite this lack of technical perfection, Teller is consistently hailed as one of the world's best photographers.

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