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# THE LANGTONIAN

*Chronicle the intellectual and cultural life of school*

## The Langton Chronicle

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## LANGTONIAN WELCOME!

A warm welcome to the Langtonian of 2024-25. This year we have a brand new editorial team: Michael Worsley, Anastasiia Shaforostova, Alex Reilly and Toby Dash, with occasional input from Dr Moxham. We would like to thank everyone who has taken part in this year's Langtonian: either through writing stories, being interviewed, or for simply working on enriching our school's culture. We would also like to raise the exciting collaboration with Canterbury Academy as part of our upcoming academisation, and hopefully we will see an increase in their own contributions over the next few months! This year, the editorial team is committed to bring you relevant stories that encourage all students to participate in our school's vibrant culture! As a consequence, we have reviewed all parts of Langton life, be it through music, politics or the school's numerous clubs and societies. Through this, we hope our students become more aware

of the opportunities presented in our school and hopefully discover new interest!

Many thanks from Michael, Ana, Alex, and Toby for reading Langtonian 7. We hope you enjoy it! The Langtonian Team.

### POLITICS

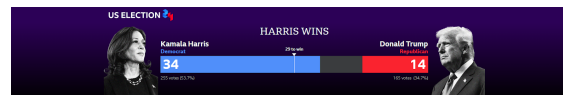
Politics. The essence of discussion between friends, family, and colleagues. The decisions of people on which our life most certainly depends. Welcome to the politics section of our Langtonian Issue!

#### *Landslide Victory for Kamala at Mock Election by Michael Worsley*

On the 7th of November, the politics department published a mock US election made completely by students - Ed Hunter and George Allen - inspired by last year's election (5th Nov 2024). The results were very obviously different to the actual US election, with one noticeable difference

being the landslide victory of Kamala over Trump - a seeming shift to the left after Reform's victory in the school's mock general election. Kamala firmly won the duo's approximation of the electoral college with 34 points to Trump's 14, receiving the firm, albeit belated, endorsement of the Langton.

I spoke with Ed and George about the process they went through to ultimately create the survey and process the results. Both received some support from Mr Haste and Mr Peto in the initial conception of the mock election (as well as distribution across the year group groups) but worked unsupported for most of the project - much to the admiration of Mr Haste and the politics department. As Ed put it: "Trying to organise a school-wide project is very difficult but very rewarding." - clearly very chuffed with his achievement. For the more technical



parts of the process I consulted George who explained how and who voted.

Q:What data did you collect?

“Collecting what form students were in, their vote and what time they voted—we didn’t use that data though”— (George did mention that he could see who completed the survey within lessons as a consequence - although not to worry as the data is anonymised).

Q:What was the most interesting thing you observed from the data?

“Which forms actually voted - for example which forms had the highest voter turnout” - (when I observed the data, I really enjoyed seeing the overwhelming Trump vote in one Mackenzie form in stark contrast to the rest of their year).

Q:How did you collect the data? How did you come up with the method?

“Collected into a google sheet and split it by year group. Used some excel equations to make it faster.” - (George then posted the results across the different year group google classrooms).

When I asked Ed about data collection he mentioned the advantages of using an online vote to the traditional paper vote as a method of improving engagement and participation — seemingly it worked! Over 421 students participated over the voting period - marking the survey as certainly one of the most successful in recent memory. Both Edward and George thanked everyone who took part. I spoke again with Ed and George to gauge their views on the subject of the real election. George very politely declined and sent me in the direction of Edward for a more comprehensive per-spective on the situation. I parted with George’s good humor and consulted an unusually

biased Ed: “How do I put this? I believe the results in America were due to a poorly run campaign by Kamala Harris. Without divulging my own views, Donald Trump had a far better campaign overall. Poorly focused campaign by Kamala- too focused on women's issues which kind of alienated the men of America.” This perspective seems to be commonly echoed across multiple sources for the election and provides a straightforward reason for Kamala’s defeat. Perhaps unsurprisingly the results of the real US election were very different to the results from our school. Trump secured a 44 point lead over Harris in the electoral college and won 49.9% of the vote — solidly securing his title as the 47th President of the United States. Due to the views of some prominent MAGA supporters, this result has caused uncertainty and tension— especially among minority groups and liberal-minded Americans. Although only time can tell what the outcome of Trump’s second term will be, one thing is certain: it will be unpredictable.

**"Social Care Reform in the UK: A Crisis in Need of Urgent Action." By Harriet Bolton**

The UK is currently at a critical juncture in addressing its social care system, which is increasingly being viewed as a crisis waiting to explode. The increasing pressure on the government to reform this sector stems from an aging population, insufficient funding, and a lack of coherent structural policies to meet the complex needs of individuals requiring long-term care. The UK’s social care system provides crucial support for people who need assistance due to

age, disability, or chronic illness. Services range from personal care in people's homes to more comprehensive support in residential care facilities. Despite its vital role, the system is often described as fragmented and underfunded.

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that by 2030, over 20% of the UK population will be aged 65 or older. With a rising number of people living longer, often with multiple health conditions, the demand for social care services is set to skyrocket. However, the funding mechanisms have not kept pace with these demographic shifts. Many local authorities, responsible for delivering social care, face large budget cuts, leaving a gap in service provision.

Successive governments have promised to tackle the social care issue, yet concrete actions remain elusive. The current debate centers on three main pillars: one of the most pressing issues is the chronic underfunding of social care. According to the Health Foundation, the sector requires an additional £8 billion annually to meet current needs adequately. Without increased investment, more individuals will face delays in receiving care or be forced to rely on unpaid family members. The financial strain on families and individuals is immense, with many resorting to selling their homes to afford care costs.

Experts argue that the social care system needs a structural overhaul. Unlike the NHS, which is free at the point of use, social care services are means-tested, leading to significant disparities in access and quality. Proposals for reform include integrating social care with the NHS to

create a seamless health and social care system. However, such changes would require significant political will and financial investment.

Another contentious issue is the balance between public and private sector involvement in social care delivery. Critics of the current system point out that reliance on private providers has led to inconsistent standards and a focus on profit over care quality. Advocates for a more publicly funded system argue that it would ensure equitable access and improve service reliability.

On the other hand, proponents of private sector involvement highlight its role in innovation and efficiency, provided there is adequate regulation.

Recent proposals have aimed to address these challenges.

Prime Ministerial pledges have included increasing funding through tax reforms, such as raising National Insurance contributions. The introduction of a cap on individual care costs has also been discussed, aimed at protecting individuals from catastrophic financial losses.

The government has also floated the idea of a new National Care Service, modeled after the NHS, which would provide care free at the point of use. This proposal has garnered widespread public support but faces significant hurdles, including political opposition and questions about how it would be funded.

Behind the policy debates and financial figures lie real stories of individuals and families grappling with the inadequacies of the current system. Many caregivers, often unpaid family members, experience burn-out and financial hardship. At the same time, vulnerable individuals risk being left without the necessary support to live

With dignity and independence.

For example, Margaret, a 78-year-old woman from Manchester, has struggled to access home care services due to long waiting lists and staff shortages. Her daughter, who works full-time, has had to reduce her hours to provide care, putting her own financial stability at risk. "We feel forgotten," Margaret says. "It's as if the system is waiting for us to fail."

Looking abroad, countries like Germany and Japan have implemented innovative solutions to address similar challenges. Germany's long-term care insurance model, funded by mandatory contributions from employers and employees, ensures that everyone has access to affordable care. Japan's approach focuses on community-based care, emphasizing preventative measures and support for caregivers. Both systems offer valuable lessons for the UK as it seeks to reform its social care framework. The need for urgent reform is clear. Experts, advocacy groups, and the public are calling on the government to take decisive action to address the social care crisis. The stakes are high, and the consequences of inaction are dire, with millions of lives hanging in the balance.

As the government debates its next steps, one thing is certain: the future of social care in the UK will be a defining issue for this generation. Whether through increased funding, structural changes, or a combination of both, the choices made today will shape the lives of countless individuals and families for decades to come.

**"Diversity - how the UK's most valuable asset is now being used against itself." by Hazik Anwer.**

The saving of the NHS by the windrush generation. The efforts of Gurkha and Punjabi British Soldiers.

Takeaways. These are all byproducts of immigrants coming to the UK and contributing powerfully and advancing the nation. However, it is clear to see across the nation the rise of anti-immigrant and far right media that is scapegoating mass immigration for almost any of the issues presented in modern Britain. For example, the outfit that is GB News was a major factor in the riots of 2024 that occurred after the Southport stabbing thanks to their heavily incorrect reporting of the perpetrator's heritage and motives. As an immigrant child myself, I am heavily concerned about the "us vs them" image being portrayed in the media by often experienced government figures. For example, The Reform Party's Farage Nigel has often been seen to claim that many cultures cannot and have not integrated into British society. This idea being propagated is extremely dangerous, as it risks causing more internal disruption within the UK, especially after the struggles recently faced by the country since COVID.

It is hard to deny the mass support that Reform has in the UK, if it was not for the first-past-the-post system they would have a lot more representation within Parliament. The rise of far-right movements has sprung across Europe, as we have seen in France and with the AfD in Germany, with them all directing the root causes of issues within their respective nations towards immigration. However, I would claim that these countries have not gained nearly as much from immigration than Britain has. Core British principles are not defined by colour, and seeing people's services to the NHS, having a PM and Mayor of London from South Asian backgrounds and a leader of the Opposition from Africa

shows just how the country has allowed all to intergrate and is clearly better off from it. I do wonder if this rise in the support for the far-right is just a show of disappointment towards the Tories and Labour or if it is genuine support of hard right ideas. With Elon Musk also publicly endorsing Reform, it seems like the perfect boiling point is being reached in British politics at which it is very clear there is a divide forming between those who have immigrated (and their children) and those who are White British. This stand-off is extremely perilous, and the cordiality that has been a part of British politics for a long time has suddenly been shed.

The UK's strength has long been rooted in its diversity, a foundation that has not only shaped its culture but also propelled its progress in countless ways. However, this invaluable asset is now being weaponized against itself by divisive rhetoric and misinformation. The rise of far-right ideologies and their increasing presence in political and media narratives threaten to fracture the unity that has been the bedrock of the nation's identity. Immigration has enriched the UK in immeasurable ways, from the NHS to its global standing, and it is crucial to resist the oversimplified scapegoating of complex societal issues. The path forward must be one of inclusivity, understanding, and collective action to ensure that the UK remains a place where diversity is celebrated, not vilified. Only through this approach can the nation hope to overcome its current challenges and continue to thrive as a global leader in both progress and humanity.

**"Luigi Mangione: Abdominal regime vs Abominable regime." by Alex Sobway.**

The shooting of UnitedHealth CEO Brian Thompson was an act of morally indefensible pre-meditated violence. This cannot be disputed. Equally, the concept of someone being too poor to afford to stay alive is unequivocally wrong. The duality of these two dangerously simple statements has created an incredibly interesting dynamic in modern politics that we have yet to truly experience since the advent of the internet. Add in a handsome face, a censored manifesto, and an already cynical population, and the result is political unrest on a nationwide scale. We are watching in real time as the catalyst of an American political revolution is single-handedly inspiring a cult following one wry half-smile at a time. Luigi Mangione, for many, in killing a man in cold blood is merely standing up for himself against an oppressive corporate America. The shocking inhumanity that is the reality of private healthcare has led to the decree that his actions were radical but necessary, if these people were to be believed. Alarming calls for further violence have erupted among followers both on the internet and in the form of wanted posters for other CEOs. As tensions seemingly rise with no end in sight, the question on many people's minds is, as aptly put by Michael Moore's 'everyday American': 'What is the rage and dissatisfaction that drives ordinary people to support a cold-blooded murderer?'.

**Class politics.**

Counter-intuitively, Luigi himself was born into privilege, leading some to declare him a fraud or even a hypocrite. A BBC biography has described him somewhat dramatically as a 'scion of a prominent Maryland family'. Erroneous Austen-

esque reporting aside, he did attend a prestigious private school, and could be assuredly described as an upper middle class. The emblem that he represents—a folk-hero archetype as old as time—is apparently at odds with his class identity, and yet he seems to inspire in his followers the same ‘ire’ as if he was himself a member of the people he supposedly seeks to protect. One would imagine that in order to be perceived as a defender of the common man, they must be themselves a common man; and indeed at first glance, one could be forgiven for calling him a hypocrite: a ‘parasite’ in much the same ways that Brian Thompson is. After all, he would be part of the demographic who would in fact benefit from Private Healthcare. However, it is in the same BBC article that one Thomas Maronick is quoted as saying “You wouldn’t think someone of privilege or means from a family that’s known for doing so much for the community would do something like this”. I invoke this quotation not for the purpose of exposing the bizarrely overt prejudice of a particular attorney, although I encourage the reader to notice it regardless, but in fact to illustrate the real reason behind Luigi Mangione’s reputation as a class ‘hero’. Maronick’s implication is that only someone of a lower class would be bitter enough, perhaps even of a low enough moral standard to kill Brian Thompson. This apparent anti-lower class sentiment represents an antiquated caste-based society—the very thing that Mangione and those aligned with him seek to dissolve. A vestige from ages long gone, the superiority complex implied in Maronick’s quotation is exactly what Luigi committed the act in reaction to. It is precisely

this attitude that centuries of capitalist society has morphed humans into a natural structure of unequal entitlement that has so consistently led to violence throughout history and still we are hanging on to it in 2024. Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 18th century, even before the conception of modern political systems, had already refuted this idea. His discourse on inequality proposed a naturally equal man corrupted by society (although this is a sweeping oversimplification). If he were revived and thrust into modern America he would likely last only days: upon clapping eyes on the private healthcare system he would have a heart attack and unfortunately would not have sufficient insurance to survive it.

#### Reactions.

It is not only the actions of Mangione, but the reactions of critics and journalists that seem to only increase the fervour of the movement that he has inspired. Right-wing newspapers such as the Washington Post seem to dominate any headlines that include Mangione’s name and other avenues appear curiously absent. Quickly, one notices that articles that are not vetted seem to blindly condemn the violence, using common rhetorical devices, such as buzzwords and ironically the appeal to sympathy. Brian Thompson is described as ‘Brian Thompson, husband and father of two’; anyone who would discuss the flaws of the healthcare system is ‘naïve’, ‘radicalised’ or an ‘extremist’. Republican politicians follow the mould and spout ‘violence is never the answer’ at every opportunity. Conversely, the other side of the political spectrum must walk on eggshells or be taken down. In an article in *The Guardian*, the only mention of Private

Healthcare is flaccid ‘some have applauded what happened, which may have been motivated by ire at the private healthcare system in the US’.

This in an article that links to Michael Moore’s manifesto, a document that provides an incredibly edifying perspective on the situation. In an attempt to provide valid discourse on the subject, it must only be hinted at for fear of immediate censorship. It is very easy to see how this will radically increase the fervour of extremists. I ask the reader, when in history has widespread censorship (or even the perception of censorship) ever caused a political movement to decrease? One anonymous reddit user summarises the views of their contemporaries on censorship, and provides an insight into how this may increase support for the movement: ‘This is violence towards the oligarchy, this very cogently exposes the actual problems in society not the made-up everyday distractions. There is no way capitalism can allow that to organically grow’. It is the very systems that the movement targets that are suppressing it, and thus one can see how the movement is bolstered. Luigi Mangione has inspired a significant movement of support and solidarity from throughout the world. People will claim that this is because of many things, from handsomeness to a morally corrupt America, but ultimately the movement will only be bolstered by these claims. However, ultimately, Mangione is only a microcosm of the larger anti-Private Health Care movement, and backlash is the same hypocrisy and condescension that any movement faces in its nascent phase. Regardless of the violence of one person, it remains that a jaded population is striking out against a corrupt and

Inhumane system; and any attempts to suppress it will only make it larger.

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## ECONOMICS

*Javier Milei / Elon Musk style cuts to the public sector should be implemented in the UK by Ed Hunter.*

There has recently been electoral support for two economic free-marketisers in two of the UK’s international allies. In Argentina, the election in 2023 of a right-wing radical free-marketiser in Javier Milei, shocked the world. This figure, who brought chainsaws to his rallies in order to demonstrate a point, promised and delivered on his first day in office, by removing half of Argentina’s government departments. In America, the election of Donald Trump, with his pro-American business standpoint, and his appointment of Elon Musk to the DoGE (Department of Government Efficiency), promises to deliver cuts of \$2 Trillion<sup>1</sup> to the American government budget by the end of his presidency. Could something similar reduce potential and future strains to the UK economy, thereby increasing efficiency, always the weakest point of government paving the way for better government spending or lower taxation? Which is likely to be continued in order to reach manifesto pledges on investment without violating Labour’s refusals to raise tax. She had promised financial security. Our current government annual expenditure is around £1.2 Trillion per year<sup>4</sup>. The quality of service provided is not good enough for this hefty price tag.

In the event of radical cost cutting measures to reduce the scope of the government considerable cuts could be made. One of the largest drains is the NHS—currently £180 billion spent

on the NHS annually<sup>5</sup>. This equates to c. £2800 per capita which is the 5th most expensive worldwide. This is on top of crumbling NHS buildings, overworked junior doctors and nurses, and poor standards of non-urgent care. Although unpopular, cuts to the government spending through privatisation of some or all parts of the NHS may help. The rate of borrowing would decrease from less spending. Private business would eliminate considerable wastage. Private sector competition could reduce direct costs on the taxpayer, freeing up more money to pay for doctors. Of course, the complete privatisation of the NHS without a level of government support could simply make healthcare unaffordable for the less well off. The profit incentive of business could lead to more money invested in technological advances and cheaper services. This would save a considerable amount of money for the government, which could be used elsewhere.

More broadly inflation has become the number one issue on people's minds. The government's artificial support seen through the COVID pandemic has been reflected in our national debt. During COVID, we had to borrow c.£313 Billion<sup>6</sup>. Pandemics normally cause deflation, however borrowing this huge amount artificially raised the prices we saw. Despite the most recent Cost of Living Crisis, mainly due to the invasion of Ukraine, government spending is higher than ever. This caused a rise in interest rates, which damaged the lives of all individuals in the UK, regardless of wealth or status. Keir Starmer is claiming that continuing with the Conservatives' policy of freezing income tax brackets, he is not damaging the lives of the

working people. These raises through simple wage inflation—receiving a 3/4% pay rise to counter inflation, translates into paying 6 or 7% more tax, i.e less disposable income. If Labour is to live up to its pledges it will have to either raise taxation—which harms all people and breaks a manifesto pledge, or borrow yet more money—leading to greater inflation, again damaging the 'working person'. The UK must not fall into the trap of overspending on unnecessary departments, and stop over-regulating businesses. In a highly interventionist environment businesses lose all incentive to grow.

State-run industries are seen by the average citizen to be corrupt, lobbied and full of cronies<sup>7</sup>. Would a simple way to reduce the problem be cutting the number of posts in Whitehall and local government? The political elite is seen as a great weakness of recent governments, who 'cannot' understand the struggles of the people. Small government with many fewer resources and much less influence should be less corrupt. The chances of seeing PPE seller Michelle Mone lobbying her friends in authority to hand out favourable contracts during COVID would be much less easy to hide. The opaqueness of the current style of government means that the CBI and other institutions that people have never heard of, can influence the ministers from the shadows. In a smaller government, there are simply far fewer institutions. The limiting of government power can be coupled with fewer business regulations.

In a smaller government with fewer regulations, there is often much less 'red tape' encouraging entrepreneurialism to grow in the UK. The history of

deregulation internationally is also very strong.

Economically liberal figures such as Thatcher and Reagan created high levels of real terms economic growth, without demand-side intervention. This is often coupled with an increase in the number of self-employed people providing the most in-depth services for specific individuals, reducing strain on government benefits.<sup>8</sup>

Is it not the time to remove antiquated and ancient institutions here in the UK? Overall, the state is bloated, with many ineffective government institutions and departments, a partisan civil service, the highest budget spending in almost all sectors in decades and yet providing the worst standard of public services in the history of the UK. The neoliberal policy seen with Trump and Milei has received large criticism as being designed for the wealthy to prosper. However I would argue that it allows for freedom from the authoritarian nature of a large and ineffective state, while also strengthening certain crucial institutions such as the police force. In the UK, we want to be able to prosper and have a booming economy, but I feel that one of the largest detriments to our aims is the oversized government allowing for people to feel overly safe in their economic failings.

In the Economics Society we are planning to discuss key current issues further. If anything I have written has struck a chord with you, or you feel that I am a right-wing lunatic, all opinions are open for discussion in the Economics Society, and we plan to continue publishing opinions in the future.\*

\*The economics society meets every Monday after school in AD3.

## MUSIC

Music. The physical interpretation of the sound of our souls and the traditions that have passed through generations. Welcome to the musical corner of our Langtonian Newspaper!

### "Tremendous Success on Annual Trip to the Isle of Wight"—Michael Worsley

Everyone who is connected to the music department loves and looks forward to the annual trip to the Isle of Wight. From Friday 5th to Sunday 7th, the Langton Chamber Choir performed multiple concerts to extremely positive reviews from the residents on the isle, as well as getting up to many enjoyable and memorable activities. As Mrs Renshaw-Kidd put it: "A joy as always."

We left for the trip early on Friday morning (around 7:50) and eagerly bundled into the elegant, seemingly jaguar-inspired coach. Unsurprisingly, the music tour began with boisterous renditions of classics such as 'All I want for Christmas' and the 'Thick of it'. One thing that I love about travelling with the music department is always the atmosphere and how everyone seems to get on, enjoying each other's company, despite any differences we may have. We had a few quick stops on our way to Portsmouth - including enjoying the massage chairs at the gas stations - before we got onto the ferry. The ferry trip over is always fun, with one group filming avenger-themed tiktoks whilst another sat and chatted over warm drinks (I personally had an ice-cream). Upon arriving at the YMCA (Winchester House) we burst into the annual tradition of singing 'YMCA' - obviously.

There was a sudden rush to get to rooms and unpack



before a quick rehearsal in preparation for the concert later that night. We had a warm dinner of fish and chips — delicious — before driving to the church that was hosting us. The yr13s (and Pascal) worked on amazing publicity stunts for the Langton Music department, showing that although some of us made mistakes, the concert went exceptionally well — of course we were invited back! We spent the evening playing cards (and being promised chips for supper) and hung out among the rooms available to us.

After waking up at a reasonable time, we went down for breakfast followed by a trip to the most hallowed of all places on the Isle of Wight — Busy Bees. A yearly tradition which takes us through the wonderful animatronic-galore 'Christmas World' and of course the incredible cake. Although my body is a temple, I sacrificed myself to try a bit of each and every cake on offer and can confirm that at least three people were required to finish a massive slice of cake (only £5.25)—definitely worth a trip. As a result, when I asked which was everyone's favourite moment, we had a unanimous response of 'Busy Bees!' (and "Wilf playing 'Hot to Go' on the organ"). Afterwards, we drove down to the pier, enjoyed our generously provided lunch and went on a spree through the bowling, arcades, and minigolf on an offer. That night we had our final concert of the trip — with a very warm welcome from the hosts — and our final group sing-along to 'All I want for Christmas'. From a musical perspective we certainly continued to improve over the course of the trip, meaning that our concert in January will hopefully be spectacular! That night we had the annual talent show—

Hosted by Harry Gove and Sam Brookes—whilst being judged by the yr13s (Marianne, Wilf, Robin, Cora, Antonin and Pascal). The real highlight of the night was Sangiv's exceptional performance, yet as always, we had lovely moments such as Harry and Sam's Paddington performance and Andrew's incredible popcorn rendition. As Harry put it: "My favourite moment was actually the talent show and seeing everyone coming together and having fun."

After breakfast, we tidied our rooms and gave a bittersweet farewell to our wonderful accommodation. We had one final trip to Tesco's (after Robin finished getting a makeover, of course) and had a calm but pleasant trip back to school. On Sunday, everyone normally runs on only a few hours of sleep, so the coach ride back is normally quiet yet upbeat. I spoke with everyone over the course of the trip and on the ferry, with Theo's sentiment being that "Honestly I wish this trip was longer." Definitely a sentiment that is shared by everyone who goes on the trip (this is a subtle hint that we want more music trips). After an incredible long weekend of music and laughter, I don't think there's much more to say. So I think I'll leave it on a quote from Mrs Renshaw: "Extremely proud with the incredible singing and behaviour. A joy as always."

### *Triumphant Chorus for Autumn Concert - Michael Worsley*

The annual Autumn Concert was a triumphant success for the music department this year with a major showcase of the choir, orchestra and many of the exceptional individuals within the department.

The concert began with a tremendous performance

of two pieces from Handel's messiah. Full Choir gave a spectacular rendition accompanied by the Langton string quartet and much-beloved piano teacher, Mr Ruddock. A testament to those performing, it was exceptionally well received, with one of the loudest rounds of applause the choir has ever had—second only perhaps to last year's performance of Faure's Requiem. Many of the musicians would agree with Mrs Renshaw that their favourite moment was 'the reaction from the packed audience'. The first act continued with a solid performance of Bach from Marianne and Antonin (accompanied again by Mr Ruddock)—the first time all three had performed together. The grand finale was Cora's incredible performance of 'La Notte', Vivaldi—on the recorder—certainly the best performance of the evening. Besides her own technical perfection, Cora's favourite moment was when "the professional string players joined the string quartet and my piece really came together". I think the absolute success of her performance was best measured in the amount of donations she procured later on!

After a break filled with lovely refreshments and delicious cakes (I sampled quite a few—shh). The orchestra returned with a valiant attempt at the can-can, showing the full ambitions of the orchestra and a testament to everyone's hard work and practise to tackle the difficult piece as well as they did. I know that Mrs Renshaw was also incredibly impressed with the performance of the orchestra as when reflecting on her favourite moments she stated: "We have very limited rehearsal time but everyone never ceases to amaze me. And

then the challenging repertoire but that's by choice." The trumpet concerto performed by James, Jonty and Robin—each taking a movement—was another highlight of the evening and a strong tribute to the music department's ability to show-off the talents of every individual involved.

I was fortunate enough to speak with many of the talented musicians involved, including Mrs Renshaw, Cora and Robin. I started by asking everyone's favourite moments with Robin's recommendations probably being the most interesting: "I would say the pizza in between the rehearsal and the concert — Franka manka, №5, gluten free, and a homemade lemonade". Of course I followed up with some performance tips from the two star musicians. Cora suggested: "Don't let it phase you, don't let it worry you beforehand, if the audience is comfortable, you'll be comfortable." Finally, I asked the question that everyone really wants to know—how much did you practise? Both musicians looked visibly distressed, with Robin giving me one of the best answers I've received: "Maybe I should lie? Most days of the week leading up to it. Practice did happen"—a truly inspirational mantra. A massive thanks to Robin and Cora for allowing me to interview them.

After the success of the autumn concert, both the orchestra and full choir have had an increase in participants and interest, so anyone who is still interested should "definitely come along and give it a try!". I know from my own experience of the music department that it definitely connects you to a group of like-minded individuals and will give you life-long skills. For everyone looking forward to more from the music department upcoming

events, including, Interhouse Music in early April and Commemoration at the beginning of May, I asked Mrs Renshaw for a cheeky sneak peek at next year's autumn concert! The current plan is for Brook's violin concerto and Elgar's Cello concerto performed by Manny and Benedict respectively—definitely one to look forward to! Another thank you to all of the talented members of the music department for continuing to excel!

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## LITERATURE

The goal isn't to live forever. The goal is to create something that will.  
-Chuck Palahniuk.

Welcome to our Literature section of Langtonian Issue! (editorial's favourite)

### *The Immortality of The Iliad as an Epic Poem by Anastasia Shaforostova.*

It is a common saying that the history of Europe begins with Greece, and the history of Greece begins with Homer. Homer—the idealization of bloodletting wars, love disputes, and the rages of mortal warriors. The great gods of Olympus. Mighty warriors with winged tongues, an unpurified sense of divine justice and cosmic order. Immortal beings whose ichor gleams brighter than the corslet armour of the brave Achaeans and Trojans. A shimmering liquid—poisonous to mortals. It curdles the blood and sets the heart racing. The enticing world of heroes and godlike men and women, nymphs and muses, cold-hearted soldiers, and ox-eyed goddesses.

Alexander Pope, in his translation, spoke of how epic poetry produces “that unequalled fire and rapture, which is so forcible in Homer, that no man of a true poetical spirit is master of himself while he reads it.”

Any reader—modern or anachronistic scholar—would be captivated by the divine afflatus (from Latin meaning “inspiration”, term used by Cicero in *De Natura Deorum*) of inhuman warfare and ceaseless bloody struggles. The power of words that never die.

Why did Homer captivate his listeners like no other poet? Why myths, gods, and rituals? Trivial questions that arise in our minds while we read *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey*. Myths are among ‘the subtlest and most immediate languages of human experience’. They tell stories of crisis and love without descending into heavy philosophical discourse. The truth of the irresistible beauty of poetry like *The Iliad* lies in Homer's ability to guide the reader toward their own soul. It is through the art that humanity learns of itself. Among the greatest of human achievements, the art of the written word dissolves into the amorphous depths of the soul, opening the path to an understanding of life. In his epic poems Homer captures the timeless essence of human conflict, honour, and mortality.

“The father of poetic diction, the first who taught that language of the gods to men.” (Alexander Pope).

Homer was an aspiration for later epic poets—figures like Virgil (*Aeneid*), followed by Milton and Dante. Generations of poets have dreamed of being as ambitious as Icarus, soaring to touch the sun's rays with his waxen wings (and I don't blame them and would join their ambitious pursuit of power of language). Before reading *The Iliad*, one must believe in the gods of Olympus—if only for a few hours. Similarly, to read Dante and truly understand him, one must become a Christian, if only for the brief span of

reading. Even though we have no sense at all of Homer as a person, if he was a writer, we can assume that this individual, whoever they were, possessed a rare talent for eloquence and storytelling, and might have created the base of all classical literature.

*The Iliad* starts in the ninth year of the Trojan War, a conflict sparked between Sparta's king Menelaus and the Prince of Troy, Paris (or Alexandros—“defender of men”), who seized his wife, Helen, the radiance of women. With help from the goddess of beauty and love, Aphrodite—who promised Paris “a wife the most beautiful in the world” (Helen) over a **golden apple** inscribed with the destined words “for the most beautiful” (in comparison to Hera's promise to make him “the most powerful king in the world” and Athena's dedication to fill him with unmatched “wisdom”)—Paris claimed his prize. The apple was cast by the uninvited Eris at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, igniting the spark of argument between the goddesses.

The poem begins with the rage of the mortal Achilles—son of Peleus, the greatest warrior among the Achaeans, prince of Pythia, and a child submerged in the waters of immortality. (“Rage—goddess, sing the rage of Peleus' son Achilles”). A quarrel, born of pride, dishonour, and prizes, shatters the bond between Agamemnon, the lord of men, and Achilles. Insulted and dishonoured, Achilles refuses to fight for the Greeks and prays to his mother, Thetis, to persuade Zeus to restore his honour and exact retribution. The gods of Olympus play with mortals' fate with divine hands; Pallas Athena whispers cunning, winged words of warcraft and wisdom into warriors' ears,

while Apollo, the god of prophecy and divine song, bends his golden bow to shield Ilium. After Achilles' refusal to fight, Patroclus, his most beloved friend, takes the son of Peleus' armour and leads the Myrmidons into battle, where eventually is killed by a noble Hector. Achilles, who learns of Patroclus' death at the hands of Priam's son Hector, is seized with grief and a thirst for vengeance. He reconciles with Agamemnon and rejoins the Achaeans. In a state of *aristeia* (ἀριστεία, the Greek word for the climactic moment in battle when a hero is lost in the fervour of triumph; his finest performance in war), he slaughters Trojans mercilessly, battles Xanthus, the river god, and, with Athena's aid, takes vengeance upon Hector, dragging his lifeless body, bound to a chariot, to the Achaean camp for nine days. Wishing to see his son properly buried, Priam sneaks into Achilles' tent in secret and pleads for mercy, asking for the return of Hector's body. Achilles, moved by their shared sorrow, gives in. Priam returns with the body of his dead son, and a truce is called to bury Hector and grieve Troy's loss.

*The Iliad* is a song of human suffering, honour, revenge, and fate.

Now that the story is familiar to us, we may understand why *The Iliad* became one of the greatest representations of human will to power, the psychological toll of war, and heroes driven to destruction by desire—by the pull of something they could never fully possess. The immortality of a text like *The Iliad* lies in its connection to the modern world and human emotions. *The Iliad* is a text obsessed with respect. Respect serves as a dagger of intimidation. We might

think that the Greek obsession with honour, so often shown in tragedy, conceals deeper feelings of insecurity, chaos, and a desperate need for control—while also revealing that revenge is a defensive mechanism. The perfection of this symbolism of honour is found in Achilles' eloquent insults toward Agamemnon and vice versa. Their quarrel, a contest of pride, began when Agamemnon refused to return Chryseis to her father, provoking Apollo's wrath and unleashing a plague upon the Achaean camp. When forced to give her up, Agamemnon could only make sense of his loss (of woman or honour) through Achilles' suffering—by claiming Briseis, Achilles' war prize. In the Greek world, honour was the only thing worth living for; its loss was worse than death. (Achilles: "I have no mind to linger here disgraced, brimming your cup and piling up your plunder.").

This follows Nietzsche's idea that "power defies us as humans". (By the way, Nietzsche's obsession—or rather, **possession**—by the god Dionysus is rather... fitting. But as they say, don't let your obsession possess you.) In other words, Homer does not try to suppress human desire but regulates it—just as ancient philosophers did not deny the gods but merely made them smaller.

The detailed descriptions of battle force readers through bloodshed, chaos, and stages of life. We do not watch from a distance but are placed so close to the lines of Trojan and Achaean warriors that the images stay in our minds, haunting our dreams. ("But huge and mighty Forms that do not live/Like living men moved. slowly through my my mind/By day and were the trouble of my dreams..." Wordsworth.) That's why it matters. It

holds up a mirror to our own desires, our own failings. It's a cautionary tale, a reminder that even the mightiest heroes, those granted favours by the gods themselves can be consumed by their own hubris and be doomed by hamartia. Driven by their passions into ruin, their lives reduced to legend, which made them immortal like gods of Olympus. That's the true beauty of it — and true terror. ("Things that seem ignominy to the mind, to the heart are nothing but beauty[...]. The honour of it is that beauty is not only terrifying thing— it is also a mysterious one." Fyodor Dostoevsky, "The Brothers Karamazov").

And lastly, the ghastly images of loss and the absence of control remind us that we are alive and mortal—achingly conscious that, in the end, nothing is ever truly in our control.

*"Journeying without direction" by Patrick James*

I don't know how I got here.

It's strange, actually, this place. No sky, for example; the ground seems to warp and rise up, sort of spherically, and yet if I walk towards the walled horizon it moves away at the same rate. It's as if this plane is finite and infinite all at once.

Weird.

And that's another thing - the murmurs. It's barren here - no faces, no bugs, not even a light breeze against my frigid cheek - but I can hear whispers. It's as if there are great, invisible giants surrounding this pill case I'm wandering.

In some ways, it's as if I've always been here. I walk, I sit, I drink from the sparse lakes that scatter the wasteland. And the more I settle, the less I can

remember.

A face - yes, I can see a face. I can remember brown hair; long, thick, wavy; in my fingers it felt heavy. Piercing eyes of saltwater slicing me to bits in an intoxicating glance. A soft smile, supplemented with a hint of derision.

I feel as if I know her, and yet she's lost to me. I don't even have her name. Thinking about it, I can't even remember my own.

I'm just... me, I guess.

Sometimes, when I'm feeling particularly lonely, I'll talk to the air, like it's an old friend. The air snorts back with a demeaning sneer, as if I'm missing something. I argue back. I'm not going in circles, I say. I've not yet seen this tree, I protest. How can I be going in circles if I'm still discovering?

And the air calls back, "Look around you, mate. Physics."

And then I'd retort, out loud this time, "How can physics matter when I just appeared? Surely this is more?"

And then the air falls silent, and I'm on my own again.

I don't know how I got here. I don't know how long I've been here. I don't even know my name.

But I know I need to get out.

*"Magical Fiction: Frankenstein and Occult Knowledge" by Christian Taylor*

'Cornelius Agrippa, Albertus Magnus, and and Paracelsus, the lords of my imagination' Frankenstein, Ch.2

Abstract: this essay argues that chapter 5 of Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* (1818;

1831) is the most important section of the text, not only because of its status as the Promethean 'creation' moment in the novel but because of something related, but different: namely, that Shelley does not reveal how Victor Frankenstein succeeds either in animating the 'lifeless tissue' of the Creature, or how he came by the knowledge needed to perform this 'magical' operation. Indeed, my contention is that the novel is not only a science fiction text, and also a magical fiction narrative: this is because, as I will show, it is Frankenstein's tutelage under Professor Waldman, plus his reading of the esoteric-occultist masters Albertus Magnus, Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus that allows him to gain access to the necessary occult knowledge needed to animate the Creature. He does so, I will contend, not only by using principles linked to anatomy, Galvanism or other branches of practical science, but by also deploying magic - specifically, the invocation of occult precepts handed down to him by the occultist-magus figure Waldman, who stands in the text as a proxy for Trithemian-Agrippan magic occultism. Shelley does not tell her reader how Frankenstein animates dead tissue because her eponym, as an initiate of Waldman's esoteric system, will not reveal what he knows.

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'It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils.' So opens Shelley's fifth chapter of *Frankenstein* (1831), although we know this to have actually been the opening section of her manuscript - composed after her stay with Percy Shelley, John Polidori and



Diodati in summer 1816. It is appropriate then that this 'seminal' moment in the text - its precise moment of 'birth' or 'genesis' - should be so vital to our understanding of the rest of the text, and to our view of Frankenstein himself. Before we address chapter five in more detail, however, let us first look at the four chapters and four letters which Shelley added to her opening chapter, and which allow us to build a clear view of the novel's troubled antagonist.

Although the opening letters are transacted between Robert Walton and his sister Margaret Saville (née Walton), they also introduce Walton's companion Victor Frankenstein, whom he encounters drifting on an ice block aboard a sledge in the Arctic Circle. Taken aboard, Frankenstein slowly ingratiates himself with his host ('my affection for my guest increases every day') and, in a moment of touching fraternal affection, reveals to Walton the source of his 'great and unparalleled misfortunes' - these taking up the rest of the narrative. It is interesting to note that Frankenstein's revelation contains within it, not the record of a 'mad scientist' who has somehow, by dint of exhaustive experimentation and the application of hard scientific theory, unlocked the secret of the principle of organic life, but, rather, the uncovering of dark secrets and occult practices that represent a quest for knowledge and wisdom (called, by Hermetists, gnosis and sophia) which have resulted in Frankenstein's ability to bestow life on dead tissue. In short, Frankenstein's narrative is not scientific, but magical - based on the revelation (but only in part) of 'occult' (Latin 'covered; hidden') secrets.

As Frankenstein declares

to his host in the fourth letter:

'You seek for knowledge and wisdom<sup>1</sup>, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been. I do not know that the relation of my disasters will be useful to you; yet, when I reflect that you are pursuing the same course, exposing yourself to the same dangers which have rendered me what I am, I imagine that you may deduce an apt moral from my tale, one that may direct you if you succeed in your undertaking and console you in case of failure. Prepare to hear of occurrences which are usually deemed marvellous. Were we among the tamer scenes of nature I might fear to encounter your unbelief, perhaps your ridicule; but many things will appear possible in these wild and mysterious regions which would provoke the laughter of those unacquainted with the ever-varied powers of nature; nor can I doubt but that my tale conveys in its series internal evidence of the truth of the events of which it is composed'.

Does it not seem odd to hear Frankenstein, a figure associated in the popular and critical tradition with the figure of the lone, semi-lunatic scientist, hold forth on topics of such esoteric gravitas as things 'usually deemed marvellous' and 'many things [which] will appear possible in these wild and mysterious regions'? That first adjective, marvellous is telling: its etymology, Latin, means 'wonderful things' (mirabilia) and its associations are often magical (think of Shakespeare's island-bound Hermetic magus Prospero's daughter's name, Miranda, which has the same etymological

root)<sup>2</sup>. But the second reference - to wonderful things - is also provocative, because so un-scientific in its connotative power.

'Wonder' comes from the Old English word *wundrian*, meaning 'to be astonished' and, given the context in which Frankenstein's dialogue is taking place - two men alone, *in camera*, one of them *trans-mitting* wondrous or astonishing things to a younger or less knowledgeable follower - what we seem to have before us is a moment, very early in the narrative, of male-to-male occult wisdom transference, recalling Hamlet's attempts to reveal 'things in heaven and on earth' that are 'undreamt of in Horatio's philosophy, and also the most famous masters of the gnostic tradition from world history: Jesus, Moses, Socrates, Confucius and, pertinently to my argument here, Hermes Trismegistus.

What Shelley therefore foregrounds very early in the narrative is this sense of mysterious, wonderful or marvellous disclosure: deep, esoteric knowledge transmitted from a male master to a disciple or follower, and conjuring ideas associated not with empiricist-materialist scientific disclosures but, rather, with philosophical, arcane and magical ones. In Letter 4 of the novel, Frankenstein *initiates* Walton in a Mystery cult, and us with him - although neither Walton nor we are ultimately allowed access to the most profound truths of this body of knowledge (*sophia*).

Now, to tackle a very likely objection to what I have just outlined, namely that to Frankenstein the type of new *scientific* knowledge upon which he has stumbled after years of university level study of anatomy and 'natural

philosophy' seems 'wonderful' and 'marvellous' but is really just exciting new science, two things must be objected: one, that Frankenstein never calls his work 'science', and, two, what he studies at Ingolstadt is not science - in the contemporary or Enlightenment sense - either.

At Ingolstadt, as detailed in chapter three of the text, Frankenstein studies *natural philosophy* - a branch of early modern science that would have incorporated, in Germany, a Romantic assumption that nature was a marvellous organic system rather than simply a mechanistic one - but also, under the tutelage of Professor Waldman, branches of esoteric and occult knowledge that bring to mind (and into the text) the pre-Enlightenment occultist tradition in science best embodied in the figure of Newton, who, although the father of modern science and a cultural icon of the scientific-rationalist school of empirical 'truth' was himself an alchemist and mystic.

In other words, what Frankenstein is revealing to Walton is not a science lesson or a lab report: rather, it is the moment of transmission of occult knowledge in the text, linking back to Frankenstein's own previous initiation into the world of occult 'wonder' and the marvellous at Ingolstadt at the hands of Waldman.

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In chapter three of the novel, Frankenstein details the major event in his undergraduate career that would shape his destiny: his meeting, and subsequent relationship, with his 'principal professors', Krempe and Waldman, lecturers in

chemistry at the Bavarian university city of Ingolstadt.<sup>3</sup>

That Shelley has Frankenstein conduct his research at the University of Ingolstadt cannot be considered accidental.

Historically a Jesuit stronghold and the seat of the Society's counter-Reformation project ('the Society's Bavarian stronghold')<sup>4</sup>, the city was also the place where Adam Tanner printed a tract written by Benito Pereira (1535-1610), defending the occult magic of Trithemius, before going on to print his own pro-Trithemian tract in Ingolstadt in 1614. 'The choice of the Ingolstadt location for both the delivery and printing of Tanner's oration [defence of Trithemius], as also the further issuance from the same city of a vindication of Trithemian magic by the Benedictine abbot Sigismund of Seon [meant that Ingolstadt] served as a base for two of the most vigorous defences [sic] of Trithemian magic after 1600'.<sup>5</sup> I take up further Trithemian ideas in what follows.

Krempe is immediately envisioned as a figure of Enlightenment, super-rationality heaping scorn upon Frankenstein's study of the occult philosophers and alchemists Magnus, Agrippa and Paracelsus, whose work he dismisses as 'nonsense', larded with occult twaddle, and constituting outmoded 'exploded systems'. 'Good God!' Krempe exclaims, 'in what desert land have you lived, where no one was kind enough to inform you that these fancies which you have so greedily imbibed are a thousand years old and as musty as they are ancient? I little expected, in this enlightened and scientific age, to find a disciple of Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus. My dear sir, you must begin your studies entirely anew.' So

So begins Frankenstein's university course under Krempe.

Waldman, however, enters the text immediately after, and it is he - a professor of chemistry, etymologically derived from its historical and linguistic precursor *alchem[istr]y* - who will offer to Frankenstein a wholly different view of science, the world, nature and creation: a new *perception* of the same essential reality as that offered by Jesus to his adepts, Confucius to his, Socrates to his, Hamlet to Horatio, and Hermes to his first Egyptian followers.

Having admitted that his early researches into occultism amounted only to 'a confusion of ideas' because of his 'want of a guide on such matters', Waldman's arrival in Frankenstein's life is both serendipitous or, seen in a more arcane light, predestined. Soon to become precisely the Hermetic magus philosopher guide alluded to above, Waldman is described by Frankenstein in these terms when he first sees him lecturing on chemistry:

'He appeared about fifty years of age, but with an aspect expressive of the greatest benevolence; a few grey hairs covered his temples, but those at the back of his head were nearly black. His person was short but remarkably erect and his voice the sweetest I had ever heard.'

Concluding his lecture with an encomium on the modern masters of chemistry and Enlightenment science, Waldman delivers what Frankenstein calls 'a panegyric upon modern chemistry' which, although seemingly a defence of modern scientific pragmatism, simultaneously evokes the occultists who preceded the age of the 'modern masters', and shares with them a

A sense of the wonderful potential of chemistry and modern science - fuelling Frankenstein's appetite for untapped, hidden knowledge.

The modern practitioners of science, Waldman exclaims:

'penetrate into the recesses of nature and show how she works in her hiding-places. They ascend into the heavens; they have discovered how the blood circulates, and the nature of the air we breathe. They have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, and even mock the invisible world with its own shadows.'

- a speech which invokes modern practical science (blood circulation and an examination of the chemical composition of air) and occultist-magical practices, such as accessing 'unlimited powers', commanding the elements (and power hitherto ascribed to witches) and summoning telluric powers from the earth. It is this sense of *wonder*, communicated to him by the older, male, benign paternalistic figure of Waldman which leads Frankenstein to seek out those 'unlimited powers' previously sought after by Magnus *et al.* In short, this moment in the novel is the direct precursor to Frankenstein's move towards an occultist practice of Hermetic science and magic, combined with modern research and experimentation, and to his later initiatory conversation with Walton.

The effects on Frankenstein of Waldman's words are immediate:

'one by one the various keys were touched which formed the mechanism of my being; chord after chord was sounded, and soon my mind was filled with one thought,

one conception, one purpose. So much has been done, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein—more, far more, will I achieve; treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation'

- not the words of a rational exponent of Enlightenment science, but more those of an aspiring practitioner of occult knowledge: a seeker after arcane, hidden truths.

To be sure, this Waldmanian irruption into Frankenstein's consciousness seems to act as an initiatory experience, such that, henceforth, Frankenstein clearly sees himself as part of a tradition of arcane revelation - merely the latest adept to be offered a glimpse of the immaterial magical tradition of previous masters of the 'deepest mysteries of creation'. This initial meeting of Waldman and Frankenstein is then supplemented by their next one, which is another in *camera* or even *sub rosa* moment in the text, as part of which master and student, initiator and adept, guide and disciple meet for private occult communication.

Finding Waldman to be, in private, 'even more mild and attractive than in public', Frankenstein discusses with him his reading of those authors dismissed previously by his father as 'sad trash' - the occult texts of Albertus Magnus, Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus.

'He heard with attention the little narration concerning my studies and smiled at the names of Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus, but without the contempt that M. Krempe had exhibited'

Frankenstein tells us, reporting also Waldman's view of these medieval and early modern pioneers of modern science:

'These were men to whose indefatigable zeal modern philosophers were indebted for most of the foundations of their knowledge. They had left to us, as an easier task, to give new names and arrange in connected classifications the facts which they in a great degree had been the instruments of bringing to light. The labours of men of genius, however erroneously directed, scarcely ever fail in ultimately turning to the solid advantage of mankind'

It is clear from Waldman's words that he sees no conceptual or practical conflict between the mystical-occultist tradition and its scientific-rationalist counterpart, but, rather, that he thinks the two are in point of fact the site of a transference or confluence of forces - interrelated, interleaved and commingled in one Hermetic-occultist-scientific *vesica piscis* of mutually reinforcing ideas and practices.

Although Waldman goes on, as part of his formal professorial duties, to give to Frankenstein a reading list appropriate to his status as a student of chemistry and medicine (although its contents are not, provocatively, specified), Waldman's appreciation of Magnus et al clearly suggests a fusion, in his mind, of their preceding thought with more modern ideas - something made explicitly clear by Waldman himself when he talks of the 'debt' modern science owes to these 'men of genius'.

And so we see how Waldman and Frankenstein embark on a mutually beneficial journey as 'a youth [and] his

Instructor', one leading the other, Hermes-like, towards an appreciation of modern science (*sophia* or wisdom) as based on the efforts of previous generations of adepts and masters, toiling at the same great task. Waldman goes so far as to claim Frankenstein as a young disciple and agrees to mentor him until such time as he can master the esoteric knowledge he offers (but which Shelley refuses to specify), and which he can then use as part of the onward transmission of this knowledge to others in the future:

"I am happy," said M. Waldman, "to have gained a disciple; and if your application equals your ability, I have no doubt of your success. [...] He then took me into his laboratory and explained to me the uses of his various machines, instructing me as to what I ought to procure and promising me the use of his own when I should have advanced far enough in the sciencenot to derange their mechanism. He also gave me the list of books which I had requested, and I took my leave. Thus ended a day memorable to me; it decided my future destiny".<sup>6</sup>

In chapter four of the novel, Frankenstein details how he spends two years studying under Waldman and Krempe, 'in the pursuit of some discoveries which I hoped to make', as he enigmatically puts it, until arriving at the point where he finally 'became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter' - this only 'after days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue' and not, importantly, as a result of 'some miracle'. Indeed, it seems to be the case that, under Waldman's kind and constant ministrations, and with his master's eye for the necessary corrections

as the disciple makes his way, combining as this would have done the reading of the medieval occultists *alongside* their modern counterparts, Frankenstein rises through what he calls 'stages', but which might easily be termed degrees or steps, until the point when he has attained ultimate knowledge - gnosis - of the generation of life itself.

Walton, of course, as a fellow Promethean and would-be disciple of Frankenstein, immediately craves this knowledge, but is warned sternly by Frankenstein that this is impossible:

'I see by your eagerness and the wonder and hope which your eyes express, my friend, that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted; that cannot be; listen patiently until the end of my story, and you will easily perceive why I am reserved upon that subject. I will not lead you on, unguarded and ardent as I then was, to your destruction and infallible misery. Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow.'

Whatever Frankenstein has learned as a result of his part-occultist, part-rational enquiry into life and the *élan vital*, he has found this godlike science to be destructive and too powerful for the human mind to wield. Or, rather, too powerful if wielded in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons.

Unlike Magnus, Agrippa and Paracelsus, for instance, who sought occult knowledge for its own sake and not for worldly glory, Frankenstein, more vainglorious, self-seeking,

and viewing himself as the potential 'benefactor of mankind', is seemingly driven to the state of bitter regret outlined above having attained the very knowledge he made it his life's work to attain - and here it would be apposite to quote the German Benedictine abbot Trithemius, himself the instructor to Agrippa and Paracelsus, who held that the pursuit of arcane or esoteric knowledge, whether alchemical, Kabbalistic or Pythagorean, must be motivated by the purest of motives, and carried out by impeccably pious Christian practitioners, given that 'this science [...] very virtuous and quite useful to the state, nevertheless, when it comes into the possession of depraved men (may God forbid such a thing) the entire order of the state in time will be not a little disturbed'.<sup>7</sup> 'The occult arts,' determined Trithemius, are wicked only when utilized [sic] for wicked ends, whereas when they are utilized for good ends they warrant the highest praise'.<sup>8</sup>

'A pure heart and illuminated mind - these are the core requirements set forth by Trithemius for successful and legitimate magical proficiency',<sup>9</sup> reminding his followers that 'the word magic (*magia*) [...] is the Persian term for what in Latin is called wisdom (*sapientia*)'<sup>10</sup> and hence Frankenstein, pursuing *magia-sapientia* or *sophia-gnosis* through chemistry, mathematics and medicine, but driven less by the spirit of God than by his desire to immortalise himself in the annals of world history ('what glory would attend the discovery if I could banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death!'),<sup>11</sup> is thwarted in his attempt to perfect the principle of the

generation of life, his role as potential master to a new generation of occult-hermetic disciples ruined by his greed for fame. All that is left to him, on this reading, is the final attempt to clear his name by warning Walton of the need to avoid his Promethean fate by abandoning the search for earthly glory.

Looking now at Frankenstein's reaction to the animation of the Creature, we can see a mixture of self-hatred and horror brought about by his perversion of both modern scientific principles and those of the occult tradition:

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet.

[...]  
How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For

this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart.'

And so ends Frankenstein's quest for glory, fame and the secret of life - informed by Krempe's rationalist project but also suffused with the glamour and wonder of the Hermetic-occultist tradition of Magnus et al acknowledged and encouraged by Waldman.

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Trithemius and the Hermetic-occult tradition are relevant to our reading of Shelley's text by virtue of the fact that, as seen above, Frankenstein's initiation into the Waldmanian occultist-rational system of esoteric-modern science takes place in Ingolstadt - a city associated with Trithemian magic in the same way that Wittenberg was associated with Lutheran theology.

Trithemius, as dealt with previously, was a German monk associated with 'magical theology' and the art of steganography: a system for sending messages from sender to recipient over long distances, using codes and ciphers, but also occult philosophy - including composing the text at astrologically auspicious moments, under the influence of particular planetary bodies and stars, and then invoking the aid of angelic-spirit messengers to help with encoding and de-coding of the message.

As Noel L. Brann explains, as part of this enciphered communication system, 'the steganographer is instructed to turn in a predetermined direction and voice an incantation

To a spirit-ruler said to reside there [whilst] the same directive is applied to the receiver of the secret message, who is previously has been apprised of the name of the spirit by a cryptic symbol inserted near the close of an earlier letter.'<sup>12</sup>

- and this is the person to whom Frankenstein is linked through the invocation of Ingolstadt as the site of his (al)chemical experiments, leading to the creation of the Creature in chapter five of the novel.

Even more pertinent to the current reading of the text is the fact that Trithemius was directly associated with the authors read by Frankenstein in the novel, Trithemius being a great supporter of his predecessor, Albertus Magnus' work, and, in turn, the confidant and esoteric instructor of Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus.

Albertus Magnus, we are told, was the 'German scholar with whom Trithemius identified above all others in his [...] campaign to legitimize the occult arts',<sup>13</sup> whilst 'two magicians often presented by Renaissance scholars as having received personal instruction in the arcana from Trithemius are Agrippa of Nettesheim and Paracelsus.'<sup>14</sup> So great was Agrippa's debt to Trithemius, and 'in appreciation of the invaluable guidance he received as Trithemius' guest, Agrippa dedicated the first version of his *De Occulta Philosophia*, appearing in 1510, to his host of the preceding year.'<sup>15</sup> Like Frankenstein in private conference with his instructor Waldman, 'the two men had discussed for hours on end "many things about alchemy, magic, Cabala, and the like"'<sup>16</sup> - a relationship which brings to mind the Hermetic tradition of initiation into the arcana by a Poimandres or master figure, who supports and

guides a younger student, and once again recalling Waldman and Frankenstein's relationship at Ingolstadt.

That Trithemius was also associated, at least in the popular imagination, with necromancy and the demonic arts (although Trithemius and his supporters denied these imputed heresies), is another link to Frankenstein and his own attempts at raising the dead - for that is, after all, what his (re)animation of the dead tissue of the Creature amounts to.

Trithemius, for example, was associated with the historical conjuror Dr Faustus, whom he met - 'the notorious magical doctor Faustus, whom the abbot encountered by chance when the two figures passed a night at the same Gelnhausen inn in 1506'<sup>17</sup> - and it was said of Trithemius himself, by no less an authority than Martin Luther, that 'at the request of the Emperor Maximilian [he] conjured from the depths of Hell not only the a number of dead heroes of the past such as Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, but also Maximilian's recently deceased bride Mary of Burgundy'<sup>18</sup> - just as Faustus 'reanimates' Alexander in Marlowe's play.

Just, therefore, as Frankenstein, by his own admission, seeks to reanimate dead people in a Trithemian-Faustian attempt to tap into hidden sources of natural power ('the raising of ghosts or devils was a promise liberally accorded by my favourite authors, the fulfilment of which I most eagerly sought')<sup>19</sup>, so he aligns himself with the Trithemian-occult tradition, and, through Ingolstadt, Trithemius, and those illustrious magi associated with him,

Frankenstein emerges as a protean figure: part modern scientific Promethean, part esoteric Agrippan-Trithemian necromancer, Shelley's novel deliberately silent as to the nature and precise details of his occult knowledge because of the traditional stipulation that all initiates into the mystery cults, demonic arts, occult world and even Freemasonry keep the secrets of these fraternities secret - a fact borne out by the rules of Trithemian steganography itself: 'the steganographer [per Trithemian principles, is enjoined] to esoteric secrecy, inasmuch as "nothing is more foolish than to inculcate the knowledge of this profound art in those who neither wish nor are fitted to gaze upon its very lofty heights."'”<sup>20</sup>

Both Waldman, Frankenstein and Shelley seem to understand this demand, and remain silent about not only the precise details of Frankenstein's wondrous ability to raise the Creature from the dead (or animate its lifeless tissue) but also the general theoretical principles underpinning this process.

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## SCHOOL LIFE

Our school curriculum is enriched with outside experiences and speakers that encourage to move forward and never give up. This is a short glimpse into the life within our school!

### *The story of Hari Budha Magar by Alex Reilly*

The man who proves nothing is impossible.

Hari Budha Magar is a Nepali mountain climber who, on the 19th of May 2017, became the first ever double amputee to summit Mount Everest. But how exactly did Magar accomplish such an achievement and why?

At the Langton we had the pleasure of speaking with Hari about his life and what drove him to attempt such a challenge.

Hari Budha Magar grew up a farmer in the Nepal mountains. The harsh environment made it a hard place to live. "We farmed just to survive." Magar recalled doing "salt journeys" with his family—a two week long trip they did every year just to get salt. He attested that his life was very different in Nepal, without electricity or heating he lived with all his family together. "I didn't know privacy until I came to the UK."

The country also happened to be a very unstable place during his childhood, entering a 10 year long civil war between 1996 and 2006. "I was lucky enough to skip that war and join the Gurkhas."

The Gurkhas are units consisting of soldiers from the Indian subcontinent, specifically the Nepalese and Gorkhas, Nepali speaking Indian people, who are recruited for the Nepali, Indian, and British Armies as well as the Gurkha contingent and Gurkha reserve unit. Hari Budha Magar was deployed in Afghanistan in 2010. Whilst on a mission to repair a well for a local community, the squad of 20 (Magar being tenth in the line) passed over the land. "We were just walking along the side of the poppy, and guys passed first, second, third; nine people passed and I went and something went BANG."

Magar notes the first thing that he felt was the ringing in his ear, and the absence of his right leg. At the time he was unsure if he would live, if he would ever see his family again. Luckily for him, his fellow Gurkhas were able to evacuate him.

"They gave me the opportunity to live my life again. The reason I do anything now is because, without them, I wouldn't be

standing here today.

An IED in Afghanistan left Hari Budha Magar without his legs from above the knee down, marking one of the most important events in his life and the defining point for the rest of it.

Back in England Magar suffered for quite some time with his disability. Unable to walk, and with nothing to do, metal anguish weighed heavily on him. Magar mentioned that back in Nepal disabilities were looked on quite unfavorably, adding to the pain that he was going through. "They are the burden of the herd, they are the burden of the family."

At his darkest moment, whilst still living in Canterbury, Magar attempted to take his life but was quickly stopped by locals and taken home. As soon as he saw the face of his son he instantly regretted it. "Looking at his face... I couldn't take my life." From that moment he knew what he wanted to do was to advise his children. "I knew... I wanted to live my life." Magar spent his time doing different things, finding what he wanted to do with his life. He did skydiving, golfing, cycling, kayaking, skiing, and of course

climbing. "Whenever we adapt our life according to situation, time and our abilities: we make anything possible... if you use this principle in everyday life... it's a very powerful thing."

Whenever Magar was climbing in the mountains, he found himself thinking of Everest. Having grown up in Nepal, Everest was a symbol of pride for the country and fascination for those who grew up there. It quickly became his goal to climb the highest peak in every continent. If he could do that, if he could climb those mountains he hoped to inspire; help everyone climb their own proverbial

mountains and prove that no challenge is insurmountable. The first hurdle to climb was not in fact a physical mountain, but the laws in Nepal: it was illegal for double amputees to climb the mountain, preventing Magar from achieving his goal. After enough fundraising and protesting, they were able to get the law removed allowing the climb. On the 19th of May 2023, Magar achieved the impossible, conquering 8,849 metres, and standing at the highest point in the world.

Since then Magar has not been idle. He plans to climb all 7 peaks across Europe, Australasia, Africa, North and South America, and Antarctica. So far Aconcagua, the tallest mountain in South America. When he originally climbed Everest Hari Budha Magar raised 300,000 pounds to do it. Now, he plans to raise 884,900 pounds for 5 charities working with disability across the world in order to give back. "We only lose when we give up."

### *An interview with a former Langton student and Celebrity star Charlie Jeer — Alex Reilly*

Change is inevitable, progress is optional.

Charlie Jeer is a model, musician and star in a reality tv show.

Previously he worked as a model for Nevs modelling agency, before being scouted for the television show *Too Hot To Handle*.

Most recently he released a single under the sound on music label named *Her Eyes*. We asked Charlie about what he thought it takes to make it in the music industry along with questions about his tenure at Langton and his philosophy on work and how to do the very best you can.

Q: What do you think it takes to be a musician?



The hardest thing about music is making people care. Anyone can release music, really good music...The creative side of it is actually only a really small part of what it takes to create music, you have to create a brand." Charlie went on to tell us a small part about how tough it was to try and work in the music industry. "Every contract is a bad contract."

"Music is one thing, but everyone wants to take all of your rights...Everyone wants to *take, take, take* and give you as little as possible."

Charlie explained that dealing with contracts in the music industry involves back and forth negotiation till "You both feel like you are being ripped off a little bit." Despite this he expressed his enjoyment for the business side of music. Charlie has an economics degree, helping him with the business side of his music. In an industry with very little tangible credibility, dealing mostly in the abstract and subjectivity of art, "Having that economics degree has been great to lean on."

Q:How has the University made you a better artist?

Charlie went to the University of East Anglia where he got his degree in Economics. "I think it helped to have the time at uni... take me at 18 compared to 21 when I left Uni; 2 completely different people with completely different levels of self confidence and understanding about the world." The level of independence gained from a University as well as the life experience and, of course, your degree are things highly regarded by those who have done such. University is the time to grow who you are as a person, emotionally maturing into the person you are. In the creative industry especially, such time is highly regarded as a time for self discovery.

"Don't just do your degree, that's the bare minimum. Uni is a time to immerse yourself in life, THAT'S where you learn things." Don't be *just* something, try to not just be that.

Charlie shared his ethos when it came to working at anything when we asked him what it was like to be the previous head boy at Langton. "I loved being head boy, doing speeches and leading by example. It's important to have people look up to you for inspiration because it makes you hold yourself to higher standards...Being the best at what you do is critical in every step along your life journey...any system you are put into you should strive to be the best at it." In Charlie's own experience he was head boy at Langton, then became head of the boxing society in university. In his modeling career at Nevs modeling agency he talked about striving to be the last in the office and forming bonds with his colleagues. Even on *Too hot to handle* "it's a different system but, you kiss the most girls on the first day."

Q:What kind of reputation do you want to have at the school and in your life?

"I want to create music that impacts people...I would love for people to listen to my music and resonate with it on a global level." Inspiring others was something Charlie seemed exceptionally driven with, wanting to look back on his life and be proud of what he had accomplished. "I don't want to sell myself too much... which can happen a lot in this industry."

Q:Who was your Inspiration?

"I used to listen to Kenny G a lot, that got me into sax. I don't really know if I have musical inspiration because what I'm trying to do is something that's not been done before... I'm not trying to be like anyone I'm not trying to create music like anyone, I'm not trying

To act like anyone. I'm just trying to find what is true for myself. You have to find what it means to be you, you kind of only find that through experiencing things and travelling, trying different things. That is what finding yourself is, you have to put your finger down on who you are rather than who you wanna be like."

Q:What is the thing you miss most about the school?

Charlie Jeer did English, economics and philosophy at Langton. He talked a lot about his favourite teachers and the experience of learning at secondary schools. "You talk a lot about the subject... you don't realise how much you know." Overall though the thing he missed most was: "Being younger, not knowing what's coming... the trajectory of what's happening."

Q:How is your new album going?

Charlie has signed a 8 song album with universal music to release 1 song over a 6-8 week window, for the entire year. He also plans to work on new albums and singles.

To finish off our interview we asked Charlie what was the most important thing that he would like to say to anyone and everyone. "Change is inevitable, progress is optional." From everything he told us this sentiment seemed to resonate particularly with him as a now successful post graduate, down a path he never would have suspected even 2 years earlier, Charlie is entirely familiar with change. "When things happen to you that are bad, they give you skills... you shouldn't think about it like getting stuff but getting skills... they are more valuable than anything material you can get, think long term, not short term."

*Let your life change.*

## DRAMA

### *"Theatre Review - A Christmas Carol" by Dr Moxham*

There are many potential challenges to staging a full-cast dramatization of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. There's the speed with which it changes focus, for one thing; close to 30 separate short scenes, many of them requiring vertiginous changes of location, scenery, and personnel. Then there's the extent to which Scrooge dominates the narrative (Scrooge appears in all 30, the spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and Future in five or six each, and no other character in more than three). Finally, so much of the story is carried by Dickens's startlingly intimate, chatty narrative voice that it's hard to imagine how the text could cope without it – yet it's equally difficult to imagine a play surviving such intrusive narration.

It's a testament to the skill and nerve of the cast and crew of this adaptation, and the finesse of its author, David Edgar, that the transfer to the stage feels so seamless and natural. The dramatic force of the original novella stems from turning the lonely miser Scrooge into a witness to his own life, as well as forcing him to really see for the first time the lives of others, and the trick is doubled here by turning the writer (and his publisher) into characters on stage. This is a neat homage to the genesis of the book – Dickens had originally intended to write a political essay, based partly on his own experience, against child poverty and exploitation – and it adds a layer of comic tension as the stricken publisher, aghast at the prospect of Dickens turning his back

On his storytelling gift, and foreseeing ruin for them both, desparately tries to cajole his author into writing a Christams story. Excellent performances from Jasper Lewis, as the publisher, and Chris Fish as Dickens, underpin these interludes. The dynamic between the two men becomes more complex as Dickens becomes consumed with hatred for the grasping money-lender character he has created, and the publisher's human sympathy as well as his commercial instincts are needed to steer the narrative towards the familiar happy ending. Archie Giblin is wonderful as Scrooge, whose serpentine malice and moralistic tone mask an underlying fear of poverty and ruin born from bitter personal experience in this production. At the same time there is a genuine warmth in his relationship with his deceased business partner Marley (Patrick James), whose ghost engages with Scrooge in a friendly reminiscence that shows them as kindred spirits rather than monsters. When Marley's role in Scrooge's redemption is succeeded by the Ghost of Christmas Past (Aryan Bhide), he is played as a canny mixture of Scrooge's younger self and the Recording Angel as Victorian businessman, noting all the formative experiences of Scrooge's life in an enormous ledger. This dignified figure echoes and contrasts with the energy of Dickens, bubbling over with emotion and ideas and scribbling frantically as he goes. It's one among several clever directorial touches that gradually hint at the developing closeness between character and author. Dickens's privilege of completing Scrooge's sentences or repeating his questions, for example, begins to establish a rapport between them that

flourishes into genuine sympathy, wonderfully registered by the actors and reinforced by the decision to have Scrooge's twenty-year-old self played by Chris Fish. The production, and David Edgar's script, have more substantial and creditable roles for women than Dickens's novella, with Scrooge's fiancée Belle (Tegan Edridge) less saddened by his alteration than justifiably enraged by what she sees as his abandonment of her father, Mr Fezziwig (Patrick James again). In a similar vein, Mrs Cratchit's (Cora Hewitt) righteous outrage at her husband Bob's (Jack De Ville) craven submission to Scrooge's treatment of him transcends the original and turns into a powerful screed on social justice and an anger at Bob for failing to know his own worth – which Bob draws on word for word when he finally drums up the courage to confront Scrooge in the final act. By then, redemption is all but earned, but before delivering its clever twist on the familiar ending, the production takes in a whirlwind tour of the British Isles –lighthouse-keepers, stormbound mariners, and miners. The music in this section is superb, a mixture of live and recorded sound, and the rapidly-shifting scenes are illuminated by dark, bobbing Chinese lanterns that double as storm-tossed

ships and miners' lamps. In a chilling nod to Dickens's planned political pamphlet, the miners are played by the youngest members of the cast – all Year 7, at precisely the age when their Victorian counterparts were forced into that incredibly frightening and dangerous form of work, and speaking lines taken directly from the report that originally inspired and angered Dickens. Even in a production full of haunting moments, this stood out powerfully. None of the key episodes are neglected – the death of Tiny Tim Cratchit is registered with a heart-wrenching sob from his father, and James Grace as Tiny Tim delivers a tubercular cough that makes you genuinely afraid for his health. But I can't go another moment without mentioning the ending, a totally unexpected twist on the original in which the famous final line – 'god bless us, everyone!' – is coaxed out of a now really elderly Scrooge by a grown-up Tiny Tim (Tegan Edridge again) at a family wedding as Scrooge, confused, badly frightened and quite possibly dying, is reassured and guided by the young man whose life he helped to save – a perfect symbol of his belated but redemptive willingness to learn. This was a stunning production, led by Ms Taylor, Mrs Humphreys, and Mrs Strickland of the Drama department, that met a huge series of technical challenges (dozens of scene changes, a cast of over 40, live music, singing and dancing) without sacrificing any emotional complexity or intensity in performance, and if there's any criticism of it to be offered, it's for setting such a dauntingly high standard for future productions.

## STEM

To add more diversity to our issue, we aim to dive deeper into the latest advancements in scientific community. Welcome to STEM corner of our Langtonian Newspaper!

**Biology**  
*Resurrecting the Woolly Mammoth using... Mice?*  
 Once roaming the icy tundras of Europe and Asia, the *Mammuthus primigenius*, also called the Woolly Mammoth, has been extinct for 4,000 years. However, scientists at the biotech company *Colossal*, have revealed their ambitious aims to 'resurrect' these ancient beasts. This will involve genetically modifying their closest living relative, Asian Elephants, to produce hybrid embryos with the relevant traits the woolly mammoth possesses. Although before this is realized, bioengineers must appropriately address the 10 primary genetic differences between them by synthetically 'creating' them. In the past few weeks, *Colossal* released an unpublished paper outlining how they engineered seven 'Colossal Woolly Mice' which have golden-brown shaggy fur similar to that of the woolly Mammoth. This is significant as this trait may one day be carried forward into breeding hybrid of woolly mammoths. Undoubtedly, we are far from woolly mammoths walking earth once again, but this demonstrates that we have the appropriate genetic-editing technologies available to one day make this a possibility. Furthermore, Colossal has expressed that they will introduce their first woolly mammoth calves by 2028.

*Should we bring back the woolly mammoth?*



\* A Christmas Carol poster, Mr Evans , 2024

## Physics

*"Life on Mars?"*

Whilst David Bowie has been posed this question since 1971, a new scientific discovery has revealed a possible answer.

After researchers identified unusual white pebbles scattered across an ancient riverbed on Mars, NASA's Perseverance rover fired layers at the rock to identify its chemical composition.

The results from this analysis revealed high concentrations of *kaolinite*, a mineral only formed on earth in warm and rainy conditions or exposed to warm springs for a lengthy amount of time. This suggests that Mars' ancient climates were warm for an extended period of time — a key component for sustaining life on a planet.

This is a huge breakthrough for the scientific community: prior to this, they were aware of sources of water, such as rivers or lakes, that Mars previously possessed. However it was deemed too far from the sun, and by extension too cold, to inhabit life.

For researchers, this raises a plethora of questions, such as 'How much water did Mars once have?', as well as more significantly: 'Where did all of Mars' water go?'.

*It is clear that this may be one of the keys in unlocking the full history of Mars, but are any sort of lifeforms found along this timeline?*

## Chemistry

*The race to Hydrogen Fuel Cars.*

Imagine a world where cars run on the most abundant elements in the universe. Where the copious amounts of greenhouse gases produced by our vehicles, which is a major factor contributing to the impending apocalypse we call 'Climate Change', is replaced by a singular waste product - water - the very essence for life on earth.

In the last few decades, this has become a more plausible option for car manufacturers globally: as a matter of fact, BMW have announced their launch of their first hydrogen-powered fuel-cell electric car (FCEV), the 'iX5 Hydrogen', by 2028.

Alongside it is evidently beneficial impact on the environment, hydrogen FCEVs have a short charging time compared to electrical battery powered vehicles—less than 5 minutes compared to up to 12 hours—as well as its ability to provide long range journeys of up to 310 miles.

Seemingly, this is the industrial miracle both environmentally and manufacturing wise that companies such as Toyota, Mercedes-Benz and Honda have been investing into. But is this truly 'be all, end all' solution we've been looking for or merely another technological pipeline?

Despite its abundance, most hydrogen production either requires the use of fossil fuels, and in effect exacerbating the current environmental issue at hand, or is entirely cost ineffective.

In addition, there is a global limited infrastructure to support the usage of hydrogen FCEVs, such as the lack of refuelling stations. This, alongside the scares demand for these technologies, alludes to the conclusion that hydrogen fuelled cars are not the way forward.

In summary, while some may argue that the potential for hydrogen based technologies for car manufacturing is no longer on the table of environmental and cost-effective options, others may say that the fact that major global companies are still investing in these technologies proves they still hold some hope in the future of car technologies.

*Will hydrogen-powered vehicles one day dominate our roads?*

By Morgane Argviter.

## POETRY

What could possibly be more exhilarating than the experience of love? Force, that fills the heart with warmth and joy. And what could be so excruciatingly agonising at the very same time?

During an engaging discussion on poetry, the 12E English class collaborately devised the idea of composing a love sonnet. We are pleased to share the result of our writing on the last page of this issue.

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Javier Milei / Elon Musk style cuts to the public sector should be implemented in the UK

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6. Alexander Pope
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*A Love Sonnet by Dr Taylor*

An English sonnet chuntering 'bout love's  
Annoying to exorbitant degrees –  
All true-romancing-wide-eyed turtle doves  
Anticipating assignations - please.  
Reality's at odds with Mills & Boon:  
In R+J the lovers curse the dawn;  
I've never seen a damasked damsel swoon –  
I've deffo seen a bored first-dater yawn.  
See, love's a game with convoluted rules:  
For every winner, fifty losers sore.  
For every handsome hero – fifty fools;  
It's hard to win when Venus rigs the score.  
Recall the star-cross'd lovers' fatal fall:  
They nearly had it – nearly had it all.

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*A Love Sonnet by Anastasiia Shaforostova*

When hands that reach for heaven's blessed kiss  
Do long to rest in thoughts of tender joy  
And Jove's divine command denies abyss  
Forbids the noose to wrap around the neck.  
The wailing cries of great Achilles' wrath  
Were then to me but love and fleeting breath.  
The Muses' friend, I walked where song was bright  
And golden garden bloomed to soothe my mind  
The stars—cold eyes that anchor life in doubt  
Consume the breath that fades with each new beat  
Through Nature's Grace, I find divine command  
To follow Nymphs in great pursuit of dance.  
If beauty be the terror, like the sun's dark glow,  
It turns wild longing into lovely form.

---

*Dog by Alexander Reilly.*

Where are those puppy dog eyes I fell for?  
That combed unmatted hair, not shed across floor  
Unshared glances; a new found bad rapport  
Replaced with an unwanted Labrador

I'm allergic to dogs, Since you asked  
you don't, never could. We'd never have last.  
Oh, and, do you know how much it has cost  
To keep spaid, neutered, to play your own host.

When we first met we were electric  
You would run after me, I, after you.  
Baring smiling k9s under soft lips  
Laying down on the soft picnic blankets

It was the end when you stopped bringing gifts  
And I was left with your good puppy: Liz.

*My only love*  
*By Michael Worsley*

I watch his golden hair, how it sets soft,  
—smiling, joyful curls—the deep, warm, sunset.  
I watch with endless eyes, how that sweet croft  
Of bountiful, golden wheat flourishes. Yet,

When he smiles — what I love — he smiles past me,  
Staring into the fullness of her face.  
*Hers.* Not mine. From my lips escapes a pleas,  
Vacant. Meaningless. My dark eyes harden.

I watch his golden hair, how it sets stiff,  
Those thin oceans devoid of life, choked  
With hardened steel. This smile seems like a glyph,  
A flesh rune carved into old marble, cloaked

By matted red stars. I'll dream another day.  
You won't have me, but I'll always have you.

I stroke his hair.

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## THE END!

Sadly, our issue has  
reached its conclusion, rest  
assured that we'll soon  
return with even more  
captivating and interesting  
content! A heartfelt thank  
you to everyone who has  
contributed to this  
newsletter!  
Until next time!

Edited by Langtonian team  
and designed by Anastasiia  
Shaforostova.