SAVAGE

Grown #10

An outsider in Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, John the Savage observes the world around him with eyes informed by the works of Shakespeare. Like John, SAVAGE Journal looks to art, literature and philosophy to enrich our perception of modern life.

"Listen, I beg of you", cried the SAVAGE...
"Lend me your ears."

Cover image—
Jocelyn McGregor—
Jennifer (concrete) (2016)

savageonline.co.uk
@savagejournal

EDITORS' NOTE

Winter 2019

Grown speaks to progress – to something larger, something advancing. The word sprouts images of buds becoming trees, of children becoming adults. And yet, it also calls to mind the constant desire to enlarge, to do more; a desire which underpins the economy that threatens the growth of these organic things through its insatiable use of resources.

Our world is moving and changing fast – with upheavals, innovations, and revolution, we are never static. Grown, a word that encapsulates a sense of the past and the present, allows us to explore where we currently are, while looking back at where we started, and thinking forward to where we have yet to go.

Nostalgia and memory play a large role in understanding how we have grown, with millennials seen as a generation that are increasingly drawn to idealised images from their childhood. *Daisy Pollock-Grey* examines how nostalgia has invaded Hollywood, leading to the churning out of remakes and sequels, while *Gabriela Fowler* looks back on her own personal experiences with literature, and the way in which memory impacts re-reading. *Sophie Cundall* takes this one step further, exploring an impulse to return to the primal aspect of language - sound itself.

Within the realm of nostalgia also comes the sense of outgrowing, of no longer needing something that defined you or was held dear. *Georgia Good* considers whether society has become disenchanted with God and religion, while *Tanya Sitnikova* reflects on Lee Krasner's legacy and moving past the moniker of 'Mrs Pollock'. Students too, have outgrown the colonial curriculums of their university education, and reflect on this in Our Voices. Decolonise the Curriculum highlights the importance of recognising institutional marginalisation and problematic histories and affirms the need to leave it behind.

Technology is becoming increasingly embedded in our lives. *Oliver-Michael Rechnitz* considers the blurring of the distinction between organic and synthetic in Nam June Paik's artwork, while *Hannah Galbraith* explores the use of artificial intelligence in art and music. But perhaps this comes at a cost. *Jago Lynch* explores how smartphones are affecting the clubbing industry in London - at what point did photogenic visuals overtake the sound of the DJ?

As development rapidly accelerates, voices are at risk of being co-opted and forgotten. *Shanti Giovanetti-Singh* looks back at the roots of flamenco as a protest movement, and how it has been commercialised, defining a vague idea of 'spanishness' in popular culture. But pockets of resistance remain: *Zlatan Zlatan* writes on the explosively verdant world of Derek Jarman's Garden, a queer liminal space in which resistance and defiance are allowed to grow. Closer to home, *Carolina Abbott Galvão* reports on the recent IWGB strike for out-sourced workers at UCL - the majority of whom are BAME.

The last five years have seen SAVAGE growing up and out, and in this issue we wanted to think about change, evolution, the past and revolution. We all hope to grow. When we're young we want to grow taller, and as we get older, we try to grow wiser. As the journal grows more mature we want to explore and reflect on how art changes over time, trace histories and origins and the growth that happens in our own minds.

With love,
Simran, Alice & Selma

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Read—	GROWING APART—anonymous	4
Music—	THE TONGUE IS A WEAPON, THE TONGUE IS A WHIP —Sophie Cundall	5
Film—	HOLLYWOOD: DOOMED TO REPEAT ITSELF FOREVER? —Daisy Pollock–Grey	7
Literature—	SPECTRES OF SANITY—Gabriella Fowler	8
Film—	GOLD RUSH—Arthur Greene	10
Literature—	THE GROWTH OF THE POETIC MIND—Joe Kenelm	12
Read—	MOTHERLAND—Enerzaya Gundalai	14
Theatre—	LESSONS LEARNT FROM PLAY—Jamie Cottle	15
Art—	SEXUALITY AND SHAME—Sara M. White	17
Thoughts—	AN ILLUSION OF CHILDHOOD—Georgia Good	18
Literature—	RUSSIAN EVOLUTION—Clarissa Siu	20
Thoughts—	FITTING MY BROWN SKIN—Paul S. Kim	22
	OUR VOICES	24
Read—	TWISTED VINE—Nicole Fan	27
Music—	NURTURING A.I.—Hannah Galbraith	28
Art—	SYNTHETIC GROWTH / NATURAL TECHNOLOGY —Oliver–Michael Rechnitz	30
Music—	THE WAY WE DANCE—Jago Lynch	32
Listen—	GOODNIGHT TOTTENHAM—Seb Perera–Slater	34
Read—	BUTTERFLIES—Daniel Lee	36
Theatre—	¡BAILE!—Shanti Giovannetti–Singh	38
Film—	QUEER GARDENING, JESUS CHRIST & PUNK ROCK —Zlatan Zlatan	40
Art—	LEE KRASNER: OUTGROWING “MRS. POLLOCK” —Tanya Sitnikova	42
Theatre—	RISING OUT OF THE ASHES —Alice Devoy	44
Thoughts—	JUSTICE FOR UCL WORKERS—Carolina Abbott Galvão	46
Read—	NOCTURNAL DEMON—Tomiwa Owolade	48

Abigail MacGinley—Playing The Fool (2019)

Growing Apart

ANONYMOUS

Let me wreck this story about myself.

I'm split by wave-pools,
And I have been since June.
My promises are splintered and wooden,
And they come back now to bite me like a decoy shark.

Throw me up -
I'm orbiting! I've overgrown into this carpet floor;
In the gap of our time zones swā hit nō wǣre.

I've made my very own eorðscræfe
In domestic existence,
Burrowing into sun spots and fake foliage.

That was yesterday, now, and you're back tomorrow.
I've never climbed a mountain but sometimes I feel like I have.
Today is a long day,
With tidal rhythms slow,
And vines coil around our bodies.

Here I'm split in two places
Across the Atlantic,
Like I have been my whole life.
I am on one island, and you are on another.
The point where the Caribbean and
The Atlantic meet
Is where we'll never face these demons.

THE TONGUE is a WEAPON, THE TONGUE is a *WHIP*

SOPHIE CUNDALL analyses the growth from language into music in Christopher Brett Bailey's *This Is How We Die.*

The lights drop, smashing shards of light into growing gaps of darkness. Christopher Brett Bailey is swallowed by the rugged hole that is what remains of the Ovalhouse downstairs stage. We too are swallowed by a darkness. A wave of sickness pushes through me, or is it a wave of sound. A discordant screech of an expensive electric guitar cuts my cheeks, the swipe of a bow across a violin grazes my ribcage. Breath leaves the communal body, and I wonder if This Is How We Die.

In Bailey's dizzying play This Is How We Die, 'the tongue is a weapon, the tongue is a whip'. It consists of a violent verbal beating where the audience is gut-punched by salted syllables and angry anaphoras until tears fill their eyes and they crush cups in their raw red hands. What happens then, though? When language is dead and has achieved the limits of its power, when we simply cannot take anymore? Growth. Growth into Music. This is what happens. Swelling bodies of chromatic chords and bitter b flats fill the air. The notes are as ghosts, flying around the room snatching their tendrils around unsuspecting audience members clinging onto each other in the pitch darkness of the theatre. It is this experience that has made me wonder, is this growth of language into music a growth, or decay? Is is progression, or regression? Bailey's play presents a compelling case for the former: music is growth from language and maybe the bodies of notes are more powerful than those of words.

Steph Harrop has written about ballet dancers in the audience of dance shows experiencing them entirely corporeally: a dancer pops up onto a pointed foot, a hand extends to grasp another, ballerina bodies feel it all. This theory can be applied to our experience of music as opposed to language, or even as a language. Even if we are hard of hearing, or lacking sight, as we were forced to be in the inky darkness concealing both our shapes and that of the orchestra, we can experience music in our bodies. We can feel vibrations pulsing through our fragile flesh, we can feel the dread in our stomachs that some of the more violent counterpoints of the piece force into us. We talk a lot about loss in translation, but what if to translate from language to music is to find? Surely music renders this piece radically accessible, something which much theatre lacks and thus can never go amiss. Music is universal, physical, and anyone with a body of any form can feel it.

If music rises up from a quite literal gaping hole left by the insufficiencies of language, the play is rendered further accessible through dismissing the need for knowledge of a literal language. Sarah Kane's plays about queer and female-targeted violence have been performed in translation more than in English: surely this is a symptom of

the body as a crucial theatrical tool for both actor and audience. In the same way that Kane's highly physical and visual 'in-yer-face' theatre renders the linguistic elements near secondary, music allows the agonising angst Bailey's beat poetry conveys to target everyone regardless of mother tongue. You could listen to his spat words, a musical act in themselves, in any language, and combined with the music understand totally what we are supposed to feel. It doesn't even matter if we zone out for 30 seconds, and lose the thread through the minotaur's maze. The orchestral tsunami that ends the piece brings us all together, uniting us into a body that feels exactly what it is supposed to, perhaps far more than language ever could. Music doesn't need translating: everybody with a body can feel it.

Thus, In Bailey's cinematic piece of surrealist trash theatre, music both slowly seeps and suddenly surges into the gaps language leaves a space to fill. The post-apocalyptic soundtrack doesn't point us to an exit, or a solution to our crushing angst, but holds us and makes us feel. We realise that perhaps the state of our burning world means This Is How We Die, but perhaps that's okay. Whether English is your first, second, or third language, this play will slap you in the face but offer you something to soothe the sting afterwards. You only need a body, and a willingness to face the void with bright light in your eyes and strings scratching on your skin.

>

Yage Guo—The Love Birds (2019)

Hollywood: DOOMED TO REPEAT IT-SELF forever?

DAISY POLLOCK-GREY asks whether Hollywood has a future beyond sequels and remakes.

Picture this: it is the year 2035, the 17th instalment of the Fast and Furious franchise has hit the cinemas, making $1 billion on its opening weekend. The highest grossing film of the year is the live-action remake of Fantasia – the whales are scarily realistic, and Ariana Grande does the soundtrack.

Is this where Hollywood is going? Hopefully not, but a pessimist might think so, and it's easy to see why. The market is getting claustrophobic; there's a constant cycle of Disney sequels, the ever-growing Fast and Furious franchise, and superhero movies. Of course, sequels often give creators the opportunity to further explore the worlds that they have created, which is valuable to fans. Remakes even work as an effective way to develop and improve old favourites, particularly with advancements in visual effects. However, rather than demonstrating the growing creativity of brilliant filmmakers, applying interesting new interpretations, movies are becoming more of a CGI spectacle, and are losing some of their authentic, imaginative quality.

This is not to say that Hollywood is greedy, and that these companies will just flog a dead horse until it stops coughing up money. Yes, concepts get overstretched, but some sequels are extremely well-crafted. Lately, the most successful Pixar films (with the odd exception) were sequels, like Finding Dory (2016), and Incredibles 2 (2018). There is clearly a winning formula in reprising the stories from one generation's childhood once they have grown older. Even though they were not necessarily incredible films on their own, they worked in their sense of fulfilment – coming twelve years after the original. Nostalgia is a big money maker, as we like to see the stories we love grow into something new.

When we love something, we want more of it. While this might be what audiences want in the short term, sequels are not usually what lives on in cinematic memory. Sentimentality cannot work creatively forever – we should be using the past as a standard to meet and exceed, not just a source for ideas.

Unfortunately, originality is not making the same money for movie companies. Over the past few years, Disney has produced far fewer new concepts, and seems to have settled into a cycle of remakes and sequels. There are of course exceptions – like Pixar's Coco (2017) – but you can't help feeling that there is less enthusiasm for these solo projects. Is this just Disney cashing in on nostalgia? All of Disney's 2019 releases have been either a live-action remakes, or sequels. It reaches a point where these franchises are no longer expanding on the worlds they first created, but just recycle the same material until it becomes stale.

Humans like to stick to what they know – we have done it for centuries. Like in fan

fiction, artists have always taken stories they love and have run with them, with their own new interpretations. Now, however, it seems like there is less concern about using these old films as inspiration for new creative visions, but instead as a template for them to fill in with a few changes. The problem lies where sequels and remakes stop being better than or different enough to what preceded them. We can forgive another version of It (2017) because it became a much better version visually, as the advanced effects allowed the fear-factor to flourish. It is harder to forgive the Halloween reboot, because not much changes, the story and the scares are too predictable. Rebooting the same story only works when enough things are different, otherwise it gets old. All four versions of A Star is Born (1937, 1954, 1976 and 2018) work on this level, maintaining the same core story but still delivering a new experience. The updated soundtrack and cast bring fresh creative energy, as does the power of the female leads who bring such a presence to their respective films. The story is adapted into its respective era and the films engage with the changing times. Instead of relying on just the hype of a previous success, the films work well on their own; they are sisters, not twins (or quadruplets, technically).

In a way, companies are just playing to the demands of the consumer: we are showing with our wallets the kind of movies we want to see. The danger is, if this means that we lose the creativity of filmmakers in the industry, that originality becomes lost to corporate greed. In 1999, the top 10 grossing films included American Beauty and Notting Hill alongside blockbuster sequels. Increasingly, however, the cinema landscape is getting dominated by just a few franchises. Last year the only non-franchise, non-remake, non-sequel film to make the top 10 was Bohemian Rhapsody. Of course, this trend is unlikely to change – but that is not such a problem, so long as innovative filmmakers still get the recognition they deserve. >

SPECTRES OF SANITY

GABRIELA FOWLER looks back on her history with Henry James's The Turn of the Screw.

The first time I read The Turn of the Screw by Henry James, I was confined to the starched white linens of a hospital bed, hoping the nurses who performed half-hourly checks on patients wouldn't discover I was reading a ghost story. While Jamesian fiction may not frighten an avid Stephen King fan, in the psychiatric ward everything we consumed – including fiction – was carefully monitored.

It was an ironic choice of reading for someone whose own sanity was being constantly observed and analysed. The novella describes the ambiguous tale of a young governess who claims to see ghosts. The uncertainty surrounding the governess' account leads readers to brand her sane or insane; either the apparitions are a real and terrifying threat, or an increasingly violent delusion of a mentally ill woman.

The near-constant anxiety that bubbled in my stomach had turned reading from my most treasured pastime to another source of panic attacks. My thoughts screamed too loudly for the quiet contemplation of sitting alone with a book. When it came to facing The Turn of the Screw, the stakes were high. It was my first essay for university, and the pressure of returning to studying was in part what led me back to hospital. I needed to finish this book, and somehow write thousands of brilliant words about it.

It seemed like an insurmountable task. Living with a mood disorder meant that when I wasn't immobilised by anxiety, I was overcome by an all-encompassing, exhausting fog of depression. I was so deeply tired of existing. I could barely imagine surviving even one more day, let alone getting to the end of my degree.

When I received my reading list earlier this year for UCL, I had to laugh seeing that familiar title, The Turn of the Screw. The nineteen-year-old in the psychiatric ward could never have imagined she would revisit the novel six years later, living in London and completing an MA in English Literature.

Part of the enduring allure of James's tale lies in the gaps he left for readers to fill. While the governess jumps to conclusions about what she sees, the reader goes through a similar process, attempting to piece together what happened. Words are deliberately chosen for their multiplicity, and the conclusion of the novel is particularly cryptic denying readers the closure of a neat resolution.

Six years on, I looked forward to diving back into James's psychological ghost tale. The ambiguity makes it a story ripe for rereading. I tried to remember what my opinion about the governess's visions had been, and predict what it would be now. I was so curious that I dug out my old essay from first year.

I anticipated that the debate over the sanity of the governess would form the crux of my argument. After all, my own state of mind had been debated in a similar fashion amongst psychiatrists. I read and reread the essay in disbelief – I had almost completely avoided any discussion of the governess' psychology.

In hospital, I was trying to forget about where I was and why. I ignored the elements of the story that reminded me of my own, and lost the thread of what makes the tale so deeply fascinating. Avoiding the issue of sanity, my essay scraped a passing grade, allowing me to continue my studies. Yet now I wonder what I could have written had I faced the governess' experience – and my own – head on.

James said in "The Art of Fiction" that "a novel is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life." While he was referring to writing, the statement also applies to reading. Rereading a novel provides an opportunity to reassess what our "impression of life" is, and how it has grown.

Rereading the novel this time, one line particularly stuck out from the governess' narration, "I go on, I know, as if I were crazy; and it's a wonder I'm not. What I've seen would have made you so; but it has only made me more lucid." My experience of mental illness has given some people reason to label me "crazy," yet I feel it has only made me "more lucid." Being able to look honestly at myself and my illness was the only way to overcome it.

For the longest time, I viewed those years spent in the darkness of my mind as a painful loss, a gap to be left alone. Now, I realise that they were an experience that helped me to see more, and shouldn't be forgotten. In the words of James, I "try to be one of those on whom nothing is lost." As for the sanity of the governess, I implore you to pick up the book, take James's advice, and see what you can find. >

GOLD RUSH

ARTHUR GREENE considers the environmental message at the heart of Jaques Audiard's The Sisters Brothers.

This article contains spoilers.

The Western genre is often used by filmmakers to depict the natural world's untamed brutality and man's struggle to survive in it. Leonardo DiCaprio's snow-beaten, bear-ravaged frontiersman in The Revenant (2015) discovers the truth of this axiom first-hand, while Kodi Smit-Mcphee's idealistic pacifist finds there is no place for him in the 19th century's rough American frontiers in Slow West (2015).

Jacques Audiard's latest film, the extraordinary The Sisters Brothers (2019), depicts the brutality inflicted upon nature by man during the American Goldrush in 1850. Showing an initial promise to be about men's vicious treatment of one another in this unforgiving setting, its disastrous climax instead reveals that it is much more mournful of the destruction that man inflicts on the land itself. It's a cautionary tale of environmental concerns, showing us the corrupting power of greed, and the disastrous impact it has upon our planet.

The eponymous brothers, Charlie and Eli Sisters (Joaquin Phoenix and John C. Reilly) are talented but disreputable bounty hunters. They fight off hordes of beaver-clad foes, however numerous or advantaged, with such hyperbolic ease that it becomes increasingly clear that whatever serious threat these two face, it won't come in the form of another outlaw. They are contracted to extract a formula from a gold-prospecting chemist named Herman Warm (Riz Ahmed) through torture, before killing him. When mixed into river water, the formula will illuminate any gold that lies hidden beneath the surface. It is highly toxic, damaging the skin of those who wade through it. Jake Gyllenhaal plays private detective John Morris, who is tasked with locating Warm and handing him over to the Sisters brothers.

A great deal of this film is spent in transit; Audiard is not afraid to spend time with Charlie and Eli in between the action as they travel south from Oregon City to San Francisco in pursuit of Warm. We see them pissing from the edges of mountaintops and trotting down the beach of a sea they have never seen before, all while discussing the nature of their violent lives and the childhood which determined them. “You know what brother? I don't think you and I have ever gone so far before,” Charlie remarks. “You mean between us, in our conversation?” Replies Eli. “No, this far in a straight line.” Audiard strikes a delicate balance between the viciousness and the tenderness of both his characters and his landscapes. In some of the less serene moments of their journey, we see Charlie brutally falling, hung over, from his horse. We watch as Eli sleeps, and a huge spider – visibly venomous – crawls excruciatingly slowly into his open mouth. He swallows it without stirring and spends the following day in a state of extreme illness, before vomiting up the spider's living offspring. It is a sequence which indicates that the greatest threat these two will come to face will come from within.

This threat turns out to be the greed of man, and the system which promotes it. The quartet of characters – Charlie and Eli, Warm and Morris – by a turn of chance join forces. Warm first allies himself with Morris by confronting the P.I. with his own greed, telling him that he is signing-off on the violent murder of a man he likes for a job's pay. He then taps into the greedy nature of the brothers, promising them half of the gold they prospect with his concoction. When the moment arrives, they carefully begin the process of stirring the formula into the river water. Briefly, it creates an enchanting light show and the men gleefully pluck the gold, unconcerned by the corrosive effect the liquid has on their skin. When the light begins to dim, the reckless Charlie gives into his avarice. He goes for the vat of formula and empties it into the river. It spills over his arm, and Warm and Morris are caught in the water. The darkness restricts our view of the chaos, and we must wait until the following morning to discover the horrific injuries sustained by the men. Before this moment, however, comes the most important shot of the film: floating on the surface of the water are hundreds of poisoned fish. Presumably, animals who drink from the river will suffer the same fate. The mass-sacrifice would have taken place regardless of this catastrophe. It is a symbol of a capitalist cultivation of the planet, using any means necessary, however toxic, to draw capital from the land. Charlie's greed is the downfall of the film's central quartet, but all four men are culpable for the destruction of the landscape that Audiard so tenderly depicts. >

Kirin Crooks—Untitled (2018)

The GROWTH of the Poetic Mind

JOE KENELM reflects on Adam Nicholson's account of a pivotal year for Romantic poetry.

The writer Roger Deakin once went to Scolt Head Island, Norfolk, in search of 50,000 pink-footed geese. Fellow writer Adam Nicolson accompanied him. In an oak-framed hut, they examined a study of the island, which contained a series of line drawings showing how the island had 'shifted its shape and position over the years.' It is, as Deakin describes it, a 'restless' place.

Nicolson, Deakin remembers, said 'this is just the kind of book he would like to write: the product of months and months of staying in the same place.' On Scolt Head, Adam Nicholson prophesied his book The Making of Poetry, published earlier this year. It is a narrative of growth, a biography of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge focused on a year when they would come to write some of their most famous poems. Beyond this, The Making of Poetry charts Nicolson's attempt to understand what went on in that year. In the end, the book conceives of people, place, and poetry growing out from each other — a simultaneous, affective, and protean vision of imaginative growth.

Nicholson went to live in the Quantocks — a stretch of hills in Somerset which, from June 1797 to Autumn 1798, Wordsworth and Coleridge called home. Nicolson buried himself in the poets' notebooks, drafts, diaries, and maps. The title of the first chapter of The Making of Poetry is entitled 'Following', and, in the simplest sense, this is Nicolson's project. Early in the book, he describes how he 'walked with' Coleridge, remembering how 'the same lanes, the same air, absorbed in his frame of mind' led to his first 'embedding.' Embedding – fixing firmly in a surrounding mass of solid material – is Nicolson's default term for his project. The process is, however, never so solid or stable.

He began 'to lower [himself] into the pool of their minds.' This is the wateriest of immersions, a far cry from his previous suggestion of 'embedding'. Later, 'dropping' into Coleridge and Wordsworth's relationship with this landscape, Nicolson undergoes another immersion; this time, in a rhyne. 'I lowered my body into the blood-warm cider-soup,' he writes, 'my feet were in the half-mud…as if I were sinking into the folds of a brain.' The experience is knitted with a language of flesh — the blood-water, the brain-bed. This is an unstable confluence of body and immersion; physical and conceptual swimming. His sense of self is compromised in the water, it is 'a dissolution of the self, not a magnification of it.'

Nicolson elaborated on this relationship in an evening with The Royal Society in 2017. He projected two maps: one charting the prevailing winds of the South Atlantic; the other displaying the Southern migrations of shearwaters. The patterns of the two maps are near-identical, showing, in Nicolson's words, the 'extraordinary attuning of creature to world'. The seabird at wing in the Atlantic wind, dipping, rising, flexing, at one with the air but distinct from it, a commingling of body and world encompassed in the name shearwater itself: flying so close to the water that the very tip of a wing joins the waves, cutting a momentary wake into the liquid surface. It is an idea Nicholson returns to again and again in The Making of Poetry. Meaning is 'embodied' in the 'very breathing and sensing of embodied souls alive in the world.' Collapsing his terms, Nicolson coins the phrase 'mind bodies', 'embedded because we are embodied'. In the end, this is a fundamentally linguistic concern. To 'embody' is both to give substance to, and to articulate.

Neena Percy—Paint Me Blue (2014)

The Making of Poetry is only 'an answer'. The meaning Nicholson hopes to find resists mapping; it is as elusive as Scolt Head Island. On a 'thick' summer evening, Nicolson visits Alfoxden, the 'decrepit' home of the Wordsworth's in the Quantocks. 'The wind of poetry is no more than a breath of stirring air…a half-feeling, a stirring of the inner atmosphere that might or might not be the making of poetry.' This uncertainty, Nicolson writes, 'is the revelatory thing. It is the simmering of a presence'. Here, Nicolson echoes Wordsworth's 'Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey':

…I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

'Those lines,' writes Nicolson, 'are the triumph of this year, and represent one of the great moments of human consciousness.' It is altogether difficult to disagree. >

Motherland

ENERZAYA GUNDALAI

I was on my way to the gym yesterday when I decided to call my mother, on a whim. It was a Sunday that day. She picked up immediately and relief flooded her voice. She remarked how strange it was; she had been thinking of me that exact moment. I must have felt her halfway across the world. Of course, there was a chance I had, through some miracle of the maternal connection between us, or a dim intuition.

But then again, probably not. How sad it is we grow separate from our parents, grow apart to lead our own lives and fulfil our own destinies, when we are all they have. In this moment I felt a strong yearning to be one again with my mother and return to a time when we were two inhabitants of one body. Like last summer, when I was leaving home again to go to Paris.

When she embraced me by the door, I felt my years dissolve in her arms and I was once again only her child. Our identities thawed and melded together in this embrace. I felt a love that was unconditional and whole and complete. When I was young, I thought my mother was the most beautiful woman in the world. But when I looked at her face then, I found wrinkles and signs of aging. I was now the more youthful and beautiful woman. I felt I had drained her of her vitality, robbing her of her life force. I know she would have given it to me freely.

And then her skin was soft and smelt like milk and home and Mongolia. I never wanted to let her go, lest when I did, I would find her withered to dust.

That morning my father was to drive me to the airport. My mother came out, wearing her robe and a ridiculous hat, because it was raining. No matter how many times I took this journey, she saw me off every single time. In her hands she held the intricately carved wooden spoon handed down to us by our nomadic mothers and grandmothers who had worshipped the ancient Sky god. She tossed milk into the air upwards and then in the four directions of the compass as offerings to earth and sky. It was an old ritual that belonged on the Mongolian steppe, not on the cement pavement next to our apartment. It was the plea of a mother watching her child leave home, to lands too distant for her to follow. It was a ritual for a woman who could no longer bear the weight of the world for her child, who now had only blessings and good will to rely on.

I watched her as we drove away, with near tears in my eyes. My father sat silently in the car next to me. Before we sped off, he remarked, “A woman with fine legs, she is.”

LESSONS LEARNT from PLAY

JAMIE COTTLE discusses the lessons we learn through play

A vast majority of my experience with theatre has been dependent upon an ethos of play. In every rehearsal room I have been in, I am reminded that the driving force of how any company makes theatre is through ‘play’. What does this mean on a practical level? What are the features of productive play? The most obvious component of any playful devising environment is games. Theatre loves games, and they can be a crucial element of theatre making; they help to develop initial bonds between the cast and make the whole experience more exciting. However, another feature, less detectable yet altogether more exciting to me, is conversation.

Theatre is impossible without conversation, even mimes need to book a venue. There is, however, a key difference between conversation and playful conversation. Conversation in the context of play is arguably where theatre is born. Typical conversation is more concerned with assimilation and politeness and particularly in Britain we appear to have an ever-lingering distaste for “vulgarity”, which is often just a synonym for emotion. How’s the weather? Are you tired? I’m tired. Let’s both ignore why we’re tired and instead talk about each other’s outfits. Typical conversation does not allow room for anecdotes involving bodily fluids or hilarious sex, but it also often leaves out heartbreak, confessions of loneliness or analysis of race relations. You may have all these conversations outside theatre workshops yet usually they happen with the people you let in over a long period of time. Theatre, however, works under deadlines so these borders are removed far quicker with the prerequisite of play.

Playful conversation may appear superficial, then, or as having an enforced connection to positivity, but really it finds its root in a childlike lack of inhibition. You may find yourself crying in front of strangers or falling into a deep familial love with people who only learnt your name by throwing a beanbag around moments earlier. This abandonment of self-censorship should not lead to rudeness; there should always be an atmosphere of camaraderie and an abolishment of ego that encourages disagreement but shuns antagonistic argument. However, it must be said that some of us are better at playing nice than others.

Playful conversation is often a testing ground for experimental thought: should we abolish masculinity? Why aren’t we all naked right now? Is it selfish to keep having children? But it can also be a breeding ground for self-reflection, based on the experience of others. As children we learn about life through play and so it is unsurprising that I have learnt more about race, sexuality, gender, ability and belief in the context of theatre making than I have ever done outside of this environment. Mummies and Daddies allowed you to play with the ideas of adulthood, love, responsibility, gender (I was always the genderless baby), and theatre too should allow you to play with new roles in an environment that encourages self-exploration. I realised I was non-binary in a research and development course, and it was that rare environment of playful conversation with a diverse array of people that brought about this life changing realisation at sixteen.

It’s worth mentioning that all of these spaces were self-described queer spaces, and that should be somewhat obvious. The

queer community already has all the elements of these conversations: encouragement of self-exploration, a finding chosen family, and a history of fighting barriers to intimacy. Still these conversations thrive in theatre spaces rather than the dancefloor of HEAVEN. Yet they need not be limited to the queer community, nor should they be restricted to theatre spaces.

My best estimate as to why playful conversation is not more common practice is to do with facilitation and permission. Despite the veneer of adulthood that would dismiss play as unproductive I think we're mostly still children, waiting to be given permission to roll in the mud.

So, I suggest we learn from theatre and challenge ourselves to be more curious when engaging in all the possibilities of play within human interaction, but I also propose that theatre should lead the charge. Companies like Emma Rice's Wise Children encourage their cast to act like their namesake, that is to have the joy and intrigue of a child in play with the experience and sensitivity of those who are wise. This manifesto for life is contagious and irresistible for the audience of their plays. And right now, in this time of political turmoil when it feels like we are all waking up to the mistakes of the past, I can't think of a better purpose for theatre than to encourage us to act like wise children: experimental, loud, awake and, most crucially, playful. >

Shinuk Suh—
Better luck next time (2019)

SEXUALITY & SHAME

SARA M. WHITE gives a modern interpretation of Munch's Puberty.

It's striking how nearly a hundred years later, the expressionist artist Edvard Munch's painting Puberty (1894-1895) can still be so emotionally resonant with the observer, especially to a woman. Whether it is when we get that first red spot on our underwear or when we begin to express our sexuality, the reaching of sexual maturity is the moment when we realise we have grown up and that, from then on, we may not ever be treated like children anymore, but as 'women'.

The dark palette of the background and its contrast with the paleness of the tiny female body immediately communicate the sense of anxiety Munch was trying to express in representing his feeling of sexual repression. In 2019, when societal repression of female sexuality is finally called out on, it seems pretty obvious why Munch, then a man in his thirties, chose a young woman as his subject for this painting: no one better depicts a sense of shame and fear than a girl who hits puberty. Whether Munch chose his subject from an awareness of the taboo of female sexuality or because he reinforced patriarchal standards by depicting a child in a strictly sexual manner is still debated, but either options highlight society's perverse view in this matter. I myself remember how I was afraid to tell my mum I had started menstruating, I remember my cheeks blushing when my family said they were happy I had grown to become a 'woman'. It's the age when the force of societal pressure starts kicking in: tiny, soft breasts are covered, periods hushed, growing body hair cut like unwanted weed in a garden of pink roses. Munch remarkably represents this pressure of having to hide one's sexuality through the timidness of the girl's body language. Her arms are hugging her own body, trying to protect herself, her knees desperately pressed together. The painter captures the contradictory essence of puberty; a time of sensuality accompanied by innocent tenderness. Depicting this conjunction, the girl's curved waist stands out on such a juvenile body sat on a made-up white bed, which Munch saw as a symbol of her "virginity" — another concept that confers sexual shame onto her through the threat of its disappearance. The despairing look in her eyes and her hands covering her pubic area represent her immense anxiety and fear of growth.

Today, the painting acts as a mirror, confronting us with the guilt women are pushed to feel when they freely express their sexuality. The strength of the message mostly lies in the disproportioned, dark shadow which rises behind the girl — it seems independent from her body, a black hole ready to devour her. This shadow foretells the struggles she will have to endure due to her sexual maturity. These struggles come from the paradox of a world where women are desired as sexual objects but are denied the chance to explore their own intimacy. People, whether men or women, are always pointing their fingers at other women, trying to make them feel small to compensate for their own insecurities.

What I believe to be the best feature of the painting is that it triggers catharsis and empathy, it awakens the observer by crudely pushing the ugliness of society right in front of their eyes. But this is what motivates us to take a step forward, to change. One would like to stretch their arms into the painting and hug the young girl, tell her there is no need to feel shame in her nakedness, that making ourselves vulnerable should be admired at, not frowned upon.

Society's view on female sexuality is obviously problematic and it can be improved if every one of us actively supports feminism. Treat all women respectfully: do not squirm at our body hair, do not call our nipples vulgar, drop sexist double standards, stop repressing and start accepting. No one should feel ashamed of their growth. Our aim, personal and societal, should be that no woman will ever be Munch's young girl again. >

Edvard Munch—
Puberty (1894–95)
Courtesy: Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo

An Illusion of Childhood

GEORGIA GOOD examines the 'secular age' and asks if it's really as godless as it seems.

We live in an enlightened society. This is an age of science and reason, a distinctly secular time. For centuries, scientific progress has been made; last century, war transformed how we see our existence; colonial expansion, then globalisation, taught us about cultural diversity, and rendered morality relative. As reality transformed before our eyes, so did the place of God. We came to see, again and again, that where religion once ruled, science could usurp it: by figures from Darwin to Richard Dawkins, God Himself was undermined. Society is disenchanted. It seems, perhaps, as if we've outgrown God.

This is, at least, one picture of the twenty-first century. Indeed, there is a loss of faith in Western Europe and North America; according to censuses, religion is on the decline. It is possible that science is displacing faith. Once, the idea of free will was challenged by predestination. Now, it's quantum physics and biological determinism that call 'freedom' into question. Once, morality was defined by divine command; now, neuroscience provides compelling explanations for our moral sense. If religion exists to explain the world, it is increasingly redundant. We needn't tell ourselves colourful, heavenly stories anymore. We're not children - we've grown up.

Yet to dismiss religion, in a world as advanced as ours, is itself reductive. This is not a theological essay: it won't and can't prove or disprove God. But while faith declines in the West, it is on the rise worldwide. 84% of us identify with a religion. Scientists may be less likely to believe, but to say science and faith are incompatible is increasingly archaic. A more nuanced view of the world, in which they reinforce each other, is possible (John Calvin believed this as early as the Reformation). In the US, after all, only 16% of believers are creationists. Both the earthly and the divine, perhaps, are crucial to our conception of the world, its meaning, and ourselves.

What if we did cast religion aside? Politically, an atheist world looks uncannily religious. We have seen it before; we may see it now, in our own lives. We find that even though we've outgrown God, we hold onto the structures He provides. When Marx called religion 'the opium of the people.' He saw it as a tool to enforce societal hierarchies - which still exist, in our secular culture, as much as ever. Opium may change form, but it doesn't disappear. Nietzche spoke of our messianic cravings: an innate, human need for a godlike figure. We see him in charismatic, authoritative political leaders, cast as 'saviours', from Hitler to Trump. Overtly or not, religion has always reflected politics (in a more religious past, earthly politics were justified by recreating them in heaven — called 'politicomorphism').

We haven't outgrown social cohesion, either, a crucial function of religion. We still need community, even if we're losing it; we still need incentives for peaceful coexistence, and morally good behaviour. In fact, these are historically so tied to faith that in the absence of God, 'atheist churches' are emerging. The Oasis Network has fellowships across North America, for example, where people can sing, debate, and come together: the social benefits of organised religion, without religious dogma. Like a child leaving home, we may aspire to independence from God - but almost irresistibly, we crave the guidance and support He can provide. Religion is, perhaps, functionally essential: "If God did not exist," Voltaire wrote, "it would be necessary to invent him."

Today, governments provide laws, science provides understanding, and secular groups can offer social support. Yet religion is everywhere. It exists in theocracies from Iran to Saudia Arabia; it exists in Christian political influence, from the Roman Catholic Church to the 'Religious Right' of the US; it exists in extremist terrorism and scores of interreligious conflict. It is also a powerful force for charity and social good - in the refugee crisis, for example. It offers genuine psychological support in times of crisis. Religion is a part of our identity: essential, illuminating, part of what makes us human. From primitive prehistoric worship to the monotheism of today, our gods are reflections of ourselves. They guide our history, dictate our lives, infuse our art and culture. The religious impulse is, in effect, woven in the fabric of the mind. Theology is a form of anthropology.

60,000 years ago, our ancestors left handprints in paint in the Cave of Maltravieso — possibly as a ritual, a call to the divine. We've come a long way since then, and grown immensely. Yet the religious story persists, and each of us — believer or not — is a part of it. Whatever it means, it is powerful, enlightening, defining. Our gods may change form, and may no longer be divine — but as much as we've grown, we haven't outgrown them yet. W>

TW: rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment

SAVAGE would like to note that one or more of the figures mentioned in this article have been accused of abuse, assault, or misconduct. While these facts were not directly relevant to the article, we believe them too important not to mention. Donald Trump has been accused of rape and/or sexual assault and/or sexual harassment by at least 23 women.

RUSSIAN *EVOLUTION*

CLARISSA SIU traces the origins of the Russian novel.

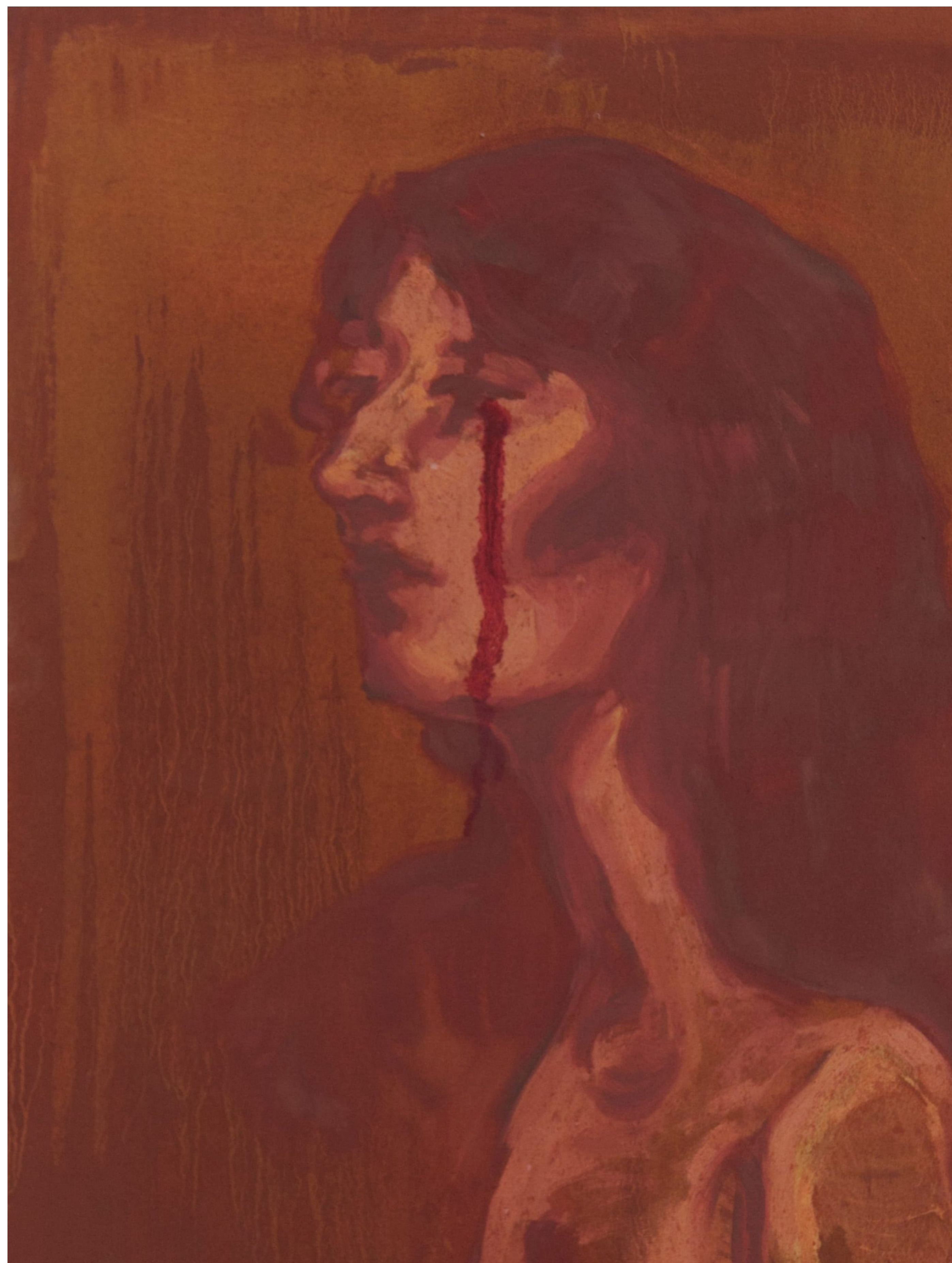
As love for one's motherland stems, in childhood, from the love for her nature, it is sustained and fostered in the nurture of her literature. For many, the Russian novel is a humanist one, advocating for the outsiders, the disenfranchised in a fragmented society. The influence of authors such as Tolstoy and Dostoevsky makes it difficult to imagine the literary canon devoid of Russian literature. Yet, as late as 1834 the prominent Russian literary critic, Vissarion Belinsky, proclaimed 'we have no literature'.

The 18th century saw the production of a wide range of genres, including essays, satirical plays, and historical tales, such as M. D. Chulkov's The Comely Cook (1770). The majority of those works, however, were tainted by the influence of Western Europe; either geographically, or philosophically. Acutely aware of their lack of a national literature, Russian countrymen strove to create a coherent literary form untinged by Western European influences. When Russia obtained victory in the Patriotic War of 1812, her status as a European stronghold grew, along with the belief that a national literature would reflect and foster a united cultural consciousness. What was once a vague desire for homegrown literature became an itch dying to be scratched. It was at this point, towards the middle of the 19th-century, that distinctly Russian social and psychological narratives began to take shape in the form of the Russian novel.

Many venture that Alexander Pushkin blazed the trail with Eugene Onegin (1833), which is, to this day, proclaimed as one of the greatest works of Russian fiction. It details Saint Petersburg's Eugene Onegin and his ennui within high society, which propels him to undertake a journey of soul-searching that takes a tragic turn. Since its publication, Onegin was enthusiastically received and labelled 'an encyclopaedia of Russian life'. Dubbed 'a novel in verse' by Pushkin himself, its chapters were saturated with poetic undertones and a playful self-awareness of its own constructional artifice. Thus, the arrival of Onegin not only created a welcome introduction on the idea of Russian identity and its literary expression, but also prompted exploration of a new narrative form.

The gentle easing into the Russian novel flourished with Mikhail Lermontov's A Hero of Our Time (1840) and Nikolai Gogol's Dead Souls (1842). Like Onegin, these novels first found their way to the public in monthly periodical publications, which, by the 1840s, had become immensely popular. These periodicals served as vehicles for public engagement with all types of new literary works, and as printing prices lowered and literary circulation increased, the social consumption of literature shifted into a private experience.

The Russian novel of the 1840s was founded on theatrical aspects, with elaborate descriptions of setting and portraiture. Lermontov posited readers in the midst of his fictive societies and oscillated between narrative perspectives, encouraging them to engage critically with his works, while Gogol created grotesque characters and emphasised the artificial construct of narrative through parody and pastiche. Regardless



Abigail McGinley—And she'll never get to eat you like your heart's a pomegranate (2019)

of the different methods employed, this focused, three-dimensional exploration of Russian society generated a candour and intimacy that was both comforting and exciting for their readers.

The form of the Russian novel continued to grow and shift in the mid 1800s. Works that straddled the divide between fact and fiction appeared in the form of memoirs and chronicles, such as Sergei Aksakov's Family Chronicle (1856), Tolstoy's Childhood, Boyhood, Youth (1852-62), and Dostoevsky's Memoirs from the House of the Dead (1862). These works verged on autobiographical life-writing, yet retained an outward appearance of fiction. This resistance against straightforward generic classification widened the scope of the Russian novel, while the nostalgia and historical perspective offered enriched its form.

In the meantime, Russia's defeat in the Crimean War left the nation in a great epoch of reforms. The aftermath of the war led to social unease between the younger intelligentsia and the older, landowning gentry. The latter sought to revolutionise the nation through radical means, including the abolition of serfdom. These bifurcations found their literary expressions in Ivan Turgenev's Fathers and Sons (1862), Fyodor Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment (1866), and Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace (1869). The significance of these works is not confined to their enormous literary accomplishment. Acknowledging the fragmented milieu in which they were created, these narratives also provided a sense of potential reconciliation and optimism. With equal measures of literary prowess and careful consideration of contemporary culture, the Russian novel reached formal wholeness.

The blossoming of the Russian novel in the 19th century embodies the adventurous spirit of the age. In the nation's search for a stable literary identity, there emerged some of the most memorable voices in the literary canon; voices drenched in an all-encompassing love of their motherland. >

Thoughts—

FITTIng MY BRowN skin

PAUL S KIM explores his place in the American Civil Rights Movement.

C.W.— Racism

America has always been built on moral contradictions, and so as I stand on a doorstep in rural Montana talking to a voter through a locked door, I try to convince myself that I should not feel guilty about my own.

I am a community organizer on a Democratic campaign for a seat in the United States Senate knocking on doors to meet voters deep in Donald Trump's heartland. But unlike my thirty coworkers scattered in other corners of this vast state, my nose bridges low, my eyes are wide and short, and in the summer my skin tans into a deep shade of brown. As I campaign from home to home, weaving through once proud communities now ravaged by economic globalization, I keep my guard up for what might come from the other side of the door. On multiple occasions I have been told that I speak good English. I would hope so; my family is from Texas, I grew up in the suburbs of New York City, and English is the only language I have ever spoken. But I hear no such comments today and I find myself enjoying door-knocking, sparing time between houses to glance at the long afternoon rays of light glinting off the Rocky Mountains.

As a child, I wanted to be white and some days I wonder if I still do. Growing up, my insecurities were superficial. I wanted to fit in: I dreamt of alternate worlds where I was never asked about my Korean middle name, where I never had to wonder why I was the only non-white student in the classroom, where I felt no guilt for rejecting my family's immigrant past. Later, my insecurities evolved but my anxiety in an unfound identity remained. And when Donald Trump told non-white members of Congress to "go back where they came from," I imagined a day where the only country I had ever known might reject me.

But my confusion surpassed the politics of the moment. Reading Frederick Douglass and Toni Morrison I considered if I had a role in perpetuating black oppression, or if the blood of civil-rights protesters was spilled for me as well. I was at once proud, uncertain, and fearful to be an American: proud because I saw myself as part of a people that pursued truth, despised unfairness, and did not fear the future, uncertain because I recognized repeated failure to reach those ideals, and fearful because I still did not know what of America I could claim as my own.

On the last door of the evening, I climb the four steps of a mobile home and see a man lying shirtless in his recliner. His eyes stare far in the distance, I can see beer bottles scattered around his home, and for a moment I consider turning around and ending my day a door early. When I finally work up the courage to ask him if he is registered to vote he responds by saying he has no interest in joining the Chinese Communist Party.

This man too is America. But I remind myself, if American greatness exists, it exists not within a country that embraces the politics of cynicism, while looking back with longing for an era that never occurred — it lies within the ability of black musicians to turn their pain into the sweet sound of jazz, it lies in the suffragist women that demanded the right to vote and did not rest until it was secured, and it lies within the Japanese-Americans that sacrificed their lives to rid a continent of fascism even as their own freedoms were denied. Knocking door after door under the Montana sky, I search for my place beside those dreamers in the American story — those who struggled to perfect a nation that was not built for them.

As darkness creeps across the North American continent, beginning where the electric pulse of New York City stands defiant against the night, continuing to envelop the towns and fields that contour the Great Plains—covering places where children can go to bed dreaming of an America that is good—before making its ascent up the Rockies carrying the relentless spirit of pioneers that refused to turn around, I get onto the interstate and begin my journey back to my office in Bozeman.

America was not built for me either.

Nudging my car forward with a push of the accelerator, further into the gentle darkness of an unfamiliar stretch of Western land, I find my restless soul at peace — in my brown skin carrying dreams for a better America, I stand on the shoulders of giants. >

TW: rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment

SAVAGE would like to note that one or more of the figures mentioned in this article have been accused of abuse, assault, or misconduct. While these facts were not directly relevant to the article, we believe them too important not to mention. Donald Trump has been accused of rape and/or sexual assault and/or sexual harassment by at least 23 women.

OUR VOICES

Our Voices is a safe space for individuals to express the raw truth of their lived experiences, sharing realities that are overlooked, stigmatised, or misunderstood. We hope to provide a platform where students are able to tell their stories and be heard, drawing attention to issues that many of us face, despite perhaps feeling alone. In sharing these testimonies, we aim to raise awareness, and help foster an environment of understanding, solidarity, and support at UCL. For this edition, we have reached out to students to share their responses to Decolonise the Curriculum.

These pieces are a response to 'Learning in the Shadows of Race and Class' by US feminist scholar bell hooks, within which hooks examined what it meant for her to be black and working class, whilst simultaneously attending a predominantly upper Class, white university. We would urge of all you who read this to also go away and read her fantastically articulated work. Her exploration sets the stage for us too to begin to explore our own personal experiences, to begin to make sense of the notions of marginalisation and oppression that are all too familiar to those like us, outside the 'norm' in elitist education institutions.

Those of us working to decolonise UCL have composed our own responses, examining the challenges we face at UCL based upon our race and or class. We too assert that the shadow hooks speaks of is one that is not distinct to her own personal experience, but rather is present in the academic lives of us all outside the White, Western, Upper Class paradigm in institutions such as ours. This is a call for us to finally begin to let the light cast out the shadows of dominance, oppression, and marginalisation that have and continue to overshadow the uniqueness and diversity of our talented student body at UCL and beyond.

Now is the time.

SHALAKA BAPAT

My discipline is rooted in colonialism a little more than most.

Anthropologists were a tool of the colonial machine. They researched colonial subjects: their customs, their beliefs, their height, their nose shape and their cranial capacity. You cannot successfully rule a people without understanding them. In my first year, every week's social anthropology lecture began with what my professor called The Dead White Men slide. This slide gave us the historical foundations of the subject we were looking at. The question was, how did early anthropologists approach this subject? In a culturally superior, racist and exoticising way, was usually the answer. And so, there is the anthropology of the past: colonial, racist, imperial. And there is the anthropology of today: self-reflexive, culturally-relative, "woke". Or is it?

Anthropology has insidious origins whose ongoing legacy remains, to an extent, the elephant in the room. How does anthropology remain complicit in neo-colonial structures that exist today? Anthropologists can be involved with the development and delivery of aid programmes, funded and designed by Western countries and executed in ones that were previously-colonised. What kinds of global inequalities does this re-entrench? Anthropology puts effort into acknowledging its colonial past but puts even more effort into avoiding the question of race. Why does it make people so uncomfortable? What forms of knowledge are being protected? How can departments and courses and reading lists be structured so that we can unravel this issue further?

All these questions led me to be part of the Decolonising the Curriculum project. And perhaps "decolonising" is an unimaginable goal, but it has prompted discussions and included voices that I have been wanting to hear for years. I hope that you can join us on this journey.

SAILEE KHURJEKAR

How can one be seen? Not through the colour of one's skin, but due to the spirit of their temperament. A temperament which lights up the room when one walks in; which puts a smile on the face of a stranger who ambles past; and makes the heart of the people one loves flitter with the most intense passion.

To be seen is to be understood. And to be understood is to be assigned self-worth. bell hooks captures that which cannot be explained in words alone – she demands a breathed and lived experience of existence in the face of adversity and prejudice.

One's race is simultaneously a proud expression and a thing to be overcome. A thing so pervasive yet defining; a thing so crushing yet integral to what makes us who we are and who we want to become. How can we both escape the clutches of race and the sorrow that it brings with its ability to shape and inspire us in a beautifully profound way?

This tension is one which we should embrace; to be who we want to be, we should be motivated to leave that which we have been. My skin is more than its shade. It is more than the assumptions which are imprinted on me from birth. It is life itself.

To isolate oneself from others it to neglect the web which binds us together. I am not what he wants me to be. I am not a coalescence of expectations which crush my core. I am my spirit. To leave the shadows, we must confront the shadows. And to take pride in our temperament, we need to know that we are important, that we are seen.

ZAIN ARIF

Walking around campus, as a Muslim from a minority ethnic group, it is impossible not to notice the wealth of diversity of thought and background at UCL. In one of the most multicultural cities in the world, belonging to a minority truly is belonging to the majority. So the real enigma is: why is what we teach not reflective of who we teach? Why do we hold on so stubbornly to academics past their sell-by date?

Studying Language and Culture, as well as Spanish and Arabic, I have been gifted with a plethora of different perspectives, insights, and cultural nuances to consider in order to view the world around me. As a person of faith, justice to all underpins everything we do. Whereas the university cannot be faulted for its tolerance and acceptance of all faiths, views and backgrounds, it can be faulted for its integration of said groups in its curricula.

By refusing to include minority scholarship, the university fails to accept its legitimacy. It appears to 'other' academics that don't fit the established, outdated mould and does not grant minority scholarship its due respect and consideration. It fails to acknowledge their contributions and advancements to academic discourse. This perpetuates the Eurocentric, colonial belief that minorities, their scholarship, academics and thought leadership are inferior.

For me, this is what this project is about. It's about facilitating dialogue between staff and students. It's about giving students a platform to share their views and suggestions, to give them a say in what they are studying. It's about challenging stereotypes, challenging the norm and changing perspectives. It's about celebrating others' achievements. But first and foremost, it's about helping staff understand the importance of redesigning their curricula, to make them more inclusive, more reflective, more diverse, more decolonised. Perhaps we're too optimistic and naive, too idealistic, but things change.

ANNE KIMUNGUYI

I grew up to believe that my 'unique' upbringing (as a daughter of immigrant parents from Eastern Europe and East Africa) meant that strictly aligning myself with one particular demographic in society, along the lines of race or class, would necessitate the exclusion of another part of my identity, and as such, be too restrictive. However, as is devastatingly the case for many non-white individuals living in a world where race, class and gender define our life trajectories, my entrance into adulthood and university has been met with attempts to confine me into a rigid social category. This preoccupation with classifying 'abnormal' social categories of all non-privileged individuals, and binding them to these categories, I believe, is too limiting of an analysis of human character and sets the premise for a culture of exclusion.

I find this habit suffocating as it puts me in a conflicting position. On the one hand, I am a native English speaker and a domestic student, yet on the other, I do not hold a British passport. I attend an elite university, yet the number of people who look like me in the student body is very small. My parents come from academic, highly educated backgrounds, yet financial struggles are not a foreign concept to me. In certain aspects, I conform to the expectations of my biological and contextual background, in others I do not, yet in all, these characteristics are singled out socially and institutionally before anything else I have to offer. These 'contradictions' of stereotypical expectations of my identity highlight the futility of society's problematic use of constructed social groups, which ignore the diversity of people's backgrounds, as a means of judgement more important than the worth of their contributions. At the same time, privileged individuals are spared from having their racial or class identity be the primary means of determining their character and can therefore more easily access opportunities.

Jonah Alexander—
Untitled (2019)

Transcending race, class or gender to reap the fruits of education, is thus made much more difficult for individuals who differ from the normative identities which make up the bulk of elite institutions. By virtue of this lack of access and inclusion, the subsequent de-valuation of diverse contributions in comparison with their privileged counterparts, gives less incentive for already historically exclusive universities to include us and our perspectives in curricula and student or staff bodies. Decolonising the curriculum, therefore, is crucial to increase non-mainstream access and presence in elite spheres, preventing each individual from being constrained by the politics of their identity.

Twisted Vine

NICOLE FAN

A twisted vine snakes around my mind
Delicate arms with the coldest touch
Its black-winged petals intertwine
Tainting thoughts once scarce, now too much

In the beginning there was chaos
Whereupon it helped me breathe
Gave respite from the emptiness
Extended a life buoy in a wreath

I held on – how could I not?
There was no way forward, no way back
Nowhere to go and within that mess
Of tendrils there was safety

It hugged and soothed with sweetest counsel
Showing the way out of the forest
Ye shall not die, ye shall live
Offered pungent pulp ripe with promise

Arms outstretched, I reached to pluck
But now here, then there, it eluded me
Waxy leaves latched onto shrivelled skin
Lavish foliage casting pure obscurity

Silly girl, it is not for your taking
You thought it was a helping hand
The more it grows, the more I wither
I am its food, I now understand

Verdant beast that constantly ingests
It never will release its icy clutch
Pollutes the landscape with noxious gas
Leaving lungs dry and throat parched

Eternal heartbeat in one dead thin twine
This is the silent dweller within me
Clinging on to the very last line
Never to leave, never to go
Held in desperation
My twisted vine
It thrives and grows

Nurturing A.I.

HANNAH GALBRAITH explores whether artists can cooperate with AI without losing creative autonomy.

Artificial intelligence is becoming an increasingly ubiquitous technology, used in areas as far-reaching as medical diagnosis, robotics and surveillance. What's less often discussed, however, is the growing application of AI in art: with the technology's capability to interpret huge data inputs and convert them into unique outputs, its creative potential as an artistic tool is limitless. AI systems have already been utilised by musicians such as Holly Herndon and Arca to push the boundaries of music. These human-AI alliances have proved creatively constructive, opening up entirely new artistic possibilities, while simultaneously, AI remains one of the greatest looming threats to human labour.

AI software is trained by inputting large amounts of data in order to improve its neural networks, making the algorithm "smarter" — a similar process to early child development, where we learn language by repeatedly hearing speech. Herndon uses the comparison to a "baby" to describe Spawn (the artificial intelligence technology she developed over a number of months using her own voice), who features throughout her latest album, 'PROTO'. This human-AI musical collaboration creates a new, inimitable sound: at times soaring and euphonic, and at others dark and stuttering, inchoate as an infant.

'PROTO' presents a complex, often harmonious, synthesis of humans and machine, bringing to mind Donna Haraway's assertion that "we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism — in short, cyborgs.". Many of the album's songs include choirs, with humans and Spawn singing together, the real and artificial voices becoming indistinguishable at times: 'PROTO' sounds like a folk album in the age of Haraway's "cyborg". Herndon plays with these ideas of hybridity throughout the album, using the project partially as an investigation of our relationship with machines — testing the waters to see whether we can truly collaborate with AI without losing creative autonomy.

AI is already being used to replace musicians by companies such as Endel, whose algorithms are designed to respond to a listener's mood and surroundings in order to generate personalised songs. While this provides an incredibly individualised musical experience for its users, the app completely eliminates the need to pay musicians — essentially replacing artists with an algorithm, maximising Endel's profits. While the automation of labour is widely discussed in relation to unskilled work, it must be asked: what if machines can replace creative labour as well?

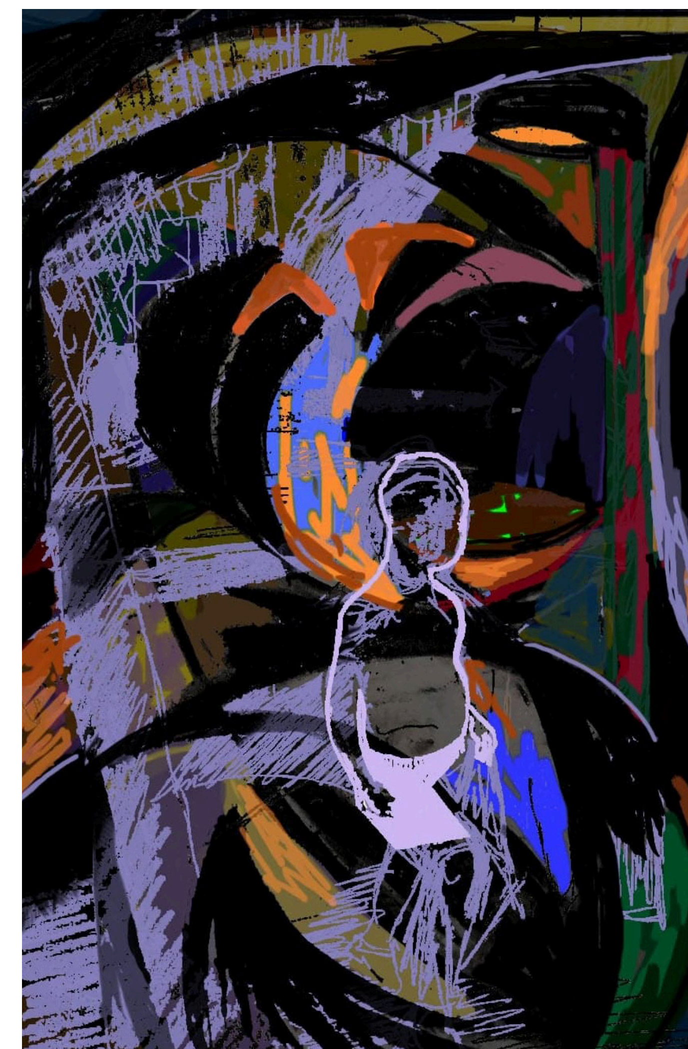
Herndon is aware of the threats AI poses to musicians. She highlights the technology's issues with regard to intellectual property: "AI is like if a sample could sprout legs and run. It is recording technology 2.0, and we don't have an ethical framework." She also mentions, with scepticism, the possibility of AI composing new albums by deceased artists, artificially extending their discography beyond the grave. She fears this potential use of AI could trap us in a creative loop, taking away the influence of new musicians in favour of "always regurgitating the past".

Musicians of the future will likely become increasingly unable to compete with the individually tailored listening experience of streaming platforms. One company working to combat this is Bronze Music. They are attempting 'augmented music', which involves the alteration of a song in order to fit a listener's preferences, but in a way which is determined by the artists. While this would give musicians more creative control, there is a problematic implication that artists of the future will have to be well-versed in machine learning in order to gain success. This would call for a dramatic redefinition of what it means to be a musician, with technology and creativity becoming even more intimately entwined.

Despite these risks, Herndon remains optimistic about the possibility of human coexistence with machines, as she explores in her song 'Extreme Love': "We are completely outside ourselves, and the world is completely inside us/Is this how it feels to become the mother of the next species?". The boundaries between "outside" and "inside" are presented here as completely collapsed, with the implication of freedom rather than fear. The words are spoken in a child's voice, over a swelling, uncertain instrumental: the overriding feeling is one of hope. Borders between the natural and artificial are reimagined — crucially, with humans remaining at the centre.

While the use of AI by powerful companies such as Spotify and Endel poses a clear threat to individual artists' livelihoods, Herndon provides an alternative to their profit-chasing, envisioning a world where people work collaboratively to "mother" newborn systems. 'PROTO' allows the listener a glimpse of that world, and provides hope that, with care, AI can grow alongside us into a force for good. She proves that it is possible for AI to be developed intimately rather than impersonally, and that the technology can supplement human creativity rather than supplant it. >

Jonah Alexander—
Untitled (2019)



SYNTHETIC GROWTH /

/ Natural Technology

OLIVER-MICHAEL RECHNITZ explores how Nam June Paik blurs the line between the organic and the synthetic.

Fluxus means flowing. In art, it has no fixed definition. A 'fluxus' artwork produces a new experience that cannot be replicated. It evokes a sense of constant change. In the 1960s, a group of international artists came together under the name Fluxus and adopted its meaning as their approach to art. They were fascinated by acts of spontaneity and randomness as a way of creating, and their focus shifted from aesthetic qualities to the experiences produced by the objects. No two interpretations of the art could be the same when what one sees and feels was invariably shifting.

An early Fluxus member, Nam June Paik was a Korean-American artist born in Seoul, 1932. He focused his practice on what he called the 'electronic superhighway' of the internet and telecommunications. Much of his work features television sets that seem outdated today but were avant-garde at its debut. Viewers of his art would have been mesmerised not only by the technology itself but also by the warped and distorted images produced through the liquid crystal displays. Although the images on the screens were not originally produced by Paik, he transforms them and liberates their representational qualities from the pictorial to something much more ethereal. The screens undergo their own processes of flux that the artist could not have programmed, rendering the images autonomous even to their creator.

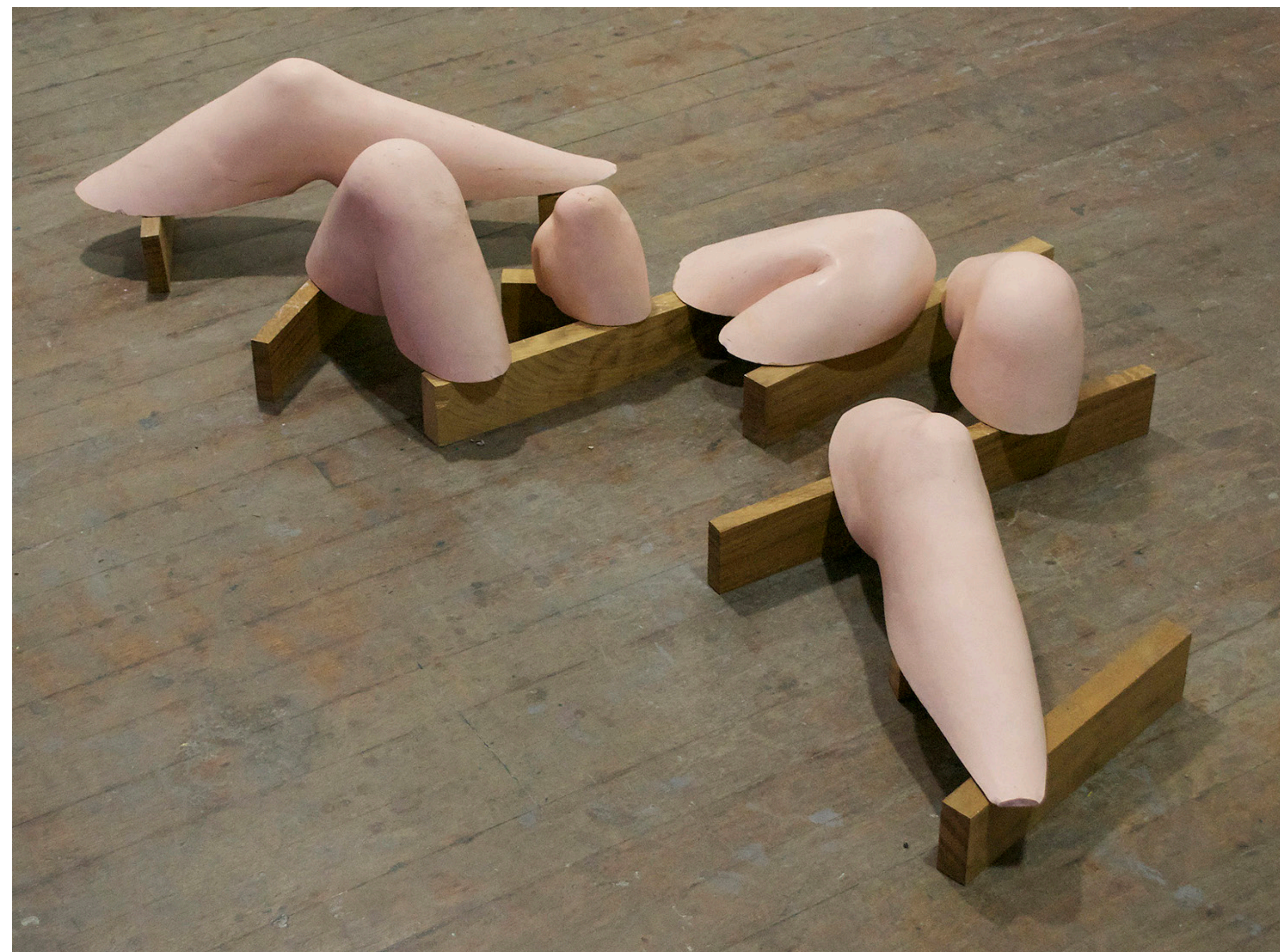
One of Paik's most renowned pieces, TV Garden, places varying dimensions of television screens within a jungle of greenery. It is at first an uncanny viewing experience of juxtapositions, demonstrating the antithesis between the natural and technological spheres – the hard plastic of the screens is juxtaposed against the supple leaves; the synthetic is at odds with the organic. However, the relationship between the elements is much closer than one might expect. There are two branches to the relationship between the constituent parts; they are both domesticated forms of matter, and yet they can become wild.

The plants in the gallery space are not growing out of the concrete floor – they must be rooted in soil to maintain their vitality. In much the same way, the screens cannot exist without the aid of a power cable connecting them to an electrical energy. Both of these things are hidden when the installation is active, but they are both vital. Nature can therefore not be purely organic when it is appropriated into a gallery setting. In some sense it becomes manufactured through its indoor environment and much closer to the technological displays embedded amongst it.

Conversely, Paik emphasises the raw nature of technology in relation to the wildness of the plants. The TV screens are programmed, but the essence of analogue telecommunications is that some of the detail is lost during transmission. At their core, the screens are distorted so that the images produced on their surfaces are arbitrary. Similarly, the shrubs too are programmed: to grow upwards, chemically forced to flourish against the pull of gravity. Their horizontal development is much freer in terms of conditioning at a chemical or biological level; the leaves, branches and fronds have an infinite realm of possibilities of how they can cultivate the space around them, none of which is predetermined. The only malleable factor is differentiated levels of abundant sunlight which affects their direction of growth, but in the gallery, sunlight is standardised so that there is an identical level of light within the room. This regularity is negated by the screens emitting light, which attracts plant growth towards them.

The two modes of similarity are at odds with each other, but provide a dynamic tension within the piece, pulling the plants to be more systematised like the man-made screens while pulling the TVs to be more unruly like the plants. The televisions display a spontaneous vision; what they program and what they emit are not necessarily commutable. This dichotomy leaves the viewer bewildered by the landscape that they walk through. As we start to see nature as something synthetic and technology as something organic, the randomness of analogue displays and the control of growth in both worlds are highlighted. When the installation is presented in an exhibition, the slow growth of the plants is still apparent at the end of its display; you can see the shrubs crowd around the light displays, almost engulfing them into the green sea of plant life. All at once, growth is shown to be devoid of any order while also completely controllable. Paik shows us that technology can be natural and growth can be synthetic. When nothing is static, flux is a constant in the way it refuses to ever be the same. This should stand as a reminder that one should always be in a state of distrust of things which claim stillness; stillness being the most synthetic quality of all. >

Jocelyn McGregor—
Jennifer (2017)



THE WAY WE DANCE

JAGO LYNCH interrogates London's changing club scene.

In my first year of university, my friend and I decided to go to a club in Hackney. On the bus on our way there, we found two abandoned books and thought it would be funny to take them to the rave. Clearly it was funny, as next morning we woke up to discover a video of us dancing with the books had been posted on the Mixmag Facebook page to a viewership well north of a million people.

At the time I found it funny, and to a certain extent I still do, but with hindsight there is a sense that the act of taking a video of my friend and me and posting it to a huge media platform was a violation. Not a violation of our private space, but more a violation of the space that is a nightclub. The general ethos of the dance music community is that a club should be a space where one isn't judged for how they look, how they dance, what music they like. And while there are obviously other problems in club spaces surrounding sexual harassment, racism, queer phobia and other similar issues, a seemingly universal promise is that one can express their love of music freely in the spaces between the strobes. It is this broken promise that led to this feeling of violation surrounding Mixmag 'memeing' my friend and I at the club.

However, there is now a whole culture within dance music that celebrates the recording of club events, with platforms like Boiler Room live streaming and posting videos of almost every single event they put on. To a certain extent, this tendency is understandable: in the same way that tape heads keep the material record of rave in the 90s, there is a sense that platforms like this are actively documenting the music of our time. And yet, they very selectively record certain parts of the scene, mainly in order to get 'instagrammable' content while kicking the underground to the curb.

This has led to a massive change in the way people experience dance music. There is now a sense that people go to these events to try and get in the videos, with most of the YouTube comments sections of these events being dedicated not to the music, but to the people dancing in the background. This has now reached such a level that channels like 'People Of' are solely dedicated to compiling all the funniest moments from these raves, with a relative disregard for the DJs and the music.

Indeed, venues like FOLD and The Cause, both of which are faced with the looming threat of closure, give way to 'superclubs' like Printworks, which are willing to feed into this video culture, with many of their events being recorded in their entirety. While I don't doubt the cultural significance of recording these events, I object to the clear baiting of the YouTube commenters by filming some of the more ridiculous members of the crowd. This means that certain, more expressive clubgoers are actively mocked and judged, making it even harder for the scene to be seen as a welcoming and inclusive place to certain individuals.

This is not solely the fault of the new video culture in clubbing, but the atmosphere within the scene has been markedly changed by the rise of these multimedia platforms. Now a club starts to feel weird if you don't see people filming DJs, and potentially the crowd; this has been normalised to such an extent by the industry that people now expect — even hope — that every moment of the night is recorded somewhere. This has in turn had an impact on clubs, not that it is their fault necessarily: in order to increase revenue they are increasingly willing to participate in this culture, hosting filmed events and accommodating events that are clearly tailored to be as popular on social media as possible.

The ability to go to a club and know that you are not being judged is being slowly terminated. Instead the scene is moving in a dangerous direction where £50 tickets are becoming a norm for events that often begin emptying out once the headliner has played and the crowd has posted it to their story. The way we dance is changing, and with perpetually harsh licensing for smaller clubs an atmosphere of expressive acceptance and a focus on music is being gradually terminated.

In response we can only hope, as fans of dance music, that licensing laws are changed to favour these smaller, more daring venues so that in ten years' time one can go to a night without it feeling in any way sanitised for public viewing. The electronic music community is a fragile one, and it only stands to lose from interference by multimedia businesses behind it. >

Shinuk Suh—
Sleep Inertia (2019)

GOOD-NIGHT TOTT-ENHAM

SEB PERERA-SLATER discusses the Grow club legacy and their inspiring ethos

Out of London's vast selection of venues, Grow Tottenham stood out to me as unique. Styled as a community garden, cafe, bar and event space, Grow finds its roots on the other side of the map.

Grow Elephant was originally started to repurpose Elephant and Castle's abandoned lots into a community garden. Over the last six years, Grow Elephant has transformed the space into three temporary gardens for local residents where they host community talks, film screenings and live music. By working closely with local schools, Grow runs gardening clubs aimed at teaching all who attend about the benefits of farming their own food. The gardens' inclusivity facilitates local children and residents to grow as they please. By recognising education as a key tool in achieving a sustainable future, the social enterprise managing these projects - Grow London C.I.C — is continuing to build these open spaces. In short, Grow London develops spaces for gardening, learning and socialising.

Recently I spoke to Hattie — the Vice President of UCL Student Action Against Homelessness - about their relationship with Grow Tottenham. They are one group to recognise the venue's potential for charity action and spirit of inclusivity. The following is everything I learned:

Tell me about USAAH.

USAAH stands for UCL Student Action Against Homelessness. We are a new society, only affiliated in January 2019. Since then we have hosted a range of events, from panel discussions to blogging workshops to fundraisers. Our aims are to raise awareness about the local issue of homelessness and what students can do to alleviate this in their own way.

What is Dance Against Homelessness?

Dance Against Homelssness is a night out we host twice a year to raise funds for a local anti-homelessness charity. We chose Shelter Against the Storm in Archway, one of London's only free homeless shelters. So far around £850 has been raised for the charity from our events. Our main motivation for running the Dance Against Homelessness is that it's a novel way for students to fundraise, get engaged in social issues around the local area and generally have a great time. For our most recent event we asked a handful of UCL DJs if they'd be willing to play for our cause. We had Cigarette No Smoking Man, Telete and Lordy playing amongst others. We gave slots to a couple jungle DJs which you don't really see at other student-led nights. I like that we're one of the only societies to give jungle and drum & bass proper representation.

Why do you think Grow is unique?

I think Grow is the perfect club venue for what we do. Their focus on the local community echoes our own altruistic values. I think that you get a sense of that as soon as you walk in. The greenery is amazing and the greenhouse gives it a completely unique vibe. Some clubs can feel really intense and like you can't escape until you leave, but the different elements to Grow make it feel like you can have whatever night you're after. There are sofas to chill on, but obviously there is the main DJ room as well. The staff have been really accommodating in arranging

Annie Metzger—Untitled (2019)

to host our fundraiser and that has added to the feeling of it being a community space. These kinds of projects have such an individual sense of originality and an artistic nature.

While Grow Tottenham retains the key values of its predecessor, it excels in bringing people together. Grow Tottenham largely stays afloat due to the income from its café and event space. Grow lends its space out for a fraction of the cost for community programmes and fundraisers. But it's not only money behind the eyes of the owners — you don't have to look far to see the charitable spirit behind Grow's inspiration.

The Cause, Grow's sister venue in the adjacent lot, has raised upwards of £50,000 for the charities Mind, C.A.L.M. and Help Musician UK. With the initial target of raising £25,000 for mental health charities, the club is only meant to run for a limited period. Both clubs spaces owe a large part of their popularity to the 5am licenses that come with the territory, meaning they often share their space for larger events. This collaboration strikes me as more than just surface altruism. To me they appear to represent a duty of self care; The Cause promotes the healthy mind and Grow the healthy body.

However, all of this arguably comes too late as we see the surrounding area getting transformed into new builds. Despite delays to the project, we will be saying goodbye to both The Cause and Grow in 2020. The Ashley Road development project is part of a much larger drive to transform the area with affordable housing, shopping complexes and refurbished stations. It's highly likely the development's completion will mark the end of the 5am licenses for this part of this part of Haringey, casting London's nomadic 24 hour party people adrift once again. >

Butterflies

Read—

DANIEL LEE

You were never reserved in speech, always at war with silence. When we passed by grown-ups on the street, you would nudge my shoulder and whisper some judgement upon them. Heels too high. Suit too big. In your denim jacket and black jeans, the end of your belt hanging from your waist and snaking down your thigh, you told me that given a suit and tie, you would do better.

In my fondest memories of you, we are walking along the streets that frame our neighbourhood. We were always moving, our feet dancing on the stone pavement. We flitted through parks like birds, like we were trying to find something, but we didn't know exactly what it was. You would bring me to a corner of the neighbourhood I hadn't even known existed – another secret place, you would whisper. We would transform it into a playground where we bounced our basketball off cragged walls.

Now, your constant chatter eludes me: I try to grasp the words, but they crumble once I hold them. There is one thing, though, that I remember the clearest of you. It's what you said one night as we stumbled along the streets back home, smelling the alcohol in each other's breath, our shadows leading the way.

"When I grow up," you said, "I want to be somebody."

For the longest time I have wondered why I can't forget those words. But remembering that year when you disappeared, I know why those words were so remarkable when you said them: neither of us were children anymore. We were already eighteen years old.

I looked up to you as an elder brother, though we were only three months apart in age. You were a head taller than me, and people in school called you 'Dragon'. If you did not scare them with your physique, your fiery words could make them wilt. Our favourite activity during recess was catching caterpillars in the school field with our classmates. When we scoured the damp long grass, you always waded through the reeds behind us like a kindly father. After we brought the caterpillars back to class, you would explain their life cycle to us again and again.

"This one," you would say, pointing at the wriggling worm, "is going to be a damn nice butterfly."

I would smile. You were always so assured of the future.

When I turned sixteen, you brought me to a bar near your house. You knew the bartender well; you spoke to him with your chest out and your lower lip stiffened. Man-to-man talk. The bartender served us our first drinks, the alcohol swirling in glasses which sparkled under the incandescent light. You jerked your neck backwards, pouring your glass down in a long draught, and then asked for another. Your large palm patted the wooden counter impatiently. When the bartender brought the next drink, you grinned at me before downing it as well. Our legs were so weak that night that I wondered if we would ever walk again.

We frequented the same bar until you disappeared, every Monday night. You ignored glances from the portly old men near us, but I could not help but think: how amused they must have been at these youngsters, who thought that alcohol could make them adults. During our first few visits, I wore the collared shirts my mother gave me for my birthdays, tucked into my pants at the waist. Then I began to fit my plump body into skinny jeans and leather jackets.

When we walked back home, trying to find the street signs swimming in our vision, you talked loudly and laughed even louder. I would try to hush you, but now I understand that you were trying to be brave, shouting the darkness away. On nights when I had to walk back alone, when you were following some others to another pub, my multiple shadows fanned out around me like a contingent of guards. Looking back, I think it was silly of me to find solace in my shadows, to think that if someone was going to rob me at night, the darkness would fight for me.

It was on one of those nights that you never returned from the bar. I walked home alone, whistling away my fears. The next morning, your mother was at my door. In that moment, watching her red eyes accusing me, I shed the jeans and jackets like a moulting caterpillar. I knew then that this phase of my life was over, and I was fully grown.

It's amusing that I can still remember you now, when I can't even remember where I put my cup last night. The nurses at the home bring me through the corridors, my legs kicking at the frame of the wheelchair, my sole purpose in life finding that lost cup. Through the maze of blank corridors perfumed with disinfectant, I find myself thinking of the labyrinth of streets we once stumbled through, searching for a taste of the maturity that would eventually be thrust upon me.

I remember you filling yourself with beer and gin, thinking to myself that this is what growing up looks like. But now I know that there are different types of growing. Even now I am undergoing a kind of growth, emptying my incontinent bladder onto bedsheets every night. The nurses rank us by how much we wet our diapers; I've heard them whisper it to each other. By that I know I am growing old.

I think implied in your words that day was a notion that growing meant becoming something more. You looked forward to the day when you would wake up comfortable in suits and ties. But through my life I've realised that growing is just change, for better or for worse. I don't look back on my childhood with you and think how little we were. Till this day I am astounded by the freedom we had in our tiny cocoons.

Sometimes at night, when I am feeling lonely, I look over the bed rail and watch the shadows on the tiled floor. I still think it is silly, but I find it comforting that they have not left me. Sometimes, I see you there too, commenting on the wrinkles on my face, the veins that bulge on my arms, saying that you could age better.

When I see you, you are always eighteen years old, untainted by the rust of adulthood. You are comfortable in your slicked hair and skinny jeans, giving me words of advice with a confident smirk. But maybe that's just my imagination. If I could speak to you, I would tell you that in the fleeting life you enjoyed, searching frantically through the night, you never lacked anything. But every time I open my mouth, you are already gone, returning to that secret place where you will never grow old. >

¡BAILE!

SHANTI GIOVANNETTI-SINGH traces the growth and development of Flamenco, from an underground form of resistance to a hyper-commercialised art form.

In the heart of Triana, a peripheral quarter of the Andalucian city of Seville, a sorrowful note emerges from a dilapidated tavern. This noise is closely followed by pounding percussion, accompanied by the rageful stamping of high-heeled shoes. These sounds will echo deeply into the night. A flash of Vermillion drifts over a clenched fist. This is the real flamenco.

When thinking of Spain, it is difficult not to let your mind drift towards either paella, bull-fighting or flamenco. Enter any Spanish souvenir shop, and your eyes will be assaulted by garish red frocks, ceramic figurines and fridge magnets depicting this emblematic dance. On countless street corners, whilst tourists tuck into tapas, women with their arms held taut whirl to the soft-sounds of Spanish guitar. But how did this dance, which has become emblematic of Spanish culture, grow into the hyper-commercial tourist attraction that it is today?

The origins of Flamenco can be traced back to a nomadic people, known as the Gitanos, originating from an area near Rajasthan in Northern India. Despite leaving India to settle in Andalucía, their Rajasthani origins would remain deeply rooted in their culture, permeating deeply into the Flamenco that they created. We see this in the Baile (dance), whose use of pivots and cyclic floor patterns vividly resemble Ghoomar, a Rajasthani folk dance. This influence is reinforced by the Cante (song), which is strikingly evocative of the Islamic call to prayer.

Unfortunately, their arrival is thought to have coincided with a particularly turbulent period in history, the Reconquista. Having finally re-claimed Spain from Moorish leaders, the Castilians implemented a series of xenophobic policies over the following centuries. Determined on creating a Spain for the ‘Spanish’, they actively persecuted ethnic minorities and suppressed all forms of cultural diversity. The Gitanos were increasingly subject to repressive decrees; they were forbidden by law to speak their own language, wear traditional dress or even to marry within their community. This anti-gitano atmosphere culminated in the 18th-century, with the so-called ‘Great-Gypsy round-up’, a raid organised by the government which aimed to arrest and imprison all Gitano people living in Spain.

In times of systematic persecution, the importance of cultural activities is amplified. National heritage, both material and immaterial, celebrates the value of a people. Consequently, the Gitanos began their counter-cultural movement in the darkest corners of Triana, secretly performing in bars and brothels of this infamous quarter. Stripped of everything bar their bodies and communal pride, they turned to dance and music in order to express their rage. We see this anger penetrate the performance, which is characterized by loud stamps, tightly clenched fists and highly expressive use of face. The very etymology of Flamenco, originating from the Hispano-Arab word Fellah Mengu, meaning ‘expelled peasant’, underlines the importance of this art form to the Gitanos. Flamenco acted as both a form of solace for oppressed individuals and an antidote to the attempts to dissipate the Gitano community.

Over the course of Spanish history, Flamenco gained popularity, resulting in its assimilation into the mainstream. Repeatedly

Oscar Crabb—
Native dye plants of Woad, Weld, Oak, Bedstraw, Elder and Dock with Iron - foraged or farmed in the UK. 100% organic hemp with organic cotton thread and cruelty-free organic Welsh wool (2019)

diluted and commercialised, it moved out of the shadows of Triana's brothels and taverns, and into the forefront of Sevillian culture. Supplementing the cries and shouts typical of cante flamenco with gentle guitar music, the Flamenco began to lose the violence which had characterised it. As Flamenco's popularity grew amongst Spanish audiences, its purpose became increasingly distanced from its political origins, as its commercial value was emphasised. Ruffled peasant dresses were replaced with heavily decorated gowns. As Flamenco became more 'palatable' to mainstream Sevillian audiences, it's connection to the Gitanos became increasingly obscured.

But why is the birth and growth of Flamenco relevant to contemporary Spain? Superficially, Flamenco's origin story can be read as an interesting and surprising tale. Conceptually, however, the idea that one of the most emblematic Spanish art forms have their roots in immigrant culture should emphasise the importance of minorities for Spanish identity. A country's cultural heritage vastly contributes to the shaping of a nation, so the Gitano's creation of Flamenco foregrounds the importance of immigrants for Iberican culture. In a time where Spanish far-right groups such as VOX advocate reclaiming Spain from immigrant and Islamic populations – just like the Castilians did from the Moors – celebrating the role of minority communities for their contribution to Spanish culture could not be more timely. When we delve deeper into the concepts which characterise a nation, we realise that Paella and Flamenco are no more 'Spanish' than tea is English. Instead, many of these foods and customs, show nothing more about the country that we associate them with than their repressive policies and colonial legacy. We must continue to reflect on the origins of national heritage, to ensure that the creators are recognised, so that these art forms are not misappropriated by the dominant culture. >

QUEER JESUS & PUNK GARDENING CHRIST ROCK

ZLATAN ZLATAN contemplates Derek Jarman's 1990 film, Garden.

sharing a wilderness of tender failure
a journey without direction
and no sweet conclusion
there are many paths to
one destination

Garden (1990) by Derek Jarman is an art house movie starring Tilda Swinton. The work is accepted as a part of the counteraction to Margaret Thatcher's conservative attitude to anti-gay discrimination and the dismissive response to the AIDS crisis under her administration. Garden is a story of lost histories. In Jarman's diaries, where he documented his artistic work, he wrote, 'I need a firm anchor in this hurricane', referring to his garden on the shore near Dungeness nuclear power station.

The opening scene consists of shots of the landscape at Dungeness, intercut with footage of flames, sea, plants, nuclear reactors and broken debris. Then Madonna suddenly appears, followed by the sharp mantis-like figures of journalists, clicking for the best shot of her. The film then follows an innocent and loving gay couple, whose idealistic existence is interrupted by exterior forces: they are arrested, severely humiliated and killed. The ocular lightness of the garden filled with sun leads onto the journey through biblical narratives cutting through the personal story of Jarman, who had been diagnosed with AIDS four years previously in 1986. A sense of betrayal committed by one's own body resonates with fragmented shots of his Kent garden and nightmarish version of his personal Passion, bed sinking in the sea and surrounded by the bacchanalian figures.

Arrangements of stones, April flowers, surround the Kent house with a backdrop of the post Chernobyl aura of the nuclear power station. Jarman's Garden is on the verge of Eden, Gethsemane and 90s England, with punk rock and Thatcherism. The physical process of gardening becomes a strategy for remembering the junk of history and personal memories. Monotony of the physical action of planting creates a detached but fruitful space for contemplation and reviving new organic forms of the past, reconstructing and reconstituting it.

Anachronism is Jarman's method of constructing the narrative or, actually, of avoiding it. The movie opens with the line: 'a journey without direction and no sweet conclusion', resembling the everlasting motif of a wanderer, Odysseus or a troubadour. However, alongside the collision of time, there is a danger of being trapped in a limbo state (like in the sitcom-like inserts with dead Judas promoting credit cards). Jarman is in control of the camera and escaping its limits through the destruction of the narrative and concentration of the 35mm textures. It resembles mystical experience comparable to Rothko's monumental iconostasis of colour fields.

Linear narrative becomes a totalitarian construct of heterosexuality, suggesting the lack of alternatives, as well as in sex and family. In contrast, Jarman creates a dynamic system of translation between words and images; the film seems to be in active dialogue with Jarman's book Modern Nature (published in 1991) and his published sketchbooks. He is interested in the alternative imageries, stories, sexualities, dropping a line, 'Everything falls to the ground like dead leaves, making a rich compost, Greek statues are pulverised for lime, Roman wall paintings decay and fertilise, others grow out of them.' An intense, kaleidoscopic experience of the 'now' for Jarman is built out of ruins and reductions, this apocalyptic vision of deserts and fragmentation resonates with T.S. Eliot's poem, 'The Waste Land' (1922). 'April is the cruellest month' is written in Jarman's diaries, as well as through the visual reconstruction of the passage 'Death by Water', the film is interwoven with English literary Modernism, renewing and reintegrating medievalism into contemporary queer visual culture.

Jarman's constant movement between image and word gives him the ability to exist in Modernist and Baroque dimensions. This cyberspace of ahistoricism is a way of counter-surveillance and non-identification with the existing regime. Through the power of images, alchemy and medieval rituals, Jarman creates a marginal language for the HIV outcasts.

Garden has a preoccupation with mortality, but it is not the film's main focus: there is too much of the energy of punk rock, West End musicals and queer extravaganza, even in the tortured figure of Mary Magdalene, one of the Christ's followers. It flirts with the dance macabre, but searches for queer identity through Christ's Passion, which entertains the possibility of surviving death.

Interestingly enough, the movie entered Moscow International Film Festival in the 1990s after the fall of the Soviet Union and was warmly received. Arguably, it marked the suspended space of Gorbachev's post-glasnost period as a place of concentration and transformation. Even though it is an utterly personal elegy for dead friends, its humane language of tenderness goes beyond the borders of geography. However, what comes after the end of the story, after mysterious babushkas sitting at the table? As the old Chinese curse says, 'may you live in interesting times.' >

Lee Krasner: Outgrowing "Mrs. Pollock"

TANYA SITNIKOVA reflects on Lee Krasner's legacy.

Lee Krasner was a trailblazer of abstract expressionism in post-war New York. Vigorous and vibrant, Krasner's paintings overflow with gestural strokes of masterfully layered colours. Her work was ever-evolving throughout her career – influenced by Mondrian, Picasso, and Matisse to name a few, her unwavering devotion to art was the one constant throughout her stylistic shifts. Except perhaps the constant cloud of misogyny hanging over the appreciation of her paintings and collages, making her largely overlooked. Her legacy was subsumed by that of another abstract expressionist – her husband, Jackson Pollock.

Last summer, The Barbican held a retrospective on the artist, Lee Krasner: Living Colour. This exhibition was the first European presentation of her work in over half a century. Last shown at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1965, Krasner's success is presumed to be contingent on Pollock's; the artist's husband pervades every discussion about Krasner as a constant point of comparison. The American art critic B. H. Friedman, as well as several others, dismissed female artists of abstract expressionism as creatively dependent on their partners.

Krasner and Pollock met when they were partaking in the group exhibition at McMillen Gallery. This fateful moment marked the irreversible change in the trajectory of Krasner's career – her path was henceforth stained with Pollock's name - critics failing to divorce reception of her work from her marital status. Pollock inspired Krasner to embrace spontaneity in her paintings, resulting in the emotive, gestural hues characteristic of her later works. In spite of Pollock's long shadow over Krasner, the dynamic between the two artists could best be described as a symbiotic relationship. Many attest to the unmistakable influence of Krasner on Pollock – namely, the order she had espoused in his paintings. Elaine de Kooning, a second-generation abstract expressionist, speculated that 'it was as though Jackson took over something Lee had had.' The extent to which critics had misrepresented the reciprocity of their relationship is baffling. The two had fed off each other's creativity – both their practices grew as a result of their marriage union.

The couple's intensely complex relationship ended abruptly with Pollock's death in 1956, which triggered a period of chronic insomnia for Krasner. The artist's paintings during this period of turmoil were remarkably raw and acutely reminiscent of human flesh. In 1959-61, Krasner created her Night Journeys; emotionally charged and devoid of colour, these works were plagued with the burden of emancipation. Scholars such as writer and curator David Anfam have commended these works as a turning point for the artist.

But Pollock's ghost still managed to cast its shadow over Krasner. Critics compared this tonal shift in her work to Pollock's. American poet and literary critic, Richard Howard described how 'people talked about how she was being influenced by Jackson from beyond the grave,'He was himself part of this 'people' suggesting that the Night Journeyswere somewhat reminiscent of Pollock's splatters, even though arcs were their pivotal feature rather than Pollock's diagonals. His legacy was so potent that critics would presume Pollock as the essence of Krasner's work than acknowledge Krasner as a standalone artist. The haunting of Pollock comes from a refusal to accept Krasner's artistic autonomy- intricately related to her status as a woman. Whilst Krasner was under his tutelage, Hoffman had praised her painting as 'so good you would not know it was done by a woman.' Is the art world growing past this mindset?

May 2019 saw the opening of the Barbican's retrospective Lee Krasner: Living Colour. Searches for Krasner skyrocketed, surpassing Pollock's for the first time – but only in the UK, and only for a few weeks. That same month, the art world celebrated the auction price of Krasner's The Eye is the First Circle (1960) for a whopping $11.7 million, easily doubling her previous record of $5.5 million in 2017. As a point of comparison, Pollock's No. 5(1948) sold for $140 million in 2006.

The argument here is not that Krasner should be valued in the same ballpark as Pollock – it's not inconceivable that Pollock was the better artist. What is problematic is that this was presumed. Most problematic of all was that Krasner's entire career has been framed in terms of this comparison.

The Barbican exhibition Modern Couples (2018-19) was another step in the right direction, featuring the work of couples such as Dora Maar and Pablo Picasso, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. Contextualising these artists' work in relation to one another's is symptomatic of the growth of contemporary views on relationships, finally acknowledging their reciprocity. Has the art industry grown out of defining a woman by her affiliation with men, grown out of crediting 'Mrs Pollock' rather than 'Ms Krasner'? Perhaps not quite yet. But these exhibitions are proof that we are on our way. >

TW: abuse

SAVAGE would like to note that one or more of the figures mentioned in this article have been accused of abuse, assault, or misconduct. While these facts were not directly relevant to the article, we believe them too important not to mention. Pollock has been accused of being violent towards Krasner. Picasso has been accused of being emotionally and/or physically abusive towards several women, and of having a relationship with an underage girl.

Rising out of the ashes: Botticelli in the Fire

Theatre—

ALICE DEVOY discusses Jordan Tannahill's recent play and how it interrogates queer histories and queer futures.

'Bullshit reigns.' These sagacious words were written by Tom Wolfe in his novel The Bonfire of the Vanities. This title comes from the real event of 1497 in which objects were burnt that were deemed 'sin-provoking': books, plays and paintings were un-made in an attempt to stem off the plague. Botticelli, now regarded as one of the greatest artists of all time, is known to have sacrificed some of his works to the fire. Except – there is no proof of this. But, as Botticelli declares to us in a new biomythography by Jordan Tannahill: 'You know what, this is my damn play, and the historians, I'm sorry, y'all can go fuck yourselves.' Tannahill confronts us with an important question: have queer histories been given the chance to grow out of the ashes of discrimination?

Botticelli in the Fire, the anachronistic retelling of the life of Botticelli poses questions about the truth of history and, in particular, what exactly progress entails. A modernised Botticelli is employed by Lorenzo Medici to paint a portrait of his wife, which will become his most famous work: 'The Birth of Venus'. Botticelli sleeps with Clarice Medici as well as his precocious student, Leonardo Da Vinci. Meanwhile, the plague is raging and sodomites are being burnt at the stake and at the suggestion of Priest Savonarola, who can only be described as populist.

Biomythography is a genre that has its progeny in the black lesbian poet Audre Lorde. It is a suitably impenetrable word, but it means something along the lines of a work that focuses on the experience of the past and identity, the sensibility of it, rather than the Truth. Tannahill consciously places his work within a movement that aims to queer history, re-exploring the foundations of our past. This is inevitably a painful process. In Roland Barthes' words it is 'the history of tears', requiring the digging up of victimised and marginalised bodies from the graveyard of heteronormativity.

Tannahill describes his play as 'something between Ru Paul's Drag Race and Hannah Arendt' conscious of the political importance of the jarring anachronisms in his play, which elucidate the disturbing proximity of this time of homophobia to our current one. He encodes the danger of the conservatism that is the destructive force in the play (the preaching priest and his burning fire) within the anachronistic structure of the entire piece. Conservatism wishes to stem the tide of change, to go back to the good old days. By placing a vociferating priest in a robe and sandals on a talk-show, the scene becomes the embodiment of the impossibility of undoing something and therefore undermines the priest's call for a return backwards. But this suggests that we are moving 'forwards.' Through the occasional signal of an iPhone or a microphone, we are reminded of the uncanny similarities that shrink the 'progress' of the last 500 years.

In this light, what is intriguing about Tannahill's play is the similarities that can be drawn to Edward II, a tragedy written by Christopher Marlowe in the 16th century, 400 years ago. It is another story of erasure and scapegoating. The real King Edward was murdered, we are told, through the 'thrusting up into his body an hot spit, being rolled to and fro, so as no appearance of any hurt would outwardly be perceived.' His punishment is a literalisation of his crime of sodomy, both in the physical act itself and in the attempt at hiding its truth from the public eye. The history of homosexuality is based on a routine and often systematic removal of the homosexual experience. It was seen in the holocaust, it was seen during the AIDs epidemic and it can be seen in the endemic minimisation of female sexuality. As Botticelli reminds us: 'There is always a plague. There is always a fire.'

Botticelli in The Fire is haunted by the chanting of the perfect proportions of da Vinci's Vitruvius's man: 'One tenth to the root of a man is a quarter to the top of the height.' Throughout the play, these proportions become disjointed: the eye drops next to the knee, the fractions begin to float freely. This questions the price of an aesthetic perfection that will inevitably discriminate. It signals a threat to identity, of a stable framework- suggesting even that these things were only ever an illusion.

There is a reason theatre is such a fitting medium for exploring the concept of historicity; its structures are controlled by a teleology- of a sense of an end destination. Tragedy is evaded by a sense of the inevitability of death, and comedy by the inevitability of unity and happiness. Any evasion of this, as we see in Botticelli in the Fire, is a re-inscription of another Truth – it fails to recognise the ritualised structures of history as final. So, when Botticelli declares 'fuck history', spinning his time turner to transform his tragedy into a comedy, he is ignoring the force of the teleological narrative that seeks to erase him, he is acknowledging that the bullshit reigning is not on his terms.

>

TW: child sexual abuse

SAVAGE would like to note that one or more of the figures mentioned in this article have been accused of abuse, assault, or misconduct. While these facts were not directly relevant to the article, we believe them too important not to mention. Leonardo da Vinci has been accused of child sexual abuse.

UCL: Bring them back in house!

CAROLINA ABBOTT GALVÃO covers the Justice for UCL Workers campaign.

At 8 AM on a Friday, Malet Place is cold, uncharacteristically empty and quiet. This is when Maritza Castillo-Calle walks into campus and begins setting up a coffee stall. She puts up a table with tactful ease, laying an assortment of pastries, hot beverages and paper on its surface. In a matter of seconds, a crowd forms around her, filling the space with warm chatter and laughter.

There are almost no students here — it's too early for that. But cleaners, porters, and night security staff have been at UCL since early in the morning. This is who Maritza and her colleagues at the Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain (IWGB) are interested in talking to. For the past two years, the IWGB have built up their presence on campus by listening to workers, encouraging them to come together and fighting for their rights.

Alipio dos Santos is a member of the IWGB, and has worked as a cleaner at UCL since 2008. Every day, he arrives on campus at 3:45 in the morning, where he stays until 5 PM. As we attempt to find a quiet place to chat during his break, he takes me through a series of hallways and notes, "I know everything in here".

For over a decade, Alipio has worked to keep the university clean. "It's hard work," he sighs, "but it's often rewarding to see the place tidy after a long day". Still, to many students and staff at UCL, cleaners like Alipio are invisible. On campus, cleaners, porters, security and catering staff employed by third-parties like Sodexo and Axis have far worse worse pay, pensions and holiday entitlements and little or no parental leave and sick pay compared to directly employed staff.

They also more likely to suffer from discrimination. Many report being picked on by their bosses for arbitrary reasons, being forced to move locations or exclusively clean toilets as a punishment for complaining about workplace abuses. For the majority of outsourced workers, putting up with these conditions is not a choice but a necessity. Alipio believes this system has been set up to take advantage of migrants like him. He notes, "When I first came here I signed a contract without even knowing what was written on it. I didn't speak a word of English ... but I had no choice, I had a family to look after".

In September, following the success of similar campaigns at LSE, SOAS, Goldsmiths and the University of London's Central Administration at Senate House, IWGB members voted to launch a campaign to end outsourcing and zero-hour contracts at UCL. After the university repeatedly refused to commit to negotiate serious changes, an overwhelming majority of outsourced staff voted in favor of strike action, with the first of these strikes taking place on 19 November.

Following the IWGB's campaign launch, UCL announced negotiations with UNISON and committed to putting all outsourced staff on equal terms and conditions. However, these concessions gave no clear timetable for delivery and no serious guarantees . Most importantly, they did not mention in-housing — the central demand raised by outsourced workers. IWGB members felt they had no choice but to go on strike.

Although UNISON and the IWGB have similar aims, they have different strategic approaches. UNISON focuses mainly on winning recognition agreements and developing closer relationships with management, while the IWGB focuses on applying firm pressure to management through strikes and direct action.

Because UNISON typically represents higher pay grade administrative and professional services staff, it often fails to support campaigns by lower-grade migrant workers. Given that migrants have largely carried out the fight for outsourced workers' rights, it should not come as a surprise that the IWGB's model of grassroots organising, which is more attentive to the demands of non-English speaking workers, has been more successful. In a context where gig-economy work has been normalized, and where migrant workers bear the brunt of increasingly exploitative labour practices, this model is also a necessity.

For outsourced workers at UCL, the demand to be brought back in house is a question of justice. If individuals who work in the same buildings have certain benefits, why shouldn't they have them too? For years, justice seemed unlikely. But according to Alipio, something is different now, and he is more hopeful. "People have more courage nowadays ... they used to be afraid to speak out and lose their jobs, but I get the sense they have opened their eyes now," he says.

Over the past month, hundreds of UCL students and staff came out to support outsourced staff in their campaign. At one of the protests, whilst surrounded by workers and students alike, listening to conversations about how to best move forward, I got the sense that something was changing too. Like Alipio, I am hopeful. >

Harriet Taylor—The Family (2019)

Nocturnal Demon

TOMIWA OWOLADE

i am a nocturnal demon
awake only in dark
when silence deafens
and foxes fuck

my mind is sharpest
in the interlude between
dusk and dawn
coffee is my sacrament

i am a nocturnal demon
turning like a clock
waiting for inspiration
to block my writer's block

turning and waiting for
buried thoughts to resurface
like sour fruit coated in dirt
or beet-root distended from earth

i live only for my imagination
all else is a blur
purblind in the summer sheen
twenty/twenty by winter twilight

i am a nocturnal demon
unable to coerce my still-
born thoughts into a clear tapestry
stumbling insatiate lonely

i am a nocturnal demon
thinking of you when you said
your words of damning innocence
while i assumed love and lust

and i think of me
looking at the sky
spotted with spare stars
like the dots from a slowly dripping

pen.

TEAM

President –
Simran Divatia
Treasurer / Events –
Hassan Sherif
Editor in Chief –
Alice Devoy
Senior Editor –
Selma Rezgui
Welfare officer –
Ines Georgis
Marketing Manager –
Soma Sara
Our thoughts editor –
Anna Lamche
Our thoughts sub editor –
Georgia Good
Film editor –
Arthur Greene
Film sub–editor –
Olivia Daley
Literature editor –
Shanti Giovannetti–Singh
Literature sub–editor –
Maya Sall
Music editor –
Thomas Cury
Music sub–editor –
Nilo Jan
Theatre editor –
Sophie Cundall
Theatre sub–editor –
Roni Mevorach
Art & Design editor –
Selin Bengi
Art & Design sub–editor –
Sophia Cano
Read curator –
Sarah Ang
Read co–curator –
Shelby de Rond
Look curator –
Hannah Gorlizki
Look co–curator –
Jean Watt
Listen curator –
Nat Jones
Listen co–curator –
Seb Perera–Slater
Creative director –
Sam White
Graphic designers –
Yiyi Zhang,
Zlata Mechetina,
Esther Chang,
Moé Atsaduma