



Sixth Form Mercury

By the students, for the students.

Volume 6, Issue 6, April 2017



Letter from the Editors

Hey everyone!

The exams draw near.

As notes start being highlighted frantically, the tension starts rising, the

revision guides start coming out and freedom seems like a pipe dream - so we try to keep calm and carry on.

We do so because we must. We do so because we are Wilson's boys and we know we can.

So enjoy the ride, and remember that there's a light at the end of that revision-laden tunnel.

*Thanks,
Matthew and Tommy*

Stress tests

by Matthew Kayanja

Stress is something that creeps up on you. Until it hits you, then it's not creeping anymore, it's a blaring megaphone in your face taking a bit out of your smile, taking that spring out of your step, making life seem like one giant problem that can't be solved.

It's an undeniable fact that stress



will hit us all, and it's not a disparaging remark to say that anyone who hasn't faced stress probably hasn't attempted anything significant in their life.

Stress is like a pain but invisible; it's good like a pain because it tells you that something's wrong and that things can't go on like they are.

Want to write for the Sixth Form *Mercury*?

**It is open to all sixth formers with an interest in writing!
Contact either Tommy MacGillivray or Matthew Kayanja for more information:**

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It may be surprising considering the coming challenges, where we'll partake of some of the most significant public examinations of our lives, tests that will determine our destinations after Wilson's and possible future career options, a time in which stress levels reach unprecedented heights and many of us will feel that we're simply not good enough, even though we are – it may be surprising that I don't think stress can always be a bad thing.

Stress can be the lubricant in the works that spurs us on to not accept the current state of affairs. Too often in the past I've found myself lounging around playing FIFA only for that floaty feeling in my stomach to remind me that while I'm struggling to not get relegated from Division 3, precious hours are trickling away, whilst the deadline for my Music homework stays static. Stop, panic, start Music homework. It's not always the most efficient method of work but it gets the job done.

Just like the Force, however, stress has a dark side.

When responsibilities start piling up like the blocks in a Jenga tower it's easy to feel everything could collapse at once. I remember myself once coming into school in the morning when I knew I had a huge amount of stuff to do for the week and just deciding to sit by myself in the toilet for about twenty minutes, feeling like it was a mountain I couldn't climb. That was unhealthy.

When stress feels like it gets too much, which in the coming weeks it very much could, I believe it's good to pause and reflect to put things in perspective.

“We're all in this together here on HMS Wilson's, and running any tight ship requires everyone to be able to lean on someone when they need to.”

Often, stressful feelings are like a runaway train – once they start they don't stop going – and your mind might blow things out of proportion.

Thinking calmly and logically about the challenges you face helps apply the brakes to that runaway train, and then once that's done maybe you can get things back on track.

Most importantly, though, I think it's good to talk.

I hate asking for help for problems I can't solve myself. It makes me feel weak, for some strange reason. But if I try thinking about it logically, try to

tackle stress head-on myself, and still end up feeling that creeping sensation that something isn't right, I don't see the harm in looking 'weak' for a bit and talking about it, to friends or to family.

We're all in this together here on HMS Wilson's, and running any tight ship requires everyone to be able to lean on someone when they need to.

Being realistic, stress isn't something catastrophic most of the time, and doesn't always need to be directly addressed; simply being someone who provides welcome release from thinking about school all the time, I think, is enough for what I think can constitute being a helpful influence among stressful times.

So buckle up, and remember as we get into the thick of things and the stress starts to pile up – is it really as stressful as losing in the ninetieth minute and getting relegated in Ultimate Team?



What topic that isn't an exam would you get an A* in if it was an exam?

In the spirit of the coming exam season, this editor decided to ask Year 12 students the question: 'What topic that isn't an exam would you get an A* in if it was an exam?'

Here are their responses.

Praveen Murugathas
Addition

Shavindra Jayasekera
Generation 5 Pokemon

Oscar Watts
Mid- to high-tier memes

Kevin Gu
Chess Opening Theory

Gabriel Cairns
Complaining

Toye Oladinni
The life and times of Kanye West

Ahmed Imam
How to live like a sociopath

Ryan Eaw
Chess tactics

Oliver Wales
Procrastination

Kiran Sushil
Anime

Zhi Ping Lim
The meaning of life

Han-Joo Kymm
Football tactics

Vincent Fideli
Japanese role-play games

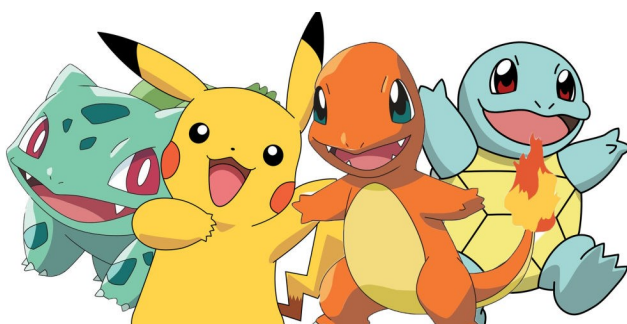
Yash Raju
Raising blood pressure

Anthony Piwowarski
Regulating Yash

Tommy Macgillivray
The life and times of Shakira

Matthew Kayanja
Editing the Mercury

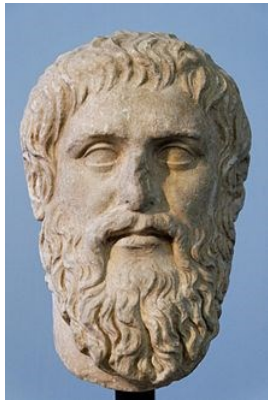
Adam di Lizia
The names and types of Pokemon





Recipe for Disaster: Does Populism lead to Tyranny?

By Yash Raju



“Tyranny naturally arises out of democracy”. This is Plato’s most famous quote, and arguably his most contentious. In fact, the Austrian philosopher Karl Popper declared that modern forms of tyranny can be traced back to Plato’s belief in the rule of philosopher kings, and his hatred for democracy.

He was only half-right.

Whilst tyrannies may not have been caused as a result of Plato’s philosophy, they were certainly predicted by it. The classical philosopher lived to observe the first democracy in the western world: Athens. What he found was a clear flaw in the nature of the direct democratic system where laws were made through direct vote, which he illustrated in his *Republic*. The democratic man, through his unquenchable thirst for liberty, begins to hate the ruling institutions that place even the most minimal regulations on his freedom. From this hatred arises a popular champion who rallies the masses against the ruling classes.

The champion makes many popular promises in order to gain the support of the poor masses, separating

the masses from the elite class. The champion, once elected through popular vote to power, purges the state of the elite classes whom he fears threaten his power, i.e. the rich and the scholarly, and hence is left to rule alone as tyrant, denigrating the democracy into tyranny. What Plato described was a strategy now known as populism, in which a political framework is created in which a “pure people” stand in conflict against the “corrupt elite”.

The contemporary political climate has begun to vindicate Plato. Throughout the notable democracies, there has been a significant rise in populist movements; from Marine Le Pen’s Front Nationale to the nationalist Viktor Orban of Hungary, populism has thrown the international political climate into disarray. However, a clear example of the dangers of populism lies in Turkey. Turkey’s Recep Tayyip Erdogan, through the recent referendum, has driven his country to elected dictatorship, some would argue. Erdogan follows a political philosophy eponymously named Erdoganism, in which he drives his support from his “charismatic authority” and the development of a cult of personality. Erdogan exemplifies the Platonic “popular champion”, he is charismatic, declares himself the “people’s man”, and labels his critics as “enemies of the people”. Through this referendum, Erdogan is poised to gain unprecedented and unchecked presidential power in Turkey.

This has all been achieved by direct democracy, it seems. Populists fa-

vour the legislative power to be directly in the hands of the electorate, referenda being the obvious mode of this, and Erdogan, through populist rhetoric, stigmatisation of groups, and an anti-elite persona, has manipulated the Turkish people into making him a frightening leader, some would claim. He has used economic discontent and the threat of Jihadist and Kurdish insurgency to declare his own “enabling acts”, and now that he has power, the abuse of it appears to be inevitable as during his tenure, 50,000 “political enemies” have been arrested, and Erdogan has targeted anyone he sees as a threat to his power.

Turkey illustrates how liberal democracies face their greatest con-



temporary threat in populism, and how direct democracy can facilitate populist tyranny. Thus, in order for liberal democracy to prevail, a strong upholding of classical liberal principles and a representative system of checks and balances must exist, keeping the government as decentralised as possible, or else western liberal democracy risks collapsing into tyranny, and we prove Plato right.