

Wilson's Intrigue

Humanities

Issue 10 | April 2026



Inside:

The Stock Market Explained

Shazil Sami

Also Inside:

Cabin Shadow Boxing | by Sam Tunbridge

Echo and Narcissus: Dali's reimagining of Ovid's tale | by Dylan Murphy

Compilation of Magazine by: Kaloyan Yunchov and Kaivalya Pullakandam
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Humanities

2026 Issue 10

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Editor's foreword

2026 Issue 10

As the year goes on, so too does the work of the talented writers and editors of the Humanities Magazine. Summer approaches, meaning exams, but there is still work to be done; after hours of writing, editing, and designing, we are delighted to present our latest issue of the Humanities Magazine, featuring an assortment of intriguing articles, moving poetry and even some beautiful artwork, for which we would like to thank Miss Waterhouse and the students involved in its creation.

However, this issue is also very special, because it contains a collection of work exploring the history and experiences of Black British people, written for the Miranda Kaufmann Prize For Humanities competition, run earlier on in the year, by the Humanities department. We would like to thank Mrs Fletcher and Mrs Berry for their invaluable help in organising the competition, without which a significant portion of this issue would not exist. It is also the first school publication to involve the work of students from all years, from Y7 to Y13, representative of the interest in the magazine.

We would also like to thank all of the staff involved in admin, proofreading and editing, including, Mr Vazquez, Mr Fletcher, Mrs Fletcher, Mr Lissimore, Mrs Berry, Miss Waterhouse, Ms Banner-Hill, Mr Nash, Miss Cohen, Mr Gore, Miss Denison, Mr Lynch, Miss Atwell, Mrs Craigmyle, Miss Fairbrother and Mr McLaughlin. We would also like to thank **Mr Lissimore** and **Mr Coop** for their new leadership over the magazine, overseeing the proofreading and printing of the publication.

We chose **The Stock Market Explained** by **Shazil Sami** as the star article because of the student focused tone of the essay and due to the various factors covered (external shocks, politics, etc). Other notable mentions include Echo and Narcissus: Dali's reimagining of Ovid's tale by Dylan Murphy, The Complicated Story of Urdu Made Simple by Rayyan Ali and the winning entry of our competition, Cabin Shadow Boxing by Sam Tunbridge.

Finally, we would like to thank the writers and editors who helped us produce this issue, and we would like to encourage anyone, whether you were involved with this issue or not, to take part in future editions of the magazine – without your brilliant articles, poetry and artwork, the magazine cannot live on, so please do get involved with any future publications.

Kaivalya Pullakandam and Kaloyan Yunchov

Chief Editors 2025/26

<History>

The Complicated Story of Urdu Made Simple

Written by Rayyan Ali

Edited by Paarush Dhawan and Kaivalya Pullakandam

If you've ever told someone you speak Urdu and they responded with, "Oh, so it's just like Hindi, right?"-congratulations, you've met a linguistic oversimplifier. Urdu and Hindi are like long-lost cousins at a family reunion; they look similar, sound familiar, and share inside jokes (or, in this case, vocabulary), but what if I were to tell you that Turkish is also a long-lost cousin of Urdu? So is Persian, and even Arabic! In fact, Urdu may be one of the most misunderstood languages in modern-day society. It is not just "fancy Hindi" or "Arabic in disguise" - no, Urdu is a language of poetry, history and cultural richness.

Emerging from around the 12th century AD, some linguists suggest that Urdu evolved from the regional and medieval Apabhraṃśa register of the Shauraseni prakrit, a middle Indo-Aryan language, which was an ancestor of other modern Indo-Aryan languages.¹ However, the connection could be nuanced. Urdu's direct lineage is more commonly associated with early Hindustani, influenced by Persian and Turkic languages. Towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign over the Mughal empire, the language was commonly known as "*Zaban-e-Ordu-e-Mualla*". The word "*ordu*" means "army" in Turkish, and this new, Persianised form of Hindustani/Hindvi was therefore referred to as the "language of the exalted camp".

Previously, the Delhi Sultanate of the 13th century established Persian as the official language in India, which was continued by the Mughals, extending over the north of South Asia, resulting in Persian being cemented in Hindustani. Finally, the Nawabs of Awadh (from an Iranian dynasty) assigned Urdu not only as a language to be spoken in court (it was a royal language due to its roots in the army, heavily used by the elite class), but amongst common people as well.² While Lucknow was a major centre of Urdu culture and helped popularise Urdu literature and poetry, especially during the 18th century under the Nawabs of Awadh, Urdu as a language developed earlier in the Delhi region.

On a slight sidenote, Urdu also contains loanwords from Portuguese, although limited and mainly restricted to some specific items related to colonial contact, due to the Portuguese colonial presence in India during the 16th and 17th centuries. Still don't believe me? What if I were to tell you that the word for cupboard is '*almari*' in Urdu, and '*armário*' in Portuguese. Or the word for 'key' is '*chaabi*' in Urdu and '*chave*' in Portuguese. Even the word for 'room' is '*kamra*' in Urdu and '*cambra*' in Portuguese.



While modern-day Urdu and Hindi share a common linguistic base, they diverged significantly in script and lexicon. Urdu uses a Persian-Arabic writing style known as Nastaliq, incorporating a substantial number of words from those languages.³ On the other hand, Hindi utilises the Devanagari script, drawing more vocabulary from Sanskrit. A simple example of this is with the translation of the word 'tree': in Urdu, the Persian word '*darakht*' is used, versus '*ped*' used in Hindi. Or for the word 'sky', it's '*aasman*' in Urdu, and '*aakash*' in Hindi. When added together, this can sometimes create two sentences, identical in meaning, but completely different sounding. Below is the transliteration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and it is quite evident the difference between formal Urdu and formal Hindi:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

The Urdu transliteration of the same is as follows:

Tamām insān āzād aur ḥuqūq o 'izzat ke f'itibār se barābar paidā hū'e haiṅ. Unheṅ zamīr aur 'aql wad'at hū'ī hai. Is li'e unheṅ ek dūsre ke sāth bhā'ī cāre kā sulūk karnā cāh'ī'e.

The Hindi transliteration of the same is this ⁴:

Sabhi manusya ko gaurav aur adhikar ke vishay me janmajat svatantrata aur samanta prapt hai. Unhe buddhi aur antaratma ki den prapt hai aur paraspar unhe bhaidare ke bhav se bartav karna chahie.

With Persian and Arabic influences, Urdu sounds softer and more poetic, whereas Hindi's Sanskrit words sound more classical and structured. The flow and elegance of Urdu make it an ideal medium for expressing emotions and ideas in ways that feel musical and profound. The Persian influence on Urdu gave birth to forms like the ghazal,⁵ where love, loss, and beauty are not just the themes, but are also embodied in the very rhythm of the language. Amir Khusrau (1253-1325 AD) was one of the most celebrated Sufi poets in the Indian subcontinent. Often referred to as the "Father of Urdu Literature", he was a prolific writer who contributed immensely to the development of Hindvi, one of the predecessor dialects of modern Urdu.⁶ After Khusrau came one of the greatest Urdu poets of all time- Mirza Ghalib (1797-1869). Ghalib transformed the nature of the ghazal to being more than just romantic love, where he wrote about philosophy, life and other subjects within the traditional ghazal style.⁷

However, the most celebrated (and maybe most influential) poet must be Sir Muhammad Iqbal, also known as Allama Iqbal ('allama' meaning 'learned' in Persian). Using Urdu to share his thoughts on identity, freedom, and spirituality, his poetry, like "*Bang-e-Dara*" and "*Bal-e-Jibril*", resonates deeply with people even today. While he was fluent in Persian, it was in Urdu that Iqbal reached the hearts of the masses, blending Persian and Urdu to create a unique poetic style. Through his work, he showed how Urdu could carry complex ideas while remaining accessible, turning it into a language of both beauty and intellectual depth. Some of his famous quotes include: "*But inner experience is only one source of human knowledge*", "*People who have no hold over their process of thinking are likely to be ruined by liberty of thought*" and "*Nations are born in the hearts of poets, they*

"Using Urdu to share his thoughts on identity, freedom, and spirituality, his poetry, like "*Bang-e-Dara*" and "*Bal-e-Jibril*", resonates deeply with people even today."

prosper and die in the hands of politicians".⁸

While Iqbal's poetic legacy solidified Urdu's place as a language of intellectual and spiritual depth, the influence of Urdu didn't just remain confined to literature and philosophy; it found a vibrant home in Bollywood, where it continues to be celebrated in songs, dialogue, and poetry. Not only do songwriters, like the renowned Javed Akhtar, write movie scripts and lyrics in Urdu, India's most famous actors including star Shahrukh Khan, Salman Khan, and Aamir Khan are fluent in Urdu predominantly due to their cultural backgrounds and upbringings. By popularising the language through their memorable Urdu-heavy dialogues, these actors have brought a modern blend to spoken Urdu and Hindi, which has been picked up across the world.

with the transliterations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the two languages can be deemed completely different when spoken in their formal registers. Despite this, both languages continue to evolve, enriching the cultural tapestry of South Asia, which includes an even wider array of languages - from Telugu and Kannada spoken in South India, to Pashto and Balti spoken in North Pakistan.

So the next time someone says, "Urdu and Hindi? Aren't they the same thing?", you can gracefully correct them and explain that while they share a common origin and many linguistic features, they are distinct languages with their own unique scripts, lexicons, and cultural influences. In the end, Urdu and Hindi are the two different sides of the same coin, each with its own shine.

“
Understanding the history of the two languages serves as a true reminder of their unique differences.

Where Urdu and Hindi can sound almost identical to the ear, understanding the history of the two languages serves as a true reminder of their unique differences. As shown



Model United Nations

Written by: Atharva Pawargi and Anay Prashar

Model United Nations is not a mockup of indecision, but rather a space where opinions and conviction collide in their rawest form to drive action. Here, we live democracy rather than learn it. We are each assigned a country, and a voice to represent, whether that be the cautious France, or the not-so cautious US. Each topic whether it be Immigration Rights, Net Zero, or the threat of Nuclear Weapons is a real battle against opposing voices where you will have to battle it out, to prove your motion is the best. Participants begin by researching their nation's perspective, to gain an understanding of who they represent, and preparing a statement to make their viewpoint, but from that point on, the experience is entirely alive.

You can then negotiate on behalf of your country, make strategic alliances, or confront unreasonable claims, to form your motion. This motion is then debated vigorously, often challenging one another publicly, critiquing proposals, and defending their positions with conviction. Every speech, every interaction and every country convinced matters, to push your motion ever so further to implementation.

Emergency sessions only serve to amplify this intensity. Based on real-world events, these committees demand rapid decisions, based on an ever changing landscape, to form creative solutions, and executable actions. Here, the pressure is real, and so is the responsibility, as proposals and alliances must be formed, to protect your interests, against the interests of others.

MUN allows participants to test ideas freely, to argue with a sense of passion, and to see whether their motion or decision will last, or whether it will be torn to shreds by the opposition. It is a space to express, to critique, and to negotiate, and to learn the strategy of leadership. It also cultivates the courage to act thoughtfully in a complex world, where decisions like this will occur daily, and you have to argue to the end, to put your point across.

In Model United Nations, diplomacy takes a more realistic approach. A messy and human-like approach, but nevertheless fulfilling in the end. It is where the flame for global issues is ignited, where voices are made and leaders are formed, to take this experience into their future life.

Parth Shete, on his experience at MUN:

Participating in Model United Nations is one of the most engaging and intellectually stimulating activities I have been involved in. It has given me the opportunity to step into the role of a global decision-maker and explore international issues from perspectives beyond my own.

One of the most memorable experiences for me, so far, has been representing South Korea during a committee debate on nuclear disarmament. This agenda was particularly challenging because it required a nuanced understanding of security, diplomacy, and regional instability, especially in relation to tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

In preparing for the debate, I researched South Korea's political position, its alliance with the United States, and its approach to nuclear deterrence and denuclearisation. This helped me appreciate how complex international negotiations are, where ethical responsibilities must be balanced against national security concerns.



**“ Here we live
democracy
...rather than
learn it**

During the sessions, I enjoyed delivering speeches, engaging in structured debate, and responding to counterarguments in real time. Negotiating resolutions forced me to think strategically, compromise where necessary, and work collaboratively with delegates who held opposing viewpoints.

What I enjoy most about Model UN is how it combines academic research with practical skills. Representing South Korea pushed me to think critically, speak persuasively, and adapt quickly under pressure. The experience strengthened my confidence in public speaking and improved my ability to construct logical, evidence-based arguments.

Model UN has also deepened my interest in global affairs and diplomacy, and it has shown me the importance of dialogue and cooperation in addressing sensitive issues such as nuclear disarmament.

Overall, it is an activity that has and continues to challenge me intellectually, while allowing me to understand global issues in a greater depth.



How the United States Is Making China Stronger

Written by Shourya Gupta
Edited by Kaivalya Pullakandam

The United States believes it can slow China's rise through economic pressure. History, however, suggests this belief is wrong. When pressure is applied to large and capable economies, it often accelerates adaptation instead of halting it. U.S. policy toward China follows this pattern. Trade barriers, technology controls, and diplomatic pressure have not halted China's development. They have changed China's incentives in ways that encourage faster self-sufficiency and movement into higher-value industries.¹ This is not unprecedented! Napoleon Bonaparte tried to weaken Britain through the Continental System.⁹ Instead of collapsing, Britain expanded its industry and global reach.

American involvement in China began long before the current rivalry, and even early policies had long-term effects. The Open Door Policy aimed to protect U.S. trade interests, not to strengthen China. Yet by opposing the division of China into European colonies, the United States helped keep China as one large economic space. This mattered. Large markets support economies of scale, facilitate the faster spread of knowledge, and promote coordinated development.² The choice to use Boxer Indemnity payments to fund Chinese education in the United States also strengthened China's future workforce.⁸ These actions were not meant to build a rival, but they helped create the conditions for one.



The Tug of War in the Far East

After 1949, the U.S. strategy changed to isolation. Trade bans and diplomatic exclusion were designed to push China to the margins of the global economy. Instead, they pushed China to rely on



itself.¹⁰ Being cut off from foreign markets and technology made domestic capacity more important. Over time, this created a strong preference for control over key industries. China's current focus on technological independence reflects this history rather than a sudden policy shift.

Engagement after 1979 was based on a

“ When access to foreign technology becomes uncertain, investing at home becomes the logical response. ”

different belief. U.S. policymakers expected that economic growth would lead China to become more politically similar to the West. What growth actually produced was industrial strength. Western companies shared production methods, supply chain systems, and technical skills at huge scale.⁷ Apple alone helped train millions of Chinese workers in advanced manufacturing. This raised productivity across the economy.⁶ The Chinese state took the economic gains while keeping political power firmly in place. Growth happened, but political change did not.

By the early 2000s, economic ties

between the two countries reduced U.S. leverage. American consumers depended on low-cost Chinese goods, while China used its trade surpluses to buy U.S. debt. This relationship made it costly for either side to disengage. Tariffs and technology restrictions were meant to restore control. Instead, they strengthened China's incentive to replace foreign inputs with domestic ones. When access to foreign technology becomes uncertain, investing at home becomes the logical response. Government support and private capital follow quickly.²

This is why the historical comparison matters. Economic pressure changes behaviour. It does not stop development. Like Britain under blockade, China has responded by shifting resources toward independence and upgrading.¹⁰ If the aim is to slow China's move into advanced industries, broad restrictions are the wrong tool. They make self-sufficiency more attractive and make faster progress more likely.

The United States is not weakening China through pressure. It is helping China learn how to function without the United States.⁹ History suggests that once this adjustment happens, it is very hard to reverse.

<Politics>

The Rise of REFORM UK

Please note this article was written in January 2026, so whilst the evidence may be slightly outdated, the points made remain.

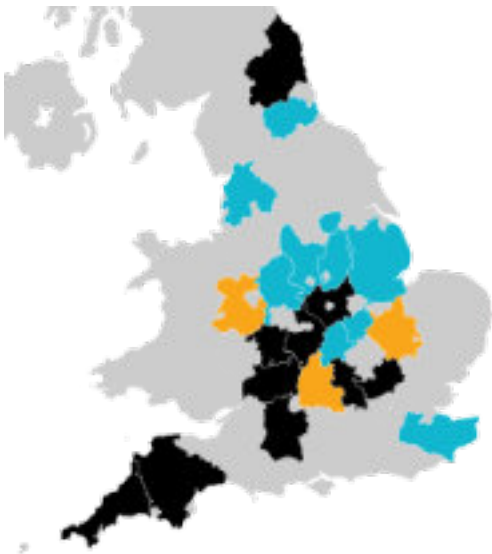
Written by Siddard Saktheesh
Edited by Kaivalya Pullakandam



Nigel Farage speaking at a Reform UK rally at Trago Mills, Devon



Nigel Farage speaking in the House of Commons, July 2024



The map above shows Reform council control (in blue) following the 2025 local elections.



Then Chairman Zia Yusuf addressing a Reform UK pre-election rally on 30 June 2024

On 20th January 2019, Nigel Farage announced his intention to lead the new 'Brexit Party' into the European elections - and beyond that, the next general elections - to a wave of scepticism. How was this party going to be any different from UKIP? And what would become of the party once Brexit was completed? Yet, fast forward more than seven years, two general elections and a rebrand later, Reform UK currently leads in the polls ¹ and 'Mr Brexit' has finally secured a parliamentary seat in Clacton. This rise of Reform UK raises the key question: will a century of duopoly in British politics come to an end in 2029? And if so, will Reform UK emerge as the victor on their tenth anniversary?

In late 2020, after Brexit had occurred under Boris Johnson's premiership in January of the same year, Nigel Farage announced that his party would officially rebrand as 'Reform UK', with Richard Tice as its party chairman. Retaining their teal logo with an arrow in the centre, Farage seemed keen to open this new chapter in British politics for himself and also his party, in the post-Brexit atmosphere. But many found it hard to take the new party seriously: they were termed an 'anti-lockdown party'^{2,3} by both the Standard and the Guardian with the general sentiment being that the party were more focused on the short-term and were unlikely to make a large impact in the long-term with many of their other launch policies, such as Farage wanting to abolish the House of Lords and overhaul the UK voting system, being seen as less relevant as a national problem. Their status as a new party was also heavily undermined by the association of some party members with radicalist movements and conspiracy theories, such as the 5G tower conspiracy during COVID.

Little did anyone at the time know, this minor 'protest party' ⁴ would soon be catapulted into the centre of British politics.

Reform UK fell under the radar for the next couple of years - a seemingly forgotten project when Nigel Farage, their face and fuel, decided to leave frontline politics in favour of campaigning for Donald Trump. A sequence of events, however, happened to work in Reform's favour. A series of Conservative controversies, starting with Partygate and leading up to the 2024 election, with surprisingly frequent new episodes of mishaps, left many traditional right-wing supporters looking for a new alternative. The cost-of-living crisis induced a lack of trust in the capabilities of the ruling party as lawmakers to be able to competently solve national problems and make the UK economically stable again. And it was with this backdrop that Richard Tice (who succeeded Farage as leader) announced that with 'no ifs, no buts' in early 2023, his party would launch an extensive campaign for 630 constituencies at the 2024 general election. The party was polling at a record high of 10%¹, enough for the Daily Telegraph to describe them as a 'threat on the Right'.⁵

In the ensuing campaign, Reform UK expanded their coverage to more national issues in a 'contract' with the people in their manifesto. They promised to stamp out illegal and unnecessary immigration, cut NHS waiting lists, affordable water and energy and a raise in real wages.⁶ Almost exactly a month before the

election, Nigel Farage announced his return to the party, displacing Tice as the leader and running in Clacton - the constituency that was famous for being UKIP's first seat in Parliament. Needless to say, the effect was immediate. In the week after his comeback, the party went up by no less than 5 percentage points in the polls, a remarkable boost. This was all tipped off with an above-par performance in the 2024 election, with Reform winning 14.3% of the popular vote, albeit a disproportionate 5 seats in the House of Commons.

*Needless to say,
the effect was
immediate.*

It would, however, be narrow-minded to attribute their electoral success to a single reason. The lead-up to the election was well executed by Reform UK. They were focused on what issues polls suggested that voters cared about most. They focused on policies to tackle the cost-of-living crisis with tax cuts and promised to stop all illegal

immigration - after all, it was branded as the 'immigration election.'⁷ Reform also realised that their main target should be Tory voters who were deeply unsatisfied by the Conservatives' failures, but also repelled by the more liberal nature of Labour. It should come as no surprise that immigration and cost of living were two of the issues that Tory voters were more likely to be concerned by, with 45% and 36% of Tory voters (respectively for each issue)⁸ seeing them as the important issues for the election.

Reform also understood the demographic they were aiming for, older white men outside of urban areas, who are more likely to be concerned about patriotism and British culture. Farage was key here - his scathing speeches focused almost always on culture, as shown when he accused Sunak that he 'doesn't understand our culture'⁹ after the D-Day debacle. Farage and others also gave a strong tone in their speeches, using statements to appeal to the masses. He played on the Conservatives' multitude of economic and political failures to paint a vivid picture of a country in 'deep crisis'¹⁰.

—
Even those in
the Tory Party
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enticing voters
to do the same.
—

Given that the electorate had not known anything other than Tory rule for nearly 15 years, any change, especially that punctuated by ultrarealistic statements which easily gained much media attention, was seen as necessary change. The defection of the very vocal Lee Anderson in March 2024 from the Conservatives was symbolic of this also as it showed that even those in the Tory Party were moving towards Reform UK, enticing voters to do the same.



Finally, the stark contrast of the manifestos of each party was also revealing. The Reform manifesto gets straight to five simple points, quickly consumable by an impatient society, compared to longer, more detailed manifestoes of the other parties. Farage and Tice were well aware that Reform were only looking at this election as a stage for future campaigns; they knew that winning in 2024 was out of the question. This explains their unsustainable and reactionary campaign. The whole ploy was to get a few seats and undermine other parties.

This is corroborated by the shift in Reform policies after the election. The image of a racist and extremist party had to go. Instead, although they deny it, Farage and Tice have begun to bring a more Thatcherite feel to the table and are now presenting themselves in a calmer and less wild fashion. Thatcherism is a libertarian (prioritising autonomy for people and businesses) ideal - exemplified by Thatcher's Euroscepticism, privatisation, and support for British companies. Parallels can be drawn to Reform's policies of 'Put British Businesses First' and 'Restore Britain's Sovereignty'.¹¹ The party now comes across as more level-headed - Tice has admitted that a budget black hole would be caused by Reform's planned £90 billion tax cuts and that these cuts would be unlikely. The party is also using the fact that a Reform government has not occurred yet to their advantage - it is harder to undermine the party without prior evidence of how they would rule. Reform UK is also playing heavily on the image that Britain is broken and that the UK needs to focus on itself and not on other countries.

Another cause for celebration for the party currently is the failings of

Keir Starmer and his cabinet. 13 U-turns and counting, Labour currently rank fourth in some polls - a stark contrast to the landslide victory of 2024. Starmer's policies have been unpopular; he has attacked the rural economy with his government's inheritance tax and has put a strain on the very working people that he promised to help throughout his campaign through policies like banning fire and rehire policies and ending all zero-hour contracts. Every mistake made by Starmer is matched by a rise in the polls for Reform. And why not? The gloomy aftertaste of the Tories still hangs over the country, and so the only viable alternative from Labour seems like Reform UK. This is reflected heavily by the fact that Reform has been ahead in the polls since early April 2025 when business owners were put under strain with their National Insurance contributions going up at the same time as minimum wages for those over the age of 21.

Electoral upsets are rare in democracies as old as Britain's. We haven't had a new winner in over a hundred years, so will the success in the polls last? Ultimately, 30% of the electorate is nowhere near the majority needed to form a confident

”

It is important to remember the three main key issues that voters care about most are the economy, immigration and health.

government that has the country's support without being doubted constantly by the media as Labour currently is. To answer this question, we need to compare the strength of the policies of the two big parties with that of Reform's. It is important to remember the three main key issues that voters care about most, according to a February 2026 YouGov poll, are the economy, immigration and health.

First, the Conservative party's 'renewal plan': £47 billion spending cuts, rolling back green restrictions and abolishing some taxes and stamp duty (the latter to make it easier to buy homes). The Tories also plan to withdraw from the ECHR, deport 150,000 illegal immigrants a year and ban the NHS from striking.¹²

The Labour Party has a 'Plan for Change'. They want a crackdown on crime, an increase in clean energy, £39 billion spent on new homes and 5 million more NHS appointments by appointing 2,500 new GPs. Their immigration policy focuses on current achievements and vaguely comments on 'rebuilding contribution-based migration'.¹³

We can see here the stark contrast in the two ideologies: Labour is more focused on spending and expanding public services, whilst the Tories want to cut spending and take



tougher measures on the NHS and immigrants alike, even willing to sacrifice the Net Zero promises they made. But where does Reform UK stand?

Reform certainly takes on a more Conservative-like approach: focusing only on the key issues. They wish to 'deport' all illegal immigrants, 'scrap' green levies, cut foreign aid and add tax incentives for NHS staff to increase employment and work rate.¹⁴ They have an increased focus on the rural economy; once again, targeting specific demographics. Reform's appeal is further increased by the current obsession with culture: many voters feel as if immigration and globalisation are negatively impacting British culture, and Reform certainly makes a strong appeal to this by mentioning the word 'British' in almost all of its official policies. The idea of cutting government spending is clearly more in line with what voters want: they do not want to be helping other countries when taxes keep rising, and they can barely see the benefits at home!

In fact, the tougher, more conservative approach seems to appeal to voters more. The recent failings of Labour have certainly played a part in this, but an impatient electorate seems to be more eager for toughness on policy, which ideas like banning strikes and quick deportations seem to enhance. This is shown by the fact that despite recent controversies of Nigel Farage's alleged racist remarks at school, many are quick to justify the idea that 'few of us were perfect as teenagers'¹⁵, that he was clouded by his age and the era, something unimaginable a few years ago. Even the temporary resignation of their own chairman, Zia Yusuf, due to a burqa ban, did not deter Reform at the polls.¹ The electorate, even the usually progressive youth, is more likely to distance itself from the slow processes that the Conservatives and Labour have been associated with, certainly buoyed by the media throwing words like 'stagnant nation'¹⁶ and 'poor'¹⁷ in relation to Britain's economy and GDP

growth. Simply put, the excitement about a Reform regime is because they break free from societal expectations of meekness, yet with just enough professionalism. This is representative of a broader political shift across Europe, where right-wing parties have gained significant ground, including the surge in the polls of Chega in Portugal and the coming into power of far-right governments in countries such as Italy. Reform's rise is unsurprising when you view the general trend in the growth of right wing parties across the continent.

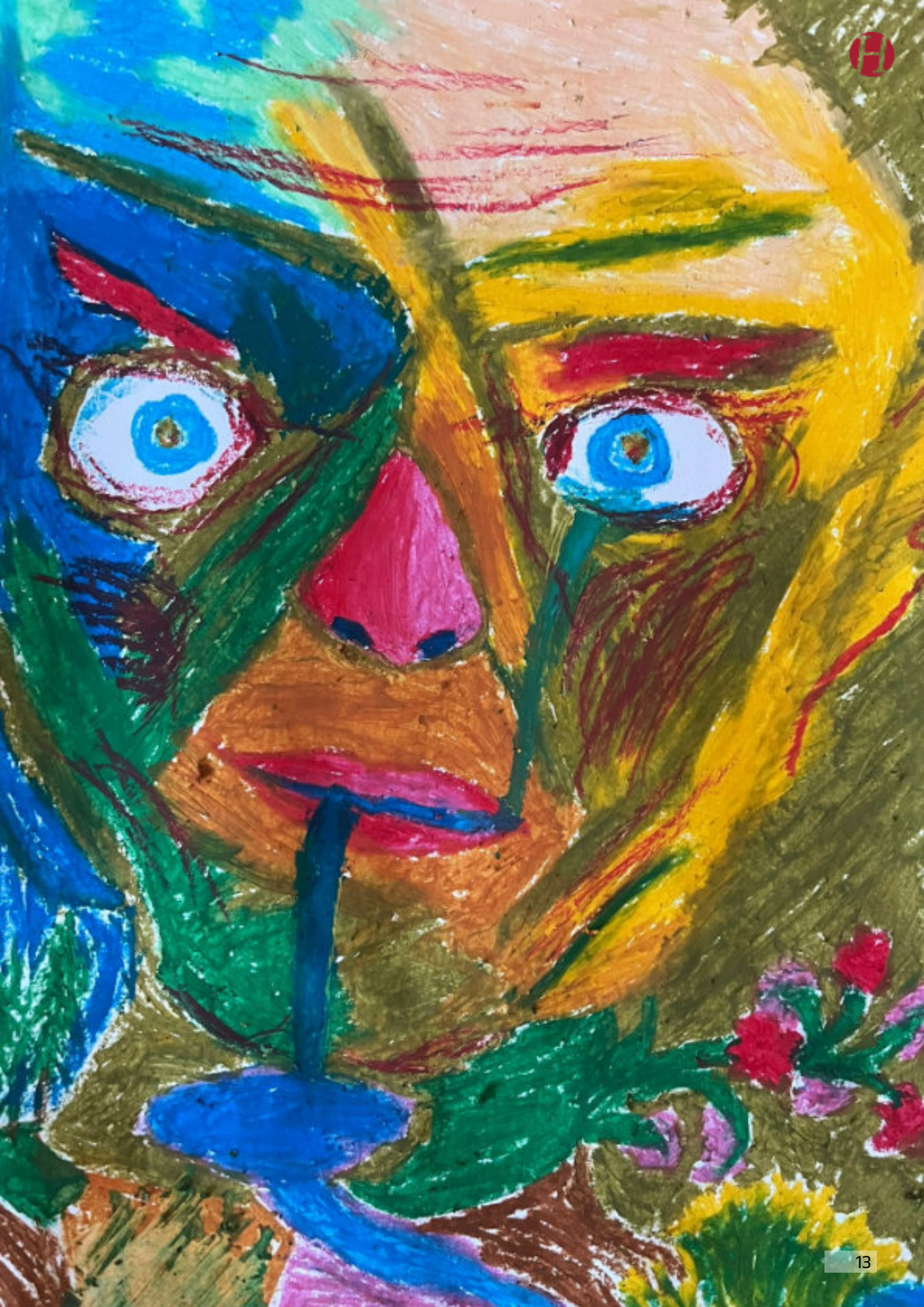
And, finally, the defections. Zahawi, Jenrick and Braverman within a fortnight. These gains are particularly resonant with many Tory voters who saw Jenrick as crucial to electoral success in 2029 due to his active politics and his constant posts on social media about day-to-day issues like graffiti and faredodging- he was exactly the politician that still upheld Tory values whilst appealing to this online generation. It goes without saying that currently, the policies of Reform and its populist rhetoric not only appeal to the voters but also to the very politicians that make up Reform UK's opposition due to their parties not exacting adequate change that helps the UK or due to the infighting of the two big parties. What we are witnessing in other countries seems a good sign for Reform, especially as they feel immune to major hits due to controversies. They have certainly worked to put themselves in the ideal place to challenge for government in 2029,

British political system shifting away from its traditional two-party politics



they will be treated as the biggest threat by other parties.

At a Brexit Party rally in May 2019, Farage emphasised that his new party aimed to 'challenge and break the two-party system.'¹⁸ 'We are attempting a peaceful political revolution in this country', he said.¹⁸ Now more than ever, with the landscape of the British political system shifting away from its traditional two-party politics to newer grounds, Farage seems as though he will make good on his promises.



<Politics>

How “free” should our speech be?

Written by Eshan Abbas
Edited by Atharva Pawargi

Freedom of speech. A core foundation of democracy. Whether it be engaging in a debate or discussing topics in a classroom, publicly protesting, or deciding what food to get with family, it’s something we take for granted, but don’t realise how much it shapes our everyday lives. This fundamental right emerged as early as in ancient Athens, where all men were free to openly discuss and debate politics in the open-air assembly. Over time, it has evolved and expanded globally, with figures such as John Stuart Mill who revolutionised attitudes to free speech at a time when exercising freedom of speech against authority was often punished.

Free speech has also been a key driver in pushing for change in the rights of the oppressed. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, for example, featured key leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., who used free speech through speeches, marches and protests to stand up to the corrupt system which unfairly discriminated against African Americans.¹ Without freedom of speech, we would also not be as able to progress as far in terms of scientific knowledge. Despite cigarette companies being aware of the fact that their products caused the global lung cancer epidemic, they hid this information from the public, valuing profits over all else. The free flow of information from researchers to the public on the dangers of smoking was essential in changing attitudes towards smoking so that these dangers could be recognised.²

Perhaps the most important change in our attitudes to freedom of speech was through the publishing of Mill's "On Liberty". In this philosophical book, Mill argues for the importance of following the Harm Principle, which states that society should only be free to interfere in the actions of an individual if it causes harm to others.³ In other words, individuals should be free to do whatever they want, provided they do not cause anyone else harm. As an extension of this, Mill came up with the idea of the "marketplace of ideas", where everyone would be free to discuss their ideas to reform society, no matter how popular they were. Mill believed that good ideas would be accepted into society, whilst bad ideas would be defeated through open argument, not suppression. These ideas were heavily influential in shaping understanding of freedom of expression within Britain, later becoming an international standard of human rights laws regarding free speech.

So what constitutes "harm"? After all, there is no point in following this principle if we cannot come to an agreement on what harm can be defined as. Mill defined harm as anything which infringes upon people's rights or interests, which is different from offence. This is a clear distinction to make – whilst harm is an objective violation of others' rights or interests, simply offending someone through exercising free speech is subjective and inevitable. As we will learn, drawing the line between free speech and hate speech is increasingly important.

Whilst free speech is a fundamental right allowing people to express their opinions, hate speech is malicious and targeted, promoting discrimination and/or violence against individuals

based on protected characteristics such as race, sex, and religion, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.⁴ Whilst in the UK this distinction is more clear-cut, in many countries it is less defined, often cultivating violence and fearmongering when used by figures with influence. In the US, for example, some forms of hate speech are protected under laxer First Amendment rights. This gives a platform for controversial radical figures such as Nick Fuentes, who is known to promote racism, misogyny, and homophobia on his podcast, and who at one point encouraged political violence at rallies during the 2021 Capitol attack.⁵

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...it's something we take for granted, but don't realise how much it shapes our everyday lives.

It is also important to recognise how governments may exploit pre-existing hate and hostility to advance political goals. Take the example of current-day Israel – propaganda, often reinforced by mainstream Western media, is used to dehumanise and vilify Palestinians, fuelling a cycle of hatred and violence between the two groups.⁶ This shows how free speech can become dangerous when used to systematically dehumanise a group and highlights how hate speech can be used to spread division and encourage further violence between different groups. This begs the question: where do we draw the line between free expression of opinion and speech that carries malicious intent?

Whilst this is a legitimate question, we should be mindful of the grey area where limiting hate speech can carry over into censorship or even the totalitarian violation of key democratic freedoms. Take the example of countries like Russia and North Korea: concerns over the content shown to citizens result in the reinforcement of state-sponsored propaganda and harsh punishments, rather than free and democratic societies.^{7 8} Therefore, many argue that limiting free speech, even with initially good intentions, could set a dangerous precedent and potentially lead to disastrous consequences.

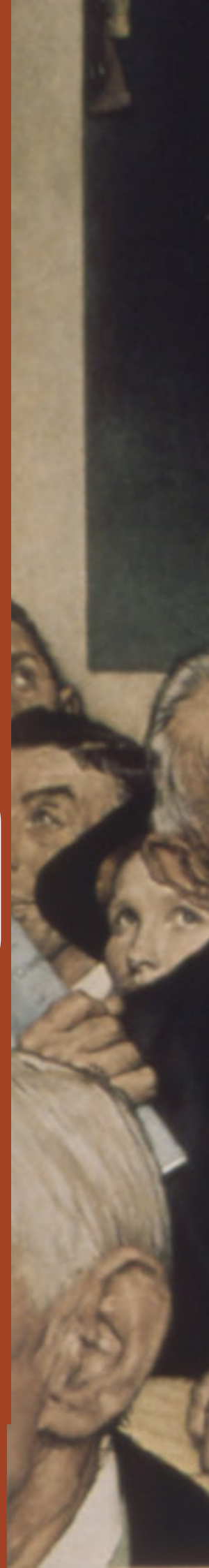
Living in an increasingly digital age, we often regard the news we consume online as valuable, helping us stay up to date with the latest stories. After all, being able to access almost all the world's information at the touch of a button seems to be the best form of free expression we could ask for. However, it is important to consider the role of social media in spreading divisive and even hateful content. Social media algorithms thrive off engagement, whether that be positive or negative, and cycle this content to new users, creating an endless loop of comments, views, and likes. This has been worsened through the use of AI deepfakes, which make it increasingly harder to tell the difference between what's real and what's been artificially created to spread misinformation. As P.T. Barnum once said, "all publicity is good publicity", and this is exemplified through the media we consume daily.

But if you do not believe this, consider the statistics. According to GOV.UK, 67% of 15–18-year-olds report having been exposed to hate speech online, with 21% having been victims.⁹ Sadly, the consequences of hate speech online extend far beyond the digital landscape and can cause mass devastation and even injury. Often, minority groups are falsely scapegoated for real-life disasters. Look at the 2024 Southport riots – false accusations of a Muslim immigrant being responsible for stabbings spread like wildfire on social media.¹⁰ By the time these rumours could be debunked, it was too late; riots increased across the country and attacks on mosques and the police led to large-scale violence.¹¹ False news and hostile language towards Asians during COVID-19, such as social media conspiracy theories and the association of Chinese people with the virus, also led to an increase in anti-Asian hate crime by fuelling prejudice against East Asians.¹² While we may think of these events as long in the past, it is important to acknowledge the long-lasting effects of these incidents and equip ourselves to better prepare for the future through tighter regulations.

This can be done by stricter safeguarding policies on social media platforms. It is easy to fall into political rabbit holes, as algorithms feed users the content they interact with most, making radicalisation more likely. To do this, social media platforms should not give visibility to extremist and polarising figures, who are able to attract young viewers and encourage the spread of hateful discourse. This should be emphasised given that the majority of social media platforms have a minimum age of 13 years old (which can easily be bypassed by entering an incorrect age), reinforcing the need for strong protection against illegal hate speech whilst still protecting the fundamental freedom of expression.

Overall, maintaining the line between free speech and hate speech is a delicate balance. Whilst it is important to protect the right to freely express opinions, this should not be done at the cost of spreading hatred, discrimination, or bigotry against protected groups. The only way to achieve this is through change – it is vital to increase education on the difference between expressing a belief and spreading harmful ideas. Wrongful hate and hostility towards others is a sad reality of our world, but with responsibility, care, and awareness, we can work to prevent it.

“**...key leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. [...] used free speech [...] to stand up to the corrupt system...**”





Is Tax Avoidance Legal Corruption?

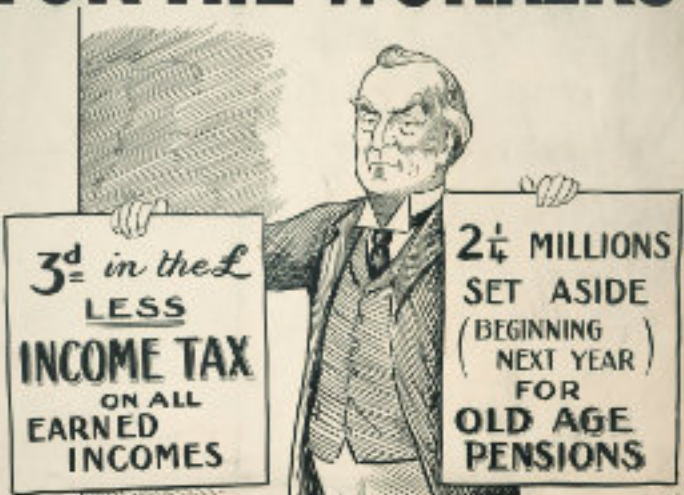
Written by Aariv Johar
Edited by Aarin Bhandari

Powerful individuals and corporations are often at the forefront of “tax avoidance”. These are considered loopholes or a way around a problem using an inconsistency in the matter concerning the legality of the situation. These are used to minimize the tax that they pay, often for personal gain, or profit maximization. They can do this because the tax code is full of exemptions and grey areas, so wealthy individuals can afford top-tier accountants to reclassify income, shift profits to low-tax countries by using shell corporations, or borrowing against unrealized asset gains. Corruption is when economic privilege is unfairly exploited for private gain.¹

I would take the stance that tax avoidance is legal corruption, for several reasons.



HELP FOR THE WORKERS



MR. ASQUITH'S Second Budget brings relief to the workers—he takes the first definite step towards Old-Age Pensions, and reduces by threepence the Income Tax on all earned Incomes under £2,000 a year.

Firstly, the law is written to foster an equitable society where all individuals contribute for greater good. While tax avoidance complies with the letter of the law, it violates its intent. This not only impacts society, but actively harms it, because tax is used by governments to fund healthcare, like the NHS, state schools (like Wilson's), and provide benefits, like pensions and council housing. These improve people's quality of life, reduce the widening inequality, and promote social cohesion. By the highest earners avoiding tax, the redistributive nature of taxation is undermined, so societal progression slows, because vast sums of money leave the system, reducing governments' ability to invest into the public, in sectors such as education, to promote better social mobility, or healthcare, to increase people's life expectancy. And wealthier individuals should be responsible for societal progression because they have disproportionate access to capital, so their investments can fund large-scale solutions that governments or individuals cannot, and it is also an ethically correct thing to do; those who benefit most from a system/country have the greatest stake and responsibility in maintaining it.



This mirrors corruption, because, whilst legal, the outcomes reflect those caused by illegal corruption, which include benefits being reaped by a small, powerful and wealthy group, while the costs are borne by the wider population, increasing inequality, and weakened public services, such as transport. Therefore, as the socioeconomic consequences of corruption and tax avoidance are effectively the same, I would consider tax avoidance to be legal corruption.

However, some may argue that corporations have a duty to maximise profits for their owners/shareholders/employees, for example, through the form of dividends. By saving costs on tax, corporations have an increased cash flow and an ability to begin/maintain/continue to increase their dividend payout. Some would argue that not only is this economically rational, it is also beneficial for the long-term success of a company, as it allows them to remain competitive in global markets. Because it creates value for a (large) group of individuals who have intrinsic interest in the company, tax avoidance is a shrewd, yet legal way of minimising costs and prioritising the interests of shareholders. They may also argue that being profit-driven has unintentional, but beneficial outcomes, because the interests of shareholders and wider society align. For example, the company Amazon – they are a for-profit company, but by being more profit-driven, they can expand into other sectors, can create more jobs in these sectors or push projects forward. Not only do they create equity value, but also general value, like easier access to resources, which aids development.

“ While tax avoidance complies with the letter of the law, it violates its intent.

I would rebut this argument by stating that legal compliance does not justify something to be “ethically correct”; tax avoidance is simply a short-sighted act. Not only does tax avoidance erode societal trust in corporations, which can be detrimental to the long-term growth, e.g. due to boycotting, reduced investment due to reputational damage, it also overlooks the growth of the public services which the corporations themselves rely on. For example, in 2012, Starbucks faced widespread criticism for paying just £8.6 million in UK tax on £3 billion in sales over 14 years.² Therefore, short-term gains are offset by longer cost, due to public scrutiny, media backlash and public boycotting, despite Starbucks’ voluntarily agreeing to pay a further £20 million in tax over the next two years. This demonstrates that because it is not a genuine exercise of corporate responsibility, but rather a manipulation of legal loopholes for private gain, hence it is a corrupt act, as it aligns with the aforementioned definition.

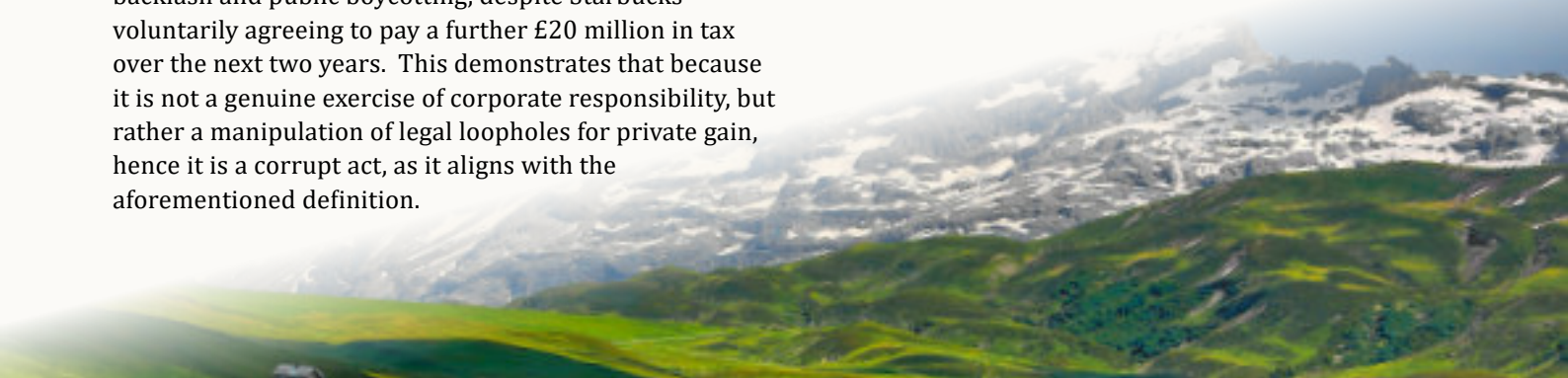
Furthermore, tax avoidance is legal corruption because it reflects unequal access to power and influence. Because wealthy individuals have the ability to influence tax laws through lobbying and donations, or can hire teams of accountants, the principle of “all are equal before the law” is undermined: ordinary citizens and small businesses do not have equivalent access to these tax strategies.³

However, some may argue that one cannot place the blame solely on individuals for avoiding tax, because countries deliberately set their own tax rates to attract foreign business and capital, e.g. tax havens, like the Cayman Islands, and Monaco/Dubai, where there is a 0% personal income tax. People choose to act in their own best interests, to keep a larger share of their income, even if it is through lobbying or shell companies.

I would rebut this by arguing that even if one country lowering taxes is rational for them, the global result is a race to the bottom; tax bases would erode everywhere, public services suffer, and ordinary citizens (who can’t afford to relocate their income) are faced with a larger financial burden. The people least responsible bear the greatest cost, aligning with our definition of corruption, as the public do not benefit, rather “suffer” more and private individuals become wealthier at their expense.

Also, corporations consistently always abuse their economic privilege, to receive benefits through lobbying, as roughly 69% of all S&P 500 companies engage in lobbying⁴, and the true figure is much higher, because this data is only derived from mandatory public filings, as federal lobbying expenditures above a certain threshold must be reported under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995. Companies who spend less than this threshold simply won’t be reported, even though they engage in lobbying.

Therefore, even though these strategies are legal, they represent an abuse of economic power for private gain, demonstrating that tax avoidance relies on structural privilege with regards to wealth, which will always have varying degrees of equality in a capitalist society, such as the United Kingdom.⁵



Why do we feel *greed*?

...and what is its influence on politics and wider society?

Written by Vihaan Srivastava Edited by Aarav Mehta

Greed is a common human impulse.¹ It often arises from envy: seeing what others have can create a desire to possess the same things. When envy is combined with weakened moral restraints, it can harden into greed: an intent to pursue advantage regardless of the consequences for others.

Self-help slogans that promise success by 'manifesting' desire simplify the matter: effort matters, but outcomes are also shaped by power and opportunity. Those in positions of power — whether a popular student or a national leader — can convert desire into advantage by exploiting their control within societal hierarchies.

On a larger scale, self-interest can be masked by policies that appear beneficial. For example, following the Great Depression of 1929, the New Deal policies were established by the government.² This entailed the employment of numerous people, fair working conditions, good pay rates and even taxing the rich instead of the poor. In fact, many businesses prided themselves on paying large amounts of their profits to their employees every year. This is a period often known as the Golden Age of Capitalism.³ The New Deal is better read as an example of institutional restraint on unregulated markets rather than 'greed' — it expanded employment and social protections in response to the crisis.

Investigations (e.g. ProPublica's Secret IRS Files) have shown how some very wealthy individuals can minimise income tax liability through asset transactions and tax planning. Observers often judge this arrangement as unfair even when it is legal. Surely, they can afford to pay their taxes? However, despite the ethical dilemma faced, nothing they do is illegal. It all has to do with the resources one has available to themselves.

Much behaviour is driven by self-interest.

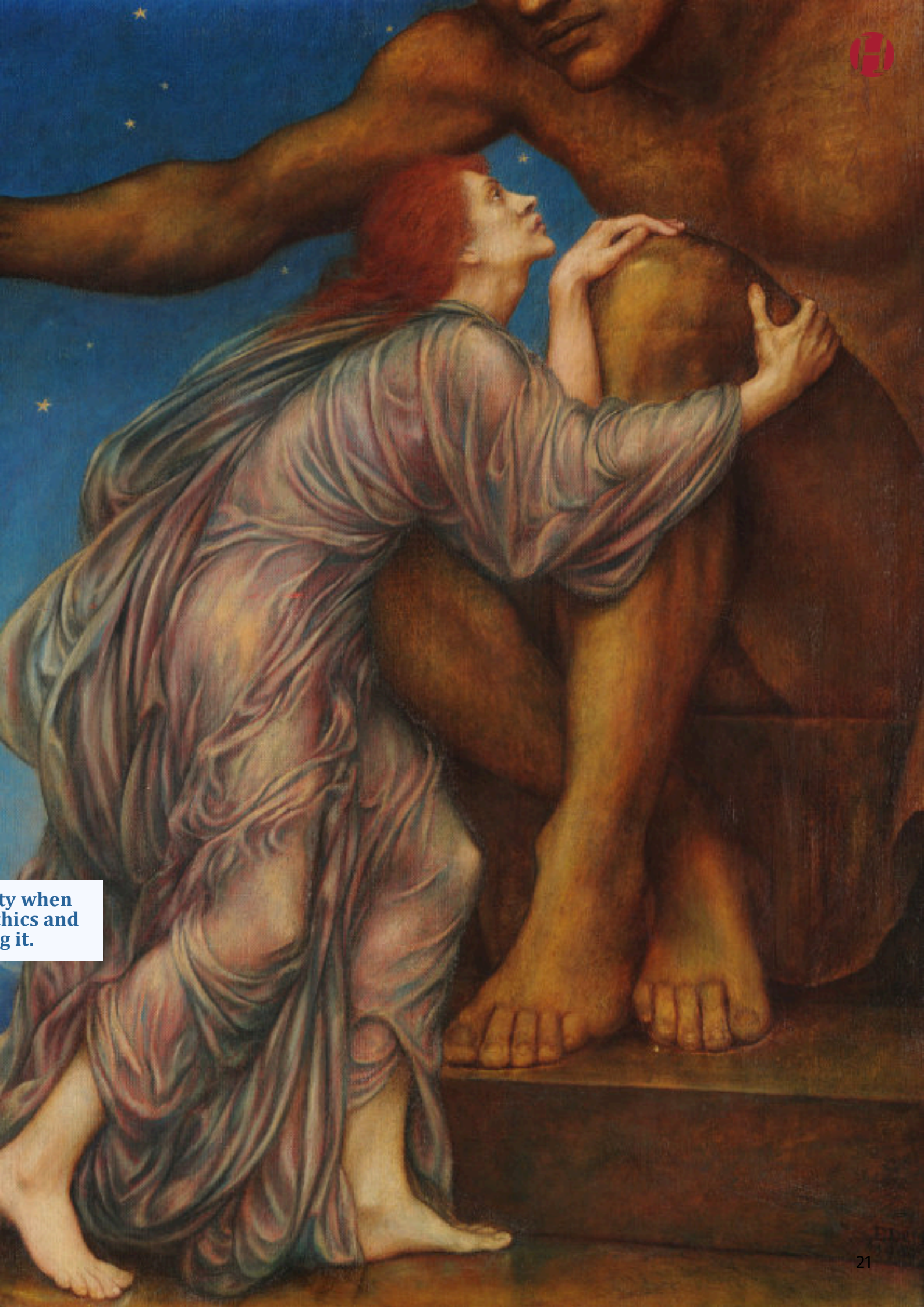
Second, greed can have a massive impact on a person's quality of life, particularly when those in power exploit it. For example, let us say that an alien government on planet X decides to reduce taxes for the rich aliens. Why? Normally because the rich have so much money, that once they are at that point they begin to feel that it is not enough. Now while we may feel that thought to be absurd, it is natural to begin to crave what we do not have regardless of how reasonable it may feel.⁴

Coming back to planet X, since the rich now have less tax, the poor have more of it. This leads to these aliens having less disposable income and therefore they cannot afford many basic needs such as shelter and food. As a result, their quality-of-life worsens and suddenly, we have a large proportion of the population with a sum of money less than what the top 5% have.

Finally, greed can also have a huge impact on your social relationships on a smaller scale. When you look for a friend, you look for someone who you can trust and rely upon (among other things). However, when that friend cares too much about their own personal interests, the prospect of befriending them starts to feel less attractive.⁵ This is where greed starts to merge with selfishness and toxicity. You would not want to be friends with an individual who prioritises themselves over friendship.

“Greed corrodes trust and equality left unchecked; both personal and institutions matter in restraining it.”

To conclude, greed is a quality which is inevitable to be encountered in society and world politics. People with the power and with the positioning will take the opportunity to abuse it at some point or another: it's inevitable. It is basic human psychology. However, I want to emphasise that although it is an innate quality, it can be combatted and controlled to limit the extents to which it is exercised. The whole issue of institutionalised greed everywhere we go was introduced because the people to enter power had no real way of regulating it. Now, with the introduction of more widespread laws and monitoring around power exploitation, we can reduce its social and political impacts and pave the way for a more just society.



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Can we really know anything?

Written by Haresh Sunil Kumar

Edited by Oscar Wong

Epistemology. The philosophy of knowledge. It seems an endlessly paradoxical branch of philosophy, questioning whether we can ever really know anything, whether we really exist, or find ourselves in some 'Matrix-esque' simulation. Regardless of the complexity or, to some, pointlessness of these kinds of questions, they remain interesting areas of study nonetheless.

First of all, what even is knowledge? Plato, for instance, goes about defining it as "true belief with an account" ¹, or "justified, true belief" ². This is known as the tripartite view, the idea that truth, belief and justification are all individually necessary, and, together, enough to qualify something as knowledge. The absence of any one of these premises in knowledge raises significant problems with whether we can really claim for it to be knowledge. If we 'know' something but don't believe it, it seems rather contradictory. Similarly, if we say we 'know' something that isn't true, it appears more of a misguided belief. And if we have a solely 'true belief' without evidence, and rather make a baseless guess towards something which happens to be true, its lack of certainty makes it difficult to classify as knowledge. I find myself almost completely accepting Plato's definition, except perhaps for the idea of it having to be judged with certainty to be true. What are the grounds for truth? It is much easier to be quite sure of something being true, than absolutely certain; the latter might even be somewhat impossible.

The idea, then, that we can really 'know' anything, is a difficult one. The knowledge from a thousand years ago is vastly different to the knowledge of today; our predecessors, who took for granted that the solar system follows a geocentric model, in which the planets revolve around the Earth, would have felt they knew this for a fact. Disproving the geocentric model by the introduction of the heliocentric model, through our observations in outer space of the planets orbiting the Sun, now leads us to collectively have this justified belief. Yet who can say if modern day knowledge is true, regardless of whether we believe it, or if we have supposed evidence for it?

The uncertainty with which we regard questions of knowledge only increases

when we ask: do we really exist? The precursor to everything else. Perhaps the validity of all other knowledge would only matter if we exist. One of the most famous arguments in support of our existence is René Descartes', using the phrase "Cogito, ergo sum", or "I think, therefore I am" ³. The philosopher himself put forward the proposition "I am, I exist,' is necessarily true, every time I express it or conceive of it in my mind"⁴. For thoughts to exist, surely so must a thinker; argued Descartes, proven true by definition. Then, whether it's as a brain in a vat, or as a living, breathing human, the French philosopher argued that the most logical conclusion would be for us to exist.



Another argument given is a simpler one, that of just being able to see, hear, feel, experience the world around us in some way. But our senses can surely be deceived, as put forward again by Descartes ⁵, in his bid to try and re-evaluate the validity of all his beliefs. Such evidence for the deception of sight and hearing is present in the idea of dreams and hallucinations; while seemingly unlikely, life itself could be argued to be a perpetual dream from which you are unable to wake, and unable to realise that you are in a dream, similar to how a dream can feel indistinguishable from reality. If that was taken to be true, you could look at the people around you and think that they weren't real, merely projections of the mind. We only ever see life from our perspective, so how are we to know that everyone else too has a 'perspective', the viewpoint of another actual person, one who actually exists. As a result,

Descartes raises the idea that our perception is not infallible ³ - infallibilism being the state of knowledge being justified and true, without any room for doubt - and as a result, there is really very little we can know for certain in general.

So, what if our existence is a lie? What does it change? Living our lives in existential disbelief isn't exactly the most efficient way to go about things, some would say. So basing things upon a few axioms, some base principles that aren't necessarily guaranteed to be true but are nonetheless likely, often enables us to do so much more. For example, as long as we believe that angles in a triangle add up to 180°, and that a triangle has three sides, we open up multiple other branches of maths, including trigonometry and calculations involving Pythagoras' Theorem, that are also true by definition. These guided 'assumptions', then, these important foundational ideas, are essential for the progress of the world, and a testament to the importance of not doubting everything around us, simply for the sake of doubting it.

Now, back to our original question: can we really know anything? Considering Descartes' rather compelling argument, we know that we exist, as some form of a thinker; and yet, we cannot fully prove that all we see and hear is true. Although little can be proven beyond all doubt, it certainly helps to firmly define or state things, ones with large banks of evidence behind them, so that we can progress onwards. We could choose to not believe anything, to not even believe in our own existence and thereby the significance of our actions. But, as I see it, that would be pretty unhelpful in terms of actually getting anywhere and doing anything. Even Descartes himself, who posed some of the biggest questions in epistemology, can't really be called a complete sceptic, a philosopher who questions the possibility of knowledge itself⁶. Instead, he sought only to "begin afresh from the foundations" ⁷, and go about trying to look for what he could know for certain, removing any past assumptions. These existential questions, then, aside from being interesting, can be used, to a degree, to rein in the array of assumptions or guesses we might be inclined to make as we continue to try and discover things, and help us to at least try and be more sure of what we know.

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Artwork by Nabeel Irfan, Y12

For many of you reading, the stock market might seem like something distant or overly complex—something you only hear about in business class or see on the news when something goes wrong. But in reality, the stock market is one of the most important systems in the modern world. It influences job opportunities, retirement savings, tech innovation, inflation, and even the price of your daily coffee. Understanding how it works, even at a basic level, can be incredibly empowering for young people just starting out in life.

The stock market is essentially a giant marketplace where people buy and sell ownership in companies

The stock market is essentially a giant marketplace where people buy and sell ownership in companies. These ownership units are called stocks or shares. When you buy a stock, you're buying a small piece of a company. For example, if you buy one share of Apple, you technically own a tiny part of Apple. This gives you a claim on some of the company's earnings, and possibly a vote in some of its decisions. More importantly for most investors, if Apple grows and becomes more valuable, the value of your share goes up—and you can sell it for a profit.¹

Companies use the stock market to raise money. If a company wants to expand—maybe build a new factory, develop a new product, or hire more workers—it needs capital. Instead of taking out loans, many companies go public and sell shares of themselves in an Initial Public Offering (IPO). This way, they raise money from investors, and in return, investors get to share in the company's success.²

Prices in the stock market are always moving. These changes are driven by a mix of factors: how well a company is doing financially, the overall state of the economy, interest rates, political decisions, global events, and even investor emotions. If people are optimistic about the economy, stock prices usually go up. If there's fear, uncertainty, or bad news, the market often falls.³ That's why you'll see stocks jump on positive job reports or drop after a major geopolitical crisis.⁴

You might think, "This is interesting, but I'm a school kid. Why should I care about the stock market right now?" The answer is: because it already affects you. Even if you don't own stocks yourself, chances are your future retirement account, your parents' savings, your school's funding, and even your job prospects are tied to the market in some way.⁵ When the stock market does well, companies often hire more people, invest in new projects, and offer better benefits. When it crashes, companies may freeze hiring or cut costs. That can affect whether you get a job after graduation—or how stable that job will be.⁶

The market also shapes the cost of borrowing. Inflation, interest rates, and student loan repayments are all connected to economic trends that the market reflects.⁷ The more you understand this system, the more informed your decisions will be—whether it's how to save, when to invest, or what career path to choose.

Recently, several major factors have been influencing the market. One of the biggest is politics. For example, former President Donald Trump had a major impact on investor behavior. During his time in office, policies like corporate tax cuts and deregulation made the market surge.⁸ However, his trade war with China and unpredictable communication style also led to spikes in market volatility.⁹ Even now, with his continued presence in U.S. politics and the possibility of another run for president, markets pay close attention to how Trump-related events might shape future policy.¹⁰

Inflation has also played a huge role in market behavior. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation surged due to supply chain disruptions and increased consumer demand. In



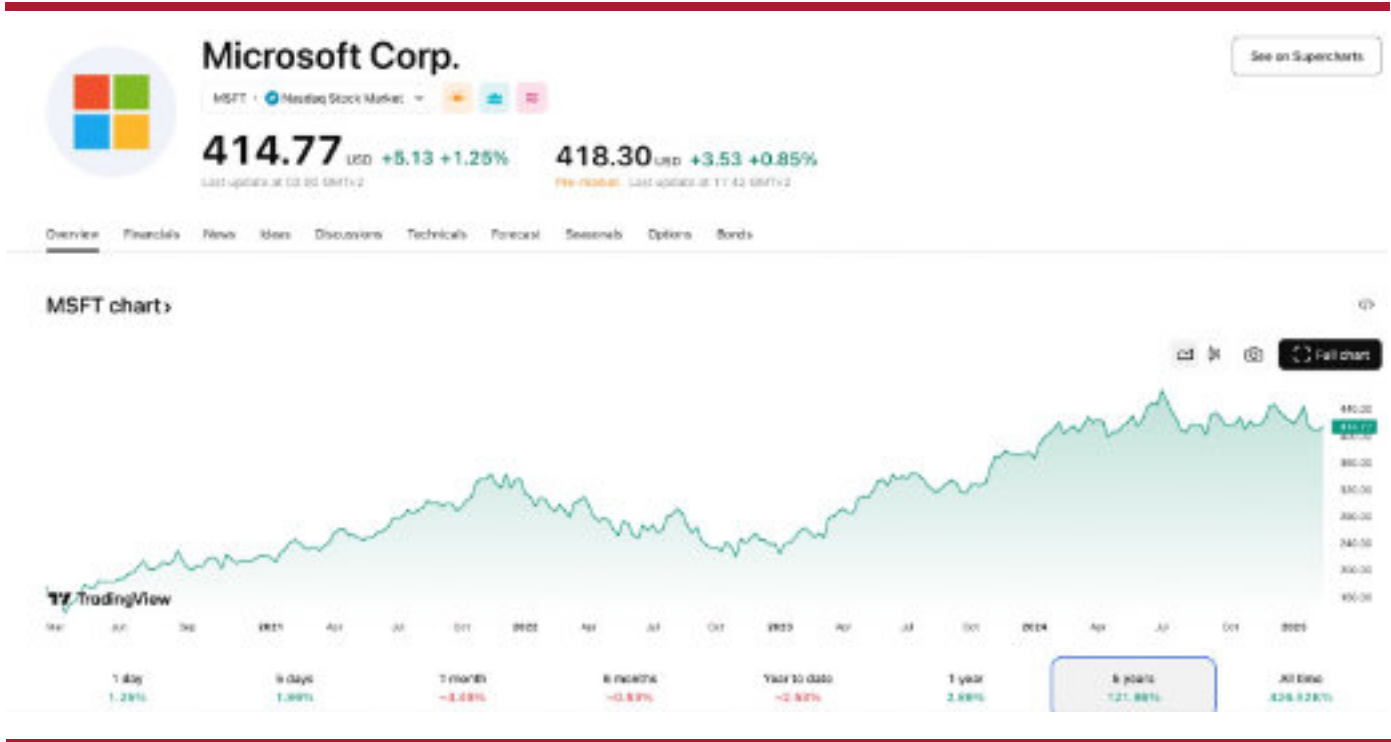
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The Stock Market Explained

What It Is, How It Works, and Why It Matters

Written by Shazil Sami

Edited by Kaivalya Pullakandam



response, the Federal Reserve and other central banks raised interest rates to cool the economy.¹¹ This made borrowing more expensive—for businesses, students, and homeowners alike—and contributed to a slowdown in growth. Investors tend to dislike high interest rates because they reduce profits and make safer investments like bonds more attractive compared to stocks.¹²

At the same time, new technologies like artificial intelligence have become a driving force in the market. Companies like Nvidia, Microsoft, and Google have seen their stock prices soar thanks to advancements in AI.¹³ Investors are betting big on AI transforming everything from education and healthcare to finance and manufacturing. This wave of innovation is creating both massive opportunities and serious risks, especially if companies can't keep up with expectations or if regulations fall behind.¹⁴

Global events continue to add

uncertainty. Conflicts in Ukraine, tensions between the U.S. and China, and climate-related disruptions are all shaping how markets behave. Every time a global crisis occurs, it ripples through the economy and the stock market. Energy prices spike, supply chains get disrupted, and investor confidence is shaken.¹⁵

As a student, this might feel overwhelming, but it's actually a great time to start learning. You don't need to become a day trader or memorize financial jargon. Even just understanding the basics can help you make smarter decisions about your own money. For example, long-term investing in broad index funds—a collection of stocks from across the market—has historically been one of the best ways to grow wealth over time.¹⁶ Apps like Robinhood, Acorns, or Fidelity make it easier than ever to start investing with just a few pounds.¹⁷

Looking ahead, the future of the stock market will likely be shaped by five

major trends: the rise of AI and automation, the shift toward green energy and sustainability, ongoing political instability, digital assets like cryptocurrency, and increasing global interconnectivity. These factors will not only affect stock prices but also job markets, education systems, and the way we live our lives.

In short, the stock market is not just something that exists for billionaires on Wall Street. It's a living, breathing part of the world economy that touches nearly every part of your future. Whether you're launching a startup, planning your career, or just trying to understand the news, knowing how the market works gives you an edge. And the earlier you start learning, the more that knowledge can grow—its an investment.

**Long-term investing in broad index funds
—a collection of stocks from across the
market— has historically been one of the
best ways to grow wealth over time.**

NB: Please note that this is not financial advice. Readers under 18 must speak to a parent before investing.

The Hidden Complexities of Rent...

Written by Sriram Garla
Edited by Siddard Saktheesh

What is rent? The answer seems obvious at first – it's a fixed amount of money that you pay regularly for the use of a room, house, car, television, etc. that someone else owns¹. 19th century economist David Ricardo defines rent as the difference between the produce obtained by the employment of two equal quantities of capital and labour². This definition seems odd, even enigmatic at first, but it uncovers the hidden mechanisms behind modern housing prices and land scarcity. This article explores the striking applications of a 200-year-old theory, from business location to urban land.

The full comprehensive version of David Ricardo's Theory of Rent appeared in his 1817 book titled *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*³. He argued that rent stems from scarcity – where human wants are unlimited despite there being finite resources (land in this case). Consider the context of a farmland, where population is low and land is abundant and let Land A be a highly productive piece of farmland, producing 100 tonnes of grain every year. Ricardo argues that a farmer could start farming on Land A virtually rent-free, since no scarcity exists and thus landlords cannot demand a payment. Once population rises and Land A becomes fully occupied, farming extends to Land B, a farmland only producing 40 tonnes of grain every year. Here Land B becomes the marginal land which is the least productive land which is still in use. By using the concept of differential rent, Ricardo suggests that rent charged on Land A should be the value of its productivity advantage over marginal land: the difference between the productivity of Land A (100 tonnes) and the productivity of Land B (40 tonnes), meaning that rent on Land A will now be the equivalent of 60 tonnes of grain.

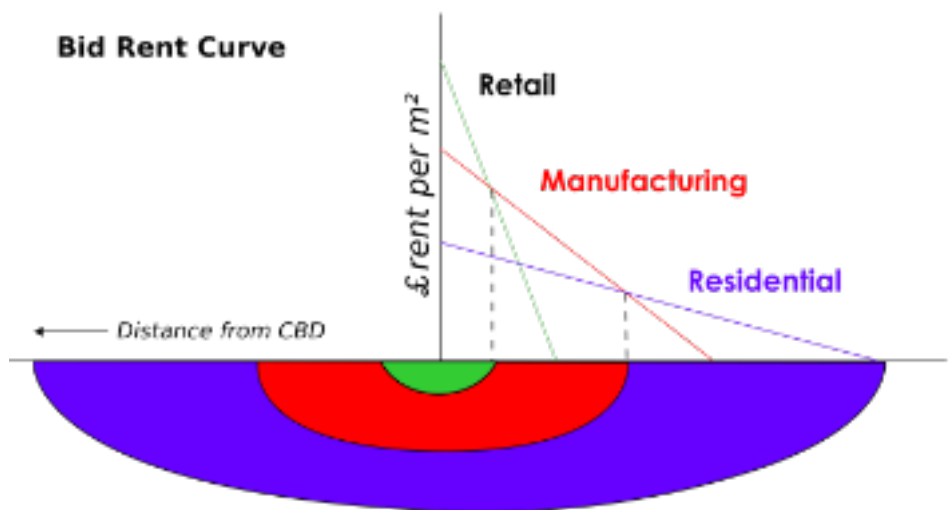
Fundamentally, Ricardo argues that only 2 factors determine rent: the difference in productivity between a given land and the marginal land, and the importance of the productivity itself.

Take another example. Why does bottled water costs so much at the airport – notoriously priced at upwards of over 15% their local street prices⁴? Some argue that airport shops have no choice but to charge premium prices in order to cover their monumental rent. But Ricardo deems this is a flawed argument – rent is not a cost that determines price, it is a surplus that arises due to a unique business location. But what are the advantages of an airport location that fundamentally allow landlords to demand such high rents? Most significantly, travellers prioritise speed and convenience at an airport – making them almost price-blind. Demand for water is inelastic in this case. Due to this unique advantage, business can capitalise on price-blind consumers and maximise revenue. But Ricardo argues that due to this unique advantage, several businesses will scramble to secure a spot on airport land, scarcity is created and bargaining power shifts to landlords, who can henceforth demand the high rents



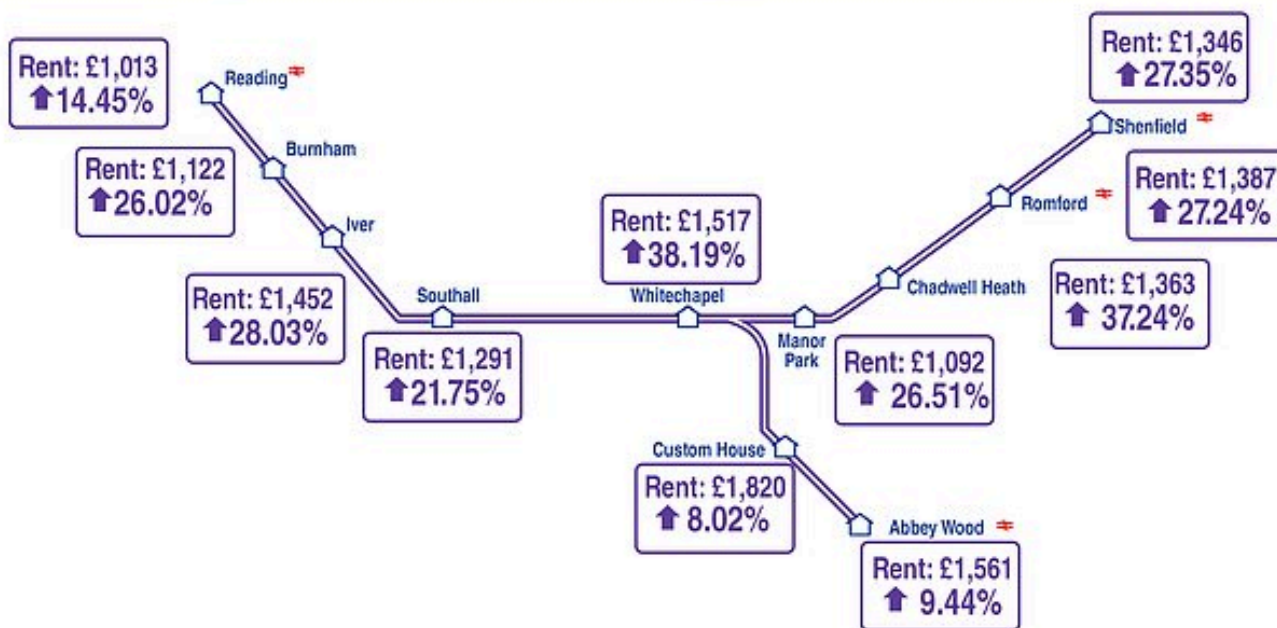
businesses face. This principle can be applied to barber shops, coffee-shops, cinemas and hundreds of other businesses where location is critical.⁵

Let us recall Ricardo's core principle of rent – rent arises as some locations are more productive than others. This can be applied to modern housing markets – rent reflects the advantages of a location, not the cost of producing a home. This is because the location



Consequence on land use

How average rents have climbed along the Elizabeth line since 2012



itself is scarce and highly valued.

In the rent curve on the previous page, the x-axis represents the distance from the central business district, and the y-axis represents the maximum price that a user is willing to pay per m². This reflects exactly how rent stems from the advantage of the locations, rather the cost of construction itself. For example, commercial property has the highest productivity near the central business district, as it offers high foot traffic. Industrial areas require infrastructure such as roads to enable logistics, hence are located in the next furthest area away from the central business district. Residential areas are located furthest from the central business district, as renters are more sensitive to high rents.

A modern application of Ricardo's argument is illustrated by the effect on rental prices due to the construction of the Elizabeth line. Opened in May 2022, the Elizabeth line has become the UK's busiest train line, carrying 1 in 6 passengers in the UK.⁶ Also titled as the Crossrail Effect, it highlights how rental prices were instantly affected – following the 2008 conformation, rental values within 500m of a London station instantaneously increased by an average of 3%.⁷ The Elizabeth line offers increased connectivity – bringing 1.5 million people within key

business districts like Canary Wharf and the City of London.⁹ Locations near stations offer better access to jobs, services and amenities, and these advantageous areas of land are in fixed supply. Thus, landlords capture the benefits upon the announcement of Crossrail, exactly as Ricardo's argument predicted.

Ultimately the fact that Ricardo's model is solely based on land scarcity and differential productivity exposes its greatest weakness – its lack of consideration for other economic factors. This is illustrated clearly by government strategies to recover from the 2008 financial crisis, where the Bank of England aggressively cut interest rates from 5.75% in 2007 to a mere 0.5% in March 2009.¹¹ This aims to stimulate borrowing and spending, whereby mortgage repayments become cheaper, and people can borrow larger amounts for the same monthly repayment. Consequently, house prices rose - a contradiction of Ricardo's theory. Ricardo states that rent arises because land is more productive or better located. But house prices rose due to financial policy and economic climate, and not because of improvements in land nor new transport as he suggested.

Ricardo's central theory that landlords can capture surplus rent due to location still applies in modern

housing markets, especially in cities where rent is driven by infrastructure and utility. Simply due to its outdated and significant assumptions, it cannot be applied to complex and modern economies. Ricardo's theory only applies where land is in fixed supply and assumes that more "fertile" land is used first.¹² Most importantly, it fails to acknowledge that speculation and government policy have a major role in rent pricing, as shown in the response to the 2008 financial crisis where house prices rose due to cheap credit rather than any improvement in land "productivity". Whilst Ricardo's theory accurately explains how rent arises in agricultural contexts via differential productivity and presents the core mechanism of rent in cities, it is heavily limited in modern economies, where speculation and government policy significantly affect pricing, as opposed to solely land productivity as suggested by Ricardo.

Risk vs. Reward: Why We Choose the Certainty of an Insurance Premium?

Written by Shreyash Goyal
Edited by Vyansh Gupta



I imagine this. You're going on holiday with your family, and as you drive to Heathrow, your car breaks down on the M25. You somehow catch the plane, but on arrival a tropical disease greets you, requiring specific medication. When you manage it back to home sweet home, you find it has been robbed, with many of your prized possessions stolen.

Now this holiday would no doubt be a catastrophic disaster, and I sincerely hope no one ever has to experience anything like this. However, after the police, the next port of call would surely be the respective insurance companies. Whether it be health insurance, home insurance, car insurance, travel insurance or even insurance for your life, Aviva has ensured that they can offer you a package for almost anything. In the UK, there are 35 million home insurance policies active, and this market alone is expected to reach around £4.1 billion.¹ The global market is worth a staggering \$8 trillion and forecast to touch \$10 trillion by 2029. However, as people spend hundreds of pounds on premiums set on direct debit accounts, according to law firm Browne Jacobson, in partnership with the University of Nottingham, only 13.4% of adults understand their insurance policies.²

So, what is insurance exactly, why do people purchase it and is this market a lot more complex than it seems?

What is Insurance

Insurance is a method to protect individuals from financial loss due to unexpected, random events by paying a company a fee, in exchange for the promise to cover the losses if the damage was to occur. Terms commonly used when referring to insurance are premiums and deductibles. A premium is the annual monthly cost of the insurance coverage, and a deductible is the payment which the customer must make before the insurance companies pay for the damage. Higher deductibles often mean that the premium will be lower and vice versa. Insurance companies operate by taking in the premiums received from customers and re-distributing this as payments to customers (along with operating costs) with the remaining being kept as profits.

Why Pay?

Paying for insurance is a choice that most of us make, and many of us may often end up questioning our decisions regarding this. In Q3 of 2024, median car insurance in the UK averaged at £450 per quarter, which is around £1800 per year.³ At first glance, that seems like a lot of money paying for an accident which has a relatively small chance of occurring. However, the utility theory has an explanation for this:

Utility Theory and Risk – Averse Investors

Utility is a term commonly used in Economics used to describe the level of satisfaction gained from consuming a good or service. It is important to note that utility can be derived from non-monetary sources as well. People will choose to pay for insurance even if the total cost of the premium exceeds the expected payout, as this maximises their utility.

People who choose to buy insurance are usually risk averse. For a risk averse investor, uncertain prospects are worth less in utility terms than certain prospects, even if the monetary outcome from the uncertain prospect is higher than the certain prospect. People therefore prefer to buy the insurance as this adds certainty to prospects, which people inherently like.

This phenomenon can be explained in mathematical terms and this example outlines it:

The hypothetical situation is such that a footballer can sign a £5 million contract with Arsenal if his ligament injury heals, and if he doesn't get better, he loses all the money. The probability of him improving is 70%. Should he buy health insurance?:

A function for Utility (U) can be created in terms of wealth (W):

Let $U = \sqrt{W}$

$$E(U) = \sum U \cdot P(U = u)$$

$$E(U) = P_1(\sqrt{W_1}) + (1 - P_1)(\sqrt{W_2})$$

where W_1 is wealth if he improves and W_2 is wealth when he doesn't

$P_1 = 0.70$, $W_1 = 5,000,000$ and $W_2 = 0$

$$E(U) = 0.70(\sqrt{5,000,000}) + (1 - 0.70)(\sqrt{0}) \approx 1565$$

This means 1565 is the expected units of utility derived when the footballer does not purchase insurance.

The Actuarial Fair Premium shows us how much it would cost to buy the insurance:

Actuarial Fair Premium = Probability of Loss × Size of Loss

$$= 0.30 \times 5,000,000 = 1,500,000$$

If he improves and purchases health insurance = $5,000,000 - 1,500,000 = \pounds 3,500,000$

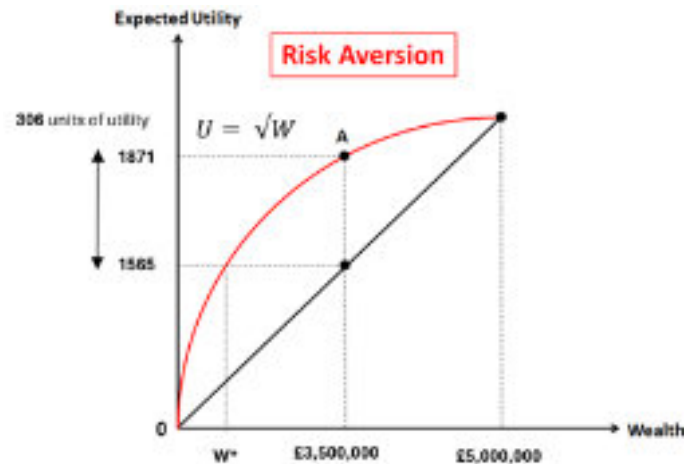
→ As he earns £5 million from the contract and then pays £1.5 million to the insurance company

If he doesn't improve and purchases health insurance = $0 - 1,500,000 + 5,000,000 = \pounds 3,500,000$

→ As he earns £0 from the unsigned contract, but pays £1.5 million to the insurance firm and then receives £5 million as payout from the firm:

$$E(U) = 0.70(\sqrt{3,500,000}) + 0.30(\sqrt{3,500,000}) \approx 1871$$

This means that the footballer is risk-averse, as he gains a higher level of utility when purchasing the insurance and is guaranteed £3.5 million compared to when he must gamble with £5 million.



The maximum amount which a consumer can be willing to pay for insurance can also be calculated. This would be when 1565 units of utility are still derived:

Max willingness to pay for policy: $5,000,000 - W^*$

$$U = \sqrt{W^*}$$

$$1565^2 = W^* = 2,449,225$$

$$5,000,000 - 2,449,225 = 2,550,775$$

This means that to get the same level of utility of 1565 units, the footballer is willing to pay £2.55 million maximum for his insurance premium and currently is paying £1.05 million. This means there is consumer surplus of £1.5 million. The consumer surplus is the difference between the price which consumers are willing to pay for a product and what they actually pay.

The graph above demonstrates how the stakeholder has a higher level of utility when he is guaranteed the £3.5 million compared to when it is a gamble and so it makes sense for him to purchase the insurance. The graph's shape also demonstrates diminishing marginal utility, as the additional utility gained is lower for each additional increase in wealth.

Why is the insurance market not so simple?

The above mathematical model suggests that insurance should be an industry where firms can reap substantial profits. However, as of Q2 2023, life insurance companies had a net profit margin of 3.22% per 12 months, and many insurance firms will operate on similar numbers. For context, these numbers are quite low compared to average profit margins in other industries – Commercial Leasing in the US managed margins of 51.6% and Portfolio and Investment Management Advice had 29.1% for

the same measure.

This is because insurance companies experience “market failure” of many different forms. Market failure can occur in two circumstances - There can be market failure due to the price mechanism as supply does not equal demand and the market does not clear. In the other case, supply does equal demand, but the socially desirable optimum is not equal to the economically desirable optimum (this is fully explained later in the article).

Some of the key problems with the insurance market is to do with informational asymmetry. This is when one economic agent has more information than another during an economic transaction and is an example of market failure.

Adverse Selection

Adverse Selection is a type of informational asymmetry and leads to undesirable outcomes as one party maximises their benefit using the additional information they have at the expense of the other. This is one of the biggest problems in the insurance market, and the example below demonstrates this using the health insurance market.

For example, drivers may be more careless once they have purchased insurance, and so they will be more reckless in their driving practices. This may increase the number of accidents on the road, and so people file more insurance claims which increases the costs to the company and so premiums may have to be raised, which has a domino effect and increases costs for all consumers. Increased costs on the consumer means less people buy the insurance and reduced demand means reduced revenue for insurance firms. However, Insurance schemes have been put in place to help counteract such behaviour – e.g. deductibles which are a certain amount that must be paid before the insurance kicks in, and there is a limit on the coverage.

Market Failure in the form of externalities.

An externality is created when there is a private benefit/cost, and this is not equal to the social benefit/cost. This means that there is an external benefit/cost on a 3rd party not involved in the economic transaction and the price mechanism does not take this into account. Both positive and negative externalities can be created by insurance.

Groups who have a higher risk of disease are more likely to purchase insurance, whereas those with lower risk will opt out. For example, smokers are much more likely to have lung cancer and are prone to a wider variety of diseases.

Insurance companies decide premiums based on the average population. However, if only patients who are at high risk of disease purchase insurance the average payout will exceed the average claim and so the insurance company will make a loss.

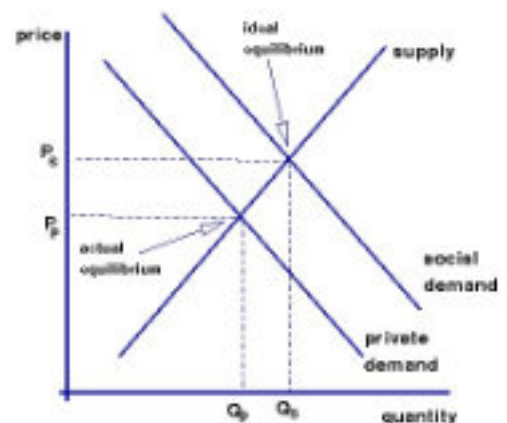
To avoid losses, the insurance companies must raise their premiums, but this means that more customers are outpriced as they are not willing to pay higher rates for their insurance.

This then leads to market failure as firms lose customers as premiums are continued to be raised and so profits and revenues fall. Eventually all customers will be priced out and so there is no market as there is no demand.

Moral Hazard

Moral Hazard is another example of informational asymmetry where a contract allows one party to take risks without suffering consequences. This can be seen in the insurance market as the behaviour of different parties can change once they have purchased insurance as they know that any losses will be covered. This means that risk shifts from the consumer to the company and insurance may act as a safety net.

External Benefits of Consumption diagram:



The car insurance example outlined above is an example of a negative externality. This means that there is an external cost of consumption, and the private optimum is higher than the social optimum. We can see that this creates a social and economic cost as if people drive more carelessly, they are likely to have a negative impact on other drivers on the road and make it riskier for them, which increases how vulnerable they are to accidents. This means additional road users must bear the costs of other people buying insurance and they are more prone to road injuries which is a social cost. However, there will also be a knock-on effect on the premiums of other drivers as firms will need to recoup the additional payouts made due to this reckless driving. This is an economic cost.

Conclusion – Is Insurance Really Worth It?

Although the insurance market does have some intrinsic faults within it, it is a flourishing industry and firms in this sector are expected to see sustained growth in the next decade. Insurance also has a significant impact on the economy in terms of a macroeconomic level and is a key to increased economic growth and development within a nation. Insurance often acts as a buffer from financial shocks, and this allows for quicker recovery from natural disasters, so individual economic agents recover as losses are covered by insurance companies. This idea of a safety net also means that start-up creation is promoted as entrepreneurs are more willing to take risks as they know that any financial loss will be covered by their premiums.

From my own perspective, I believe that private health insurance is a luxury good in the UK. This means that as income increases, people are more likely to purchase health insurance. Although the NHS system is widely available to all people, long waiting lists and sub-par treatment, especially for specialist areas, does mean health insurance is becoming increasingly popular. If I were to have some spare cash, I would consider spending on insurance myself, to access higher quality treatments more quickly. However, insurance may be a better option for those who are slightly older, as they are likely to be prone to a wider variety of diseases, so the insurance works out to be more financially viable.

Overall, insurance is an integral part of our individual livelihoods and the national economic landscape. The increased certainty which insurance brings allows for us to have increased utility, but this effect is then aggregated on a much larger scale which then brings benefits to the state economy. After all, if your holiday did end up being a calamity, you would hope that your insurance claims can somewhat help you recover.



THE HISTORY OF MONEY

Written by Houting Li
Edited by Vihaan Paul Chowdhury



Ancient Mesopotamian Counting Tokens from Tepe Gawra in modern day Iraq 5000-4500 BCE

Early Prehistoric ages

Money existed even before written records. Its first forms were in the shape of tokens, used by civilisations such as Tepe Gawra, which existed as much as 7500 years ago. The tokens used by Tepe Gawra, being a few centimetres in size, were made of clay, existing in different shapes that represented cereal in varying amounts and even labour. Tokens used by later civilisations were of a similar form, which represented commodities such as textile lengths, oil, wheat, metal ingots and even animals.¹

These tokens were evidence of development in concrete counting. In one case, the quantity of ovoid tokens represented the quantity of jars of oil, and no other token could represent jars of oil. This also showed cognitive abilities in humans of ancient civilisations (moving and removing tokens for the purposes of performing arithmetic operations on quantities of commodities). Later tokens had marks that denoted the quantity of goods,

replacing one-to-one correspondence, as it became inconvenient for larger quantities of goods. Furthermore, tokens had economic significance, enabling record-keeping of agricultural commodities, and this came with a sharp rise in the production of such goods. However, these tokens were only used as a medium of account, not a medium of exchange. They were used to measure contributions to the collective wealth and the administrators would redistribute the wealth to fund the least wealthy and religious festivals.

Late Prehistoric ages / Classical Era

This is the period that saw the development of money as a medium of exchange. In ancient China, cowrie shells were originally used as rewards for services to a king or lord, but starting in the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BC), they were being increasingly used for economic and social transactions, such as for buying land, goods, and services, in the units of *peng* (朋), which were double strands containing five shells each. In total, one *peng* was ten shells.²

Another example is ancient Egypt. In pharaonic Egypt (3150-332 BCE), workers were paid using goods such as food, drink, and oil.³ People also used gold and silver pieces as money, sometimes taking the shape of rings, and even sheep. Ingots of those metals were rod-shaped. A system existed to determine the values of goods and services based on weights of gold, silver, and copper, measured in deben (1 deben = 91g).

Coins were first invented by the Lydians (in modern-day Turkey), around 700 BC,⁴ and they continue to be used to this day (though evolving in shape). They functioned better than metal blocks, as their value could be determined through counting alone, rather than using cumbersome scales and weights, speeding up transactions. Other civilisations around the world either borrowed this new invention, or had their metal currency evolve into coins independently (such as ancient China).

It also solved the problem of cowrie shell forgeries in ancient China, as metals were much harder to forge. Eventually, the people of ancient China transitioned to metal coins, first in the shape of a metal spade (900 - 771 BC),⁵ then a knife (475 - 221 BC),⁶ and ending up with the shape of the iconic square-holed round coin, its usage beginning at 206BC.⁷

Coins (Middle Ages onwards)

The Middle Ages saw the creation of the pound sterling. The name "pound sterling" came from the fact that it was then worth one Saxon pound (or tower pound, approximately 350g),^{9,10} of sterling silver. The English inherited this system of currency in around 800 AD from the Carolingian monetary system, developed in France by Charlemagne.^{8,11} In France, one pound

Banknotes solved a crucial problem with metal money: they were easier to carry around than metal.

would be known as the *livre*, which was subdivided into 20 *sous*, and each *sou* was worth 12 *deniers*. England inherited this new system of money, and it meant that one pound was worth 240 pennies or 20 shillings, although in reality, it was rare that 240 pennies added up to a pound in mass.

The pennies were made of silver and stamped with a figure of the monarch of the time, beginning with King Offa and carrying on to this day. It was only in 1489 that the pound coin appeared (called the sovereign), under Henry VII, the shilling arriving 15 years later. Before 1489, the pound and shilling were only convenient units of account, i.e., multiples of pennies. The first gold sovereign came about in 1560, and its advantage was that it was much easier to carry around, only weighing 8g,¹² as opposed to the 350g pound. The existence of copper pennies officially started in 1797 when the government gave Matthew Boulton a contract to produce such pennies. Eventually, the coins evolved into today's form, partly through changes in monarch, changing the person stamped on the coins and their design, based on the monarch's liking, partly through decimalisation in 1971, simplifying the 1200-year-old system, and partly through the need to prevent forgeries, leading to modern coins having subtle chips in their metal.

Banknotes (Middle Ages onwards)

Banknotes solved a crucial problem with metal money: they were easier to carry around than metal. They were promises to pay a specific amount of cash, made by the issuing bank. The hoards of metal would be stored in banks, and they would be given back to the bank in exchange if the holder of the banknote wished to retrieve it, meaning they retained their face value. The notes could also be exchanged for goods and services, like metal money.

The first banknotes were invented in China in the 7th century,¹³ and they arrived in England in 1697, three years after the Bank of England was established, initially handwritten. However, they could easily be forged or destroyed, and this led to such notes being printed instead. This led to specialist inks and papers being used, beginning in the 1730s in America. Fully printed notes came about in 1793, issued by the Bank of England. The same occurred in the USA in 1861, leading to the present-day dollar. The early 20th century saw secret markings in banknotes that looked like printing errors that forgers would try to correct, leading to easy detection. In 1940, the addition of the metallic security thread prevented the Nazis from injecting forged notes into the UK. Another security addition was the face of the then-monarch on UK notes in 1961, with countries around the world following suit, leading to the familiar present-day appearance and security of banknotes.



Online banking

The banks hold deposits of cash, much as they used to hold deposits of gold. Money transfers are made by sending a transfer request to the bank in various ways (such as by bank transfer online or by tapping a bank card onto a card reader) and the bank changes the owner of that money from the payer to the payee. No cash has been moved in that transaction. If the digital account balances of today are to the banknotes of the 1600s, the banknotes of today are to the gold of the 1600s.

How well the various forms functioned as money

The four functions of money are as follows: it is a unit of account, it is a store of value, it is a medium of exchange, and it is a standard of deferred payment.¹⁴ The clay tokens 7500 years ago functioned solely as units of account. The commodities of ancient Egypt and the cowrie shells of ancient China meet the four criteria, but the problem in these types of money lay in the store of value, due to inflation and counterfeiting. Precious metals as money (in the form of pieces, coins or bars) functioned better in terms of storing value, as they were hard to find, and so relatively scarce. However, they were inconvenient to use, and this led to the invention of banknotes. Again, the problem of counterfeiting came in, as well as the fact that early banknotes were easy to destroy. Banknotes went through developments in security and quality, making forgeries harder. However,

they could still be printed in vast quantities by governments, and more easily manipulated after the abolition of the gold standard in 1931 in the UK, highlighting the need for careful government management. Online banking has reduced the need to carry money around, reducing the accidental loss of physical forms of money, such as by dropping coins and not noticing. It has also sped up transactions, and has become integral to modern life, and this, along with digital currency, could potentially lead to coins and notes being abolished in the future.

Echo and Narcissus

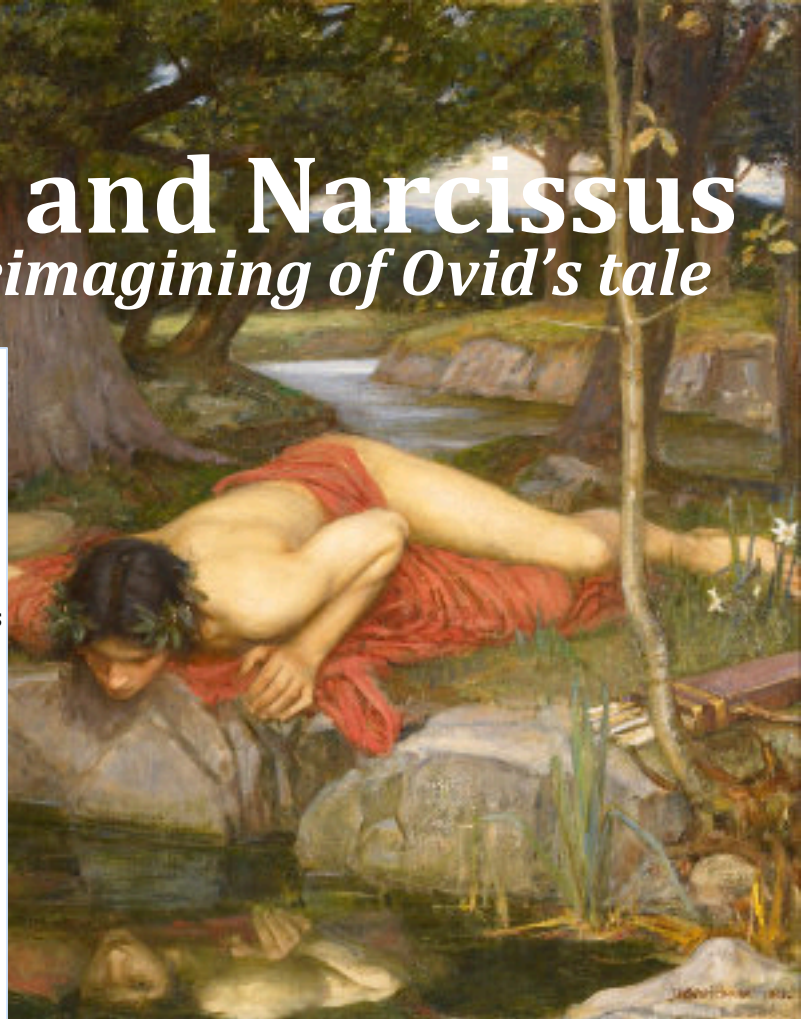
Dali's reimagining of Ovid's tale

Love yourself a little more.

Often in daily life we hear this as positive advice, such as to help your friend get through their day and to set some time aside for themselves. But, if this cheap and cheerful comment were taken to the extreme, what would it look like? Perhaps it would be self-obsession, pride, or a complete and utter infatuation with your own looks. Narcissism. This is the crux of Ovid's retelling of the myth of Echo and Narcissus, the pining nymph and the prideful youth, and the Roman poet spins a story of heart-wrenching unrequited love. Over the course of this article, we will explore exactly how Ovid does this to such great effect, and afterwards how Salvador Dali adapts the material in his 1937 work 'Metamorphosis of Narcissus'.

But first the source text: Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. For Ovid, usually an elegist (writer of Roman love poetry), this move into the genre of epic poetry was a bid to cement his prowess as a poet, mastering multiple forms of literature. Put simply by Griffin, "Ovid's love poetry was minor poetry. An epic was needed if Ovid was to reach the top of the literary ladder".¹ So, he crafted a chronological collection of myths, retelling popular stories as he saw fit, emphasising whichever aspects he chose. And, in Book 3 of this collection, he decided to tell the story of Echo and Narcissus.

Echo is a nymph, cursed by Juno for Echo's duplicity, to only repeat the last words that she hears. Narcissus is the image of handsome youth, full of pride and self-absorption. As he is out hunting, Echo spots him and approaches him – unable to speak any words besides the last few that Narcissus called to her. Upon running up to him she is rejected, and she then retreats. With her love unquelled and her shame amplified, she dissolves to stone and air, until only her voice remains, after the rejection. Nemesis, the goddess of revenge, sees this dismal scene and decides that reparations are due for Narcissus – therefore, as he comes to a stream in the woods, he catches sight of his own reflection and falls hopelessly in love with it. And there he stays, gazing into his own reflection, realising after a while that it is indeed himself yet not caring, and he too fades and his legs being rooted to the grass, turns into a narcissus flower, a daffodil. His soul is left in the underworld, eternally gazing into his reflection in the River Styx.



Written by Dylan Murphy
Edited by Kaivalya Pullakandam

Ovid relishes the opportunity in this dual-sided tale to craft some beautifully stylistic Latin. Reflection is the key motif, be that Echo's reflection of Narcissus' words, Narcissus' adoration for his own reflection, or the reflection in the parallel decline of both figures. Here is an example, from when Narcissus first sees his own reflection:

'qui probat, probatur / dumque petit, petitur, pariterque
accendit et ardet'²

(He who inspects, is inspected / and while he seeks, he is
sought – he both burns, and is set alight in equal measure)

No knowledge of Latin is needed here to see the lovely to-and-fro of the words – Ovid reverses each action, turning it on its head in a visual showcase of Narcissus' reflection. This is but one of countless examples of fluid word order demonstrated in this story, and Ovid really drives home this image of Narcissus' actions being met with equal response, nullifying them.

We could spend all day running through examples of decorative imagery from this story – but that would leave no time to explore what the world-renowned surrealist painter Salvador Dali saw in the tale, and where's the fun in that? What details did he choose to project onto his canvas in 1937?



Dali presents us with two images, with two contrasting tones and compositions. In the background there is the human Narcissus, head fixed downwards in a seemingly resigned gaze to his reflection. And in the foreground, there is an egg, gripped by the fingers of a bone-white hand, made to act as a ghostly second iteration of Narcissus. Finkelstein describes the relationship between the two as “echoing and re-echoing each other in a continuous pendulum movement”³, which nicely highlights the metamorphosis that Narcissus undergoes.

But what has Dali decided to keep from Ovid’s story? One element is highlighted by Heyd, who comments on how Dali maintains the idea of time’s passage with the two vastly different constructions. The degradation seems to give us a sort of fourth dimension narrative, of a hopeless soul declining, fading.⁴ The symbol of the daffodil has been kept, as has the transition from mortal realm to underworld in the stark tone shift from left to right. However, Echo is noticeably excluded – Dali seems to want to focus only on Narcissus and his psychological turmoil, making him and his ominous grey counterpart the central figures.

But what of the symbolism of hand and egg? The egg comes in chronologically as the last part of the story, and from it sprouts a bright daffodil to contrast the grey, ossified hand. It is a symbol of life, of what remains of Narcissus held aloft by the cold grey hand. Some have argued that this hand is not bone but stone, and is that

of Echo, her passions still clinging to the world in the tiny warm yellow hue of the fingertips holding up the egg.⁵ Could it be the cruel grasp of the gods that curse both Echo and Narcissus, a comment on the powerlessness of mortals? The chess board in the background – does Dali want us to see this vain Narcissus, placed on his own pedestal in a one-man game?⁶

The fantastic part of all these options is that they all hold some weight regardless of the view. Any one of them could have been true in Dali’s mind, yet they still rang true in our minds. At the end of his Ode on a Grecian Urn, Keats claims “beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all... ye need to know”.⁷ Whatever you find beautiful is your truth: art like this is subjective, and truth can be found in all of its beauty.

<Art>

Are They The Ones We Dream Of,

...Or The Ones We Fail to See Among Us?

Written by Charlie Hennessey
Edited by Kaloyan Yunchov

Now that Hirokazu Kore-eda's fame has grown to Joycean proportions in light of his upcoming live action adaptation of beloved manga writer Fujimoto's "Look Back," it may be interesting to... "Look Back" at Kore-eda's past projects and highlight the thematic and atmospheric wonders in which he conveys his scathing societal criticism of Japan in his most recent release: 'Monster.'

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'Monster' is set out in intriguingly experimental structuring, following a distinct tripartite narrative, in which each narrative section is a retelling of the other, as more of the mystery is revealed. At first, we see the movie from the perspective of a mother (Saori), a tender, familial figure, who struggles to comprehend and come to terms with the unusual habits her son (Minato) is beginning to exhibit. She eventually discovers and accuses his teacher of assault, having to battle against the frustratingly desolating emotionlessness which the school's governing body seem to display. The next section is in the perspective of the teacher (Hori), a figure who we have just been prompted to despise, and it retells his story in a more sympathetic light, where we see his life begin to crumble around him as Minato frames him for violent assault and bullies to another student (Yori) who seems strangely subservient to his aggressor. The narrative culminates in Minato's perspective, one which allows us to see the true

How can someone truly accept themselves in a society that discourages and mocks happiness?

darkness hidden within the story. We witness firsthand the traumatic toll that homophobic oppression has had in plaguing Minato and Yori's life and how they only find freedom of expression in the recesses of society. Each new perspective reveals to us a new "monster" - someone we judge based off on what we think they do.

So, the question that the film poses is, 'who is the monster?' As the layers of the narrative are slowly peeled away, we find ourselves accusing certain characters of outrageous misconduct and evil. However, at the end, we come to see society as the true source of evil, having labelled the two children as 'monsters' and instilled in them a denigrating fear of themselves. Minato becomes a bully, as an appeal to popular kids who see Yori's 'feminine' traits as exploitable and, also, as an internalised sense of disgust that he feels as he longs to repress his romantic attachment to Yori. This searing resentment ends up backfiring in several ways; it leads to the mistreatment of Hori, who only wishes to support Yori and Minato, but never understands the true situation, and it entrenches, in Saori's mind, doubts regarding her parenting, and allows a gnawing worry to fester in her mind, about her child's wellbeing. Each narrative retelling opens with the highly symbolic image of a burning skyscraper, a pure manifestation of the turmoil

within both boys' minds. Are they angry at society or so rooted in prejudice that it is themselves who they hate? Or is it rather Kore-eda's warning to us, that such ill-treatment and invalidation only further exacerbate personal and interpersonal conflict. How can someone truly accept themselves in a society that discourages and mocks happiness?

"If only some people can have it, that's not happiness. That's just nonsense. Happiness is something anyone can have."

“

Here, in the speech of the almost allegorical-feeling character of Minato's school principal, Fushimi, Kore-eda criticises a society which makes happiness exclusive, due to people's differences, for seemingly no good reason. This societal attitude leaves Minato entirely unable to reconcile with an outward expression of his homosexuality. Fushimi is also a character who has had to commit morally dubious actions in order to protect someone around her, whom she loved, so in a moment of almost ethereal storytelling, both characters seem to break free from societal restrictions for just a scene and connect through their shared trauma.

The ending of the movie is heartbreakingly devastating, as, after a harsh storm, which both boys are caught in, we witness them running through a field, free of everything that has weighed them down before. It is bathed in a paradisiacal atmosphere, and I feel that there is the implication that the boys die, but can finally love each other, as their spirits run free in the afterlife.

Colours in the Evening

Charlie Hennessey

I'm sitting on the stairs,
legs almost pressed to my chest,
but slightly pushed out further so
that I've made a sort of V-shaped hill.

The lights are off upstairs,
but are on down here with me.
So my eyes trace a gradient,
a pretty change from light to darkness.

My frame rests on one stair,
spread along it - still and calm.
I feel a calling in both ways,
but I don't want to decide yet.

My life sprawled on the wall,
a gentle blue, darkening
at the end. And the banister
with flaking bits of white paint and wood.

I wish I had more time.

Wilson's Intrigue



Humanities

Issue 10 | April 2026

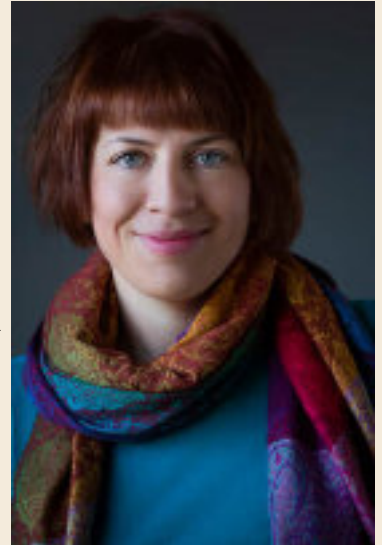
The Miranda Kaufmann Competition:
Black and British Identity

COMPETITION SHORTLIST EDITION:
EXPLORING CULTURE, HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Judges' Commentary

2026 The Kaufmann Prize for Humanities

Miranda Kaufmann, famous for 'Black Tudors', has recently published a new book called 'Heiresses', which focuses on the stories of women who benefited from the Caribbean Slave Trade. In anticipation of her latest release, we asked whether we could run a competition in collaboration with her and award signed copies to our top winners. Thankfully, despite our audacious request, she agreed to provide copies for the competition and help us judge and organise it.



We ran the competition a few months ago, and we received far more entries than we had anticipated - thank you to everyone who submitted an entry. Even if you weren't shortlisted, we read every submission and are very grateful that you took the time and effort to put it together. We hope that this will inspire you all to continue writing essays, poems, and stories in the future, especially without the restrictions of our deadlines!

Having mentioned the shortlist, we want to congratulate everyone who made it onto the shortlist. Please remember that, if your entry was shortlisted, we believe that it demonstrated a particular level of adroitness and craft that deserves plenty of merit, even if it didn't make the top four.

Our winners are: **Sam Tunbridge**, **Aeshan Nekkanti**, **Keynes Chung Hei Chim**, and **Vishahan Senthuran**. Congratulations to them all! They have each receive a signed copy of 'Heiresses', and Sam - as our first-place winner - has received a £20 voucher as well.

We would also like to thank everyone involved in making this competition happen, particularly given how unlikely it may have seemed when we first had the idea of running it in September. We would like to thank **Miranda Kaufmann** for agreeing to provide prizes, for allowing us to use her name for the competition and for helping us record a video advertising the competition. We could not have done this without **Mrs Berry's** and **Mrs Fletcher's** indispensable help with the admin side of the competition, and selecting the winners - thank you!



Finally, we want to urge everyone, whether you wrote for this competition or not, to consider getting involved with similar opportunities in the future, which - and perhaps those involved in the competition could back us up on this - you will certainly get a lot out of. Even if you don't want to write for competitions, we would still encourage you to pursue writing, whether creative or academic, and we hope that this experience will have inspired you in some way.



In the following pages, find some of the shortlisted and winning entries, ranging from fiction to non-fiction works. Whilst all entries submitted commentaries, we have only included a selection.

The Fight

Written by Aeshan Nekkanti

He took a deep breath in, and began,

“Now I know what you all think when you see a wealthy man dressing lavishly in a fine, silk tuxedo, this man is impeccable without a single flaw; he never struggled and got everything as right as can be and is now a millionaire. However, this is where you are all wrong. You may have got the rich part right, but the rest is all wrong. You see I had to struggle immensely and experienced situations where I felt death was imminent, but I got through it and now here I am. Today I will tell you, my story.

I come from the suburbs of Nigeria where I was living a monotonous but simple and joyful life. My mother provided me with all I thought I could possibly need: clothes, shelter, food and education, and I was thankful for that, but I never truly experienced struggle – something that shapes many of us in unfathomable ways - until my father died. When I was 13, he died and all I had left of him was a bracelet he gifted me on my 7th birthday and something I clung on to with all my heart. Years later when I was accepted into a nearby college, I decided to join the basketball team for basketball was one of my few interests that I still had at the time. On the day one boy, the same age as me named Max came up to me as I was getting prepared and took my bracelet which I had laid next to me taking it as a meaningless object and bashed it against the floor shattering it into fragments. With it I felt a piece of my heart had gone with it and been filled with nothing but rage. I gave him one uppercut straight to his jaw bloodying his mouth and leaving blood dripping on his pristine white shirt and before he could return people started pulling us away from one another. I went home bursting in tears. Since that day he kept trying to get revenge on me partly fuelled by his jealousy of me being better than him at basically everything. Once he tried, to bash me on the head with a baseball bat and ended up smashing his car window instead. With incidents like that every turn I kept outplaying him until the night of our last day of college – I remember that day like the back of my hand. The college had held a most joyous party filled with delectable plates of food and dancing until late in the night. However, my friend had urgently messaged me to meet at the basketball changing rooms. Out of worry I hurried there swiftly. As I entered the room, I was met with a knife cutting my arm along the bone and as I cried in agony there, I saw Max with a gang of friends he had accumulated over the years each with clubs and knives, staring at me with eyes like daggers and blood-curdling expressions. I turned and faced another sharp cut to the back of my thigh and wincing back the pain I ran like never before. Behind I could hear them shouting like monsters and at each turn I couldn't help but imagine one their arms ready to take another bit of me. Each step felt like I was going through lava, but I still went and as left the compound I noticed some train tracks with some trains yet to depart and sprinted as fast as my legs would take me to them. I took one quick glance and saw all of them running after me ready to kill me and leave my corpse never to found again. Somehow, I managed to get a grip onto the accelerating train and hauled myself over. I didn't turn but I heard him shouting “never come back. This is my city.” I never went back again. The next day was a blur as I was taken to the hospital by some most amiable women and was treated. From there I left the country with my mother to the UK hoping for a better life.

Now here is the surprising bit. Although most of you would think I am most horrified by the experience and wish it never happened I am almost thankful for it. I may sound deranged, but this experience is the reason for my success, it shaped my future and brought me here wearing this silk tuxedo and delivering this speech to you. You see that experience gave me the idea to create an app that tells you what injury you have and how fatal it is. It became successful and here I am today – from the suburbs of Nigeria to the heart of London living a luxury life. If there is one thing I would like you to take away it is that it is that you don't need to be living a lavish life to be successful, you can start with no money and still become a millionaire; someone may be able to take your arm from you but you can still keep walking forward in life, someone may be able to take a leg from you but you can still keep moving forwards in a wheelchair, someone may be able to take bully you but you can stand tall and ignore them and keeping going forwards but there is one thing nobody can take from you and its your dreams because you can always keep fighting back.

<Competition>

SHADOW OF SLAVERY

Written by Aarin Bhandari

(Harriet Tubman stumbles forward, shy but ready – her voice steady, burning with fire to confront the oblivious monsters that have felt the treatment pushed onto her was a norm, something to be accepted).

- 1) “Did the people saved thank you? Did they think of you as some saviour or a messiah or merely a lucky woman who thought she could change the order of things?”
- 2) “Nothing ever crossed our minds of our treatment to you all being unfair but rather a truth in life that the true winners come out from hard work, so why – I ask of you- do you think that we were ever unfair? We never thought of you (his head tilting downwards, meeting eye to eye with the very object he had toyed around with. Her very life he had toyed around with) of being a different thing but rather a “person” who had not tried hard enough.”
- 3) “You might ask before me why? You might ask me who could bring themselves to imprison someone else. Well, I ask you, if someone had not worked hard enough then would you have let them be seen as equals to you? Now Tubman you might think that that is one of the most idiotic questions ever mustered up on the face of planet Earth but let me ask you, what is the difference between what I did and what people do? Do people not think certain people are below them and is that not what society has told us to think? If that is not the case, then why isn’t the world communist? WHY is there a difference between what I do and what you do? “

“Have you ever felt the breath of freedom? You come to me asking me questions about how I feel about what I did and why I am challenging you, but people think that freedom is just a word. But I have experienced it, it’s warm glow as it reaches out to hug you as it pulls you in closer. You ask me all these questions because you can’t handle the truth or the ideology that you might be wrong. You have never been confined in those walls as they cave in, enveloping you, encasing you, caging you in like a precious bird meant to be adored. I used to adore them. Now after the bitter-sweet taste of freedom I have come to you to challenge you and get answers and after this perhaps I will rejoice, perhaps I will finally get that sweet taste. To answer your questions, you bombard me with as you just stand in your suits pondering when I am going to answer. Well let me tell you something, this is something I have been begging to God to let me say for the last years. So, no I will not stop. I HAVE BEEN CONFINED FOR TOO LONG and now when I wish to talk, who are you to stop me? I used to fear you, used to worship you just so you wouldn’t hurt me, and I hoped every day for your demise and now you argue that it was justified. Many people thanked me, ebut gratitude is not guaranteed but rather something that echoes through the hearts of every person I saved from that horrific area I called home for so long. It is not something that is heard but rather known. “

- “Have you ever been confined like a rat, a caged animal wanting to escape but simply told to get back to work like a bull in the fields. That is hard work, not nepotism but real hard work. We tried enough, we died from it, we survived from it but now I realized I had never truly lived. I had done work for men who hardly cared and forgot to live.”

- “I, now, will never ask before you. I will always ask and answer as an equal not as a follower not as a disciple. What I do is give respect and what you do is harm us for work. Who is going to do what I did? Nobody, because they will never have to live under the tyranny that we had to live under, and they will be better off without it. You had that luxury of relaxing. So, I ask you only one question:

Could you have done what we did, slave like dog while a pig shouts at you from above? You use words such as honour and abiding by your master, but I know see those words as a stab in the back forever and ever, so I hope you will as well.”

(The men leap up from their seats- “pigs?”, but by then Harriet had already strutted out of the room, confident in her walk oblivious to the outroar she left behind)

<Competition>

**Half-Gentlewoman, Half-Question Mark
- The Story of Dido Belle***By Savir Karandikar*

I am the river that no wall can bind,
carved from the Atlantic's fury,
carrying salt and chains,
a child torn from her mother,
dragged by blood to Britain's shore.
Baptised without a father's hand,
I bear my mother's burden in silence,
My name a ripple against stone.

Kenwood greets me with marble and gilt, portraits
glare with powdered eyes,
faces frozen in light,
faces that will not know my blood. Beside my cousin
I stand in silk, yet the painter places fruit in my grasp
ripe reminder I am spectacle,
a blossom plucked, a body displayed. Half-
gentlewoman, half-question mark, permitted, yet
perpetually apart.

I am the river bending through halls of stone, flowing
past chairs I cannot claim,
watching, learning, knowing
that power is not always visible.
At dinner, platters parade, silver strikes, tongues
chatter, glasses clink.
I pour coffee, I serve grace- half-gentlewoman, half-
question mark, permitted, yet perpetually apart.

Still, I bite on books like bread.
Letters bloom beneath my pen,
scripture burns, poetry pulses in my throat. My
tongue is blade, my mind a blaze,
even Mansfield marvels at my voice,
though law and life divide my skin.

Commentary:

In this poem, I attempted to make effective use of the first person to create a more intimate conversation between Belle and the reader, as if she is asserting her presence and celebrating her achievements from a past in which she was just a face among many—a marginalisation exacerbated by her experience as a Black woman in an era when women were infamously objectified in English society.

Through imagery, sound, and structure, the poem conveys both Belle's personal resilience and the broader historical struggles she represents. Stanzas and enjambment mirror the river's flow, reinforcing her unbroken spirit, while repetition and sharp consonants give her voice force and urgency. These techniques work together to assert Belle's identity and legacy, transforming historical marginalisation into a vivid, powerful presence that resonates with the reader.

I hear his gavel crack like thunder: "Slavery cannot breathe in English air."

The chamber shakes, benches boom,
but whispers bite beyond the door.
Chains clatter where eyes cannot see,
freedom falters at the threshold of colour.
I am the river that will not break,
rushing past walls, carrying centuries, cutting channels
of courage through stone.

I live. I love. I bear sons.
London stones bruise beneath my feet, yet I flow
onward, unbroken, unbent. Still they call me curiosity-
"the mulatta in Mansfield's care."
Mark me not as ornament,
but as blood, as breath, as Britain.
Half-gentlewoman, half-question mark, permitted, yet
perpetually apart.

Remember me not in shadows of fruit,
but in the blaze of a name that endures.
Belle—bright, Black, unbowed—
beating against the boundaries of blood.
I am the river, the storm, the tide,
splitting walls, soft yet unstoppable,
carrying my story through centuries,
proof that Britain was never pale.
I was here.
I am voice.
I am water.
I did not bow.

I did not bow.

Entering the Mother Country

Written by Harshil Kalepalli

The ship tilts beneath my feet for the last time as the gangway slips away. Twenty-two days on the water, and now Empire Windrush finds rest, metal frame groaning against the jetty. Salt and heavy sea air clings to me, but I pull chest up high, chin high. It is here.

I grip my small suitcase as though it holds more than shirts and trousers. It carries my mother's prayers, whispered in the dark. My father's silence, his hand gripping mine hard at Kingston Harbour before letting go. The voices of my brothers teasing me, calling out: "Eh, don't forget us when you're rich and walking on streets paved with gold!"

Gold streets. That is what they said. That was what Britain was supposed to be.

We came up alongside her in our textbooks, her kings and queens on our currency, her hymns sung in our churches. Rule Britannia from the rooftops but none of us had ever set foot on her beaches. In school we learned of Nelson, of Churchill, of the Union Jack waving high in victory. Britain was great, we were told, and Britain was mother.

So when the posters came, with the promise of work and potential—Come help rebuild after the war, come join us—how could we not react? A son reacts to his mother when she summons.

The gangplank creaks. My shoes step forward.

We stand in line and file down—men in their best suits though the material is fraying, women clinging to infants who wriggle at the sudden chill. Eyes

of children flash open to skyscrapers that brush the heavens. The pier smells of smoke and oil and something bitter I don't recognize.

There is a cop at the gangway's end. Not scowling. Not smiling. Just... measuring.

Behind me, Joseph mutters, "So this is the land of opportunity, eh?" I smile, even as my stomach twists.

I remember the night we left Kingston. The salt and music hung in the air. Children and adults lined the harbour, crying, laughing too loudly to hide their sorrow. Women wandered through the crowd, peddling roasting peanuts and corn, children scrambling through legs. The ship loomed above us, massive and huge, lit by lamps that made her look like a city on the horizon.

My mother shoved a skinny Bible into my hands. "Hold on to this always," she whispered, her voice cracking. "When you're alone, remember the Lord never leaves you."

My father didn't speak. He placed his hand on my shoulder, heavy, then let it fall. That silence was heavier than any bag.

On deck that night, as the boat left, Jamaica's voices rolled like a hymn. Men sang old songs, women sang hymns, and waves tolled out the beat. I stood against the railing and saw the lights of Kingston shrink until they were tiny stars on the horizon. For the first time in my life, I was free and homeless.

The journey took long. There were days the sea was smooth, cradling us. There were days the sea rolled and

pitched, tipping buckets and stomachs over. We became family on that ship. Joseph, with his jokes, always ready to laugh even with stale bread and thin tea. Miss Clarke, cradling her baby as she told tales of her school teaching years. Young Winston, barely sixteen, who had lied about his age so that he could buy a ticket, eyes aglow with fire and dreams.

We had shared a meal and more. We shared island memories: cricket on dusty fields, calypso drifting from roadhouses, mango juice dripping sweet down our arms. Each story was a strand, binding us to home even as the boat carried us farther away.

Evening we spent on the deck, gazing upwards at the stars. Some prayed. Some planned futures—mechanics, carpentry, nursing. I planned too. I saw a small room with tidy walls, work that brought in enough pay to send money home. I saw strolling down London streets where no one looked twice at me but to nod in respect.

And here, on this pier, I wonder how much of this dream will survive the cold wind lashing against my skin.

The cop grabs my papers, scrutinizes them more than he needs to, and then returns them with nothing said. His gaze rakes me as if I were a puzzle with pieces missing.

I breathe deep. I proceed.

The city looms. Grey buildings shoulder to shoulder, high and unyielding. Smoke billows from chimneys, mist shrouds the streets like a cloak. The air is chilly as coal, bitter alien taste. I miss the warmth

of the island sun suddenly, the scent of guava, the laughter of market women.

A little boy regards me from the pier, chalk-white, clutching his mother's hand. I smile. He winks, and then tugs at her sleeve. She rushes him off, her lips pursed as if my smiling was a threat.

For a moment, the cold penetrates the entire layer of my suit.

We are being herded toward the buses. Some of the men laugh nervously, others become silent. Joseph shoves me. "Eh, bro, don't look so serious. This is just the beginning." His grin is wide, but I can see the fear in his eyes.

The bus jolts on London streets. I press my forehead against the glass, and rows of brick houses whizz by. The streets are not paved with gold. They are wet, smooth with rain. Men

in coats walk past, collars turned up against the cold. Women clutch handbags to their chests, eyes fixed straight ahead. Not one smile toward us as we drive by.

But still—I remember the posters. Jobs to be done to rebuild. Buses to drive. Rails to mend. Hospitals in need of nurses. Britain needs us, though she doesn't know how to say so.

I also think of my uncle, who was murdered in Burma fighting for this country. He wore her uniform. He died under her flag. If he could lay down his life, then I can certainly offer my labour—and claim a life here as payment.

Night falls. We are led to a hostel, beds lined up in rows, the smell of wet hung on the walls. I lie back, suitcase as pillow, the Bible under my pillow. The noise of the rest fades slowly as sleep engulfs them.

I look at the ceiling.

I hear the voice of my mother in my ear: "Remember who you are."

I whisper to the shadows: "I am my mother's son. I am my father's hope. I am Jamaica's blood and Britain's promise. I do not cross the ocean for their welcome. I cross for my future."

My hold on the suitcase handle tightens.

Tomorrow I will get up. Tomorrow I will knock on doors until one open. Tomorrow I will begin again.

For the time being, I take breath. I permit myself to rest. And I whisper once more, resolute and absolute:

"England."

Here, the word bends to me.



Commentary:

The 'Black and British' that is a part of this history represents the influx of Caribbean migrants into Britain in 1948 as something more than just a physical relocation of people from one place to another, in addition to representing a starting point for a shift in mentality, which is reflected in my own fiction writing.

In attempting to describe it, I have chosen a first-person narrative, blending past and present tenses. In choosing a character perspective with the insight of youth and the vision of a larger vision, I was able to combine the concept of hope with the concept of nostalgia. In combining it, I was able to convey a sense of hope experienced by the migrants, as well as challenges faced, incorporating flash-backs within the experience of life left, engagement with other migrants, and the experience of entering a new environment. However, I wanted my hero to also be a reasoned thinker—one who can admit mistakes but not be dominated by them. This is because, factually, most members of the Windrush generation are left dealing with experiences of prejudice and difficulties but have made enormous contributions to the United Kingdom.

While writing this story, I had found that it has been quite challenging for me to address the speed and the element of history in the story. "Comparing a thing to another thing like it, by which an explanation is made, is an explanation but not the substance of explanation."

Ultimately, the reason I narrowed it down to the subject of my choice was the fact that it involves a point of transition, as it is what seems to be pertinent within the context of the current state of affairs to inspire a reflection on what it actually means to be a part of something.

<Competition>

What They Don't See

By Keynes Chung Hei Chim

They say I'm Black —
Like it's the only thing they see.
That I'm no more than just my skin,
I'm a hollow black shell.

They ask where I was born—
And I say, "Where else?"
Then they ask me again, no manners,
Ask me where I'm from.

They say I talk way "too street",
Then they copy my "slang".
They nod to my music,
Claim it for themselves.

My nan says I'm British —
Cuz I was born here.
They say I'm British,
But only when I win.

I drink tea with my nan,
And chat with my mum.
I hear grime in my headphones,
Shut them out from my ears.

I talk to myself,
Who am I?
They ask the same thing,
It sounds like "What" not "Who".

But why should I care,
I know the answer in my heart.
They're right I'm Black,
Black and British.

Commentary: I decided that I wanted to write a poem which created the image of a normal teenage person in Britain, whilst drawing in "Black" stereotypes and addressing them from a first-person perspective. I felt that the final poem was able to portray such a person and their own personal thoughts and emotions, as well as touching upon important issues, primarily cases of racism in daily life which are either so subtle that they are virtually ignored by the majority of bystanders or are simply dismissed as banter. The poem also included instances of Black culture being explored by the protagonist, and I particularly wanted to focus on something that really interested me during my research - grime. Most importantly, grime was a way for young "Black and British" people to express their views and voice their own opinions on a range of matters like politics and racism.

Night in the Field Hospital

Chris Kavanadiyil

Context: This Poem is based on the Experiences of Mary Seacole (A British Nurse) who was born to a Scottish Father and a Jamaican mother. It follows her experiences during the Crimean War (1853-56), a period in which saw progress in the field of nursing in general as pioneering nurses such as she and Florence Nightingale brought revolutionary change to the field.

The Poem takes place after the battle of Balaklava. Seacole is taking care of many wounded soldiers, many of whom could have died due to neglect otherwise.

That Evening, near 700 cavalry-men were laid
to waste,
They were French and British, having come
from nearly a thousand miles away.
We tried to get them all off the field- toiling
with care and haste,
But for many unlucky lads, their time had
come today.

Oh Lord, the Hospital's filled to the brim,
And infection spreads the longer we dwell,
Not only have the soldiers lost arm and limb,
It seems the guns have scarred their souls as
well.

I can't allow it, not a single man shall perish,
Not because these men are any good to me.
When I treat them I know what they wish,
I know that they wish that I wasn't free.

Well, born to a Creole and a Scot,
My soul is sweet as Jamaican sugar yet as
tough as Highland rock
I know who I am and who I'm not

Home

Written by Nathan De Oliveira

As I gaze over the railing, the wind caresses my cheeks and the salty smell of the ocean around me fills my nose. The sun is just starting to rise, and I watch in awe at how its radiant light adds a bright tint to the water all around me. Truth be told, I am very nervous. Leaving my home and family behind with only this torn suitcase to remind me what was. "Only take what you need" I remember my mother yelling to me as she crammed my suitcases with a few more snacks for the way. Around me, I suppose, the others are reminiscing about home but now my mind is flooding with what I hope England will be like. Mother said that father gave his life for the greater good during World War Two when he died fighting for England and many other nations. I truly miss the way his smile kindled a sense of bliss within me and how he, somehow, silver-lined every cloud. In my heart I hope that England will be welcoming and encouraging. I dream of coming home to my family with gifts and experiences unlike anything they have seen before. Now as land slowly creeps into sight and the low murmurs from the boat become squeals of excitement, I clutch my suitcase, fix my slouching posture and wait. I wait ready to have my expectations fulfilled, or rather ... destroyed. I feel a coil of fear within me. What if I am not accepted? What if I do not do well enough in this new land? A malicious whirlwind of anarchy and panic runs riot in my brain. But then I remember my mother back at home. My village. They would not want me to back down but to thrive in England and thrive with pride. I remember how our priest said that God aids us through opportunities. Here is mine. I know not what awaits me. All I know is that I must seize it with everything I have.

The Heart of Britain

Mohammed Rayyan

They ask me where I'm really from,
As if my passport hides a lie.
But I am Northern winds that call me home
But I am southern seas where gulls still fly

I am Manchester sky and London lights
I am Liverpool rain and Newcastle nights
I am Sheffield skyline and Brighton flare
I am Birmingham beauty and Bristol air
I am Oxford minds and Cambridge stone
I am Cardiff history and Glasgow tone
I am York walls and Dundee seas
I am Belfast unity and Leeds with ease

I am the red of the London buses
I am the blue of the River Thames
I am the white of the Cliffs of Dover
I have the British heart, and it beats in me.

The Life Story of Mary Prince

Written by Vishahan Senthuran

As the small vessel rocked from side to side, Mary Prince's anxiety erupted like a fish out of water. She took a quick glance at her mother and sisters, who were staring at the small dot in the distance the town of Hamlet in Bermuda where they were to be sold.

They were approaching the auction house.

Their small family jumped off the boat and was taken to the auction house. Soon, they were bundled into a line with many other Black Africans, and one after the other, they were bought by the bidders. After a long stretch of waiting, Mary was called up to be sold. She faced the rows of bidders, cautiously watching everyone there.

"33 pounds!" one called.

"36 pounds!" another hollered.

"38 pounds!" shouted a man with a scowling, grim face.

"Any further offers?" the auctioneer exclaimed joyously. "Selling, selling - and sold to Captain John Ingham!"

Suddenly, strong, forceful hands pushed Mary toward her new owner, and her heart wrenched as she watched her two sisters dragged away from her.

Mary was roughly pushed toward the exit and forced to walk five miles to her new owner's farm. Captain John Ingham and his wife were horrid to Mary in many different ways, such as beating her and making her work all day long.

Soon, because of the Inghams' cruelty, Mary ran away to her mother, who lived at Richard Darrell's residence. However, she could not hide for long, as she was owned by the Inghams and by law in the 19th century was not permitted to leave without her owner's consent. Eventually, Mary had to go back to the Ingham farm. After five long years with the Inghams, Mary was put on board a sloop heading to Grand Turk Island. When they reached the island, she was sent to her new owners by the captain. Mary was taken to Robert Darrell's house, where he became the next person to claim her as property. The next day, she was put up at auction to determine her value. Robert Darrell purchased her for £100 Bermudian currency.

Robert Darrell was a salt proprietor in the Grand Turk Island salt industry and had a son called Richard. Mary later worked as a member of a gang of enslaved workers who made solar-evaporated salt. Her tasks included raking salt, measuring salt to load onto vessels, and turning machines that drew water out of the sea into the ponds. Salt was a very valuable commodity before refrigeration; it was used to preserve meat and fish. Bermudian salt merchants traded salt with other British colonies, such as Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. They also sold salt to Americans.

Although it wasn't the salt season for a few weeks, Mary and the other enslaved people were ordered to build a stone wall. Mary dove into the ocean near the shore for rocks to build the wall and cut mangroves. The mangroves were set ablaze to heat shells that would convert into quicklime. When water is added to quicklime, it boils and becomes lime putty, which was used as mortar to build the stone wall.

Robert Darrell was a cruel taskmaster, and his son Richard followed in his father's path. Mary and the other enslaved people were frequently flogged for not keeping up with the gang. They also suffered from poor nutrition. The main staple of their diet was Indian corn - sometimes, it was all they had to eat. They often starved. After about ten years on Grand Turk Island, Robert Darrell returned to his Bermuda residence and took Mary with him. His son Richard remained on Grand Turk Island to carry on the family's salt business.

Back in Bermuda, Mary left Darrell's direct service and was hired out to Cedar Hill, where she earned money washing clothes but everything she earned was turned over to Robert Darrell. She learned that John Adams Wood Jr. was going to Antigua, where his family lived. She asked Robert Darrell to "let me go in Mr. Wood's service," and it was agreed.

Mary was sold to John Adams Wood of Antigua for \$300. She began to work in his household as a domestic slave, attending the bedchambers, nursing a young child, and washing clothes.

From then on, she began to suffer from rheumatism, which left her unable to serve the family. Whilst John Wood left on voyages to sell his goods, Mary earned money for herself by taking in washing and selling coffee, yams, and other provisions to ships.

In Antigua, she joined the Moravian Church, where she attended classes and learned to read. She was baptised in the English church in 1817 and accepted for communion, though she was too afraid to ask Adams Wood for permission to attend.

In December 1826, at the Moravian Church, Mary married Daniel James, a formerly enslaved man who had bought his freedom by saving money from his work as a carpenter and cooper. According to her book (*The History of Mary Prince - A West Indian Slave*) her floggings increased after her marriage because Adams Wood and his wife did not want a free Black man living on their property.

Following her marriage, the Woods left Bermuda to arrange their son's education in London and to bring their daughters home from Antigua. Crucially, Mary Prince was brought along as a domestic servant in their household. Upon arrival in London, Mary Prince walked out of the Woods' household — as a free woman in 1828.

Mary Prince finally tasted freedom - yet she remained in a precarious position. Although she was no longer under the physical control of the Woods, the laws of the British Empire were still uncertain regarding the status of enslaved people brought from the colonies to England. Mary sought assistance from the Anti-Slavery Society, appealing to them for protection and legal guidance.

She made several attempts to return to Antigua to reunite with her husband, Daniel James, but there was one devastating obstacle: if she returned to the colonies, she would again fall under the ownership of John Adams Wood. Wood refused to formally grant her manumission unless she returned to his service, a condition Mary rejected. She chose to remain in England rather than surrender her hard-earned freedom.

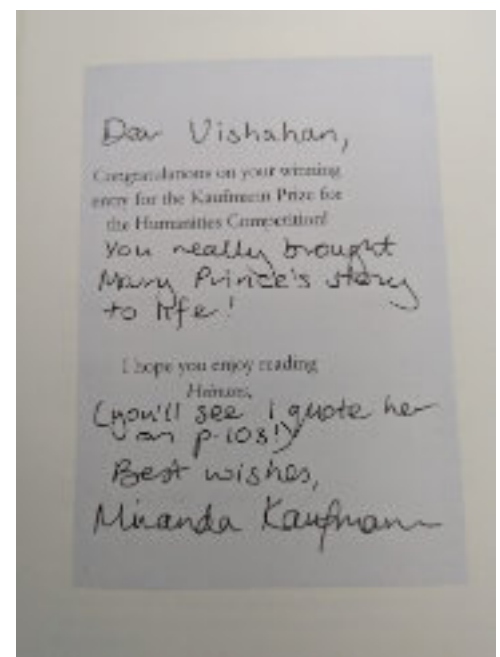
Moved by her courage and determination, members of the Anti-Slavery Society encouraged Mary to tell her story publicly. She dictated her life experiences to Susanna Strickland, a writer and abolitionist, who carefully recorded Mary's words. In 1831, *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave* was published

making Mary Prince the first Black woman to publish an account of her life in Britain.

Her book sent shockwaves through British society. Many readers were horrified by the firsthand accounts of brutality she endured. Abolitionists used her story

as powerful evidence in parliamentary debates. However, her former enslaver, John Adams Wood, was enraged by the accusations against him. He sued the publishers for libel, accusing Mary of lying. The case went to court, but Wood failed to prove his claims. Mary's testimony stood firm.

Although she had gained freedom, Mary still lived in poverty, depending on the support of abolitionist networks. Records suggest that she continued working as a cleaner and domestic servant while advocating for the freedom of her people. Even though she never saw her husband again, she remained steadfast in her belief that no one should live in chains as she once had.



Commentary: I chose to write about the life story of Mary Prince, as I had read *The History of Mary Prince* by Mary Prince prior to writing for the competition. *The History of Mary Prince* tells the life story of Mary Prince and the difficulties she faced while living as an enslaved woman. This book inspired me to write about the journey of Mary Prince from a young girl about to be sold to a woman writing an autobiography. Mary Prince's journey from a young girl about to be sold to a woman who bravely wrote her autobiography shows how strong and determined she was. In my writing, I wrote my story with many descriptive adjectives in order to describe fully the journey of Mary Prince. Through this project, I learned that slavery was not just something in history but something that affected real people's lives in very personal and emotional ways. Mary Prince's story showed me how important freedom and equality are, and why it is important to stand up for what is right. Writing about her life also made me think about my own life and helped me appreciate the opportunities I have today. I also used sentence variety to make my writing more interesting and linking words such as "because" and "therefore" to connect my ideas clearly. Overall, this project taught me the power of storytelling. Mary Prince's life reminds us that sharing personal experiences can inspire others and teach important lessons about courage, resilience, and justice. Her story continues to be meaningful because it shows the strength of the human spirit and the importance of fighting for what is right.

*What was the **impact** of the **Windrush Generation** on society and culture in Britain?*

Written by Advik Kashyap

The Windrush generation was a generation of change. An estimated 500,000 people arrived in the UK between 1948 -71 (the Immigration Act of 1971) with the purpose of helping to rebuild the broken foundations of the UK after WWII. The 1948 British Nationality Act allowed commonwealth citizens to enter the UK to live and work in Britain. They would do much more than that. Helping the culture and society in Britain, the Windrush generation would make a mark that would have resonant effects to the present day.

The Windrush generation brought changes to the music in Britain, with the introduction of music styles such as Calypso, Reggae and Ska. These genres of music were completely unfamiliar with the locals at the time. They portrayed the struggles of Black British people and were messages of unity, strength and bonding more than music. They brought up issues of discrimination and lit the eyes of the British Government. Examples of artists of these genres are Linton Kwesi Johnson and Steel Pulse. They increased musical diversity in Britain by adding to the swing and dance bands that existed. The modern music genre of UK grime is heavily influenced by the genres of the Caribbean. This shows what a lasting impact the Windrush generation has had on British culture. The Windrush generation added on to another essential part of culture: food. Notting Hill was a hub for multiple Caribbean eateries and a 'taste of home'. Jamaican foods like curry goat, jerk chicken, rice and peas were available at restaurants and are now parts of British cuisine. It was not all easy though for Caribbean food to flourish in the UK, as there were diet differences and different availabilities of food than back home. Imports helped as they brought in the products required for cooking and catered to the needs of the Caribbeans in Britain.

Society was not the most welcoming however, when the Windrush generation came. Many people did not approve of the migrants and even the government was not okay with their arrival. Riots took place such as the Notting Hill Riots of 1958 with groups targeting the migrants, such as the Teddy Boys. Racism and discrimination was in abundance as many Black Britishers were not allowed jobs and found a lot of difficulty in finding places to live. This drastically differed to what was expected by the migrants after coming from the Caribbean. Still, they persevered and supported their motherland and helped it in becoming the great place it is today. For example, many Black British people found jobs in the newly founded NHS (National Health Service) and filled 54,000 nurse vacancies. They still faced hardships, but they showed their talents and supported the now world's largest healthcare service. Diane Abbott was a famous Black woman and the first one to be elected to the British Parliament. This shows how Black women played important roles in Britain during a time when women and Black people were not privileged like others. Sam King was a member of the RAF who, after his service, came to Britain as part of the Windrush generation since he could not settle in Jamaica. Sam King became an activist and stood up to the discrimination faced by migrants from the Caribbean. He was also the first mayor of Southwark and was also heavily involved with the Post Office. These people show how Black Britishers had a lasting impact on Britain and that without them, Britain would not be what it is today.

Overall, the Windrush generation not only improved Britain, but instilled a new life into the nation's culture and society. It brought changes that had never been realised and started a new chapter of British history. Black people advanced the country, their motherland, and etched their legacy into British history.

<Competition>

Should history seek to unite a nation's past or expose the cracks within the mirror which enables us to see history?

Written by Kaan Cortuk

We often regard history as something that has taken place in the past and no longer present. In truth, history will always continue to permeate our lives and act as a pliable truth that we will subconsciously hammer, shape and use every day. As Norman O. Brown says, "history is the enactment of ritual on a permanent and universal stage; and its perpetual commemoration."¹ When it comes to Black British history, we immediately realise that the book of history is still being written and is never complete: yet to this day, we are left oblivious of the way our society is defined by our actions.

Where does the concept of Black British heritage lie within this spectrum?

Dating all the way back to the Roman times, the ubiquitous influence that Black British people have had has been forgotten and neglected. Today, we therefore celebrate the impact of Black British heritage and remember its role within history. The question for us to then think about becomes whether this element should be integrated into British history as a whole or remembered separately as its own branch of the past. This in turn raises a more generalised debate regarding history's compound nature and whether we shall observe these different elements by themselves: as separate pieces of glass within the mirror which tells us about history. This essay will examine different perspectives of this argument and give specific examples relating to Black British heritage.

John Blanke

One particular example of a prominent Black Tudor whose case demonstrates that Black British history is embedded in the nation's past is John Blanke. John Blanke, who is the only Black Tudor of whom we have an official record and an image today, was a renowned trumpeter who served in the royal court during the reign of Henry VII and Henry VIII. Blanke was an active individual in the court, and it is believed that he took part in both Henry VII's funeral and the coronation of Henry VIII in 1509.

It is also believed that, in his marriage, Blanke received presents from the king. This suggests that Blanke was respected and seen as a valuable individual, regardless of his ethnic diversity; it also highlights that Britain, at the time, was not just a place where all the Black people were used as slaves, since people like Blanke were allowed to utilise their talents. Furthermore, Blanke was directly credited for the role he played in the court and was paid 8 pence per day – which was not inconsiderable, and equivalent to that of a skilled craftsman at the time.²

However, what makes his case so striking is that, following Blanke's petition for a promotion and pay rise, after the death of Domynck Justinian, his request was granted, and his wages were doubled to 16 pence per day. The fact that Blanke's voice was heard and that he was treated as an equal individual emphasises how he was not just seen at a different and inferior level to others; his petition being successful is evidence of how he was an important person for the court. Therefore, the case of John Blanke makes us consider if there is even such a thing as Black British history and if this is the same as British history, within which Black people came into focus later on.



Mary Seacole

Another well-known figure with a Black British heritage is Mary Seacole, whose case similarly makes us wonder what the true boundary between Black British and British history is. Seacole's father was a Scottish soldier, and her mother was a Jamaican healer - known as a "doctress" - who ran a boarding house where she treated patients with herbal medicines.³ Since she often spent time with her mother in Blundell Hall - her mother's boarding house-, Seacole was able to quickly develop knowledge of traditional medicine; thanks to her previous trips, she also became familiar with European medical ideas.

During the Crimean War, she offered to help British soldiers on the frontline in Crimea with her medical skills. However, she was rejected by the War Office in 1854 and told that her help was not needed. Regardless, Seacole was determined to find a way of accomplishing her goal and travelled to Crimea on her own and established the British Hotel near Balaclava to provide 'a mess-table and comfortable quarters for sick and convalescent officers'⁴, adopting the name "Mother Seacole".

Seacole's relentless efforts in helping the British soldiers demonstrate how she felt obliged to contribute and aid Britain amid the war. This highlights how she truly felt British, in simple terms, and emphasises her desire to break racial boundaries. Thus, Mary Seacole's story makes us consider what truly the differences between Black British history and British history are - beyond racial terms alone.



Olaudah Equiano

However, the experiences of Olaudah Equiano, in contrast, offer a whole different viewpoint and make it very difficult to believe otherwise. Equiano was a former slave and a member of the abolitionist group 'Sons of Africa', and is most famous for his autobiography in 1789, in which he exposed the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade. According to his account, Equiano was captured when he was 11 years old and taken to the West Indies, where he started his life as a slave.⁵ Later, he was sold to a sea captain in Virginia and, with him, travelled all across the globe - going as far east as Türkiye and as far north as the Arctic Circle.

After being tormented for most of his life, he was able to gain his freedom in 1766 by collecting enough money (£40) to pay his enslaver at the time, Robert King. Following his liberation, Equiano came to England, where he became an abolitionist and wrote an autobiography in which he described the abhorrent events he had to endure during his lifetime. This became so popular that it was translated into many other languages and reprinted nine more times.

The experience of Equiano acts as evidence for how terribly these people were treated and highlights the evident injustice towards them. Especially since Britain was strongly involved in the slave trade, this makes us wonder how history can possibly seek to unite the nation's past when the past experiences of Black British people only deserve recognition and separate acknowledgement from British history. Thus, stating that Black British history is the same as British history would only be ignoring the sufferings and the brutal experiences of all these people, making the claim almost implausible.



The Windrush Generation

When we think about Black British history, it is inevitable that we mention the Windrush generation. The Windrush generation refers to the people who came to Britain, mostly from the Caribbean, from 1948 to 1973, as part of an initiative to rebuild post-war Britain. This name comes from the HMT Empire Windrush - the first ship to transport a large group of people at the time. However, these people who embarked on this journey were unfortunately treated very poorly by the British, with opportunities being limited, and quality of life being extremely low. These Black British people were racially segregated, looked down upon, and not welcomed as they should have been.

Quite recently in 2018, the Windrush Scandal broke out after it emerged that many of these people had been wrongly detained, deported and denied legal rights. This was all due to the government's failure to recognise that changes in immigration and citizenship law in Britain since 1948 had affected Black people in the UK differently than they had other racial and ethnic groups. In turn, this gave courage to the Windrush generation to speak out for themselves for the first time, and many of them addressed struggles they faced when they first came to Britain and how they were seen as a completely inferior level to the British.

Therefore, this emphasises that, although the Black British like Seacole may have wanted to be seen as British, it was always made clear to them that this would never be the case as they were fundamentally different to the British in nearly every aspect. Hence, we have to decide for ourselves if it is really acceptable for these two elements of history to be united today and, as a result, for their individual stories to be erased: the obvious answer does not seem to think so.

In conclusion, we observe that just a handful of experiences of the past are enough to demonstrate that history is all about personal experience and choice.

From the cases of John Blanke and Mary Seacole, we observe that branches of history may, at times, be treated as part of the trunk of the tree; when not, these branches may, in fact, choose to find a way around themselves, driven by the desire to be a part of the trunk. This makes us wonder whether history can truly be a unifying force and if we can regard Black British history and British history as one notion altogether.

At the same time, we remember the cases of Olaudah Equiano and the Windrush Generation, who remind us that Black British history has emerged today by facing many obstacles and bearing intolerable hardships in the course. This makes us question ourselves and consider whether we would really be willing to ignore the cracks in history and neglect all the sufferings endured by these people.

In simple terms, the correct answer lies within a level of ambiguity itself. As historians, we must all decide, personally, where in the spectrum we stand; as Alphonse de Lamartine says, "The impartiality of history is not that of the mirror which merely reflects objects, but of the judge who sees, listens, and decides." The only way we can come to a conclusion is by reading more about the book of history ourselves.

We must constantly ask questions: is this a certain exception and a unique case, or, at what scale did this event have an effect? Only by asking these questions will we have a true idea of the past: we must learn to be critical thinkers. However, we will soon come to realise that history, as a whole, is all about personal experience and choice. What I think may not be what you think – but that is fine. When it comes to Black British history, we must look at this mirror and observe both the cracks within it and the unity it brings about: the final choice is up to you.

<Competition>

Cabin Shadow Boxing

Written by Sam Tunbridge
First Place Winner

You stand, petrified of the scene in front of you. You think you know nothing of what happened, and you are terrified of why you are here. You run, unaware of where you are going or what you are going to do about what you have just seen.

You wake the next morning to your brother's snores. You yawn, momentarily forgetting what you witnessed the night before. Your brother also awakes, as if his own snores disturbed him (though you wouldn't be surprised!) and calls to you, "Morning, John!" Bleary-eyed, you return his greeting with a tired, "And you, Harold." Instinctively, you reach out to your left to grab your boxing gloves, to go to early morning practice. When you find nothing, you remember that it is May 1948 and you are on board the HMT Empire Windrush, on your way to England to start a new life. As you come to terms with the fact that you are on your way to the "mother country," you remember what you witnessed the night before.

You head down the stairs to the first deck for breakfast. You smell the same bland toast that is served every day. As you eat the soggy bread, you ponder the night before. Suddenly, you hear a foghorn echo through the hall. "All passengers please exit to your cabins immediately. More information will be given to you later." Butterflies create a tornado in your gut as you realise what this could mean. On your way to cabin 22, you meet a couple who are equally scared. "I hope no one was hurt! I hope everyone's alright! I hope..."

"Calm, Louise! Everyone's fine!" says her husband, Howard. You chuckle nervously. "Yeah...What do you do for a living?" you ask to swiftly change the subject.

"Ooh!" says Louise. "I'm a cleaner and Howie's a boxer." "Really?" you exclaim. "So am I!" "Sorry to rain on your parade, but we prob'ly should quickly get to our room. Nice to meet you!" John interrupts. You make a mental note to meet Howard later.

In your cabin, you shadow box to waste time. Shimmying from left to right to left to right...the movements feel so natural, even on an erratic ship, and you immediately calm down and take a seat. As soon as you sit down, Harold starts to pace back and forth around the room, randomly spouting out questions: "When will we be called back? What happened? Why? Whe..."

"Please! We will find out soon!" you shout, tired of his constant questioning and paranoid about what the panic is about.

After what seems like forever, you hear Captain Charles Cook announcing on the tannoy system that an extremely unfortunate event has occurred: Charles Baine of cabin 24 has died of a heart attack in the night. As soon as Cook mentions cabin 24, your heart leaps; not just because of how close said cabin is, but also because that is the cabin that you ended up in just the night before. Suddenly, you reach out a hand and grab

Howard, begging him to help explain the events of the night before. Confused, he holds your hand as you recall the events.

You sway rhythmically to the smooth calypso music, hearing the call-and-response lyrical styles and the cuatro violin melodies. You drink a tall glass of rum, savouring its sugary taste and the light-headed feeling it gives you. Suddenly, you remember an encounter with Samuel Baine you had earlier in the day; you acted like an unofficial therapist, listening to him air his complaints about his older brother Charles. "He acts like he knows everything. So ridiculously arrogant; sometimes I just want to kill him. This isn't helped by the fact he was always the favourite child." In the moment, you feel empathy: you also sometimes don't like your sibling. The alcohol calming your rationality, you decide to go to his cabin (number 24) to express your empathy. Entering his cabin, you call out, "Samuel!" Not hearing an answer, you walk further into the room and find the body of Charles Baine.

After hearing the announcement, you are confused. When entering the cabin, you vaguely remember a mask of fright and shock on Charles' face. It is not the face a heart attack victim would have. Your dad is a detective back in Barbados, and you have learnt many of the tricks of the trade; maybe the tricks of the trade will help you bring justice to poor Charles Baine.

However, you have no idea where to start; maybe checking the body? But where would that be? You decide to talk to an engineer; you think that the body could be kept in the boiler room. In almost every murder mystery book on ships, the body is in a boiler room; why not in real life as well? "Hi, I'm...Edward, erm, Charles' brother. I would like to see his body if you don't mind."

"Hmmm..." the engineer is unconvinced. "Let me check the passenger list."

"Wait! Never mind!" you shout and run away, leaving the engineer flabbergasted. "Good," you say to yourself. "I know that Charles' body is in the boiler room...how to get there?" Suddenly, you have an idea; Harold would make a great partner! You rush back to your cabin, readying your words. "Harold! Harold!" you shriek. "Yes?" replies Harold, tired of your yelling. "Listen!" you explain the events of the night and suggest your proposition. "I'd love to!" Harold exclaims. "What do I do?"

"Well..." you reply, "I need you to take notes and help me find suspects, as well as providing a distraction so I can investigate the body for wounds."

"Okay! Whatever you need!" he replies. "Okay, I need you to distract an engineer. Any ideas?"

"Hmmm...I know! I'll get him talking about his childhood!"

"Good idea!" you say.

"Erm, excuse me? Where were you born?" you hear Harold ask. "Ah! In Port of Spain, my friend!" "How was your childhood?" "Very busy: I was a keen sportsman, but my parents couldn't fund my obsession, so I had to get a job and..." Hearing the engineer enter his own world, you quietly fiddle with the handle and enter the boiler room.

You gasp as you enter the boiler room to see Charles. His three-piece suit is pristine, and yet his face has specks of blood all over it. The three-piece suit has a very dry-cleaned look about it and you are suspicious, so you unbutton his shirt and see what could help the case be solved.

In the middle of his chest, you see a bullet wound with a bullet still wedged in his skin. Instinctively, you gasp, and the engineer snaps out of his daydream. "Hey you! Out of there!" You sprint toward cabin 22, hearing every footstep of the furious engineer behind you. Finally, you see the number 22 in calligraphy and sprint in. Frightened of the consequences, you swiftly lock the door behind you. Panting heavily, you ponder the evidence at hand. Obviously, you that there has been a cover-up and Charles was shot, not the victim of a heart attack. But why and by whom?

"We must first recreate the scene of the crime. We know that Charles was shot, but Samuel hasn't told the captain that he heard a gunshot."

"Harold? Maybe we should try Samuel, Charles' brother? We know he has a motive: jealousy of his seemingly perfect life and wanting the love of his parents. I'll talk to him about Charles' death, and you search his cabin, number 24."

"Won't it be closed pending investigation?" Harold replies.

"Pretend you are...Edward, his brother. It kind of worked for me!"

"Sure..." replies Harold sceptically. "Let's investigate and remember what Dad told us: stay vigilant!" Suddenly, you realise that the search would be easier and more efficient with 3 people, and you tell this to Harold. "Maybe we should ask Howard, the boxer?" you suggest. "We don't know anybody other than him, and he seemed nice. He could help us!" "Okay..." replies Harold, unsure. "Fine. We'll do it."

You find Samuel in the dining hall and try to ask him some questions: "I tried to find you on the night when poor Charles was killed...had a heart attack!" you correct yourself nervously. "Were you there? In the cabin?"

"Yes; I was in the bathroom doing...you know...my business so I couldn't answer you." "Hmm...did you know of Charles having any previous heart conditions?" you ask, trying to collect more information.

"I wouldn't know; I organised this trip as a forgive-and-forget, to make up for previous hatred for each other. I know I was complaining to you on the night about him, but I love him really."

"Okay, thanks for that, Sam. Just seeing if you're okay?" you ask. "I'm fine, I guess. I'll never be the same though, without Charles." Saddened by his feelings, you reply, "Thanks for your time. I won't bother you any longer."

Although you are almost certain that Harold and Howard would have found nothing, you go and check with them anyway. "Find anything?" you ask.

"No!" Howard says. As he goes back to his wife and their cabin, you see Harold pull out a piece of paper from his pocket. "But I did find a cheque from Howard Sinnas, representing Port of Spain Boxing to Charles Baine of Georgetown Punches, for \$3000 because of a serious spine injury to Richard Bower of Port of Spain Boxing."

"We've got to investigate your buddy Howard," you hear Harold say, "because I also heard him brag to his wife Louise about his shooting skills; maybe we should check his cabin for a weapon?"

"Sure!" you reply. "Let's do it! Can you distract Howard, and I'll check out the cabin?" "Why not?" replies Harold.

"How?"

"I know!" you exclaim. "He's a boxer, so ask him about his career!"

"Okay," says Harold. "Let's get justice for poor Charles."

You hear the chuckles of Louise as Harold makes bad jokes about boxing as you open the cupboards in the cabin. "Tie, shirt, trousers...! Pistol!!!" You shriek as you see a Colt M1911 in his suit jacket. Hearing your cry, Howard enters the room curiously and sees you. You see his confusion and wave the gun in his face. "Did you kill Charles Baine?" You don't wait for an answer before you drag him towards the captain's deck. "Captain! I know who killed Charles Baine! It was Howard Sinnas. On 19th May, he entered cabin 24 with this Colt M1911 and shot Charles Baine in the chest, stopping his heart and killing him. We must lock him in his cabin until we board in Tilbury Docks and the English police can deal with him..." Your voice falters as Harold walks toward you, a sad look on his face. "It wasn't Howard; he's been framed," he says to you. "When I first searched his cabin, I found a love letter to Louise. This handwriting and the cheque did not match. Knowing this, I then searched Samuel's cabin and found his invitation to Charles for the trip and the life in England. The handwriting matched the writing on the cheque. Samuel Baine killed his brother for reasons of greed."

Two hours later, you, Howard and Harold watch the crew drag a screaming Samuel into his cabin to lock him in. "Please!" he shrieks. "I've been framed! It wasn't me! I swear..." You hear the sounds being drowned out by the slam of his cabin door. He will not be seeing light for a long while.

It is 22nd June 1948. Yesterday, you landed safely at Tilbury Docks, Exeter and found a job as a carpenter; you have also found a local boxing gym near where you live in Exeter; Howard has set up his own boxing club, called Exeter Hooks. The three of you remain close friends, and you will never forget the adventures of the Windrush journey.

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1. File:Metamorphosis of Narcissus.jpg https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Metamorphosis_of_Narcissus.jpg
2. File:John William Waterhouse - Echo and

Narcissus - Google Art Project.jpg

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:John_William_Waterhouse_-_Echo_and_Narcissus_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

Are they the ones we dream of, or the ones we fail to see among us?

1. Monster. 2023. Directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda. Japan: Gaga, AOI Pro, Bun-Buku, Toho, Fuji Television Network.

Image Credits:

1. Monster, Cannes Film Festival - found on <https://variety.com/2023/film/reviews/monster-review-master-manipulator-kaibutsu-kore-eda-hirokazu-1235614597/>

Competition

1. Assorted houses, Photo by Ovinuchi Ejiohuo on Unsplash <https://unsplash.com/photos/assorted-houses-q4U9Pyfz-vQ>
2. File:Dido belle alone crop.png https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dido_belle_alone_crop.png
3. <https://unsplash.com/photos/a-beach-with-a-body-of-water-and-mountains-in-the-background-yN2p8PRSTig>
4. Crashing Waves, Photo by Ivan Bandura on Unsplash <https://unsplash.com/photos/crashing-waves-5cwigXmGWTo>
5. Big Ben London, Photo by Marcin Nowak on Unsplash <https://unsplash.com/photos/big-ben-london-iXqTqC-f6jI>
6. Grayscale photography of man, Photo by Julian Myles on Unsplash <https://unsplash.com/photos/grayscale-photography-of-man-JRPu9rnNgH8>

Should history seek to unite a nation's past or expose the cracks within the mirror which enables us to see history? & Where does the concept of Black British heritage lie within this spectrum?

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1. Main image: College of Arms MS Westminster Tournament Roll, 1511. Reproduced by permission of the Kings, Heralds and Pursuivants of Arms.

2. Mary Seacole, cartoon in Punch magazine, May 30, 1857.

3. Olaudah Equiano, from the frontispiece of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano; or, Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* (1789).



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