

Wilson's Intrigue

Humanities

Issue 8 | December 2025



Napoleon Bonaparte: How did he rise from Corsican Outsider to Emperor of France?

Shankar Raghavan

Also inside:

Tolkienian Ethics - From the Shire to Mordor | by Christopher Sinclair

Unequal Britain | by Ishan Dey



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2025 Issue 8

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Editor's foreword

2025 Issue 8

We are thrilled to present the latest issue of the Humanities Magazine. This issue is one of our most varied yet, featuring an even more diverse collection of articles which span subjects such as philosophy, history, economics, music, and psychology. Each article offers a unique lens on a different aspect of the world, and we hope that, as you read, some of their ideas will not only inform but also spark your own. Several articles also explore contemporary topics, such as AI, social media, and Trump's challenge to the rule of law, whilst other articles on epistemology, metaphysics, and Napoleon engage in a deeper historical and philosophical inquiry.

From early brainstorming to final layout, this magazine is the result of countless hours of writing, editing, proofreading, and design. We'd like to thank all of our editors and writers who contributed with their energy and commitment, and for putting themselves forward.

Due to the nature of the magazine, it is not possible to publish articles without a round of teacher editing. Thus, we thank Mr Vazquez, Miss Atwell, Mr Englefield, Miss Clarke, Mr McLaughlin, Mr Kramer and Miss Denison for their support. We must also extend our sincere thanks to Mrs Fletcher, the teacher in charge of the Humanities Magazine, whose unwavering support, help with proofreading, and assistance with logistical challenges have been essential to the magazine's continued success.

There will be just one more opportunity to contribute to the Humanities Magazine this academic year. If you are interested in exploring a topic you're passionate about and sharing it with a wider audience, keep an eye out for announcements. We are also seeking two new Chief Editors to take over leadership of the magazine, beginning in September 2026. To be eligible, you must have contributed to at least one previous issue, either as a writer or an editor.

Kaivalya and Oscar

Chief Editors

Cover design by Oscar Wong.

Apply to work in the next issue of Humanities:

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Unequal Britain

THE PERSISTENCE OF INEQUALITY IN THE UK AND WHY WE SHOULD TAX WEALTH

Written by Ishaan Dey

Edited by Oscar Wong

The UK has come a long way in addressing inequality of opportunity; the expansion of the comprehensive school system and the establishment of the welfare state have meant that generations of British people have been more socially mobile than before. University education has become an achievable goal for many, with the proportion of 18-year-olds choosing to continue with further university or equivalent education jumping from 15% in 1980¹ to 36.4% in 2022.² The establishment of the NHS has meant that decent healthcare has become accessible and affordable for the masses, improving the ability of the poor to get treated, be healthy and therefore be productive. The large institutions that help achieve these are embedded into UK society and have genuine tangible effects on the lives of all; from 2025 to 2026, the government plans to spend £853 billion on Healthcare, Education, Social Care and Welfare schemes³. There is no doubt that British society in 2025 is far less unequal than Britain in 1900.

And yet, inequality continues to persist in the UK and has arguably worsened in recent years: the Joseph Rowntree Society calculated that in 2021, 50% of the poorest have just 5% of the wealth in this country – a proportion that continues to worsen.⁴ The economist Thomas Piketty found that in developed countries around the world, including the UK, the returns from holding wealth have grown to be much greater than the average increase in real income for people, and so wealth and income inequality are presently increasing, and will continue to increase, if there is no substantial change in policy⁵. This rise in wealth inequality has very real effects on the quality of life and standard of living of British people, as it makes assets, most importantly housing, less accessible to the average person. When a high-wealth individual like the Duke of Westminster holds £9.5 billion worth of property,⁶ the average person has to spend ever greater sums of money to buy or rent their own property, making it far more difficult for people to

fulfil their basic need of shelter, and by extension their other needs (food, heating etc.), because much greater proportions of their income is spent on housing without, on average, wage increases that cover these increased costs. The average price of a house was 4.4 times the average yearly wage in 1999 in England, and this figure is today 8.6⁷. This, alongside other government policies, has contributed to an increase in the number of children suffering from what is known as ‘deep poverty’, that is, those whose families are earning less than 50% of the median income after housing costs. Between 2011 and 2023, this number increased by 600k.⁸

What can be done to reduce inequality? The root cause of this growing inequality, according to the economist Thomas Piketty, is that returns on capital have consistently exceeded growth in average incomes. Reversing this trend by creating an economy in which average incomes rise faster than returns on capital will reduce inequality, and the best tool that the government has to do so is its taxation policy. By increasing capital gains tax rates to the average rate of income tax and introducing a wealth tax of, for instance, 2p for every pound of wealth above £100 million annually, inequality can be reduced. By making it less profitable for high-wealth individuals to invest in housing as an asset, they are incentivised to look towards investment in industries and job creation instead, increasing the level of investment in productive industries that create incomes, raising average incomes. By reducing the profitability of investing in assets, speculative buying of property and assets is reduced, and so assets become more accessible and affordable for those who just seek to have a place to live in.

A commonly cited problem with the wealth tax is that it encourages wealthy individuals to move to somewhere else with lower taxes, and so will reduce the total level of investment in the economy

and not raise significant amounts of tax revenue. This argument is, however, misleading; most wealth in the UK is tied to the UK, either in the form of land which is immovable or in companies that are based in the UK. Individuals cannot move the assets themselves to another country to pay less tax, and so they will have to pay taxes on assets that are in the UK. The tax revenue gained by raising wealth taxes can be used by the government to invest in public services further that reduce inequality, and also reduce income tax which can more than make up for any loss in economic growth caused by a wealth tax. Lower income groups have a higher marginal propensity to consume than high wealth groups; they spend a higher proportion of their income buying things, and so reducing taxes on low income groups increases economic growth more than an equivalent rise in tax for high income and wealth groups. The government should, therefore, enact a wealth tax to deal with the problem of a lack of economic growth and to deal with rising wealth inequality.



AI FOR BUSINESSES – A BLESSING OR A CURSE?

With AI booming around the world, what does this mean for businesses and the workforce now and in the future?

Written by Vihaan Zawar Edited by Kaivalya Pullakandam



The usage of AI chatbots like ChatGPT, Gemini, and so on, has boomed recently. It has helped to overcome countless day-to-day problems, from condensing heaps of overwhelming information into a summary paragraph, to helping create a workout for a gym session - the list is almost endless. All in all, it has proven to be quite useful. However, the use of AI in businesses seems to be multifaceted- it seems to come with its own set of benefits and downsides.

FIRST AND FOREMOST - WHAT IS AI?

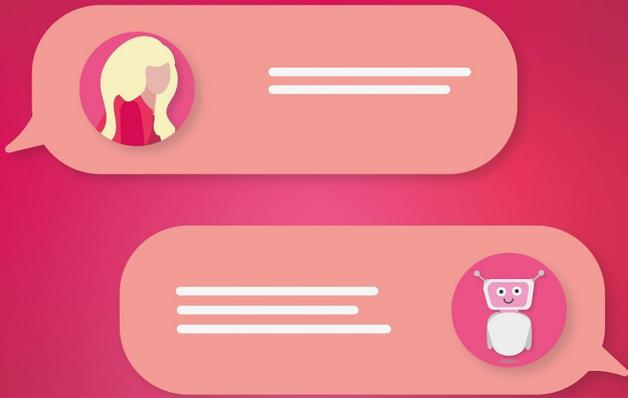
Computers don't possess the ability to think or reason. This distinction is why many tasks still require a human to complete. Which is where AI comes in: it bridges the gap between computers and humans. Scientists were able to engineer computer programmes with a capability to use human intelligence to perform tasks which previously required a human

to complete. In essence, AI works by using complex algorithms and data. A lot of data is inputted into the programme, the computer analyses it and is therefore able to recognise patterns and make predictions on different things. Although the idea of creating an "artificial brain" dates back to the 1950s¹, more recent investment and research into AI has paved way for the release of multiple Large Language Models (LLMs), like ChatGPT, which exhibit "human-like traits of knowledge, attention and creativity"¹. And due to its versatility, it has been seamlessly integrated into countless sectors such as banking, retail and healthcare, further leading to a lot of investment into AI due to its clear usefulness! At this astounding rate, it wouldn't be surprising if, in 10 or so years, AI were able to compose an entire song in a matter of minutes.

WHAT PROBLEMS ARE POSED TO BUSINESSES AND HOW IS AI USED TO SOLVE THEM?

Here are some challenges faced by businesses in various sectors that can be mitigated with the use of AI:

- Drug delivery in healthcare: this process is usually quite time-consuming and costs billions of pounds before a drug can be introduced to the market. However, AI can be used to accelerate this process- it can crunch large amounts of data and identify potential drug candidates. It can also help analyse the efficacy and toxicity of chemical compounds and even suggest new chemical compounds which may even improve the effectiveness of a drug.²
- Financial crime costs the UK around £350B, equivalent to 17.5% of the UK's GDP³. Deutsche Bank, a German multinational investment bank, is using AI since 2019 to tackle financial crime.



Babylon was an app which was powered by AI that helped people solve their day-to-day health problems within the comfort of their homes⁵

They use an AI model known as Black Forest, which at heart analyses transactions and records, and checks whether there's any which doesn't fit the pattern. It looks at where the transaction is going to, the value and currency of the transaction, whether it is been done over the counter or online and many more factors, before it flags down a suspicious transaction and reports it to the account manager. The account manager can then investigate it, and if it really is suspicious, then they can report it to the Anti-Financial Crime Department⁴. This can be quite useful, as it can lower the number of financial crimes that occur. AI's ability to be quite accurate and its thoroughness compared to humans may also serve as a deterrent for criminals. It's 24/7 availability ensures that criminals are caught anywhere, any time.

- Historically, pests have been a problem in agriculture due to their ability to devastate large areas of crop. As a matter of fact, pests are responsible for 40% of global crop losses a year⁶. Pests cause agricultural losses of about \$220 billion annually⁷, which includes crop losses and costs of pest management, e.g. pesticides. In Africa alone, a pest known as the Fall Armyworm costs farmers an exorbitant \$4.6 billion per year⁸, henceforth affecting food security in these areas as well as affect farmers' livelihoods. This has led to the development of AI models which can be used to prevent these pests causing widespread damage to crops. AI-powered drones can scan fields, capturing hi-res images. Machine learning models can analyse these images to check whether the plants show signs of pest infestation, such as leaf damage, discolouration, etc. This provides a warning to the farmer during the early stages of an infestation, and the farmer knows its exact location, so they can quickly eliminate any pests in

the area. This can greatly benefit the farmer, as they get an increased crop yield, and also the economy of the country in general as it doesn't have to suffer losses when losing large areas of crop.

SO, WHAT DO THE STATISTICS SAY ABOUT AI USAGE?

Here are some statistical data about AI usage in businesses:

- The financial services sector seems to have the highest AI adoption rates. According to a 2024 Bank of England report, 75% of UK financial services firms are currently utilising AI, with a further 10% planning on using it within the next 3 years.
- AI is projected to have a profound impact on global economy. According to a study by PwC, AI could contribute up to \$15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030, representing a 14% increase in global GDP⁹.
- AI can also help save a lot of money for businesses. A small business could save up to \$35,000 a year by integrating AI into its operations¹⁰, a study has shown.

THE BENEFITS OF AI INTEGRATION IN DIFFERENT BUSINESS SECTORS

Alongside the use of AI to solve problems as mentioned previously, it also has many other benefits which it can bring to companies who choose to use AI in their operations:

1. **Efficiency.** AI can prove to be far more efficient compared to its human counterpart. With humans, there are always factors that can affect their productivity, such as tiredness, distractions and stress, to name but a few. All of these issues are wiped clean with AI, with its ability to crunch data and do functions around the clock with unwavering accuracy. As a matter of fact, employees using AI tools can experience performance boosts of up to 40% compared to those not using these tools¹¹.
2. **May eliminate employment and training costs.** If companies were to replace their human employees with AI programmes, it would benefit them immensely. Not only do they not have to pay the employee anymore, but they can also avoid significant costs associated with training- AI comes pre-trained, of course. A popular example of a service that AI is handling a significant portion in is customer service. Many websites feature chatbots which seem to instantly reply as soon as a customer messages them. These are powered by AI, reducing the need of human agents for simple

issues. NIB Health Funds, an Australian healthcare fund, saved \$22M by utilising its AI powered digital assistant, reducing the need of human customer service support by 60%¹².

“AI could contribute up to \$15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030”

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

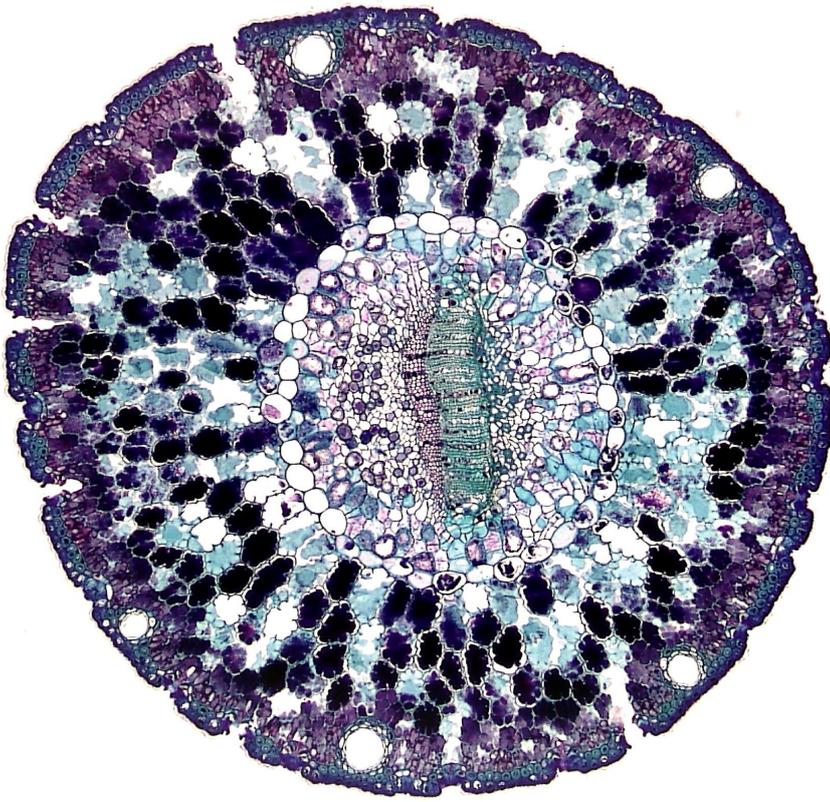
- 1. Loss of many jobs.** It is highly anticipated that AI programs taking over jobs will result in unemployment for many. What's worse, if they are specialised in a certain sector where most of the jobs have been taken over by AI, they may have to retrain and work in a completely unrelated sector. But just how big of a risk is AI to jobs? Well, in a report from the American multinational investment bank Goldman Sachs in 2023, it was estimated that AI could replace the equivalent of 300 million full-time jobs¹³. And that's just an example from the finance sector. A report from McKinsey forecasts that, by 2030, 400 to 800 million jobs could be displaced as a result of automation and AI¹⁴.
- 2. Mistakes made by AI- who's to blame?** Contrary to popular belief, AI is not completely flawless. ChatGPT even warns its users that the information it is providing may not be accurate, stating: "ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important information." Well, this is true due to multiple reasons. AI, as explained before, relies heavily on data. If this data is incomplete, then that can lead to it producing inaccurate results. Also, AI lacks common sense. This makes it especially hard for it to navigate unusual scenarios which it may not have been trained for. This has caused numerous issues in the past, a particular case being in 2018 when a self-driving Uber car hit a pedestrian in the USA, fatally killing them¹⁵. This also makes it problematic to find the culprit behind these issues. Is it the company who utilised the AI programme? Or is it the company which made the AI programme? These are the kind of difficulties that are entailed by the use of AI in businesses.
- 3. Increased energy consumption.** Though it may sound far-fetched, it is indeed quite a significant

problem that comes with the increased usage of AI. AI is far different to normal computers in that it uses a lot more energy. They comprise of specialised hardware which consume a significant amount of energy. To put it into perspective: Data centres currently use 1-2% of the world's electricity. However, studies have predicted that this can increase to 21% by 2030- largely due to the increase in AI usage¹⁶. Energy usage is already a problem in the light of climate change, but this is only to be exacerbated by AI's high energy consumption.

- 4. Ethical problems.** One such prominent example is in the creative arts industry- acting, singing, painting, literature. Recently, there has been a rise in AI models which can compose melodies, write stories and much more. It may therefore pose a serious threat to artists in the near future, with many possibly losing their jobs due to a development in AI's creative abilities. Other problems, such as plagiarism and legal disputes, may also arise if AI produces content that already exists. The education sector is another example. It is possible that AI may struggle to replicate a human teacher-student relationship. If AI then were to replace teachers, who is to be held accountable if student learning is hindered - the AI developers or the schools?

SO, WHAT IS IN IT FOR THE FUTURE?

In conclusion, AI brings with it its own set of advantages and disadvantages. Even the problems mentioned in the section above have some solutions - though it is true AI will replace many jobs; experts predict that it may even bring millions of new jobs for the future workforce. By not allowing AI to operate at maximum capacity, many companies have reduced the energy consumed by AI, hence making AI usage quite energy efficient. Maybe in the future there will be a development of AI models which consume significantly less amount of energy. While it is evident how AI can immensely benefit some sectors, at its current state, there still are some sectors which may find it hard to use AI, due to a vast array of reasons such as ethical considerations, lack of common sense, and so forth. However, AI has undergone exponential growth within the past few years, so it is completely possible for that to continue in the future. Future advancements may lead to AI being used in industries where it was previously unsuitable - or maybe even a taboo!



<Economics>

The Economics on Stem Cells

What would this mean for our medical system

Written by Harshil Kalepalli Edited by Kaivalya Pullakandam

In recent times, we have been accustomed to hearing recent medical developments from around the world. Virtual surgery has been a prime example of that development, with many surgeons now using this surgery as the way to practise for complex surgery¹. This has saved many lives as surgeons were able to find out how to do a procedure and what mistakes they could have been making in a non-emergent setting, while also acting as a way test surgical students in medical schools.

However, there have been different inventions and discoveries that have really swept across the medical community, including stem cells procedures. Stem cells procedure⁶ include using undifferentiated cells found mainly in the bone marrow and are extracted from the patient's body, so when the stem cells are again placed into the patient's body to differentiate into the organ needed, like a heart for instance,

the body won't reject it, meaning post-surgery recovery can happen more easily. This will decrease healthcare costs and potentially let people who would have been lower down on the transplant register get a vitally important organ to survive, as there are many organ shortages around the world and in the UK specifically.

So, what does this mean for our economy. There are serious effects to our economy if these procedures get more common place. Well, this would severely reduce healthcare costs around the world, especially in America, the most expensive health care system in the world due to privatisation of many different hospitals².

Transplants are expensive: from extracting the organ safely from the dead body, to then shipping (mostly by air) the organ all the way to another hospital, in the little time the organs must be transplanted in, to be viable for another person. These are all issues to consider,

making the average transplant very expensive. In the USA, an average heart transplant costs \$1,664,800³. That is massive, as the average house in America itself is \$419,000, meaning a heart transplant in America could buy you around four houses!

Now in the UK there is a public health system, called the NHS. In recent years, due to a lack of budget, this has left many hospitals in the UK, unable to keep up with demand and many nursing and Doctor shortages. This is very problematic, because this will reduce the ability for the patient to get the appropriate care and will negatively affect views on the NHS and can kill people that could have been saved. Also, this causes burnout within the existing Doctors, as there are fewer Doctors, causing more Doctors to leave, causing further shortages. The cycle just doesn't end. This is almost like the cycle of deprivation⁴ which happens in poor areas, which simply can't escape the cycle due to a myriad of reasons working against them and it is very hard to come out of.

Stem cell transplants are currently being used,⁵ but only for lower problems and transplants, like bone marrow transplant. While this is incredible, it is also quite limiting and can't be used to transplant a liver for instance. This could reduce healthcare costs in Britain significantly, if technology is developed and it is possible for transplants to happen using stem cells, which can be great for the patients

These are all issues to consider, making the average transplant very expensive. In the USA, an average heart transplant costs \$1,664,800

and reducing healthcare costs, but is this completely beneficial, and are there any problems that can happen when this happens?

Firstly, there is the possibility that the body rejects the stem cells. Even though technology is trying to adapt and has made it less likely for the stem cells to be rejected in the body of the patient, there is a big chance it can get rejected, simply because currently, patients are getting stem cells from other people, because some conditions, such as genetic disorders or cancers like leukaemia, may not benefit from autologous transplants because the patient's own cells may carry the same underlying issue. This still results in immune suppressants being needed and this can kill a person if they get an infection.

Also, organs are complex structure and currently stem cells from bone marrow are not at all potent enough to fully differentiate into an organ. They can only differentiate into certain type of cells, like white blood cells or red blood cells, whereas a liver needs many more types of cells. This isn't perfect, but if this does eventually replace all type of surgery and transplant there could be serious consequences. If stem cells could be used for all transplants, this would change medicine but also create some economic problems. The need for traditional organ transplants, like kidneys and livers, would reduce, which could hurt industries involved in organ donation, transplant surgery, and drugs that prevent organ rejection. From the helicopter pilot who generally flies the organ to the manufacturer of the box of the organ to the scientists who properly extract and check the condition of the organs when harvested, all will be affected.

While stem cell treatments might lower healthcare costs in the long run by reducing the need for lifelong medication and multiple surgeries, they would likely be very expensive at first, making them hard for lower-income people to afford. Like any new surgery which is cutting edge, lots of R&D is needed for the treatment to be safe and effective. This means that even if this treatment was available and successful it is unlikely to be available for the rich for a long time. Insurance companies and healthcare systems would have to change their policies, which could raise concerns about fairness and access.

Insurance companies might introduce new payment plans, such as spreading costs over time or only covering certain types of stem cell treatments. Healthcare systems could set price limits, create guidelines for who qualifies for treatment, and fund research to make stem cell transplants more affordable. The biotech industry would grow quickly, but this could lead to a few big companies controlling the market and charging high prices, making these treatments available mostly to wealthy people unless strong rules are put in place by the government, but then that would be problematic since then

companies are less likely to be incentivised to actually develop new treatments for other diseases like cancer if they realise the government could impose strict rules on the pricing, meaning in the long run less development will happen. There is a fine balance between incentivising businesses to develop new cures and not taking advantage of consumers and patients who need lifesaving support, from an organ.

On one hand you want new technology which can save more lives, but on the other hand you want that to be accessible to average people and this will reduce profits of businesses. If this new technology involving stem cells became successful after the four stages of gruelling testing on hundreds of people and after finding ways to make the surgery more successful for the mass market and manage post-operative symptoms, it would involve a lot to take into account and would cost a lot of money—possibly tens of billions of dollars, including scientists' salaries and equipment costs.

To make a profit, it is clear that companies will have to charge maybe double if not triple of the price of an average transplant, so when a person who needs a liver transplant sees the price of a normal organ harvest and transplant, which is around £100,000 in the UK⁷, and sees maybe the £400,000 price for the stem cell, unless this is an extremely wealthy old patient who doesn't qualify to be near the top of the registry, it is clear that your average person will definitely wait to get a liver. This means that prices will further increase as not a lot of people will buy this product and treatment, meaning it will be inaccessible to average people even more.

So, the question is, is this going to be useful and help people or, will this not be useful and a typically transplant surgery will still be the way to go? Only time will tell, but currently there is little hope that even if the surgery is properly developed, it will be accessible to patients who don't have a lot of money, and with money being able to be spent in other areas where there is a shortfall, like in certain women's diseases, this would clearly boost the healthcare of the people even more than some surgery which is unlikely to work, and even if it does work is more expensive than a normal surgery which has been done for decades now and Doctors are comfortable with reducing the change of medical error.

While stem cell surgeries can be game changing, I believe that they won't be accessible any time in the future. Unless the government does huge subsidies to incentivise and speed up the process, I think that this will be a niche surgery only available to the ultra-wealthy with access to world class Doctors.

<Philosophy>

The Overdependence on Divinity

Written by Vedanth Menon

Edited by Siddard Saktheesh

Exploration into the divine is one of the most researched and studied fields throughout history, whilst also being the greatest mystery of human life, with arguments made on both ends of the spectrum regarding the existence of a divine figure, such as God. This, however, does not prevent some religious believers from devoting their lives to their faith, willing to go above and beyond for it, and unable to function without it.

Dr Kurt P Wise is an American geologist and palaeontologist who achieved his Master's and PhD from Harvard University¹. Born into a fundamentalist Christian family, as his education progressed, he found himself conflicted between science and his faith. Aged 15-16, Wise investigated how religion and science opposed one another. He identified every verse in the Bible which actively seemed to contradict the theory of evolution.

He said in 2001²,

"I found it impossible to pick up the Bible without it being rent in two. I had to make a decision between evolution and Scripture. Either the Scripture was true and evolution was wrong or evolution was true and I must toss out the Bible. However, at that moment I thought back to seven or so years before when a Bible was pushed to a position in front of me and I had come to know Jesus Christ. I had in those years come to know Him. I had become familiar with His love and His

concern for me. He had become a real friend to me. He was the reason I was even alive both physically and spiritually. I could not reject Him. Yet, I had come to know Him through His Word. I could not reject that either. It was there that night that I accepted the Word of God and rejected all that would ever counter it, including evolution. With that, in great sorrow, I tossed into the fire all my dreams and hopes in science."

Even as his research and insight into the origins of life developed, Wise has maintained his literal belief in the Genesis creation account and has written three books confirming his strong belief in scripture.

Kurt P Wise is one of many examples, presenting how strong religious beliefs can influence individuals to prioritise their faith when it conflicts with scientific understanding. Renowned scientist, author and atheist, Richard Dawkins referred to Wise as a "*disgrace to the human species*,"³ for his clouded judgment.

Many theists would argue that the dependence on the divine is integral to human life. Some Christians, for example, may claim that '*Dependency on God is not negative, but rather something we can strive for in our Christian walks*.'⁴ The Christian God is described to advise and yearn for our dependence on him: '*He doesn't want us to be independent, but rather He wants us to run to him, to be dependent on Him, His guidance, and His mercy*.'⁵

Undoubtedly, dependence on God can have multi-faceted benefits on humans. Wellbeing and mental health are often greatly improved through reliance on and devotion to God, with an increased sense of optimism, purpose and the recognition that we can never be alone, when God is always with us. For religious believers, submitting fully to the will of the divine can lead to increased spiritual awareness, strengthening of your relationship with the Almighty, and answered prayers.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) once said, as recorded in a Hadith⁶, *“If you all depend on Allah with due reliance, He would certainly give you provision as He gives it to birds who go forth hungry in the morning and return with [a] full belly at dusk.”*

Some traditions rely completely on the will of the divine to sustain themselves, unable to function without fervent faith.

Ancient Egyptians, for example, celebrated the annual festival of Osiris, the God of the underworld, vegetation and agriculture during the inundation of the Nile, to ensure a successful crop yield⁷. In such cases, people’s livelihoods and survival depended on mercy and blessings from the Gods.

Furthermore, Aghoris are a Hindu sect of ascetics who completely devote their lives and submitting to the Hindu deity Shiva. These Aghoris settle in places such as Varanasi, a holy site of pilgrimage, where devotees often flock to cremate dead loved ones. They renounce all the outside world, wearing limited, if any, clothing, consume human flesh from remaining corpses⁸ and cover themselves in ash⁹. While it is important to respect and gain understanding of their rituals, it is equally important to recognise that these extreme practices are a product of their limitless devotion to Shiva, to the extent where they are completely reliant on intervention from the divine to maintain their health and body. Is such dependence necessary, or perhaps, an even more pressing question is to ask, is such dependence good for us?

A horrifying incident in Kerala, India, can be seen as evidence for the danger of uninhibited reliance on God. On the 31st of October 2021, an 11-year-old girl named Fathima died¹⁰ after her parents purposely neglected her and gave her no medical attention, despite her having an unwavering fever which had been ongoing for 5 days. Instead of giving her medication, her father directed her to fast and recite the Qur’an. Local ‘faith-healer’ Muhammad Uwais confessed to having advised the parents not to go to the hospital, and rather, gave them ‘Qur’an-infused water’, which would supposedly cure her. Even after Fathima’s death, Uwais maintained to the police that hospitals were still unnecessary; Allah was the only being needed for human healing - “Doctors are devils.” In this instance, over-dependence on the divine has led to harrowing consequences, and this

“Perhaps an even more pressing question is to ask, is such dependence good for us?”

case is not singular, with similar extremity evidenced across the world, such as a minority of Pentecostals in the Christian Church, who rely on the divine for recovery from illness and refuse all other medical help.

Over-dependence on divinity exists not only on an individual basis but can also be seen as a wider societal and philosophical debate. Religious believers would argue that society is dependent on a divine figure and religion to have any principles, morals or order whatsoever. To an extent, this interpretation is convincing. William Lane Craig, an American analytic philosopher, Christian apologist, author and theologian¹¹ states that *“without God, good and evil do not exist- there is only the bare valueless fact of existence”*¹² as all actions would be seen subjectively, with the question of good or bad based on individual decisions. Atheists, however, criticise this argument as being flawed, old-fashioned and illogical. As Steven Weinberg, an American theoretical physicist¹³ stated at a conference in 1999, *“Religion is an insult to human dignity. With or without it you would have good people doing good things and evil people doing evil things. But for good people to do evil things, that takes religion.”*¹⁴ This is elaborated on by the famous atheist author and journalist Christopher Hitchens, who asked anyone to state a moral action that a theist could perform that an atheist could not¹⁵.

Over-dependence on divinity in society is much more than a child who refuses to revise for his exam, claiming he prayed and that is enough. Over-dependence on divinity can kill, and we have seen evidence of this. Perhaps most importantly, over-dependence on divinity takes away from the value of human life- the spiritual framework built intrinsically into society that, without a divine figure, be it God, Yahweh, Allah, Krishna or otherwise, we cease to have meaning, cease to have morals, or perhaps even cease to exist. This essay does not answer whether God exists or not, nor does it seek to undermine the diverse range of religious groups in our world. Rather, what I hope I have achieved is to convince you that whether God exists or not, whether religion is accurate or not, it is reductive of humans to unconditionally depend or rely on divinity. As a species, we are much more than that, and we, as humans, do not need the divine.

<Philosophy>

Science versus Demons

Exploring Laplace's Demon, envisioned by French mathematician Pierre-Simon Laplace in 1814.

Written by Jashn Agarwal Edited by Kaivalya Pullakandam



In 1814, French mathematician Pierre-Simon Laplace envisioned an all-knowing intellect, later dubbed Laplace's Demon. If given the precise position and momentum of every particle in the universe in a single 'snapshot', using Newton's laws and its own infinite intellect, their past and future positions and momenta could be calculated using classical mechanics. In Laplace's own words, 'for such an intellect nothing would be uncertain and the future just like the past could be present before its eyes'¹. This bold proposition represents one of the first and most famous examples of causal determinism.

Determinism asserts that every event arises necessarily by antecedent events and conditions together with the laws of the universe². The universe, in this view, operates like an enormous clockwork mechanism where the present state inexorably determines all future states, just as it was completely determined by past states. These events extend from simply the movement of atoms to our

own choices, and are a hurdle to the concept of free will (though some theories suggest that the two are compatible). For if every particle - such as those which make up neurotransmitters and hormones - can have its future and past behaviour all determined, then every action we ever take would too be ascertainable.

The existence of such a being however can be challenged by our understanding of physics: the second law of thermodynamics says that the entropy of a system must increase over time. The number of microstates (specific configurations of each individual particle within the system) corresponding to a single macrostate (the overall state of the system, such as its temperature) must increase. In other words, particles have a tendency to be spread out in such a way that their energy is more evenly distributed as time goes on. This is because systems evolve towards the most likely macrostate, but these are the ones with the most possible microstates,

where energy is spread evenly. But how is this problematic for the demon? If the demon were to have a snapshot of the universe, it would still be unable to formulate their past microstates, as there are many possible ways that could have led to the present one. If the past is not determinable with certainty, doubt can be brought to the demon's existence.

You may have noted a flaw in this: it might require more intensive calculation for the demon if there are multiple possible pasts, yet this is still theoretically doable. In fact, this wouldn't be a problem for the being even in Laplace's initial formalism, since although solely through a thermodynamic and macroscopic view there are multiple definite pasts, the deterministic nature of classical mechanics means that a single and actual timeline is still calculable.

However, the demon runs into more problems thanks to modern physics. For example, the start of the 20th century saw the rise of quantum mechanics. Barring that classical mechanics was now

insufficient to comprehensively describe the motion of particles, in 1927 Werner Heisenberg's paper of the uncertainty principle showed that it was impossible to know a particle's position and momentum precisely and simultaneously. According to the Copenhagen interpretation, this isn't just a limit to the accuracy of our measuring devices, but a fundamental truth in the behaviour of the particles due to their inherent probabilistic nature. To know of one property is to affect the others. Even if the demon were to have some innate knowledge using its semi-omniscience which allowed for it to know both the position and momentum at a certain instant, it could not definitively determine these in the future, as the fact that these properties are probabilistic means there are multiple calculable futures.

Contrastingly, quantum mechanics also calls for the preservation of unitarity. The wavefunction (if you momentarily ignore special relativity) completely describes a system and does so deterministically. If at one point you know the quantum state of a system, you have a complete understanding of its future and past. However, under the Copenhagen interpretation of QM, even if the demon were to know the wavefunction of the universe and its instantaneous state, some information would be lost. The collapse itself is non-unitary and frankly inexplicable, thus some information is irreversibly lost when the demon learns of this initial state, as previously explained. Alternatively, the demon can use the wavefunction without knowledge of the current state of the universe, avoiding the information loss from collapse yet probabilistically finding the aforementioned multiple calculable futures.

Although Laplace's own demon uses Newton's laws, we can generalise this to the true and actual natural laws governing cause and effect. So we must question whether or not our theories are accurate; would the demon be using these models when it is calculating the outcomes? After all, these frameworks are built upon empirical observation, so there is a possibility that they are incorrect. Although the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics says that particles do not have definite position and momentum simultaneously, Bohmian mechanics does allow for this with a different understanding of how particles work. In fact, Laplace was amongst the first to theorise the black hole, which we now coincidentally see as a potential contradiction to modern scientific frameworks due to their possible violation of unitarity as posed by the black hole information paradox. Despite the fact that alternative solutions have been suggested, we are currently unable to deduce which one is true, so it is still valid to doubt our understanding of quantum mechanics. Stephen Hawking and Kip Thorne were so convinced that the information paradox necessitated the reformalisation of quantum mechanics that they had

In 1927 Werner Heisenberg's paper of the uncertainty principle showed that it was impossible to know a particle's position and momentum precisely and simultaneously. ... a fundamental truth in the behaviour of the particles due to their inherent probabilistic nature

a (friendly) bet with John Preskill on the matter, who argued the opposite.

But that brings us to the heart of the idea behind this thought experiment - for determinism, the question is not 'can an omniscient-esque being with infinite computational power exist?' Rather, 'are the laws of science and nature such that everything is as if inevitable and predetermined by those laws?' Certainly some aspects of modern science do not permit this. But if there were such laws, then the precise predictability of outcomes would be no different in effect as them being prewritten in a sense. And therefore scientific determinism would hold true.

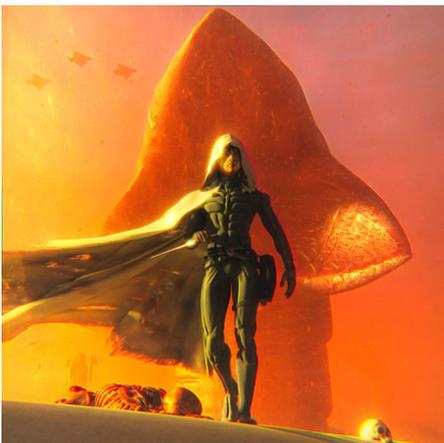
Laplace's demon hence remains an open question, but now reframed such that it is more pertinent to scientific determinism's central philosophy. Researchers have been working to try and find a theory of everything for over a century, and its potential discovery could hold the answer to this question and most certainly many more philosophical enquiries. Whether the universe is deterministic or not, and whether we can even know this, remains unresolved, but an answer, whether by the discovery of a unifying framework or some other matter, would indubitably redefine the limits of knowledge.

TOLKIENIAN ETHICS - FROM THE SHIRE TO MORDOR



Following the release of the novel 'Dune' in 1965 by Frank Herbert, another world renowned author began writing a letter entailing his disapproval of the book.^{1 2} This was none other than John Tolkien (who had written both The Hobbit and The Lord of The Rings trilogies).³ Despite the letter eventually never being sent, it describes him as having disliked Herbert's Dune "with some intensity". This is because Tolkien believed that its ethical standpoint was fundamentally wrong; their novels had two profoundly different takes on good and evil and how to live 'the moral life'.

The protagonists in 'Dune' and other novels of the time such as the 'A Song In Ice and Fire' series (now known for its popular tv show adaptation, 'Game of Thrones') are pragmatists- these characters often choose the lesser of evils to forge a path which they deem to be good. They are also consequentialists, adhering to the idea that good and bad actions are defined by what comes as a result of those decisions. This introduces several ethical decisions which many people find intuitively wrong. For example, in 'Dune Messiah', Paul Atreides assumes that the ends justify the means when he unleashes galactic holy war (albeit reluctantly), killing billions in order to secure the future of humanity. These protagonists in



Dune and Game of Thrones are Nietzschean in the sense that they forge their own moral framework throughout the books, embracing will to power without any divine authority. They thrive entirely thanks to their own strength and self overcoming, cultivating Nietzsche's virtues of courage, pride and self-reliance. These main characters present a stark contrast to Tolkien's heroes of Middle-earth.

Tolkien was a deontologist, meaning he believed that actions are right or wrong based on their inherent nature, not on their outcomes. This is directly reflected by Frodo's quest (against all odds, he is tasked with the treacherous journey to destroying 'the ring' at Mordor, all whilst armies of evil and corrupted friends alike hunt him); it is right because it resists evil and not due to any miraculous guarantee of success. His strong motivation is rooted in his belief that he has an obligation to do the right thing: "I will take the ring, though I do not know the way." Tolkien's protagonists act not through will to power, but through duty, in submission to a higher plan.

His strong motivation is rooted in his belief that he has an obligation to do the right thing.

This higher moral vision runs deep into Middle-earth due to the fact that it is also a deeply religious story. This is largely a reflection of Tolkien's own religious beliefs as he was a devout Catholic throughout his own life. His faith played a vital role in writing his novels and he even described The Lord of the Rings as "fundamentally religious and Catholic". This is evident in the backstory of Tol-

WRITTEN BY CHRISTOPHER SINCLAIRE

EDITED BY KAIVALYA PULLAKANDAM

kien's universe which is first sung into existence via the music of creation. Arda starts out as a perfect, symmetrical world in complete absence of darkness until Melkor (a devil-like figure) brings evil into this world. Over time, Arda is remade after numerous "falls" which seek to echo the biblical fall of mankind from the graves of God as they are tempted into sin. Each time this world "falls" the perfect beauty that once was declines, and by the events of The Lord of The Rings, the world is merely a shadow of its former glory. This trilogy takes place in an era known as the Third Age in which the culture is only a fracture of its past and Middle-Earth is littered with ruins of previous, superior civilisations. For example the fortified city of Minas Tirith - meaning "Tower of The Guard" in Sindarin - was a seven-level circular fortress built into The White Mountains with concentric walls. Despite being actively inhabited in The Third Age, it was founded in The Second Age by Anarion, son of

Elendil and its inhabitants in The Lord of The Rings struggle to maintain its beauty and could never hope to construct such an architectural masterpiece. This depiction of the city of old is how Tolkien viewed all of history: a steady fading of the beauty and magic of creation. He once wrote "I do not expect 'history' to be anything but a 'long defeat'..."

According to Tolkien, this long decline mirrors the reality we live in; Middle-earth is supposedly on our Earth, long ago, when the continents had not yet split apart, inhabited by magic and beauty now lost to the ages. The Seventh Age to be specific. Tolkien, quite humorously to some, says that we are in the seventh era of eternity's downfall from grace.



However if history shows us on a long march to inevitable doom then why bother? Does this not pose an intuitive cause for despair? Well... not exactly. Tolkien's universe does have another power at work. A divine providence watches over it, acting a guiding force and "providing samples or glimpses of final victory..." The destruction of the ring is a notable example of one of these glimpses of that so called "final victory". This does not happen because of a heroic protagonist (in the end Frodo cannot bring himself to destroy the ring due to its the rings manipulative power-driven temptation). It happens as an instant of good fortune, according to Tolkien, guided by something of a higher power. It is this same trust in the divine plan which motivates Aragorn to stage a last-ditch diversion at the gates of Mordor facing near-certain defeat.

Hence, Tolkien's 'History of Defeat' is not so much a

march to final destruction as it is a march to a final, grand rescue. A rescue outside our control, overcoming all evil when all seems to be lost, just as in Tolkien's own Catholic Theology.

Overall, from Tolkien's work we can derive a system of morality

A rescue outside our control, overcoming all evil when all seems to be lost, just as in Tolkien's own Catholic Theology.



focused on motivations of actions (much like Immanuel Kant), alongside the belief that goodness in the world is fading over time and we must trust in a higher guiding power to lead us to the 'final victory' through glimpses of triumph over evil. Tolkien's characters feel profoundly 'good' as a result of choosing to be motivated by a deontological Good Will. To give an example, even when it seems foolish to do so Bilbo spares Gollum in an act of mercy which ultimately led to the destruction of the ring, vindicating Gandalf's wise words:

"Do not be too eager to deal out death in judgement"

Freedom

Freedom is defined (by the Collins Dictionary) as ‘the state of being free’ or having the power or right to act, speak and think as one wants without hindrance or restraint¹. This definition encapsulates an important interpretation when it comes to freedom – the notion that there exists more than one type or form of liberty. Yet it also fails to account for a broader view or interpretation of circumstances, a problem encountered by most definitions of such abstract yet important nouns. The supposed meaning of freedom, as taken by Collins, does not look at whether this is right or wrong, or what this freedom is being utilised to do. To delve into this very concept, however, is the only way one can truly determine whether there does exist something labelled as too much freedom. Hence, it is important to categorise freedom into two main categories: the freedom of choice and the freedom of speech/intellect, and through this, we enable ourselves to reach a much more nuanced definition of the term and whether there exists too much of this.

The freedom of choice is the ability that we possess to choose between different scenarios or things when presented with

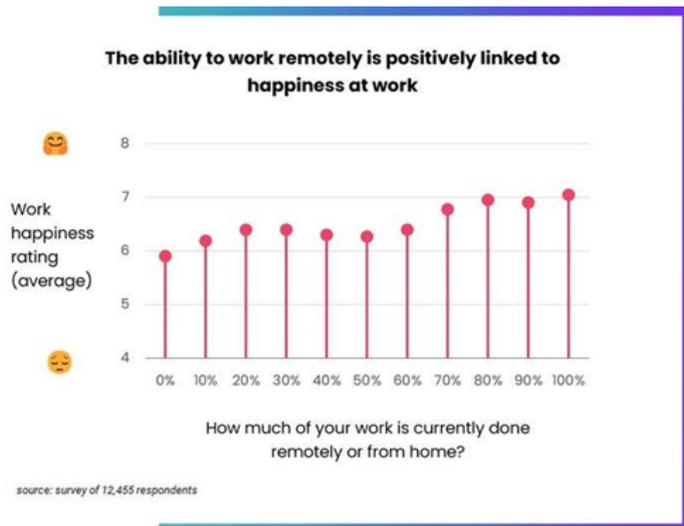
a decision, whilst not being hounded down upon by some superior authority or power. The COVID-19 pandemic is a perfect example of this, instilling a permanent change in work culture where corporate jobs now mostly entertain the ability to enjoy a degree of flexibility by working either at home or in a designated region of operation. Figure 1² shows how those who have a greater proportion of work done at their residence generally tend to report a higher level or score of happiness.

Now, this could be put down to people simply feeling happier at home, but when we delve into why this is the case, it is most probable that it is a matter of freedom and the ability to choose the way you work. You are, after all, in control of how you work; what you do when you work; what you wear when you work, and the list goes on. In this case, we can see how beneficial the ability to grant a certain degree of freedom of choice to people truly is. In a study conducted by ONS in February

Written by Pratham Dixit

Edited by Kaivalya Pullakandam

2022, it is reported that over half (47%) of those who worked at home reported a general increase in wellbeing³. When people are therefore respected as moderately independent entities, we see the fruitful effect on happiness, which raises people’s sense of comfort but also argua-

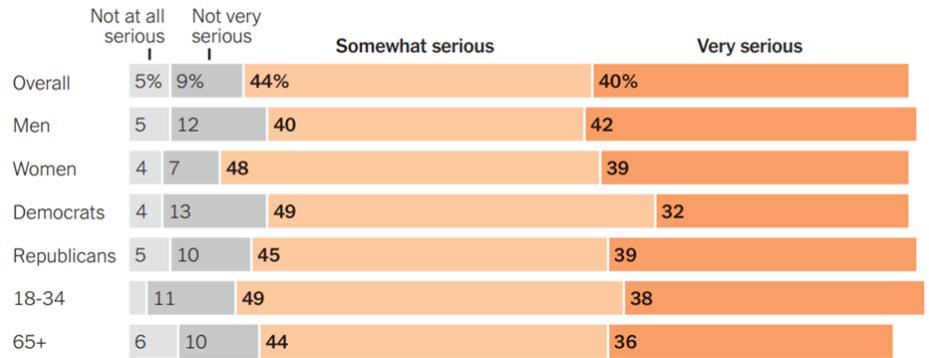


bly satisfaction that they are trusted to work at home.

Yet we can also see that too much freedom of choice hinders progression within society. Many people enjoy the ability to make decisions for themselves, yet what appears problematic is the overwhelming effect that too many decisions can have on us. Ben Gately, CEO of Charliehr, a human resources software company, terms his solution to this very problem as ‘structured flexibility’⁴. He argues that there exists a sweet spot that strikes a reasonable balance between too much independence and too much freedom. Companies need to avoid situations in which they face employees not motivated enough by the implementation of strict regulations, whilst also diverting away from an imposing sense of authority that impedes a meaningful sense of worker wellbeing. Furthermore, a 2000 study found that people presented with six different types of chocolate or jam were much more likely to choose a new brand



How much of a problem is it that some Americans do not exercise their freedom of speech in everyday situations out of fear of retaliation or harsh criticism?



than when presented with upward of 24, where they were ironically less likely to diversify from regular choice⁵. If this is the case, then why can it not be argued that too much freedom gives people in general a dull comfort in regularity and obstructs innovation? When we are presented with fewer options or pathways, whether it be in everyday situations or scenarios of enterprise, then surely this is the only way in which we actively seek something different or unique to society. These situations force people to innovate and to change, and after all, surely an ever-changing and developing society is what is most beneficial to humanity? Excessive freedom strips us of this capability, overwhelming us with choice that sends us back to the monotonous repetition of our familiarities.

Secondly, there remains the concept of the freedom of speech, the right (in the UK at least) that one can speak their beliefs, be it politically, religiously or otherwise based and not face any obstruction so long as these ideas do not incite or encourage violence. Here, one can establish that there should be no confines on the freedom of expression so long as we stand by the assumption in the question that this liberty does not violate or infringe upon the freedom of others, mostly concerning violence as well as oppression.

When one lives in society, holding certain beliefs and moving across the world, they will inevitably face opposition and contrasting opinions or outlooks on their personal beliefs. This is a given, and so long as these beliefs do not inspire violent or oppressive hatred targeted at characteristics that are out of people’s control, what society needs to do is welcome this freedom to disagree and argue civilly. By alleviating the burden of restriction upon the freedom of speech, we pave the way for open, interactive and

ultimately flourishing conversation between two main ends of the political spectrum, which is vital to the orderly function of society. Figure 2 itself depicts the proportion of Americans who are concerned about the fact that people are worried about the supposed retaliation (in this case, serving as a blockade to freedom) that they could face when exercising their freedom of speech.

Without granting people the liberty to disagree and discover the capability to reason and understand opposing political views, we are wielding a two-edged sword and cultivating a breeding ground for conflict where people feel they need to resort to extremist methods to express or assert their views. Unrestricted freedom of speech is central to this idea and the only way to assure ourselves of a communicative national and international community.

So, through breaking down the abstract concept of freedom into two different categories, one can truly determine when there is too much freedom and when there is not. This allows us to look at the answer to the intriguing question in a manner that is not so starkly black and white, one with more nuance and flexibility, or in other words, giving us the ability to approach the concept of freedom with more freedom.

Napoleon Bonaparte:

How did he rise from Corsican Outsider to Emperor of France?

Written by Shankar Raghavan Edited by Vedanth Menon

Napoleon Bonaparte, born Napoleon Buonaparte¹, was born in Corsica, not France, to Carlo Buonaparte (lawyer) and Letizia Ramolino on 15th August 1769². Napoleon was born into a large family; he had seven siblings³, and as the oldest, responsibility was placed on him from an early age.

Through his father's connection to the French Governor Louis de Marbeuf, Napoleon and his younger brother Joseph were sent to a religious school, the College d'Autun.⁴ Napoleon then transferred to a military school called the Brienne-le-Chateau⁵. At this military school, Napoleon suffered a fate common to many who find themselves as outsiders at school: bullying. Napoleon, the future Emperor of France, was bullied for his foreign accent, his birthplace of Ajaccio, his height, his mannerisms, and his poor French. However, Napoleon did not let this stop him, and he persevered through this; an examiner at the school observed that Napoleon "has always been distinguished for his application in mathematics. He is fairly well acquainted with history and geography ... This boy would make an excellent sailor"⁶, clearly showing his academic abilities.

In September 1784, Napoleon was admitted to the Ecole militaire in Paris to further his ambitions in the army⁷. However, because of his father's death in February 1785, meaning that he had to finish the two-year course in one year, making him head of the household⁸. In September 1785, he graduated and became the first Corsican graduate from Ecole militaire⁹, the first of many records Napoleon would shatter.

After graduating, Napoleon returned to Corsica to help his family. At the same time, the monarchy was overthrown by the French people- The French Revolution, an event supported by Napoleon. In April 1791 Napoleon returned to France and became the First Lieutenant to the 4th Regiment of Artillery in Valence¹⁰, but by September 1791 he returned to Corsica. As a result of Napoleon exceeding his leave of absence in Corsica, he was listed as a deserter in January 1792 and removed from his military position¹¹. This would have devastated Napoleon; to be listed as a deserter by a French Government that he had supported would have felt like betrayal. However, by April 1792, Napoleon was pardoned as France declared war against Austria.¹²

Not long later, however, he encountered new problems with the Corsicans. In February 1783, Napoleon lost a battle; specifically, a French expedition into Sardinia¹³. The French Government then outlawed the commander in chief of Corsica, as it was suspected he sabotaged the expedition. The commander-in-chief then condemned Napoleon and his family, who all lived in Corsica, to "perpetual execration and infamy"¹⁴ (cursing the Bonapartes), forcing them to flee to Toulon. Napoleon had been



cursed and treated as an enemy of his birthplace, where he grew up, the place he had called home.

Despite this, Napoleon was called back into action, rejoining his regiment in Nice in June 1793¹⁵. He was made commander of the National Convention (the French Republic's Government) to attack Toulon, where his family lived, from royalists (people who supported the king) and the British troops that had been called in¹⁶. By December 17th, 1793, the British troops had evacuated¹⁷ due to Napoleon's expertise in attack, showing his growing military prowess.

However, trouble came back to Napoleon; Maximilien Robespierre, the leader of the National Convention who had led the Reign of Terror, a period when 15,000-17,000 people¹⁸ were guillotined, fell from power on July 27th 1794¹⁹. Napoleon had attracted the attentions of the Robespierre's after his success in Toulon. Napoleon was then arrested on charges of conspiracy and treason²⁰; again, Napoleon faced many barriers in his rise to power, but he once again persevered. Napoleon was freed in September, but he was not given his command. This was mainly due to Napoleon's association with the radical Jacobin party²¹, but also due to his growing ambition, which the National Convention feared.

The National Convention's power began to weaken and reduce over time, resulting in mutinies in Paris²². In a moment of desperation, the National Convention selected Napoleon to command their forces to defend against the rebels. The rebel forces numbered thirty thousand men and they advanced on the Tuileries against Napoleon's force of only five thousand strong²³.

Despite the odds being against him, Napoleon was still victorious²⁴, successfully defeating the rebels, showing off once again his undeniable strength and strategy.

The Convention may have been right to fear Napoleon's ambition, as he assumed the role of supreme commander of the army in Italy²⁵, where he reorganised the army. On 11th April 1796, Napoleon encountered the Austrians at Montenotte; the Austrian Forces numbered seventy-five thousand, while Napoleon only had forty thousand troops²⁶. Yet again, Napoleon beat the odds and defeated the Austrians with a smaller force. Napoleon, after winning at Lodi, gave France the full control of Northern Italy, as well as Lombardy, Netherlands, and Ionian Islands²⁷. In December 1797, Napoleon returned to France and was received as a great hero.

The Directory, which had replaced the National Convention, began to fear Napoleon. This parallels Julius Caesar's downfall, as both Napoleon and Caesar were both successful generals and military commanders, who alienated the leading powers in their countries due to their cult statuses as heroes. Like Caesar, who was betrayed by the Senate because of his growing power, Napoleon was also feared by the Directory, who sent him to Egypt and Turkey²⁸. This had two purposes; conquer countries and reduce the British influence in the area, as well as removing Napoleon from France, where he was slowly gaining power.

Napoleon's forces arrived in Alexandria on July 1st, 1798²⁹. Three days later, the city was his, showing the speed and efficiency Napoleon had created in his forces. On 24th July, Cairo, the capital of Egypt, was captured by the French³⁰, although the French fleet was destroyed by Admiral Horatio Nelson in the Battle of the Nile³¹, a foe that would return later in Napoleon's reign as Emperor of France.

In France, the Directory had been unsuccessful in satisfying people. Fearing a loss of power and a second revolution, the Directory gave Napoleon more power and cooperated with him, as he was a stabilising influence³².

Napoleon then got to work; he worked twelve to fourteen hours per day, reading reports and reorganising the military, as well as improving life for the French

people by building canals and highways³⁴. However, as consul, Napoleon had no interest in abandoning his ambitions of an empire. In 1800 Napoleon marched into Italy, defeating the Austrians at Marengo³⁵. However, unlike before, Napoleon actually made peace with Europe, signing treaties with Portugal, Spain, Bavaria, Naples, Turkey and Russia³⁶.

Napoleon at home faced several assassination plots, from royalists who wished to reinstate the French royal family back into power. After a plot in 1804 was uncovered, which was financed by the British and led by the young Duc d'Enghien, a scion of the royal house of Bourbon, who was residing in Germany³⁷, Napoleon was convinced to make himself hereditary ruler³⁸- an Emperor. On May 18th, 1804, Napoleon was declared Emperor of France³⁹. He was crowned as Emperor on December 2, 1804, with Pope Pius VII present, although famously Napoleon placed the crown over himself⁴⁰, which was Napoleon showing the world that it was his work, not God's, that made him Emperor.

Napoleon had gone from a bullied, Corsican outsider, whose ambitions knew no bounds, to the emperor of forty-four million people⁴¹ and one of the greatest military leaders in Europe. However, it is the second part of Napoleon's story that really show his human nature. The majority of Napoleon's previous battles had been triumphant, with the exception of the Battle of the Nile, but this changed after Napoleon became increasingly ambitious. By 1814, Napoleon was cornered; the allied forces of Austria, Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain had cornered him⁴², after a failed invasion of Russia. Cleverly, the Allies told the French that they were declaring war on Napoleon himself, not France⁴³. The French people grew restless with war, and the government stood up to Napoleon. Eventually, with the writing on the wall, Napoleon abdicated from his throne on April 5th 1814⁴⁴.

Napoleon was punished with exile to the island of Elba⁴⁵. However, Elba was only off the coast of France, and yet again, Napoleon's perseverance and ambition continued. Napoleon escaped Elba, and landed in France, determined to win back his throne, The King of France Louis

XVIII, who had been placed in control by the Allies, sent troops led by Marshal Ney⁴⁶, to apprehend Napoleon. Napoleon convinced these troops to join him by reiterating his position as Emperor⁴⁷, and the King escaped France before Napoleon could capture Paris, reclaiming his position as Emperor of France.

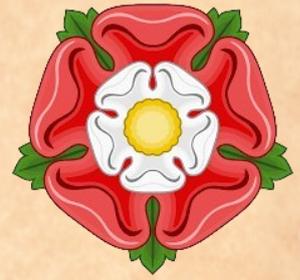
Immediately, he was outlawed by the Austrians⁴⁸ and the Allied Forces got ready to defeat him. At the famous Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon faced the Duke of Wellington's British forces, and was holding on until a surprise attack was made by the Prussians⁴⁹.

Napoleon, sensing no other solutions, abdicated again on 22nd June 1815 in favour of his son and attempted to flee France, but the British fleet blocked his attempted escape to the US. Napoleon surrendered to the British Frederick Lewis Maitland on HMS Bellerophon on 15 July 1815⁵⁰.

This time, Napoleon was exiled far away to the island of St Helena, off the coast of the African continent, where he would live out the rest of his days. Napoleon would die on 5th May 1821, his last words being "La France, l'armée, tête d'armée, Joséphine"⁵¹ (France, the army, the head of the army, Josephine- his first wife), perfectly summarising Napoleon's life; he lived his life wanting to be the head of the army, the leader of France; yet it is fitting that his last words referred to his first love Josephine- as a society, we have reduced Napoleon to a great military leader, a conqueror and emperor. But perhaps we should instead focus more on the personal, human side of Napoleon: his personality, his relationships, his upbringing.

Napoleon's life was characterised by various obstacles and challenges; being bullied at school, his father dying, being labelled a traitor and an enemy of France and his homeland Corsica. These problems continued even after Napoleon rose to power as Emperor, as the European forces acted against him and his ambitions. But throughout it all, Napoleon persevered and continued; perhaps what is key about Napoleon was not his intelligence, his skill in leadership and battle, but his perseverance, and unwavering ambition.

Travelling through time: Elizabethan



attitudes to Poverty and Vagrancy

Travelling through time: Elizabethan attitudes to Poverty and Vagrancy

Written by Vedanth Menon Edited by Emad Rehman

From the dawn of humanity to the present day, human civilization has been shaped by dramatic change and relentless innovation. Such pioneering occurred extensively in Elizabethan England, however, beyond Shakespeare's legendary plays or naval exploration (albeit serving as the catalyst to imperial colonisation), many would argue that the legal framework set up by Elizabethan government concerning poverty and vagrancy has been the most significant product of the early modern age, revolutionising attitudes towards the poor.

During the Medieval and early Tudor periods, the issue of poverty was not targeted, nor neglected – it was criminalised. The state took little role in the provision of support for the poor and took a harsh view towards vagrancy. This can be seen in the approach taken by Edward the III following the Black Death. The Black Death left 1/3 of the population dead and provided an opportunity for the peasant class to request higher wages, after increase in demand for farmers, servants and labourers (due to the high death rates). In response to this, the Statute of Labourers was passed in 1351. The Statute of Labourers stated:

"Because a great part of the people and especially of the, workmen and servants has now died in that pestilence, some, seeing the straights of the masters and the scarcity of servants, are not willing to serve unless they receive excessive wages, and others, rather than through labour to gain their living, prefer to beg in idleness"

This statute targeted the peasant class – approximately 90% of the population – who worked on land owned by a Lord. Especially due to bad harvests (e.g. Great Famine 1315-1317), and aspects such as

warfare destroying farmland, many peasants sought to utilise the Black Death of the 1340s, which left 1/3 of the population dead, by requesting higher wages, after increase in demand for farmers (due to many dying). The Statute of Labourers recognises this; however, rather than acknowledging the reasons behind this behaviour, it attempted to suppress it, by making such demands illegal. The poor were explicitly disregarded here, which often lead them to lives of crime; 73.5% of all crimes were attributed to theft in this period, 50.5% of which was stolen food – a testament to how the poor were forced to turn to crime to survive, as a result of the lack of aid by the authorities.

The early Tudor period showed continuity in the government continuing to neglect but punish the poor. The Vagabonds and Beggars Act 1494, during the reign of King Henry VII, stated that:

"Vagabonds, idle and suspected persons shall be set in the stocks for three days and three nights and have none other suste-



nance but bread and water and then shall be put out of town."

His son, Henry VIII followed mostly in the footsteps of his father. In the 1530s, Henry set about with the Dissolution of Monasteries, removing monastic communities across the nation. Monasteries were previously primary sources of poor relief, and their abolition also forced many impoverished into being vagabonds. King Edward VI further brutalised the act, with



The cloth trade was England's largest industry; however, with its decline in this period

the Vagabonds Act 1547 permitting the



enslavement of able-bodied poor for two years. However, Edward's reign also marked the beginning of a distinction between the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' poor. The Poor Act (1551) recognised the impotent poor (those unable to work) as deserving of charitable support to be administered by local alms collectors.

The Elizabethan age, however, was a major turning point in attitudes and actions taken towards the poor, prompted by a rise in poverty.

Poverty and vagrancy rates had already increased following Henry VIII's expensive wars with France and there were many factors which contributed to the effect of poverty within Elizabeth's rule. Inflation, for example, meant that prices of goods rose by 400%. Arguably the most significant cause of poverty was the drastic rise in population, going from 2.9 million in 1500 to 4.5 million in 1600. A population growth leads to the increasing scarcity of food, water and shelter, amounting to growing poverty. Moreover, the cloth trade was England's largest

industry; however, with its decline in this period, descending from 138,000 to 60,000 rolls of cloth exported from London between 1550-1560, many people found themselves struggling after a previously prosperous industry began

to crash. Simultaneously, a shift from labour intensive arable farming to sheep farming, required significantly less workers. Previously, peasants survived on the crop they farmed on a rich landowner's property, and often lived on these lands, however, upon the introduction of sheep farming, enclosure of land became common, depriving workers of employment and their homes. Monopolies were also a cause of poverty, with Elizabeth, in the 1590s, rewarding people in her favour, or those who pay hefty prices, the rights to sell certain products without competitors, allowing them to increase prices without the fear of customers turning to other competing businesses.

The very poor earned approximately fourpence, which was the price of a chicken at the time, and lived in thatched cottages, often with 7-8 people living in one house in cramped conditions, an earth floor, no light and the frequent infestation of vermin.

Vagrancy was also a serious cause of concern within society, especially with Tudors placing utmost emphasis on community policing and responsibility, and so vagrants were feared greatly, with the perception being that they actively chose to live a life of crime rather than work, and that they were at fault for most breaches of security and spreading of diseases.

In famous writer Thomas Harman's book, 'A Caveat or Warning for Common Cursitors', he discusses the various questionable forms of vagrants, ranging from the Abraham Man who pretended to be insane, hoping for sympathetic donations, to the Hooker/Angler, who used a long stick with a hook on the end to steal clothing or valuables.

Elizabeth did show signs of continuity in her regard to the poor. For example, the 1572 Vagabond Act stated that vagrants should be whipped,

bored through the ear with hot iron, and given the death penalty for being caught a third time. Furthermore, the 1598 Act for the Punishment of Rogues established 'Houses of Corrections' for vagabonds, where they would be forced to work and punished. This echoes the attitudes to poverty from her predecessors, aiming to punish the poor rather than aid them.

However, Elizabeth did also recognise the responsibility of the government and authority to help the poor. For example, the 1563 Statute of Artificers made it compulsory for boys to complete a 7-year apprenticeship, aiming to reduce unemployment. Furthermore, in the 1598 Act for the Relief of the Poor, a poor relief duty was imposed on all citizens, which would be collected and then distributed to the poor by 4 Overseers of the Poor, as well as more methods of reducing unemployment. In 1601, this 1598 Poor Law was made permanent, being used as the legal framework for tackling poverty until 1834: more than 200 years later.

Undoubtedly, poverty and vagrancy were not reduced at all by the Elizabethan Poor Laws – in fact, these issues continued to rise steadily. Many critics argue that Elizabeth failed to address the root causes of poverty, inclining more towards punishing them. Whilst this is convincing to an extent, it is impossible to ignore an explicit shift in attitudes towards the poor, with an acknowledgment made that society had a duty to help the poor for arguably the first time. Although this spark in thinking did not immediately take effect, it catalysed more progressive perceptions of those in need. For that, the Elizabethan age must be remembered as a period ahead of its time – even revolutionary.



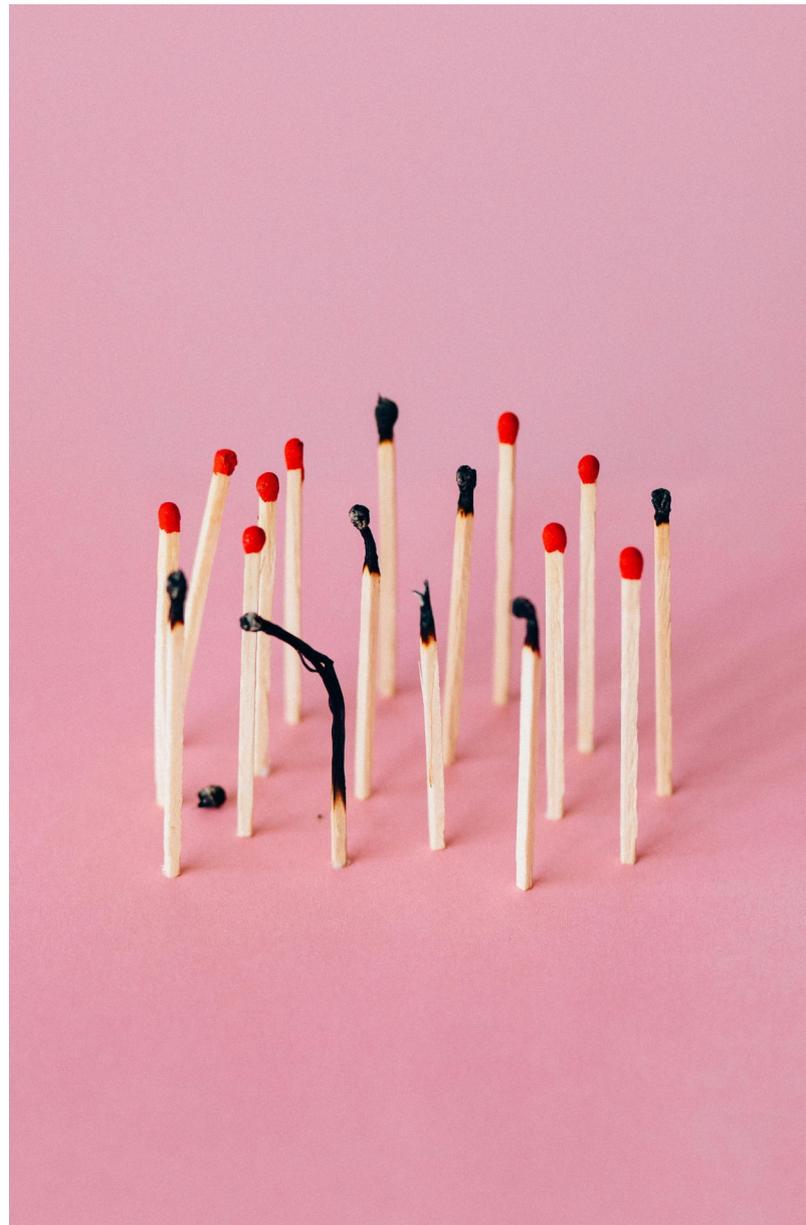
BURNOUT AND ITS EFFECTS

Written by Aarush Chennadi Edited by Oscar Wong

These days, students have a lot on their plates. Whether it be keeping up with school, managing a multitudinous amount of extracurricular activities, such as musical instruments or sports outside of school, maintain social lives, or even in some cases working part-time jobs, it can all feel a bit too much. Burnout is what occurs when the stress we feel piles up so much that we feel completely drained, both mentally and physically. It can make everyday tasks feel impossible, tasks that we used to love, tasks that made us happy. This article takes a closer look at how burnout affects students – whether they're involved in sports and music or simply just focused on academics.

What Exactly is Burnout?

Burnout is essentially when stress goes overboard and overwhelms you. It usually comes with three big warning signs: feeling exhausted all the time, losing motivation to do everyday tasks and a lack of self-fulfilment, i.e. the feeling that nothing we do is good enough. If you have ever felt so tired that even easy tasks feel like a huge challenge, for example homework, you may have experienced burnout. Some common causes of homework include having too much work, not getting enough sleep, feeling a constant pressure to do well, and not taking enough breaks. The COVID-19 pandemic has also severely exacerbated the symptoms of burnout in students nationwide, such as anxiety and feelings of self-doubt. According to a study published by YoungMinds¹, 67% of UK students reported that the pandemic negatively impacted their mental health, with a separate study from Mental Health UK² showing that 9 I 10 are at risk of burnout, whilst the proportion of 18-24 year olds who feel comfortable opening up to their superiors about burnout dropped from 75% to 56% in one year, therefore showing how prevalent, and perhaps unnoticed this issue is within our society.



Effects of Burnout on Academic Performance

As a member of Wilson’s School, and thus always having high expectations and aspirations can be a lot sometimes, especially when we aren’t able to live up to these expectations, whether it be academically or in activities outside of school, such as sports, something I have had personal experiences with. Being in a community of scholars in the form of Wilson’s School can be both a curse and a blessing, in that you can relate to and learn from your peers, but the competition and thus the stress and pressure to perform at school, especially academically, can be incredibly high. Chronic stress diminishes cognitive functions, leading to declining grades, increased procrastination, and ultimately a decline in one’s mental health. A survey by the House of Commons³ found that 81% of UK students experienced mental health issues, with many reporting that these challenges negatively impacted their academic performance. This problem is not only within secondary school students either, with the Insight Network’s 2022 Report⁴ indicating that 42% of university students required professional help for serious mental health problems, marking an 8% increase from the previous year.

Burnout in Students Engaged in Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities such as sports and music can be a great gateway away from the stress and hustle of school life, providing students with a life away from the monotonous studying associated with life at Wilson’s. Personally, I am both an avid drummer and badminton athlete, so I have definitely had my fair share of time away from the books. Whilst these activities can serve as sports relievers, the added commitments can contribute to burnout – balancing intense and rigorous training with academic responsibilities can lead to incredibly tough time constraints and exhaustion. A report led by Sport England⁵ has actually found that over 60% of student athletes in the UK struggle to manage their academic workload due to training demands. Furthermore, pressure from these activities only further contribute to this process, my own experience being pressure to make tournaments and become better at my

sport leading to me having to prioritise it over my schoolwork, now leading to incredibly tough academic pressures and deadline as a result. As a student-athlete, managing time between all the different activities that you have to do is incredibly difficult, in my case having over 10 hours of training a week, along with various strength and conditioning sessions throughout the week. The pressure faced by students with many extracurricular activities is immense, and through my own interviews with my peers, over 85% of them report being incredibly stressed, having a lack of time to complete homework and other assignments, and overall are exhausted from this, showing that, whilst extracurricular activities can be a gateway away from the hustle and bustle of the school life, they can also lead to immense pressure on these high-achieving members, ultimately leading to prolonged periods of immense stress, thus leading to burnout.

Physical Consequences of Burnout

The physical consequences of burnout include headaches, digestive issues, muscle tension, and weakened immune systems. Another cause of burnout is sleep deprivation, which also exacerbates these problems. A study by the NHS and NIH⁶ found that students who sleep fewer than six hours per night are 40% more likely to feeling exhausted during school, leading to decreased performance and higher stress levels. Therefore, what can we do to prevent burnout?

Strategies to Prevent Burnout

To combat burnout, there are several strategies that students can adopt:

1. **Time Management.** Prioritizing tasks and setting realistic goals can prevent feelings of being overwhelmed, thus reducing stress and so the risk of burnout.
2. **Self-Care.** Ensuring adequate sleep and a healthy diet can not only mitigate the physical and mental effects of burnout, but can also make you feel better about yourself.
3. **Exercise.** Physical exertion has been proven by many to be an effective method at taking your mind off stress, whilst also allowing you to be the best

version of yourself that you can be.

4. **Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques:** Practices like meditation and deep-breathing exercises can help manage stress, and thus reduce the risk of burnout.
5. **Setting Boundaries.** Recognising the need for breaks and avoiding over-commitment can help maintain well-being.

“Three big warning signs: feeling exhausted all the time, losing motivation to do everyday tasks and a lack of self-fulfilment”

Conclusion

Burnout is a pressing issue affecting students across the UK, impacting their academic performance, mental health, and physical well-being. Both students engaged in extracurricular activities and those focused solely on academics face challenges related to burnout, and addressing this issue requires a balanced approach, emphasizing the importance of time management, self-care, and seeking support. By creating a supportive environment and encouraging healthy habits, we can help students navigate their educational journeys with growth and success.

<Music>

AI IN MUSIC - INNOVATION OR IMITATION

Written By: **Sudersen Aiyyanan**

Alternative Viewpoint: **Mr. Kramer**

Edited By: **Haresh Sunil Kumar**

Imagine writing a whole song without playing a single note. No musical knowledge, no instruments, no training. Just you... and a computer. Thanks to the power of artificial intelligence, this isn't just science fiction - this is happening right now. From writing TikTok tracks to symphonies, AI is quietly creeping into the world of music. AI generated music is bringing about so many questions that it is difficult to distinguish whether it is a good or a bad thing. Will AI aid musicians or jeopardise their roles? Who owns AI music? Can AI-generated music ever be original? And most importantly, amidst all of this chaos, should you be excited about it?

First of all, we need to understand how AI creates music. AI music generation begins with feeding a machine learning model a large amount of existing music. Using deep learning and neural networks, the AI model analyses the music to identify patterns in various different musical elements, such as melody, harmony and rhythm. Using these patterns, the AI model is able to combine and rework different patterns that it has 'learned' and produces a new piece of music.

This is where we encounter our first problem. Who does this composition belong to, and who, therefore, should get paid? Currently, there are already rules within the music industry for this, and the question is whether AI can fit into this system.

Whether an artist gets paid or not depends on whether the music industry defines the composition as inspiration or copying. It is allowed for artists to create songs that are inspired by someone else, and it is not expected that they will have

to pay the person from whom they drew their inspiration - for example, Kendrick Lamar cites his main source of inspiration as Dr. Dre, but he is not obliged to pay him.¹ It is also allowed for an artist to copy someone else, as long as you pay them and give them their due credit. However, it is illegal for someone to copy someone's work, and not provide them credit, and this is the purpose of the copyright laws in place today.

Now, the question is, where does AI fall into this picture? The AI model has created this new composition by using the works of many different artists in the vast dataset it was provided when it was trained, so surely the piece is copied? However, the model hasn't just taken pieces of music in its dataset and collaged them; it has analysed patterns within the music and created a new piece of music. So, is this inspiration or copying? And, therefore, who should be credited for the work of AI?

Another issue is whether or not AI music can be original. Originality is the ability to think independently and creatively, and it is feared that with the rise of AI music, there will be no more originality within the music industry, as pre-recorded music gets recycled into new music in a continual cycle. Human creativity and originality is a result of emotional expression, cultural influences and personal experiences, of which an AI has none. It is not a beating heart, brainwave activity nor bipedal motion that make us human - a vole has a beating heart, a lobster has brainwave activity, and a gorilla can walk on two legs. It is rather the emotional expression that sets us apart from other living beings. If AI does not understand such expression, how can it create truly original music?

Furthermore, although AI would still create a good end product, we would lose all of music's beauty - the pain and angst,





joy, focus and love, struggle and procrastination, and every human quality good and bad that has led you to create the music. Because the art of music is not just the product, but the journey that leads to its creation. AI in music may save you⁶ hours' worth of orchestrating a piece of film music, but in doing so, you will never make the mistakes and refine the sound and push your brain hard enough that will lead you to creating the theme tune for Indiana Jones, or the iconic sound effects of Bernard Herman's string orchestra in Psycho. And as a result, we would never have incredible producers or truly new, innovative and creative music, meaning that AI in music cannot be helpful... right?

That is not the full story, as there are many arguments for why you should be excited for this promising future. Every time new technology has been introduced, there has been a lot of concern and criticism. Take auto-tune for example. This is a tool widely used by singers today, to ensure that the pitch of their singing is on point. However, with its invention, it faced immediate and ongoing criticism, with many arguing that it devalued talent by enabling singers to mask poor singing. Music critics such as Neil McCormick labeled auto-tune as a "particularly sinister invention" that "puts an extra shine on pop vocals" by correcting poorly sung notes.² Despite the backlash, auto-tune is an extremely useful tool for music artists today, not for masking poor singing as originally suggested by critics, but also as a way of exploring new sounds and creating unique vocal effects. Likewise, AI too can be used as a tool for many musicians, rather than just as a new composer.

The reason why AI is such a big deal in music is because of the ability it has to significantly enhance the music you listen to today, and how it can make the process of music production much simpler for artists.

With AI's ability to analyse many different songs, programs can figure out the features in different genres of music that appeal the most to different audiences. Artists can keep the 'interesting' parts of the music that hook you in, but still be able to experiment with new ideas, which has the ability to open up many different sub-genres of music. This could improve the industry as a whole, if done right in a way that does not affect the artists' creative identity, and does not take their work without credit.

Furthermore, AI can help music produc-

tion and mixing, which would normally take a lot of time and effort to master. As a tedious job, it would make the music production aspect so much simpler for artists, allowing them to focus on the quality of music they produce, which would again be a great advantage to the industry, and to listeners. This is directly relevant to us, as it can directly influence the music that we listen to on a day-to-day basis, and hence, improvements to the quality of this is something we should be excited about.

AI's ability to help in so many different ways in the industry is what makes it a supertool for artists, and why it is such a big deal today. It can help from music production, to controlling the lights on stage on a live performance, to even composing masterpieces by itself. And this is huge, if we are able to train AI effectively and use it in the best possible manner.

So, is AI going to replace humans in the field of music? Are the jobs of musicians at risk? Is creativity in music doomed? No. Back in 1997, the chess bot Deepblue beat World Champion Garry Kasparov, and since then, humans have never stood a chance against chess AIs.³ But we still continue playing chess, because we see it as a sport and as art. As long as we want to create new, imaginative, creative, original pieces of music, humans will continue to produce unique and special art, whereas AI will simply churn out content. The time, effort and devotion required for someone to reach a certain level of proficiency in a music instrument creates a unique human experience that an AI program just cannot replicate.

"AI music is not going to destroy the music industry. Rather it is going to revolutionise music"

And for all those reasons, no. AI music is not going to destroy the music industry. Rather it is going to revolutionise music, and make it so much better in so many different ways - but only if we go about this in the right way. We need to create a future in which there is no unlawful use of music to train AI; create a world where AI does not replace jobs, but rather works as a useful tool; create a world where the use of AI still requires the imagination and creativity of us humans. So let's strive towards this future and neither one that disregards the potential of AI in the music industry, nor one that is so heavily reliant on it that the very thing that makes us human is dulled.

Social Media's Impact



on our Views

Written by Emad Rehman Edited by Siddard Saktheesh

From early morning scrolls on TikTok to heated comment threads under political posts, social media has become one of the most powerful forces shaping how we think. What began as a way to connect with friends and share photos has transformed into a globally influential machine, capable of changing opinions, spreading questionable ideas, and tipping elections. Whether it's the government's next move, a celebrity scandal, or a controversial VAR decision in a football match, chances are that people's first reactions come not from newspapers or news channels, but from what they see online.

One of the reasons social media is so influential is because of how it's designed. Algorithms constantly track what users engage with and then throw similar content at them; somebody who watches a few political videos from one side will start to see even more extreme versions of that viewpoint, while opposing arguments are hidden! As a result, people often find themselves in "echo chambers" where they're only exposed to opinions that match their own, reinforcing their beliefs and making them more resistant

to other perspectives¹. This effect is seen not only in politics but in all areas of life, including sport, culture, and even how we view ourselves.

In politics, the influence of social media has been dramatic. During the 2016 US Presidential Election, fake news stories spread across Facebook were shared more than real ones, with false claims often going viral due to their emotional impact². These stories reached millions, many of whom may have believed them without checking for facts. A similar pattern was seen during the Brexit referendum, where targeted adverts used people's online data to deliver messages aimed at specific fears or beliefs. One widely shared claim was that leaving the EU would save the UK £350 million a week for the NHS; a statement that was later heavily criticised for being misleading³. These digital campaigns were designed not to inform, but to persuade, often by triggering emotional reactions rather than rational thought. This misinformation had a strong effect on how people voted and viewed the EU. Simplified, emotional messages - like the promise of £350 million a week for the

NHS - appealed to voters' concerns, especially around healthcare. Many decisions were based on slogans rather than facts, and repeated claims online began to feel credible, even if incorrect. As a result, social media played a major role in shaping opinions, deepening divisions, and influencing the outcome of the Brexit vote.

At the same time, social media has allowed people to organise and protest in ways never seen before. The Black Lives Matter movement, for example, gained global attention largely through platforms like Twitter and Instagram. Videos of police violence, shared by ordinary users of events such as the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the shooting of Jacob Blake in Wisconsin, helped spread the message worldwide and brought urgent issues of racism and injustice into public conversation⁴. This shows that while social media can be dangerous in spreading falsehoods, it can also be a powerful force for good as it allows for immediate global awareness, the amplification of unheard voices, and the rapid mobilisation of support for social

causes.

Outside of politics, social media has quietly changed how we see ourselves and others. On platforms like Instagram, users are constantly exposed to filtered images, idealised lifestyles, and perfect-looking people. This can lead to feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem, particularly among young people who compare their everyday lives to the highlight's others choose to share⁵. Over time, this comparison can contribute to anxiety, depression, body image issues, and even disordered eating, as users may feel they are not “good enough” or constantly falling short. The constant pursuit of likes and validation can also create pressure to appear perfect online, leading to stress and emotional exhaustion. Even though many users are aware that these posts are edited, the impact on mental health can still be significant.

Celebrities and influencers have also taken on new roles in shaping public opinion and consumer behaviour. Many people now form opinions based on what their favourite creator posts, whether that's about climate change, mental health, or which trainers to buy. Sometimes these messages are positive and educational, such as influencers raising awareness about anxiety and therapy, promoting sustainable fashion, or sharing personal stories about overcoming adversity. But there is also a risk when influencers share views or promote products without any expertise or honesty, they can blur the lines between fact and opinion and can result in misinformation, exploitation of followers, or the promotion of unhealthy

habits and unrealistic standards.

Nowhere is this digital influence more obvious than in the world of football. Players, clubs, journalists, and fans all interact directly online, creating a constant stream of analysis, praise, and criticism. This can be exciting and bring fans closer to the game as seen by behind-the-scenes content, live Q&As with players, and real-time match commentary, but it also means that footballers face intense public scrutiny. After England's loss in the Euro 2020 final, Marcus Rashford, Bukayo Saka, and Jadon Sancho were subjected to a flood of racist abuse online simply for missing penalties⁶. Despite their disappointment in losing the Euro final, their bravery in standing up afterwards showed strength, with Rashford publicly stating that he would never apologise for who he was⁷. The response, both from social media users and in real life, showed how digital platforms can quickly shift from hate to solidarity.

Yet, social media has also enabled footballers to make a real difference. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Rashford used Twitter to campaign for free school meals for children in need. His posts gained huge public support and eventually led the government to reverse its decision, proving that online pressure can lead to real-world change⁸. At the same time, football clubs now create dramatic videos to announce transfers, interact with fans during matches, and use their platforms to promote equality and mental health awareness. All of the ways that football has therefore used social media shows how the sport is evolving beyond the pitch: engaging our

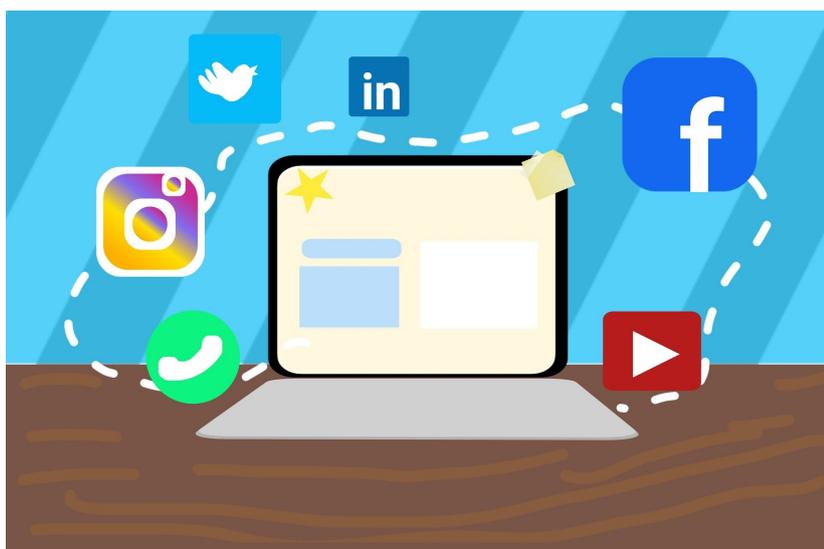
“Repeated claims online began to feel credible, even if incorrect”

communities, raising awareness for important causes, and shaping a more inclusive culture.

However, with all these benefits come serious challenges. Because it's so easy to post something online, false or harmful content can spread much faster than ever before. On TikTok, for example, young users have been shown dangerous and misleading content on issues such as eating disorders, vaccine conspiracies, and unproven mental health advice by the platform's algorithm, even when they didn't search for it⁹. The speed and reach of social media make it extremely powerful, but also extremely risky and therefore demand greater responsibility from users of platforms, and policymakers to ensure that content is safe, accurate, and ethical.

In a world where most of us spend hours a day online, understanding the role of social media has become essential. It doesn't just reflect our thoughts—it actively shapes them. We may feel like our opinions are our own, but they are constantly influenced by what we see, who we follow, and what we choose to click on. This doesn't mean we should avoid social media, but rather that we must use it carefully, think critically, and always ask questions. Where did this information come from? Is it reliable? What might I be missing?

Social media is not just a place to share photos or laugh at memes—it's one of the most powerful tools of modern life. It can divide or unite, mislead or inform, hurt or heal. Whether it's a political campaign, a player's missed penalty, or a trending topic, the way we respond is shaped by what we see online. Recognising that is the first step towards using social media more wisely.





<Politics>

Trump's Tariff Game: Tearing the World Apart

Written by Siddard Saktheesh Edited by Aarav Mehta

On April 2nd, 2025 - widely addressed by the misnomer of 'Liberation Day' - the Trump Administration sent shockwaves throughout the world of politics and economics by unleashing their policy of reciprocal tariffs. The barrage of global tariffs has been commented on by both ends of the political spectrum with the policy being hailed as 'fair'¹ and 'kind'² by the seemingly blinded American right wing but questioned by many, with David Goldman, a renowned economic writer, calling the system 'dubious'³. The past has not been kind to pro-tariff presidents - so the questions remain: why does Trump believe a modern America needs to impose tariffs and how will the global political dynamics be affected by this move??

Tariffs are taxes put on imports to encourage the production of goods locally rather than globally as well as locally made products to be sold in the same country. This means any product from another country brought into the US to be sold there will have a fee placed on top depending on the origin country, such as currently 10% on British products sold in America. Most countries already have tariffs on foreign products, such as the UK which applies a standard UK global tariff on imports in order to protect the livelihoods of local product manufacturers. The US has had a long policy of free trade - trying to encourage international competition and businesses by insisting on minimal tariffs - which was championed by the Obama administration, as seen by the fact that before Trump's initial term as president,

the 2016 average American international tariff rate was a mere 2.76 percent⁴.

However, Trump immediately began to see tariffs as a useful weapon to impose pressure on his rivals, namely China - the tariff on Chinese products jumped from 3% to 19% in 2018 as soon as a more prominent Trump-China divide became apparent as a result of his Republican and nationalistic ideals⁵. And now, after four years of tariff calm under Biden, Trump, assisted by Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, has unleashed a very extreme tariff policy. Trump's implementation of tariffs has been unorthodox as the countries with major tariff increases such as Cambodia (49%) and Laos (50%)⁶ both contribute less than one percent of imports into the US. This is possibly

Why does Trump believe a modern America needs to impose tariffs and how will the global political dynamics be affected by this move?

because both Cambodia and Laos import goods mainly from China and Hong Kong and Trump is willing to antagonise countries who are more likely to support China even when they don't pose a direct threat to ensure that countries are more likely to stay away from China and huddle towards the USA on the international stage.

Contrastingly, Trump, despite receiving a larger portion of imports from the UK and the EU, has both in relatively lower tariff bands at 10% and 20% respectively⁶. Thus, it becomes clear that Trump is not only keen on achieving his primary aim of encouraging local American products, by imposing these tariffs, but is also trying to get bonus points for his secondary aim of weakening China and being harsher on Chinese allies and trade partners whilst being slightly more lenient on traditional American allies.

As expected, many countries were not happy with these highly inflated tariffs being exerted upon them and some are in the process of deciding or have decided to put retaliatory tariffs on America, such as the EU and China (30% and 32.6% as of August 2025 on equivalent products as to those tariffed by Trump). And Trump, being the vocal and unique leader he is, is not shying away from picking favourites. His muted and suspiciously friendly reaction to the majority of retaliation by pausing his tariffs for three months - although the basic 10% increase will remain - contrasts with his extreme and unprecedented 125% hike for Chinese

products. But even more confusing given Trump's stubborn nature - Trump has come out saying he is open to talks and has blamed China for his radical actions.

No matter the tumult at the moment (of writing) - one thing is clear. Trump's overarching policy is to force attention from other countries upon America. By unleashing extreme tariffs and causing European and Asian markets to crash, many countries immediately tried to negotiate and beseeched Trump to loosen the noose, which he later did with the 90 day pause on tariffs. As Ross Clark, an acclaimed Times journalist, asks us: 'Were Donald Trump's tariffs a negotiating tactic all along - he never intended them to come into force but rather as a shock tactic to bring other governments to the negotiating table?'⁷.

As a shrewd businessman, surely Trump knew better than to unleash tariffs as he did on April 2nd given that the last Republican president to do so - William McKinley - lost 50% of his seats in

the following election. The commotion over the last ten days has captivated global audiences and every large news outlet has been solely focused on Trump and his every move, which has enabled him to...

And is that the end? Is this all Trump intended to do? Did Trump only want to hype up the entire world and exhibit a show of force? Or does he really intend to impose the full version of tariffs that he originally announced on the ill-fated Liberation Day? As Singaporean Prime Minister, Lawrence Wong warns us of 'wider and more profound consequences'⁸, especially for smaller countries more reliant on exports to the US and for open market countries, larger countries will also have to expect impacts such as the disadvantage in the biggest western consumer market of America to foreign businesses. The immediate impact has been somewhat mitigated by Trump's sudden U-turn, with only a small decrease in GDP for European countries and a similar decrease in Asia. But the future continues to be uncertain, as the EU is expected to lose 15% of its exports to America as soon as the 90-day pause is

over. And with China, who just months earlier flooded the European markets with cheap goods such as BYD's electric vehicles, seeming extremely angered, the world is holding their breath to see what the impact on consumers will be given the commotion the tariffs will cause in the cheap Asian factories.

Americans have taken to the streets following these events and why should they not - prices are rising for the products they once took for granted in a direct violation of Trump promising cheapest prices during the election campaign. Trump's policies seem extremely isolationist and some historical experts are worried this could weaken America on a global stage as their historical power has lain in the support of an increasingly alienated EU and NATO.

Furthermore, the remainder of the West - ever so reliant on America for protection - have much to fear as former UK Prime Minister John Major warns us that Russia has been handed a huge 'win' as the US turns its back on its international responsibilities⁹. A superpower of America's magnitude isolating itself in the modern globalised world definitely read as a catastrophe due to their central role in defending the West and supporting the Western markets in Europe and beyond which is echoed as Lawrence Wong, the aforementioned President of Singapore, goes so far as to warn us of World War Three with scary parallels to the build up to the previous World War due to similarities such as the echoes of President Hoover's tariff policies⁸.

And to us, the passive and helpless audience, the question remains: whether to Trump this bombshell policy is simply another stunt or a very real change to our lives? All we can do is wait and watch to see how this plays out.

<Politics>

Free Speech vs Hate Speech

Where Should the Line Be Drawn?

Written by Snehith Vishnu Gannu

Edited by Rohan Saravanan

Freedom of speech is one of the most fundamental rights in democratic societies. It allows us to express opinions, challenge authority, and advocate for change. However, the question that has troubled societies for years is this: how do we balance the right to free speech with the need to prevent harm? This is a particular topic which has caught my attention, in the midst of the rise in popularity of social media, where the boundary between expressing an opinion and inciting harm appears to become increasingly blurred.

The Importance of Free Speech

Growing up, I was always encouraged to speak my mind. Whether it was in class debates or discussions with friends, the ability to express my thoughts freely was empowering. Free speech has been the foundation of intellectual progress as it has allowed for the challenging of established norms, such as Galileo questioning the geocentric model⁸, and Martin Luther's 95 Theses against the Catholic church⁹. If we were never allowed to question things, how would society have ever evolved?

Historically, free speech has been a driving force behind monumental change. From the civil rights movement in the United States to the Arab Spring, the right to express dissent has shaped the world we live in today. Unfortunately, I have also witnessed far too often how words can be weaponised—sometimes

with devastating consequences.

Philosophers such as John Stuart Mill argued that the free exchange of ideas is essential for progress.⁴ According to him, even unpopular or offensive views should be debated rather than suppressed, as this seemingly arduous yet democratic process helps society distinguish truth from falsehood and enables everyone to voice their opinion to form a just society. However, some critics contend that the modern landscape has changed significantly; with digital platforms amplifying speech, which has allowed harmful rhetoric to spread far more easily than in the past.

The Dangers of Hate Speech

Hate speech extends far beyond just offensive language or controversial opinions. It encompasses speech that

incites violence, discrimination, or dehumanization of individuals based on race, religion, gender, sexuality, or other protected characteristics. There exists a delicate balance between freedom of expression and the potential for harm, and I've often wondered: should people have the right to say anything, even if it incites hatred or violence?

Take the example of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994. Hate speech broadcasted on the radio played a significant role in inciting violence that resulted in deaths of hundreds of thousands of people.⁵ More recently, misinformation and inflammatory rhetoric have fueled violent events across the world, as shown by the 2020 Delhi riots in India, where fake news and provocative social media posts played a key role in inciting communal violence that left over 50 people dead, mostly from

the Muslim community¹⁰. If speech can have such deadly consequences, should there be legal limitations?

Another contemporary example is the role of social media in disseminating hate speech. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have faced criticism for permitting harmful rhetoric to proliferate unchecked, resulting in, real-world violence and discrimination¹ as seen in the events of the Rohingya genocide in Myanmar, where Facebook was accused of enabling hate speech and incitement.¹¹ Algorithms tend to amplify divisive content, primarily because such content generates higher engagement- users are more likely to click, comment, and share emotionally charged or controversial posts, which signals the algorithm to promote them further. This engagement-driven model prioritises virality over accuracy or social harmony, making polarising content more visible and influential. This raises another question: should technology companies be held accountable for moderating speech, or does this establish a perilous precedent for censorship?

The psychological effects of hate speech cannot be overlooked either. Studies have shown that exposure to hateful rhetoric can elevate levels of anxiety, depression, and even lead to physical health issues among targeted groups⁶. In schools and workplaces, environments where hate speech goes unchecked often result in higher dropout and redundancy rates.⁷ This is because individuals who experience or witness hate speech may feel unsafe, unwelcome, or undervalued, leading to disengagement, mental health issues, and ultimately decisions to leave or be excluded from the environment. Clearly, hate speech does more than merely offend; it actively harms individuals and communities.

Striking the Balance: Where Should the Line Be Drawn?

Some argue that banning any form of speech is a slippery slope toward authoritarianism as seen in historical examples such as Nazi Germany, where the regime systematically eliminated dissent by banning opposition parties, censoring the press, imprisoning critics, and using propaganda and fear through the Gestapo to silence alternative viewpoints.¹² Some (such as the American

civil liberties Union) also argue that it's only completely unrestricted free speech which can lead to the most harmful consequences⁶. However, others (such as the philosopher Jeremy Waldron) believe that speech threatening the safety and dignity of individuals should not be tolerated. I believe the key factors at play in making the decision on the regulation of free speech in society are the intent of the speech and the impact of the speech. If someone is simply expressing an opinion, regardless of how controversial it may be, it should be protected as an essential part of democratic discourse and intellectual freedom. However, if speech is deliberately intended to cause harm or incite violence, it should be restricted to ensure that public safety and the rights of others are not undermined .

Governments worldwide have adopted various approaches to this delicate matter. The U.S. follows the First Amendment, which protects most speech, including offensive language, provided that it does not incite violence.³ In contrast, countries such as Germany and France enforce stringent hate speech laws to prevent the spread of extremist ideologies which has resulted in fewer public displays of neo-Nazi symbolism and a more proactive stance against Holocaust denial and racist rhetoric.¹³

One possible approach is a middle ground: a legal framework that differentiates between offensive yet permissible speech and speech that incites violence or discrimination. For instance, the European Union's Digital Services Act, places the responsibility on tech companies to remove illegal hate speech while still safeguarding free expression.⁷ Such policies highlight the ongoing struggle to balance these two fundamental rights as societies strive to protect individuals from harm without undermining democratic discourse.

As someone who values open discussions, I believe that silencing individuals is not the answer as this could result in underground radicalisation of silenced views and a lack of trust in public institutions if they feel their basic human right is being suppressed. However, I do believe that with freedom comes responsibility. Just because we can say something does not necessarily mean we should. Perhaps the more pertinent question is not where the law should

draw the line, but rather, where we, as individuals, should establish our own boundaries. This should then allow for a more respectful, thoughtful public sphere where differing views can be exchanged without leading to harm or discreet division.

Conclusion

This debate isn't going away anytime soon. Social media, global politics, and evolving cultural norms continue to shape our understanding of free speech and hate speech. The key takeaway for me is that freedom of expression should be protected, but not at the expense of others' safety and dignity.

A potential solution could involve education and awareness. If individuals were taught from an early age about the power and consequences of their words, perhaps fewer people would engage in harmful rhetoric. Education and awareness can foster a culture in which individuals exercise free speech responsibly, recognising that their words carry significant weight. If people naturally avoided hate speech due to ethical considerations rather than legal constraints, society might be able to uphold free speech without resorting to excessive censorship. Furthermore, clearer regulations—those that distinguish between genuine free speech and speech that incites violence—could help create a more balanced approach. For example, such regulations could include well-defined legal criteria for what constitutes hate speech, such as direct threats, dehumanising language, or calls to violence against protected groups, while explicitly protecting the right to express unpopular or controversial political opinions. This would provide both citizens and online platforms with clearer guidance on what crosses the line, reducing ambiguity and ensuring fairer enforcement. So maybe the real solution isn't about laws alone, but about how we, as a society, choose to engage with one another. What do you think? Should we allow complete freedom of speech, or should there be boundaries to prevent harm?

Who will emerge victorious in Trump vs The US Constitution?

Written by Pavamaan Jagalur Edited by Oscar Wong

The US Constitution has a profound reputation as being the bulwark against a tyrannical regime; a model that employs fundamental principles of democracy and protection of rights that are cherished by Americans; a foundation that has enabled the rise of a great superpower dominating the global landscape. The Constitution is codified, meaning it is written down and established as the supreme law of the land, and yet there seems to be a figure, one of 47 Presidents, that views the Constitution as a roadblock suffocating his mandate to enact policies he has been voted into office on.

This figure is Donald Trump. We may immediately associate him with the torrent of mottos that he has thrown out to the public over the years, from “Build the Wall” to “Make America Great Again”, but a more subtle undermining and undoing of the Constitution is at play here under Trump that doesn’t receive the same level of attention than his farcical claims over Greenland or his unapologetic and brash approach to the Russian-Ukraine war.

Let’s be clear here: Trump has an unchallenged mandate. He has a majority of 53 vs 47¹ in the Senate and in the House, a majority with 220 vs 215¹ (with the House and the Senate forming branches of the legislature that pass laws). Trump was voted in to tackle immigration, the ballooning cost of the Russian-Ukraine war (with \$66.5 billion² sent to Ukraine in military assistance and no seeming change in the momentum of the war), and to implement change to the anaemic government and policy making under Biden. He is a strong, charismatic leader with a laser-focused vision to reinstate American dominance that he and many Americans feel has diminished, with controlling China, immigration and revamping foreign policy as proposed solutions. A separate discussion exists on whether the Constitution has a morally justified obligation to hinder Trump’s



policies that seek to carry out his mandate – something I am inclined to suggest the UK model as a solution, in which Parliamentary sovereignty ensures that no court decision is legally binding on Parliament (and hence the legislature). But it is wrong for the President to brazenly challenge the principles of the Constitution, finding loopholes to enact his policies and undermining the system in place. You have a majority, you have a mandate, but you don’t have control over the Constitution.

Before diving into the legal consequences of this twisted relationship between Trump and the Constitution, we must acknowledge the factors triggering this chain of events: his policies. One key element of his manifesto called “Agenda 47”³ was his immigration policy. Beyond the baseless allegations of Haitians stealing pet dogs and eating them, Trump has repeatedly emphasised the need to tighten border security and control immigration, all areas for which Trump has a mandate to carry out. He has tried to end “immediate birthright citizenship”⁴, claiming that the Constitution, under the 14th Amendment, describes US citizenship extending to

those born in the US and those “subject to the jurisdiction of the USA”. Thus, he will enact a “total ban” on Biden using “taxpayer dollars to free illegal aliens”⁵ as Trump believes that part of his mission of “Mak[ing] America Great Again” is prioritising investment in Americans, redirecting expenditure away from immigrants.

Trump is clearly answering the calls of many Americans to enforce stricter barriers to immigration and to enact more severe punishments on immigrants who commit crimes with 34% of Americans who voted for Trump finding it as the biggest problem⁶ coupled with the fact that white voters without a college education preferred Trump’s handling of immigration by a margin of 67% to 30% (for Harris)⁷.

Foreign policy is another element which draws controversy; the aim to “clean the house of all the warmongers and America -Last globalists in the Deep State, the Pentagon, the State department, and the national security industrial complex”⁶ has resulted in Trump’s systematic removal of potential means of opposition and checks under this dangerous rhetoric.

However, the most pertinent aspect of

this unorthodox manifesto is the expansion of Presidential powers that Trump had planned. Trump believes that “dismantling the Deep State and reclaiming democracy from Washington corruption”⁹ is necessary, and hence he would “fire rogue bureaucrats” who he deems to be weakening America by prioritising corrupt elites’ interests over American ones. He also wishes to restore Executive Order 13771¹⁰ (an Executive Order being a formal decree from a President without the legal standing of an Act), which would cut federal regulations over environment, financial and labour, while also wishing to bring independent regulatory agencies like the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) and FCC (Federal Communications Commission) “back under Presidential authority”.

What we see here are clear policies, and a clear agenda that will revolutionise America, but there is a significant cost – the authority of the Constitution. Expanding Presidential power would be detrimental to the ability for the Legislature (the body that creates the laws and holds the Executive to account) and the Judiciary (the courts that rule on the legality of laws) to check on the Executive, reducing their ability to prevent its excessive growth to one which is often seen in authoritarian societies such as Russia.

Now, let’s take a deep dive into the Constitution and the powers bestowed on the President, and Trump’s unique interpretation of this law. We shall start with the President. The position of the President is established in Article 2, Section 1, which states that “executive power shall be vested in the President of the United States of America” – a bold proclamation that establishes the primacy of the President in the Executive branch. What is interesting is that the same section requires the confirmation oath which includes the President stating they will “preserve, protect and defend the Constitution”.

Section 2 refers to the powers of the President more explicitly, stating that they are the “Commander-in-chief of the army and the navy” and of the “militia of several states”. The President can also “grant reprieves and pardons for offences against the United States” and has the power to make “appointments... in the courts of law or in the Heads of

Departments”. They must also make sure that the “laws are faithfully executed” and if found to have committed “treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanours” and convicted, they can be removed via an impeachment. What we can see here is fundamental: the Constitution is creating a strong Executive that can harness enough power to hold a dominant position and ensure that the duties of the President can be executed without significant delay and gridlock undermining the political mandate¹¹.

Comparing this with the powers conferred to the Legislative Branch, which are described in Article 1, we see a system of checks and balances developing. Section 1 (similar to Article 2, Section 1) establishes the “legislative powers” as being “vested in a Congress in the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.” We shall look more closely at the powers of the Legislature that are interwoven with the Executive. “All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives” and any bill that has passed both the House and the Senate, will be “presented to the President” who can choose to veto the bill with his objections passed back to the House and Senate. Here, the Executive has considerable power over the Legislature in the role that the founding fathers envisaged of checking the power of the Legislature. However, there are limits on the Executive by Congress, including the ability to override a veto if two-thirds of both the House and Senate agree to this.

The most significant ability of the legislative branch is outlined in Section 8, as “collect[ing] taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay debts and provide for the common defence and general welfare of the United States”, including “to borrow money on credit”, and “to declare war”. Specifically, regarding the Senate, they must approve judicial appointments by a majority, and when they carry out any impeachment trials, they must take an oath of affirmation (confirming judicial neutrality) and vote with 2/3 members present whether to remove the President. What we see here is this balanced relationship where the Executive has significant power, including the most significant power over Congress to veto any legislation, but also the power of the

Legislature that can control the Executive’s economic policy and foreign policy, while also acting as a barrier to the politicisation of judges¹¹ to ensure that the judicial neutrality is preserved.

Once we add the Judiciary into the picture, we can get a full scope of the system of checks and balances cleverly devised and outlined in the Constitution. For the Judiciary, in Article 3, the “judicial power” of the USA, “shall be vested in the Supreme Court”, but also in “inferior courts that Congress may ... ordain and establish”, demonstrating that this system of checks and balances extends to the relationships between all three institutions. Judges hold their office during “good behaviour”, meaning they cannot be arbitrarily removed from power by the President, and they enjoy “continuance” of salary that cannot be diminished. All these provide protections of the Judiciary to remain independent from short-term political interventions and agendas.

However, most significantly, “judicial power shall extend to all cases ... arising under the Constitution, Laws of the United States ... affecting public ministers and consuls ... to which the United States shall be a party”, highlighting the ability of the Supreme Court in the Judiciary to strike down any Executive order by the President (or legislation passed by



Congress) that is contrary to the Constitution. Hence, we can see that this meticulously designed system employed by the Constitution ensures that the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary each individually have powers to carry out their duties, while also being maintained by the other two institutions. Any change to this system could spell immense danger to the political system as it could result in an imbalance of power towards one branch without significant controls that could then be used to subvert the other branches and topple the carefully curated political engine.

But it seems that Trump has turned a blind eye to this¹¹. Trump's plan seems to be to implement incremental change, as identified by American University Washington College of Law professor Elizabeth Beske¹², that consistently and devastatingly undermines the constitution in order to establish greater power for himself so that he can enact his radical manifesto commitments and "Make America Great Again". This implements his interpretation of the Executive's power that is more in line with the unitary executive theory. This involves the President holding vast authority over the Executive branch, returning to the system used before the 1974 resignation of President Nixon, according to John Yoo¹², a proponent of the theory.

There have been two conflicts of interest that have driven this change, and the one between Trump and Congress have seen the most significant victories for Trump. Trump fired inspectors general and the heads of various agencies, numbering roughly 17, without the 30-day notice required, which are powers vested in him in the Constitution - powers abused to establish a Republican stronghold and undermine the balance of power¹⁵. These positions acted as independent checks on the mismanagement and abuse of power, with posts from the Department of Agriculture, Commerce, Defence and Education.¹³ With minimal reaction from the Republicans, the Democrats have lashed back, with the US Representative Gerald Connolly calling it a "coup"¹³. Relying on the 2020 Supreme Court ruling that Congress (which is part of the Legislature) limiting the power of the President to remove the Director of Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

"We can see that this meticulously designed system employed by the Constitution ensures that the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary each individually have powers to carry out their duties, while also being maintained by the other two institutions."

violated the Constitution, Trump has managed to effectively shift power away from the Legislature and to the Executive.

It seems the only barrier to this expansion comes from the courts, who have impeded Trump's actions on foreign aid, federal spending, the firing of government workers using a 1798 law historically used only in wartime, curtailing automatic birthright citizenship and banning transgender troops in the army¹⁰. Despite this, Trump has called for the impeachment by Congress of Judge James Boasberg, US District Judge for Columbia¹², where the courts blocked the use of the Alien Enemies Act from 1798 which Trump tried to use to deport 250 Venezuelan alleged gang members and was rebuked by Chief Justice John Roberts.

Despite this, Trump still deported them, acting in complete violation of the court's ruling, undermining the balance of power¹⁴. Trump, almost ominously, posted to "STOP NATIONWIDE INJUNCTIONS, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE" on X in response, demonstrating his own indignation towards the restriction of his policies¹². However, it is clear that Trump is undermining the Judiciary, painting it in this anti-America spotlight that curtails its authority and respectability, which has led to a shift in power to the Executive branch, even if the democratic role of the Judiciary is being completed by it restricting the unrestrained policy making by Trump. Consequently, we see both relationships of the Legislature and the Judiciary with the Executive be undermined as there is a shifting of power away from them that is contrary to the principles of the constitution that has led America to greatness and a beacon of democracy globally.

Trump is an assertive, dominant leader that has a clear mandate which he wants to implement no matter what the consequences might be. Immigration must be resolved in order to meet the demands of the majority of Americans

who voted for Trump; a U-turn in foreign policy must be achieved in order for America to maintain global dominance; the economy must be revitalised to ensure that America is "Great" as promised by Trump. There is no doubt that this mandate has been consented to by the people, considering the overwhelming victory by Trump, clearing off the Democrats, suggesting nationwide agreement with his manifesto. It is the essence of democracy that the people must be represented by the person that they have voted for to hold elected office.

However, Trump's approach to achieving this mandate is unjustifiable because the Constitution acts as protection for the people, a barrier between an overbearing Executive, and it has been weakened significantly. There is no excuse to belittle the Constitution and to undermine the power dynamics between the three institutions of the Legislature, the Judiciary and the Executive that have acted as a solid foundation that propelled American growth to prominence and acted as a model for democracies across the world. The Constitution is the base upon which the many great pillars are built on: the economic prowess, cultural explosion and strong American values of democracy and human rights.

I can only imagine that Trump, who seeks to weaken certain sides of the base to fortify his side of the structure, will only establish a more isolated, unaccountable Executive that fails to achieve the principles of democracy that he claims the existing system fails to achieve. No matter the frustration and gridlock, a deliberately destructive route cannot be taken to achieve the agenda envisioned because this would result in a collapse of the balance of power and intricate system of checks designed to protect Americans. We can only hope that the Constitution, as it is, is strong enough to withstand Trump's attritional damage during his four-year term.

Diplomacy in Conflict Resolution

Written by Naman Shah Edited by Aarav Mehta

When two nations with a history of hostility shook hands at the negotiation table in Belfast, the world watched with cautious optimism.

After years of conflict, countless lives lost and endless violence, the Good Friday Agreement finally brought an end to this period of struggle. Perhaps being one of the greatest examples of conflict resolution in history, it marked the end of 30 years of conflict in Northern Ireland. But what makes such diplomacy work?

Conflict occurs when individuals or groups perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, or interference from others. Whether it's a disagreement between coworkers, a community dispute, or an international standoff, conflict can escalate quickly if not addressed with care. To handle situations where there is conflict, a degree of compromise is required between all parties involved. This is where diplomacy comes in. The United Nations currently runs over 11 peacekeeping and conflict resolution missions around the world, helping fragile nations transition from war to peace.¹ What is the purpose of these missions?

At the heart of effective conflict resolution lies diplomacy—the art of managing international relations, negotiating alliances, and promoting peace through dialogue, not discord.

Modern diplomacy has expanded far beyond the embassies and elegant banquets. Today, diplomats are just as likely to be found in boardrooms, on video calls, or in grassroots peacebuilding missions. Their toolbox includes negotiation, mediation, cultural sensitivity, and strategic communication. This helps improve international relations in many cases and can help avoid unwanted issues. From the Camp David Accords to the Good Friday Agreement, history is rich with examples of diplomacy averting disaster. More

recently, peacebuilding efforts in Colombia, South Sudan, and Northern Ireland highlight how sustained dialogue and inclusive negotiations can end decades of bloodshed.

Even at the local level - between neighbours, in classrooms, or within companies - diplomatic approaches have resolved countless disputes, often preventing costly legal battles or broken relationships.

This is why UN conflict resolution missions are vital; they help prevent violence, protect civilians and support long-term peace in some of the world's most fragile regions. By deploying peacekeepers, mediators, and humanitarian support, the UN provides a neutral ground for dialogue, monitors ceasefires, and assists in rebuilding institutions. These missions not only save lives but also create the conditions for sustainable development, democracy, and stability, helping entire nations transition from conflict to peace.

Therefore, the implementation of diplomacy is so vital in modern-day affairs. Conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza and Sudan will only be resolved through diplomacy. Diplomacy is important today because it helps countries and communities solve problems without fighting. It encourages people to talk, listen, and find peaceful solutions. The Good Friday Agreement shows how diplomacy can work—leaders from different sides came together to end years of violence in Northern Ireland. This agreement is a great example of how talking and working together can bring lasting peace.

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Diplomacy in Conflict Resolution

1. UN Peacekeeping (2025) [online] Better World Campaign. Available at: <https://betterworldcampaign.org/un-peacekeeping> [Accessed 20 Apr. 2025].

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