British Academy
Review

UNDERSTANDING PEOPLES, CULTURES, SOCIETIES – PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Linda Colley on why constitutions matter ❡

Uta Frith on what autism tells us about our social nature ❡
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The British Academy

British Academy Review Contents

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Editorial

Welcome to this new look issue of the *British Academy Review*.

The British Academy and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) have launched a £3.6 million initiative to support leading international research teams to investigate and identify the most successful ways of addressing corruption in developing countries. Professor Paul Heywood – leader of the British Academy/DFID Anti-Corruption Evidence Programme – explains how this initiative seeks to improve on past attempts to reduce corruption and address its negative impact on people's lives.

First and foremost, the British Academy is a Fellowship of scholars, elected for outstanding academic achievement in one or more of the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences. This issue contains interviews with three Fellows of the British Academy – all women – who have had very different careers. These stories of leading academics at work provide an intriguing picture of modern scholarship, and help us appreciate why the study of their subjects enriches our lives.

The British Academy operates a number of 'early career' schemes for supporting outstanding scholars at the other end of the academic ladder. There are articles by five Academy-supported individuals from this new generation in the 'Emerging perspectives' section of this issue. Each brings a quite different approach to subjects dating in range from early medieval times to the present day.

Other articles reflect the Academy's contribution to matters of public policy, and its longstanding interest in promoting the study of languages.

2016 is a year full of centenaries. Some are of international cultural significance, harking back to 1516 or 1616. Others are particular to the early history of the British Academy itself. Various of these milestones are touched on at different points in this issue.

President s Notes

Nicholas Stern introduces the British Academy's new 'Strategic Framework'

Lord Stern of Brentford is IG Patel Professor of Economics and Government at the London School of Economics, and President of the British Academy.

People have mixed views about 'mission statements'. Some seem a pedestrian statement of the obvious, others merely trot out the jargon of management-consultancy-speak, while the worst, to quote Macbeth, come across as 'a tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing'.

I hope that in drawing up our Strategic Framework for the next four years the British Academy has avoided these bear traps. Any publicly funded body needs to be clear about the rationale for its existence, to provide a sense of purpose and vision, and to have a clear sense of its priorities and objectives in order to justify receiving the support of taxpayers.

The aim of our Strategic Framework is therefore to spell out our overriding purpose for all the communities with which we interact – our thousands of grant applicants, the wider academic community whose interests we seek to serve, our 1,300 UK and international Fellows, the curious and the thoughtful in general, the policy-making community with whom we share research findings and evidence, our stakeholders and funders, and not least our own staff. To meet that objective, it is essential that our purposes and intentions are communicated in clear, concise and realistic language.

We have described the British Academy's purpose as being:

- 'to inspire and support high achievement in the humanities and social sciences throughout the UK and internationally, and to promote their public value'.

We think this distils our mission as clearly and unambiguously as possible. It captures both the intrinsic value of research in our disciplines as vital sources of human knowledge and insight, and the contributions they make to the economy, to cultural enrichment and an educated citizenry. In short, how the humanities and social sciences can both deepen understanding and help change our world for the better.

Over the past few years the British Academy has built on its scholarly strengths while developing its public role. Looking ahead, we have therefore defined the Academy as having three principal roles. These are:

- **A Fellowship** of distinguished scholars from all areas of the humanities and social sciences, elected by their peers, that facilitates the exchange of knowledge and ideas and promotes the work of our subjects.
- **A Funding Body** that supports the best ideas, individuals and intellectual resources in the humanities and social sciences, nationally and internationally.

❝ It is essential that our purposes and intentions are communicated in clear, concise and realistic language. ❞

- **A Forum** for debate and engagement that stimulates public interest and deepens understanding, that enhances global leadership and policy making, and that acts as a voice for the humanities and social sciences.

Spanning all three of these roles are three core values that lie at the heart of the British Academy's work: excellence, independence and diversity:

- **Excellence:** We are committed to the highest standards across all the Academy's activities, from recognising and supporting outstanding research, especially by early career scholars, to our engagement with policy development and public discussion.
- **Independence:** We seek, in all our activities, to safeguard scholarly interests and academic freedom, independent of government and of individual university or other particular interests.
- **Diversity:** We are committed to promoting and encouraging greater diversity in those we fund, elect to our Fellowship, and work and partner with, reflecting the excellence of the research community, wherever it is found.

Having defined our three principal roles and our three overarching values, the Framework then sets out our four strategic priorities that will shape our work for the next four years (2016–2020):

- **Championing the Humanities and Social Sciences**
  To promote our disciplines, uphold their value and importance and stimulate public interest in them.
- **Advancing Excellent Research**
  To create funding opportunities for outstanding people and innovative research across the humanities and social sciences, and to recognise and celebrate high achievement.
- **Shaping Policy and Public Understanding**
  To enhance understanding of the contribution of humanities and social science research to public life and debate, and their role in the process of making public policy.
- **Delivering Global Leadership in Research**
  To develop UK research in international arenas and provide leadership that helps shape the research agenda on global challenges, and strengthen understanding of other cultures and societies.

As President, I think that this Framework does provide a succinct and powerful summary of why the Academy exists and what we will do over the four years of the current funding period. Or to quote again words attributed to Shakespeare: 'See first that the design is wise and just; that ascertained, pursue it resolutely.'

Culture and community energy

Natasha McCarthy explains how national and local cultures shape community energy ownership

Dr Natasha McCarthy is Head of Policy at the British Academy, and has a background in science, engineering and public policy and the relationships between research, technology and society.

Many debates about energy focus on the UK's 'big six' energy providers, and large-scale energy generation projects such as new nuclear generation. However, much smaller-scale projects may well play a crucial role in future energy needs and obligations to reduce carbon emissions. Community energy projects are (usually) local energy generation and supply projects, characterised by local ownership, community participation, and benefit sharing through returns on community members' investments or through supporting local community initiatives. While such projects are not going to be the sole solution to energy security, they can play a significant role in local energy systems.

According to the 'Community Energy Strategy' published in 2014 by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), 'Community-led action can often tackle challenges more effectively than government alone, developing solutions to meet local needs, and involving local people. Putting communities in control of the energy they use can help maintain energy security and tackle climate change; help people save money on their energy bills; and have wider social and economic benefits.'[1] Local energy solutions can therefore provide not only power and heat – but can bestow local pride, and have the potential to create a common purpose around affordability, social justice, and low carbon living.

However, engagement in community energy across the UK has tended to be relatively small-scale compared to countries like Germany where, as early as the end of 2010, community energy made up 40 per cent of the country's renewable energy assets.[2] To test current levels of interest in the UK, the British Academy commissioned a small-scale YouGov survey in October 2015. It suggested that not many British people would invest, and if they were to, saving money would be a major motivation. Of the 1,000 participants from Great Britain who were surveyed, only 5 per cent had ever invested in community-owned projects, and of that 5 per cent, 1 per cent stated that they would not do so again. However, 21 per cent showed some interest in investing in community schemes having not done so before. Respondents' levels of interest in community energy schemes were similar to their levels of interest in community centres or allotments, though there was more interest in libraries. Respondents were most likely to give a reduction in their bills as a motive for investing in such projects – ranking this higher than the return on their investment, and significantly higher than promoting community involvement.[3]

The British Academy sought to look at why is it that British people show what, on first reflection, seem quite low levels of engagement in such projects, and how this compares with other countries. Barriers to widespread take-up of shared energy generation in the UK may be regulatory or technical, but there may also be cultural, historic, constitutional or political barriers that need to be better understood. The British Academy report *Cultures of Community Energy*, published in May 2016, examined the cultural factors that shape the success of community energy projects

1. Community Energy Strategy: People Powering Change (Department of Energy & Climate Change, 27 January 2014), p. 4.
2. www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/275163/20140126Community_Energy_Strategy.pdf
3. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,595 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken on 21–23 October 2015. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Great Britain adults (aged 18+).

Three aspects of culture were explored in the case studies. National institutional and political cultures were examined, including the assumptions governing regulatory structures. Cultures of social enterprise were also considered significant, concerning the extent to which social enterprises (businesses trading for social or environmental purposes) are recognised and valued within the economy and society of a region. Finally, local cultures very specific to individual projects were considered, looking at the cultural milieux within which community energy groups operate including the degree of trust and social cohesion.

What does community energy look like?

One of the case studies produced by the research team looked at Brixton Energy. Based in the district of Brixton in south London, Brixton Energy is a voluntary group of individuals who are enthusiastic about community-owned, renewable energy initiatives.

Since 2012, the group has led the establishment of three community solar energy projects in the area, generating renewable energy and bringing financial revenues into the local neighbourhoods where they are sited. Each project is a registered co-operative that is wholly owned by its shareholders, who were able to buy shares from £250 to be part of the collective ownership. The sale of these shares helped to finance the installation of each solar scheme.

From all these projects, electricity generated is first sold to users within the buildings, and the excess is sold on to the National Grid. To date, the first two projects have generated over 50,000kWh of energy. Alongside energy generation, as with many other community energy projects, the Brixton schemes provide financial revenues to the local community. Investors in each scheme receive interest of around 3 per cent their investment, whilst 20 per cent of the profits are spent on a variety of local initiatives focused on energy-saving in the local area.

The local culture and context of the Brixton area shaped the project in a number of ways. Most obviously, the area lacked the strong social ties and networks that can characterise some rural neighbourhoods where community energy projects are undertaken. Many local residents were also sceptical of the potential for solar energy in the UK, or were not familiar with the technology. Community involvement was secured through open, hands-on and proactive consultation, with a focus on local development, jobs and improving the prospects for young people.

For all three of the Brixton Solar schemes, a portion of the profits from the solar panels is placed into a Community Energy Efficiency Fund, which is used to improve the housing stock on some of the poorest estates in Brixton

Brixton Energy in south London. 'Obviously we were inspired by what others were doing – Brighton, and other community groups. So I think there was just a kind of general energy that was building up where community groups across the country were inspiring each other to do stuff, and it was like "They've gone ahead with it, we can do it too!" ' (project leader).
PHOTO: TIM MITCHELL.

internationally, and the cultural enablers and barriers to community energy becoming mainstream. What cultural factors encourage engagement in such projects? Are these present in UK examples, and can they be actively developed?

Understanding culture

The British Academy commissioned a team of researchers at the University of Lancaster to collate a set of international case studies of community energy projects, in order to identify what those cultural factors might be.[4] The case studies prepared by the research team were selected from three broad groups. The first was the 'community energy leaders' group, in which projects from Denmark and Germany were studied, countries with high uptake of community energy, and supportive regulatory frameworks. Four case studies were from the UK – from England, Scotland and Wales, with the Welsh case study being a project that had failed to receive planning permission. Finally, 'wild card' projects were selected from Belgium, South Korea, Brazil and Chile, to explore very different cultural and institutional settings.

4. The researchers that developed the case studies were Rebecca Willis, Peter Capener and Neil Simcock, and they were working in collaboration with Lancaster University. The working group was led by Professor Tim O'Riordan FBA, and members were Professor Nigel Gilbert FBA, Dr Fraser McLeod, Professor David Newbery FBA, Dr Alan Walker, Professor Jim Watson and Professor Sarah Whatmore FBA.

and 'thereby taking meaningful steps to alleviate fuel poverty for some of the poorest residents.' The Brixton schemes have also focused on training and improving the skills of young people via programs such as internships.

How national institutional and political cultures shape community energy

Through the full set of case studies it was found that government policy has a significant impact on the relative success of community energy initiatives – not only through its direct effects, but also in terms of the stories that government policies tell about institutional attitudes towards community energy. These stories are as important as the outcomes of the policies themselves. Support from local authorities can also provide both financial backing and credibility to community energy projects.

The case studies suggest that the existence of incentive systems, such as Feed-in Tariffs or specific tax incentives, matter in incentivising local energy economies, not only through financial support but by lending perceived credibility to projects. However, financial incentives without other forms of political institutional support are of limited benefit. Community energy thrives where the policy environment is supportive of community energy in a broad sense.

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Case study:

Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy

'Government support has driven down the cost of renewable energy significantly, enabling renewables to compete with other technologies and helping the industry stand on its own two feet.

Our priority is now to move towards a low-carbon economy whilst ensuring subsidies are used where they are needed most, to provide the best value for money for hardworking bill payers.'

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Market liberalisation is also important – but it appears to be the *type* of liberalisation, rather than the *degree* of liberalisation, that is a factor in the ease with which community energy initiatives are set up and are able to scale-up. For example, liberalisation can enable the entry of small-scale suppliers into the market, but it can also favour large corporations meaning that community energy groups must operate outside the system.

As for other parts of the energy sector, there is need for a national policy framework that is clear, credible and consistent. The existence of long-term stable conditions for community energy is critical to their success. Predictability is particularly important for communities because of longer development times, relatively complex partnerships, building the confidence of local investors, and the need for capacity-building to develop skills and experience. DECC's 2014 Community Energy Strategy

could form the basis of this stable framework, developing it along with the Cabinet Office, HM Treasury and Ofgem.

How cultures and community shape community energy projects

The existence of a tradition of social enterprise affects both the ease with which a community energy group can be established and its ultimate success. A familiarity with, and an acceptance of, social enterprise also matters: increased support for social enterprises in the UK could act as an enabler for social enterprise in the energy sector. Such familiarity was clear in projects based in Germany and Denmark.

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Case study:

Jühnde Bioenergy Village in Germany

'In Jühnde we were the first co-operative. But the people here in Germany in the rural areas, they know the construction of co-operatives. So for example the bank in the next village is a co-operative, or examples where farmers bring their products from the fields to co-operatives that buy it and sell it to the market. So they knew that this was a very fine and excellent type of company.'

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Installation of renewable energy is capital-intensive. Decisions about financing and ownership models can be fraught, and lead to a tension between commercial practice and community expectations. Where there is a tradition of community ownership of energy infrastructure, this tension is easily resolved.

The motivation and the stated aims of groups vary depending on the local situation, needs and priorities – they might focus on social benefits beyond energy, or they might support self-sufficiency. However, 'resistance spirit' seems to be an important galvaniser of community energy action. A number of the case studies show projects arising out of opposition to particular energy sources, such as nuclear.

But communities have different forms and can work in different ways. In a close-knit community it may be easy to engage the local community in a dialogue about an energy project. But it can also be easy for networks to join together in opposition – for example, those opposing wind energy.

However, there can also be positive influence in the other direction of travel, from energy projects to local communities. Community energy initiatives can act as a catalyst for local discussions about energy and can enable citizens to think beyond being passive consumers.

Cultures of Community Energy
Policy report
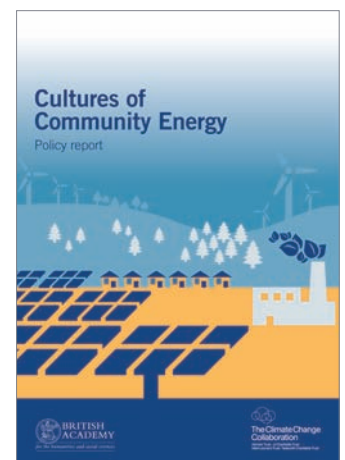
Alun Evans, Chief Executive of the British Academy, speaking at the launch of the *Cultures of Community Energy* report in Parliament on 24 May 2016.

How policy can support community energy

The working group came up with a number of suggestions for action, for all groups with an interest in promoting community and local energy – from policy-makers to community groups. This section summarises some of the key policy actions that could be taken.

Community energy is one aspect of a wider local energy 'ecosystem'. Such local energy ecosystems can be enabled by empowering local government. This could be by giving local areas some responsibility for energy generation and carbon reduction, or encouraging partnerships between local authorities, other local service providers such as housing associations, and community energy projects.

Case studies from other countries show that community approaches work not just for electricity generation, but also for energy supply, heat and energy efficiency. In the UK, complex regulatory structures prevent such integration. This system could be improved by developing a community energy supply model, allowing community

generators to sell directly to customers, and testing the regulatory framework to see the extent to which more localised approaches to grid management and energy supply can work, whilst protecting consumers, fundamental grid security and security of supply.

Case study: Ecopower in Belgium

'At the beginning of the liberalisation of the electricity and gas market in Flanders in 2003 our general assembly decided to become a supplier of electricity. And we were one of the first suppliers, and it was not hard to get permits because people from the advisor of the Ministry came to our meeting and practically begged us to do it. So we did and he was one of the first to have the electricity.'

More generally, central and local government expressing clear support for community energy is seen as potentially effective. This could include encouraging partnerships between communities and commercial parties to help projects get off the ground.

How communities can support energy projects

Key to communities developing successful projects is tapping into social enterprise as a distinct model of service delivery. Encouraging the community energy sector to embrace social enterprise can potentially help the sector to scale-up. One way to achieve this is developing the necessary commercial skills within the community sector and building capacity to work with commercial partners, with community energy bodies leading the way in developing relevant training.

The idea of a 'resistance spirit' identified in this research can be a catalyst for action, overcoming the assumption that energy is the preserve of large companies.

Also important are influential individuals, levering in already active networks, building on existing successful local actions, and linking into incentives that are likely to have resonance at a local level. These can be leveraged by promoting success stories of community energy to inspire and inform communities.

The case studies surveyed for this report suggest that community energy projects allow people to engage in the energy system more actively, which may have additional benefits such as providing an incentive to reduce energy use and carbon. A member survey carried out by Bath & West Community Energy suggested that over 70 per cent of members talked more to friends, family and colleagues about community energy as a result of being a member of BWCE.[5] Provisional findings such as this could be tested through evidence gathering across a wider set of projects, to produce a more rigorous and broad evidence-base on the wider impacts of community energy projects.

Future questions to address

There are more issues to address to understand better how to encourage successful community energy schemes. These include how the British planning system, based as it is on simple statements of rights, can be reformed to help the kind of local interaction and deal-making that is important to community energy. They include better understanding of the balance between primarily voluntary community action, social enterprise and more commercial approaches to delivery. They also concern whether there is a robust link between communities and their members engaging in community generation projects and becoming more engaged in energy issues including demand reduction. These are significant questions at the heart of the relationship between community culture, national policy frameworks and the energy system. ▬

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5. Figure reported in unpublished correspondence.

Anti-corruption: bridging the gap between research and policy-making

Paul Heywood outlines why anti-corruption efforts have so far been disappointing, and how a new British Academy/Department for International Development research programme is seeking to change that

Paul M. Heywood is Sir Francis Hill Professor of European Politics at the University of Nottingham, and Leader of the British Academy/Department for International Development Anti-Corruption Evidence Programme.

Recent months have seen a lot of attention focused on the issue of corruption. The release in April 2016 of the so-called 'Panama Papers', a leak of more than 11.5 million financial and legal records belonging to the law firm, Mossack Fonseca, exposed a global network of offshore shell companies that helped hide the proceeds of crime and corruption. Either by co-incidence or design, the Panama Papers revelations emerged just weeks before the UK Prime Minister hosted a global summit in London on fighting corruption. Using the refrain of 'expose, punish and drive out corruption', the UK summit on 12 May brought together a coalition of the committed – including governments, businesses, civil society, law enforcement, sports committees and international organisations – to produce what was claimed to be the first ever global declaration against corruption. Inevitably, the Panama Papers revelations ensured that a key focus of reporting on the summit would be on action to tackle tax havens and to reveal beneficial ownership details.

A casual observer could therefore be forgiven for imagining that corruption had only recently emerged as an issue on the policy agenda, and that the UK summit represented the first concerted international attempt to address it. Indeed, the rhetoric around the summit suggested

just that, widely hailing it as launching the first ever global declaration against corruption[1] – even though, in practice, representatives from just 42 out of the 195 sovereign states recognised by the United Nations were present to support the summit communiqué and to provide their own country statements of proposed actions against corruption. That stands in marked contrast to the 140 signatories to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), which came into force in December 2005.[2]

Indeed, there had been earlier attempts to develop a global response to the issue of corruption, with the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention,[3] signed by all OECD member states plus seven others, entering into force in February 1999. International attempts to tackle corruption are hardly new. In fact, it could be argued that corruption has been at the forefront of global policy debates for at least 25 years – prompted initially by the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) which was passed in the wake of the Watergate scandal, but assuming major significance following the collapse of communism and the assertion by the then president of the World Bank, James D. Wolfensohn, of the need to deal with the 'cancer of corruption'. In the introduction to a collection of essays I edited in 1997, my opening sentence read: 'As the twenti-

1. www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/anti-corruption-summit-london-2016
2. www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/signatories.html
3. www.oecd.org/corruption/oecdantibriberyconvention.htm
4. P.M. Heywood, 'Political Corruption: Problems and Perspectives', in P.M. Heywood (ed.), *Political Corruption* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 1.

eth-century comes to an end, one of the issues which has dominated its final decade – political corruption – shows little sign of diminishing in importance.'[4]

So the obvious question is why, if so much attention has been focused on corruption for so long, did a UK summit need to address an issue that Wolfensohn's successor as president of the World Bank, Paul Wolfowitz, had described in 2006 as 'the greatest evil facing the world since communism'? Part of the answer is that, for all the international focus on corruption over the last quarter-century – including the UN and OECD initiatives, as well as concerted efforts by a global anti-corruption advocacy movement – the results have been deeply disappointing. There is little evidence to suggest that the extent or level of corruption has diminished in any significant way, and indeed the Panama Papers served starkly to underline its continued global reach. It could be argued, therefore, that international anti-corruption efforts over recent decades have been a huge policy failure.

In turn, then, a further question arises: why should that be so? The answer is complex, of course, but here I want to highlight three contributory factors: the way that corruption has been conceptualised; a focus on nation-states as the prime locus of corruption; and a tendency to use misleading measurements to assess its extent.

It is significant that corruption emerged as a core policy concern in the post-Cold War era, and was seen at the time primarily as a pathology of former Communist states as well as the developing world. Corruption, in this interpretation, was primarily driven by an over-sized state bureaucracy that was able to extract rents through a combination of discretionary power and a lack of accountability. However, such an assessment reflected a careless conceptualisation of the problem. Corruption has always existed; the fact that concerted international focus on the issue really began only in the early 1990s was closely tied to the presumption that liberal democracy was now the only game in town. In this scenario, privatisation and deregulation were the key policy prescriptions that would drive the post-Communist world towards the 'good governance' model that reigned in the West and would thereby control corruption.

The seeming self-evidence of the superiority of the Western model was reinforced by the first systematic attempts to measure corruption, itself an early example of the ongoing obsession with 'ranking the world' – that is, the use of global indicators to help shape global governance. In particular, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index and the World Bank's Control of Corruption measure in its worldwide governance indicators, showed a compelling correlation between high levels of socio-political and economic development and low levels of corruption. Yet, in reality, such correlations

Prime Minister David Cameron at the Anti-Corruption Summit, London, May 2016. PHOTO: CABINET OFFICE (CC BY-NC-ND).

mask a much more complicated story. In particular, they rely on a reductionist and undifferentiated notion of corruption, understood as really being about bribe-paying in the developing world – in short, corruption was primarily a problem found in other countries, not well-run democracies, even if Western businesses had to pay bribes to prosper. And it was this understanding of corruption being about bribes that exercised the international financial community and the policy-makers they sought to influence.

Corruption, of course, encompasses a vast array of different kinds of activity, only some of which involve bribery. They range from highly sophisticated transnational networks linked to criminal gangs and drug trafficking involving billions of dollars, to small-scale local-level abuses involving few people and not necessarily even monetary exchanges. The former, crucially, is dependent on external collusion and facilitators; the latter is usually not. And without minimising the impact of 'petty' corruption on daily life, it is the plundering of state assets that really undermines good government and costs citizens (especially the most vulnerable). The idea that such a complex phenomenon can be captured through a single indicator is questionable, to say the least, and even if the various global measures may operate at a heuristic level to indicate broad trends, they are unable to offer any nuance or serve as a useful guide to action.

Second, and closely linked to that, attention has focused on nation-states – both as the unit of analysis for measuring corruption and as the site for the implementation of anti-corruption measures. Hence, various initiatives – from development aid measures to membership of the European Union – have increasingly been made conditional on state-level anti-corruption efforts, usually in the form of a national strategy, the creation of dedicated agencies, or other internationally endorsed measures. These have often entailed an implicit belief that there is a 'correct' way to tackle corruption, based on adopting a specific national governance model. In terms of such things as ensuring the rule of law, promoting ethical standards for public officials, having clear guidelines for investigation and prosecution and so forth, a national-level approach is perfectly appropriate and sensible.

However, as the Mossack-Fonseca leaks have comprehensively revealed, some of the most egregious types of corruption – the corruption that involves billions of dollars being stolen and diverted – relies precisely on transnational operations that are near impossible for individual states to address on their own. It is noteworthy that in the list of the top 10 countries where intermediaries operate (i.e. the facilitators and enablers who support the transnational flow of corrupt finance)[5] are the United Kingdom, Switzerland, the United States of America, and Luxembourg. These countries do not figure as poor performers in the standard global rankings of corruption, although all four are in the

A Ugandan anti-corruption sign. PHOTO: WWW.FUTUREALTAS.COM

top 15 of the most financially secretive jurisdictions in the world according to the Tax Justice Network.[6] That raises real questions as to what exactly we should be looking at when it comes to measuring corruption.

Third, academic researchers and the advocacy community have been unwittingly complicit in perpetuating this mismatch between the reality of how corruption functions and our efforts to combat it. Much of the huge outpouring of academic literature on corruption in the last two decades, particularly that by economists, has used an undifferentiated concept of corruption to serve as either a dependent or independent variable, seeking to explain a host of specific failings – and most especially why there is more or less corruption in country x as opposed to country y. In turn, responding to a dif-

5. https://panamapapers.icij.org/graphs/
6. www.financialsecrecyindex.
   com/introduction/fsi-2015-results

ferent logic, the advocacy community has similarly tended to rely on undifferentiated aggregate indicators of corruption, both to make a political point about the need to combat it and to secure resources in order to do so. Moreover, neither body has been especially good at talking to the other, operating largely in what are effectively disconnected silos.

By talking in such generic terms, though, neither academics nor advocates are likely to make much headway. It makes about as much sense as having a health policy that simply entails 'fighting disease'. It could be argued that we should stop focusing on corruption, writ large. Or at the very least, whenever the word is mentioned, we should ask: what kind of corruption is it, where is it taking place, who is involved, what are their motivations, who/what is needed to allow it to take place, what level does it operate at, what sectors are implicated, what are the key interdependencies, how does it relate to the broader social context? Without clear answers to these

kinds of question, it will remain difficult to develop interventions that have an impact on the lived reality of specific instances of actual corrupt practices, as opposed to generic observations about which places are more corrupt than others.

So, what will the British Academy/Department for International Development Anti-Corruption Evidence (BA/DFID ACE) Programme contribute to this overall picture? In designing the programme, we have tried to move beyond the kind of generic, broad brush approaches that have characterised much existing research; by the same token, there has been an explicit focus on engagement with practitioners. Not only were several members of the advocacy community involved in assessing the applications, but bidders were also required to outline exactly how they would interact with practitioners on the ground, most Obviously the DFID country officers in the priority countries that are the principal focus of the

programme (Bangladesh, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia).

The eight projects funded under the BA/DFID ACE programme will seek to identify practical initiatives that can help developing countries tackle corruption and the negative impact it has on millions of people's lives. One example is described in the right-hand column. All the projects have a strong focus on identifying how the impact of anti-corruption interventions will be measured, for instance in relation to scale, change over time, causality and attribution to reform. Similarly, a comparative element to understanding what works in different countries, and contexts, is an important feature of this scheme. The research teams' work will range from analysing big data from major aid agencies to better assess the risks of corruption in aid allocation, to the development of actionable policy recommendations for the design of civil service systems, and a study into the role that informality plays in fuelling corruption and stifling anti-corruption policies.

Taken together, the eight projects in the BA/DFID ACE Programme seek to move away from the kind of generic 'one size fits all' approach that has for so long bedevilled anti-corruption efforts. Rather than just providing more academic research on anti-corruption – of which there has been no shortage – one key innovative element is that the programme is explicitly designed to ensure a very close relationship between researchers and practitioners. Too often there has been a gap between academic analysis seeking to explain the how and why of corruption and the reality of activists trying to address it on the ground. We need to recognise not only that corruption is complex and multi-faceted, but also that to have any real impact on it requires sensitivity to the specific contexts in which it takes place, and especially what is politically possible. That means working closely with colleagues who are faced with actually implementing anti-corruption measures, which is why we placed such emphasis on engagement when selecting the projects that have been funded under the programme. Whilst we are under no illusion that we will discover any 'magic bullets', we do expect that the projects will make a positive contribution to identifying mechanisms that can help reduce corruption in specific sectors and specific locations. ▬

This photograph illustrates a third attempt to construct the Mongu–Kalabo Road in Zambia, after two previous procurements had failed.

Options for reducing corruption in procurement: the case of the construction sector in Zambia

Corruption is widespread in the construction sector in Zambia. Corruption has direct consequences on economic and governance factors, and inhibits equitable service delivery and the provision of infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and roads. This prevents socio-economic development and negatively affects quality of life.

When the President addressed the nation on 25 May 2015, he lamented that 'corruption is among the key challenges that Zambia must confront with urgency.' The country has in the recent past been investing 25 per cent of its budget on infrastructure development, making the study of this sector a high priority.

A study supported through the British Academy/DFID programme will look at corruption in the construction sector in Zambia. The project will seek to establish the extent, types and key drivers of corruption in construction, and to identify gaps in the legal and institutional frameworks that regulate the industry. It will also document national, regional and global best practices, in order to produce evidence-based findings of what works in tackling corruption in the construction sector and develop options for helping to address the issues in Zambia.

The project will be conducted in Zambia, and comparative data will be collected in Tanzania and Rwanda. An interdisciplinary team of six social scientists and three engineers, led by Professor Mundia Muya of the University of Zambia, will look at case studies over a two-year period.

The project will produce training manuals and reference materials for government and civil society organisations, and also seek to raise public awareness of anti-corruption efforts via a stakeholders' forum.

Who are the Zoroastrians?

Almut Hintze explains why we need to know more about a small group that has an ancient heritage and current global significance

Almut Hintze is Zartoshty Brothers Professor of Zoroastrianism at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. She was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2015.

From March to May 2016, Delhi's museums mounted four simultaneous exhibitions about the smallest of India's religious minorities, the Zoroastrians or Parsis: 'The Everlasting Flame' at the National Museum, 'Painted Encounters, Parsi Traders and the Community' and 'No Parsi is an Island' at the National Gallery of Modern Art, and 'Threads of Continuity' at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. Fully funded by the Government of India, the exhibitions showcased the history, religion and culture of one of the world's most remarkable living traditions: Zoroastrianism. In his message, read at the opening ceremony on Nowruz, the Iranian New Year, Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister, emphasised that 'The rich culture of the Parsi community is an important and integral part of the country's invaluable heritage.'

Past and present

The roots of the Zoroastrians reach back to prehistoric Central Asia in the 2nd millennium BCE. According to their own tradition, the 'Mazda-worshipping religion' was inaugurated by Zarathustra. Later the Greeks turned his Iranian name into *Zoroastrēs*, from which the name Zoroastrian derives, denoting a follower of the religion of Zoroaster. Zoroastrianism flourished for over a thousand years as the state religion of the three great Iranian Empires: the Achaemenids, the Parthians and the Sasanians, but was ousted by Islam following the Arab conquest of Iran in 651 CE. The Islamisation of Iran was a slow but persistent process and led to the eventual erosion of Zoroastrianism in its homeland, where today *c.* 25,000 Zoroastrians still live. Emigration proved vital for the survival of the religion. Following the Arab conquest, Zoroastrians migrated to India in search of religious freedom and better living conditions and, coming from 'Persia', they became known there as Parsis. During the British colonial period they were among the first Indians to westernise and soon became leaders in business and legal, medical and other professions. From around 1850, they formed diaspora communities, linked to trade within the British Empire, in China, Sindh (then part of British India, present-day Pakistan), East Africa and Britain. In a second wave of

diasporic movements after the Second World War, Zoroastrians settled in Canada, the USA, Australia, Germany and, again, Britain, only rarely for trade, but more typically for education and career development – and to leave certain regimes. In particular, increasing Islamisation in Pakistan after Independence, in Iran after the 1979 revolution, together with Black African policies in East Africa, led Zoroastrians to leave those countries.

In spite of their small number of *c.* 130,000 people world-wide, Zoroastrians have made significant contributions to every society which they inhabit. A case in point is India, where the *c.* 61,000 Parsis make up only 0.006 per cent of India's 1.3 billion population, but contribute 5–6 per cent of the country's economic turnover. Mahatma Gandhi summarised their achievements by famously saying: 'In numbers Parsis are beneath contempt, but in contribution, beyond compare.' The role Zoroastrians have played in Iran under the Pahlavi regime, which treated them favourably, and in the UK, is no less significant. The UK's capital is among the most important centres outside India and Iran for this global diaspora community. For example, the Tata Group's involvement in Europe is centred on Britain, where it owns brands such as Rover, Jaguar, Tetley and the Taj Group. The Tatas, both the Indian business empire that now looms so large in Britain and the remarkable Parsi family which built it, were frequent guests of King George V and Queen Mary and were among the first families of India's new business class to be accepted into imperial high society. Under Ratan Tata, the company has become Britain's biggest industrial employer. Another case in point are the first three ethnically Asian MPs at Westminster, who were also Zoroastrians: Dadabhai Naoroji in 1892–1895 for Finsbury Park; Mucherjee Bhownagree 1895–1906 for Bethnal Green; Shapurji Saklatwala in 1922–1923 for Battersea North. More recently, Karan Bilimoria (b. 1961), the chairman and founder of Cobra Beer, was the first Parsi Zoroastrian to become a member of the House of Lords in 2006. On this occasion he introduced the Zoroastrian prayer book, the Avesta, to sit alongside the Bible, the Bhagavad Gita and the Koran in the despatch box in the chamber of the House of Lords. Lord Bilimoria led the first debate on Zoroastrianism in the House of Lords in 2011 on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, the oldest Asian organisation in the UK, and launched the Zoroastrian All Party Parliamentary Group in the British Parliament in 2013. Zoroastrian philanthropy is legendary. My own institution, SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies, London), benefited from it through the endowment by the Zartoshty brothers, who

> **Zoroastrians have made significant contributions to every society which they inhabit.**
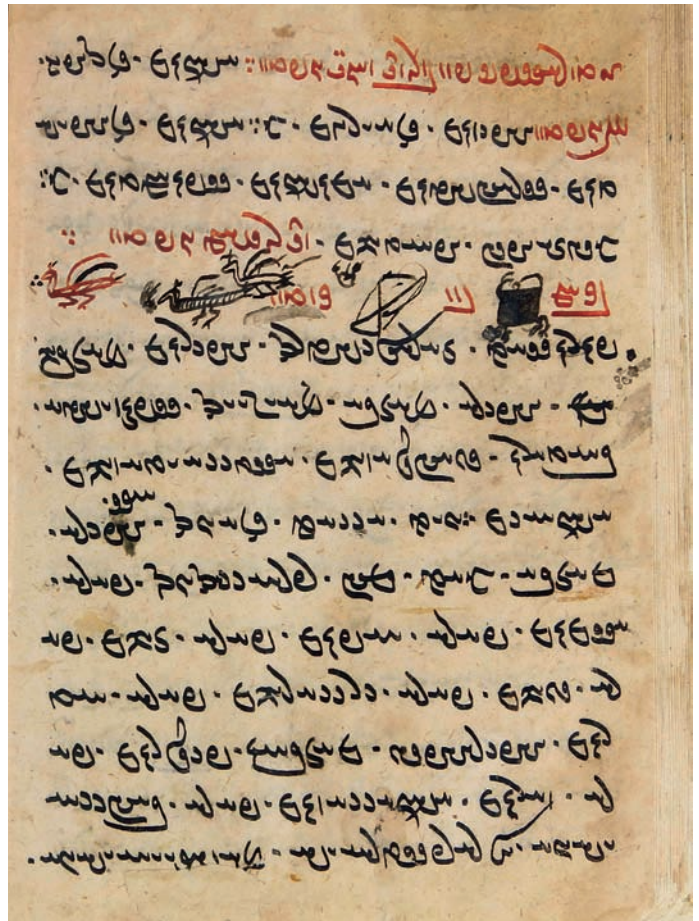
An Avestan manuscript of the Yasna from the Library.
IMAGE: AVESTAN DIGITAL ARCHIVE.

were of Iranian Zoroastrian origin, of what is to date the world's only endowed Chair in Zoroastrianism.

Worship

Zoroastrians worship their god, Ahura Mazdā, or 'Wise Lord', by means of priestly and lay rituals during which the performance of precisely prescribed actions accompanies the recitation of texts composed in the ancient Iranian language of Avestan. The most important of these rituals is the Yasna, or 'worship', whose 72 sections have at their centre the five Gathas, or 'songs'. These are 17 poems which are attributed to the religion's founder, Zarathustra. Together with a Ritual in Seven Sections, the Yasna Haptanghaiti, which the Gathas in turn enclose in their middle, they were orally composed in the 2nd millennium BCE and constitute the Older Avesta, the foundation text of the entire religion and earliest document in any Iranian language. In the Gathas the poet engages in a conversation with Ahura Mazdā about topics such as Good and Evil, the origin and creation of the world and a person's final destiny. Ideas about the choice between Good and Evil, which each person has to make, about right and wrong worship, judgement after death, reward and punishment, and heaven and hell are here formulated for the first time in world literature as constituent parts of a coherent belief system.

Caring for the animal, represented by the cow, and protecting it against cruel actions is a further major concern in both the hymns and the Ritual in Seven Sections. In the latter, moreover, the deity is invited to come and be present in the ritual fire, which thus becomes Ahura Mazdā's visible and tangible form in the presence of the worshippers. The Yasna Haptanghaiti constitutes the foundation for the pivotal role of fire in the religious practice and imagery of the Zoroastrians, who are occasionally wrongly labelled as 'fire-worshippers'. The Younger Avestan sections which sandwich the Old Avestan middle are comprised of praises and invocations. The praise of the sacrificial plant Haoma (Yasna 9–11) includes elements of Iranian epic literature, such as the succession of mythical kings and the story of the dragon-killing hero, which later re-surface in Firdausi's New Persian epic, the Shahname. Zoroastrian religious thought is widely considered to have impacted on Judaism from the time of the Judaean Babylonian Exile in the 6th century BCE, and later on nascent Christianity and Islam, although the full appreciation of its significance is severely hampered by the lack of reliable text editions and translations of the Zoroastrian sources.

Multimedia Yasna

The Yasna, like most parts of the Avesta, exists in two forms: as a ritual performance, and as a written text. The former is a ceremony in which the priests recite the text by heart while simultaneously enacting the ritual. By contrast, the latter appears in the extant manuscripts, on which printed editions are based. My research on the Multimedia Yasna, which the European Research Council has recently approved for funding with an Advanced Investigator Grant (October 2016 to September 2021), combines two different, yet complementary approaches: one starts from the act of the ritual performance, the other from the manuscripts. In this two-pronged approach, the Yasna will be studied both as an event in the form of a ritual performance and as a text in the form of a literary document. The two procedures will be integrated to answer questions about the meaning and function of the Yasna in a historical perspective.

To date scholarly knowledge and understanding of the Yasna hase been based chiefly on the written text, which has attracted the attention of philologists, linguists, and cultural and religious historians. However, while the authoritative edition of the written text is over a hundred years old and now considered outdated, there are few descriptions and no recordings at all of the performance of a full Yasna ritual. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the Zoro-

astrians of Iran abandoned the Yasna ritual some 50 years ago, and no Yasna ceremonies are performed in the diaspora. As a result, today the Yasna ritual is only celebrated by the Parsis in India, though requests are in decline and consequently the ritual know-how, although currently still available, is under threat. A recording of the entire event needs to be undertaken urgently in order to preserve this endangered heritage.

As part of the Multimedia Yasna project, my team is going to produce a film of the full Yasna ritual and transcribe the recitation text into Roman letters in order to make the words which the priests utter available to the observer in both aural and visual form. The transcribed recitation text will be visualised in the form of sub-titles that run simultaneously with the spoken word and the visible ritual performance. The project will thus produce a new primary source that will form the basis of further investigation and provide data for philological editions of parts of the Yasna. For the critical edition of the Avestan text, we will adapt and use digital technology that has been developed for an ongoing edition of the Greek New Testament at the Universities of Birmingham and Münster.

Training

The training of priests takes place in special priestly schools which sons of priestly families join at the age of seven in order to learn the recitation and memorise the texts alongside the ritual actions. While such institutions were still numerous in the 19th century, only two, both in Mumbai, exist in the whole of India today. One of them is the Dadar Athornan Institute, though the number of students is dwindling. The other school, Andheri Cama Athornan Institute, currently has only one student and is almost defunct. The memorisation of texts continues an ancient oral Indo-Iranian custom best documented in the Vedic tradition of India, which shares a common heritage with the Avesta. However, apart from anecdotal accounts, very little is known about how Zoroastrian priests are trained, as no investigation of their teaching and learning techniques has ever been undertaken. Such a study is likewise urgently needed as this tradition too is endangered. The Multimedia Yasna project will document and investigate the training of cultic personnel in Zoroastrian priestly schools and homes in India and Iran. This part of the project entails further filming in order to capture the teaching and learning techniques of the trainee priests rehearsing the Yasna ritual and memorising the text, and will show how a millennia-old tradition is carried on. ▬

Priests performing the Yasna ceremony at the Fire Temple Maneckji Seth. From: Darmesteter, *Zend-Avesta* vol. 1.

Is learning Latin beneficial for school pupils?

Evelien Bracke has been looking for answers

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It may have functioned as a *lingua franca* of the Western world for centuries, but during the last hundred years Latin has become increasingly marginalised in UK education because of its status as a so-called dead language. Recently, however, a counter-movement has begun and numbers of primary and secondary schools offering Latin are increasing UK-wide. In 2014, the Department for Education included Latin as a 'foreign' language option in the Key Stage 2 curriculum, and approximately 2 per cent of primary and 25 per cent of secondary schools in England now teach it.

In 2014, I therefore decided to investigate why Latin might be a useful subject for UK pupils to study. With the help of a British Academy grant and my research assistant, Ceri Bradshaw, I reviewed the existing evidence, and tested reading and writing skills of 200 pupils before and after Latin learning. The findings of this project contradict still persistent negative perceptions of Latin as impractical and tedious, and pose urgent questions for policy-makers.

Existing evidence

The quantitative data we gathered from the last century strongly indicates the positive effect of Latin learning on literacy skills, at primary even more than at secondary school level. Findings suggest, however, that studying Latin *per se* is not sufficient for pupils to make linguistic and global progress. Particularly at primary school, a playful, age-appropriate approach to language learning – through storytelling and activities, with language and culture inextricably linked – is required in order to promote literacy developments. For this approach engages pupils of all abilities, while the traditional grammar-based approach favours the linguistically gifted. One reason that learning Latin can help pupils improve English skills is that English is a language with a low-level connection between pronunciation and spelling, while Latin has what is called a high grapheme-phoneme correspondence. Therefore, playfully engaging with linguistic roots, for example – such as different meanings of the prefix *in* in *in-creasing*, *in-stant*, and *im-practical* – gives pupils a clearer understanding of English linguistic structures.

Quality of life also features largely in studies from the past century. Juxtaposing ancient Roman with modern contexts allows pupils to gain insight into their own and other cultures. Consequently, increased global awareness is a common qualitative improvement attributable to the study of Latin, particularly among pupils in economically deprived areas.

The existing evidence is significant. However, 45 of the 46 studies we examined were from the United States (and the final study was German). Therefore, I set out to test to what extent these findings are transferrable to the UK.

A UK study

As this was a small-scale pilot project, we explored to what extent learning Latin improves reading and writing skills and expands the cultural horizons of primary school pupils. We tested 200 school pupils throughout the UK, using quantitative tests before and after one year of Latin instruction, and a qualitative end-of-year survey. All schools involved teach Latin in a playful way, including activities and storytelling alongside course books.

The quantitative tests revealed that pupils learning Latin mostly outperformed the control group. Latin classes varied from 20 minutes to four hours per week, and initial findings suggest, among other things, that the level of progress made correlates to the amount of Latin learning within one year. A worrying trend we discerned, however, is that girls outperformed boys significantly. This resonates with a trend in UK PISA (Programme for

International Student Assessment) results on reading and writing skills among 15-year-olds, and indicates that more literacy support for boys is required.

The qualitative survey highlighted that, for pupils, the cultural literacy – exploring the historical Roman background in juxtaposition with present UK contexts – was considered of equal importance to the linguistic aspect. For Latin learning to appeal to pupils, it needs to be taught in context rather than with a sole focus on the linguistic element.

Learning the Latin numbers at Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr, one of the schools taking part in the British Academy Schools Language Award project.

and in response to Welsh Government interest in exploring the role of Classics in the curriculum, I set up the Cymru Wales Classics Hub in 2015, to support and promote the teaching and learning of Classics throughout Wales.[2] Alongside events and CPD activities, we were able to start offering Latin classes at three schools in South Wales for two years thanks to a British Academy Schools Language Award. As my university projects mainly focus on

This pilot project thus unearthed useful findings which require further exploration. Moreover, in spite of cultural and teaching differences, our current UK study produced findings similar to those of US studies of the past century. A follow-up project concerning the role of teaching approaches to Latin learning is in preparation.

primary schools, the BASLA funding increases access to Latin in local secondary schools, which means some continuity can be provided. Teaching is on-going and pupils are particularly enjoying making connections between Latin and modern languages. Demand, however, outstrips supply.

Applying the evidence: a case study from Wales

While there is ample evidence regarding the benefits of Latin when taught age-appropriately, the subject remains under pressure. Since 2011, I have therefore worked on broadening access to Classics (ancient languages and cultures) in South Wales, through activities such as student placements in local schools[1] and summer courses for South Wales communities. On the basis of this experience

Ultimately, the role of Latin in the curriculum as a potential tool of exclusion or emancipation must be considered by policy-makers, since Latin can play a significant role in benefiting children's literacy skills and global awareness. Latin need not be made compulsory. But increased access must be complemented by the provision of adequate teaching and logistic support to schools, with the aim of raising young people's aspirations, particularly among disenfranchised groups. ▬

1. www.literacythroughclassics.weebly.com
2. www.cymruwalesclassicshub.weebly.com

A new British Academy Special Research Project

To develop a greater understanding of the cognitive benefits of language learning, the British Academy has commissioned a research team at University College London to provide a comprehensive overview of existing research in this area, and its implications for policy and practice.

Although there has been a surge of interest in recent years in the cognitive benefits of bilingualism, research on the socio-economic and cognitive benefits of language learning has had less attention. As well as reviewing research on the relationship between bilingualism, executive function, literacy, and health, this project will include systematic reviews, analysis and synthesis of such areas as creativity, social and affective cognition, and bilingualism in signed as well as spoken languages, linking bi/multilingualism and language learning with broader perspectives on cognition including intercultural understanding.

The project is concerned with language learning in relation to cognitive function across the lifespan, including modern and community language education, language skills, employability, community cohesion, and public policy, and explores cross-curricular and cross-societal benefits to individuals and communities.

Learning Latin the ancient way

Eleanor Dickey discusses language learning manuals
from the ancient world

Eleanor Dickey is
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and a Fellow of the
British Academy. She is
the author of *Learning
Latin the Ancient Way:
Latin Textbooks from the
Ancient World*
(Cambridge University
Press, 2016).

Lately I have been having a great deal of fun discovering how ancient Greek speakers learned Latin. This has resulted in a book, *Learning Latin the Ancient Way*, which provides selections from (and translations of) the different kinds of materials that Greeks used to learn Latin in antiquity. Those materials include dictionaries, grammars, letters, and the charming but unfortunately-named *Colloquia of the Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana*.

The *Colloquia* are Latin easy readers consisting of little dialogues about daily life in the Roman empire. Nowadays, if you learn French, you might use a textbook with a little dialogue about going to a café in Paris and ordering a sandwich: it will tell you what the customer says and what the waiter says, and if you are really lucky, when you actually go to a café in Paris you too can get a sandwich using those phrases. (At least in theory – and just once it did actually happen to me that I had exactly the conversation in my Welsh book with a real person who spontaneously said all the same lines.) Well, they had the same idea in antiquity, except that they did not set their dialogues in cafés in Paris, but in places such as Roman public baths, markets, banks, and temples. The dialogues are short, easy, straightforward, interesting, and written by native speakers – and they aim to teach both culture and language simultaneously, as our French textbooks do. One of them, in which someone is given a scolding for bad behaviour at a dinner party, is reproduced on the facing page.

One of my personal favourites is the list of good excuses. Now as a university teacher I am a real expert on excuses, particularly excuses for not doing things; I hear these absolutely all the time. And the *Colloquia* contain a list of excuses to use if you need to tell a Roman why you have not done something – yet these are excuses that, in all my years of teaching, I have never yet heard from a student. For example, 'I couldn't do it, I had to take a bath.'

There is a lot that you can learn about Roman culture from the kind of excuses that they thought would fly.

Why Greek speakers in the Roman Empire wanted to learn Latin

One of the most important reasons for learning Latin was a desire to be a lawyer. As the Roman Empire spread across the Greek-speaking world, Roman law spread with it, and over time Roman law took over more and more of the ordinary legal business that had originally been handled using local legal codes. For example, inheritance from a Roman citizen was governed by Roman law – and after AD 212 most people in the Empire were Roman citizens. Roman law was fundamentally Latin-based; for example, citizens' wills had to be drafted in Latin in order to be valid. And since wills constituted a significant percentage of legal work, a lawyer would find himself at a distinct disadvantage if he could not draft them.

An orientation towards law students is clearly evident in the *Colloquia*, which contain many scenes involving lawyers – but these scenes present an unrealistic picture. Lawyers in the *Colloquia* always win their cases, they are very well paid, their clients are unfailingly grateful, and if a lawyer should end up unemployed, the first person he meets will simply offer him a job on the grounds that he deserves one for having studied so hard. That is

Painting from Pompeii, now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale (Naples), showing a banquet or family ceremony.
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

not what the life of an ancient lawyer was really like: evidently these texts show language teachers painting a rosy picture of the legal profession in order to encourage students to persevere with their studies.

Other major reasons for learning Latin relate to the Roman army. The Roman army was not entirely Latin-speaking, but it was nevertheless one of the main ways that Latin speakers ended up in Greek-speaking areas and vice versa. People who joined the army often found it worthwhile to learn Latin, and even those who did not sometimes appreciated the economic advantages of being able to use Latin when dealing with the army. Army bases constituted an important market for local produce, and knowledge of Latin was an asset in the inevitable competition for that market. That is why we have a text with on one side a glossary of kinds of fish, and on the other side a glossary of Roman army terminology: that text was used by someone who wanted to sell fish to the army and believed that knowing Latin would give him a competitive edge.

Getting a scolding

The Colloquia of the Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana contain dialogues to help Greek speakers learn Latin in ancient times. The dialogues are laid out using a line-for-line ('columnar') translation system, with the Latin on the left and the Greek on the right, so that students can easily identify which words mean what. In this sample dialogue – in which someone is rebuked for their drunken behaviour – the original Greek in the right-hand column has been translated into English.

'Quis sic facit	'Who acts like this,
domine,	sir,
quomodo tu,	as you do,
ut tantum bibis?	that you drink so much?
quid dicent	What will they say,
qui te viderunt talem?	the people who saw you in such a condition?
quod numquam	That you never
foris cenasti	dined out
tam aviditer?	so greedily?
ita hoc decet	Is this a fitting way for a
sapientem	prudent
patrem familias	master of a household
qui aliis consilia dat	who gives advice to others
semet ipsum regere?	to conduct himself?
non potest	It is not possible (for things)
turpius	more shamefully
nec ignominiosius	nor more ignominiously
evenire	to happen
quam heri gessisti.'	than you acted yesterday.'
'Me certe valde	'I certainly am very much
pudet.'	ashamed.'
'Quid dicunt alii	'What do others say
in absentia tua?	in your absence?
infamiam maximam	Great infamy
tibi cumulasti.	have you accumulated for yourself.
accidit ad haec	In addition to this,
grandis denotatio	great censure (of you) has occurred
de tali intemperantia.	as a result of such intemperance.
rogo te	Please,
ne postea	in the future don't
tale facias.	do such a thing.
sed modo numquid	But now you don't
vomere vis?	want to vomit, do you?
et mirror	And I'm amazed at
quae passus es.'	what has become of you.'
'Nescio quid dicam,	'I don't know what to say,
ita enim	for so
perturbatus sum	upset have I been
ut rationem nulli	that no explanation to anyone
possim reddere.'	can I give.'

What these *Colloquia* tell us about the Roman world

They tell us a lot about ordinary, everyday life. The ruins of Roman buildings and the objects one sees in museums simply come to life in the *Colloquia*. For example, when you went to a Roman bank to borrow money, exactly what did you say and what did the banker say? Only the *Colloquia* tell us that.

When you went to the Roman baths, what was the procedure, and what did you say at each stage? What happened when you got out of the water? We used to think that Romans were clean after a bath, but it turns out that they were not, because the water itself was fairly disgusting owing to having many sweaty, dusty, oil-covered people washing in a small pool all at once. So when you got out, the *Colloquia* tell us, you had to take a shower and scrape yourself with a *strigil* in order to get clean enough to use a towel.

We have the remains of Roman *insulae* – huge blocks of flats. We know that these had shops on the ground floor, flats for rich people on the first floor, and then rooms for progressively poorer people on each higher floor. The *Colloquia* bring the *insulae* to life by describing what to do when you arrive at one of them looking for someone who lives there. You start by asking directions from the doorman at the bottom, who says, for example, 'Oh, yes. Go up two flights of stairs and knock on the door on your right.' Then when you arrive at your friend's flat you have to negotiate with a different doorman, and all these doormen are slaves. It turns out that nearly everything a Roman did involved interacting with the institution of slavery, and that just isn't something you see either from the ruins or from the mainstream literary culture.

What we can learn from these texts about the Latin and Greek languages

The language-learning texts tell us a lot about pronunciation, because sometimes the Latin is transliterated into Greek script, or vice versa. Of course, interpreting that evidence is complicated, because not only was the Latin language changing over time, but the Greek language was changing too.

For example, in the 1st century Romans pronounced the letter *v* like our 'w'. (Thus *veni, vidi, vici* was pronounced 'waynee, weedee, weekee'.) So in the 1st century Latin *v* was transliterated using the Greek letters *omicron upsilon* (ου), because this was the closest thing Greek had to the 'w' sound. But by the 5th century Romans were using the 'v' sound that we would recognise now (*veni, vidi, vici*), and in the texts of that period, Latin *v* was transliterated with the Greek letter *beta* (β). This is because by the 5th century the pronunciation of the Greek *beta* had shifted from a 'b' to a 'v', like the Modern Greek pronunciation of *beta*.

The language-learning texts also reveal the extent to which the formal rules of Classical Latin, the ones we learn today, were not always followed in everyday practice. On the whole ancient learners were interested in collo-quial spoken Latin, not literary Latin, and the two could be very different, especially in later centuries.

What lessons we can learn from the ancient world about attitudes toward languages

It is really striking that, although the Romans had conquered pretty much the whole world (at least, 'whole' from their perspective), they did not assume that everybody would or should speak their language. They never seem to have thought 'Latin's enough, I don't need to learn Greek.' Indeed it is clear that most Romans who travelled to the East learned Greek, having made a significant investment of time to master the language that had been the hallmark of civilisation long before the Romans arrived.

The Romans had a way of handling their expansion that more recent empires could only dream of. Part of that was a humility in terms of languages, and it would not do us any harm to have a bit of that humility too. ▬
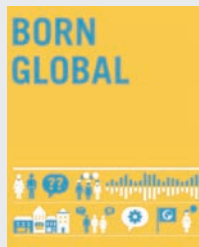
Born Global

On 31 March 2016, the British Academy published *Born Global*, a collection of evidence on the complex relationships between language learning and employability.

The project was launched against a backdrop of steady decline in the take-up of languages at all levels despite recurrent reports of unmet employer demand for language skills, in an increasingly mobile and international labour market.

The Academy therefore set out to gather a range of new evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, to develop a deeper understanding of the language needs for employment, employer attitudes to languages and how languages are used in the workplace for different purposes, by employees of different levels of skill and accountability.

In addition, to reflect the Academy's longstanding concerns in the area of languages, its particular interest in Higher Education and research and its role in assessing and maintaining the health of its disciplines, it has produced a report on the implications of the Born Global evidence for higher education, *Born Global: Implications for Higher Education*.

All the evidence from *Born Global*, alongside the higher education report, is available via www.britishacademy.ac.uk/bornglobal

Rights, wrongs and reconciliations

Audio or video recordings of most British Academy events are made available via the Academy's website shortly afterwards (www.britishacademy.ac.uk/events/). The wide range of recordings available is demonstrated by two events held on 8–9 June 2016, in the British Academy's season on 'With Great Power: Political leaders, popular legacies': Professor Joseph Nye FBA spoke on 'America's role in the world – an election year appraisal'; and the discussion entitled 'Thinkers for our time: Mary Wollstonecraft' considered the enduring influence of the author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

In addition, some specially recorded conversations involving Fellows of the British Academy have been made available via the Academy's SoundCloud page (https://soundcloud.com/britishacademy/). Three examples are discussed further below.

UK and European Convention on Human Rights

In a conversation recorded in March 2016, Professor David Feldman FBA (Rouse Ball Professor of English Law, University of Cambridge) talked to Professor Colm O'Cinneide, Professor of Constitutional Human Rights Law, University College London. They discussed the UK and the European Convention of Human Rights – including the ideas that have been floated recently for replacing the Human Rights Act with a Bill of Rights, or even withdrawing from the European Convention itself. Professor O'Cinneide said: 'That [idea of withdrawing] is often seen as a diplomatic nuclear option. That would be the UK repudiating a major international human rights treaty which has shaped and positively influenced the development of the protection for human rights across Europe and the wider world for decades. … It's very difficult to point to an instance of a well-established democratic country choosing to repudiate an international human rights treaty instrument.'

Tom Devine on Scotland past, present and future

Sir Tom Devine FBA, Sir William Fraser Professor Emeritus of Scottish History and Palaeography at the University of Edinburgh, was interviewed by Alun Evans (Chief Executive of the British Academy) about his book *Independence or Union: Scotland's Past and Scotland's Present* (Allen Lane, 2016). The conversation reveals how the omission of a 'devo max' option on the Scottish referendum ballot paper was a tactical error by the British government. Recorded just before the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2016, the discussion correctly anticipated that the Scottish Labour Party would be squeezed into third place, and analysed what has gone so wrong for Labour in Scotland. Sir Tom asked: 'Where does Labour go in terms of political response to this horror? They can't go left, because those clothes have already been stolen by the SNP. And they know – given Scotland's conservatism – that they daren't go too far left. … Don't forget that, if you look at the whole of the 20th century, the Conservative Party was clearly and unambiguously the most popular party in Scotland. Once the memory of what occurred in the 1980s and early 1990s starts to fade, there is no reason why they [the Conservatives] should not flourish.'

David Porter on Reconciliation, Identity and Faith

In March 2016, Professor Marianne Elliott FBA (former Director of the Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool) recorded a conversation with Canon David Porter, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Director for Reconciliation (pictured). They talked about the Northern Ireland peace process, and about David Porter's current role. To set the context of the latter, he explained: 'The reality is that 80 per cent of Anglicans live in situations of conflict or post-conflict societies. The average Anglican is a 30-year-old African woman, with three or four children, living in a village in the bush, probably with a husband who is off fighting in a war or is dead or is an economic migrant, and she is a subsistence-level farmer. We look at the Church of England and all its grandeur – Westminster Abbey – and we forget that that is the average picture of an Anglican in this global community of 85 million people, and many of them face these situations of conflict.'

L I N D A
COLLEY

... discusses a transatlantic career studying global history, British angst, and why constitutions matter

Linda Colley is Shelby M.C. Davis 1958 Professor of History at Princeton University. She was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1999.

You have been based in America for quite some time now. You were at Yale University between 1982 and 1998, and have been at Princeton University since 2003; in between, you were at the London School of Economics. Are there significant differences in how history is studied on the other side of the Atlantic? Is there an American way of doing history?

I don't think that there is a monolithic American way of doing history. I do think – and I'm not sure British-based historians of Britain always fully understand this (why should they?) – that if you do British Studies in the United States, it is a rather different discipline, because you are teaching it as a foreign subject. So, if you are a British historian

in the United States, you have got to work out how to make the subject comprehensible, attractive and pertinent to an audience that is becoming more and more diverse. I have many more Asian, Chicano and African American students now in 2016 than I did when I first started teaching at Yale in 1982, because of demographic shifts in the US and because the university system there has become, quite rightly, more variegated. So I tend to talk about the British past in wider contexts – not just European contexts, but imperial and global contexts – as a way of making the subject buzz a bit more.

Are American students at all interested in more insular British history?

Some of them are very interested and will do very detailed work for you. But I have many graduate students in the United States, and I have to get them academic jobs. I probably couldn't get someone a job if I had him/her writing a doctoral dissertation

1. Linda Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party 1714–1760* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).
2. Jonathan Spence was elected a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy in 1997. Joseph Needham was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1971.
3. Edmund Morgan was elected a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy in 1978. David Brion Davis was elected a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy in 1992.
4. Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600–1850* (Jonathan Cape, 2002; Pimlico paperback edition, 2003). The book is divided into three parts covering different geographical zones: Mediterranean, America, and India.

on, say, Robert Walpole's fiscal policies of the 1730s. That, actually, would be a very interesting topic, but it would likely be career suicide for an up-and-coming young scholar in the United States.

You yourself did start studying British history post-1700 – there was your book on the Tory party 1714–1760.[1] But your work acquired a much more international dimension as you moved on to the British imperial diaspora. Does being based outside the UK provide a perspective that helps with that more global outlook?

I think so. Going to the United States introduced me to different parts of the world and their histories to a greater degree. For example, going to Yale meant that I met the wonderful Chinese historian, Jonathan Spence; I had never previously met anybody who studied the Chinese past other than Joseph Needham at Cambridge.[2] Some of my best friends at Yale were great Americanists, like Edmund Morgan, John Blum and David Brion Davis.[3] So I found myself learning a lot from different kinds of scholars, and that gave me new ideas for the topics I chose to write about.

For instance, *Captives* stemmed from, mundanely, a pizza lunch with another Americanist, John Demos.[4] He was writing about captivity tales, and he commented that they were a purely American genre of the 17th and 18th centuries. I thought that really didn't make sense given the closeness of transatlantic connections, and that there must have been a captivity genre in Britain. So I hit the library catalogues and, of course, there was. That was the genesis of *Captives*, in which I spin together captivity narratives from three zones of British encounter in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries. I don't suppose I would necessarily have thought of writing it had I not been in the United States.

Did the themes emerge from the literary sources that you found, or were you looking for themes in the sources when you turned to them?

A recurring method in the history I write is that I like doing close analysis of particular texts, but I also try to locate them in a broader context. Reading these extraordinary narratives by different kinds of captives gave me access to a lot of individuals who had been completely lost from the story. But finding out why and how they had become captives and what kind of captivities they endured also gave me

> These are such far-reaching, violent and complex events, but they are within the experiences of an individual. That is something immediate and vivid that people can easily react to.

an entrance into the texture of British power – and British weakness – in different parts of the world at different times, and I found that intriguing. One can't read too much into these texts, and I embed them very densely in many layers of more conventional historical research. But I became interested in the vulnerabilities and compromises of empire, and not just in chronicling its growth and power in a Whiggish way.

Why were these narratives so compelling for contemporaries? What does it tell us about the Britons of that time that they loved reading this kind of tale?

Some of the most absolutely gut-wrenching texts were never published because the experiences were so dark and troubling – particularly some of the captivity narratives of military men who felt that they had been made to feel emasculated and/or placed in a position where customary notions of racial order were inverted. If therapy had existed at the time, they were doing the right thing: they wrote out their experiences!

With other narratives, if the captivity had a happy ending or could be contrived to have a happy ending – 'We were rescued by brave British soldiers or sailors etc.' – one can see why there would be an audience. But quite a lot of imperial episodes were extremely controversial at the time, so there were probably mixed readerships. I think people found these narratives gripping for some of the same reasons we find them gripping now. These are such far-reaching, violent and complex events, but they are contained within the experiences of an individual. That is something immediate and vivid that people can easily react to.

You make much use of these contemporary accounts of individual stories to explore the big historical narrative of Britain's global expansion. And you obviously do this to particular effect in *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: How a Remarkable Woman Crossed Seas and Empires to Become Part of World History*.

Oh, don't call it that! I fought against the use of that subtitle for the UK paperback edition. But, hey, I'm only the writer! The original hardback subtitle was *A Woman in World History*, and that is what it is about.[5]

Can you talk about the approach of using just one person to tell the story? Is there a particular way of writing a book like that?

I had always wanted to try biography. I like writing

5. Linda Colley, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History* (Harper, 2007); *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: How a Remarkable Woman Crossed Seas and Empires to Become Part of World History* (Harper paperback edition, 2008).

different kinds of books, even though many of the curiosities running through them are the same. I knew I didn't want to write something conventional such as another biography of the younger Pitt or Benjamin Disraeli – fascinating though those topics are.

I also thought it would be interesting to write about a woman, because that side of the globalising world of the 18th century tends to be neglected. Even today, most self-describing global historians are male, and they often write about huge frameworks, tell very big stories, and their characters are mainly other men. I wanted to write something that was global history but in a different way.

Elizabeth Marsh represented an extraordinary challenge because she was not remotely an affluent woman. She was the daughter of a ship's carpenter. We have the narrative she wrote of her captivity in Morocco – the first published text in English by a woman on that country. Then there is the unpublished diary she wrote of her travels along the eastern coast of the Indian subcontinent in the mid-1770s – one of the very first narratives of this sort by a woman not accompanying her husband. But when I wrote the book, I had no letters by Marsh at all (since it came out, we have found a few). So I had to reconstruct her largely through the writings of others. It is not a book I could have attempted without the world wide web. It was this that led me to some of the sources out of which I could wrench details to fill out her remarkable and remarkably itinerant life.

Did you follow Elizabeth Marsh's footsteps physically? Is that an important part of a historian's work?

For me, it is, yes. I did a lot of travelling in Morocco, and I went to many of the sites in India that she explored. I also tried to get a sense of what it was like on the sea. For example, she is captured and taken to Morocco in 1756 when, most unwisely, she boards a small merchant ship that is setting out from Gibraltar. It is hit by Moroccan corsairs and taken back to Morocco. So I took a ship from Gibraltar to, in my case, Tangiers. It was a much less exciting passage, but still a very rough crossing, even in a modern motor ship. It was interesting to realise how easy it would be in a small wooden ship, particularly in mist – and that sea crossing is full of mist – to go astray and fall into the hands of raiders. While I had read about this, experiencing that stretch of water made me understand it at a deeper level.
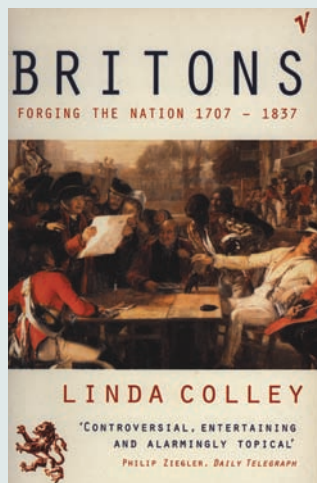
You have written importantly about Britain itself. In *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837*, you described how the mindset of being British first came about. Then, in 2014, ahead of the Scottish independence referendum later that year, you produced a Radio 4 series, and book, on *Acts of Union and Disunion: What has held the UK together – and what is dividing it?* [6] Did you feel that, as an academic historian who had covered the topic, you had a duty to enter the arena of public debate at that time?

I don't think I would put it like that. I am personally averse to any kind of narrow or hegemonic view of what the academic's duty is. Historians have different interests, different skills and different curiosities. That said, I do feel that if you have certain swathes of knowledge and can possibly contribute to the public's wider understanding, then this is a good thing to do.

I had never done a series of radio talks before, and I found it an astonishing thing to do – and a tremendous privilege. No other country has the BBC. Where else would an academic historian be allowed to give 15 talks on the radio to a nationwide audience? It would be inconceivable.

I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to give people information that might help them sort out these complex events. And I didn't have an obvious drum to beat: I wasn't resident in the UK, I had been in the US for a long time. I had done lots of lectures and discussions in Scotland, so I had a sense of some of the strands of various Scottish arguments Also, I felt that I could put this particular troubled political union within a wider context. It's not something that can be understood just from its internal make-up. You have to look at change over time, and at the different relations between different parts of these islands and different parts of the world. Trying to get that over in 15 short talks and a slim book was interesting!

What reaction did you have to the series?

In general, the response was extremely positive from people from different parts of the political spectrum. I was told that the series was listened to in the political offices of the SNP (Scottish National Party), but I was also told that the Prime Minister's Cabinet secretariat had listened to it. So that was good. And one of my friends who is a working Peer told me that she had gone into the Library in the House of Lords just after the book had come out and there were five Peers there all reading it!

However, the more moving thing was that I got letters from people from a wide variety of back-

BRITONS
FORGING THE NATION 1707 – 1837

LINDA COLLEY
'CONTROVERSIAL, ENTERTAINING AND ALARMINGLY TOPICAL'
PHILIP ZIEGLER. DAILY TELEGRAPH

6. *Acts of Union and Disunion*, fifteen 15-minute talks broadcast in January 2014 on BBC Radio 4 (available via the BBC iPlayer). Published as: Linda Colley, *Acts of Union and Disunion: What has held the UK together – and what is dividing it?* (Profile Books, 2014).
7. Linda Colley, 'This Small Island: Britain, Size and Empire' (Raleigh Lecture on History, 2002), *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 121, 171–190.

grounds. I got one from a young black woman who was a fairly new citizen in the UK. She said that she had found it very heartening, and that she had not realised before listening to my talks that there had been waves of migrants into these islands and that the nature of Britishness had changed over time. This made her feel more confident about the kind of role that she could conceivably play in this society.

In the 2002 Raleigh Lecture on History which you gave at the British Academy, 'This Small Island: Britain, Size and Empire', you discussed how different aspects of Britain's size affected its imperial expansion.[7] And you revealed how at different times there were varying levels of anxiety or confidence about how big a player Britain was in the world. Do you think we have similar worries about our place in the world now?

The UK has increasingly had to come to terms with global decline since the Second World War, even though the process started well before that. For a while, the fact that Britain had emerged on the victorious side in 1945 rather glossed over its loss of weight and power in large stretches of the world – the loss of this huge, increasingly ramshackle, empire. I suspect that many people here are still not remotely over this amputation yet. I think that a lot of the angst about the EU in this country isn't actually about the EU at all. It derives from deeper doubts and anguish about the nature of the UK itself.

One of the most unfortunate verdicts on this

country's post-war experience, which is quoted over and over again, is Dean Acheson's remark that 'Great Britain has lost an Empire and has not yet found a role.' It's unfortunate because it suggests that somehow Britain *should* have a special role. Most countries on the face of the globe do not have roles in fact. They seek, if they are lucky, to be orderly places where the majority of people are prosperous, and where there is peace within, and external enemies are repelled. Many countries would give a great deal to achieve that. The idea that the UK should seek out a distinguishing role on top of all this is misplaced, and people should stop tormenting themselves about it.

In *Acts of Union and Disunion* you talk about possible ways in which the Union might be better held together. You talk about more autonomy for the different nations; you talk about setting up some proper federalism; and you also talk about the benefits of having a written constitution. Constitutions are what you have now moved on to as your current area of work. Does British exceptionalism in not having a written constitution remain an odd thing?

I can think of good historical reasons why we don't have a written constitution. Part of it is that we haven't been invaded since 1688 and forced to change political regime violently. Very often it is the experience of defeat, invasion, revolution, or some other major trauma that gives rise to a new constitution. If in the future Scotland becomes independent, almost

'The (Modern) Deluge'. This marvellously complacent British print from 1848 celebrates the unwritten British Constitution as a sacred Ark floating invulnerably while other European regimes are swept away.

certainly it will have a written constitution to signal its new identity; and I should think it is within the bounds of possibility that what is left of the UK might also feel the need for some kind of new written document to reappraise and legitimise what it is.

I don't have idealistic notions about written constitutions. They are as good as they are, and they vary enormously in competence. As Jefferson said in the early 19th century, it is best to have constitutions that are revised regularly. Otherwise you get appalling anomalies like the gun laws in the United States. That is a country with a now very antique and creaking written constitution that is in dire need of radical amendment. So these are not magic bullets. However, I think that in some contexts they can be helpful, because they can set out a script in which people have to hammer out statements of belief, political principles and ideas about identity and aspirations. Of course this is difficult, but it can be very useful if you are trying to hold an increasingly complicated polity together.

In your new essay, 'Writing constitutions and writing world history',[8] you talk about the dramatic expansion in the writing of constitutions in the late 18th century and the 19th century. You show how, by just studying the output, you can track the flow of ideas and, indeed, intellectuals across the globe.

This is another iteration of my delight in looking closely at particular texts and embedding them in much broader stories.

I became intrigued with written constitutions for a variety of reasons. I come from a country that, since the 1650s, has not had a conventional written constitution. So coming to the United States, where there is written constitutional idolatry, I felt I had to learn more about these texts and what they did.

But, as I read into them, it seemed to me that a lot of existing analyses were not particularly satisfying. The conventional story was often that, as written constitutions spread around the globe, it was all to do with the spread of democracy and nationalism, but this made only limited sense. Throughout the 'long' 19th century, full democracy was a minority pursuit. And while there were nation states, there were also empires, some of which were leading protagonists of written constitutions – one thinks of Napoleonic France, which was an imperial power but also a big proponent of written constitutions. So as a historian I had to find different explanations for the explosion of these instruments.

I also wanted to get away from the national celebration of particular constitutions. They are a literary, political and legal genre that crosses boundaries, seas and continents. I was intrigued by that.

And I had a deeper aim in approaching this topic. In recent decades, the history of political thought has been a very flourishing and creative field. However, it has also tended to be very elitist, focusing on great minds, so I was interested in constitutional texts in part because they involved much broader constituencies. How were constitutions drafted and printed? Who read them? How did ordinary people interpret them? How did they move about different countries and continents? Who were the agents who spread them? I found for instance that before 1850 some of the most busy activists pushing new constitutions in different parts of the globe were soldiers and sailors. This is not surprising, given that soldiers and sailors were often remarkably mobile, whereas, before the coming of steam ships, ordinary civilians tended not to be. So studying the spread of written constitutions is a way of re-connecting the history of political thought and ideas with social history, which is all to the good.

> I don't have idealistic notions about written constitutions. They are as good as they are, and they vary enormously in competence.

You talk about how, as tools of empire, these constitutions, far from being vehicles for spreading democracy are sometimes serving to hold in place indigenous people – and indeed women.

I found this striking in several ways. In the long 19th century, writing constitutions was a well-known amateur and scholarly pursuit. It was not just that politicians, legal officers and jurists were writing formal constitutions; it was also quite common for individuals who were simply interested in politics and stuck indoors on a rainy afternoon to say 'You know, Bolivia needs a new constitution', or 'I visited Baden last summer: that's a place that needs a constitution – I think I'll draft what a constitution for Baden might look like.'

However, I noticed that this was almost entirely a masculine pursuit. It's not just that non-royal women are shut out of official constitution writing until they are allowed in as full citizens. Even as an amateur pursuit, writing constitutions was clearly quite gendered.

I do think we sometimes forget the way that written constitutions, as they evolved, operated as dirigiste texts and as weapons of control, not just documents of liberation and rights. That is important.

8. Linda Colley, 'Writing constitutions and writing world history', in *The Prospect of Global History*, edited by James Belich, John Darwin, Margret Frenz and Chris Wickham (Oxford University Press, 2016).
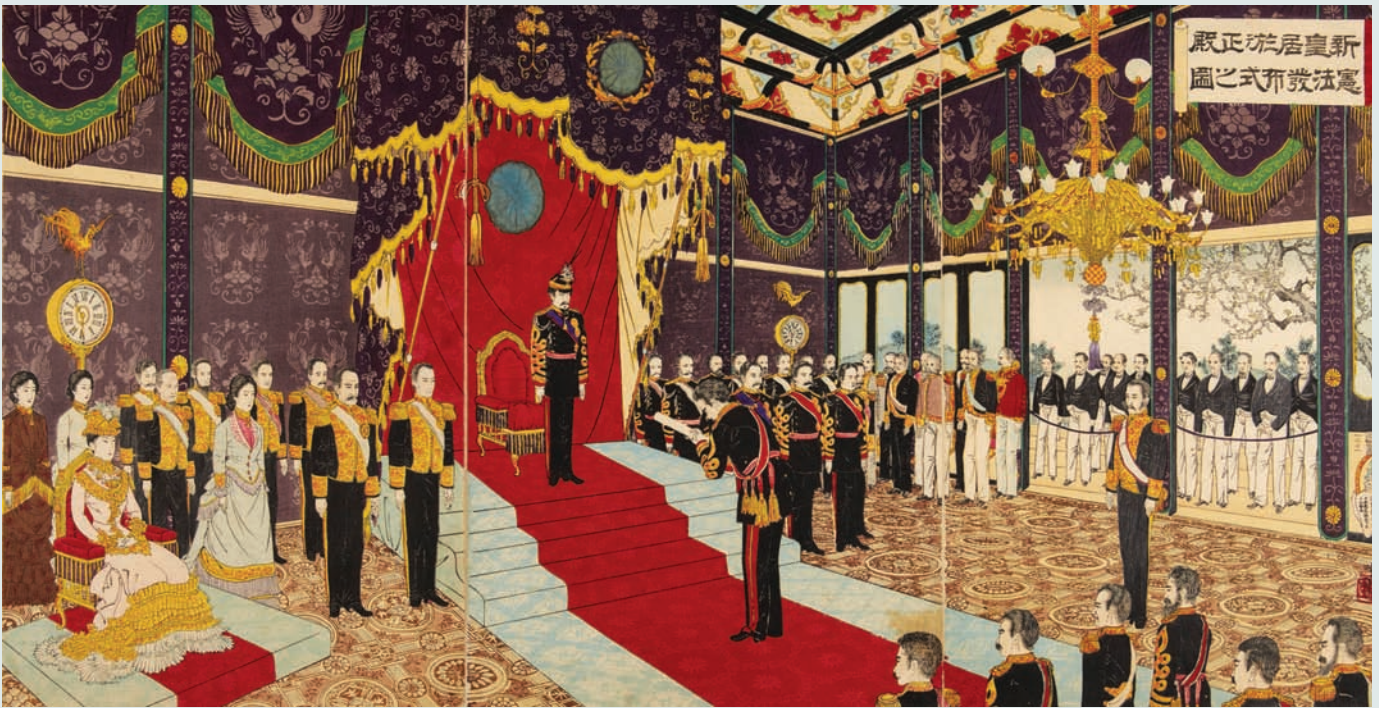
Japanese print showing the Emperor of Japan being formally presented with the Meiji Constitution.
IMAGE: PRINCETON ART MUSEUM.

Are these constitutions recording change or creating change?

I think it's both. They are creating change in all sorts of ways. One of the ways is through statements on boundaries. This connects with their imperial significance. For example, as the United States gradually stretches over the American continent, part of the way it does that is through constitutions. The federal constitution comes into existence in 1787, but then increasingly there are state constitutions – and they are regularly issued and revised. A lot of the time they say things like 'The boundaries of Tennessee are that particular river, taking in that particular mountain range.' Why are they saying this? It's because many of these boundaries are in fact disputed. There are overlapping areas inhabited by indigenous peoples who certainly don't think they belong to Tennessee. So these constitutions are making claims and forcing changes – legitimising settler advance. They can say to indigenous people 'But the constitution says the boundary is *here*, and so you have no right to be *there*.'

I liked your story of the Cherokees who tried to create a constitution of their own and were slapped down.

In the 1820s, Cherokee activists worked out how to write down their own language. They also acquired printing skills – they set up a newspaper. They felt that, with these skills – with a written language, and with print, which is one of the great instruments that spreads constitutions – they could play this game to their own advantage. Well, they tried and, as you say, they were slapped down, because it was not supposed to be a game that people such as they played.

In your essay, you introduce readers to the Meiji constitution of Japan of 1889, which not enough of us will be familiar with, although it sounds as though it is an important document.

It's a remarkably important document. In regard to the spread of constitutions, there is a real shift from the 1860s onwards. They appear in zones where on the whole you haven't seen written constitutions before, like Ottoman Turkey and Japan. Before the First World War, they have also appeared in Russia and China. And you get schemes in the 1860s from what one might call early African nationalists for written constitutions to be applied to that continent as well.

The Meiji constitution interests me deeply because it picked up on so many themes that I focus on. First of all, it illustrates how constitutional information crosses boundaries. The Meiji regime wanted to make Japan a modern empire – I stress 'empire' – and was determined to get a written constitution as a token of modernity. So it sent envoys around the western capitals to pick up constitutional and legal nostrums, and was particularly influenced by what was happening in Germany. Japanese leaders then threaded these different elements of acquired knowledge together with their

own indigenous priorities, and published this new Meiji constitution in various languages. It reflected their own domestic ambitions, but it was also intended to impress the western world with the fact that Japan was now a major power that had to be taken notice of.

The Meiji constitution was also important for other Asian peoples. Indian nationalists, for instance, were excited by it because they felt 'Here we have a powerful written constitution in the Asiatic world. If they can do it, then we can do it.'

So it is important in itself, and it is important too as an indication of how global power relations are shifting by the last third of the 19th century.

You describe your essay as defining a research agenda. Are you now following that through and producing a book?

I am almost half way through it. It has taken me a long time to work out the plot, as it were. For a start, once you leave national history, you have got to do an awful lot of reading and be parasitic on the expertise of so many other scholars. You have to have your chapters read over and over, so that hopefully you don't make too many silly mistakes. But also, when you deal with big stories in different parts of the globe, working out a plot line becomes more than ever challenging. It took

> This new Meiji constitution was intended to impress the western world with the fact that Japan was now a major power.

me some time to work out what I was doing. I knew I had curiosities that were valid, but I didn't know how I was going to handle them. I have at least the illusion by now that I do know how to handle them.

And you also have, on the horizon, a Penguin history of Britain in the 18th century. Will it be easy reverting to familiar territory, or does that present challenges of its own?

I think it will present challenges. I hope it does, because that is what books should do. I have always intended to leave the Penguin history of the 18th century to the end of my active professional career. This was partly because *Britons* involved such a major effort. That book took 10 years to write and, by the time I finished it, I really felt that I wanted to leave 18th century British history alone for a while. I felt that I had to establish sufficient distance from *Britons* so as to be able to approach that particular period afresh and in an interesting new way. Also it goes back to the fact that I have been in the United States. I wanted, while I was there and while I was still a highly energetic scholar able to travel fast around different parts of the world, to focus on these more global history books. However, it will be intriguing to come back to Britain in the long 18th century and to see what I can do with it. 🍂🍂

UTA
FRITH

... on how much we have learned about autism,
but how much more there is still to understand

Uta Frith is Emeritus
Professor of Cognitive
Development, University
College London. She was
elected a Fellow of the
British Academy in 2001.

At an event held at the British Academy in 2012 to celebrate women in the humanities and social sciences, you spoke about the empowering influence of your mother.

I think I always dimly knew what a tremendous debt I owe to my mother, but I've expressed this only rarely. Although she never went to university and did not even have a secondary education, she was passionately interested in art and music, and particularly in poetry. I was told that, when I was asked as a tiny tot what I wanted to be when I grew up, I said 'Gedichterin' (a made-up word for poet-ess). What this tells me is that my mother gave me the confidence to be what I wanted to be, and that I modelled myself on her from very early in life. Mothers are an extraordinary power source. They shape our attitudes and aims in very individual ways, different from the larger cultural context.

You studied experimental psychology in Germany and then trained in clinical psychology in London.

As you have worked to understand aspects of human behaviour, where for you has been the balance between scientific curiosity and improving the lives of real individuals?

I remember struggling with this question while training for clinical psychology. There was a forking path: should I go into practice, and try to help people here and now, or should I try to do research in a lab, detached from real life? This has occasionally recurred as a dilemma for me, but it has always been resolved in favour of the ivory tower.

I still think that basic research, actually, blue skies research, is a vital necessity, if you really want to help people with mental health problems. And it is also necessary to distance yourself from the immediate urge to do something practical.

Can you summarise what our current understanding of autism is?

I have to give a rather personal view here. This is because I've been involved in autism research for nearly 50 years, starting when it was hardly known.

So what kind of thing is autism? It turns out that it is not one thing, but there are many varieties, forming what is now called the autism spectrum.

This covers a hugely heterogeneous group of people, but all individuals on the spectrum have this in common: they have characteristic difficulties in social communication, and they have repetitive and restricted interests and behaviours. These difficulties turn out to be highly detrimental to everyday living.

What causes autism? I think it's true to say that almost all cases of autism have genetic causes, often from d*e novo* mutations, and these causes are likely to be different in different individuals. It helps to see that blind chance is at work here, and therefore autism is not something we can blame somebody for. We have tried to in the past, but it is time to give up on this idea. For me there is no way round the assumption that there is malfunction of some particular circuits in the brain, and this leads to the characteristic constellation of behavioural signs and symptoms. The critical link in the chain from genes to behaviour is that mental development is affected adversely.

To me autism is something of an unwanted side effect of evolution. The developing brain seems to be vulnerable in respect of just those accomplishments that we human beings pride ourselves in: our language and our extraordinary ability to negotiate a complex and seemingly unpredictable social world. Perhaps these accomplishments are a bit like the icing on the cake, where the cake is made up of many amazing abilities and skills that we share with other animals. The icing is very visible and glamorous compared to other animals, but if something is wrong with it, this does not mean that the rest of the cake is necessarily wanting. I always marvel at the fact that many important mental functions remain intact in autism.

I am a little at odds with current thinking, which is keen on blurring the boundaries between people on the autism spectrum and the rest of the population. I can see why, and particularly when we look only at the milder end of the spectrum, Asperger syndrome. These are individuals who are highly intelligent and can therefore learn to compensate for underlying abnormalities. As the term compensation implies, I believe that they still have the characteristic dysfunction, in the mind and in the brain, but they manage to find ways around this and camouflage problems in their behaviour.

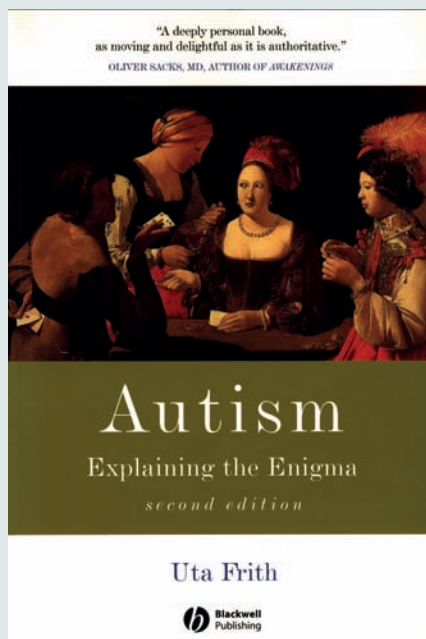The irony is that I have to some extent been responsible for putting these fascinating individuals into the spotlight. In the early 1990s I translated Hans Asperger's oddly overlooked 1944 landmark paper and edited a book that promoted the idea of extending the autism spectrum to include cases such as he had described. Before then autism was strongly linked to intellectual disability. Now I am somewhat taken aback that Asperger syndrome tends to be seen as the more typical and common form of autism.

I think we need to remember that autism is a very debilitating condition for at least half of those diagnosed. I keep thinking of the many autistic individuals I know who are very handicapped by their dire intellectual limitations and heart-rending inability to communicate. Here compensatory learning is a call too far. It is romantic to think, and also misleading, that such individuals must have a rich inner life, and if only they had the means to communicate, all would be well. And there have been attempts to reveal this rich inner life by a now thoroughly discredited technique referred to as facilitated communication (carers guide the arm or hand of the typist over a keyboard). It is quite upsetting to me that there are still stories circulating that reinforce this idea, trading on false hope.

How does autism usually manifest itself?

No two autistic individuals are alike. In the severe case there may be no language at all and there may be repetitive movements that lead to self injury. In the mild case, language competence may be at a high level and there may be only a touch of rigid and inflexible behaviour. Above all, there are big changes with age. For example, in infancy, one sign is a lack of response when being called by name; at pre-school, being oblivious to other children will come to the fore; at school, being preoccupied with narrow interests; in adulthood, one sign is not being able to sustain friendships. The sheer variety of behaviours is one of the reasons why diagnosis is very complex and relies on clinical judgement.

So how do we pull together this variety to explain the core features of autism that unite all cases on the spectrum? Autism researchers in the UK, from the 1960s, when I myself started out, have been guided by cognitive theories. They are called cognitive, not because they exclude the emotions – they absolutely don't – but because they focus on how the mind processes information. After all, this is what the mind/brain does. A lot of empirical work backs up the idea that information processing is interestingly different in autism, both in the social and in the non-social domain. This leads to advantages and disadvantages. For example, you may become a specialist in stick insects, and this may enable you to spot creatures that others would be unable to see, but it can also make you unable to tolerate small changes in your daily routines.

"A deeply personal book, as moving and delightful as it is authoritative."
OLIVER SACKS, MD, AUTHOR OF *AWAKENINGS*

Autism
Explaining the Enigma
second edition

Uta Frith

Blackwell Publishing

As our understanding has developed over the last 50 years, have there been any particular moments of breakthrough?

On the whole, it has been a gradual process.

But, well, perhaps you could say that there was a breakthrough in our understanding of the precise nature of the social impairments in autism. This did not come out of the blue, but it was still a novel idea in the early 1980s. Here is the key notion: there is a purpose-made gadget in our human minds and brains that makes us able to see the invisible intentions of other social agents – and autistic people don't have this gadget.

It's still a strange idea. I think the most amazing aspect of this ability is that we automatically track the inner states of other people – and also our own mental states – just as if we had a social GPS. If we assume that it is missing in autism, we can explain why their social interactions are so characteristically off kilter, and why they find it almost impossible to go with the flow of a conversation, even if they have excellent language. It is as if they have to use a map instead of a GPS, a slower process, and clearly, not everyone can become an excellent map reader.

Try to imagine your social GPS is missing. You would not spontaneously think about intentions, desires and beliefs. You would not instantly assume that if Sally believes her marble is in her basket, then she will look for her marble in the basket, even if you know it is not there (Figure 1). You would have to work it out by long-winded logic.

Perhaps you would feel like a true behaviourist who says, 'I don't care what happens inside the black box of the mind, I simply observe behaviour. That is enough for me.' That sort of stance might well be found in an autistic person. It could be this stance that makes them so naïve, so honest, and so apparently untouched by things imagined or believed. But it can also make them intolerant of the way that we normally talk to each other. This always involves a bit of give-and-take, a bit of manipulation, aggrandising certain things that we might have done, minimising others. Likewise, when we listen to others, we always read between the lines and don't take utterances literally. These are tricky things for autistic people, and it is no wonder that they prefer to watch factual programmes on TV rather than soap operas.

Oliver Sacks has used the nice phrase 'an anthropologist on Mars'. The autistic person lives in a world of apparently hyper-social creatures, and what these creatures do requires deep study to make sense.

You use the term 'mentalising'.

It's a deliberately strange word for a strange process: 'automatically taking mental states into account in order to explain and predict behaviour' – such a mouthful! We simply had to coin a new word for this ability, and mentalising seemed to stick.

Another term for it is 'theory of mind', which is quite popular. I don't like it as much, because it pretends that we consciously hold a theory about mental states. Well, some philosophers might, but I doubt that ordinary four-year-olds do.

Has our understanding of autism developed through observation or specific experiments?

These are different sources that need to converge. In my own case, first insights have often come through observation, talking to parents and teachers, talking to clinicians, and through reading the work of other researchers. Such an insight is like getting a magnifying glass. It might enable one to see something that was not visible with just a list of anecdotes.

But in order to develop and test a theory from a first insight, rigorous experiments are essential. Once you have a hypothesis, let's say about mentalising, you can design a task that requires mentalising, and another task that doesn't, but is identical in all other respects. Then by comparing the two tasks, you can find out what happens in behaviour, and what happens in the brain, when a person is engaged in mentalising.

A gadget in our human brains makes us able to see the invisible intentions of other social agents – autistic people don't have this gadget.

Have there been any blind alleys in the research?

There have been lots of blind alleys! Observation, reading the literature, having good ideas and doing well-designed experiments – these still do not prevent blind alleys. There has to be a bit of luck. You have to try many different things. You can't just gamble on one idea. There were many different ideas, and some emerged as being stronger than others. But even the stronger ideas are far from being explored fully.

There are now more diagnoses of autism. Is that because we are better at diagnosing, or because, with increased public awareness, more parents are presenting their children for diagnosis? Or is it that there are just more definitions of autism now and a wider spectrum?

All of these things are true. But the main thing is that our idea of autism – and the criteria that need be fulfilled – have widened enormously. They are so wide now that I fear they will have to be retracted again, or some subdivisions will have to be made. Before we took account of Hans Asperger's clinical descriptions the criteria were too narrow, and many individuals were missed who should not have been. There has since been a tendency for the pendulum to swing in the opposite direction.

It has been fascinating to observe how much

people have become aware of autism as a condition that affects at least 1 per cent of the population. I remember talking to an old classmate of mine at a reunion in the 1980s. He had become a busy paediatrician and had seen hundreds, probably thousands, of children. I was very surprised when he said he had never seen an autistic child. Now I would expect quite a different response.

Autism now appears everywhere, in the press, in films, plays and books, and this is a good thing on the whole, but it can also give rise to misunderstanding. In fiction an autistic person will inevitably be portrayed as a savant – someone who is absolutely brilliant at something like maths. This has become the essence of autism in the public imagination, but it's a distortion. It is very rare to find these extraordinary specialists, and many parents of autistic children feel distressed when everyone expects them to show some astounding talent, and they just don't.

The Sally–Anne test of the ability to attribute a false belief. From Uta Frith's book *Autism: Explaining the Enigma* (1989, 2nd edition 2003).

When there is a diagnosis of autism, what is the reaction of the patient?
If you have a diagnosis in early childhood, when autism becomes obvious, the child would not know, and you often hear parents asking 'When can we tell them? Can we tell them at all?' Often it turns out that it is not hard to do this when the time is right. It can come as a relief.

It can also come as a relief to people who have discovered their diagnosis as adults, often having worked it out themselves. It gives an explanation for the characteristic problems they have to struggle with. They can now negotiate with their family, letting them know that certain things are impossible for them, even though they seem incredibly easy for everyone else.

Do you think we are now in danger of medicalising ranges of normality?
I do understand when people are worried about the medicalisation of what might simply be personality variants. In the colourful rainbow of individual differences there must a space for the personality who is egocentric, single-minded and socially inept. Providing a medical term seems like giving an excuse for behaving badly. I would argue that such an excuse is acceptable where a significant mind/brain abnor-

mality exists. Here it would be harsh to hold affected individuals responsible for their problems. This is one of the reasons why I am clinging to categories, not just positions on a continuum. With a well-defined medical category we are able to say, 'Oh well, they can't help it. They need support. This is autism.' This is similar in the case of blind people. If we know they are visually impaired, we are prepared to give help.

How do you react when the allegation resurfaces that some cases of autism may be linked to the MMR vaccine?
This is a story that refuses to die. When the theory was first proposed, it was taken very seriously by researchers, including me. It was tested in substantial investigations in different countries, comparing data before and after the triple vaccination was introduced. These studies gave conclusive evidence that MMR vaccination did not cause autism. Sadly, the belief in MMR as a cause of autism persists despite the evidence.

Why? I think parents are desperately seeking an explanation for what they consider to be a terrible fate that has befallen them out of the blue. I can understand this, and I can also understand that they would feel satisfaction if there was an explanation that puts the blame on an identifiable agent, rather than the blind chance of the genetic lottery. Human beings crave this sort of explanation. But as far as autism is concerned, this is the wrong story.

Can autistic difficulties be ameliorated through behavioural remedies?
Indeed they can. There are many kinds of behavioural programmes, and they all work, but may suit different families and individuals. Sometimes a programme of, say, 40 hours a week of intensive behaviour modification can be very effective. Sometimes doing nothing much apart from providing a structured and loving environment can be enough.

It is frustrating that we don't know why certain things seem to benefit some individuals, and not others. It's a bit like an art rather than a science, and where medicine was 100 or 200 years ago.

This is a hypothetical question. If a pill was developed that could turn off exaggerated autistic traits,
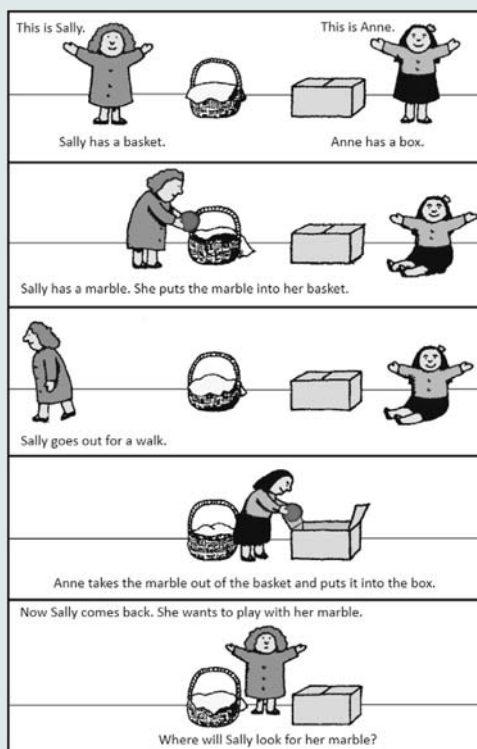
how far along the autistic spectrum would someone have to be for you to consider it was appropriate or ethical to administer it?

I would be so relieved if that kind of pill was available – but then I would say this – given my preference for categories over a continuum! Another hypothetical question is whether it will eventually be possible to tell apart categories, to tell apart abnormal from normal function. I imagine people who believe in a continuum would have no reason to welcome such a pill. They would probably not wish to decide when a trait is exaggerated and when it is not.

Can some of those with autism end up leading functional lives?

Absolutely. We now have real-life histories, longitudinal studies over many years, so we know what can happen over a lifetime. And the range is so varied! At one extreme there is, for example, early death from epileptic seizures, which unfortunately is not uncommon – and at the other extreme there is the possibility of a contented life and of contributing to some important endeavour. Some individuals no longer even fulfil the criteria of the diagnosis.

Where do you think the next breakthrough in autism research will come?

What a difficult question! There is an enormous amount of effort being spent on genetics, and a slightly less intense effort on how some critical brain circuitry works or doesn't work. Both of these avenues are promising, but need huge data sets. Actually, what they need is progress in technology and in the basic sciences, in our understanding of how the brain works and how genetic interactions result in developmental irregularities and influence the brain's ability to process information. That is where I would wish the breakthrough would happen.

I am very happy that there is a new generation of researchers who are developing Bayesian theories to explain differences in the way autistic individuals process information. These suggest there is an imbalance between the weighting given to prior expectations and incoming information. If true this would give a neat explanation of why autistic people can often be hypersensitive and also why they may often not see the wood for the trees.

You have done a lot of media work on autism. You did a programme for the BBC *Horizon* series and you will be doing others. And you also did one on OCD, 'The Monster in My Mind'. What is your motivation in doing that kind of work?

It is worth telling people about scientific research that is consistent and sound. As scientists we need

to justify what we are doing and why we are doing it. And we need to try to do away with misunderstandings. I am trying to make complex concepts simpler and my ulterior motive is to make people critical of what they read about mental health and disease – and also to make them question themselves and become aware of their own preconceptions.

Science communication has a lot in common with story telling, but far more interesting to me is fostering curiosity – and stirring up a critical attitude, so that my story can be probed and improved. That would be very satisfying to me.

What can we learn from autism about our social nature?

Autism is the model case for learning about social communication – precisely because that is the core problem in autism. When something goes wrong, it is often in that very place that we can gain an insight into how we function. If nothing goes wrong we take our amazing cognitive abilities for granted to the extent that they are totally invisible to us. In the history of medicine, we have often learned how our bodies function through looking at some pathology that has opened our eyes to the underlying mechanisms. Take the case of mentalising: who would have thought that this ability was common-place and that it needed any explanation? But when it has gone wrong, we suddenly see how important it is for our everyday social life. Then we can ask questions about the neural substrates and evolutionary history of mentalising. Autism has opened our eyes to the fragility of our mind/brain.

> It is worth telling people about research that is sound, but far more interesting to me is fostering curiosity.

You have been recognised for your work by election as a Fellow of the British Academy, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences. When you go about your work, can you tell whether you are now being more of a British Academy person, a Royal Society person or an Academy of Medical Sciences person, or do you find all these differences to be a bewildering division of knowledge that does not exist?

I totally agree with that analysis. I am not aware of any divisions of knowledge. There are no borders for knowledge and scholarship. Similarly I neither feel German nor British – but European. In that sense, I am quite used to not considering which particular compartment or which Academy I might fit in. We all know that the idea of 'the two cultures' is archaic. The Academies have to work together to further our knowledge and to develop better methodologies to do so. This applies whether we are studying music, medicine or maths. It is the same precision, the same critical attitude, the same rigour that serves all these disciplines. 🗩

MARINA WARNER

... talks about life as an independent
scholar, and why fairy tales matter so much to us

Dame Marina Warner
is Professor of English
and Creative Writing at
Birkbeck University of
London. She was elected
a Fellow of the British
Academy in 2005.

**Compared to many other Fellows of
the British Academy, you have a rather
different career story. After graduating,
you went straight into journalism – the
Daily Telegraph Magazine and *Vogue*.
Those must have been interesting times.**
I know my career has been very irregular.
Even when I was at school, I was always
getting reports saying 'erratic'!

I wanted to finance my own writing,
and journalism in those days was defi-
nitely compatible with that. V.S. Naipaul,
a features writer on the *Daily Telegraph
Magazine* when I worked there, was one
of several very distinguished authors who
practised journalism in order to fund the
writing and research of their books. This
was a common pattern in the 1970s when
I was first becoming a serious writer. But
this use of journalism to support writing
has changed. Somebody like George
Orwell is likely now to be a Professor of Creative
Writing, or a Professor of Journalism, or even a Pro-
fessor of Cultural or Media Studies, teaching in

a university in a very distinguished way; in his day,
he eked out his living on Grub Street.

**You interviewed the film director Bernardo Berto-
lucci as well as figures like Glenda Jackson for *Vogue*,
and Jean-Luc Godard for the *Observer*. You later
interviewed Margaret Thatcher shortly after she had
become Leader of the Opposition in 1975. Were those
formative experiences?**
A fashion magazine like *Vogue* is a female world.
There really were very few men working there (just
some in the upper echelons running the money side),
so it was very like the convent where I had gone to
boarding school. I had changed from one entirely
female environment to another, with rather compa-
rable figures of authority: the Reverend Mother was
quite a model for the Chief Editor of *Vogue*. (I don't
think Alexandra Shulman would think that now!
But Beatrix Miller, known to us as 'Miss Miller', was
definitely of the same ilk as a Reverend Mother.)

In the features that I wrote there was a common
thread of interest in how women were represented.
The avant-garde filmmakers of the time included
strong female roles, which were important in the

1960s for shaping ideas about sex and relationships. Godard, particularly, didn't explore women's lives in an admirable, profound way, but women and their desires were foregrounded. So it was an arena where my interest in this aspect of experience could be pressed forward.

I was pleased that a woman had been elected leader of the Conservatives; I thought this was a great breakthrough. But I'm afraid Margaret Thatcher let me down in the very first moments of the interview, because she was patronising – it was almost 'There, there, little girl' – which was a huge mistake. I only had ten minutes with her, so I asked her a rapid series of questions. One of them was 'Do you believe in God?' She was very cross and protested furiously that of course she did, but she condescended to me while answering it, so she revealed herself in an interesting way.

In those decades, we were still looking for role models and for exemplary women. We could find them amongst the exceptions. In fact, in my pattern of writing, the subjects have moved from exceptional women to ordinary women. I started with the Empress of China,[1] and went on to the Virgin Mary.[2] Then I became interested in anonymous fairytale tellers – the figures of the old crone and Mother Goose – and in the vernacular, anonymous body of literature which was often created by women who could not read and write. This shift in my inquiries reflects the changes in feminism, as its interest was moving from examples of exceptional heroines to explore the structures that produced gender inequalities – and possibilities.

You wrote that first book about the Empress Dowager of China whilst still at *Vogue*.

I did a lot of research into what is called 'Treaty Port Literature', and I was very aware that I couldn't read Chinese. I wanted to study Chinese at university, but I was strongly advised not to try because I didn't already have any. After Oxford, I applied for scholarships to learn Chinese, but I was turned down. My career would have been entirely changed!

My interest in China was probably sparked by Rupert Bear. This is a good example of how popular literature puts one onto extraordinary paths. In Rupert Bear there is an emperor of China who flies around on a carpet, and I was fascinated by this figure when I was very young. And any time my sister or I ever showed any
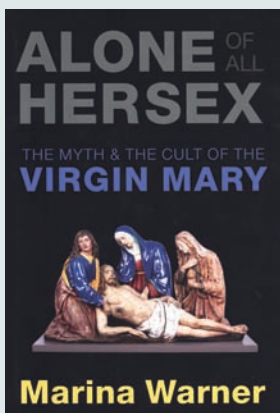
interest in anything, my father, who was a bookseller, would bring us material of all kinds – books, journals, magazines – back from the shop. My question 'What is China?' produced a marvellous stash for me to look at, and it was immediately very seductive. Even the script is aesthetically satisfying, and the art is wonderful.

I particularly fell in love with Chinese civilisation, because it was so ancient and had shown such strong interest in poetry, philosophy, nature, seclusion and reflectiveness. As a teenager I was already very uneasy with Christian patterns of sacrifice, and I still am. In terms of cosmology, Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism are in general all rather more serene than Judaeo-Christianity.

Do you think there are different opportunities and different pressures for an independent scholar?

I have thought about this a lot.

My career would not have been possible inside the academic world – until the point when I was embraced by it. For one thing, I didn't really have a subject. At Oxford I read French and Italian. But I wanted to decipher the world. I wanted to look at how things related to the stories we were being told. I had been brought up a Catholic and I had been brought up on stories. I knew they had made my imagination's picture of the world, as laid out by the Catholic religion that I belonged to. I wanted to understand that.

> In those decades, we were still looking for role models and for exemplary women.

My work doesn't fall very easily into any category, and that is extremely difficult for the academic disciplines to accommodate. I wanted to investigate the texture of reality as I experienced it, and that seemed to me to need a cross-disciplinary approach. My questions couldn't fit into French language from 1800 to 1900, or Italian Renaissance studies. I sensed that such cultural expressions were rather more interconnected in a dynamic way, so I tried to investigate that.

The division between academic subjects and between periods can cause rigidity, a rigidity that doesn't always allow for fertile fission.

In my career, I've tried to write my non-fiction work in a creative way, and develop a rich, dramatic style. My models are Virginia Woolf and George Orwell, whose critical writings are still literature. That is what I have wanted to pursue.

My fiction writing is always seen separately from my non-fiction writing. People in this country

1. Marina Warner, *The Dragon Empress: The Life and Times of Tz'u-hsi, Empress Dowager of China, 1835–1980* (1972).
2. Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (1976; reissued by Oxford University Press, 2013).

think it's more of a dilettante thing that I do. It isn't dilettantism: it's dedicated in the same spirit to the pursuit of something I want to understand – or at least describe.

As an independent scholar living off your writing, you had the pressure of having to produce books that sold.

Yes. I had some very lean years, partly because in the 1980s I was married to a painter, so we didn't have a real professional salary between us.

I was increasingly being invited to lecture. This developed organically. I was really beginning to be entirely supported by invitations to America or to Europe. The very first large act of support came from the Getty Institute of Humanities in California. They telephoned me (this happened before the Internet) and invited me to join a year that was focusing on religious symbolism. They knew my work on the Virgin Mary. It was a wonderful year for me (1987–88), and my first entry into higher scholarly circles.

In 2004, you became Professor in the Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies at the University of Essex.

I had been ill for a year, and though I had enough money for the year I was ill, afterwards I couldn't make up for the gap. My partner, Graeme Segal (we are now married), said to me, 'You just have to get a job, otherwise you are going to have to sell your house.'

I had lots of friends at the University of Essex, with Peter Hulme, who is a Caribbeanist. The Warner family's antecedents were in Trinidad for many centuries, and he had helped me with the novel I wrote about that history – *Indigo* – which is a reckoning with my white planter background.[3]

You were elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2005, just a year after you became a Professor at the University of Essex. Did that recognition by the British Academy of everything you had done up to that point, outside the normal university system, seem particularly valuable to you?

I was astonished, and I continue to be completely astonished when I see the extraordinarily complex and arduous process by which Fellows get elected. I must say, it made a huge difference to me. I have a bit of trouble with recognition, because it makes me feel like an impostor. I was very, very pleased, and I still am.

How have your interests progressed? Has one project moved seamlessly into another?

Yes. They are all interconnected, including the novels. They all arise from questions that the last piece of research has left dangling.

Fiction gives you permission not to make up your mind. You obviously don't want to be too didactic or too schematic. My novel *The Lost Father* was about my mother's childhood.[4] She was born in the year Mussolini came into power and married my father the year he fell, when she also left Italy. So her entire Italian life was lived under Fascism. If I had written a non-fiction book, I would have had to tackle the lives of little people like my mother's family who didn't do anything about it. In a novel, you can be much more sympathetic without necessarily endorsing. I tried to show what it was like to be a young woman in Fascist Italy and how you had to accommodate this way or that, how you survived. It's not exactly moral latitude, but fiction allows for powerful psychological sympathy.

I almost always used to write a novel after a non-fiction book, and in some cases it was a reply from the psychological or emotional view of the problem. I have written about racism, and still do. But in *Indigo* I tried to explore the legacy of white colonialism in the Caribbean, not sympathetically,
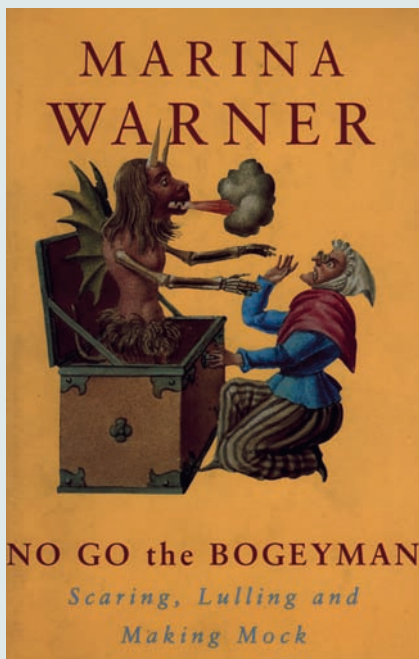
One hundred years of the Rose Mary Crawshay Prize

Marina Warner was awarded the Rose Mary Crawshay Prize in 2000 for her book *No Go the Bogeyman: Scaring, Lulling and Making Mock*. In 1888 Mrs Rose Mary Crawshay established 'The Byron, Shelley, Keats In Memoriam Yearly Prize Fund'. In 1914 the Charity Commissioners transferred the administration of the prize fund to the British Academy, and the Prize was first awarded by the Academy in 1916. The Rose Mary Crawshay Prize is awarded for a historical or critical work written by a woman on any English literature subject. Past recipients have included Jenny Uglow, Penelope Fitzgerald, Hermione Lee and Claire Tomalin.

3. Marina Warner, *Indigo* (1992).
4. Marina Warner, *The Lost Father* (1987).

but at least tried to get insight into the necessary collusion of the inhabitants with their white masters, which is usually decried. Especially for women, it's difficult to act heroically in such situations.

Can you give some other examples of where your scholarly work has thrown up ideas, which you have then worked through in your fiction?

After I set aside exceptional figures from history who were women and structures of ideology employing female symbols, such as Liberty (I wrote about this in *Monuments and Maidens*),[5] I started to look at the lesser voices that had fashioned our world, to dig under the massive visible fabric to the more difficult-to-access undercurrents and how they carry ideology or opposing values. This research took me to fairy tales. In *From the Beast to the Blonde*,[6] I was trying to engage with the feminist critique of fairy tales that, through Disney above all, they are oppressive instruments designed to turn every girl into a milksop Cinderella. I was trying to argue for a countervailing tradition. Many very powerful and interesting writers like Italo Calvino and Walter Benjamin have also seen in this folk tradition something different, something more energetic, vital and liberating.

All during the time I was researching this material, I was writing fables and fairy tales myself. *Indigo* is structured as a fairy tale with a happy ending. It's a re-vision of the *Tempest*, but it ends with the marriage of Caliban and Miranda, which is a clear fairy tale ending, a defiant gesture of hope against hope.

The Leto Bundle is another series of interlocking fairy tales, but tragic, about a refugee.[7] A lot of my short stories also take up fairy tales. I do try to continue the dialogue, though it's not been much noticed by the critics. I'm quite proud of the one that rewrites 'Rapunzel' ('The Difference in the Dose'), because it's about adoption and older women who can't have children.[8] I like trying to engage at this level.

Did your early upbringing in Cairo, where your father had a bookshop, contribute to your interest in the 'Arabian Nights'?

Yes, possibly.

But when I was working on French and Italian fairy tales, I began to realise how indebted they were to the 'Arabian Nights' (this is an example of structural limits in university organisation: Oriental Studies and Modern Languages rarely meet or interact). Giambattista Basile, who in the 17th century

put together an early collection of fairy tales, known as *Il Pentamerone*, knew many oriental stories, probably because Naples is a port city trading across the Mediterranean. And there are also traces in Shakespeare, which he may have found in Boccaccio. The sea of stories was crisscrossed by merchants and pilgrims and many others who might have told one another stories. I felt this conversation hadn't been acknowledged.

As I was listening to the radio when the first Iraq war broke out, I realised that I knew the name 'Basra' from the 'Nights'. At this time of conflict, I thought I'd look at the alternative story – a story of entanglement, intercommunication, mutual curiosity and respect. As I wrote in the foreword to *Scheherazade's Children*, which is a collection of very good essays by other people,[9] at the very height of the most murderous Crusades or battles across the Mediterranean, ordinary men and women were looking at one another's clothes and saying, 'How did you make that velvet? How did you weave that silk?' There was something very different going on at a cultural level, and certainly in literary terms they were listening to each other. That inclination of the imagination to listen in to others because they are going to tell you something you don't know is a real resource for stability and for co-existence. It's important in terms of creating mutual respect and interests, and I feel it is under-noticed, neglected. I was fortunate that my book *Stranger Magic* struck a chord.[10] People recognised something in it that could help now, could do something.

In 2016, I've been the Humanitas Weidenfeld Visiting Professor in Comparative European Literature at Oxford, and one of the themes of the lectures I gave was that many of us are living in a half-comprehending world, where we're all needing to learn. People speak a bit of this and a bit of that, and we have to muddle along together and make ourselves understood. I've become very interested in unintelligibility. I am in that situation myself when I look at Arabic. I can't read a word of Arabic, although until I was six I spoke kitchen Arabic.

For migrants and refugees displaced from their homes and cultures, how important are stories?

This was a theme of these lectures I've been giving. I am trying to suggest that the imaginative world we
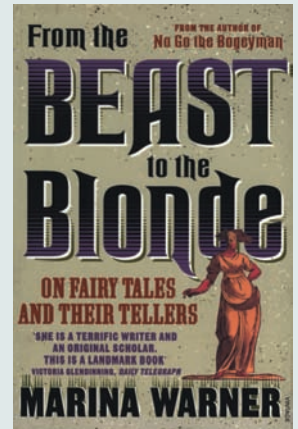
5. Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (1985).
6. Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On fairy tales and their tellers* (1994).
7. Marina Warner, *The Leto Bundle* (2001).
8. In Marina Warner, *Fly Away Home* (2015).
9. *Scheherazade's Children: Global Encounters with the Arabian Nights,* edited by Philip F. Kennedy and Marina Warner (NYU Press, 2013).
10. Marina Warner, *Stranger Magic: Charmed States and the Arabian Nights* (2011).

carry inside us – which can be made up not only of words, but also of music, song, possibly certain ritual gestures – can help a little to alleviate the conditions of dislocation, evacuation, of being emptied of your past. The charity Bibliothèques Sans Frontières has said the average time in a refugee camp is 17 years. So if you become a refugee as a child of four, that's your life, that's the setting for what you're going to know. It's really important that the world inside the head is full of something beyond the immediate deprivation – that song, poetry, stories exist there too.

I'm working on a refugees and storytelling project. The idea is to persuade an NGO that it's important to have storytelling or cultural spaces in a refugee camp or 'reception centre'. For *x* number of people, there should be something of the kind.

It was winning the Holberg Prize last year that made me want to do this.[11] They asked whether I had any plans for using the prize money. I began thinking up this plan. I hope it's going to bear fruit. But it's very complicated and difficult.

There are linguistic difficulties, obviously. The camps do naturally divide up according to ethnic groups and languages. In Sicily, where we are holding a workshop this September, I encountered 14 different languages. We're trying to face the problem of how you foster cultural memory within a community without a common language. We're looking at gesture, performance, mime, puppetry – different methods of carrying a story that aren't textually linguistic. The emphasis is on the people telling their own stories. But we want them to have more furniture to put in their stories – we want them to have a house they can build of their memories with more elements.

Alice Oswald is participating: she is a wonderful poet, but she is also very committed to these questions, and does a lot of translation/re-telling of classical myth. Tamim Al-Barghouti is involved: he is a Palestinian-Egyptian who is reviving the Arabic tradition of recitation, but is also interested in the mnemonic aspects of sharing poetry – it can give you a sense of home, 'a country of words', where you inhabit a familiar, larger music than the immediate meaning of the language.

You're also interested in how stories can act as 'thought experiments in times of turmoil'. What do you mean by that?

I am interested in well-known stories that don't exist in one textual form. Jane Austen's *Persuasion* is *Persuasion*. You could retell it with zombies – as is

now the fashion – and it might recognisably still be *Persuasion*. But on the whole, it's a text, and the commas matter. 'Bluebeard' is a very different thing. It manifests itself in a form that becomes very popular, like Charles Perrault's famous version, or in a film, but it's totally mobile, totally labile. It only needs certain elements and it still remains 'Bluebeard'. That is the metamorphic quality of the received tale.

A neater way of thinking of it is the difference between a story and a tale. The French word for a short story, *nouvelle*, and 'novella' and 'novel' are all terms that imply newness, originality – in contrast to a tale, which comes down through tradition. Of course, novels are thought experiments too. But those proverbial tales already exist as a kit, and the way you reassemble that kit gives you the chance to think out a different way of doing it. 'Bluebeard' has been rewritten many times, including by many women. I have proposed that it's about death in childbirth – that it confronts that danger and that very well grounded fear that marriage may be the death of you.

These tales constitute an inexhaustible treasury. When Italo Calvino made his collection of Italian folk tales in 1956,[12] what he was really thrilled by was the extraordinary variety. There's a repertory of recognisable themes and figures – the poor woodcutter's daughter, the trickster lad – but there are so many ingenious variations. For example, Calvino particularly liked the version of 'Bluebeard' in which the girl tricks him and brings her two sisters back to life – it's a joyous act of rebellion. We have allowed the range of tales to be attenuated. And there is a huge amount that has slipped from general consciousness. There is the Scandinavian material – the sagas and the myths – and the rich corpus of Irish and Celtic legends, which are very little known.

There is also a whole class of tales that are even more evidently thought experiments. Those are the ones that are about resisting power, and they are the most interesting ancient literature in the world. The so-called fables of Aesop actually originate in India earlier, and then manifest themselves in different forms over the world, including Africa. In the *Kalila Wa Dimna*, the Arabic version, they are parables about statecraft and power. They are thought experiments about justice. In the 'Arabian Nights', the princes who are deeply criticised for their violence and tyranny do resemble certain people today very recognisably – Assad or Putin. Unfortunately, while the stories understand, the abuses continue.

So do these tales provide us with some sort of compensation mechanism?

> I'm working on a project to have storytelling or cultural spaces in a refugee camp.

11. The Holberg Prize – established by the Norwegian Parliament in 2003, and named after the Danish-Norwegian writer Ludvig Holberg – is awarded annually to a scholar who has made outstanding contributions to research in the arts and humanities, social science, law or theology. The Prize amounts to 4.5 million Norwegian kroner.
12. Italo Calvino, *Fiabe Italiane* (1956).

In May 2015, Dame Marina Warner FBA introduced a week of British Academy events that explored the literary 'Other Worlds' of fairy tales and folk tales. Her book *Once Upon a Time: A Short History of Fairy Tale* is reissued in paperback in Summer 2016.

she helped set the path that put the pen in women's hands. And other women writers, thinkers and artists did so much work to get women educated. Voltaire grasped that making up fables – his *contes philosophiques* – would communicate his ideas far more widely than his essays.

Why do we seem so interested today in stories about vampires and zombies? Are they also symbols for understanding our world?

Vampires and zombies are formidable cultural symbols. When zombies first emerged in the Caribbean in the 18th and 19th centuries, they were figures of the slave, driven by the slave owner and deprived of all being, of all will and sentience – shuffling around, completely zombified. But then they re-emerged in the 1960s, in George A. Romero's films as active, cannibalistic, vengeful. In Romero's vision they had taken on a totally different dynamic – the urban proletariat enraged with their lot.

Zombies and vampires are now a powerful expression of the difficulties the young are experiencing. They feel themselves to be part of a vampiric system in which they have been zombified. There are real difficulties of housing and expenses for the young. Their only way out of it is to become more cannibalistic than the next person. The job market is absolutely cutthroat.

There is also the broader question of the role of fantasy. One of the reasons that fantasy has gained such a purchase on us – and has become so extraordinarily fertile through so many systems of representations – is the underexplored state of our changing consciousness in the digital age. We are now capable of realising phantasms beyond any previous generation.[13] There are 3D glasses where you can live in a complete virtual world: you feel you are experiencing a reality. Our sense perceptions are no longer our only tools for understanding phenomena. We are now able to conjure phenomena that simply aren't there. But it's very little understood what effect it will have on us and our children.

There are several ways in which it is a literature of consolation. Somehow understanding something, recognising it, gives one a sense of fulfilment of some kind. Aristotle noticed that. It's bizarre how one goes to tragedy and feels a bit better afterwards. He said that it was to do with seeing the mighty fallen, but I don't think it's that. I think the sense of order that a great tragedy imposes on the mess of existence gives one a certain kind of hope that maybe something can be redressed – that is Seamus Heaney's word and I like it.

I don't believe that Auden was right that 'poetry makes nothing happen'. Certain things *have* changed, and one should uphold literature as an instrument of that change. The great changes in our lifetime have included women's rights to equality in education above all, and gay rights. These major social changes arrived through legal measures. But those legal measures depended on changes in values and attitudes, and they happened through thinking and writing. Jane Austen wrote 'Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story … the pen has been in their hands'. But she recognised that, and

> There is a whole class of tales that are about resisting power, and they are the most interesting ancient literature in the world.

I'd like to make a final point. When one is trying to talk in a scholarly way about fantasy or fairy tales, it is very easy to forget the part enjoyment plays, the important cultural dimensions of entertainment, which can lead to pleasure, laughter, sympathy and poignancy. That is also an important part of the way we are – imaginative, thinking beings, but also capable of fellow-feeling and of moving outside our own immediate experience. 〞

13. At a British Academy event in May 2011, Marina Warner discussed her 2006 book P*hantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media,* in conversation with Professor Hermione Lee FBA. See B*ritish Academy Review,* 18 (Summer 2011), 41–44.

The history of Arabic books in the digital age

Sarah Bowen Savant reveals how computer algorithms can aid the comparison of medieval Arabic texts

Sarah Bowen Savant is an Associate Professor in the Aga Khan University's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations, which is based in London. In 2015 she received a British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award.

In September 2015, a British Academy-funded three-day workshop in London brought together computer scientists, programmers and scholars to explore the ways that a new digital method can detect the copying of older books into newly created ones. The method is useful for seeing how authors reworked and adapted past texts for new purposes.

In the 7th century, the rise of Islam and the Arab conquests initiated a period of literary creativity at urban centres across the Middle East, as new wealth combined with new faith. By the 10th century, the result was one of the largest textual traditions up to its day, which addressed all aspects of culture in Arabic, the new common language for elites. Works on religion fuelled this creative outpouring, as did many other books, reflecting the subjects of interest to Arabic-reading elites, including philosophy, literature and poetry, as well as medicine, mathematics and geography. Going by accounts from the period and also what survives, individual writers wrote dozens of wordy works. For example, the *History* written by a famous Iranian author named al-Tabari (died Baghdad, 923) covers history from the creation of the world up to his own day and runs to over 1.5 million words, filling 39 volumes in the modern English translation – and this was apparently an abridgment of an earlier version (by comparison Herodotus's Greek *The Histories* has 190,000 words). Furthermore, that is just one of al-Tabari's many books, and he is but one of thousands of authors from the pre-modern period.

What inspired this surge and what kept it going? Why, when Europe and other regions of the world produced books on a much more modest scale, did Arabic writers become so prolific? How did they produce such vast works? The introduction of paper-making technology

in the 8th and 9th centuries and the technological revolution it implied can only explain so much. What core practices and ways of thinking about authorship, books, and book production arose in the Middle East to draw new writers into the field and to spur them on? So far, scholars have made only slight headway to explain the driving factors of this new, massively creative tradition.

Detecting book copying and how the technology works

There is now a major clue that can for the first time be probed and this is evidence for verbatim copying gathered electronically. An important point, frequently made but little explored, is that the Arabic textual tradition is not only very large, but very repetitive. About four years ago, I was checking student papers for plagiarism using software purchased by my university, while also writing a book about Islamic history using online collections of Arabic books. For my research, I was particularly interested in the ways that Iranians' memory of their history changed as they converted to Islam between the 9th and 11th centuries. I was trying to work this out by comparing earlier and later accounts of the same matters, and found that many reports about the origins of Islam fine-tuned earlier ones, changing only a name or other choice details so as to give Iranians themselves more of a starring role in events. Frequently, I could find as many as a dozen varying accounts of the same event, as if a game of 'Chinese whispers' had been played out over six or more centuries. Student papers in hand, the idea dawned on me: what if I could use plagiarism detection software to gather evidence for copying in the Arabic tradition, the networks of people who participated in it, and how the tradition developed as a whole over time?

Unfortunately, no software existed that I could apply to my Arabic texts. So after some preparatory work, in 2015 I assembled a team of programming volunteers who decided to try an algorithm developed in the US that detects 'text reuse', much as plagiarism software does. The algorithm's author, David Smith of Northeastern University, had developed it for 19th-century American newspapers, to see how stories went 'viral'. Similar algorithms are employed by search engines to eliminate duplicate results and by security analysts combing the web. KITAB's team[1] – working weekends and nights, including a weekly two-hour Sunday call – applied the algorithm to about 10,000 Arabic books that have been digitally formatted and made available online across the Middle East. We compared every book against every other one using a 'shingling' method, in which the computer searches for

The Arabic textual tradition is not only very large, but very repetitive.

similarities between texts broken into units. This comparison generated nearly 10 million files filling 250 gigabytes of data. The algorithm was run on the texts on the supercomputing centre at Tufts University in Boston, thanks to the support of our project partner, the Perseus Digital Library. KITAB's team then designed a database at my university of indexed results and a web application for studying them. We are in the process of loading our files into this database (which, given the size of the data, requires quite a lot of data modelling), but now a sampling of our pilot data can be seen on the KITAB website.[2]

From a research point of view, the complexity of these operations and the enormous quantity of data generated means we need to think carefully about what we would like to find within our data. Furthermore, the present algorithm is designed to discover statistically significant relationships between texts, but there is no one-size-fits-all algorithm to detect text reuse perfectly – it is very different to look for and visualise rare similarities versus rare differences between texts and across our collection. As we detect and graphically display other types of text reuse, we will adapt our algorithm and data models further, and generate still more data for exploration.

The British Academy funding was absolutely critical to our work on the pilot, as it provided a concrete goal: to generate data for analysis by a group of peer historians at our British Academy-funded workshop in September 2015. We met this goal, and KITAB's findings are now beginning to be cited by members of the user group in their own research. The workshop also featured a day and a half initiation into text reuse algorithms themselves, offered by Marco Büchler, of Göttingen University. This was helpful for communicating both the promise and challenges of the method to the field.

Copying as a creative practice

What we have found is that the scale of copying was absolutely enormous. Just to take one straight-forward example: different accounts about the Prophet Muhammad were written down and then copied repeatedly in the first four centuries of Islamic history. Some accounts eventually won out as the most authoritative, but that was a long time coming. When authors wrote about Muhammad, they went back to previous circulating accounts, copying out the parts most relevant to their own versions. This writing was fuelled and supported by auditory practices, including reading texts aloud. The graph in Figure 1 was generated from our data, with the red lines showing passages common to both the *History* of al-Tabari and an earlier biography of Muhammad. The *x*-axis represents

Figure 1. Comparing works by al-Tabari and Ibn Hisham.
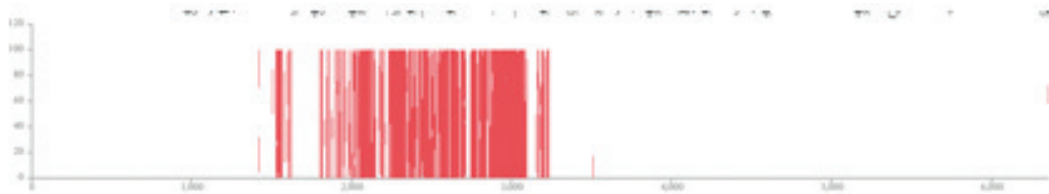
(a) Detecting common passages. This graph may look like a bar code, but in fact shows what of al-Tabari's *History* also turns up in an earlier book, a biography of Muhammad by Ibn Hisham (died 828). The numbers on the *y*-axis represent numbers of words from this second book. Each line represents up to 100 words; hanging lines mean that the length of an identified passage is, for example, 60 words; it starts on the 20th word in the chunk and extends to the 80th word.

(b) Aligning texts. The passage on the left is from Ibn Hisham's book, whereas that on the right is from al-Tabari's. They treat a moment in the events leading up to the Battle of Badr, when Muhammad's newly established community in Medina had its first significant success against his opponents in his hometown of Mecca. The dotted lines indicate discrepancies in wording between the two texts, which in this case are not significant for the meaning of either text.

Figure 2. Comparing works by Miskawayh and al-Tabari.

(a) Two closely related books. Miskawayh chronology – divided into chunks – runs along the *x*-axis, with the red lines representing 100-word chunks of the text that also appear in al-Tabari's *History*.
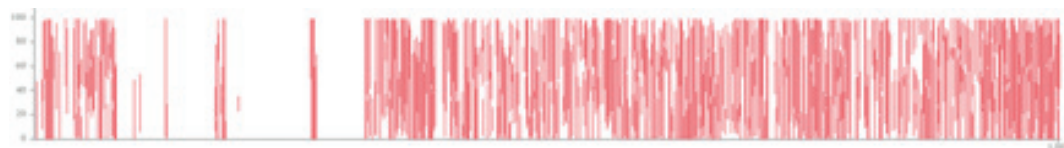
(b) Closely related but not the same. This is a closer look at the start of Miskawayh's chronology. The red lines indicate passages common to al-Tabari's *History*, whereas the white indicates that the computer has not detected common passages.

chunked segments of al-Tabari's book, running from the beginning of the book to its end. The red lines running up the *y*-axis represent 100 word segments that are also found in the earlier history. The copied passages start with an account of a Christian king of South Arabia in the middle of the 6th century by the name of Abraha, who Muslim tradition records as leading an expedition against Mecca in the year of Muhammad's birth (*c.*570). They end with the death and burial of Muhammad. As a source for his knowledge, al-Tabari cites in his book an earlier book by Ibn Ishaq (died 767) that was transmitted through intermediaries. Ibn Hisham's book is a revised edition of that of Ibn Ishaq, so what we have in Ibn Ishaq is a common source for both al-Tabari's book and that of Ibn Hisham (Ibn Ishaq's book does not survive independently).

The results of the pilot stage turn up quite extensive and close copying, suggesting a vibrant, if complicated, written tradition. Such wholesale repurposing of an earlier text is in fact extremely common, and it is really just a matter of time – and statistically grounded research – before we can work out how much of the surviving tradition, as a whole, is repetitive.

To say that authors copied out parts of previous works – even very large parts – is not to say that they parroted past knowledge. Rather, they would appear to have viewed earlier books as valuable resources whose contents could be reused, sometimes giving credit, but other times not. We need to understand the assumptions guiding this copying much better. We already know that it occurred in many ways, including excerpts from earlier works, as with al-Tabari's copying of Ibn Ishaq's book, as well as the recycling of textual fragments in anthologies, encyclopaedias, multi-text compilations, commentaries, and abridgements and extensions of earlier books. Did citation practices vary depending on the copied source and/or the book into which it was copied? This seems likely, but in precisely what ways and why? Were Arabic authors more likely than their European and other counterparts to adapt past works than to copy manuscripts in their entirety? Does such copying suggest the evidence of previously unrecognised Arabic literary canons or classics?

For now, we can already see how selective this copying was – sometimes in fascinating ways. Consider how al-Tabari's own book was copied in later centuries, including by a court secretary and librarian named Miskawayh (b. *c.*932, d. 1030), who studied al-Tabari's works under the direction of one of the past master's pupils. A famous Orientalist, David Samuel Margoliouth,[3] completed in 1921 an English translation of the last two volumes of Miskawayh's universal history – at the time, he asserted that Miskawayh copied al-Ṭabari's *History* for his own book up to 908. Since then – that is, for nearly a hundred years – European scholars have largely ignored Miskawayh's book for anything but history from 908 onwards and have viewed it as only original – and valuable – as a source for the Buyid dynastic period in which he worked. Until the

turn of the 21st century, in fact, there was not even a completed printed edition to be had.

Both works are chronicles, running from creation up to their own day. In Figure 2, the red lines represent what of al-Tabari's book can be found in Miskawayh's. Read as a whole, the graph shows that Miskawayh relied very heavily upon al-Tabari's *History* – but he did not copy it verbatim. In particular, examining the white parts of the graph now, rather than the red, reveals that when Miskawayh wrote about the history of the Sasanians, the last dynasty of Iran before the Muslim conquests, he copied very little, and likewise, he copied sparingly from al-Tabari's account of Muhammad. By contrast, he relied heavily on al-Tabari when he turned his attention to the history of the caliphate (but even there, he made choices). It would seem that these were parts of his book that he felt needed more editorial work and intervention – these are where we can expect to find his own handiwork. For research purposes and understanding the authorial interventions of Miskawayh, it is very helpful to be able to see the distinction between the white and the red, and then to closely read and consider the parts of Miskawayh's book corresponding to the white.

Future development of KITAB

We have produced a lot of data now, and we need time to examine it carefully and consider its significance. We are applying for further funding to do so, and also for funding to improve the quality of the bibliographic data in our collection of digital books.

As for the technology side, as a result of the pilot, we now have a much better idea of the technology underlying KITAB and the research questions that can realistically be addressed. We can filter our data to show the highest correlation between one book and any other in our corpus. What might we do in the future? We hope to allow users to explore copying and transmission in the tradition in many different ways, for example, to investigate complex texts, built out of earlier texts, to see how diverse elements were combined and amalgamated (as occurred, for example, with anthologies), or to see how single, specific works (such as al-Tabari's *History*) moved across many other later works. We intend to create visual aids that allow users to detect slight differences between two or more texts, as one might wish to do when comparing two editions of the same book, or a book and its abridgements or extensions. We also hope users will also be able to collect common passages scattered across the corpus, and order them using bibliographic data pertaining, for example, to place and date of composition (as would have been useful for researching my first book). Each of these ideas arose through the process of the pilot and is inspiring the next phase of development. This research will undoubtedly show that copying had many different cultural meanings. It is this big picture that drives the work of KITAB. ■

3. D.S. Margoliouth was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1915.

A passion for war poetry

Philip Lancaster tells how his study of the War Poets has inspired him to compose a new musical work

Dr Philip Lancaster is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Exeter.

It is quite amazing where a song can lead you. In around 1994 I was page-turning for the pianist in a concert at the Lichfield Festival of song settings of, and readings from, the work of A.E. Housman, performed by Gabriel Woolf, Ian and Jennifer Partridge, and the Lindsay String Quartet. One song knocked me for six: a setting of the poem 'Far in a Western Brookland' by one Ivor Gurney. Such poise, intensity and beauty! I asked Gabriel for a copy of the score, and began, slowly to explore who this Gurney was. Ten years later, having made my interest known to some, I was asked to prepare some unpublished songs for a recording by baritone Roderick Williams; an edition of Gurney's *War Elegy* for orchestra followed; and so began a relationship with the Gurney Trust and Gurney's archive that has led to the bringing of numerous works from manuscript to performance, recording and broadcast, including the remainder of Gurney's orchestral works and the first of his choral works to be brought out of the archive.

With my PhD I unexpectedly crossed a great formal divide: I moved from the world of academic music into English literature and poetry. Gurney is both a composer and a poet, so it was a natural progression in this respect. And as a singer with a great passion for English song, and a dabbler in the writing of poetry, I discovered that I knew a little more about the subject than I thought. It was still, however, a daunting step, but it is one that has brought great re-wards, both in my research and, during this second year of my British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship (PDF), in the surprising joy that I have found in teaching poetry to undergraduates.

My PDF research continues the work begun during my PhD: the ordering and reclamation from the archive of Gurney's poetical works, two-thirds of which – in the region of a thousand poems – is yet unpublished. With Professor Tim Kendall I am editing these for publication by Oxford University Press. Alongside this edition, I am writing a monograph which will draw together my work on both the music and the poetry in a detailed study of his work, looking at the common tropes and ideas behind both of his arts.

With the monograph in mind, in March 2013 – just after successfully defending my PhD – I began with purpose to read much more thoroughly and widely within the genre of War Poetry, seeking to identify how Gurney compared; where he sat within the War Poets. I was reading Isaac Rosenberg when one poem struck me: 'The Tower of Skulls'. 'These layers of piled-up skulls/These layers of gleaming horror – stark horror!' It was a little before Holy Week, and I was, at around that time, revisiting a recording of J.S. Bach's *Johannes Passion*, and it struck me forcibly that Rosenberg's poem could be evoking the scene of Christ's crucifixion at Golgotha – 'the place of the skull'. The evocation of the Passion is not unusual in War Poetry. Wilfred Owen, for instance, invokes it directly in his poem 'At a Calvary near the Ancre'. The imagery of the crucifixion was very present in the landscape of Catholic France and Flanders, that religious iconography adorning the roadsides, giving rise to places being known by the British soldiers as 'Crucifix Corner', for instance.

Ivor Gurney, photographed in hospital at Rouen in May 1917, after he had been shot in the arm on Good Friday, 6 April.
PHOTO: IVOR GURNEY ESTATE/GLOUCESTERSHIRE ARCHIVES.

One of Gurney's most famous songs, *In Flanders* – one of a handful of songs composed whilst at The Front – was written in January 1917 at one such Crucifix Corner. The Rosenberg poem, in combination with that connection with Gurney, made me think: might it be possible to draw together a telling of the story of the Passion with a commentary from poems by the poets of the First World War?

For three months I devoured the work of the War Poets with a greater hunger, and slowly began to build up a narrative based upon the Gospel of Mark and reinforced by the work of Rosenberg, Gurney (of course; an unpublished poem), Julian Grenfell, Charles Sorley, Edward Thomas, Robert Graves, Herbert Read, Edmund Blunden, Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. So a *War Passion* was born in which the war poetry not only strengthened and lent weight to the story of the Passion, but also presented a parallel narrative of the soldier, and the sacrifice of the common man for the salvation of wider mankind; a purpose not dissimilar to that of Christ's crucifixion.

Whilst I was awaiting the verdict on my British Academy PDF application, I was awarded a two month scholarship by the Finzi Trust in order to start bringing the libretto of the *War Passion* to life with the addition of music, and so a year after the first idea, I began composing. Having not done any serious composition for almost 15 years, I made but small and steady progress – but it was progress. Following that two month scholarship, and having been successful in my PDF application, I expected to tinker with it occasionally in my spare time and bring it to fruition as and when I could, whether during the centenary of the First World War, as would be appropriate, or not, I couldn't say.

The third arm of my PDF work has been to bring to life a substantial post-war cantata by Gurney, which he didn't quite complete. This setting of Walt Whitman, *Anthem of Earth*, is a major work for baritone solo, chorus and orchestra through which Gurney likely sought to lay to rest some of his experiences of war, telling of the rejuvenation of the earth out of the putrefaction of death. It is a substantial work of some importance, and in seeking to find an output for the première of that work I contacted Adrian Partington, the Artistic Director of the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester. As a former Gloucester Cathedral chorister who sang in that festival in the early 20th century, Gurney had a close connection with that place, and the festival had in 2010 programmed my orchestration of Gurney's choral setting of Edward Thomas, *The Trumpet*, and the world première of his 1921 *A Gloucestershire Rhapsody* for orchestra (which receives its Australian première this August); and in 2013 they had

Canada's Golgotha (1918), by the British sculptor Francis Derwent Wood (1871–1926), in the Beaverbrook Collection of War Art at the Canadian War Museum, Ottawa (CWM 19710261–0797). The sculpture is a depiction of a story that arose during the First World War, in May 1915, of a Canadian soldier who was crucified by German soldiers, pinned to a barn door with bayonets. The story has been dismissed as propaganda, although subsequent research has suggested that, if it is true, the soldier was Sergeant Harry Band. PHOTO: OWEN BYRNE.

programmed my reconstruction of the original scoring of Gurney's first masterpiece, the *Five Elizabethan Songs*. Would they like another important Gurney première for the 2016 festival? In my correspondence about this Gurney work I mentioned as an aside my *War Passion*. To my absolute amazement, Adrian was more interested in my own work than in the Gurney; he wanted to programme it in the festival. To my delight and terror, it was confirmed, and so I had to step up work on the piece, whilst trying to maintain momentum on the Gurney project and also work out how to teach. The result is a 67 minute chamber oratorio for four soloists, choir and an ensemble of 13 instrumentalists; a new, and I hope effective, telling of the experiences of war, which will hopefully bring the work of 10 different War Poets to new audiences. It will be premièred on the afternoon of 24 July 2016, during the period of commemoration of the centenary of the Somme offensive, as part of the 301st Three Choirs Festival; my first major work as a composer.

With much relief, I can now refocus all of my time and effort back onto Gurney; but it is quite amazing where a song will lead you: from a page-turning school-boy, through a PhD to a PDF; the undertaking of a major poetry edition and monograph; the teaching a subject that is not your first; and to the première of a major original work that has grown directly out of the research that has defined your academic career. Who knows what might happen next? ▬

Human nature in society

Jennifer Sheehy-Skeffington argues that
lessons from evolution can support academic
critique of how society is run

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In most social science and humanities circles, bringing up
the role of evolution in shaping human behaviour is un-
welcome, and thus unwise. The first core objection is em-
pirical: the attempt to reduce the behaviour of this most
complex social animal to a set of deterministic 'biological
drives' is said to neglect the pervasive influence of social,
economic, cultural, and political forces on human action
and co-ordination. The second objection is ideological:
claims about evolved human tendencies toward aggres-
sion or infidelity are seen as white-washing, providing a
justification for the maintenance of systems of inequality
and patriarchy, and thus leaving no space for individual
and collective agency to effect radical social-structural
change.

Eloquent arguments have already been put forth
against the supposed empirical naivety of evolutionary
psychology. In The Blank Slate, Steven Pinker presented
the empirical case against the notion that humans are
born with no evolved psychology whatsoever, ready to
be moulded to produce whatever set of behavioural pat-
terns the surrounding environment and socialisation dic-
tates. Rather, as put forward most forcefully by two of the
founders of evolutionary psychology – John Tooby and
Leda Cosmides – our brains arrive on the scene with a set
of cognitive tools already prepared to navigate the kinds of
social environments in which our ancestors had to survive:
small-scale societies of hunter-gatherers and proto-agri-
culturalists. More recently, research on evolution and be-
haviour has moved beyond the question of nature *versus*
nurture, to ask how the *interaction* between universal
social-cognitive mechanisms and varying ecological con-
texts yields the cultural diversity in patterns of behaviour
that we see across societies. Schools of study such as be-
havioural ecology and evolutionary developmental biology
are shedding light on how early life experiences shape key
later life decisions and abilities in ways that make adap-
tive sense. Those working in the field of cultural evolution
demonstrate how the uniquely human capacity for social

learning generates complex cultural landscapes that our evolved brain learns to navigate, possibly evolving further in the process. Rather than bracketing out the complexity of modern human social systems, sophisticated computational models and simulations can now attempt to build such complexity into theories of evolution and behaviour, predicting societal change better than can approaches to history based on social constructionism alone.

I would like to argue that just as evolutionary reasoning shouldn't be dismissed for empirical reasons, so we also have little need to be afraid of it on ideological grounds. Indeed, my own research programme can be characterised as aiming to explore how evolutionary insights help us to see the fundamental role in human behaviour not only of sociality, but of society at large. One way of summarising these insights is to think of two core kinds of social knowledge that have been found to be early-emergent and cross-culturally universal: an understanding of social groups, and a sensitivity to social status. Research has shown that infants even before they can speak, and members of small-scale societies across the world, share an understanding of what it means to be a member of an 'ingroup' or 'outgroup', and why it matters whether one is high or low in standing in a social hierarchy. If social cognition of this kind is innate, and responsive to the shape of institutions and economic arrangements, this has important implications for what kinds of societies we might find feasible and desirable – what's worth fighting for and what's worth fighting against.

Harnessing insights regarding our evolved understanding of social groups has important lessons for enabling cohesion and fairness in multi-ethnic societies. In particular, what we know about our ancestral past implies that the tendency to be biased in favour of our 'ingroup' did not arise from an innate hostility toward members of other ethnic groups. Rather, it is the product of an evolved 'coalitional psychology' which tracks shifting alliances among any people in our surrounding environment. Thus, what our brains evolved is a tendency to watch for cues that differentiate people with whom one is likely to co-operate, from those with whom one is likely to compete. Race is one such salient cue, but can be supplanted with others. Based on this logic, Robert Kurzban, David Pietraszewski and collaborators have shown that racially-biased thinking can be altered once the coalitional cues in the environment are altered. In their studies, those who read stories in which people of different ethnicities are co-operating shifted from cognitively categorising them by ethnicity to cognitively connecting them based on (multi-ethnic) team membership.

Related research from Michael Bang Petersen, again taking an evolutionary perspective, has shown that such co-operative cues matter for social welfare preferences. People are more likely to support social welfare payments for those whose inability to earn enough is due to no fault of their own, and thus whose co-operative intent is unquestioned.[1] The implications are hopeful for the debate about the future of support for egalitarian social reform. Contrary to recent claims from economics, ethnic heterogeneity should not erode social solidarity as long as there is a sense of a shared coalition that includes everyone in society, in which each makes an effort to contribute. Recent declines in support for social democratic parties in Europe are no longer seen as an inevitable response to unprecedented levels of immigration from non-Western countries. Seen through an evolutionary lens, attempts to save Europe's strong welfare state in the face of rapid immigration are less a question of how to ensure enough resources are left for the ingroup, than of how to construct a shared notion of the ingroup that is inclusive enough of newly arrived populations to earn their desire to contribute to it.

Questions around the apparent 'deservingness' of welfare recipients trigger our evolved cognition of social status, too. Specifically, recent British media and political debates on welfare reform have focused on the role of individual responsibility of those at the bottom of society to work to advance their conditions: the need, as Prime Minister David Cameron puts it, to 'become more like us … hard-working, pioneering, independent, creative, adaptable, optimistic, can-do.'[2] As critics of the welfare reform agenda have pointed out, such persistent focus on the decisions and behaviours of low-income groups can easily slide into attempts to blame the poor for their own situation of poverty. An evolutionary approach breaks this link, in two ways.

First, our ancestral past teaches us that perceptions of where one sits in a social hierarchy affect our health, happiness, and even our behaviour. The work of epidemiologist Michael Marmot[3] has already drawn on evidence of the importance of hierarchy for our primate ancestors, to explain his findings that those sitting lower in any kind of social hierarchy – be it organisational or socioeconomic – are more likely to suffer health problems than those higher up. My PhD research attempted to take this a step further, demonstrating that perceived social standing matters not

1. See R. Kurzban, J. Tooby and L. Cosmides, 'Can race be erased? Coalitional computation and social categorization', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, 98 (2001), 15387–15392; M.B. Petersen, D. Sznycer, L. Cosmides and J. Tooby, J. 'Who deserves help? Evolutionary psychology, social emotions, and public opinion about welfare', *Political Psychology*, 33:3 (2012), 395–418; D. Pietraszewski, L. Cosmides and J. Tooby, 'The content of our cooperation, not the color of our skin: An alliance detection system regulates categorization by coalition and race, but not sex', *PLOS ONE* 9:2 (2014), e88534.
2. Speech to the Conservative Party Conference, October 2011, accessed at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-15189614
3. Professor Sir Michael Marmot was elected an Honorary Fellow of the British Academy in 2008.

only for health outcomes, but for health behaviours. In a set of online and laboratory studies, Jim Sidanius and I randomly assigned middle-income American participants to receive positive versus negative feedback about where they sat in the American 'socioeconomic ladder', and then measured the perceived control they had over their life outcomes. Those who received low socioeconomic status (SES) feedback were less likely to say they had control over their life outcomes, a subjective state that is known to be damaging to health behaviours. Indeed, when we then asked people to play a household budgeting game in which they were randomly assigned to have a very low (versus a very high) income, they reported not only feeling less powerful, but also being less able to stick to healthy behaviours in the areas of diet, exercise, and safety. In a related set of studies, those perceiving that they were relatively low in SES were also less likely to identify the best of three hypothetical credit card offers, this time because the negative socioeconomic feedback had actually temporarily impaired their cognitive abilities.

This evidence adds to a growing literature on the behavioural economics of poverty, which argues that the experience of not having enough resources is disruptive to everyday psychological processing, and thus to good economic decision-making. Researchers in that field had shown that exposing middle-income participants to a situation of scarcity in resources elicited poor cognitive functioning and bad financial decisions. Our evolutionary approach predicted that relative resource scarcity should have a similar effect, which is just what we found.[4] Overall, the conclusion from these two areas of research is that decisions and behaviours that are criticised in the poor, such as smoking and taking out high-interest loans, are less likely to be a product of enduring psychological 'defects', than of the situational impact either of not having enough, or of merely realising one has a lot less than others.

This emerging study of the psychological consequences of poverty implies that one can use experimental methods to demonstrate what social theorists had long been claiming: that one's social structural position has a pervasive impact on one's subjective experience and sense of agency. But an evolutionary approach also allows us to go one step further. By understanding behavioural patterns as a product of evolved mechanisms responding to changing ecologies, we can see how decision-making patterns associated with low-income groups might not only be understandable, but might actually be adaptive. In research conducted while a British Academy Postdoc-

Evolutionary insights help document the mechanisms through which society shapes psychology

toral Fellow, I explored this by returning to the case of subjective social standing and cognitive functioning. In a study conducted with Michael Price, I started with the assumption that receiving negative feedback about one's socioeconomic standing should trigger a threat to one's perceived status – status being a valuable resource in our evolutionary past. Such a status threat shouldn't induce an across-the-board deficit in cognition; rather, it should reorient cognitive resources toward opportunities to regain status. If this is right, then presenting people with negative SES feedback, and then giving them an irrelevant cognitive task, should lead them to perform poorly, as their brains are busy thinking about the status threat. If, however, the cognitive task is presented in a way that makes clear how performing well on it might lead to later gains in socioeconomic status, people's cognitive resources should be 'brought back online'. This is exactly what we found. Whereas those randomly assigned to receive low SES feedback performed worse on a cognitive task than those receiving high SES feedback (as had been found in my earlier studies), once we presented information linking the cognitive task to later life gains in socioeconomic status, the performance differences between the high and low SES groups disappeared.[5] The implication is that exposure to negative perceptions of SES does not damage one's psychology, as much as it redirects psychological resources toward pressing environmental needs.

In another study funded by the British Academy, my collaborators at Brunel University and I are testing whether a similar process takes place in the case of what might be perceived as an evolutionary survival threat. We have collected data from students who have fasted for 12 hours, with half of them then randomly assigned to eat breakfast, before all students continue to a set of cognitive tasks. This will enable us to investigate whether the well-known damaging impact of food scarcity on cognitive functioning might go away once hungry participants are given cognitive tasks involving food-related stimuli, or tasks that offer a food reward based on performance. Once again, evolution teaches us that we have mechanisms designed to respond to environmental threats by prioritising psychological resources, rather than switching them off altogether.

Developmental psychologist Willem Frankenhuis has used similar evolutionary reasoning to propose that those who grow up in poor or high-risk environments, who perform worse on conventional measures of cognitive

4. See J. Sheehy-Skeffington and J. Haushofer, 'The behavioural economics of poverty', in *Barriers and Opportunities at the Base of the Pyramid: Prospects for Private Sector Led-Interventions* (Istanbul: UNDP Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development, 2014).
5. See J. Sheehy-Skeffington, J. Sidanius and M.E. Price, 'Decision-making at the bottom of the hierarchy: The cognitive impact of perceiving oneself as low in socioeconomic status', flash-talk delivered to the Society of Personality and Social Psychology Pre-Conference on the Emerging Psychology of Social Class, San Diego, CA (2016).
6. See W.E. Frankenhuis and C. de Weerth, 'Does early-life exposure to stress shape or impair cognition?' *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22 (2013), 407–412; C. Mittal, V. Griskevicius, J.A. Simpson, S. Sung and E.S. Young, 'Cognitive adaptations to stressful environments: When childhood adversity enhances adult executive function', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 109:4 (2015), 604; G.V. Pepper and D. Nettle, 'Socioeconomic disparities in health behaviour: An evolutionary perspective', in *Applied Evolutionary Anthropology* (New York: Springer, 2014), pp. 225–243.

Evolutionary insights imply that the reason low-income groups engage in more unhealthy behaviours such as smoking and unsafe sex is because being low income means living in an unstable environment with a high risk of dying for reasons outside of one's control. PHOTO: FLORIAN CHRISTOPH/FLICKR. USED UNDER CREATIVE COMMONS. LICENCE (CC BY 2.0).

functioning and intelligence, might perform better than those from middle-income backgrounds on cognitive tasks that draw on the kinds of challenges presented by high-risk environments: tasks such as detecting aggression in facial expressions, and rapidly shifting from one set of demands to another. In a related vein, behavioural ecologists Daniel Nettle and Gillian Pepper apply cross-species evolutionary insights to argue that the reason low-income groups engage in more unhealthy behaviours such as smoking and unsafe sex is because being low income means living in an unstable environment with a high risk of dying for reasons outside of one's control. In this context, where one can have little faith in one's future, shifting one's psychological focus toward present gains makes adaptive sense.[6] In sum, the application of evolutionary insights to the politically topical issue of poverty and individual responsibility not only helps document the mechanisms through which society shapes psychology; it also sheds light on ways in which middle-income groups have a lot to learn from the particular cognitive strengths one acquires from growing up in a low-income context.

In the above overview, I have focused on two in-sights drawn from human evolution to show how societal positioning, whether within social groups, or along social hierarchies, shapes our decision-making and behaviour in ways that matter for contemporary policy debates. Such within-country forces can be studied in interaction with differences between countries, and as they change over time. Knowing about our evolved cognition for co-operation and coalitions sheds light on how entire cultures evolve, becoming more or less stratified depending on the nature of interactions within and between societies. Similarly, knowing about our evolved sensitivity to social status can illuminate the   dynamics of intergroup oppression through history, or show why rising economic inequality has such a potent impact on population cohesion and well-being.[7] Though I have only touched on recent research in two areas, I hope to have made a case that applying evolutionary insights to the social scientific study of behaviour is a fertile endeavour, both empirically and normatively. Not only can it move us toward capturing the complexity of the intermingling of subjectivity with social, political, economic, historical and cultural forces; it can also reveal what such forces are doing to us, and what we might do about it. ▬

7. See S. Bowles, E.A. Smith and M.B. Mulder, 'The emergence and persistence of inequality in premodern societies', *Current Anthropology,*
   51:1 (2010), 117–118; J. Henrich and R. Boyd, 'Division of labor, economic specialization, and the evolution of social stratification', *Current
   Anthropology*, 49:4 (2008), 715–724; A. Nishi, H. Shirado, D.G. Rand and N.A. Christakis, 'Inequality and visibility of wealth in experimental
   social networks', *Nature,* 526:7573 (2015), 426–429; S. Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why violence has declined* (New York:
   Penguin, 2011); J. Sidanius and F. Pratto, *Social dominance: An intergroup theory of social hierarchy and oppression* (Cambridge:
   Cambridge University Press, 1999); R. Wilkinson and K. Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why equality is better for everyone* (London: Penguin, 2010).

Who owns state assets?

Angela Cummine argues the case for citizen
control over public wealth

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**'We want the state to control key sectors of the
Greek economy so that we can reap the benefits.'**
Alexis Tsipras, Prime Minister of Greece, 2015.[1]

Greek national assets are up for sale. Everything
from vital infrastructure like Athens Water
Supply, the country's main ports at Piraeus and
Thessaloniki and 14 regional airports, to symbolic
assets like the 2004 Olympic complex and Hel-
lenic Post. As part of Greece's third bailout struck
in July 2015, privatisation proceeds from state as-
sets must go into an independent fund to help
repay Greece's international creditors.

For many Greeks, this arrangement feels like
selling off the family silver, only to hand back the
sale proceeds to those demanding its sale. It was
reportedly the sticking point that nearly scuttled
the €86 billion three-year debt relief programme
and forced a Grexit. Even when privatisation was
first suggested as a fund-raising strategy to pay off
debt in 2010, several German politicians contro-
versially suggested Greece sell off its uninhabited
islands and historic monuments to pay down ar-
rears. Greeks responded by boycotting German
imports.

Despite the protests, the original Hellenic Re-
public Asset Development Fund (HRADF) was
established in 2011 to oversee a privatisation pro-

gramme. Known as Taiped, this initial fund was
expected to generate €50 billion in sale proceeds
within five years. But by early 2015, only €3.2 bil-
lion sat in the fund. Most key infrastructure assets
were unsold. When the Syriza party took office
on an anti-austerity mandate at the start of 2015,
they sacked Taiped's leaders and halted the sale
of numerous assets. A near-completed purchase
of ADMIE, Greece's electricity network operator,
was cancelled.

ADMIE is now for sale again and the pri-
vatisation programme rolls on. But Greek Prime
Minister Alexis Tsipras secured two concessions
on the management and use of privatisation assets
in the third bail out deal: the privatisation fund
must be run from Athens, not Luxembourg as the
creditors had wished; and part of its capital must
be invested in Greece. The final deal allocated half
of the new fund's anticipated €50 billion to recap-
italising local banks and a quarter to local invest-
ment in Greece, leaving the remaining €12.5 billion
to pay off creditors. In short, Greeks wanted more
control over and *benefit* from the fund holding the
proceeds of their national assets.

1. http://www.ekathimerini.com/167520/article/ekathimerini/business/
    tsipras-changes-govt-tune-over-privatisation-projects, accessed 9 March 2016

It is no surprise that the two conditions insisted upon by Prime Minister Tsipras to render the privatisation fund acceptable to Greek citizens were greater control and benefit, for these are the two core components of property rights. Pleas for more local control and benefit are ultimately pleas of ownership. But how can control and benefit rights over property be given effect when it comes to shared public assets like those in the Greek privatisation fund? And who should ultimately exercise those rights: citizens or their governments?

Who owns the state?

The resolution of such issues ultimately depends on the answer to a more fundamental question: who owns the state? This is the title of the research project which I am undertaking during my British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford. By determining the proper ownership status of the state, normatively-speaking, guidance can be developed on how to manage public assets in the best interests of communities.

This broader question about the ownership of the state and its assets has become more pressing in the 21st century. While the intensity of the 'nationalisa-tion versus privatisation' debates of the 1980s has waned, the desirability of public ownership remains a salient topic in polities across the globe today. Indeed, the past decade has seen a resurgence of the 'owner state', both reactive and proactive. On the reactive side, the financial crisis required extensive government intervention across OECD economies, resulting in an unplanned build up of public assets and record public liabilities. Emergency sovereign debt issues and national bailouts signalled a new era of public indebtedness. On the proactive side, many governments capitalised on windfalls from the super commodity cycle and trade surpluses, storing impressive levels of wealth in new Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs). Other governments, like those of Scotland, Greece and the UK, began selling off public assets including land and government buildings to generate fresh national capital and reduce primary deficits. These new assets and liabilities pose tough choices for governments. What should guide the distribution of their benefits and burdens, especially in light of the classical political theory demand that citizens must

The past decade has seen a resurgence of the 'owner state', both reactive and proactive.

be situated equally vis-à-vis the state? How should the benefits of newly amassed public wealth in SWFs or from state asset sales, and the burdens of record national debt, be distributed?

My British Academy-supported research seeks to assist governments in making those choices, by determining the rightful owner of contemporary state property: citizen or government. By considering whether the state can own something in its own right or if it is only ever the steward of the people's property, we can identify the proper rights and responsibilities of governments and citizens in relation to the use and management of public assets.

The project addresses the overarching question of 'who owns the state' by tackling four sub-questions, each with a distinct objective. The first objective is descriptive: to identify what today's 21st-century 'owner state' owns, and how this differs to the sorts of property states amassed

In Athens, riot police officers protect the Parliament from demonstrators, 12 December 2008. PHOTO: KOSTAS KOUTSAFTIKIS/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

over previous centuries. The next stage of the research is clarificatory in aim. It examines what existing theory on the state and public property in political philosophy says about the status of government assets and liabilities. In existing property theory, the ideas of 'state', 'government' and 'public' ownership are often used interchangeably, yet each concept contains a subtly different notion of ownership. To date, we still do not have a good grip on the difference between the ideas of common, collective, state and public ownership. This is problematic given these property systems are increasingly looked to as alternatives to the private property model in the current economic and political climate. Well-worn philosophical metaphors based on shared rights to common parks and natural resources are not easily transferable to the case of contemporary public economic assets such as sovereign wealth and other intangibles. Yet, these are the very forms of state property which hold significant implications for citizen equality vis-à-vis each other and the state. The third phase of the project is theoretical in focus. Assuming property theory must be refined to accommodate the new challenges posed by the contemporary 'owner state', it asks what would a modern framework of public ownership look like? The final objective of the project is prescriptive. It considers what this new understanding of public ownership implies for the distribution of benefits and burdens of the modern state's public property.

The overarching goal of the research is practical. By situating today's rebirth of the 'owner state' historically and devising an updated ownership framework for contemporary public property, the project seeks to guide governments and citizens in leveraging the full potential of state economic assets.

The blessings and burdens of sovereign wealth

One crucial aspect of the 'owner state' phenomenon is the build up of substantial national capital in SWFs. Sovereign funds are state-owned investment vehicles that hold and invest public wealth in financial markets for a return. They are typically seeded with windfalls from commodity receipts, privatisation proceeds or foreign exchange assets to act as savings or stabilisation vehicles in domestic economies. Although more than two-thirds of the world's almost 80 sovereign funds have come into existence since the year 2000, and collectively hold over US$6.5 trillion in assets, domestic-level analyses of the funds are sparse. Yet these powerful and increasingly prolific entities transform the citizen–state relationship by amassing national capital in government hands, often outside traditional agencies of the state, for financial investment on behalf of the nation. Consequently, their organisational design, investment behaviour and distributional policies have significant implications for those local citizens and communities in whose name they are created and act.
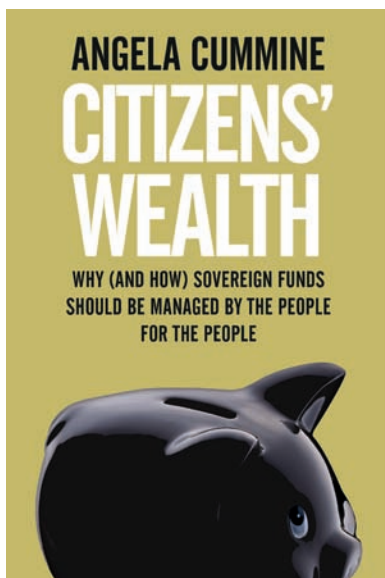
Just as in Greece, disputes over how to control and benefit from sovereign wealth plague numerous communities. Conflict has occurred in Alaska, Mongolia and Chile over the fairest use of sovereign wealth; in Norway, Australia, and New Zealand over whether the returns of SWFs should be generated ethically on behalf of the nation; and in Korea, China and Nigeria, which all experienced internal bureaucratic conflict over which public agencies should manage their vast pools of sovereign wealth.

Consider the case of Chile. In mid-2006, the streets of Santiago were flooded with protestors. Effigies of the new finance minister, Andrés Velasco, were set ablaze as citizens demanded a bigger share of Chile's historic copper boom. The metal's soaring price had quadrupled in just four years, generating unprecedented budget surpluses for the world's largest copper producer. But much of the windfall was going into two newly established sovereign funds, tasked with saving the country's boom proceeds for a rainy day.

The move to quarantine a chunk of Chile's burgeoning wealth in sovereign funds was not popular. The country's developing status and persistent income inequality meant many ordinary Chileans favoured expenditure of the copper revenues on welfare-enhancing projects. A May 2006 poll revealed that two-thirds of Chileans wanted the government to spend, not save, the copper windfall. In 2008, demonstrators chanted 'The copper money is for the poor people', as President Michelle Bachelet's approval ratings dipped to a historic low.

Just one year later, the protests ceased and Velasco's vindication came. In mid-2009, the price of copper tanked, falling 50 per cent within a few months. Chile's growth hit negative figures. Unemployment soared to 10 per cent. Thanks to boom-time discipline, the government was able to stimulate recovery by drawing down the Economic and Social Stabilization Fund and Pension Reserve Fund revenues to fund urgent social spending. At 2.8 per cent of GDP, close to $4 billion, Chile's stimulus package was two to three times higher than other Latin American governments, and even outstripped America's 2 per cent stimulus effort. When they left office in 2010, Bachelet and Velasco boasted the highest approval ratings of any president and cabinet minister since Chile's return to democracy.

But not all conflicts over sovereign wealth have such happy endings. Australia's Future Fund and New Zealand's Superannuation Fund both divested substantial chunks of their equity portfolios from tobacco and mining-related investments respectively after public disquiet over the ethical implications of these investments. While these divestments may have resulted in more responsibly invested portfolios today, when it comes to the augmen-

ANGELA CUMMINE

CITIZENS' WEALTH

WHY (AND HOW) SOVEREIGN FUNDS SHOULD BE MANAGED BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE

tation of vast sums of public wealth, reactive investment strategies are not in the interests of either a sovereign fund or the sponsor-community. Such experiences underscore the need to ensure citizens' values are properly reflected in the initial mission and mandate of a fund, as well as its investment behaviour.

This is equally true of the institutional design and general management of sovereign funds. In Asia, the central banks of China and Korea put up substantial resistance to the establishment of new sovereign funds tasked with helping preserve and augment more public wealth. The monetary authorities feared the loss of control over a portion of foreign reserve holdings which they considered 'their' money. Such bureaucratic competition frustrated and in some respects negatively affected the design and early operation of both countries' new and independent sovereign funds.

Citizens' wealth

At the heart of all these wrangles is the thorny issue of who ultimately owns, and therefore deserves to control and benefit from this wealth: citizen or state? In my forthcoming book C*itizens' Wealth: Why (and How) Sovereign Funds Should be Managed By the People For the People*, I argue that citizens are the ultimate owners of all government property. In making this case, I rely on a fiduciary understanding of the state, inherited from the political thought of 17th-century philosopher John Locke. Under Locke's classic theory of the state, government is an agent for its principal, the people. This principal–agent conception of the citizen–state relationship implies a set of fiduciary principles that require the people to maintain control over their government agent. One such principle is that all property obtained by the agent while acting on the principal's behalf ultimately belongs to the principal and must be managed exclusively and solely for their benefit. On this view then, citizens are the rightful owners of sovereign wealth.

Realising this theoretical ideal of citizen ownership over sovereign wealth in practice has far-reaching practical implications for the design and operation of sovereign funds. In my book *Citizens' Wealth*, I identify three areas of SWFs that require reform to achieve citizen ownership. These are the management, investment and distribution of sovereign wealth. Possible reforms to SWF management and investment include: improving citizens' ability to directly influence and constrain SWF boards and management; greater transparency and direct accountability to citizens in fund operations; and ethical constraints on SWF investment to ensure the collective values of citizen owners are protected and

Citizens must perceive tangible benefit from their sovereign wealth.

promoted through sovereign wealth investment. The SWFs of Norway and New Zealand are exemplary in this regard, but most other sovereign funds require more democratisation.

Citizens must also perceive and enjoy tangible benefit from their sovereign wealth, achievable through fairer distribution of SWF income. This can be done through collective or individual distribution of SWF returns to citizens. Individual distribution of a sovereign fund's earnings to citizens occurs in Alaska, where each year a proportion of the annual return of the Permanent Fund is distributed directly to residents as a cash dividend on an equal per capita basis. The dividend amount varies year-to-year, based on a complex formula for calculating the average five-year return. In recent years, this has produced a dividend of between $1000 and $1500 per person.

Alternatively, sovereign funds can collectively distribute their earnings to their host community. There are different models for such distribution. The Norwegian approach requires a fixed portion of the fund's value – capped at 4 per cent of total fund capital (deemed to be an appropriate long-term real return on the fund's portfolio) – is to be transferred into the budget annually. At a size of US$850 billion, a 4 per cent transfer amounts to around $33.5 billion redistributed fiscal revenue available for public spending. Alternatively, the Singaporean government is constitutionally permitted to channel up to 50 per cent of the real and paper returns of its two investment funds, the GIC Private Limited and Temasek, to the budget annually through the 'Net Investment Returns Contribution' (NIRC). In Singapore's 2015 financial year, the NIRC amounted to S$8.9 billion, constituting an impressive 13 per cent of the budget and providing more resources for government spending to benefit Singaporeans.

If such measures to promote citizen benefit and control over sovereign wealth are embraced, this would ensure that government managers of existing and future SWFs are truly agents of their principal, the people. The UK has recently seen some suggestions along these lines. In 2014, then London Mayor Boris Johnson advocated the creation of a 'Citizen's Wealth Fund' by combining the UK's 39,000 public pension funds into one large government investment fund holding more than $100 billion that could invest in domestic private equity and infrastructure projects. But the capital in this fund will only truly be citizens' wealth if ordinary Britons follow in the footsteps of the Greeks and demand a degree of democratic control over and local benefit from *their* wealth fund. ▬

Angela Cummine's book, *Citizens' Wealth: Why (and How) Sovereign Funds Should be Managed By the People For the People,* is published by Yale University Press in August 2016.

Fish 'n' ships: a story about food and holistic outreach

Kristine Korzow Richter tells us all what we can learn from the fish we have eaten

Dr Kristine Korzow Richter is a British Academy Newton International Fellow, in the BioArCh facility, Archaeology Department, University of York. This article was jointly written with Richard Gardner, who provides logistical help for non-profit organisations.

I'm going to start with a few keywords: food provenance, overfishing, managing fishing stocks, expanding human population, water quality. These are all words used by ecologists, economists and environmentalists which appear frequently in news sources we read every day, and you might therefore think I am going to tell a modern food story. However, my story starts around 1,000 years ago in medieval Europe. These keywords are not new – people thousands of years ago struggled with some of the same issues we do today. So there is a story to be told about the winding and complex relationship that humans have with the fish we eat.

BioArCh researchers from the Archaeology Department at the University of York, along with 'Chef Presenter' Phil Leverington, put on an outreach event for York Festival of Ideas to tell this story to the public. Over 400 people joined us on the sunny afternoon of 4 June 2016 at the lawn of King's Manor in York. Phil (assisted by Richard Gardner and Samantha Tilford) cooked authentic medieval recipes, while my fellow researchers (Drs Laura Llorente-Rodriguez and Andrew Jones) and I engaged adults and children about history, archaeology and science. While we did tell a fish story, we also addressed a lot of lingering questions people came into the event with. Were the average people eating the same thing as the rich people? Who were the people who were dodging the medieval fasting rules? And how do archaeologists make claims from only a few bones?

A meal for a king

A wood burning stove, fish roasting over hot coals, and aromatic sauces drew most people in. Phil cooked three different species of fish in authentic fish-sauce recipes from medieval cookbooks. Bream, a freshwater fish caught in rivers and lakes, was cooked in a *dauce egre* sauce made from a base of red wine vinegar, sugar, onions, and cloves. Carp, a freshwater fish common in Asia and Eastern Europe but introduced to England for fish farming in the medieval period, was covered with a *galantyne* sauce made from wine and spices straight from the *Forme of Cury*, a cookbook of the Master Chef of King Richard II (see page 56). Cod, a marine fish, was salted and covered in a *pikesauce* made from butter and parsley. The common perception of medieval cooking is that it was vile, and in preparing the recipe list even Phil was a bit concerned about driving people away with terrible-tasting food. However, all three recipes were surprisingly tasty, and people left with copies wanting to try them at home.

A fish with wings

'Fish' to the medieval person were not just the aquatic vertebrates we think of today. Fish was a general name for anything not considered a proper land-living animal. This included the obvious marine mammals such as whales and porpoises, as well a number of slightly less obvious creatures – such as beaver, because of its scaly tail

and considerable time spent in water; geese, because of the time they spend in water and feeding from water; and puffins, because they spend much of their time flying over water and catching fish. Because the Catholic Church prescribed over 200 fast days a year (when no land-living animal meat could be consumed), there are a wide range of recipes for 'fish', some of which replicate favourite meat dishes that people eat today. One example is *puddyng of purpaysse* found in Harleian MS 279 from the 15th century, which is essentially a traditional Scottish haggis recipe, but made from porpoise instead of sheep.

An artifact for the lab

After they had learned about the classifications of fish and had tasted some medieval cooking, we encouraged our audience to think about what remains after the butchery, cooking, and consumption of fish. And we asked participants what they thought archaeologists might recover hundreds or thousands of years later. Trays filled with sand containing some of these items including bones, shells, fruit pits, and pottery fragments allowed the young (and young at heart) to dig for and touch some examples of the types food remains found in the archaeological record. We then introduced our audience to the science that allows us to analyse these artifacts: morphology, lipid, stable isotope, DNA, and protein analyses. How can these discarded fish bones provide us with a window into the world of the past?

A tale of three fish

With more than 200 fast days where fish was the primary protein, it is unsurprising that fish played a significant role in the medieval diet, which archaeologists can see through looking at the different species in the archaeological record. In the 7th century, freshwater fish such as bream were plentiful, and can be seen to be a greater part of the British diet than marine fish such as cod. However, as the population increased the rivers and streams begin to suffer the consequences of excessive consumption and pollution: overfishing, poor water quality, and the resulting diminishing fish stocks. These diminishing fish stocks were a contributing factor (although not the only reason) to the increased spread of freshwater fish farming in ponds from the late 10th to the 12th centuries. Initially, locally caught freshwater fish such as bream were farmed, but then carp were introduced from France and became the dominant farmed fish in Britain. Carp grow quickly and are quite hardy, able to survive in conditions that would kill other freshwater fish – qualities valuable to the medieval fish farmer. However, the muddy flavour of carp is considered an acquired taste at best.[1]

At the same time marine resources were also being increasingly exploited. A switch between primarily freshwater to primarily marine fish bones can be seen starting in the 11th century. Factors contributing to this switch included the diminishing freshwater fish stocks and improved sailing technology. The iconic British cod now became a common food source. Isotope evidence shows that initially the marine fish were being sourced locally, mostly from the North Sea. However, during the 13th to 16th centuries, marine fish were increasingly being fished or traded from further away locations – some coming from as far away as Newfoundland (Canada today). From local ponds to an international fishing trade, the changing face of Britain's diet in the past illustrates how the problems we face today also influenced the lives of our ancestors centuries ago – and maybe can provide insights into how to address them in the future.

Bream roasting over coals, and (on facing page) cod being cooked in a butter and parsley *pikesauce*, at the 'Fish 'n ships' event held on 4 June 2016 as part of the York Festival of Ideas. PHOTOS: SAMANTHA TILFORD, HARRY LEVERINGTON.

Bones of contention

Fish archaeological 'assemblages' – collections of bones found at particular archaeological sites – from medieval Iberia (Spain and Portugal today) reflect the differences in diet between the two main cultures inhabiting Iberia at that time: Muslims and Christians. It is possible to detect differences between which species were present at the different sites, which may indicate different cultural attitudes toward fish. The most dramatic differences can be seen in serpentine fish such as the conger eel. This fish is quite common in Christian sites, but scarce in their Muslim

1. This section represents a wide number of research projects. For more information, see the work of Drs James H Barrett (University of Cambridge), David Orton (University of York), Andrew K.G. Jones (University of York).

counterparts. A likely explanation for this difference is that serpentine fish were *Makruh* (disapproved) items in Muslim areas.

Butchery practices in fish also reflect differences between these two cultures. Cutmarks on hake bones from Christian assemblages exhibit a perpendicular pattern, while cutmarks on Muslim assemblages are inclined. The inclined pattern is still seen today in the southern regions of Portugal which is likely related to the longer Muslim occupation in this area of Iberia. These differences make it possible to identify an area where there are no artifacts as a potential Muslim or Christian community just through the study of food waste – a fascinating insight gained through examination of fish bones.

Continuing the story

Often outreach events are seen as just for kids, or just lectures and discussions for people already interested in the topic. We tried to join the increasingly growing group of science advocates who are attempting 'holistic' outreach. We included hands-on activities for adults and kids, discussion and mini-lectures on multiple cross-disciplinary topics, and items for kids and adults to take home. And it didn't stop at the doors of the event. Many small businesses got involved, including Bluebird Bakery who donated the bread, Swains Family Butchers who donated bones for the children's activity, Smelly Ally Fish Company who sourced the fish (including carp from France), Netherton Foundry who made historically based cooking equipment, and several tour companies who agreed to take their tour groups through our event on the day. We advertised via traditional methods (fliers, website) and social media (Twitter and Facebook), but most of the over 400 people who attended the event just walked in off the street.

I hope that these sorts of holistic outreach events can create a sense of community and a wider circle that will hear the story and be interested beyond just the day of the event. And with feedback like 'truly brilliant and original idea: I've learned more about fish and medieval cooking than I'd have thought possible', it's a rewarding thing for everyone involved. ▬
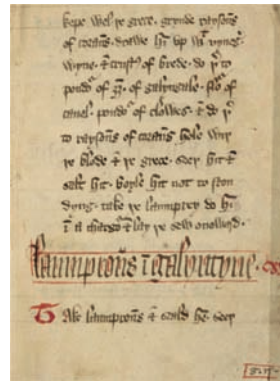
The original 'laumpreys in galentyne' recipe from the *Forme of Cury* (written in the late 14th century by the Master Chef of King Richard II). IMAGE: ©JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY.

Galentine sauce, medieval and modern
Chef's note by Phil Leverington

In many historical recipes, including that for galentine sauce, no quantities are given. This recipe from the *Forme* (method) *of Cury* (cooking) just gives the ingredients and the process or method for cooking the dish. I have adjusted the 14th century text to give estimates of quantity to produce the recipe in a recognisable, modern format. Try it for yourself (and tell us about it #fishnships). As you cook, remember that the medieval chef would have altered the quantities based upon their taste.

In recreating the dish, I made only minor adjustments to the *Forme* as outlined in the original text. The recipe calls for lamprey blood in the sauce, and it was served over cooked lamprey. As lamprey are not available for consumption in the UK, for the event I omitted the lamprey blood and served the dish over carp. I also added a small amount of unrefined sugar, which would have been available at the time. This could also be replaced with a small quantity of honey as that was a common substitution for sugar during the period.

The method itself is exceptionally simple, requiring nothing more than the reduction of the liquid and regular tasting, and the sauce can be served over a roasted or grilled fish of your choice.

Ingredients
1/10 of a Pint of Vinegar
9/10 of a Pint of White Wine
A pinch of Salt (to taste)
2 Tablespoons of Currants (ground to a paste)
The crusts of approximately 4 slices of bread
½ a Teaspoon of Powdered Ginger
½ a Teaspoon of Powdered Cloves
½ a Teaspoon of Powdered Cinnamon
A small amount of Unrefined Sugar (to taste)

Method
Add all the ingredients to a saucepan or pot and bring to the boil. Simmer and reduce by half.
Serve on a fish of your choice.

Ariosto, Cervantes, and Shakespeare in 2016

Jane E. Everson, Andrew Hiscock
and Stefano Jossa on three writers
receiving centenary celebrations this year

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Conference on 'Ariosto,
the Orlando Furioso and
English Culture, 1516–
2016', which was held on
28–29 April 2016.

2016 marks the fifth centenary of the first publication of the *Orlando Furioso*, the masterpiece of the 16th-century Italian poet, Ludovico Ariosto. This fascinating poem of love and adventure in 'ottava rima' (a rhyming stanza form) tells the stories of Charlemagne's paladins during the war against the Moorish assailants in France. This centenary is, regrettably, being overshadowed in the mind of the general public by two more prominent literary centenaries, those of two deaths, of the national bard William Shakespeare and the Spanish novelist Miguel de Cervantes, who both died in 1616.[1] Shakespeare and Cervantes will frequently be celebrated jointly this year in the major world libraries: not so with Ariosto. William Shakespeare needs no introduction, while Miguel de Cervantes may be less well-known to some than his greatest creation Don Quixote – the renowned chivalric anti-hero who unveiled the crisis of the feudal world and gave birth to the modern novel. The works of Shakespeare and Cervantes are milestones of world literature and have certainly attracted much greater attention than Ariosto's. Nowadays perhaps, nobody could be blamed for knowing them better than Ariosto. However, if just the happy few are aware today that both Shakespeare and Cervantes had Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* in their background, in the past Ariosto was at least as prominent in the mind of the British and European public.

Ariosto's epic was translated into Spanish as early as 1549 (seventeen years after the third and final edition) by Jerónimo Jiménez de Urrea, followed by further translations, by Hernando Alcocer in 1550, and Diego Vázquez de Contrera in 1585. When it appeared in English in a version by Sir John Harington in the 1590s, the English verse

Portrait of a Poet (c. 1516), by Palma Vecchio (c. 1480–1528), The National Gallery (NG636). It is presumed that this is a painting of a poet, because the figure has a book in his hands and there are laurels (with which poets were crowned) behind him. And it has further been proposed that it is in fact a portrait of Lodovico Ariosto, the author of the poem *Orlando Furioso*.

translation of *Orlando Furioso* joined Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* in a strikingly ambitious venture for English culture – to build on the medieval chivalric tradition to create something completely new. Interestingly, Spenser himself launched into his own undertaking armed with detailed knowledge of the epic which had travelled across the continent from Italy. *Orlando Furioso* was found to deal with human nature, Fate and chaos in such a modern way that a few centuries later Sir Walter Scott had no dif-

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1. On 16 May 1916, Professor James Fitzmaurice-Kelly FBA delivered the first ever British Academy 'Master-Mind Lecture', and took as his subject 'Cervantes and Shakespeare' to mark the 300th anniversary of their deaths. *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1915–1916, pp. 297–317.

ficulty in acknowledging its primacy in the development of modern narrative, especially when it comes to the representation of simultaneity in literature. For generation after generation of readers, *Orlando Furioso* is the first piece of early modern literature to question the value of fiction, gender roles, sexual attraction and the complexity of the world. Cervantes and Shakespeare could not help but be attracted by its romantic vicissitudes, the ever multiplying threads to the plot, the elements of trickery, humour and the complex relations between mockery and understanding which it forged.

Shakespeare's sources are much debated among scholars, yet his knowledge, by whatever means, of a key story from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, that of Ariodante and Ginevra from cantos 4 to 6 of the poem, cannot be denied. The plot of *Much Ado about Nothing* is clearly indebted to the story of Ariodante and Ginevra. Don John arranges to make Don Pedro and Claudio believe that Hero, Claudio's betrothed, is unfaithful by making them witness John's associate (Borachio) enter her bedchamber; there, he has an assignation with Margaret (Hero's chambermaid disguised as her mistress). This encounter mirrors the similar trick played by Polinesso on Ariodante to force him to give up his aspiration to wed Ginevra. It is likely that Shakespeare's direct source for the story (perhaps through the translation into French by François de Belleforest) was another Italian Renaissance writer, Matteo Maria Bandello (1485–1561). Bandello had himself borrowed the story of Ariodante and Ginevra in story 22 of book 1 of his *Novelle* (1554), telling the vicissitudes of Sir Timbreo, his betrothed Fenicia and his rival Girondo in Messina at the time of Peter the Great's defeat of Charles of Anjou (1282). Shakespeare's historical and geographical settings, at the time of a certain Don Pedro, Prince of Aragon, in Messina, confirm that the story is rooted in Bandello's tale. Nonetheless, Ariosto is undoubtedly part of this complex picture of textual influence and borrowing.

Things become more fascinating, and Shakespeare's knowledge of Ariosto even more likely, when it comes to *Othello*. The famous 'ocular proof' (III.iii.360) demanded by Othello to Iago to confirm Desdemona's infidelity seems to come from the same story of Ariodante and Ginevra, when Ariodante asks Polinesso to provide a similar proof of Ginevra's infidelity (V, 41, 7–8: 'ma ch'io tel voglia creder non far stima,/s'io non lo veggio con questi occhi prima'[But do not think I will believe your lies/Unless I see it with these very eyes]). Later on (IV.i.5) Iago's depiction of Desdemona as 'naked with her friend in bed', repeated by a disheartened Othello, echoes the same expression in similar circumstances in the Ariostan episode (V, 24, 7: 'nuda nel letto', 'naked in bed'). When Othello asked for ocular proof, indeed, he was admonishing Iago 'Villain, be sure thou prove my wife a whore' (III.iii.359), which is in line with Lurcanio's conclusion that his brother Ariodante has seen with his eyes what sort of a whore Ginevra is ('poi che con gli occhi tuoi tu

vedi certa/quanto sia meretrice, e di che sorte', V 54, 6). Furthermore, Desdemona's handkerchief is described as woven by 'a Sybil […] in her prophetic fury' (III.4.70–72) as is Ruggero and Bradamante's pavilion at the ending of *Orlando Furioso* – which was made by the ancient Greek prophetess Cassandra, who had 'prophetic fury' too ('Una donzella de la terra d'Ilia,/ch'avea il furor profetico congiunto' (XLVI, 80, 4). Since Othello is one of the most Italian among Shakespeare's tragedies, set as it is initially in Venice and derived from Giovan Battista Giraldi Cinzio's tale 'Un Capitano Moro' ('A Moorish Captain') in

An illustration of the Ariodante story from Canto 5 of *Orlando Furioso,* taken from the edition printed by John Baskerville in the late 18th century.

his collection of stories *Hecatommiti* (1565, from Greek ἑκατόν μύθοι, 'a hundred stories'), references to the most celebrated among Italian contemporary authors are all too possible. The abovementioned expressions might also support the argument in favour of Shakespeare's reading of Ariosto in the original Italian rather than Harington's translation. The debate continues.

Things heat up further with *King Lear*, where, it has been suggested, another reminiscence of the story of Ariodante and Ginevra can be found. The duels that conclude Ariosto's episode – first between the two brothers Ariodante and Lurcanio, and then between the avenger Rinaldo and the evil Polinesso – could be seen to merge in the duel between the brothers Edgar and Edmund (V.iii), the former appearing at 'the third sound' (133) as 'an unknown opposite' (179) (as Polinesso appeared 'sconosciuto […] al terzo suono', VI 77, 3 and 88, 3). Scholars used to connect Shakespeare and Ariosto also for the writing of *The Taming of the Shrew*, the subplot of which is apparently derived from Ariosto's comedy *I Suppositi,* either in the original Italian or in George Gascoigne's translation. Whether Shakespeare knew Italian is still debated among scholars, yet his debt to Ariosto is undeniable and testifies to the prestige of the Italian poet in Elizabethan England.

Cervantes's primacy in penning the first example of the modern novel, in turn, is widely acknowledged and openly acclaimed. However, most of the reasons for this accolade can be found in *Orlando Furioso* too. Irony, the combination of various threads to the plot, the awareness of the fictional character of the work of literature, the play with the alleged sources, the appearance of the author in the text and self-reflexivity are characteristics that *Don Quixote* shares with *Orlando Furioso*. Cervantes seems to acknowledge this when he makes the curate and the barber burn all Don Quixote's chivalric romances except, among a very few, *Orlando Furioso* – provided it is read in the original Italian rather than the Spanish translation (book I, chapter 6). Cervantes's novel, very much like Ariosto's epic poem, starts with medieval romances, but goes on to convert them into something innovative. There are at least twenty references to *Orlando Furioso* throughout *Don Quixote*, to the point that homage prevails over parody. Thus, *Orlando Furioso* can be rightly seen as the seminal text upon which Cervantes drew to question cultural stereotypes at the time. Like Ariosto before him, and perhaps inspired by Ariosto himself, Cervantes shows the gap between life as it is lived and life as it is represented in works of imagination.

Continuity rather than discontinuity between Ariosto, Cervantes and Shakespeare was clearly acknowledged by the German thinker and literary critic Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829) at the dawn of the 19th century, when he defined romantic modernity as the outcome of playful wit

and arabesque as opposed to classical harmony and equilibrium. We find the three major writers of early modern Europe intimately linked when Schlegel suggests 'the divine wit, the imagination, of an Ariosto, a Cervantes, a Shakespeare' as the main source of modern literature (*Letter about the Novel*, 1799). Once notable among the classics of an aristocratic education in Britain, *Orlando Furioso* is now rather forgotten by the general public and his epic can seem unattractive if described solely by its plot summary. Nevertheless, put to the test, Ariosto's poem proves much more in line with Cervantes and Shakespeare's modernity than expected: a notion of modernity based on humour rather than just progress, evolution, revolution, freedom, democracy, science and technology would help us understand that modern literature is more concerned with the joining and separating of the ideal and the real than with the ideological celebration of set values.

Time has split the trio. Ariosto is now certainly less famous than Shakespeare and Cervantes worldwide, with the possible, yet not certain, exception of Italy. However, his name would perfectly fit to complete the title of the recently published and already very popular book *Lunatics, Lovers and Poets: Twelve Stories after Shakespeare and Cervantes* (with an introduction by Salman Rushdie): after all, wasn't he the one who first reinvented the journey to the Moon, represented the widest variety of love cases, and questioned the truthfulness of poetry in early modern Europe? Why should we not urge that Ariosto deserves to be as much celebrated as Shakespeare and Cervantes? Ariosto's poem has reached its fifth centenary, while Shakespeare and Cervantes have only reached the fourth in both cases. Shouldn't numbers have the acknowledgement they deserve? So 2016 is proving a most animated year for remembering – for remembering key anniversaries of the births of monarchs and celebrated writers such as Charlotte Bronte, the publication of seminal works like Thomas More's *Utopia*, for commemorating those who lost their lives in Flanders fields, and for remembering the passing of literary giants in the English and Spanish literary traditions. It seems now more than ever we must make a little more room in our commemorations for Ludovico Ariosto and *Orlando Furioso* which transformed epic writing and ideas of heroism across Europe for centuries to come. ▬

Why should we not urge that Ariosto deserves to be as much celebrated as Shakespeare and Cervantes?

This article was originally posted on the British Academy Blog on 25 April 2016. Further articles from the British Academy's blog can be found via www.britishacademy.ac.uk/blog

The British Academy and the Shakespeare Tercentenary, 1916

Initiative

In January 1914, the Council of the British Academy initiated discussion of what should be done to start the planning of a national celebration of the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death in 1916. In March the Academy convened a 'conference' of representatives from societies and institutions that it was thought would be interested in such a project (including the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London). That meeting approved the principle of 'a Celebration to honour the memory of Shakespeare', and asked the Academy to take steps to put together an organising committee.

In April 1914, the President of the British Academy, Viscount Bryce, sent a letter to a wide range of academics, politicians, dignitaries and artists, both in the UK and abroad, announcing the intention for there to be 'a Commemoration of our greatest national poet', and inviting people to show their interest in the proposal by allowing their names to be added to a 'General Committee' of supporters.

The letter elicited considerable interest. The great Shakespearean actress, Dame Ellen Terry, dictated a letter from New Zealand to express her enthusiasm for the project. The actor and theatre manager, Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree was another early signatory. George Bernard Shaw scribbled 'Yes, with pleasure' at the bottom of Bryce's letter and returned it – complete with doodle (Figure 1).

Bryce chaired a second meeting of interested parties in July 1914, at which it was resolved 'That the Tercentenary of the death of Shakespeare should be commemorated in a manner worthy of the veneration in which the memory of Shakespeare is held by the English-speaking peoples and by the world at large'. An Executive Committee was appointed to take over from the British Academy the organisation of the Tercentenary, but the Committee's Honorary Secretary would be Professor Israel Gollancz – who was the Secretary of the British Academy.

Homage

'Then came the War; and the dream of the world's brotherhood to be demonstrated by its common and united commemoration of Shakespeare,
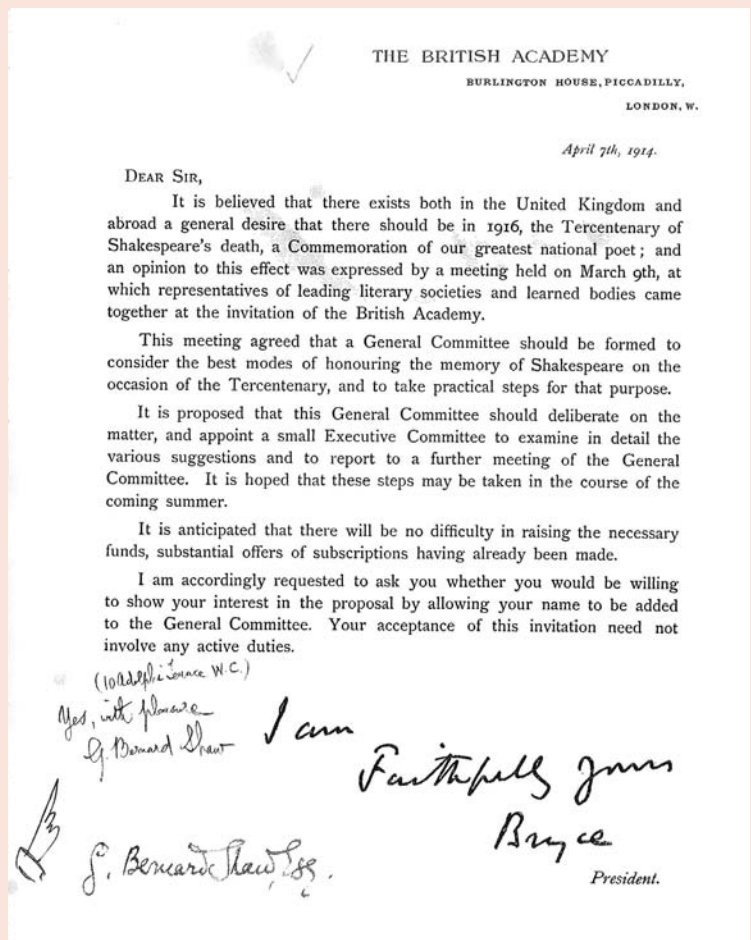

Figure 1. Invitation from Viscount Bryce, the President of the British Academy, seeking advance support for a Commemoration of the Tercentenary of Shakespeare's death in 1916. This copy was sent to G. Bernard Shaw. He scribbled on it 'Yes, with pleasure', drew a hand pointing at his message, and sent it back. (BA 402)
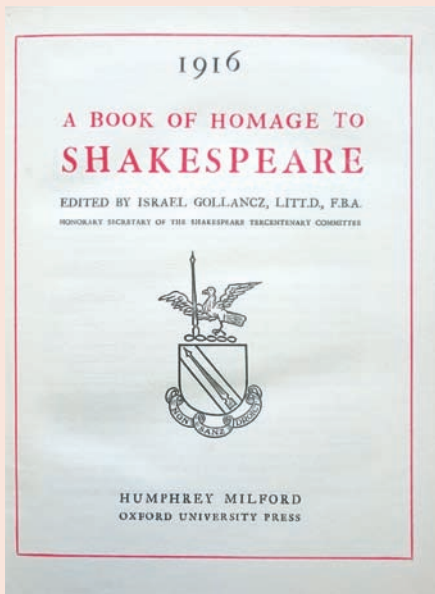
Figure 2. The title page of *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare*, which was published in 1916. It was edited by Professor Israel Gollancz FBA, who was Secretary of the British Academy, and also Honorary Secretary of the Shakespeare Tercentenary Committee.
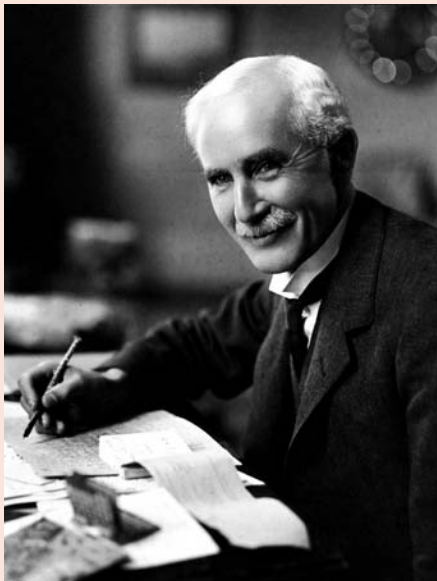

Figure 3. Dr John William Mackail FBA, who delivered the 1916 British Academy Shakespeare Lecture, on 'Shakespeare after Three Hundred Years' (This photograph was taken in 1923.)

with many another fond illusion, was rudely shattered.' So wrote Gollancz despairingly in 1916.[1] 'In face of sterner duties all such projects fell necessarily into abeyance.'

But Gollancz – himself an eminent Shakespeare scholar (he had edited the popular pocket-sized 'Temple' editions of Shakespeare in the 1890s) – was dogged in his determination 'that not even under present conditions should the Shakespeare Tercentenary be allowed to pass unobserved, though the scope of our original programme would of necessity be modified'. He therefore contrived 'to hand down to posterity a worthy Record of the widespread reverence for Shakespeare as shared with the English-speaking world by our Allies and Neutral States, namely, by the publication, in honour of the Tercentenary, of a Book of Homage to Shakespeare, with contributions in prose and verse, representing the ubiquity of the poet's mighty influence.' In this handsome volume (Figure 2), among the many miscellaneous contributions by distinguished academic and literary figures, there are 'Some Stray Thoughts' by the British Academy's President, Viscount Bryce.

Lecture

A series of British Academy 'Shakespeare Lectures' had begun in 1911. In 1916, the lecture was delivered by J.W. Mackail, formerly Professor of Poetry at the University of Oxford, and a Fellow of the British Academy (Figure 3). In his lecture entitled 'Shakespeare after Three Hundred Years',[2] Mackail reviewed the shifting tides of critical opinion about the Bard over the previous three centuries. He concluded:

> The mistake to which we … are subject is to praise him at all. No words said of him are more exactly true than those of one who, in the last generation, was his most impassioned lover and most eloquent interpreter. After exhausting on Shakespeare all hyperboles of laudation, all glitter and pomp of rhetoric, Swinburne, as a poet and not as a panegyrist, wrote of him more simply what is the last and the unsurpassable word:
>
>> His praise is this, he can be praised of none.
>> Man, woman, child, praise God for him; but he
>> Exults not to be worshipped, but to be.
>> He is; and being, beholds his work well done.
>
> 'I cannot last ever,' says Falstaff, in one of his cross-flashes of wit and insight: 'it was alway yet the trick of our English nation, if they have a good thing, to make it too common.' But there are some good things that cannot be made too common, and that do last ever. One of these is Shakespeare. ▬

1. Israel Gollancz, 'Preface', in *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare* (Oxford University Press, 1916), pp. vii–viii.
2. *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1915–1916, pp. 319–38.

On 12 May, Professor Lorna Hutson delivered the 2016 British Academy Shakespeare Lecture, on the subject of 'The Shakespearean unscene'. An audio recording may be found via www.britishacademy.ac.uk/shakespeare

And on 2 June 2016, Professor Jonathan Bate FBA delivered a British Lecture at the Hay Festival, on 'William Shakespeare 1616–2116'.

One hundred years of Honorary Fellows of the British Academy

The prime criterion for Election to the Fellowship of the Academy has always been academic distinction in the humanities and social sciences, as reflected in scholarly research activity and publication. But within a few years of its foundation, the Academy felt the need to find a way of honouring those who served the interests of its disciplines in different capacities.

In 1916, the Council of the British Academy agreed to introduce a new category of 'Honorary Fellowship of the British Academy'. The idea had been in circulation for several years, but final consideration of it had regularly been deferred. In January 1916, the Council 'agreed to appoint a Committee to consider the propriety of electing a limited number of Honorary Fellows'. In May, having discussed the committee's report, the Council resolved to establish this new class of Fellowship: 'Honorary Fellows must be persons of distinction possessing a special acquaintance with some branch of study which it is the object of the Academy to promote; or, who have contributed signally to the promotion of the purposes for which the Academy was founded.'[1]

At that same May 1916 meeting, the Council agreed the name of the first person to be put forward for Honorary Fellowship, Evelyn Baring, 1st Earl of Cromer. Cromer had been a diplomat who had been much involved in the affairs of Egypt. But he had always had a personal interest in Classics, and in 1916 he offered the British Academy £1000 (a handsome sum at that time) to establish 'a Prize for the best Essay on a subject connected with the Language, History, Art, Literature, or Philosophy of Greece'. In his Presidential Address on 30 July, Viscount Bryce assured the Academy's Annual General Meeting that 'the Council had decided to propose him to you before it had the least idea that he contemplated this foundation'[2] – something that the Council's own minutes show to be completely untrue! In later years, the Academy would be happy to bestow Honorary Fellowship more transparently on those whose generosity had supported it and its purposes.[3]

At its meeting on 28 July 1916, the Council of the British Academy put forward the name of a second candidate to receive Honorary Fellowship: the Rt. Hon Sir Samuel Griffith, Chief Justice of Australia, 'for his eminence as a constitutional lawyer'. Griffith was the first of several distinguished members of the legal world to be recognised by the Academy in this way.

At those May and July 1916 meetings, the Academy's Council also intriguingly floated the idea that some 'Ordinary' Fellows of the British Academy might be transferred to Honorary Fellowship, in the way that Fellows can now opt to become 'Emeritus Fellows'. Indeed, it was agreed that 10 specific individuals – all aged between 72 and 88 – should be invited to transfer to the new Honorary category. For one reason or another, this did not happen – though some of those individuals would choose to 're-tire' from the Fellowship in subsequent years.

In the hundred years 1916–2015, just 69 individuals have received the Honorary Fellowship of the British Academy. There are currently 27 Honorary Fellows (prior to the election of any new names at the Annual General Meeting in July 2016).[4]

A further mechanism

Forty-four years after establishing Honorary Fellowship, the British Academy looked for an additional way to elect into its ranks a select number of those who could make a contribution beyond

1. This definition of Honorary Fellowship has been refined since then. In the current Bye-Laws, 'Honorary Fellows shall be either persons of academic distinction in fields other than [the humanities and social sciences] whose work has a bearing on the humanities and social sciences; or leading figures or philanthropists who have themselves done distinguished work in the Academy's field of interest or promoted or advanced the causes for which the Academy was founded.'.
2. Viscount Bryce FBA, 'Annual Presidential Address', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1915–1916, p. 22. (The prize money for the first Cromer Greek Prize was £40.)
3. For example, see 'Charles Wakefield and the British Academy's first home', *British Academy Review*, 21 (January 2013), 64–66. Wakefield had established the Raleigh Fund for History in 1918, and then funded the refurbishment of the Academy's first permanent home at Burlington Gardens in 1928; he became an Honorary Fellow in 1938.

a narrowly academic one. In 1960, The Queen granted the Academy a Supplemental Charter enabling the addition to the Fellowship of individuals who 'are such that their election will be of signal benefit to the Academy' – on condition that there would never be more than four in this category at any time.

In that first year, 1960, the Academy took the opportunity to elect two individuals who it thought would indeed be of material benefit. 'With his wide knowledge of the civil service and the city' it was thought that Sir Oliver Franks 'would be an invaluable help to the Academy, and there is no doubt that he would be eager to do all that he could for us.'[5] Lord (Harry) Nathan had already proved his worth: 'as Honorary Legal Adviser to the British Academy he [had] successfully fought the Income Tax authorities' on a point of principle.

By the beginning of 1966, no new names had been brought forward through this mechanism (and Nathan had died in 1963). In February 1966, the Revd Professor Henry Chadwick FBA wrote to Sir Mortimer Wheeler FBA, the Secretary of the British Academy, to suggest that the process might be triggered again, to make possible the election to the Fellowship of 'a creative artist of outstanding distinction – someone in the class of e.g. Henry Moore, or Benjamin Britten, or W.H. Auden' (Figure 1). Chadwick acknowledged that this should be 'a rare event', and that the candidate should be of such distinction that their election 'is likely to be virtually by acclamation'. And he justified how such an election would be of 'signal benefit to the Academy' by pointing out: 'The Council has been considering the Academy's public "image". It is possible that we might attract a little honour to ourselves by making such an election.'

In response to this proposal, Wheeler replied: 'Personally I am inclined to think well of it. Years ago I suggested T.S. Eliot, but at that time the climate was not quite right. On the whole I think that it has improved.' Wheeler was right. The sculptor Henry Moore was elected a Fellow of the British Academy 'under Supplemental Charter' in 1966. In his letter to Moore, Wheeler explained: 'Although the British Academy is not, in principle, concerned with creative artistry in what may be called the first degree, we should very much like to have at least some form of association with the creative arts, as well as with derivative scholarship. … I need hardly add how very greatly the Academy would appreciate your accession to its number.'

Only two more individuals would be elected through this mechanism, and none since 1973. ▬
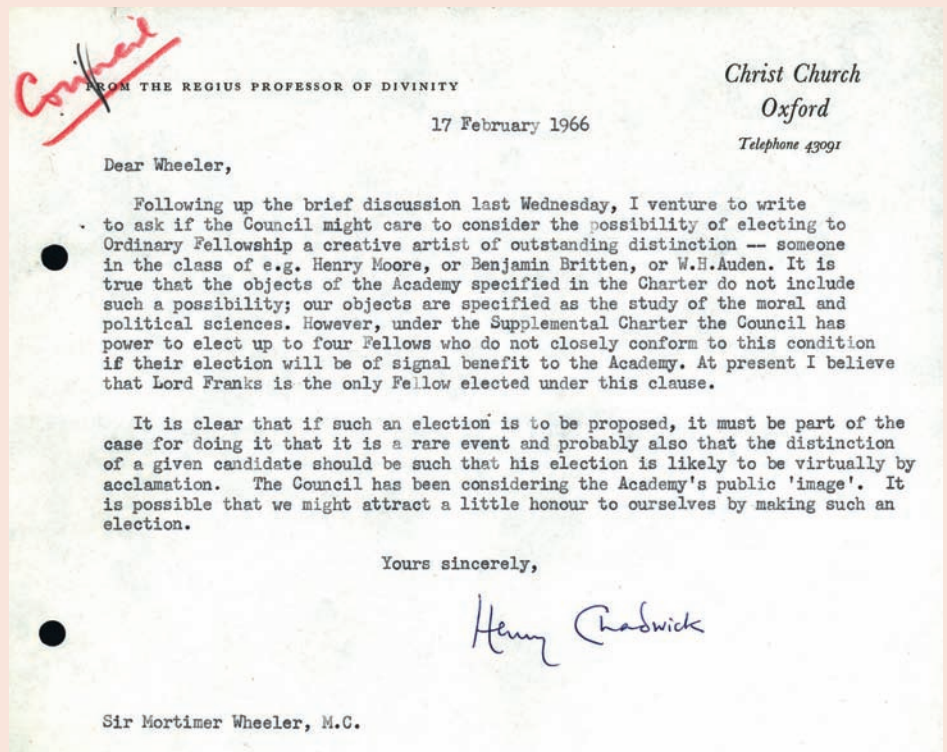

Figure 1. Letter of 17 February 1966 from the Revd Professor Henry Chadwick FBA to the Secretary of the British Academy, Sir Mortimer Wheeler FBA, proposing the election of 'a creative artist of outstanding distinction' as a Fellow of the British Academy by using the mechanism introduced under the 1960 'Supplemental Charter'. (BAA/FEL/7/20)

4. A list of the Honorary Fellows of the British Academy can be found via www.britishacademy.ac.uk/honorary
5. As Lord Franks, in 1983 he would oversee the production of the Franks Report into the circumstances leading up to the Falklands War.

Inequalities season

The British Academy's themed series of events in autumn 2016 considers how inequalities impact on individuals and societies.

While inequality has risen in many countries since the 1980s, it has recently become far more prominent in political debate. What type of inequality is of most concern to policy-makers? And how do differences in wealth, access and opportunity affect individuals, societies and economies?

There are eight events in the British Academy's 'Inequalities' season, at a number of venues in London and beyond. There are four 'British Academy Debates', and four related events – all of them free and open to all.

Wednesday 28 September, 6pm, London
Globalisation and inequality
Keynes Lecture in Economics, by Professor Elhanan Helpman FBA
Professor Helpman looks at the recent research shedding new light on the role of globalisation in shaping inequality.

Thursday 29 September, 6pm, London
Thinkers for our time: Thomas Malthus
Panel discussion
In 1798 Malthus published *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. Is his thinking still relevant to modern society and the issues we face in tackling social, economic and political inequalities?

Tuesday 4 October, 6pm, Edinburgh
Inequality: good for the rich, bad for the economy?
British Academy Debate, organised with the Royal Society of Edinburgh
Do big disparities in wealth and income signal a strong and healthy economy and society, or do they in fact hinder economic growth and sustainability?

Monday 17 October, 6pm, London
All work, no pay: generation intern
Panel discussion, organised with the Culture Capital Exchange
For many young people the internship has become the route to professional work, but critics question whether the practice is exploitative. What might new models of internship look like?

More information about the season – including registration details where relevant – can be found via www.britishacdemy.ac.uk/events

Wednesday 19 October, 6.30pm, London
Can reversing inequalities revive politics?
British Academy Debate
Can a democratic society that treats people as equals be consistent with an economy in which differences in wealth are great? Can declining voter participation be attributed to growing inequality?

Tuesday 8 November, 6pm, Brussels
Decent wages, decent work: how can we improve job quality in Europe?
British Academy Debate, organised with Académie royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique
With more people in low-paid, temporary or part-time positions, what are the implications for their lives and well-being? Does poor quality employment present a cause for concern for companies, society and the economy?

Tuesday 29 November, 6.30pm, London
Reducing global inequality: how do we achieve a fairer world?
British Academy Debate
The UN's Sustainable Development Goals aim to transform the world for the better by 2030. How do nations realise this vision of a shared future with equality and opportunities for all?

Friday 9 December, 6pm, London
Laura Bates: Girl Up
Leading journalist, author and founder of the Everyday Sexism blog, Laura Bates speaks about gender inequality and her new book *Girl Up*. ▬

Front cover image: "The (Modern) Deluge" 1848 print. See article on pages 22–28.