THE GOAT POST

RADICAL ISSUE

Fitzwilliam's student magazine.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Edited by **Tom Knight**

Editor's note

This term's Goat Post is trying to do something different. All too often, student journalism becomes a forum for complaints and analysis, rather than ideas and innovation. By focusing on what's wrong with our university, we overlook our own ability to bring about change. The truth is that longstanding traditions, policies and structures can be transformed with targeted and sustained pressure. We need to remind ourselves that the university is there for us: if we don't like something, we can change it.

So instead of outlining the problems we're all aware of, this month's writers are trying to develop solutions. From the university's environmental policy to exams, we can shape our student experience, but only if we are bold and uncompromising.

Big love,

Tom x

Reforming Exams

George Breckenridge

At the beginning of this academic year, the General Board of the Faculties appointed me as Undergraduate Student Representative to the Exams & Assessments Committee. I was appointed because of my work representing students in the School of the Physical Sciences, so this wasn't entirely an unfamiliar realm for me, but unlike any of my previous positions, I was asked to answer a very radical question: what would you change about Tripos exams, if you *actually* could?

I spend a lot of time in committee meetings at this university, and they usually do remarkable work behind the scenes. More often than not, though, it's just a matter of tweaking. Tweaking for the better, maybe, but tweaking nonetheless. In Cambridge, good governance means slow governance.

However, when considering exams, the university *can* be radical, and *can* change things fast. Unlike most areas of the university's governance, we don't really have to consider the impact and willingness across colleges all that greatly: exams aren't a complex collegiate education, they're normally just a straightforward, one-off assessment of progress. This makes exams a critical opportunity for change that could make an immediate impact – not just to education, but to student welfare too. In order to do so we're going to need to be able to pitch suitable ideas effectively.

What was refreshing to see in the exams committee is that the membership is really open to thinking big, and not taking current practice as a rigid template for how we go about assessing in the future. As a student representative, I wish I could see more of this from Cambridge's internal committees.

Being the only undergraduate student in the room, the heads turn in my direction for advice more often than they usually do. Here are some of the ideas I'm proposing.

In the sciences, I think we need to pay more attention to how we treat students achieving 2.2 and Third Class scores. I think it's reasonable to claim that any science student at Cambridge is undoubtedly bright.

Unfortunately, from the personal accounts I have received, it doesn't appear that all DoSs reflect this in how they communicate with students. As one Natural Sciences student bluntly told me, "you're treated like a fail if you get a Third". For one-offs, this is unfortunate but unsurprising. At an institutional level, though, it is completely unacceptable. The last time I checked, a Third Class degree here is a pass. The fact some students are called in for meetings with their academic supervisors to explain this 'poor academic performance', or pressured into intermitting, is not acceptable. To treat such students as inadequate in their academic abilities, for simply being lower down in the pecking-order of an elite academic community, is educationally shameful.

Especially, it must be understood, when the assessment practices of some Tripos exams *statistically guarantee* that students are to attain such classifications, due to a ranking relative to their peers. Where it exists, which I should note is <u>not</u> the majority of cases, this systematic treatment of lower attainment has to be put to an end. Despite this though, at least the sciences are employing a grading system which is substantially rewarding those who do better than many of their Cambridge peers. Disappointingly, the situation in the social sciences, arts and humanities is that 'we spend so much of our time putting candidates in either one or two categories' – namely, a 2.1 or a First. In some Triposes, the number of candidates getting one of these two classifications is above 90%. That's not how it was intended to be.

Let's take a moment to remember that it doesn't have to be this way – leading universities on other continents would find this system unacceptably rigid. We need a system that rewards candidates in a way which both differentiates themselves from their peers at Cambridge, as well as reflect their broadly high achievement within a national standing.

Across both problems, we need to use the range of marks and classifications more flexibly. Grade reform may not be solved within Cambridge alone. The issues are broader than this university alone. Yet, if Cambridge is anything, it is academically-respected, and its policy reform in the examination field will be followed. Cambridge may have contributed to some of these problems, but it is also part of the solution.

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Radically Considerate

Rensa Gaunt

Radical consideration for others can include not only reacting to but also anticipating their needs. If you are organising a society or college event, you can give the relevant access information from the start, so people know what the score is. The CUSU Access Statement Generator allows you to fill out a short form and generate text to copy-paste into event listings, taking the burden away from individual students with access needs and making it clear that you have thought about them, and that they would be welcome!

If you're going out to a venue or event that doesn't have access information available, it only takes a few seconds to message the hosts and ask them to put access info on their event listing and their central website. You can also leave reviews for venues, mentioning their access arrangements.

By anticipating that *someone* will need that information, and expecting it to be clearly displayed as standard, we can work towards considering other people by default, and not just as an apologetic afterthought.

Friends

I've not met people like you before
Your accent is so strong, and -
I don't know how to deal with The Poor?
Of course you couldn't understand
I didn't mean you specifically
(Just everyone like you)
Reacts so stereotypically
Why can't you just be, you?
Really? You don't look disabled,
I guess I can believe it.
At least you don't look disabled,
Exactly how I misconceive it.
Why do you need to meet
With people who are labelled just the same?
Why come to university
If you're going to be ashamed?
Do you really think
We all can't just get along

Can't I say hurtful things
Without someone having to be wrong?

University and Religion

Hannah Mendall

Religion has been a central part of my life, as it provides me with a sense of community and links me to a culture and shared history. Being Jewish, as with any other minority group, connects you to people across the world, because you have at least one thing in common. This is where the idea of a 'Jewish geography' originates from.

Now that I am in my final year of university, I have had the opportunity to explore the Jewish community in Cambridge and at Fitzwilliam College. Through interfaith work, I have met a range of people from different religious backgrounds.

For one year, I served as the Interfaith Officer at Cambridge University's Jewish Society. Working alongside two co-Officers, I organised interfaith events which increased connections with faith groups across Cambridge. Through this, I met many friends, committed to a shared goal of raising interfaith and religious understanding.

The biggest termly event I organised was an Interfaith Sabbath dinner. Taking place on a Friday night, the Jewish Society opened its doors to students across the university, regardless of their religious affiliation. Alongside the committee, sponsorship was secured from external interfaith charities, such as the Council of Christians and Jews.

It was a real honour to host Rowan Williams, Master of Magdalene College, as our guest speaker at the Lent-term dinner. Addressing a packed and buzzing room of 150 students, Rowan Williams spoke about the importance of interfaith engagement. His universal message was about empowering each other through respecting difference, whether that difference takes the form of faith, gender, sexuality, age or ethnicity. This event attracted representatives from 7 different faith groups in Cambridge, including Christian Union to Cambridge's Bahá'i society. Another highlight was organising a Jewish-Muslim Iftar meal during May Week. Attended by 90 people, Jewish and Muslim students gathered and broke the fast of Ramadan together. We ate a three-course meal, consisting of Jewish and Israeli foods, and were addressed by a local Rabbi and Iman. However, organising the event was not without several mishaps. Two hours before the event, the restaurant in London supplying us with food experienced a chip pan fire (luckily no one was hurt). It was stressful sourcing alterative food supplies just before the event, but the committee rose to the challenge and the event was a huge success.

In addition, we organised university-wide scriptural reasoning discussions. Different faith groups gathered and brought along religious texts, centred on a common theme, including 'sacrifice' to 'hospitality' in religious scripture.

Overall, being part of interfaith work in Cambridge introduced me to new people across the university. This Michaelmas, I am delighted to have founded a Jewish Society at Fitzwilliam College alongside Fabian Bor and Leeron Haffner. This provides a fantastic opportunity to promote cultural events and interfaith engagement in college. Our society plans to host events in celebration of Jewish festivals, such as a Chanukah party and Purim event. We also hope to run an interfaith discussion panel from interfaith charities. Most importantly, we are open to people from all backgrounds, and hope to provide a sociable and open space open space for students in college. My belief in interfaith work stems from an inherent recognition that 21st century British society has a deep issue with understanding 'difference.' Society's failure to accept difference is reflected in many ways, through the rising incidents of anti-Semitism and islamophobia, to the xenophobic discourses which have emerged out of populist Brexit campaigns. Speaking from my own experiences as a Jew, anti-Semitic discourse in Britain has become mainstreamed in political discussions. This was highlighted by issues relating to Labour Party politics over the summer. The repeated individualised and political experiences of anti-Semitism question British Jews' sense of belonging and place in the UK; this feeling of alienation now constitutes a part of daily life.

The issue of anti-Semitism, as with other forms of racism and discrimination, can be tackled at the roots causes. Perhaps one way through which Cambridge University can increase the representation of religious minority voices is through the college-based JCR system. There is a place for a 'Religious Minorities' Officer, who aims to both protect religious minorities from discrimination in university life, but also to assist with specific issues relating to religious practice. For example, Jewish and Muslim students have specific dietary needs, such as requiring Kosher and Hallal food at Formal Hall. Whilst some changes could be made, there are many steps in the right direction towards accommodating minority groups within the University.

Overall, interfaith engagement and religious understanding has never been more important, in an age when racism proliferates. I have learnt a lot from my experiences of engaging in interfaith work at university, and met many wonderful people along the way. Starting a Jewish Society at Fitzwilliam College will open up opportunities for interfaith work, and create new spaces of dialogue and friendship.

Ghosting
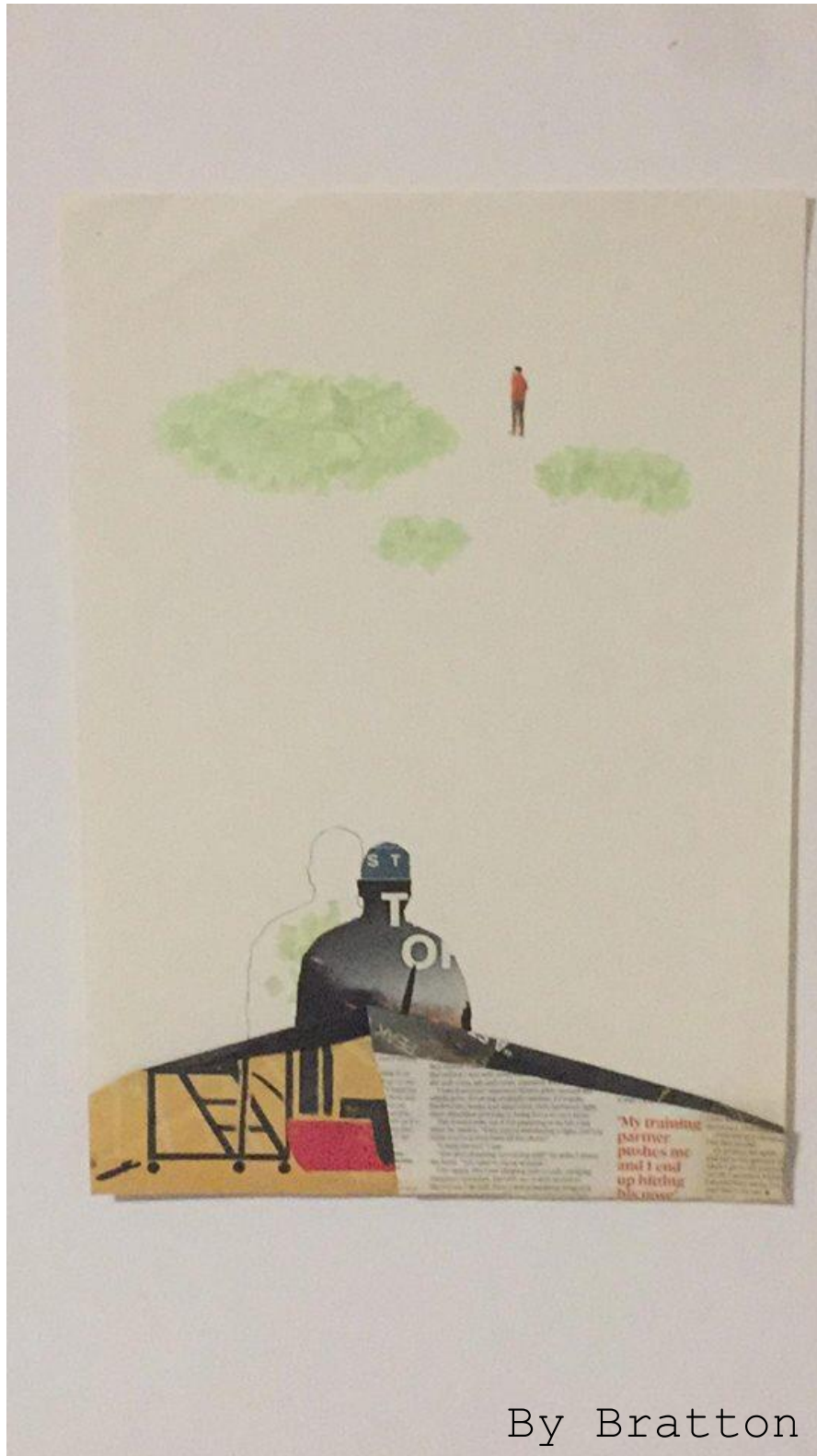
By Bratton

Washing Ourselves Green

Ella Palmer

It's generally accepted, particularly among students, that climate change is happening. Even before this summer's heat, a YouGov poll on public attitudes found 83% of people believed the planet was warming and humans were either partially of fully accountable. The question now is how to respond effectively, and how to harness the unprecedented public awareness. Corporations, organisations and institutions are conscious of this new-found awareness, but rather than committing to meaningful and long-term change, they focus on monetising the movement by 'greenwashing' their public image. Such cynical manoeuvres stifle real change and breed widespread complacency.

There are many examples of corporations attempting Greenwashing: Starbucks recently committed to backing the movement to ban the use of plastic straws – replacing them with new lids that used more plastic than the original straws. The term has been used since the 1980's with reference to large companies but it can be also thought of on a personal level as well; Greenwashing is a narrative which requires us to partake in. It grossly simplifies issues to a point where it is easier and more comfortable for us to follow, rather than looking into an individual product or personal action's unique complexities. It becomes easier to cling to these manufactured rules and we become unused to thinking through our own multifaceted impact.

It is made far too easy for us to accept the surface level implication that, because your take away cup or buttery box is labelled biodegradable or compostable, then all environmental impact is annulled and is equal to using your own keep cup or Tupperware. In the example of Fitzwilliam's buttery boxes supplied by Vegware, the boxes are designed to break down in industrial composting plants and put in food waste bins. Vegware have stated that if these boxes are placed in landfill, they are unlikely to break down because the conditions prevent microbial activity.

Despite repeated attempts by Fitz green impact group in the last few years, Fitzwilliam have also failed to grant the food bins that are needed for the boxes to work. This means that the use of the boxes amount to little more than a symbol of a good intention, on the colleges part and our own, but is ultimately ineffective.

To avoid becoming complicit in the trap of greenwashing it is so important to radically question narratives rather than sticking to a set of hard and fast rules. This issue of biodegradable plastic is similar to other environmental catechisms like vegetarianism/veganism, carbon offsetting and recycling. It's not to say these aren't useful starting points, but there simply needs to be constant questioning within these principles on an individual basis. To touch lightly on an example, the negative environmental impact of palm oil is making headlines at the moment, but there is very little being said about the deforestation caused by the 'millennial avocado'. Recycling is also obviously very important, but with China's recent rejection of the UK's recycling and stories of corruption in the Environment Agency, it is clear that recycling a plastic bottle is not the same as not using it in the first place.

The likelihood of recycled products actually making it back into circulation is perhaps slimmer than we think.

The need to constantly question narratives which might partake in greenwashing extends to how we operate as students within our University. This university prides itself on its ability to produce critical thinkers but it appears less keen when its members turn their questioning on the institution itself. Some have criticised the Zero Carbon and the broader Divestment campaign for becoming too radical too quickly. However, this is to overlook the fact that the majority of undergraduates are only here for 3 years. This quick turnover means a large majority of us have not seen the previous attempts to work through bureaucratic procedures before the current methods were been adopted. The University relies on the transience and time pressures within our years to prevent sustained pressure on its justification for still investing millions in arms and fossil fuels. To have any type of sustained impact in holding the University's narratives to account, it is so important to be involved in movements larger than yourself, including societies and conversations with other students.

With all this in mind, the best thing we can do to help the environment is to continue to think critically about the choices we and others make, trying our best to push for the truly greenest action rather than taking steps that simply alleviate guilt. We must remain wary of greenwashing on an institutional and social level, but also as individuals.

Responsible Investment
Melissa Dicks

Divestment has often been discussed in a university setting as a solution to environmental problems, but it should be seen as the solution to a wider issue: how the investments made by our university reflects its moral integrity.

Cambridge is the wealthiest university in Britain, with the combined assets of the university and its constituent colleges totalling nearly £12bn, of which £54m belongs to Fitz. However, despite increasing scrutiny into their investment policies, our university and almost all colleges (including Fitz) still have investments in arms and fossil fuel companies.

These unethical investments clearly do not reflect well on an institution whose purpose is to contribute to society and promote the bettering of the world through furthering human understanding. In fact, in the case of fossil fuels, these investments seem to be directly at odds with the University of Cambridge mission statement, which includes among its core values "concern for sustainability and the relationship with the environment."

At this point it seems necessary to offer a clear definition of divestment: getting rid of stocks, bonds or investment funds that are unethical or morally ambiguous. Positive reinvestment would involve using this money to support funds, companies and bonds that do moral and environmental good. For example, Cambridge could invest in ESG funds which actively integrate environmental, social and governance concerns into their investments are an important part of the solution.

Before any of this can happen though, the first stage of a responsible investment solution should be to provide a greater level of transparency around the investment policies of the university and our college, to elucidate the scale of the problem. It is true that divestment is unlikely to bring about an immediate, significant financial impact on those corporations deemed unethical, at least at this early stage. However, the more important result to be gained is the ideological statement, and its use as a public-awareness exercise. When a large public institution, especially one with the reputation of Cambridge University, takes such an action, it sends an extremely powerful message. We are part of a world-leading establishment, and national news often reports on both the decisions taken here regarding investment policy, and the activities of our divestment movement.

So, if the university was able to demonstrate that it takes ethics into account, listening to the concerns of its students and supporting the academic research of its own staff on issues such as climate change, this could have a great impact and set an example for other institutions.

Indeed, precedents have already been set and widespread divestment from tobacco companies on ethical grounds has already happened. With regard to fossil fuels investments, more than 60 UK universities have made commitments to divest fully, including Glasgow, Durham, Bristol and Cardiff, as well as our neighbours Anglia Ruskin. Within the University of Cambridge itself there are two colleges which have begun the process of divesting: Peterhouse and Queens.

As a college which considers itself to be "forward-looking" Fitz (and the wider university) must put its money where its mouth is. By joining the many institutions which have already committed to full divestment, Fitz can make a vital ethical stand to add pressure to industries which have a damaging impact on our society and environment, and support more positive investments.

Transforming Space
By Tesni Clare

Proposal #1: switch some of Fitz's energy supply to local-scale renewable sources
Proposal #2: transform empty lawns into communal edible garden

To some readers, the above proposals will hardly seem radical. Instead, they merely represent the bare minimum that we should be doing in order to curtail the dangerous trajectory in which Earth is heading. To others, they will seem far *too* radical, 'utopic' even. These disparate responses are symptomatic of our polarised and disconnected times. In a moment where collective action and consensus are urgently needed, radical change is immobilised by clashing worldviews and ideologies, and the condemnation of alternative visions as 'unrealistic'. Photovoltaic systems employ solar panels that transform the sun's energy into electricity – a renewable source of energy that has been used by plants and. photosynthetic organisms for millions of years. The various buildings at Fitzwilliam

college add up to over 6412m² of rooftop, many of which are flat – this is ideal as solar panels can be orientated to face south and mounted onto racking structures that optimize the angle at which the sun hits, thus maximizing electricity production. Advances in technology and increased manufacturing scale have drastically reduced the cost of solar panels. However, small-scale uptake has been somewhat stunted in recent years, as government support for renewables (in the form of subsidies and feed-in-tariffs) has been rolled back under a neoliberal regime of austerity. Initial costs of purchase and installation are thus high, but grassroots, independent energy production can produce returns in a number of years, and slash electricity costs at a time when the 'big six' energy companies are

pushing up prices perpetually. This project could also be an exciting opportunity for students to learn about photovoltaic systems and be more conscious of where our energy comes from.
A further 'radical' shift at Fitz would be to turn parts of the lawn and ornamental flower beds into vegetable, herb patches and orchards. This model could be applied across Cambridge, as the number of colleges boasting perfectly manicured lawns are hardly lacking in empty growing spaces. It seems nonsensical to reserve massive green spaces as 'decorative' – and forbid people from even walking on them – at a time when cities are getting denser, concrete is sprawling and peoples' access to nature is increasingly difficult. Replacing these somewhat artificial patches of 'nature'

with spaces where students can connect with the earth by physically getting their hands dirty, and experience a seed turn into an organic meal, is exceedingly important in a time of plastic-wrapped fast foods and desk-based lives.

Edible York is a successful example of one of many community garden schemes popping up around the UK. Teams of volunteers transform un-used patches of grass or gravel – within housing estates, on roadsides, in parks – into public vegetable and herb beds.

My inspiration for this article came from a summer of researching an off-grid island in Canada, which brought the question of environmental responsibility back to the local, the community and the individual level. The one primary school on the island – False Bay elementary school – runs entirely off solar and micro-hydro energy and has a vegetable garden from which students take produce home every week. "I try to contribute to the system as little as possible" one resident of the island proclaimed, as we trudged through the forest, arms full of hand-split firewood, toward his solar-powered cabin.

He elaborated, "I grow as much food as I can in this patch, swap with neighbours, bodge things together and always question if I actually *need* something".
I have no vision of us *all* living such off-grid, rural, minimalist lives, reminiscent of transcendentalist simple living. This would be impossible and undesirable for most. I am, however, suggesting that we integrate such values of self-sufficiency, renewability and 'making do' into our modern, urban lives and university structures.

I wanted to write this article without using the words 'sustainability' or 'climate change' (and I've succeeded until now). A once radical term, 'sustainability' has been thrown around, abused, rendered a tokenistic marketing trope, morphed well beyond its original meaning. Today, it simply means things that *endure*. We are saturated with unoriginal, scare-mongering headlines, and the same meaningless, ostensibly environmental jargon.
We risk becoming desensitised to the point of lethargy or overwhelmed to the point of feeling insignificant. We trundle on, blindly consuming

and producing waste in a system designed to encourage unlimited consumption and production of waste. But we do have agency, as individuals, and as a college and university community. I am not naively suggesting that eating more home-grown produce and switching to solar will 'save the world'. It won't, but it sure might make us happier, healthier and more fulfilled in the meantime. To lay sole responsibility for environmental preservation on the individual and at the local level would be to grossly neglect the massive role that corporations, global industry and governments play in perpetuating damage. However, solutions have to be multi-scalar. Furthermore, there is something to be said for supply and demand, and the empowered role we have as consumers to dictate demand (and thus supply) of energy and foodstuffs. As college residents, we are restricted to the options supplied by college, but at the college or university level, the institution is empowered to choose where energy and food comes from. For a radical solution to be successful, it has to be holistic, and framed with a positive, exciting – not dystopian – energy.

The Problem with #MeToo.

Anonymous.

CN: sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape

A few weeks ago, the Cambridge Union held a debate on whether the #MeToo movement has failed, and a majority of students left the debate feeling that it had succeeded. In response to that discussion, I want to talk about the failings of the movement and what we can do create a more successful campaign.

The #MeToo movement is characterised by the use social media to vocalise the stories of sexual harassment victims. Despite claiming to be a narrative for victims, the campaign has inadvertently morphed into something more trivial. This is because social media, at its base level, is entirely shaped around the individual voice. Although it can be empowering, this individualistic construction can lead to an overrated emphasis on subjective perceptions that are often unverifiable and not necessarily reliable.

Unlike police reports and legal case proceedings, which are externally scrutinised and upheld to a strict code of conduct, social media is unregulated, acting as a blunt conveyor of human emotion. It is therefore easy to see why a movement like #MeToo can be corrupted by 'rogue' claims of sexual harassment when the form through which it operates is not subject to external regulation. This can lead to an arbitrary jumbling of allegations whereby serious, legal matters can be clumped together with more trivial cases not only leading to false accusations, but also undermining the movement itself. The narrative of the movement can be harmful to sexual assault victims who see their traumas conflated with clumsy attempts at flirting and mistaken touches, all categorised under the single heading of sexual harassment. Even supporters of the movement have admitted that claims of serious sexual assault are being tainted and neutralised by regressive accounts of bad dates and clumsy flirting. A movement like this cannot be taken seriously, let alone take itself seriously, when it cannot recognise a spectrum of sexual abuse and make a case in accordance with rationality.

Social media may be a way of enfranchising the personal, but that does not mean there is nothing too personal to discuss. As much as some people may be brave enough to share their experiences, many victims of rape, sexual abuse and assault might feel uncomfortable about putting their accounts onto social media. Instead of putting their experiences into the open, survivors need a controlled environment in which to come to terms with a traumatic event. This cannot be achieved by reopening a painful account on social media, made transparent to anyone with a single scroll or click. There is also something trivialising about social media in itself. How is a person supposed to react to a few hundred 'likes' of their traumatic experience? There is a superficial construction to social media: it was designed to build up and maintain links between friends rather than share deeply personal stories to an indiscriminate group of people. The platform therefore promotes the sharing of more trivial and easier to talk about problems, thus twisting the image of what real sexual assault looks like. I would like to suggest how our student body can help correct some the excesses of #MeToo. Students need to employ some perspective and learn how to respond to the multiple complexities of social and sexual discourse without feeling disempowered. The victimisation of individuals, especially women, seems to make them more incapable of calling out harassment in the first place, and such disempowerment should be rectified.

My suggestion is that we give young people more agency by encouraging them to establish their own boundaries with other people, who may be insensitive to the needs of other students without meaning to cause harm. This is not to say that we should blame them for the actions of others, but rather that they should become empowered by clarifying their discomfort to other people, who could otherwise take their silence for a sign of consent.

We also need to me more careful with our use of the word 'trauma'. This precise medical term relates to a specific mental state in which the victim cannot even function properly, and as uncomfortable as an experience of unwanted advances may be, it cannot seriously be on par with a severe medical issue. A movement that conflates the trivial with the profound does not help to restore any sense of perspective. These simple actions are about restoring students' dignity in social situations, without having to feel like they are victims of a sexual persecution, and they can help to avoid feelings of discomfort and misunderstandings relating to sexual misconduct in the future.

Defending #MeToo: A Resource For The Marginalised.

Ellie Brain (JCR Woman's Officer)

CN: Sexual assault, sexual harassment, rape

One in three women aged 18 to 34 have been sexually harassed at work (World Health Organisation, 2015). 71% of these women said they did not report it. One in three of the world's countries do not have any laws prohibiting sexual harassment at work – leaving nearly 235 million working women vulnerable in the workplace. #MeToo is one of the few campaigns which have truly exposed the scale of sexual harassment and abuse. I would like to point to the four reasons why I would personally defend #MeToo: it helped expose the breadth of the problem, highlighted how certain language sets a worrying precedence, provided an invaluable resource for the new social movement against gender inequality, and brought about genuine change.

#MeToo's greatest aim was to highlight that survivors are not alone. The term was coined in 2006 by Tara O'Brien, a watershed moment in feminist protest. However, when Oprah Winfrey delivered her speech at the golden Globes in January, 2018, the campaign spiked with a wave of significant online attention. People, be that celebrities or members of the general public, started sharing their stories. The power and sheer number of these stories has continued to rise ever since. The campaign has therefore created an informal channel to highlight the wide-scale problem of sexual oppression, a platform for solidarity, empowerment, exposure, and liberation. It shows victims standing strong together against sexual harassment and abuse within the patriarchy.

Secondly, I strongly disagree with the quantification of sexual harassment or abuse: anything from being catcalled in the street, being lightly touched in a club without consent, or gang rape, all constitute something that must be talked about. An asset of the #MeToo campaign is that it rightfully acknowledges that nothing is trivial; the social revolution does not discriminate from those wanting to contribute to the movement because they haven't, under anybody's terms, been affected 'enough'. Regardless of how severe unwanted touching is, it is sexual assault, and should be called out for what it is. Misogynist insults also deserve recognition for their prevalence. Casual sexism is the soil that creates, sustains and legitimates sexual harassment and assault, meaning that the Everyday Sexism that Laura Bates (2014) addresses must equally be exposed, criticised, and protested. The #MeToo campaign does just that, incorporating an array of types of gendered oppression, which I believe furthers the campaigns primary aim: to highlight the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault.

Thirdly, social Movements have to be innovative, dynamic, and creative to achieve their specific aims. Harnessing the increased popularity of Twitter and hashtags surely is a form of innovation, dynamism, and creativity for the social movement of feminism. It is using all of its resources – a combination of the free, powerful world wide web, and one of the most common assets to social movements, collective action – to create an informal exposure of societal issues. The #MeToo campaign has therefore provided a resource which is (nearly) freely and easily accessible to all, and one that has globally spread the word concerning the frequency, and severity, of gendered oppression.

Finally, #MeToo is not just a hashtag, but has made difference to the cause, both personally and tangibly. The US's 'Me Too' Bill was revealed in January 2018 as an Amendment to the 1995 Congressional Accountability Act, which changed how federal government treats sexual harassment claims by shortening the time for reports to be filed, increasing transparency within the system, and offering protections to unpaid employees. Given that sexual harassment and/or assault is inherently harder to disprove, rather than prove, any legislative reform is the step in the right direction. The movement is also informally inspiring hundreds of grassroots campaigns. Nicole Stamp in 2017 published an essay on Facebook addressing "how men can help" the movement, which provided a manifesto including encouraging men to practice the phrase "that's not cool", and to stop using gendered or misogynist insults (CNN, 2017). The essay was shared by over 70,000 people, and likely to have been read by hundreds of thousands. Informally and formally, progression is being made which may not have happened without the prerequisite of #MeToo. We must recognise the power of, be it online or in person, saying "I'm with you" or "you are not alone" to a survivor, and in the wake of #MeToo, a community has formed to do so. The #MeToo campaign is an innovative social movement which has struck the hearts of individuals across the world. Critique is necessary for progression, but dismissing the campaign entirely is an insult to the hundreds of voices who it has helped, perhaps even saved. The fact we are all are aware of the term itself highlights that #MeToo has succeeded.

The Art of Being Boring

Harry Gatward

I am in awe of the people that can see a worthy cause and immediately jump in, pouring their heart and soul into the movement. I love the romantic notion, but I just can't do it. I find actually publicly supporting a movement nerve wracking, and so I try to research it so I can at least justify my position. Hours of google searches later and I'm overwhelmed by the complexity of it all, I feel ill-equipped to make any decision on something so intricate, and so I let it fizzle out and nothing gets done. In case you couldn't tell, that it is not a particularly sensible attitude to have. However, I do find it frustrating to see people totally swept up in a movement, with no understanding or respect for what it really means. This might accidentally be a good thing: imagine a rich and powerful activist in favour of stopping climate change, but only because they like seeing polar bears when they holiday to Norway.

Sometimes people are caught up in movements which are obviously wrong or insane. At best these can be stupid, and at worst harmful, but they are easy to spot and easy to avoid. But there is also middle ground where things become a little trickier. For example, there was a crowd funded product called 'FONTUS' – a design for a solar-powered bike-mounted water-bottle holder which could condense water out of thin air. This is clearly a product with huge potential for communities without clean water. But if you start doing some very simple calculations based on basic physics, it would render the machine the size of a fridge (it's essentially a dehumidifier). Now clearly this start-up had noble goals, but poor execution. If you then consider that most of their team are engineers, it means their oversight is either extremely negligent, or intentional.

My point here is that it's possible to feel like you are doing good while not actually solving a problem. It is also possible to sit on your hands and not do anything because you're too cautious to actually do anything *nervous cough*. There is a middle ground. Effective Altruism, for example, provides excellent resources for learning how to navigate this middle ground – and they are far more qualified than me to give advice!

I'm just putting my two cents out here because I see so many people focus their efforts on a problem, but not in a way that actually makes any progress. Humans are incredibly good problem solvers, and yet we are also ill-equipped to deal with problems in a global sense. We get caught up in us vs. them campaigns, and scapegoat others left right and centre (pun intended); we do very little to actually work the problem. Another symptom of the animal-brain is the trend for opinions, particularly political ones, to creep towards extremes. Bringing lots of energy to a movement, through things like protests or rallies is a great way of drawing those on 'your side of the fence' closer to you, but at the risk of pushing others further away. Doing nothing doesn't raise any awareness or funding, so, again, there's a middle ground.

Look, you lot are at Cambridge, (and even better, you ended up in Fitz), I don't need to tell you to use your common sense. What I am trying to say is that everything is more complicated than we give it credit for. That being said, you are at university. This is a place where you can have these discussions and figure things out, go to debates (Fitz has a Debate society by the way) talk to your supervisors even, it's all there for you to learn and question things in a safe environment.

The bubble can have its benefits!

As students we do have the ability to influence our immediate environment, and the university's reputation extends that influence even further. We have an ability to make a small impact on the world through our actions and choices. They won't all be perfect decisions, but they can at least be informed and sensible, and be focused on actually solving a problem.
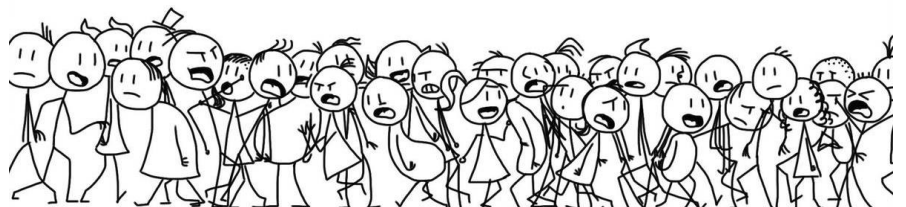
Meme Wars

Yusuf Uddin

Some people have said that one of the best signs of thriving and riveting democracy is the quality of the memes put on display. One thing that is quite unique to Fitz in comparison to many colleges is the ability to unabashedly describe yourself as the lord and saviour who will provide the JCR salvation and safety. In other colleges, it is quite absurd to just spam the main college Facebook page with mostly unsatisfactory, stale, overused memes yet here at Fitz it is a staple of the democratic process.

To put it briefly, I see meme campaigns as an afront to rational authority principles. Max Weber in his seminal lecture "The vocation for politics," states that for the state to be ran well, leaders should be voted in according to rational principles i.e. the president should be voted in based off experience and the policies they wish to implement. But memes are debase political discourse and are detached from reality. They create a hypothetical situation for the candidate to mould themselves into, talking about their greatest attributes as a leader whilst never using real life experience nor examples to show how these skills have been put into practice.
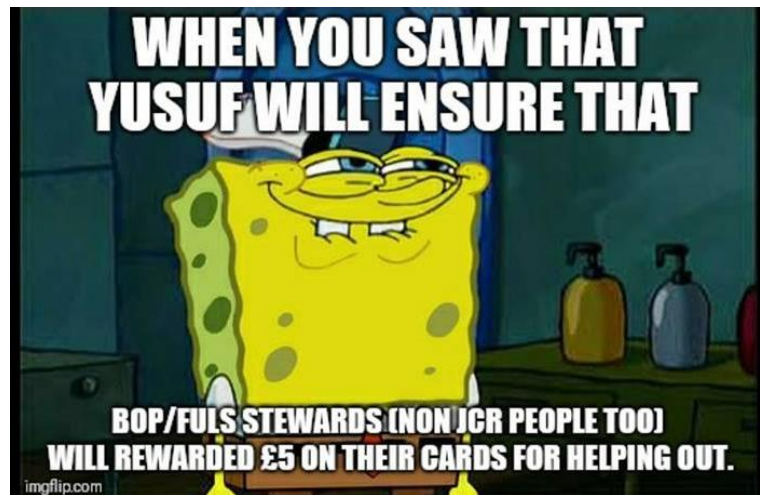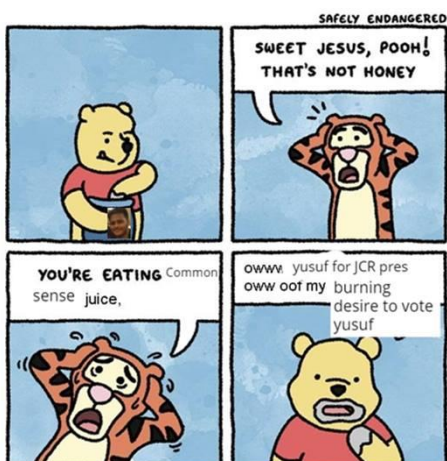
How can the right leader be chosen if their only means of expression is a distorted medium?

The truth is, memes are bad for JCR elections, they mar who should really be voted in. Meme campaigns are more akin to "idiocracy" than they are to democracy. You may argue that political parties spend millions on political campaigning and misleading voters to vote for politicians that do not have their interests at hearts. However, I would argue that meme wars are worse than this. They aren't just harmless fun, but instead muddy accountability and just outright confuse people. Rarely do memes refer to policies or how they will be implemented, they just accentuate the popularity contest that the JCR elections are often critiqued for. Furthermore, candidates tend to use memes to make blasé points they never discussed in their manifesto. Promising the world through memes is tantalising but dangerous and something we should be wary of. Towards the end, people are just so fed up of the memes that they make their own counter memes. These memes are just as bad and as stale as the old memes.

The current system is just simply unsustainable. The solution I propose is that the rules should be drastically changed. I think there should be a meme limit, so that only the best memes may be procured and posted on the Facebook group. These memes need to also directly address the policies that candidate wishes to bring about, no more random self-congratulatory posts but, real accountability.

Furthermore, memes should only be posted on the Official Fitz Group and nowhere else. Again, it is frustrating for these memes to take up every aspect of Fitz life, this would require extreme moderation but will ensure some measure of culpability on those who have broken the rules. These changes would require a drastic change to the current election rules, but I am sure this can be done swiftly. If this cannot be implemented, then just ban memes altogether. Finally, just because I ran a meme campaign doesn't mean I can't criticise the issue of meme campaigns...

Mr. FIED