FROM WAYGOOD & CHIVERS' POOR PRINT

FANTASTIC TRUMPS

AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

Enviable plumage

Ego expands to fill the available space

FAKE NEWS

Notoriously thin skin

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On behalf of Sean Spicer's Ministry of Truth.

(See Marco Rubin, 2016)
The Stuff of Myth & Legend

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Media & Journalism Careers Event

We are excited to announce the first ever Poor Print careers event, as part of Oriel Arts Festival 2017 and in collaboration with Merton Street JCR Careers Officers.

On Tuesday 9 May (Trinity Term Week 3), a number of Oriel and Corpus Christi alumni working in media and journalism will be coming to Oriel to give talks on their experiences in the industry and give careers advice to current students.

The speakers will be Adam Raphael, Daniel Hinge, Sian Cox-Brooker, Robert Rea, Robert Katz and Candida Evans. Any current members of Oriel can attend.

The event will be held in the Harris Seminar Room, and will run from 4:45pm-7:00pm. Doors will open at 4:30, and tickets can be bought via Eventbrite on a first-come, first-served basis.

Attendance to the talks will be free of charge. There is, however, also the option of paying for a ticket allowing you to join the speakers at Charity Formal afterwards. Proceeds of this will go to Oxford Homeless Pathways.

Executive Editors: Alex Waygood & Aidan Chivers.
Redesigned header by Charlie Willis.
This issue designed by Alex Waygood.
Visit www.thepoorprint.com for the full Poor Print team.
Once Upon a Time...

Kryssy Burawaski

A phrase often used at the beginning of fairy tales in Russian is 'и в далеком царстве'. The closest marker used in English tales is probably 'in a land far, far away.' This conveys the meaning, but understanding the Russian phrase literally is a little more problematic. Google seems to have been watching a lot of Shrek recently because it suggested using 'in the kingdom of Far Far Away' as a translation. Игранце does mean kingdom, but the adjective is made from the Russian words for 'three' and 'nineth'. So maybe 3 x 9 = 27 kingdoms away! (Wilkinson's suggestion.) I don't know the answer, but the point is that it's really, really far away — incomprehensibly so.

And so it needs to be. The fact that fairy tales in general are set so far away encourages readers/listeners to suspend disbelief and forget the laws of nature they know to be true in their own kingdoms in order to believe the fantastical happenings of the stories, while offering a glimmer of hope and magic that such things might just be possible. But this idea is a little bittersweet, since so many fairy tale motifs are associated with reaching goals, finding true love, ending suffering, gaining riches beyond our wildest dreams...

Phrases like 'a knight in shining armour' (in the Russian idiom, the knight rides a white horse) and 'they lived happily ever after' spring to mind. Or, taking the wealth example, the goose that lays golden eggs which Jack finds atop the beanstalk. Such tales can inspire and create hope that somewhere — even if it is very far away — or somehow dreams do come true and problems do get solved.

But on the other hand, taking a more skeptical view, these stories being set so far from reality in both time and space could be interpreted as an implication that achieving dreams and finding happiness is a largely untainable truth. That it is something that can only happen in the 27th kingdom, to a special hero or heroine, with the help of a fairy godmother.

This leads me to another idiom: 'счастье не за горами'. This phrase is very much in my mind since it is written in giant letters by the banks of the river Kama here in Perm. I suppose our equivalent would be: 'happiness is just around the corner'.

Word for word, it means: 'happiness isn't beyond the hills'. I like that idea a lot better.

The Stuff of Myth & Legend

Myth and Folklore from Around the World

The Lost Stories

Anna Wawrzynkowska

I travelled along the winding roads of coastal Victoria, Australia, I was reading a book by a man called Big Bill Neidjie — as the last speaker of the now-extinct Gagudju language and the elder of Kakadu in Northern Territory, he is a man of incomparable experience and wisdom regarding the Aboriginal ethos, culture, and history. The book is a small, A5-sized hardback, with a photo of an old man and a child on the first page — a story being told, knowledge freely given. When I picked it up, it felt like just another coffee table book, something sweet and short and easy, perfect to start and finish on the road.

Selected excerpts from Gagudju Man

(Bill Neidjie, 1986)

Rock stays,
earth stays.
I die and put my bones in cave or earth.
Soon my bones become earth.
all the same.
My spirit has gone back to my country, my mother.
... Dreaming place,
you can’t change it,
no matter who you are.
No matter you rich man,
no matter you kind.
You can’t change it.

I feel it with my body, with my blood.
Feeling all these trees,
all this country.
When you wind blow you can feel it
Same for country,
You feel it.
It can look.
But feeling... that make you.

Aborigines do not record their history. It lives and breathes with the land, each tree a myth, each billabong a reminder. But with the land changing, and the stories surrounding the world of native Australians incessantly depicted on paper and screen, Big Bill Neidjie did what no Aborigine had done before: he recorded the secrets of his tribe on paper, in English.

What Bill Neidjie has done is for you and me to call out a man’s name after he is gone, for fears of recalling his spirit from the land of the dead. But faced with the choice between preserving the endless resilience of his spirit, and forgetting the secrets of the land and tribe, Big Bill Neidjie has chosen the sacrifice: he has given permission to record his name and make it endure along with his writing, so that his words — his story — live on.

In beautifully simple, broken English, in lines that look and sound more like poetry than anything else, he speaks about the land and the law of the land. The law is unchangeable; the people will once return to the land, bones will become soil. The pain you inflict on a tree will come back to you once you’re old and grey. You cannot sell land because it is not yours to have — you belong to the land. No matter your ancestors, all humans are bone and blood, and they all belong to the land. Fire renews; detachment is illusion, and so is death.

And after this dictation of tenets, Bill Neidjie writes something that freezes me to the bone: ‘you know it now, the ways of my people. You know it — and it is your responsibility now.’

Up until that point, it was simply a profound read. But when he says that — and you’re aware of why, of what he’s saying — a weight of ten thousand years falls on your shoulders, and stays there. This is a personal sacrifice of an old man who surrendered the peaceful rest of his spirit, given in full, so that the story lives on, and is inherited by a new generation. Not only is it yours now, but it is yours to remember and carry forward; through an act of faith, you, the reader, are now a spiritual heir of Big Bill Neidjie and his people. And the way of life that he has striven to protect and preserve — it is now yours to do so. From the pages of a short, simple book, and from decades and centuries, an old man speaks about the secrets of his people; and because you know now, it is your responsibility to make them live on.

Big Bill Neidjie died in 2002. Every time I type his name on my keyboard, his spirit stirs restlessly, de- nied its peace. But fear not, spectre: your sacrifice is not forgotten. You, as no Aborigine before you, carried the secrets of your people to all the corners of the earth, including the land of your invaders, and Oxford where they were taught: you have withstood the slaughter of your people, and even though you have lost an unimaginable wealth of tradition and land, your words will still be coursing the world like a Westerner’s remorse, like a reminder, an impulse to help and salvage and preserve, a call to remembrance.

‘Gagudju Man: Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory, Austral- ia’ (Bill Neidjie, 1986) can be pur- chased on Amazon, with prices starting at £13.37. The Bodleian Library also has an electronic ver- sion of Old Man’s Story: The Last Thoughts of Kakadu Elder Bill Neidjie’, which everybody should at least skim through.

www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/what-can-you-do-to-support-aboriginal-culture.html

And a handy list of (Australia-centred) activities that would help the Aboriginal communities can be accessed here: https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/
The key ingredients here are salmon fillets (£2 reduced from £3.50 for two) and an orange (reduced to 15p). I’ve tried to use vegetables that are usually not too expensive, such as beetroot (70p for a pack of three) and lentils (really cheap if you’re getting them from Tahirid’s on Cowley Road). And if you’re really strapped for cash, oranges are the kind of thing that might be vulnerable to theft from, say, an MCR fruit bowl (not that I’ve tried to use any spitting) into

1. juice from a wedge of the orange (avoiding any spitting) into a saucepan. Place the salmon fillet skin side down in the pan (it should make a soft sizzling sound). Leave the salmon to cook with the orange on a medium heat before

2. turning the heat down to medium. Then, carefully squeeze the juice from a wedge of the orange (avoiding any spitting) into the pan, tear the wedge in two, and add to the pan.

3. While this is going, heat up the garlic oil (or oil with a clove of garlic) in a small/medium frying pan.

4. Gradually I wound west and north, in the footsteps of those first explorers of my ilk who discovered these lands but a few hundred years before me, in the opposite direction to their distant predeces- sors, the first human feet to tread these steppes. Countless generations before me, I heard for the Bering Strait, the narrow tempestuous torrent that forms the fine fissure between two colossal continents which, in a younger, colder Earth, were linked by an arc of ice. But first, to cross Alaska. My Canadian train brought me not to the Alaskan land border, but to Port Arthur where, though the snow and ice were gathering and the trees and birds less numerous than further south, the inhospitable Arctic did not quite have dominion and the sea wasn’t frozen shut. There, it was possible to transfer to a train ferry — an old-fashioned means of transport quite new to me — and, rolling by rail straight onto a boat, we made a short and sunny crossing to American shores, before rolling off again to con-

5. tinue on our way. Similarly seductive scenery awaited me and, carried by train, I at last briefly crossed the Arctic Circle, coming — not long before the winter solstice — to the very edge of the land of perpetual winter dark.

6. Another beautiful aurora burst to life before me on that first nearly never-ending night, illuminating the empty edges of the world.

7. There were no roads here, no shops, no restaurants in a society not spoiled by streams of tourists. Apart from brief arrivals on the new cross-continental train, this is Russia’s ‘last closed territo- ry’, with no free travel and strict en- try requirements that each visitor ob- tains a special visa and a sponsor from amongst the inhabitants, who must promise to keep watch on them night and day.

Another beautiful aurora burst to life before me on that first nearly never-ending night, a mesmerising spectacle brought on by sparkling streams of stardust, but said in Norse mythology to be the sheen of the armour worn by Odin’s Valkyrie army as it marched across the sky. I witnessed too the strange sight of billowing polar clouds glowing in the dim twilight, with the sun’s light gently growing almost to the dawn. The hidden fire hung tantalisingly just beyond the horizon, but withdrew again, his promise unful- filled. I passed there, in that starlit land, while the deepest dark of winter idled by, alleviated even there, by the joyful festivities of that special time of year. Then, as the final embers of 2018 began to fade away, I boarded another train to continue on my way.

This journey would have been impossi- ble even a year before. But in contrast to the tightening noose being tugged on all of America’s other borders, here I was favoured by the sole migration loosening effected by its ersatz presi- dent: the bridging, at last, of the cold chasm between the United States and her near Asian neighbour, Russia. Though it is possible to cross the Bering Sea by foot, if one is willing to take one’s chances over the shifting ice-floats that wobble like slipping stepping-stones throughout its stormy, wind- swept breadth, this border has been closed for decades to travellers from afar.

A manned military Russian base oversees Big Diomede Island in its midst, and the few who have made it in recent years to the far side have been met by arrest and expulsion. But my journey came soon after the completion of a project dream of over a century before, and brought to fruition at last by the mutual friends that lead these once-warring states: a great train line linking, by bridge and tunnel, Russia and America. So it is that I can return to the way these ancient humans came, albeit by somewhat swifter means. Looking out from the safety of a rail- way carriage, I beheld the swelling waters of one of the most dangerous straits in the world, and passed safely across.

How long this cordiality will last is anybody’s guess in such uncertain times. Arriving in the Russian province of Chukotka, it was as though I peered beneath a veil into a secret, forgotten corner that had been, until so recently, still in the shadow of the Cold War. There were no roads here, no shops, no restaurants in a society not spoiled by streams of tourists. Apart from brief arrivals on the new cross-continental train, this is Russia’s ‘last closed territo- ry’, with no free travel and strict en- try requirements that each visitor ob- tains a special visa and a sponsor from amongst the inhabitants, who must promise to keep watch on them night and day.

This bitter landscape, with tempera- tures at this time of year swaying be- tween 15 and 35 degrees below zero, was inhabited by an ancient Chukchi people long before the Russians arrived in 1641. They remain a society steeped in Shamanic ritual and myth, telling strange stories of ancient battles and Earth’s creation, seeing spirits in animi- als, forests, rivers and stars. To me and my fellow travellers – set down but for a few hours by the train – they showed generosity and welcome, offer- ing us food and shelter in their tradi- tionally fur-ringed or more modern wood or concrete soviet-era single-storey blocks. Most of the people are reindeer herders, fishermen or whalers, carrying on long-lived ways of life that Russian influence could not quite dispel, re- freshingly at odds with the rest of the world that seems in some respects more like a separate universe.

But there are signs, inevitably, of a grimmer reality stamped upon the province, carried here by the greedy machinations of the USSR. Here and there the landscape is pock- ed by the blight of industrial complexes, designed to extract and process the gas, coal, gold and tungsten treasures that hide beneath these hills and perhaps in some way compensate for the great reserves of oil which Russia lost un- knowingly to America when she sold it.

Somewhere, also, in that bleak ex-panse, disillusion rides run to hidden hor-izons, the gulags of the Stalinist Terror where political prisoners from across this huge country were forced to face the winter, freezing in slavery and suf- fering for their supposed sins. Despite the warmth of the locals, something more than the chill Arctic breeze was making me shiver inside, and it was not with regret that, the short sojourn over, I was asked to re-embark the train and continue on my way.

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Contribute to The Poor Print

The Poor Print invites your contributions for our Trinity 2017 issues:

Issue 119 — Fracture. (Deadline: Sunday, Week 3.)

Issue 120 — Bodies. (Publication Week 5; submissions now closed.)

Issue 121 — Growth. (Deadline: Sunday, Week 7.)

Submit your pieces via thepoorprint@oreil.ox.ac.uk.

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Letters to The Poor Print

Responses to the print edition are welcome, and should be sent to thepoorprint@oreil.ox.ac.uk.

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THE COLUMN
Cut-Price Cuisine

Orange-Scented Salmon

Alice Correia Morton

The poor print.com

Tobias Thornes

Slow Travel: Myths of the Arctic

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FRIDAY, 28 APRIL 2017

ISSUE 18 — MYTH—PAGE 4
Fantastic Trumps—and Where to Find Them

Alex Waygood

The exhibition currently showing at the Christ Church Picture Gallery, *Fabulous Beasts and Beautiful Creatures*, documents the human fascination with the animal kingdom. Combining depictions of real-world creatures with those of myth and dream, the collection stands in marked contrast with much of the rest of the pictures on display at Christ Church. A horse, reduced to barely a few lines on paper, feels as though it moves before your eyes; a sketch of a lion hunt overwhlems in a cacophony of colliding bodies and spears. The beasts on display are alive: many are depicted in scenes of epic battle where confusion of lines prevails but the spirit is captured. The immediacy and mess of these pieces (primarily pen, pencil or chalk on paper) could not be further apart in some respects to the stylised intimacy of the canvases on display elsewhere in the gallery.

A special in-focus display case gives information on the seminal British animal artist Francis Barlow. Subtly exaggerating the key aspects of the animals portrayed, his work lies on the border between naturalism and caricature. A trio of treepit squirrels is lovingly sketched as they call to each other, with special attention (naturally) given to the fluffy ears and bushy tails. As with the rest of the exhibition, the emphasis is on the movement and vivacity of the natural world—the innate beauty and strangeness of the creatures around us.

The timing of the exhibition, naturally, comes as no coincidence. It doesn’t take a sleuth to suppose that the topic of the display (running from 18 February to 29 May 2017) was chosen to coincide with the release of the latest film from J.K. Rowling’s wizarding world, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. In many ways, the collection of pieces has more in common with the original 2001 book *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, the inspiration for the development of the recent film. Taking its name from a textbook mentioned in passing in the original Harry Potter book series, Rowling’s spin-off tome took the form of a catalogue of information and drawings of faux-fauna from the realm of Harry Potter—detailing both those mentioned in the series (such as Hippogriffs, Flabberworms and Kappas), and newer inventions such as Chizpurfles and Lethifolds.

The newer film fished the original material by adding a backstory (socially and in a mandatory love-interest) to the writing of the book by the renowned magician/actor Newt Scamander. Yet the emphasis on the wonder and quirkiness of Rowling’s world was retained—a welcome relief from Harry Potter

Continued on page 6

In an Age of Storytelling, Why Do We Continue to Undervalue the Creative Writing Degree?

Rebecca Slater

When I tell people I’m doing a creative writing degree there are two questions that people usually ask: the first is ‘Why?’ and the second, ‘How?’

The ‘how’ is an interesting place to start. With university course fees rising and incomes for writers falling, the financial outlook of a creative writing degree is at best optimist, and at worst downright crazy.

In the USA, the popularised Master of Fine Arts programme at institutions like Columbia or New York University will set students back between $50,000–120,000 (£40,000–96,000). In the UK, like programs at those at the University of East Anglia, Cambridge or Oxford cost around £12,000–15,000 for two years, or £20,000-30,000 for international students. In Australia, a masters in creative writing will put local students between AUD$18,000–$50,000 (£11,000–30,000) out of pocket in total, or up to $65,000 (£40,000) for international students.

A 2016 European Commission report showed average yearly earnings for UK writers to be below minimum wage at just £12,500, and in Australia the prospects are even gloomier: a 2015 Australian Book Industry report estimated annual earnings of less than AUD$13,000 (£8,000).

And that’s for writers who have ‘made it’—writers who are published, who call themselves professionals. It doesn’t take into consideration the thousands of writers who are yet-to-be-published, who are stuck in that perpetual limbo of ‘aspiring’ or ‘emerging’—or indeed, the writers who never make it at all.

For a debut author presenting their first manuscript to a publisher, advances can be as low as a few thousand dollars, with no further payment until sales exceed that amount. For many as-yet-unknown authors looking at modest sales for a first title, that’s it.

Poor sales will also affect the author’s chances of a publisher taking on their second book. With economic uncertainty hanging over the publishing industry, multi-book deals and high-risk projects are becoming a rare species, as publishers are forced to play their cards cautiously.

I may be a writer, but my maths is good enough to see that those figures don’t add up. Years of work and a whopping student debt, for an income that doesn’t even come close to covering living costs.

The trope of the struggling artist is nothing new, but the real-life financial and mental health implications of entering into such a field are surely cause for serious caution.

Which brings me to the second question: ‘Why?’ Why, knowing all this, would I— or the next hopeful writer—sign up to the creative writing course? Are we simply being played the fool? Or does this incompatibility between cost and gain signal a systemic problem with how writing is valued?

As a writer who values my craft, to have people continually question my desire to it is at best irritating, and at worst incredibly disheartening. To be viewed with scepticism by curious adults and potential employers, and looked down on in universities by students or teachers of ‘serious’ disciplines, is an insult to the practice and the time and effort its practitioners put into it.

It’s simple enough to see creative writing degrees as merely a matter of indulgence: to say that we students enter into these courses ‘for the love of it’, because ‘there’s nothing else in the world we could be doing’. And while this is true of many of the passionate students I may be, it’s also dangerously reductive.

For many of us, there are a lot of other things in the world we could be doing. We have students in our midst who were clearly ‘born to write’, but there are also those among us who have willyingly chosen and fought for the right to be here, and many who already are doing other things to support their passions.

In my course alone, I have diplomats, school teachers, lawyers, academics and filmmakers, all fiercely trying to carve out the time and means to hone their writing.

To say we’re here to learn is also true, if not equally problematic. There’s the strong view from many quarters that creative writing can be taught—that you’ve either got it, or you haven’t. And in some sense, I agree: there’s certainly an element of ‘natural’ creativity, lyrical flair and imagination that seems to the heart of all great writers. But just because good writers appear effortless doesn’t mean there’s no skill involved—skill that can be har-nessed, and built on. By ignoring that skill, we contribute to the devaluation of the craft itself.

We wouldn’t suggest a great musician could simply play without instruction or practice, nor the painter. Just as one is taught to read music or use a paintbrush, one learns to write and write well. But skill can always be improved.

Time is the other major factor calling students to the writing degree. At a very basic level, writing takes time. A whole lot of it. In an age devoid of patronage, the opportuni-ty to take the time out from work or other commitments to focus on writing is a rare privilege, and unfortunately not one that everyone can afford. Of course, this rais-es other questions about the ethics of writers’ programs, which are avail-able only to those voices which can afford to support their practice—but this is nothing new to the arts, nor higher education, where universities must make it their prerogative to extend opportunities to writers from all social and economic back-grounds.

Scepticism around writing degrees is fuelled by the underestimation of the time it takes to write. There’s a prevailing sense that writing should be ‘done on the side’, in one’s ‘spare time’. For many stu-dents, the value of writing degrees lies in their acknowledgement of the work it takes, and the structural framework they provide for carving out that time.

For many writing students, signing up to these courses is also about taking ourselves ‘seriously’ as writers. It may seem ridiculous to pay this kind of money for a boost of self-confidence, but in a society that reveres and under-values the writer, it’s important to have spaces where writers can dedicate their craft to the public.
FANTASTIC TRUMPS
Continued from page 5
films that all-too-often seemed to sand down the magic and charm of the books into something ultimately far less interesting and satisfying is Peeves, the parodying poltergeist? Why do we never get to see the Weasley's battling with their gringos? Is the interest too tame for SPEW, Hermione’s Society for the Promotion of Elvish Welfare? Rowling’s creations in the film are often wonderful works of the imagination in their own right, and frequently feature her trademark intros- textualty. The Thunderbird, a huge North American relative of the phoenix that generates maelstroms merely through flapping its wings, has its origins in the folklore of North American indigenous peoples such as the Algonquins, the Menominee and the Ojibwe. Meanwhile, the Occamy, a winged serpent that has the ability to grow shrubbery to shrink the available space, has clear roots in the dragons of East Asia that can shrink to the size of a silver coin. In a similar way the The Inherent Evil, a monstrous Obfuscus. The writhing clouds of dark and nebulous fog that are described as having “pleashe pale as milk”; “faceless, si- lent”, they have eyes that are “blue, deeper and bluer than any human eyes, a blue that burned like ice.”

The Inherent Evil is frequently described in MANY parts: un- seen and working from afar, yet manipulating the whole of Middle Earth through his servant Saruman, Sauron is far more terrifying. Sometimes the dynamic is inverted. Voldemort, Rowling’s villain in her original series, was never entirely successful simply because he was ultimately far too human. The De- mons, however, who eventually become his allies, are truly terri- fying: faceless, voiceless and cloaked, they feed on fear; in a sim- ilar way the Beast has both a motiveless Inherent Evil (the Ob- scurus) and a human antagonist with a purpose (Graves/ Grindelwald). In Cornelia Funke’s boxer, the villain is often the robotic Capricorn. Far more frightening, however, is his slave The Shadow:

Sometimes he was red as fire; sometimes skin grey as ash; sometimes black as death into which fire turns all that it devours. He leaped from the ground like flame flickering up from wood. His touch and even his breath brought death. He rose up at his master’s feet, soundless and faceless, scut- ting the air like a dog on the trail, waiting to be shown his victim.

And yet— I wonder if problems with these tropes are applied to real life.

Fantastic Beasts — with its frequent allusions to Grindelwald’s dreams of ethnic cleansing, and with the populist political propaganda that is in the background throughout — carries clear reference to the fascist movements of the 1930s (the period in which it is set). And the Second World War is one of those historical periods in which the same way as a fantasy con- flict plays out: a clear-cut battle between Good and Evil. The below poster — an anti-Japanese US poster carried by a woman — is a fantasy narrative of an inhuman, intrinsic evil was employed in prop- aganda at the time. Even now, the Second World War is often remem- bered as the last ‘simple’ conflict, when you knew who was in the right and who was in the wrong. I’m not questioning the horror of the Nazi atrocities or trying to be an apologist for the Axis regimes in any way — but it’s worth remembering that most soldiers in the War were, at the end of the day, just fighting for their country, and atroc- ities were committed on both sides.

The Inherent Evil is far more terrifying. It is the Unknown, the Unexplainable. The Beauty of the Inherent Evil is far more pressing than whether or not an Orc or a Gringos represents the latest manifes- tation of a political minority. The parallels between the two peri- od are clear: far-right parties are on the rise across Europe; the US have recently voted in a nativist, isolationist president; and supra-na- tional unions such as the EU seem increasingly fragile.

Fantastic Beasts, whether it was intended or not, can’t help but seem as though it is making reference to current re- gimes in Hungary, Poland, and the US.

It’s hard to talk about the 1930s, nowadays without discussing the current political climate, and to an extent we are forced to do so. The Inherent Evil frequently works in tandem with a motiveless Inherent Evil (the Ob- scurus) and a human antagonist with a purpose (Graves/ Grindelwald). In Cornelia Funke’s boxer, the villain is often the robotic Capricorn. Far more frightening, however, is his slave The Shadow:

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And yet— I wonder if problems with these tropes are applied to real life.

Fantastic Beasts — with its frequent allusions to Grindelwald’s dreams of ethnic cleansing, and with the populist political propaganda that is in the background throughout — carries clear reference to the fascist movements of the 1930s (the period in which it is set). And the Second World War is one of those historical periods in which the same way as a fantasy con- flict plays out: a clear-cut battle between Good and Evil. The below poster — an anti-Japanese US poster carried by a woman — is a fantasy narrative of an inhuman, intrinsic evil was employed in prop- aganda at the time. Even now, the Second World War is often remem- bered as the last ‘simple’ conflict, when you knew who was in the right and who was in the wrong. I’m not questioning the horror of the Nazi atrocities or trying to be an apologist for the Axis regimes in any way — but it’s worth remembering that most soldiers in the War were, at the end of the day, just fighting for their country, and atroc- ities were committed on both sides.

The Inherent Evil is far more terrifying. It is the Unknown, the Unexplainable. The Beauty of the Inherent Evil is far more pressing than whether or not an Orc or a Gringos represents the latest manifes- tation of a political minority. The parallels between the two peri- od are clear: far-right parties are on the rise across Europe; the US have recently voted in a nativist, isolationist president; and supra-na- tional unions such as the EU seem increasingly fragile.

Fantastic Beasts, whether it was intended or not, can’t help but seem as though it is making reference to current re- gimes in Hungary, Poland, and the US.

It’s hard to talk about the 1930s, nowadays without discussing the current political climate, and to an extent we are forced to do so. The Inherent Evil frequently works in tandem with a motiveless Inherent Evil (the Ob- scurus) and a human antagonist with a purpose (Graves/ Grindelwald). In Cornelia Funke’s boxer, the villain is often the robotic Capricorn. Far more frightening, however, is his slave The Shadow:

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The Myth of Rhodes
A Special Report on Rhodes, Rhodes Must Fall, and the Oriel Statue

Editorial

Aidan Chivers

Over the course of 2015, debates about imperial legacy and race relations within universities became a prominent topic of debate. Questions about the commemorations of one of Britain's most notorious colonial leaders caught the world's attention and attracted a huge amount of discussion in the media. Issues about black experiences in academic institutions gained more prominence as concerns about the continued glorification of imperial figures. Over time, these debates have developed into a global movement.

Now that it has the space to breathe, Oriel has been holding a series of meetings and forums to establish how it should respond to and better contextualise Rhodes's legacy. At this point in time it is worth reflecting on the events leading up to and surrounding the protests in Oriel Square, and the attention that they received across the world.

The RMF movement's origins in the University of Cape Town (UCT) are widely recognised and yet also often misrepresented. Although the campaign shot to prominence in March 2015, it was not – as often supposed – born out of a vacuum or simply from the whim of a small number of individuals. Unveiled in 1934, demands for the UCT statue’s removal date back to at least the 1950s.

There had long been discomfort at the huge statue of the colonialist gazelle running out over the land he had invaded, and debates had been ongoing for some time. The international media's attention, however, was only really attracted to the issue when a group of students gathered around an activist named Chumani Maxwele, who triggered the modern wave of protests on 9 March 2015, when he threw human faeces at the statue. The protest was small, but the event prompted a surge in the prominence of the issue.

Within less than three weeks, following a series of increasingly aggravated protests, the decision was made to remove the statue. As far as we are aware there is no evidence for its existence, students used black paint to create the impression of the shadow the statue used to cast. The national and international public relations relating to the UCT protests show how quickly and aggressively tactics had lost the movement much of the early favour it had won in the media.

Reports of RMF’s apparent hatred of whites spread widely; practices such as imprisoning the en- trance of non-blacks into the univer- sity cafeteria and using the anti-apartheid chant ‘one settler, one bullet’ often seemed to detract from the discussion they wished to provoke, leading to a frequently question- able media presentation. Nevertheless, the movement spread across South Africa in the universities of Stellenbosch (Protest for Freedom), and Rhodes University in the Eastern Cape Province.

Thousands of miles away, the anti-Rhodes feeling was also taken up in Oxford by Nkoseko Qwabe and others, causing a fascination on the part of the British media and sparking a range of discussion across the UK and beyond in relation to how the statue should be treated.

Rhodes: a Perspective

Joanna Eagle

ecil Rhodes, the man behind the centre of debate, was a colonial politician, businessman and apartheid enthusiast. He grew up in Hertfordshire before being sent to South Africa at the age of 17 to find a profession for himself. While there, he company De Beers gained worldwide prominence, and Rhodes died of cancer in 1902 and is buried in Zimbabwe.

Rhodes was, and remains, a controversi- al figure because of his fervour for British imperialism and belief in racial hierarchy. Brian Kwoba of Rhodes, however, has a more positive perspective on the protests, discussion and conse- quences of December 2015. Now that it has the space to breathe, Oriel has been holding a series of meetings and forums to establish how it should respond to and better contextualise Rhodes’s legacy. At this point in time it is worth reflecting on the events leading up to and surrounding the protests in Oriel Square, and the attention that they received across the world.

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Continued on page 8

Rhodes Must Fall: A Timeline

9/03/15: Chumani Maxwele, a student of political science at the University of Cape Town (UCT), picks up a bucket of human faeces on the kerbside at the town of Khayelitsha and brings it back to UCT. He throws it into the face of a bronze statue of Cecil Rhodes that has stood prominently on the university’s rugby fields since 1934, shouting ‘Where are our heroes and ancestors?’

12/03/15: More than a thousand students gather on the stairs of Jammin’ Plaza, the focal point of the UCT Upper Campus, to discuss the statue and Rhodes’s role in colonising Africa. After the meeting, protesters return to cover the statue in white and red sheets. The RMF Facebook page posts its first post.

15/03/15: The statue is again covered by protesters, this time in black bin-bags. RMF begins a week of daily sit-ins at the statue.

19/03/15: Two Oxford students, Annie Teriba and Bi Kwo, organise a ‘Solidarity Action’ in support of RMF UCT on the High Street in Oxford.

20/03/15: Students march on the UCT administrative building, the Bremner building, demanding a date for the removal of the statue. They begin an occupation of the building which lasts several weeks, supported by students, academics and members of the public, who supply the protestors with food. They ‘rename’ the build- ing ‘Azania House’ (an older term which refers to parts of South- East Africa without the colonialist associations of ‘South Africa’).

25/03/15: Rhodes Must Fall publish a mission statement on their Facebook page, calling for an ‘end to institutionalised racism and patriarchy at UCT’.

27/03/15: UCT’s Senate, a 345-member body that decides on aca- demic matters and has representatives from all academic depart- ments, votes to remove the statue.

09/04/15: The Rhodes statue is removed following further disrup- tive campaigns from RMF.

12/04/15: The occupation of the Bremner Building ends after UCT serves the students an eviction letter.

28/05/15: Rhodes Must Fall in Oxford (RMFO) protests during an Oxford Union debate on the motion, ‘This House believes Britain owes reparations to her former colonies’, which passes by 185 to 56 votes. The Oxford Union later comes under fire from RMFO for serving a cocktail called the ‘Colonial Comeback’, accompanied in adverts by a picture of black hands in chains, after the event.

01/06/15: The Oxford Union Governing Body passes a unanimous motion to acknowledge that the Union is institutionally racist.

17/10/15: RMFO stages a ‘matriculation’ protest, where students wore red while matriculating.

06/11/15: RMFO protests outside Oriel College to demand that Oriel’s statue of Rhodes be taken down.

17/12/15: Oriel releases a statement responding to RMFO’s de- mands, announcing a six-month consultation period on the statue.

14/01/16: A Cherwell survey of 967 students finds that 54% of students favour Oriel’s statue remaining, compared to 37% who think the statue should go. Among BME students, however, 48% thought the statue should fall whereas 45% favoured it remaining.

19/01/16: The Oxford Union votes 245 to 212 in favour of removing the Oriel statue.

28/01/16: Oriel announces that the statue will remain.

03/06/16: RMFO members disrupt a meeting on contextualising the Rhodes statue that was intended only for Oriel members.

30/06/16: RMFO members protest shirtless outside Oriel on an Oxford open day.

02/12/16: RMFO returns to Oriel to stage another protest a year after Oriel’s original announcement of their ‘listening exercise’.

14/01/17: Oriel holds two internal meetings to discuss how to con- textualise the statue: one for Oriel alumni and one for current Col- lege members and staff (see the report in this feature for the latter).

A more complete timeline can be found at www.thepoorprint.com, as can references for all articles in this report. Our thanks to Professor Teresa Morgan for assisting us with fact-checking across the report.
Putting Rhodes in His Place

Alex Waygood

Rhodes was a man of multiple controversies. His biographer, John Family, said of him that he was ‘a man of conflicting character’. Indeed, the debate over the statue of Cecil Rhodes in Oriel College, Oxford, is illustrative of several broad issues that have surrounded Rhodes’s legacy.

The death of Rhodes, the South African imperialist, in 1902, was the subject of much public attention. Yet, the debate over Rhodes’s legacy is far from over. In recent years, there has been a growing call to remove the statue of Rhodes from Oriel College. The statue of Rhodes, which stands in the High Street, is one of the most iconic representations of Rhodes’s legacy. The statue is a symbol of Rhodes’s imperial ambitions and his role in the colonization of Southern Africa. However, the statue has also been criticized for its depiction of Rhodes as a benevolent colonialist.

The debate over the statue of Rhodes in Oriel College has been ongoing for several years. The controversy began in 2015, when a group of students and alumni called for the removal of the statue. The group argued that the statue was a symbol of colonial oppression and should be removed. The University of Oxford has not made a decision on the matter, and the statue remains standing.

The debate over the statue of Rhodes in Oriel College is part of a broader debate over the legacy of Cecil Rhodes. Rhodes was a controversial figure, and his legacy has been the subject of much public debate. The statue of Rhodes in Oriel College is a symbol of the complexity of Rhodes’s legacy. The statue is a reminder of the way in which Rhodes’s actions have been used to justify colonialism and imperial expansion.

The debate over the statue of Rhodes in Oriel College is a reminder of the way in which historical figures are used to justify modern day policies. The statue of Rhodes in Oriel College is a symbol of the way in which the legacy of Cecil Rhodes continues to be used to justify colonialism and imperialism.

Iconography Campaigns: A Global Perspective

Emma Gilpin

Iconography campaigns have taken place in recent years to remind us of the fact that history is littered with people and things that it would perhaps be preferable, or at least more convenient, to forget. There have been movements across the University of Cape Town, Harvard University and the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, as well as universities across Europe, America and Africa, to address some of the iconography across their campuses that still reflect those times. However, these campaigns have often been accused of attempting to erase history, and this in particular was one of the main arguments against removing the statue of Cecil Rhodes that faces the High Street at Oriel.

The RMFO campaign, which took place in 2015 and 2016, and continues to campaign for decolonisation in Oxford, was inspired by the campaign of the same name in the University of Cape Town, which succeeded in getting a statue of Cecil Rhodes removed from their university’s grounds. The University of Oriel, as its Oxford-based counterpart, that students were more demonstrative throughout the campaign, throwing paint and even once faced at the statue. The campaign of African students against the statue of Cecil Rhodes is an example of how iconography campaigns have been used to challenge colonial narratives and to highlight the brutality of colonialism.

The impact of colonialism should be represented and acknowledged. Yet despite the huge interest in the issue, the broader experience of black culture in the UK is much easier for us to distance ourselves from colonialism and the atrocities committed by men like Rhodes. Attempts to decolonise universities and remove iconography which represents racial values or figures that have been held in high regard by the University of Oxford to represent a range of views and to give voice to students who have been silenced by the legacy of the statue. The removal of the statue must be as antiseptic to a wound as antiseptic to a wound. It is nonsensical. History is not linear. The death of Rhodes has simmered since his death (The Guardian’s 1902 obituary lambasted him as ‘a dragon efficient in tooth and claw’) – yet still there is little consensus on how to approach his legacy.

On Saturday, 14 January 2017, Oriel held a meeting on how to contextualise the college’s statue of Rhodes, around which debate has raged since May 2015. Teresa Morgan, Classics Professor at Oriel, opened the meeting by defining its parameters: the purpose was neither to discuss the presence of the statue or the King Edward Street plaque (both of which had been decided on), nor to attempt to come to a single ‘Oriel view’ of Rhodes. Rather, the aim was to explore ways of responding to the King Edward Street plaque, and the controversies throughout the campaign, so as not to attempt to come to a conclusion.

Anna Eavis, Curatorial Director of English Heritage, spoke intriguingly on two cases with parallels to Oriel: Richmond Castle, Yorkshire; and Marble Hill, Twickenham, an eighteenth-century villa. In both cases, the heritage landscape is riddled with controversy. Richmond Castle, dating from the Norman Conquest, has cells in which the walls are scratched with pencil graffiti: relics of conscientious objectors imprisoned there during the First World War. A recently-built commemorative garden for the objectors proved unpopular due to the Richardson’s military history. Meanwhile, Marble Hill has vital importance to architectural history as one of the earliest structural uses of mahogany. Yet English Heritage faces the challenge of preserving this site of immense beauty, while at the same time allowing space for the narrative of the Bellesean slaves who it is thought must have harvested the villa’s mahogany under appalling conditions.

The last speaker on the panel was Judy Wong CBE, President of the Black Environment Network, who spoke on how to effect a change in narrative. Arguing that you must ‘bring a wholeness of yourself to truly bring about a multilayered society’, Wong reminded the room of the ‘enormous opportunity’ that the college has. As a world-renowned institution, Oriel has a responsibility to lead the way. Views in the room varied wildly as to how Oriel should contextualise the statue. Many maintained that Oriel – as an academic establishment – could not appear to be imposing a single view of Rhodes; some argued that any form of contextualisation was inappropriate, being suitably to heritage sites. Others swung as far in the other direction, arguing that, in order to achieve neutrality, any response by Oriel would have to be ‘large, solid and permanent as the statue. Some warned against ‘over-privileging’ the name of Rhodes in Oriel’s history, as ultimately counterproductive to any contextualisation.

In practical terms, an array of suggestions was proposed: a clarifying plaque (perhaps supplemented online); a series of lectures/exhibitions; or indeed an artistic installation to visually connect with the statue, either on the High Street or in Third Quad. All are being considered by Oriel’s Rhodes Working Group; the Governing Body will likely accept some combination of the above.

The Poor Print’s view is that a supposedly neutral consideration of Rhodes (whether on a plaque or online) would be wholly insufficient. Neither party has had a responsibility to encourage nuanced discourse, the college can neither be pigeonholed as a centre of academia nor as a heritage site. It is a university, a home, and so any response must adequately address the fact that the statue has become a symbol of violent oppression to some in Oriel. Oriel has a duty to support those who study here – and if it fails to be a welcoming environment, it may find that the diversity of applicants falls off a cliff. The contextualisation of the statue must be as antiseptic to a wound: antiseptic is non-neutral.

The aims of this special report are to give context to this complex issue, and analyse where RMFO and Oriel now stand. The report includes a perspective on Rhodes’s legacy and iconography, and a summary of the history of the campaign. Iconography also includes a feature on the recent contextualisation meeting held in Oxford. The report also seeks to examine the wider context of colonial iconography and ‘safe space’ campaigns around the world which have been referenced in the recent campaign both in Cape Town and Oriel.

On the other hand, supporters and sympathisers of the statue - many of them among the student body - found themselves angered by the college’s eventual decision to remove the statue and to place it in a contextual exhibition.

The college found itself trapped between sides in an increasingly polarised debate, leaving it little choice but to engage in any reasoned discussion. Further criticism followed from the University, which stated that the statue on the site (planned to be six months) was cut short on 28 January 2016 after just one month. While the early conclusion of this consultation was seen by some as a panicked response under the pressure of powerful alumni, others still condemned them for having begun such a process in the first place.

The perception of Oriel as a whole became a highly negative one. Some drew parallels between the Rhodes debate and other issues, presenting the college as sexist (the last to accept women); classist; and pro-Russian (in the nickname ‘Tories’); and, finally, racist and unashamed by its colonial past (the Rhodes debate).

Finally, this report looks to give context to this complex issue, and analyse where RMFO and Oriel now stand. The report includes a perspective on Rhodes’s legacy and iconography, and a summary of the history of the campaign. Iconography also includes a feature on the recent contextualisation meeting held in Oxford. The report also seeks to examine the wider context of colonial iconography and ‘safe space’ campaigns around the world which have been referenced in the recent campaign both in Cape Town and Oriel.

It is difficult to justify supporting some iconography campaigns whilst suggesting that others are unnecessary. Though a man like Cecil Rhodes is, to most people, almost impossible to endorse, we print figures like Winston Churchill on our banknotes because we celebrate him as an imperialist. We would decide who our icons are: who we respect and who we remember. And who we remember less favourably. These issues are not unconnected. The argument that removing a statue of a historical figure is an attempt to erase history is nonsensical. History exists not so we can glorify those who may or may not have served our country well; it exists so that we can learn and not repeat the same mistakes.

View Emma’s article online at www.thepoorprint.com for summaries of the various iconography campaigns that have swamped the world in the last few years.

Putting Rhodes in His Place

Alex Waygood

Rhode...