

CATALYST

The New Normal: Equality In A Post-Pandemic World



Spring 2022

What's Inside?

Catalyst

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Equality in a Post-Pandemic World
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The Editors' Foreword

This year's edition of Catalyst is entitled 'The New Normal: Equality in a Post Pandemic World' and seeks to address structural inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic through the medium of open and constructive dialogue.

When we were little and our families sat down to watch a film together there was always one question we would ask throughout, "Now, are they the goodies or the baddies?" Whilst this was of great annoyance to other siblings, it is hardly an unlikely question for a young child to ask. This is how children make sense of the world around them. Part of the joys of growing up is that slowly you begin to understand life in all its complexity. This does not mean the line between right and wrong is blurred, rather we see the world for all its nuances. However, it seems that in recent times society has regressed to a childlike understanding of the world, where things can only be categorised as wholly good or wholly bad and where open discussion, debate, and discourse are ditched in favour of shouting matches.

The dawn of social media has not helped either. It takes only a couple of minutes of trawling through spats on Twitter to recognise that we have lost our ability to listen and choose instead to trap ourselves in echo chambers that perpetuate a continual affirmation of our views. War correspondent Christina Lamb wrote a powerful article in The Times recounting her experience of being trolled online. She writes, "The jihadists were polite in comparison [to the trolls]". Self-censorship, no-platforming and cancel culture misunderstand the crucial fact that the key to defeating an argument is exposing all its flaws. Indeed, an unfortunate consequence of being 'cancelled' is that sometimes those whose views are deemed inappropriate, offensive, and simply wrong are pushed to the margins of society where they fester and mutate into something far more dangerous.

As you will see, this edition of Catalyst will not pander to the free speech brigade nor the cancel culture brigade. We recognise that free speech is not only the freedom to speak but

also the freedom to know when not to speak and when to listen instead. Understanding how our words affect others and appreciating that the gift of free speech is better used for purposes other than offence and harm is essential. We want Catalyst to be a safe space — where it is safe to disagree well and still remain friends. However, we are not promising to create a piece of work that is not challenging or uncomfortable; this issue of Catalyst is tackling our current world of inequality, which has been exacerbated by the effects of COVID-19, and inequality is a challenging and uncomfortable topic. Catalyst should be a moving reflection on the work humanity has to do to alleviate inequality; it is this culture of nuanced, sensitive and considered speech which we have attempted to cultivate.

We recognise that to truly forge post-pandemic equality we must reject the discrete categories of 'good' and 'bad' in favour of a continuum of 'good' and 'bad'. Whilst innocent and youthful naivety can be great, the best part of growing up — specifically growing up as strong and independent women in the context of FHS — is moving away from a facile understanding of the world and choosing to see the vibrancy and colour of life in all its shades.

Best,

MARYSIA FANNER-BRZEZINA AND
HELENA GARROOD
(Co-editors of *Catalyst*)



When the orange man smothered with fake tan and the man getting stuck on a zipline across London came into power, it galvanised the new movement for a staunchly nationalist outlook upon the world. In today's TEDx talk I want to describe the new political divide: nationalism v globalism, examine its underlying causes and offer some ideas that will help forge a new middle way between the two competing ideologies and move forward in a more equitable and balanced way, that reflects the co-existence of these two systems.

So, let's begin first with some definitions. Nationalism is an identification with one's own nation and support for its interests leading to the overriding focus on one's identity and loyalty. It advocates political independence and holds that each nation should govern itself, free from outside interference. Nationalist groups like the National Front in France, the BJP in India and of course UKIP have each gained prominence in their respective nations, advocating restrictions

on immigration to protect their local populations. We had Trump's campaign to 'Make America Great Again' and 'America First', which exemplified his campaign's repudiation and denouncement of globalism coining the infamous phrase "The future does not belong to globalists." There has been the biggest surge in nationalism in Western democracies since WW2, with spasms of resurgent successes as demonstrated by the Leave campaign in the UK referendum, framed as a defence of sovereignty and identity.

Globalism, on the other hand, refers to the widening, deepening, and accelerating worldwide connectivity. At its core it seeks to describe and explain nothing more than a world which is characterised by networks of connections that span multi-continental distances. In today's global economy, the fate and fortunes of entire nations, communities and households across the world are bound together through complex webs of global trade, finance and production networks. Over the past several decades, there has also

been a dramatic growth in transnational and global forms of governance, rulemaking and regulation constituting a system of global governance with the UN at its institutional core.

The old way that people thought about political divides was the prominent polarisation between left and right, however, now this framework has been severely challenged and a new political reality has emerged. Nevertheless, there is often a strong connection made between right-wing parties and nationalist ideologies although the same cannot be always said about the left-wing parties and globalism.

The rise of nationalism accelerated due to a unique combination of factors in the UK including, the rise of elite and populist leadership such as the 'Leave wing' of the Conservative Party and UKIP, powerful right-wing media support influencing major swathes of the population, a coincidental mass refugee crisis, widespread discontent with the effects of austerity in place since the financial crisis as well as the preference for social media views over those of experts. This turned the EU referendum into a simple message of YES or NO, and US against THEM, and allowed Brexiteers to gain a narrow and unexpected majority over the unfocused and less emotional case put forward by an already distrusted establishment led by Cameron.

In parallel, the rise of globalism was evident in almost every aspect of modern life, from fashion to finance, social media to supermarket merchandise, multinational corporations to the #MeToo movement. Digitalisation has revolutionised worldwide communications and acted as the 'oxygen' of a new democratic agent through relatively cheap, instantaneous.



round-the-clock global communication and information flows.

Currently, the UK is a key player in global economic and trading system and yet the present government is hyper-focused upon national politics above all else, exacerbating tensions between the two strategies to make the present-day political system deeply ineffective. The solution to this imbalance is that either: 1) we renationalise the economy or 2) globalise the political system, by seeing changes such as significant democratisation of the world, the creation of the global civil society, and moving beyond the centrality of the nation state as the sole actor in the field of politics. Global governance would become the supreme actor in international relations. However, globalism is deeply detested by many. It is often perceived as 'westernised' and idealistic, thus stroking fears that globalisation homogenises national identities and undermines territorial sovereignty. One cannot deny that we went through a phase of hyperglobalism whereby neoliberal and market-driven economic priorities were the key focus, instead of rising inequality, the lack of social safety nets and gaps in education and the welfare state. The key challenge to those advocating greater global governance should always make it very clear that it does not replace or abolish local identities and communities.

Presently, throughout the global job market, there are legitimate concerns and complaints about major job losses. Workers' traditional way of life has been heavily affected; no wonder people are furious! In general, the initial starting point was that people have blamed globalism and global elites for doing this to them. They would argue that the real cause of job losses now and going forward is about globalism and thus they propose that the right response is to shutdown borders, keep people out and change trade agreements as this all actively protects and supports the national communities.

However, the problem of job loss permeates across the whole world and thus is much broader and deeper than the simple and superficial message endorsed by many nationalists. The bigger cause of job losses will originate from the immense technological advancements and currently, we as a world have no chance of solving that unless we operate as a connected world. If you think



about the growth of artificial intelligence over the next 20/30 years, it will inevitably push out hundreds of millions of people from the job market. This is a problem on a global level as it will disrupt the economies of all countries and global issues in my view require global co-operations and solutions.

There is often the argument which highlights how only a catastrophe can shake humankind and open the path to a real system of global governance. However, COVID-19 has clearly shown, despite the efforts of the WHO, Gavi and others to effectively stop the spread of the virus, how difficult this has been to achieve as there has been no ultimate global solution to tackling the spread of the virus. Arguably the only way to tackle problems like COVID-19, the refugee problem, terrorism, climate change and the consequences of superhuman AI is through strong co-operation between leading nations as well as a necessary willingness to work through some established global multi-lateral institutions like the UN and NATO. No single nation can regulate the world by itself, we are all living together in a single planet which is threatened by our actions and if we don't have some kind of global corporation, then slowly, yet eventually we are contributing towards the complete collapse of our world. Nationalism alone is just not capable to tackle the numerous problems we are facing. For one, there is a very close correlation between nationalists and climate change deniers as almost always the people who deny climate change are nationalists. This is because nationalism has absolutely no solution to

climate change because they are afraid of a system of global governance because power is lost from their iron fist, thus if you want to be a nationalist in the 21st Century, you have to deny the climate change problem. Rather, the sensible option towards this would be to accept that yes, there is still space in the world for patriotism, special loyalties and obligations towards your own people and country. However, in order to confront and tackle issues like climate change, additional loyalties and commitments are needed to a level beyond the nation. This should not be impossible because people can have several layers of loyalty such as to one's family, community, and nation, and therefore, why can we not be loyal to humankind as a whole.

In conclusion, the words of Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum resonates best with me. He has argued publicly that we should maintain the positive effects of globalisation but certainly place more of an emphasis on creating a national environment which maintains the social contract and responsibility whereby the individual's rights and liberties are cherished. Thus, globalism should be combined with social caution and not allow inequality to get out of control.



Winner of the Geography Competition

BY ALLEGRA BRYANT

Coronavirus: the pandemic which to date has killed nearly 5 million across the globe, from all backgrounds. Needless to say, a pandemic of this magnitude has had an impact on everyday life and global economies that goes beyond anything seen since the Second World War. In terms of the impact on equality, there have been both positive and negative effects, not only during the crisis itself but also surviving into the post-pandemic world.

On the positive side, Coronavirus provided an unexpected temporary levelling between socioeconomic groups, as people were subject to the same lockdowns, restrictions, and access to COVID-19 healthcare irrespective of their status. Whilst this masked some longer-term issues of inequality, which I will come to discuss shortly, I would like to first address some key areas of equality benefits which I believe have been accelerated by the pandemic.

An outcome of people being locked in their houses for weeks on end was that they had more time to be cognizant of world affairs. The tragic murder of George Floyd made such a large impact and got more coverage on the news and outspoken public reaction than many similar racially motivated incidents had prior to the pandemic. The lessons from, and visibility of, the Black Lives Matter movement made social injustices a great focus everywhere. This is especially in the corporate world where it has become a central focus making sure every office is diverse and employers are being socially conscious. It is expected that large corporations should lead the way and be cheerleaders in the post pandemic world to promote diversity and social consciousness. For example, after George Floyd it was fully expected that every CEO of a corporation would comment and take a stance, which is a far deeper reaction than seen in other

circumstances. It genuinely feels like a real tipping point has been reached, that will continue long into the post-pandemic era.

The increased focus on racial equality accompanied a demand for greater action around gender equality, which built on the Me Too movement which had grown up prior to the pandemic. I believe that the shift to a whole new model of flexible working, alongside increased focus around corporate responsibility, will make a real difference to gender equality.

After working from home for so many months, many multi-national companies have adopted some form of flexible working, not only in the matter of attending the office, but also the hours that people work. Parents trying to balance work and home responsibilities, who may previously have had to stay at home, now have more of an opportunity to work. This issue disproportionately prejudiced women in the past, and the shift should therefore have a beneficial impact on gender equality.

However, these positive influences are offset by a number of material issues which risk undermining the advancement towards greater equality coming out of the pandemic. As is so often the case, these are centred on threats to economic stability and well-being. I would like to examine two examples of this: threats to equality from higher inflation, and food deprivation.

The fallout from the pandemic, including issues like labour shortages, global supply chain disruption and the need to recoup earnings lost during lockdown, are all driving global prices higher and bringing in levels of price inflation which have not been seen in the last decade. This directly impacts lower socioeconomic groups through increasingly unaffordable rises in the cost of living and the threat of higher mortgage payments resulting from government-driven interest rate rises to combat inflation. In addition, governments need to recoup the investments made to combat the pandemic will drive higher direct and indirect taxation.

One area where inflation is at risk of exacerbating an already serious problem is in food inequality. One in five parents struggle to feed their children, according to a study carried out by Tesco. Hence why the nutritionally balanced school lunch is an essential staple in children's diets in lower socioeconomic groups. Although this issue was known in the pre-pandemic world, when the pandemic heightened and led to schools being shut down, more than 200,000 children missed out on regular meals. Therefore, the government finally acted and over 420,000 school pupils became eligible for free meals during lockdown.

A well-known footballer, Marcus Rashford, pledged to help with the newly recognised food poverty in the UK's children. Although he failed with his £15 voucher scheme that was voted down by the government, small businesses have seen what a critical case Rashford is describing and have offered small tokens of help. For example, Rhubarb Shed Café in Sheffield have been giving out free cupcakes and sandwiches just in the hope of putting a smile on some kids' faces. However, he is still fighting for better food equality in the UK and was recently speaking on his fears for the rise in child poverty and starvation as the furlough scheme, that had been keeping so many of the families afloat, has come to an end.

As discussed above, the pandemic has had far-reaching consequences for equality, whether economic, gender, racial or otherwise, which will carry forward into the post-pandemic era. Social conscience, corporate social responsibility and government policy will hopefully work together to combat some of the negative side effects, such as inflation and food poverty, whilst enhancing and prolonging the positive ones like a more flexible, diverse, and equitable workplace and a greater focus on social justice. Coming out of the pandemic there is no doubt of a new normal where there will be a drive to increase equality.



The Need for Global Unity in a Time of International Conflict

BY JULIA KOZIEJA

There are 195 countries in the world, spanning across seven continents. Each one has its own language, culture, and political system. But since the dawn of the 21st century, it has been revealed that all suffer from similar issues. A country's employment and housing policies may be different from one another; but all suffer from some degree of unemployment and lack of accommodation. However, as each country is at a different stage of improving these issues, there cannot be one solution for all when it comes to such domestic policies.

There are challenges, however, that have a similar impact on all countries. Climate change and COVID-19 affect all, with different solutions being proposed by each country. Yet, many solutions proposed and acted upon by high-income countries, have caused the same issues to worsen in other low-income countries. Global politics has started to mimic a seesaw: when one country gets better, another gets worse. We have slowly come to realise, however, that it's all or nothing – an issue cannot truly be solved in one country if it is not solved in others.

Currently, the most important global issue is climate change. Although it is high-income countries that produce the most amount of fossil fuels, it is low-income countries such as Sudan that feel the impact the most. Wildfires, flash floods and desertification have all faced low-income countries, with higher-income

countries acknowledging climate change's impact in these areas but refusing to do anything about it. And although each country has its own policies on reducing climate change, these are long-term policies, with varying impact on this global problem. China has promised to stop coal mining overseas. California has capped greenhouse gas emissions from factories and power plants. Indonesia has pledged to prevent deforestation. The UK has pledged to become net-zero by 2050 (although how they plan on doing that is still unclear). Countries have tried to tackle the issue from different angles – meaning the overall impact of reducing climate change appears to be messy and ineffective. Although recently there have been efforts to begin global policies – such as the 2015 Paris Agreement and the approaching COP26 conference – there is little chance of improving global unity and developing global policies on these issues. Many countries don't even make climate change a priority – Australia's PM Scott Morrison has hinted at not attending COP26 citing that "it's a long flight" – so there's debate about how effective such global policies will be and if they will be fulfilled – if such policies are even made.

However, climate change isn't the only major issue facing all countries. COVID-19 and the global vaccination programme have caused further global inequality and made it harder for

COVID-19 to stop becoming fatal. Once again, it has become a political seesaw – high-income countries are given more vaccines, causing low-income countries to continue to battle COVID-19 with barely any. The inequality is so great that booster shots have begun to be given in developed nations, whilst millions in developing countries haven't had at least one vaccine. In the UK, 67% of the population are fully vaccinated and booster shots are to be given to over 50s. Meanwhile, in Congo, barely 0.1% of the population has had even one vaccine. Even Boris Johnson, who downplayed the virus at first, has admitted that "It's no use one country being far ahead of another, we've got to move together". The universal message is clear: vaccinate all or the virus will continue to be a stain on humanity. The vaccine inequality also increases economic and social inequality around the world – poorer countries have little money to keep funding affected businesses which has caused the economy to grind to a halt. Developed countries are fortunate – the state has enough money to continue to fund businesses and provide furloughed workers with income, causing minimum social and economic disruption. Such inequality – especially surrounding vaccines – has caused a global wake-up call. Many high-income countries have pledged to give millions of their vaccines to developing countries, but are such steps enough? Many

think not.

The reasons for this global discord are many. The main reason, however, is that every country focuses on different things. As mentioned before, each country has different policies on climate change. But it would be far more effective if all countries were to bind together and develop team solutions such as a global reduction in unsustainable farming practices or a worldwide pledge for all countries to stop using, and selling, fossil fuels. After all, quality is better than quantity. This is not helped by the fact that few countries focus on good worldwide, rather on their own parochial needs. COVID has been controlled because Portugal is almost fully vaccinated. Or, climate change is not a massive problem, because the UK never suffers from natural disasters. Most countries are self-centred. Many focus on small-scale domestic matters rather than on bigger issues facing the world and fail to realize that it is these global issues that cause national problems.

Most of us are not citizens of Sudan or Congo. Most of us won't die of COVID-19. Most of us will never experience fatal extreme weather events. But some of us will. We may not be citizens of the same country, but we are all citizens of the same world.

Why Introversion is a Strength

(Even if the World says Otherwise)

BY GRACE STUART



“House arrest.” That was one way lockdown was described. Admittedly this was by The Sun, but a lot of newspapers seemed to share similar sentiments: “Will we ever be free?”; “Life put on hold” covered the front pages in those early days of COVID. This narrative of lockdown as a strange kind of hell on earth seemed to be the most common, and clearly, for a lot of people, having to stay at home really did seem like house arrest.

But if I were writing the headlines they would have been quite different. Difficult though it was in many ways, I loved lockdown for the time it afforded me at home.

To be able to stay at home for three months straight was a dream. All I had were days stretching out before me, with no obligations to see anyone, do anything. And lockdown was, also, an introvert’s idea of heaven.

But saying this makes it seem like there’s only one side to the labels ‘introvert’ and ‘extrovert’ – that lockdown was a blessing for introverts because they hate anything to do with socialising, and vice versa for extroverts. These two terms are quite often thrown around nowadays. But, in my opinion, their definitions are often twisted, especially with regards to the label introvert.

There’s this idea that introverts are withdrawn and reclusive, whereas extroverts are sociable and chatty, however psychologists provide a different definition. The key difference between introverts and extroverts is where they gain energy when worn down and tired – introverts recharge by being alone, whereas extroverts recharge in the company of other people. So, I would consider myself an introvert, but not because I think I’m shy or withdrawn. I love

talking, and having conversations with people – it’s just that I prefer to think deeply before speaking, rather than thinking out loud. I also love socialising, and spending time with my family and seeing my friends – it’s just that after a while I feel my social battery start to run down and often need to catch a break alone. So, although I may love being at your party, don’t be surprised if I disappear from the room a couple of times – no, I don’t have a bad case of food poisoning, I just need a quick two-minute break.

Some of you may relate to what I’m saying – welcome to the club. Although, as this tweet says, don’t worry, there’s not actually a club. And, clearly, some of you may not relate at all. I consider myself an introvert, but I’m not ashamed of that, and I know my strengths as an introvert. However, there has long been a negative bias towards introverts. Even in pop culture, for example, the classic narrative is that sociability and being a big presence is synonymous with popularity and success. In teen coming-of-age movies, the main character transforms from a quiet, bookish character into a wildly popular prom queen. And the issue is, we teens have grown up with these narratives being reinforced around us.

But you may be asking – okay, so what? Why does it matter if there’s a bias? And here’s the answer: because it translates into real life. Our world is significantly more geared towards extroversion.

Think about it – In the workplace, the culture is competitive, and those with the loudest voices in the rooms, with the most ideas (although, I’d like to note, not necessarily the best ideas) are noticed more, praised more, and ultimately given promotions. Workplaces are also increasingly

open plan, to allow for hyper collaboration. That’s not to say collaboration isn’t needed, but for introverts, solitude is where we’re most creatively inspired, intellectually challenged, and stimulated. So, these fast-paced, high-stimulation, collaborative environments are incongruous with an introvert’s needs – and that’s a problem, not just for the wellbeing of employees but for the success of a company itself, when half of your employees are working in an environment which is entirely unsuited to their needs.

This isn’t just a problem in the ‘real world’ either. In fact, it starts in schools. We seat kids on grouped tables, we encourage pair work, we push group projects on them. The quieter children in lessons are repeatedly told to ‘speak up more’. The child who likes to read in the classroom at breaktime is told to ‘put on their coat and go play with their friends’.

And again, that’s not to say that we don’t need to encourage children to be able to work well in teams, to listen to each other, to articulate their innermost thoughts and ideas. We do. But it’s about balance – and I would say that the balance has swung only in favour of extroversion. Because it’s also about encouraging individual work, encouraging kids to think for themselves and be self-sufficient. Actually, it’s more important to encourage the more extroverted kids to spend time alone, thinking for themselves without having to rely on someone else, as it all translates to life as an adult. There’s no group projects for paying your bills. You can’t do a job interview in a pair. And when, say, a grieving friend comes to you, they don’t want you to ‘speak up more’. They just want you to listen.

As a society, we need to learn to value the characteristics of introversion more, instead of seeing it as something to be ashamed of, or something that’s unwanted. In fact, introverts make the best employees, friends and parents. We’re naturally reflective, contemplative, and thoughtful, meaning we’re in a constant state of self-improvement – clearly useful in the workplace and in our personal lives. In fact, the world’s greatest inventors, creatives and leaders are introverts – Albert Einstein, Barack Obama, Rosa Parks, Meryl Streep. It’s actually a significant strength to be able to just spend time with yourself – in case a deadly pandemic

threatens to put you under ‘house arrest’, this is clearly very useful. But also – only in solitude can you truly take the time to reflect and learn about yourself.

But, I do want to say two things, firstly, there is obviously no clear-cut line between an introvert and an extrovert. It’s not like you’re born as either, and even Carl Jung, the psychologist who first popularised these terms, said that it’s a spectrum, and that everyone falls somewhere in between, and indeed that everyone is slightly a mix of both. And secondly, the labels ‘introvert’ and ‘extrovert’ are just that – labels. We humans love labels; we love categorizing every little thing in order to make sense of the complexity of life. But they are useful concepts and tools to help us understand ourselves, and also for people to connect with like-minded individuals.

You can find any video about introversion on YouTube, and there are thousands of comments like these – that people feel misunderstood and under-appreciated as introverts. We need to start encouraging people to understand their strength as introverts (and indeed as extroverts). We need to start valuing our differences, accepting our different characteristics and qualities, and teaching our children to do the same.

I have two little brothers, and though they’re only 6 and 9, they are already at very different ends of the introversion/extroversion spectrum. One always barges into my room shouting, “Can you play with me?!” whilst the other prefers to write this question on a piece of paper and slip it under my door. I can always find one in the centre of the house, doing some kind of activity with someone, whereas I sometimes have to physically search for the other, before I find him curled up in the corner of his bed reading Harry Potter.

But as they grow up, I don’t want either of them to feel forced to be anything they’re not. I don’t want them to feel as though they have to be a certain way because that’s the only way they’ll make friends, be praised in class, or later, get a promotion. I’m going to talk to them and tell them that how they are is just right. I’m going to talk to them - although I may have to disappear for a quick break.

Black History Month

Celebrating Black British role models from history and the present day

by VI Historians

Quobna Ottobah Cugoano

aka John Stuart, c.1757-91, African abolitionist, writer

- Born in present day Ghana in the city of Agimae. Kidnapped age 13 by African raiders.
- Transported to the island of Grenada and spent 9 or 10 months in the slave gang and then about a year at different places in the West Indies.
- Brought to England in 1772 and eventually liberated (circumstances of this are not known).
- Part of London's Black community and actively involved in helping the Black poor and fighting for abolition
- Became one of the most radical campaigners for the abolition of the British slave trade and slavery
- A contemporary and associate of Olaudah Equiano
- Wrote *'Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species'* (1787) which forcefully criticised the British trade and the trafficking of Africans and demanded its immediate end and the liberation of all enslaved Africans



- Black people have lived in Britain since at least the Roman period; soldiers based in Britain were drawn from all over the Roman empire including northern and sub-Saharan Africa, and, as populations moved, they were among the many people who moved to Britain from across Europe and beyond from this period onward. The discovery of a rich burial from the 4th century of a wealthy noble in York in 1901 proved to be that of a woman of African descent, for example.
- There were some black residents of England in the Anglo-Saxon period, and in the Tudor period, when English trade with West Africa grew, African traders were based in England and Africans worked for European nobility (see image). By Elizabeth I's reign it is estimated that the black population of England may have numbered several hundred.
- From the 1730s Liverpool (which has the oldest black community in Britain), Bristol, Cardiff and London all had sizeable black populations, with around 20,000 black people in Britain by the early 20th century.
- Many people came too from the British colonies of the West Indies in the 1950s when encouraged to do so for work, on the 'Windrush' and other ships, to help Britain out after World War Two, but the experience of being British and black has a long history, though it has often been overlooked.



From the Westminster Tournament Roll of 1511, showing John Blanke, who worked as a musician for Henry VII and Henry VIII, in a royal procession for Henry VIII

Robert Wedderburn

1762-1835, revolutionary radical

- Born in Kingston, Jamaica, to James Wedderburn, a doctor and slave owner, and Rosanna, an African-born enslaved woman.
- Rosanna was sold while 5 months pregnant and again when Robert was 5 on account of her 'violent and rebellious temper'.
- Robert was freed at birth but lived between the worlds of the free and the enslaved. He witnessed the loss of his mother, countless atrocities, the floggings of his grandmother and as a free slave his own status was insecure.
- Joined the navy aged 16 and arrived in London in 1778, aged 17.



Robert Wedderburn continued

1762-1835, revolutionary radical

- Became part of the Black community in St Giles, which consisted of runaway enslaved people and former sailors
- Became aware of the division between the rich and the poor
- Inspired by a Wesleyan preacher at Seven Dials, he became a Unitarian preacher
- Influenced by Thomas Spence, a fierce opponent of slavery, Wedderburn argued that Parliament was corrupt and did not represent the interests of the British working people. Called for universal suffrage (votes for all) and the redistribution of land. Argued that reform of the system could only come about through revolution.
- His political ideology was brutally repressed and outlawed by the government.
- Placed under surveillance, charged with 'blasphemous libel' and imprisoned for two years from 1831.



Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

b. 15 September 1977, author and public speaker

- Born in Nigeria and lived there till she attended university in America.
- Her father was a professor and her mother an administrator
- She started reading around 4 and story writing at the age of 7 and talks about how her characters "were white and blue eyed" and that until she discovered African books she was convinced books had to be about the western world.
- Her culture was never represented and it showed her how impressionable children are
- One of her first recognized pieces Her short story "My Mother, the Crazy African", dating from when Adichie was a college senior living in Connecticut, discusses the problems that arise when a person is facing two cultures that are complete opposites from each other. This helps a lot of people in similar situations
- She has also inspired many with her Ted talks including "why we should all be feminists" and "The danger of a single story"
- She is also an advocate for LGBTQ rights in Nigeria
- She aims to help and inspire others from Africa to able to follow their dreams and is a prime example that despite prejudice she received nothing can hinder someone from being an inspiration.



Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock MBE

b. 1968, space scientist, television presenter

- Born in London to Nigerian parents
- Always wanted to be a scientist and learned to build her own telescope as a child
- Struggled with dyslexia and felt 'written off' at school
- Graduated with a BSc in physics and a doctorate in mechanical engineering and now works in academia and the space industry
- Designed missile systems, led a group making observational instruments for the European Space Agency and NASA and helped to build the 8-metre Gemini telescope for the conservatory in Chile that provides coverage for the northern and southern skies
- Made it her mission to inspire children that science as a career is possible.
- Demystifies science - translates complex science and technology into a language everyone can understand - gives lots of public lectures
- Award-winning broadcaster. Presents 'The Sky at Night'



Questions for Discussion

with the people next to you

- What are your thoughts on these slides? Did anything surprise you?
- What challenges do you think these people faced being in a visible minority in Britain?
- Do you think these same challenges exist for Black, African and Minority Ethnic groups today?
 - How far have we come in the past 300 years?
 - How far do we have to go?
 - What can we do on a daily basis to achieve this?
- Why might the work and sacrifice of these figures be of particular note given the treatment of black people in America, Britain and the British Empire in the past?
- What other examples do you know about of Black people in history or present day Black role models that we might add?



Alumna and film-maker, Farah Nabulsi, inspired her audience with an impassioned talk at the Old Girls' Lecture on November 21st. The lecture included a screening of Farah's Oscar nominated and BAFTA award-winning film, *The Present*. Directed by Farah, *The Present* is a short film about a father and his young daughter who live in the Palestinian territory of the Israeli-occupied West Bank. The story highlights the reality of everyday life for Palestinians, some of whom must pass through Israeli checkpoints everyday to gain access to basic amenities. The film sensitively reveals the human condition as both fragile and strong, and in doing so examines ordinary life and the harsh realities that accompany the daily decisions that a family

must make, only to reveal a frustrating and painful truth.

Farah began working in the film industry in 2015, founding a production company through which she writes, produces and directs fiction films, enabling her to explore the Israeli military occupation of Palestine. Born and raised in London, Farah was educated at Francis Holland School – (“I give a lot of credit to my education at Francis Holland for enabling me to get where I am today”) before establishing a career in finance as an institutional equity stockbroker, and then running a child-focused business for 10 years.

Attended by over 100 former pupils and staff, parents, Sixth Form pupils and current staff, Farah presented an engaging

account of both her own and her family's experiences that inspired her to write and direct *The Present*.

Said Farah, “I chose film as the medium with which to express myself because I wanted to tell these stories far and wide in a way that would shed light on that reality. The film itself is fiction but rooted in a cruel, absurd reality.”

POEM OF THE WEEK

Selected by FHS staff

For my own last Poem of the Day, then, let me give you the saddest, wisest poem I know: ‘The Mower’ by Philip Larkin.

The poem's ‘inciting incident’ is not obviously poetical. Mowing the lawn one day, Larkin unwittingly runs over and kills a hedgehog. Not obviously poetical, perhaps, but Larkin may be evoking Robert Burns' famous lament, ‘To a Mouse’, in which he pitied a poor field mouse whose nest was ruined by the plough's cruel blade: “The best laid schemes o’ Mice an’ Men, / Gang aft agley, / An’ lea’e us nought but grief an’ pain / For promis’d joy!” Larkin's grisly accident provokes him, like Burns, to reflect – profoundly – on grief, guilt and how we should treat each other, “while there is still time.”

Somehow the poem manages, in a few plain words, to show (or seem to show) everything worth showing of life, death and our relationship with the ‘unobtrusive world’ of ‘unobtrusive nature: how we cultivate it, care for it, and carelessly destroy it.

A few plain words – but how beautifully precise they are, and how precisely placed! How much pain, for instance, does ‘Unmendably’ convey, thanks in part to its delayed position. And how much meaning is packed into “careful” and the pause created by the stanza break immediately after it... Yes, we should take care – be cautious of, and full of care for, our world, ourselves, each other. We should – but let's face it, we often fail; we're so often careless. Note, too, how the poem ends somewhat abruptly, its final line and final stanza shorter than expected. As if precious time runs out on the poet.

I would say that Larkin's moving plea for mutual care and kindness makes ‘The Mower’ a perfect poem for this year; but really it's perfect for all years.

Mr Macdonald-Brown



The Mower

The mower stalled, twice; kneeling, I found
A hedgehog jammed up against the blades,
Killed. It had been in the long grass.

I had seen it before, and even fed it, once.
Now I had mauled its unobtrusive world
Unmendably. Burial was no help:

Next morning I got up and it did not.
The first day after a death, the new absence
Is always the same; we should be careful

Of each other, we should be kind
While there is still time.

by Philip Larkin

POEM OF THE WEEK

Selected by FHS staff



Poetry is not just about words in a page but sounds in the ear and the mind, so this week, our Friday poem is one intended to be performed rather than read. Rupi Kaur was born in the Punjab in India to a Sikh family who moved to Canada when she was three. Her poem, Broken English, is a homage to her parents who moved continents in the hope of a better life for their family. This is an experience many of us know personally, and her poem highlights the difficulties, prejudice and disconnect from home that our parents might have experienced, and the struggles of their children who feel the pressure and conflict of fitting in to both a home culture and that of the new world in which we are growing up. Kaur cleverly uses the nuts and bolts of the English language to express her feelings towards her parents, and the result is somehow both humble and moving, but also deeply empowering.

Ms Shevah

***Broken English* by Rupi Kaur**

I think about the way my father pulled the family
out of poverty without knowing what a vowel was.
And my mother raised 4 children
without being able to construct a perfect sentence
in English
A discombobulated couple that landed in the new
world
with hopes that left the bitter taste of rejection in
their mouth. No family no friends, just man and
wife,
Two university degrees that meant nothing,
one mother tongue that was broken now,
one swollen belly with a baby inside.
A father worried about jobs and rent
coz no matter what this baby was coming.
And they thought to themselves for a split second
was it worth it to put all of our money
into the dream of a country that is swallowing us
whole.
And papa looks at his woman's eyes
and sees the loneliness living where the iris was.
Wants to give her a home in a country
that looks at her with the word visitor wrapped
around their tongue. On their wedding day she left
an entire village to be his wife
and now she left an entire country to be a warrior.
And when the winter came they had nothing,
but the heat of their own bodies to keep the
coldness out.
And like 2 brackets they face one another
to hold the dearest parts of them,
their children close.
They turned a suitcase full of clothes
into a life and regular paychecks
to make sure that children of immigrants
wouldn't hate them for being the children of
immigrants They worked too hard - you can tell by
their hands, their eyes are begging for sleep
but our mouths were begging to be fed
and that is the most artistic thing I have ever seen.

It is poetry to these ears that has never heard what
passion sounds like
and my mouth is full of likes and uhms when I look
at their masterpiece
'coz there are no words in the English language
that can articulate that kind of beauty.
I can't compact their existence into 26 letters and
call it a description
I tried once but the adjectives needed to describe
them don't even exist so I ended up with pages
and pages full of words
followed with commas and more words and more
comas Is this intentionally 'comas'?
only to realize that there are some things in the
world
so infinite that they can never use a full stop.
So how dare you mock your mother when she
opens her mouth
and broken English spills out.
Her accent is thick like honey,
hold it with your life,
it's the only thing she has left from home.
Don't stomp on that richness,
instead hang it up on the walls
of museums next to Dali and Van Gogh
Her life is brilliant and tragic.
Kiss the side of her tender cheek.
She already knows what it sounds like
to have an entire nation laugh when she speaks.
She's more than our punctuation and language.
We might be able to take pictures and write stories,
but she made an entire world for herself.
How's that for art

CATALYST'S MOVERS AND SHAKERS



Marie Colvin



Audre Lorde

CATALYST'S MOVERS AND SHAKERS



Kathrine Switzer



'Tank Man'



Marsha P Johnson



Sophie Scholl



Lech Wałęsa



Sojourner Truth



Lewis Latimer



Raif Badawi



Peshmerga



Katherine Johnson



FRANCIS HOLLAND SCHOOL
SLOANE SQUARE

