

Nigel "Alf" Robson (Oriel Lodge)

M. Davies (College Porter)

is chalked up notices had a talent for stu-dent humor often featuring celestial sub-the student would be smiling, tears or anger havjects such as Uranus's rings. The Provost (Sir Derek) never deviated from calling him Nigel though nearly everybody else called him Alf, and it was only after working with him a couple of years that I got to know that Alf (which I knew was not his real name) actually stood for Alien

Widely read, with an impressive almost encyclopedic knowledge of plants, heraldry, space and above all perhaps Oriel, he was the Lodge's goto guide in the days before J. Catto's "A History of Oriel". But Alf's knowledge was also practical. For example, seemingly instinctively, he knew every fire hydrant, stop tap or fuse box. (No mean feat in this college - in fact, I would even be concerned if the current student can find their fuse box in 10 - 1 for example!)

He sang in the college choir before starting his As a Porter, colleague, or a single-handed Oriel career in the civil service, finally serving in Oriel lodge under 3 Provosts.

Of all of my colleagues past and present, he was surely the most impressive at being able to calm an emotionally breaking down student (or worse - suicidal) and change them back to an assured, competent, capable, motivated human being again, all within five minutes - an act I witnessed personally on a number of occasions over a number of years. A rolled up cigarette ('After all we are the college of Sir Walter,' he would say) and a stroll down Oriel Lane. He had a knows there could still be some hope for me well-practiced patter which was even more effec- yet!?■ tive on a cloudless night. In Oriel Square, he would pick out a named star, and by the time the cigarette was actually lit, (around the area of the Provost's Lodgings) the insignificance of even our very planet would be the question at

ing been long lost into the night and they'd still have the return journey to the Lodge to go.

Oriel's Wikipedia pages became award-winning thanks to his contributions. For a time he was groomed as Jeff's (Head Porter of the day) successor but though Head Porters continued to come and go it was never a promotion he actually achieved (disgraceful was a widespread view, particularly in the Lodge). When "Dickie Bird" (the most respected and liked Head Porter I have ever worked with at any college - present company accepted of course!) heard that Alf had left. I recall his words: "Now there was one who'd I always assumed would only leave here if carried out in a coffin. I despair at Oriel all that knowledge just walking out the doors but good luck to him." A view I precisely shared.

first response force, Alf would be all that would ever be needed, and I maintain this institution owes him a debt of gratitude for his care of many, many intakes of students. His contribution and relationship to Oriel was as deep as any Don or Alumni and our college is the poorer for him moving on to pastures new.

It is important I think to end Alf's story happily and in this case it happens to be true. He found that special someone, fell in love and really will live happily ever after or so I wish... so who



To Infinity and Beyond

Martin Yip

rogress' is one of those words like 'peace'. Like peace, virtually everyone agrees that progress is desirable to have. Yet, like peace, there is no clear definition of what progress is, to the extent that many thoughts and actions may be justified on the grounds of a certain convenient definition of 'progress'. As a result, what is reasonable to one may be repugnant to another.

One most typical example of this is GDP. GDP measures the value of output in an economy, Nonetheless, there is much to gain from sharptry's progress. However, it is notably deficient as a measure of progress, even in the narrow sense of economic growth. For example, it does not measure the distribution of wealth in a country, nor does it account for the environmental damage inflicted by economic activity. More fundamentally, one could question why economic growth is good, or why its importance might trump other desirable goals for society, such as lower inequality, a social safety net, or the development of political rights.

If economic growth is debatable, personal growth is less so. There doesn't seem to be any downsides to personal growth. Given its intuitive appeal, it is no wonder the self-help industry has been estimated to be worth millions of pounds in Britain. Advice on personal growth is abundant in the form of books, YouTube videos, newsletters, podcasts, and so on.

One might say that too ardent a pursuit of personal growth can be self-defeating. In the quest to 'improve' ourselves, we may lose ourselves in what has been branded 'productivity porn': procrastination in the form of consuming content

about productivity. There is never a perfect time when we are 'ready' to do something or perfectly prepared to do something; it is always about taking a leap of faith and diving right in. And so, if we focus on sharpening the saw too much, we might forget that the saw was intended to saw wood, and a razor-sharp saw that does no sawing is hardly better than a blunter saw that is actually put into use.

and GDP growth is a major measure of a coun- ening the saw and unleashing your potential. Valentine's Day has just passed; are you doing well romantically? How about your academic work? Fifth week blues is coming. And your physical and mental health? Reflecting on these questions is always useful. Identifying and confronting the sub- optimal aspects of life is the first step to changing them - to making progress. Next, turn thought into action. What could you do to tackle these problems? Maybe you look at your phone too much; perhaps turn off push notifications? Maybe you don't read enough; The Poor Print is highly accessible and it welcomes you with enthusiasm.

> 52 is not only the number of this issue, but also the number of weeks in a year. What sort of progress have you made in the past year? And what sort of progress would you like to make in the year ahead?■



Me, you, the garden, the sun, and all of their beauty

Michael Leong

Oh my muse, my good friend,

In my mind I hold a time slice:

how long it has been since we last spoke.

What did we talk about when days were grey

and when the sun shone through clouded skies?

What did we talk about when we watched the willows sway

and lay on the grass dreaming of better times? What did we do before I became me and you, you?

Sometimes I wish we could see who we are.

the air is moist and we are lying on damp grass

as Niven's Arcadia spreads before us -

broad palms cast in gold over a still Symphony Lake

Capability Brown's Colonial Eden, made just for the end of time.

We are breathing, and the world is passing us by.

That slice is an endurantist's illusion. It is a perdurantists' diagonal cut across a four dimensional loaf cake.

Bought fresh from Cold Storage, the tin foil cradling it still cool,

and its elements are sweet and moist and soft,

just as you would expect Time and Space to be.

A part of you, drawn from your past,

With a part of me, drawn from mine.

a young garden, born of a naturalist's pragmatism,

two hundred years before we first met.

The setting sun, taken from a nearby aeon.

And our hopes and dreams spanning our being and coming-to-be.

We talk and watch as time passes us by.

We hold, in this time slice, images of our more whole selves

You and I know that we are both temporal parts

One of an infinite number of selves, coincident and

having infinite conversations with each other We are at every instant instantiated and ending.

We think of the loaf cake and

how we are like worms which bore through it,

Our entire existences, infinitely layered people stages

In this moment - but two segments of one slice.

But maybe I am wrong.

Maybe the presentists are right -

the past has long ceased to exist; there is only the eternal Now and

Our person stages – which once met spatially at the same time,

and temporally in the same place,

were really just persistent wholes now ever separated by space,

long faded ashes of a wistful ontology in which

you and I share no relation

Or at best, relations bound to an ever receding past.

And maybe for the better, anyway – for an eternalist only ever has the eternal summer and its woes

and its sun shining just through the clouds.

- 1. Lawrence Niven managed Singapore's Botanic Gardens in 1860. Symphony Lake is in fact the name of the lake in the gardens on which music was performed. I did
- 2. Arcadia is a nod to Stoppard's play, which was full of perhaps unnecessarily quasi intelligent and obscure references, including something about Capability Brown and landscaping. It is also a nod to this poem's own unnecessary references.
- 3. Cold Storage is Singapore's equivalent of a Sainsbury's/Waitrose.
- 4. Endurantism is the philosophical view that concrete particulars - objects like ourselves - exist only in 3 dimensional space, and they persist through time as a whole.
- 5. Perdurantism is a view opposing endurantism, which holds that concrete particulars (objects) can have 'temporal parts'. Time is taken to be a fourth dimension across which objects can exist. On this view, me at this instant would be but a temporal part of my whole four dimensional self, which persists through space-time like a worm through a cake.
- 6. Perdurantists embrace generous ontologies: ontologies being parts of their theories which

specify what objects exist. The perdurantist is committed to accepting that there is an object which has as its temporal parts the Big Ben from 2009, my metaphysics tutor from our first tute, and you, the reader. Some think this is absurd. This is what a 'slice' through four dimensional spacetime might look like.

- 7. Presentism is the view that only the present is real. Endurantists tend to be presentists.
- 8. Eternalism is the view that all points in time are equally real. Perdurantists tend to be
- 9. This poem expresses a desire to reconstruct a relationship by creating a sort of diorama made of parts stretching across the past. To be an eternalist and a perdurantist is to believe that the object "Me, you, the garden, the sun, and all of their beauty" could in theory exist, forever. To be an endurantist and a presentist is to believe that there is only the eternal now, where the objects "Me" and "You" do not bear any spatiotemporal relation.



Ithuriel

David K Asamoah

The weather wasn't favourable that day.

The grey sky wore the bitterest of scowls

And from above the crowd of ashen clouds

Drifted so aimlessly like they were freeFree from the wind's sure will

And down below, upon the solid ground,

The bustle did not calm, even more loud

Were busy roads transporting hurried traffic

And markets breathed swift business at the pulse

Of the clicks by the till.

Far, far away from all this rush did dwell
A timeless fortress from the everyday,
With walls of oak and aspen flushed with green.
A kingdom hidd'n, retraced with careful feet,
Was found at peace and still.
It was near silent, minus the slight breeze
And the light rustling of the shivering leaves,
The quietude of murmured conversation
From tree to tree, held gentle tones that carried
Despite the springtime chill.

The tune of the tranquil rang out therein
Yes, all at hand could listen then dissolve
Into those lulling murmurs and absolve
Themselves from this day's groan.
To then have felt

As sweet as thyme and dill.

Alas the sun must rest and memories fade

And where a peace had set, thin sighs pervade

And all that glowed in mind,

in present dimmed.

With nothing left save thought

and my own skin

Am I to face the shrill?

EQUALITIES WEEK

To celebrate diversity within Oriel and raise awareness of key issues, the JCR Equalities Team has put together a whole week of events from 26/02/2020 - 04/03/2020.

LGBTQ+ Discussion - 26/02/2020

In accordance with LGBTQ+ History Month, the LGBTQ+ rep will be hosting a discussion regarding key issues that the LGBTQ+ community has faced over the years, and the steps taken to improve visibility and human rights. Look out on the JCR page for more details on time and location.

BME Cultural Hotpot - 27/02/2020

Our BME rep has invited people of all backgrounds to bring in culinary delights unique to their culture. With Indonesian, Russian and Bengali food confirmed, this event will leave you hungry for more! Join us in the MacGregor Room from 6-9pm.

SANE - 28/02/2020

Check the JCR page to stay updated on details, times and venues!

Film Screening - 29/02/2020

Film, venue and times will be confirmed closer to the date.

Equalities BOP - 01/03/2020

In collaboration with Merton and Corpus Christi, Oriel will be holding a tri-college bop at Plush with DJs playing a variety of LGBTQ+, BME and wom*n's artists! Pre-drinks will be at Merton College JCR.

Language Immersion – 02/03/2020

An evening of language immersion hosted by the International Officer. Come along to the Oriel Bar at 9pm for the chance to practice your language skills and meet people across the university!

Tri-College Wom*n's Dinner - 04/03/2020

A formal celebrating the wom*n of Oriel, Corpus Christi and held at Merton with an all-female high table.

Difference [3/4]

Leo Gillard

here was, Pan noticed, someone watching them from across the street. Tall, muscular, and probably very slightly over the age for military service. It was almost always people like that who caused trouble, so they weren't surprised when the call came.

'Coward!' the voice called, from over the road, in a position far enough away that Pan could feel fairly justified in calling him a hypocrite. 'Traitor!'

In reply, they simply smiled at him and tipped their hat. He could say all the weak words they'd heard a thousand times before if he wanted, it wouldn't make all that much of a difference.

They'd heard worse, even. A mother with two small children, who came right up to their face and yelled at them, spit and all, about how it was because of people like them that the war wasn't already over. She claimed that if they'd just shoot some poor person who'd probably be no older than them, the war would be over and her children wouldn't have to grow up in fear.

Quietly, Pan had wondered if the war was the only reason the children were growing up in fear. Outwardly, they'd used the response they always had to such an argument: 'One more body on the pile won't make any difference. The way I'm trying to make a difference instead is pressuring the government for peace.'

The reason the war was yet to end was that neither side, none of the combatants, would accept any form of compromise. Victory had to be absolute. To Pan, absolute victory meant nothing more than absolute chaos, absolute destruction. If the war kept going, if people kept dying, if both sides were worn down more and more, that was no victory worth having.

Every time a protest was held, the crowd swelled larger with ever more people who'd come back from hell on earth, or people who never wanted to experience it. Every time a protest was held, the government released a statement saying that they understood that people had suffered, but that they were making progress in the war and soon the five years lost would be worth it.

The phrase always made them chuckle, in a dark, humourless way. 'Progress' was something they could get behind. But they didn't count a larger death toll as progress. No, progress looked like an end to this conflict as soon as possible; an acknowledgment of how wrong everything had gone.

Progress, in a twisted way, looked like the world collapsing around them. Every day that brought more suffering brought the government closer to the point where no one would tolerate them anymore. And maybe that was bad, maybe it was wrong to view it in such a way.

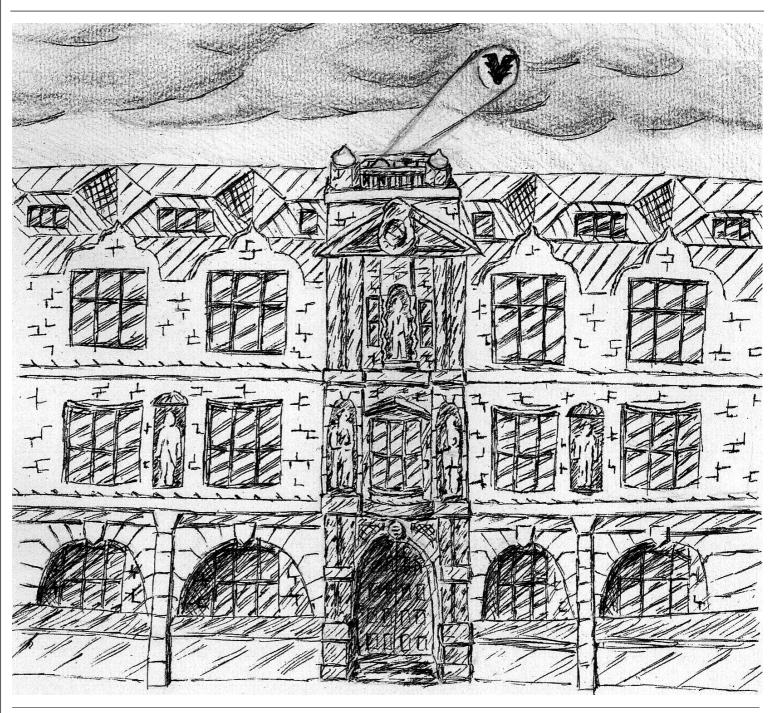
But at this point, Pan felt like it was the only thing they had left. How else could they view the suffering around them, if not progress towards something that could maybe be better?

They were, of course, aware that this was exactly the logic the government was using. 'The suffering would be worth it in the end' and all that rubbish. The government's preferred suffering had an end point, sure, just as theirs did, but it was one that would only cause more pain. When they finally reached their point of triumph, who would pay the price of all the damage done? The people they'd just beaten into the ground, naturally.

The end to the suffering Pan envisioned... that end wouldn't divide people. It wouldn't hurt anyone else. Rebuilding would be difficult, and people would continue to feel pain and sadness. But they'd also continue to feel happiness, — joy to be alive in a way they couldn't with the weight of war and guilt hanging over their heads. Pan's end point didn't involve punishing one to benefit another.

So yes, each day brought trials. Far greater trials than a woman who couldn't contain her rage or a man who wouldn't even get close enough to have a conversation. But they knew that if they could just hold on, progress would tip over into peace, and the world would be righted again, if only a little.





The Change We Need to See?, drawn by Monim Wains

This idea was courtesy of Leo von Malaisé, who bid the largest donation at the charity auction for the offer. I appreciate his support!

UPCOMING ISSUES

Issue #53 – Triumph

Submission deadline: 01/03/2020

'Triumph' will be the last issue of Hilary Term 2020. Keep a lookout for the announcement of the themes for Trinity Term. You can read The Poor Print online, at www.thepoorprint.com, where you will find all of our previous and future issues, as well as pieces not shown in the print editions.

You can also find the link to the contribution form. We welcome all types of submission, from drawings and poetry, to prose and photography. All members of the JCR, MCR, and SCR can contribute.

Note to readers:

The Poor Print's editorial team will be looking for new members in Trinity term to progress the paper into next year.

No prior experience is needed, and if you would like to join, message us to have a hand at editing the next issue!