

EDITORS' NOTE

Something seems a bit different. We've got this feeling that we've left something behind. It's nothing physical, and it's no place geographical. We're not quite sure what it is yet and we don't know if it's good or bad. Perhaps it's just post-burnout? Iron deficiency, maybe? What's Mercury's placement looking like?

One can ESCAPE from anything - a place, a person, a reality, a system. It can be a joyful and liberating act; but it's also often a necessary one. Of course, escaping always leaves something behind, and so, it's worth considering what state we leave this "something" in. Does our past not catch up with us, eventually, at some point down the line?

This issue brings light to ESCAPE in all its manifestations. Spatial concerns fill these pages - from a small town to the planet. Through examining the stories we tell - here, superheroes, cults, and personality quizzes - we unpack the collective ESCAPE from the self, whether for better or for worse. In personal yet political explorations of media and fashion, ESCAPE also examines class with a much-needed nuance. Crucially, we look to mainstream narratives of migration and the xenophobia and racism these narratives are so inextricably bound with. Throughout, we urge you to question who defines an ESCAPE and who this definition advantages and who it disadvantages.

This issue's shoot, ACROSS THE GREEN, unearths the bittersweet beauty of ESCAPE, what it means to truly exist in a place where there is nowhere to return to and everywhere to run to. Upon the grassy expanse of its surroundings, the shoot channels the raw vulnerability and openness of the issue.

Ever on theme, this is the final issue created by the 21/22 team. We hope GUM has been an ESCAPE for you this past year - whether that's through coming along to events, contributing to the mag, or simply reading each issue. WFor us, it's been relieving to have GUM as an ESCAPE - an outlet to pour our creativity into, something to conceptualise and watch grow in the hands of our talented team. But as the academic year winds down we prepare for our own ESCAPE; we clear out our Google Drive, hand back our office keys, and send the last couple of emails. In this past year we've become accustomed to contributors' meetings, takeover schedules, and stressy voice notes at 1am. But it's time to close all tabs, to log off and log out. It's been a lot (a joy, a blessing, a curse) and we're ever so thankful for all of it. Most importantly, we're so grateful to have worked with the most creative, passionate, and hard-working team and contributors. Thank you. You're fab.

Enjoy this lil ESCAPE. It's on us.

With love,

 TIARNA

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FINDING MAMOU



ART
ELLA EDWARDS
(SHE/HER)

WORDS
PIERRE LABAT
(HE/HIM)

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When Fraissette learned that she was to become a grandmother, she naturally chose “Mamouchka” as her nickname. It was unconventional, refined, and sounded just as warm and invigorating as the hugs she would later give her grandchild.

Unfortunately for her, my mother gave birth to a child (my sister Cléo) so lazy and unappreciative of well thought out grandparents’ pet names, it was quickly shortened to “Mamou”. Fine, she would be Mamou, but her hugs would be just as mamouchkan.

She passed away from Alzheimer’s on the 21st of December 2014 and, horrifyingly enough, at that point, to me she was already long gone. Yet it does not change the fact that her departure left a hollowness in me so big I stand resolute to fill it. Ironically, following the passing of my grandmother to a memory devouring ailment, I was craving to remember her.

I’ve always been a little bit of a hoarder, I attach memories onto things because I am afraid to forget them, and that’s how I can transform a candy wrapper or a stained synthetic daffodil into priceless relics which tell a story only I can understand.

The sweetness of the peach syrup she would put on my bedside table, the records of Veronique Sanson she apparently loved to listen to, the bewitching Mugler fragrance she seemingly never ran out of, the ever-softness of her wrinkled, stained hands, the striking shine of her platinum hair, the gentle crackling laugh that accompanied each of her witty remarks...

Over the years I cataloged every sensorial memory I had of Mamou as if to invoke her back into my life, but none has been as effective as the souvenir of her essence. I call it her essence because the smell alone of her perfume or any other of the numerous cosmetics she had lined up in baroque boxes on her bathroom shelves, could not suffice to explain whatever happens in my nose when I come in contact with it.

When I come across this elusive fragrance of worn leather couches, slightly weathered stationary and recently bleached silverware, all draped with diluted notes of patchouli, it’s as if she’s here again. I brought her back, or rather I brought myself back to her. I am not only once again resting on the carpet of her excessively beige yet somehow colourful apartment, my eyes aimlessly wandering around the room, from her tastefully-intriguing tchotchkes to her extensive collection of lacquered Chinese paper-mache antiques; but my head is suddenly resting calm, carefree, all the while ecstatic and excessively prone to amazement. She is waiting for me in the kitchen, the news is playing on the radio but to me, the voices are only white noise I am 6: I do not care for them. The sound of water boiling, the beeping of the microwave, the sudden strong stench of cheese, all lead me to believe that we’re having du riz et du rapé (rice and grated cheese) (again). And as I meet her in the corridor to the kitchen, she hugs me and gives me a look that lets me know she will always be here to love me and to dry the tears that had, prior to her departure, so often rolled down my cheeks.

I brought her back, or
rather I brought myself
back to her.

But then as Mamou’s fragrance fades away as swiftly as when it arose, I forget the colour of the kitchen tiles, the cheese suddenly turns bland and the rice chewy, the voices on the radio are growing oppressive, there are talks of war and climate inaction, and I am relentlessly growing, and she is gone. Coming down from that unexpected high is always melancholic, but there will always be more things to look forward to than to look back upon. This is the mantra I have to deafen myself with as I tighten the embrace in which I hold my material body in place, alone once again.

I could go on forever talking about her, how great she was, how much I miss her, how unfair life was to her, and how many regrets I carry with me thinking of her. I have remorse over the night I went to the movies with my cousin instead of visiting her in her hospice the day she died. I regret not telling her that I liked boys and that I always had; if not to get the approval I chose to believe she would have granted me, to have her hate me so much that she would have fought her ailment a little harder and stayed a little longer. I also regret she wasn’t here to watch me fall in love for the first time and to put me back together the first time my heart broke.

But alas I will never get those moments and admitting this is pouring salt on the forever opened wound of grief. Yet, well-worded optimism and questionably spiritual rhetorics can help me lick the pain away from said wound. I know that when I truly deeply need Mamou’s love, that essence will come back to me and I’ll be having lunch with her again. Because by leaving so early, she may have robbed me of more time with her but she also robbed me of the opportunity to ever resent her. Like her essence, my memory of her will never sour. In my memory, she can remain the guard to the ultimate refuge she cultivated in me from my birth to her passing: my innocence.

In loving memory of Mamou.



SMALL TOWN GIRL

WORDS
CLAIRE THOMSON
(SHE/HER)

ART
MAGDALENA
JULIA KOSUT
(SHE/HER)

There's a rather niche Austrian stereotype where people introduce their hometown alongside a short statement about the town's history and why that makes it significant. In Scotland or the UK, this would be absolutely absurd. Too often I settle for somewhere 'close enough' to my hometown as I run out of ways to describe its location, almost like a part of my identity will regularly not be accessible to others. Commuting distance to Edinburgh, sky-high house prices, an incredible coastal landscape, a Facebook town billboard and families who constantly arrive but rarely leave (my family being a prime example, my parents have lived in our house for 29 years) - that sums up my little, chocolate box hometown. What is it about a small-town upbringing that makes us feel isolated from big cities, and at what point do we accept home for where it is and stop escaping to the place that we once called home?

It's a constant battle between familiarity and anonymity. Support and structure versus freedom and spontaneity. It's the reason why so many small-town teenagers relish the idea of a driver's licence: finally, a way to get out there. The prospect of leaving home and moving away to university is so exciting and the possibilities seem endless. We want to escape the small-town life, where everyone is tied to a spider web woven together by secrets and gossip. In the city, you can be whoever you want. No one knows your story or recognises your face. For me, it was the fresh start that I didn't know I needed. As cliché as it sounds, I didn't leave high school the same person that I arrived, yet for some reason, that was the mould that I was trapped in and could not escape. It was time for bigger and better things and to learn to embody the more confident person that I had grown up to become rather than the shy and quiet preteen in her black and white striped school tie.

It's a respite from city noise and something to return to when I crash and burn under the neon lights.

However, if growing up in a small town has taught me anything to take forward to big city student life, it's to appreciate the little things and to find comfort in nature. With so much stimulus and unpredictability, I often find myself completely overwhelmed and powering through life at 100 miles per hour trying to make up for lost time. The hustle and bustle regularly makes me feel isolated, like I'm failing at city life and can no longer keep up. It's the rushing of cars causing sleepless nights, the bars, the laughter, the singing and dancing when all you're used to is family card games and bed by 9pm. It's the strangers in the street: not knowing their next move or who can be spoken to and trusted, compared to the local neighbourhood watch waving you off to the bus in the morning. City life is exhausting. What's worse, unlike back home, no one knows who you are. Growing up in a small town is trying not to pass people you know in public to avoid the small talk and awkward sideways smiles, only to find the mere thought of a familiar face comforting again when in the big city. It's at this point that I must remember where I come from and rely on what I find peace in to create the best of both worlds.

I grew up on the coast, a literal stone's throw away from the water's edge and surrounded by beautiful views over Edinburgh and the Forth Bridges. Until I moved to Glasgow, living next to the water was something I'd massively taken for granted because I'd known nothing different, yet now it's the thing that I appreciate the most. I constantly crave the sound of waves crashing onto the rocks and lapping up the beach, alongside the fresh sea breeze that clears stress and tension in a single breath. When I'm home, chasing sunsets becomes a hobby and my escape from life. Nothing else matters at sunset because tomorrow is a new day with brighter possibilities and revived hope. It's not complicated, it's just silent. It's a respite from city noise and something to return to when I crash and burn under the neon lights. If we escape country life to then escape city life again, do we ever truly find the escapism that we seek?

This year on my year abroad, I chose the small-town life – 10 minutes away from the middle of nowhere in rural Bavaria, Germany. My goal for this year is to improve my German, so I decided that the only way to achieve this was to give myself no other choice but to live in a place with very few English speakers and speak the language daily. I had the anonymity already; I wanted the support, the realism, the culture. I didn't want to float on the outskirts of a community, I wanted to be in the heart of it. I arrived as an outsider but I've been made to feel like I belong. It's the things I hate at home – when I detour in the supermarkets to avoid the weird nod of acknowledgement to someone that I went to school with and hoped never to see again – that I love here. I see the primary school pupils that I teach at the shops, or in the swimming pool, or walking to school as they call my name and wave, smiling or telling me that they love learning English with me and it's so much fun. To a lot of these kids, me teaching them English for an hour or two is the highlight of their week. The global, for them, is becoming the local. It's something exciting and new in their little lives and a chance for them to learn about a different country and where a lot of their pop culture comes from. You don't often get these opportunities in small towns. I never had language assistants in my classes growing up, the exchange schools stayed in Edinburgh instead of crossing the water to us in Fife and the idea of a 'foreigner' in town was a breath of fresh air. I want to give these kids access to chances that they would otherwise miss out on.

Recently, I asked my friend from home, who is also abroad, at what point do you call somewhere else, somewhere away from where you grew up, home? She turned around and said within the first few weeks of moving abroad; yet as I get ready to leave after 9 months in Kronach, I still can't help but say that I'm going home. For me, home is about familiarity and comfort. Yes, I love it out here and I've had an amazing time but it's still too different to be called 'home'.

Small-town life has its peaks and troughs. You can't have the positives without the negatives, but it's about striking that balance. City life is a learning curve and experience and it takes a while to adapt to the constant buzz and movement. Despite all this and my love of going back to my roots, I would say that I'm slowly becoming a city girl at heart and after a year of nothing but fields, I'm excited to return to the city. I wouldn't have changed my small-town upbringing for the world, but now it's time to learn how to call somewhere else home too.

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LET THEM EAT CORIOLANUS

WORDS
JAMES TAYLOR
(HE/THEY)

A couple of years ago, for reasons the referenced time-frame should make nauseatingly clear, the National Theatre uploaded recordings of old performances weekly on Youtube for free, encouraging viewers to donate what they could to support theatre employees out of work. I watched every single upload. The dull summer weeks were suddenly punctuated with cultural vibrancy – Gillian Anderson tottering and drawling in A Streetcar Named Desire, Tom Hiddleston being shouty in Shakespeare's Coriolanus. As someone who never had much access to the world of theatre before, the opportunity to appreciate these performances without financial (and geographic) obstructions was exhilarating; getting to see professional stagings of Lorraine Hansberry's Les Blancs and Andrea Levy's Small Island made me feel like theatre wasn't a remote, elite and withdrawn world, but something directly accessible to me under anomalous circumstances.

Alas, dear reader, twas not to last. As the summer drew to a close, the curtain fell on these free performances; the rest of the online theatre catalogue retreated under a pricey paywall. I appreciate we pay for these performances to fund artists, actors and directors livelihoods – as we should – but this brief interlude of free theatre offered a tantalising hint at what a more democratic and accessible approach to culture might look like. Consider this; I even managed to catch a performance of The Magic Flute when the Royal Opera House decided to copycat the National Theatre. In a regular performance, I probably would have suffered – I don't speak German, or Opera. But online, I was able to follow the narrative with a guide open on another tab, and the video came with English subtitles! In another world, the Queen of the Night's squeaking arias would have been unintelligible. And here, Opera, a performance style known for its elitism and social and intellectual capital (rather like ballet and Shakespeare) became common currency – it felt like the entitled enclaves of world culture might, just might, be attainable to a monolingual, working class viewer like myself.

The fierce protection of cultural items by the privileged to maintain its supposed intellectual integrity – and thus, its social currency – manifests itself widely throughout

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culture. The selective circumstances required to become 'cultivated' enough to access and understand these cultural objects mean when this is compromised, by, say, an ordinary fellow on Youtube, so is the carefully designed stratifications of class identity. Take the Bloomsbury Group of the early 20th century, or the historically conjunctive Bright Young Things – these artists and critics, all of them white, wealthy and well educated, notorious for their snobbishness and precious attitude to their cerebral pursuits, dominated cultural discourses. Their money allowed them to self publish, and they all praised each other's work in their respective literary criticisms. It was a self-congratulating arts club, at its core. It was their inherent material privilege in the first instance that allowed them to achieve their artistic privileges – and thus the world of culture became a self propagating and self consuming entity, like a snake eating its own tail, ad infinitum. It continues into the world of film and television – take Monty Python, the epitome of haughty rich-boy nonsense, or the Cambridge Footlights Dramatic Club, which has launched the careers of countless British comedians, actors and writers. And fair enough, they're all a talented bunch. But it was their elevated background which allowed them access to these well regarded cultural institutions in the first place; Oxbridge is well known for its failings in admitting working class and PoC individuals. The argument that culture is a meritocracy, and the Wildean dictum of art for art's sake, has never had value.

And indeed, the current crisis in living costs is ensuring disposable income that might otherwise be spent on cultural pursuits will no longer be available to many. As the Conservative government continues its mission to shut libraries, privatise public television channels and demanding immigrants answer citizenship questions on The Canterbury Tales and the Bayeux Tapestry, as if general British citizenship is contingent on a knowledge of Chaucer, this doesn't look likely to improve. And it begins to make me feel uncomfortable with my attitude to these elite cultural objects I was so thrilled to be allowed admittance to before. In a society where knowledge of, or access to, restricted aspects of culture is akin to social investment, and an understanding of them often relies upon an exclusive education, contemporary cultures' relationship to privilege is inescapable. British culture, in particular, is produced by the same clique that will applaud it, meaning it can be wielded as an instrument of systems of power. While I felt an excitement at being able to escape my social exclusion as I watched these performances, it didn't whet an appetite I was proud of. Why did watching this make me feel I was escaping my limited self, when it was these very same institutions that devised these limitations in the first place? Should that not be the focus of my escape instead? When art is only used to uphold systems of power, it no longer has any purpose, value or cause. Culture should do the opposite, actively looking to deconstruct the obstructions that seek to divide us; why else do we hold the work of those like Lorraine Hansberry and Tennessee Williams in such high regard, when they advocate this directly? But when the individual is deprived of the means to access art by systems all too aware of its ability to empower, educate and democratise, its incredible potential is negated. And that, to again paraphrase Wilde, will render all art quite useless.

FIGHT OR FLIGHT: THE FUTURE OF SUPERHERO FILMS



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GUM

WORDS
EVE CONNOR
(SHE/HER)

ART
MAGDALENA
STRZYCZKOWSKA
(SHE/HER)

I remember the first superhero comic book I bought, an issue of DC's Future's End, a story that included all the beloved characters: Batman, Superman, Wonderwoman. Though already a fan of superhero films, I do wonder what initially drew me to the genre: the burgeoning Marvel Cinematic Universe, or the absorption of geekery into mainstream culture? But draw me it did, and though my weekly excursions to Forbidden Planet eventually stopped (it's a deceptively expensive hobby), I've been a superhero buff ever since. All stories offer an escape, and within those glossy pages I found a sense of excitement that thirteen year old me, between school and being a quiet only child, was sorely lacking.

But a much broader socio-political climate initially engendered the creation of our beloved comic book characters than a need to remedy teenage boredom. The lasting effects of the Great Depression and the rising tensions in Europe set the scene for the first appearance of Superman on the cover of Action Comics #1 in June 1938. With its story of a seemingly normal man with a superpowered alter-ego, Superman set the standard for the superhero as a symbol of hope and a monument to America's foundational myth of individualism. Timely Comics (now Marvel) debuted Captain America in 1941, the cover showing the star-spangled hero punching Hitler. By the end of that year, the US had joined the second world war. The idea of a super-soldier, an embodiment of patriotic values, quelling fears about the looming danger, was a form of protection against the realities of war.

In fairness, in the intervening 80 years, superheroes have never completely fallen out of fashion. As with every trend, public interest has waxed and waned. But never before have they encapsulated the zeitgeist quite as much as in the 21st century, in the wake of 9/11 and another financial crisis. Though the increased quality of special effects certainly helped them dominate the box office when translated to the big screen, it is the flavour of stories that superhero films offer that makes them an audience favourite. Stories of a select few, honoured with extraordinary powers (or, in the case of Batman and Ironman, lots of money), who are the only ones able to save the world from destruction, offer immeasurable comfort. In these stories the hero always wins. Maybe not straight away, maybe not without sacrifices (because let's be honest, we're not stupid, we know that there is always loss in strife). And yet always, at the end, goodness prevails. But reality does not function so smoothly. And it is precisely for this reason that superhero stories are almost universally beloved. What better way to escape

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the ubiquity of war and pain and death than into a world in which all that badness can be distilled in a single entity, an antagonist for our hero to fight and ultimately defeat? Through these films we are taught that a caped crusader will swoop in to catch us before we hit the ground. Children like to pretend to be Superman; by adulthood you realise you're Lois Lane.

Arguably, there are enough superhero films to satisfy our desire for safe, bombastic action without countless new ones being churned out each year. And there has always been an aspect of propaganda to superhero stories—they were, as mentioned, a symptom of WWII. Marvel films in particular presents many of the heroes as tools of the US military, glorified soldiers rather than lone vigilantes intent upon justice. By allowing Spiderman to enter the MCU (despite the film rights being owned by Sony), a character intended by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko to be relatable to the young readers of the '60s, struggling with school, money and relationships, is no longer that. Taken under the wing of a billionaire and given a suit and every piece of technology needed to succeed, Tom Holland's webslinger does not embody the spirit of the friendly neighbourhood Spiderman. He is weaponised and drafted into the Avengers like a soldier would to a war.

This does not make the films any less enjoyable, but it does reveal a hesitancy to diverge from Disney's superhero formula even though audiences are growing fatigued with their predictability, and the genre has grown largely stagnant. While Red Skull was the ideal antagonist for 1940s Captain America, representing the fear of Nazi Germany, few modern superheroes flicks engage with contemporary anxieties. Perhaps the solution is to look towards grittier interpretations such as the most recent instalment of Batman which leans heavily into the detective noir genre, exploring government corruption and police failure. But does that mean that the only politically resonant heroes are those that are tortured and wracked by nihilism? Not necessarily. Captain Marvel (2019) attempted to explore xenophobia and the vilification of refugees, although ultimately presented a superpowered, white American with ties to the US air force saving the day. However, Marvel proved that they could engage deeply with current concerns in Black Panther (2018), which examined racial identity, colonial legacies, and nationalism versus internationalism, and was the first superhero film to be nominated for a best picture Oscar.

The reign of superhero films is far from over and though I would like one to engage with the climate crisis, for instance, I am looking forward to seeing if and how the genre evolves in the future. But I do appreciate the diverting escape they have always offered. The predictability of big budget blockbusters is the escapism we are given, and perhaps it is the escapism we deserve. The constant stream of sequels, and tie-ins, and continuations is the clearest reflection of reality that this genre can offer without denying us the comfort we crave. Just as the real world encounters an endless barrage of conflict and crises, when one villain is defeated, another rises to take their place in the next film. A superhero may win the battle, but they'll forever be fighting the war.

Affection

LYDIA BUDLER
(SHE/HER)

As a textile artist I'm drawn to bright pattern and the use of painted fabrics when creating. My practice continues to surround the idea of painting dream-scape worlds; often dot decorated and intricate - imagery that I can really lose myself in. An exaggerated colour palette alongside subconscious patterns and shapes allow for an unfamiliar workflow without straying too far from the connection that exists within the core pillars of my practice. Although painting takes up a large amount of my practice, I would consider myself a textile artist as I mostly work with patch-worked fabric canvases and often embroider into my work.

Painting holds a therapeutic purpose for me as the pieces often take months to complete and I am able to grow alongside the painting I'm working on. My central interest lies between translating the chaotic, mind-exhausting worlds in my head onto the canvas in front of me and fabricating new, immediate scenery using paint and soft sculpture. This process roots my emotions to my artwork.

My solo exhibition 'Affection' was a one-night event exhibiting a family of pastels and paintings which were created in sequence, fitting continuous dream-scape styles and showcasing my world from 2020-2022. The exhibition consisted of nine paintings, four beadworks, two plates

and two vases. The name 'Affection' was stolen from a Jonathan Richman song; most of my paintings are named after Jonathan songs as his music always seems to be playing in the background as I paint. Other inspiration for me has been Dorothy Iannone's 'This Sweetness Outside of Time' as well as the beautiful late works of Shorty Lungkata Tjungurrayi. Iannone has a very obvious influence on my use of shape and towered, busy scenery. The meanings and stories behind each of her paintings is something I have always been fascinated by - the connection she holds with her artwork drives me to always paint as an outlet.

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ART & PHOTOGRAPHY



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WORDS
NIAMH FLANAGAN
(SHE/HER)

BACKWARDS BRITAIN: THE HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

IS ALIVE AND WELL

CW
DISCUSSION OF
RACISM, XENOPHOBIA,
AND WAR

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As the Russian invasion of Ukraine rages onward, Europe finds itself in the midst of a constantly evolving refugee crisis. An estimated 5.5 million Ukrainian civilians have fled the nation as things stand, a figure guaranteed to rise as the conflict continues. Emerging from the Ukrainian border is a barrage of distressing images, stories, and experiences – families brutally separated, grieving and traumatised individuals stranded at the precipice of bordering nations, parents fearing for the lives of their children. Whilst we cannot know the full scope of what is occurring on the Ukrainian border, what is known is that in the context of crises of displacement, borders invariably become sites of violence, abuse and exploitation, and women and children become especially vulnerable to such experiences. It is the moral obligation of any nation that professes to champion the values of liberal tolerance to do all it can to alleviate the inevitable pain and suffering generated by a humanitarian crisis such as this. You would think so. But here in the UK, the Conservative government seems to be doing all it can to shirk such an obligation.

Without a comprehensive and efficient system of refugee intake, it amounts to little more than performativity and co-optation of a tragedy that is not ours to claim.

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Whilst the EU and its member states have adopted a policy of open sanctuary for those fleeing the violence, the UK is resisting this move and has instituted a highly constrained system of family reunification and, latterly, a system of sponsorship limited by the layers of bureaucracy integral to its functionality. Essentially, Ukrainian refugees can only apply for visas to enter the UK as long as they have family residing in the nation. Alternatively British homeowners are being offered £350 to apply to offer their homes up to refugees with no family connections in the nation – a disturbing outsourcing of governmental responsibility in the context of an international crisis that requires an institutional response. Refugee status has not been granted, and currently the rate of issuing visas has been painfully slow. In contrast to the permissive and open armed welcome offered by the rest of Europe, the UK has opted for a strategy so steeped in red tape as to be virtually redundant to Ukrainians seeking urgent refuge from a life-or-death crisis. Indeed, the government seems happy to light itself up in blue and yellow, to give standing ovations to the Ukrainian ambassador and wax lyrical on the bravery of Zelensky, but without a comprehensive and efficient system of refugee intake, it amounts to little more than performativity and co-optation of a tragedy that is not ours to claim.

Of course, these decisions do not come as a shock. After all, the Conservative government has since 2015 been constructing a policy approach toward immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers that can be described at best as hostile and impenetrable, with the 2021 Nationality

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and Borders Bill sealing our fate as a nation ruled by a decisively anti-refugee government. In this context, the UK response to Ukraine falls in line with a culture of policy making at the heart of the UK Home Office.

Of course, another important facet of our national response to refugee crises such as these lies in the coverage of the national media and the narratives it constructs. Naturally, media coverage has been sympathetic to the plight of the Ukrainian people, and accordingly national polls indicate that as much as 65% of the population believes the UK has a moral obligation to take in Ukrainian refugees. In 2021 when the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, only 48% of the population believed we had that same moral obligation, despite the UK having been an active and arguably harmful military presence in the region. Such a discrepancy in attitudes prompts an obvious question: what makes one set of refugees more deserving of sanctuary than another? One must look no further than our media response for an indication of the logic informing such views. An ITV reporter stationed in

Poland exclaimed on live news: 'Now the unthinkable has happened to them. And this is not a developing, third world nation. This is Europe!' The BBC also interviewed a former general prosecutor who stated – 'It's very emotional for me because I see European people with blue eyes and blond hair ... being killed every day.' An implication fundamental to establishment rhetoric is here made clear; war and violence is seen as being the exclusive remit of "developing" nations, the supposed "third world" and, as such, victims of the Ukrainian conflict have befallen a tragedy of which they are less deserving than the likes of the people of Afghanistan – or any other country that is simply predominantly "non-white". This sentiment of European exceptionalism is not only woefully ahistorical but deeply racist, indicative of a gross ignorance informing the national conversation on the matter.

If there is anything to be learnt from this shameful response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis and refugee crises beyond, it is that we must keep pushing back on the intolerant anti-refugee rhetoric (often fuelled by racism) at the heart of our national establishment (also often fuelled by racism). As the Conservative party pushes us further toward the position of isolationist global pariah, it is vital that the people of Britain continue to show up in acts of productive solidarity for the global refugee community. We must refuse to allow the values of decency and humanitarianism to be blotted out by institutional parochialism and insularity.

Data sourced in early May 2022.

WHO IS

WORDS
HELENA WAUMSLEY
(SHE/HER)

Whilst performing in London in 2003, Natalie Maines, the lead singer of The Chicks (formerly The Dixie Chicks), spoke out against the American invasion of Iraq. The crowd cheered; the night continued. Her words were quoted in a review of the performance by the Guardian, and then immediately weaponised against the band. Right wing internet chatrooms began to share the article, and began to urge each other to act. Radio stations were flooded with phone calls insisting that The Chicks's songs were no longer played, and then they were dropped by their label. They were effectively silenced.

The case of The Chicks follows to a letter the common narrative of "cancel culture". Comments are made, and in the court of public opinion (whose meeting place is now almost always online), judgements are announced and "justice" is served. After Maines' comments, popular right-wing sentiment was transformed into practical action. The outrage shared within the chatrooms spilled over into the wider world, and so strong was the campaign against The Chicks that radio stations refused to play their songs for fear of backlash: the band's platform was dragged out from under them.

But The Chicks were not the only victims of this sentiment. After 9/11, widespread fear and anger was directed at those who criticised the actions of the

government – as Susan Sontag put it in an essay written a year after 9/11, it was 'all in the grand tradition of American anti-intellectualism: the suspicion of thought, of words'.

The whole concept of enacting cancel culture has now appeared to have been amputated from the right and transplanted onto the left. The pattern remains the same, but now it is popularly portrayed, namely by those on the right, to be enacted by Social Justice Warriors on a moral crusade to cleanse public discussion of the things that they deem 'offensive'. The criticism that Susan Sontag aimed at the right is now being levied against the left: that cancel culture has become an issue of free speech, limiting reasonable discussion and instilling fear in those that dare to challenge it. When comedian Jimmy Carr recently joked that the Romani genocide was a 'positive' of the Holocaust and there was a justifiably outraged response, defenders claimed that this signalled the death of comedy and the plaintive wail that 'you can't say anything anymore'.

In her essay, 'The Long and Tortured History of Cancel Culture', Ligaya Mishan suggests that the act of 'cancelling' is a modern realisation of the act of scapegoating. Classically, the scapegoat has been a 'way for a dominant group to label an "other" as evil and cast them out', in order to alleviate their own moral guilt. Mishan suggests that cancelling is a public way for a group to

THE REAL

CW
DISCUSSION
OF RACISM AND
XENOPHOBIA

distract themselves from their own faults by labelling a particular individual as the 'transgressor'. Perhaps it is also a way to reify the paranoias that lie deep in the public consciousness. In an increasingly atomised society, the lack of community leaves a vacuum in which common fear is the easiest and strongest bond.

There is a key difference between cancelling on the right and cancelling on the left. When The Chicks were cancelled, they were the clear scapegoat: a banner for the terror and mistrust of the American public following the 9/11 attacks. They were labelled 'Saddam's angels' – could there be a better example of the concentration of public paranoia on a single entity? They were effectively "cast out", and their lives were never the same following the comments made. However, Jimmy Carr is less obviously a "scapegoat". He's still playing sold out gigs, and he certainly still has a public platform. It doesn't seem like Carr has faced many consequences. The people in this situation that have paid the price of his comments are Roma people. Jokes about the genocide of a population broadcast on Netflix will undoubtedly make bigoted remarks and hate crimes more common. This is the source of the outrage: not simply the notion that Carr's remarks were incredibly offensive, but also that his comments have real tangible consequences for those they concern.

The reason people laughed when Jimmy Carr told his joke was the same reason that UKIP were able to stir anti-immigration sentiment in the public: frustrations about the quality of life are directed at one group, the scapegoat, rather than at the structures that are responsible.

By understanding this we may in turn understand why recently cancel culture has resulted in endless discourse but very little action. The cancelling of The Chicks was in accordance with the prevailing establishment's sentiment of the time: they offered a popular avenue for ensuring that criticism of the war was silenced, and therefore it was easy to translate discourse into action. "Cancelling" Jimmy Carr is better understood as a symptom of a wider problem, backlash against a system which not only permits and proliferates bigotry but also utilises it to achieve its aims. Whilst Jimmy Carr should face consequences for his actions, without practical actions it will be impossible to achieve this. As long as the capitalist system which supports and profits from people like Carr stands, we will continue to be trapped within an endless cycle of cancellation.

SCAPEGOAT OF

CANCEL CULTURE?



EDITORIAL SHOOT

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Across the Green

BENEATH CANOPYING WILLOWS AND TOWERING OAK TREES, THE THREE STUMBLE OVER TREE ROOTS AND SLIP DOWN FOREST STEPS. AS THEY SKIRT THE GRASSLANDS, THE BLUSHED PINKS AND IVORY CREAMS OF THEIR HEMLINES GRAZE THE DEWY OVERGROWTH. EACH FOOTFALL DRAWS UP A RICH EARTHY SCENT: A SWEET MIXTURE OF WILD GARLIC AND RAIN. A CONNECTION WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH NATURE TAKES PLACE. IN A RAW RETURN TO SIMPLICITY, THIS EDITORIAL SHOOT CAPTURES THE SEARCH FOR, AND DISCOVERY OF, ESCAPE.

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EDITORIAL SHOOT

ESCAPE

A TALE OF TWO WARDROBES: WORKING-CLASS FETISHIZATION

WORDS
KATHRYN BLAKE
(SHE/THEY)

26

27



ART
ELIZA HART
(SHE/HER)

It's been 27 years since Jarvis Cocker stood in a second-hand suit on the stage of Top of the Pops and asked the nation: 'You wanna live like common people?' It's been almost as many years since I was kicking about my estate in fake Kappa poppers straight off the back of a white van listening to a taped over Top 40 playlist.

A lot has happened in the world since Pulp released *Different Class*, namely, the internet and a global economic depression. But as my guys Boethius and Anna Wintour decree, the world spins on its axis and what goes away must come back again. Sportswear is back, baby, and alienation from the means of production is timeless. The outfits may be coming straight out of the estate but the people wearing them are certainly not.

For me streetwear peaked back when skidding on your knees in trackies at the school disco was the epitome of sophistication. Back when convenience prevailed over fashion, and sensibility decided our outfits for the day. Which hand me down fitted the best? Would anyone notice that grass stain? Yet, that's not to say fashion wasn't important, estates were ruled by a hierarchy of brands: streetwear kings were Champion, Umbro, Reebok. Bench was okay and Fila was hot shit. God forbid you wore Diadora trackies, and no one even spoke of the Slazenger. It was unspoken knowledge, canon even.

What you wear is who you are, or more importantly in the beautiful fakery of our social media society, who you're trying to be. Your wardrobe provides the most immediate opportunity for escape with the least commitment; it's much easier to ditch your Rebooks than it is to drop your accent.

It's a rite of passage, this shedding of the skin. The perennial attempt to escape your class comes every fresher's week when your identity dissolves in a fishbowl shared between 7 other people who are also trying to conjure up a self-reinvention.

What I grew up wearing was a navigation of expression and availability. Necessity is the mother of invention and what amounts to a "working-class aesthetic" emerges from creative necessity. But the capitalist formula of gentrification means I'm watching myself being priced out of my own identity. For someone brought up in hand-me-downs, hiding your class background was imperative if you wanted to be taken seriously. Now, I walk around Glasgow's West End and see rich kids dropping £90 on a Nike sweatshirt and realise that it never mattered what you wore, it was always about where you came from.

The exploitation of poverty is a simple game of dress-up for those that can afford it, gentrification finds its happy place in a working-class wardrobe. The cycle is as follows: working class people face derision in their off-brands and dirty trainers, the middle classes start to co-opt the look, brands realise rich people are buying them, they change their marketing, the working class can't afford it and they move to something newer, cheaper, and it starts again. There is an endless moving of the goalposts, a system of gatekeeping and escaping by means of exclusion. Look at Burberry's infamous re-branding of the polo-shirt, Vetement's \$400 DHL t-shirt, Mugatu's 'Derelict' in Zoolander.

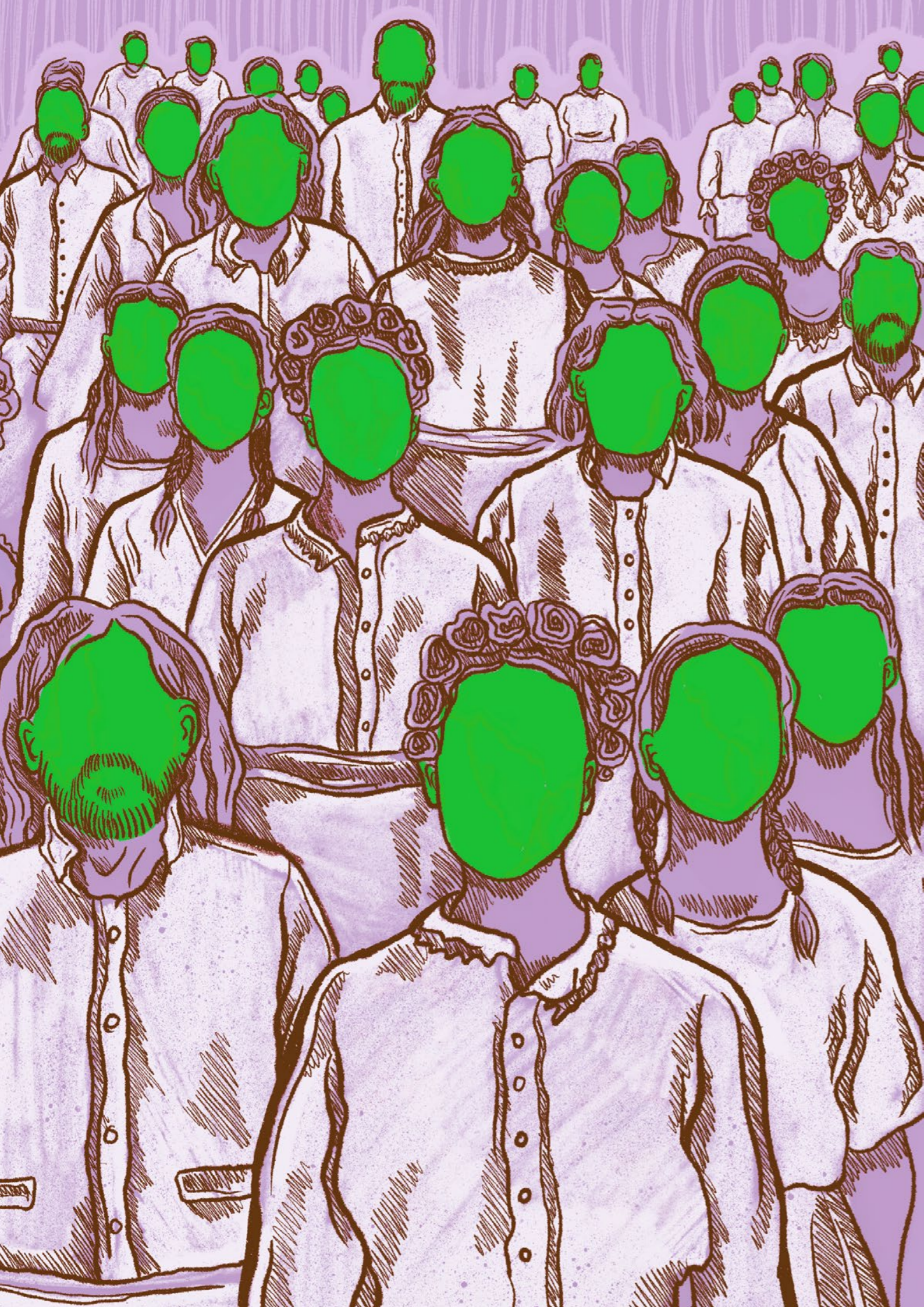
Necessity is the mother of invention and what amounts to a "working-class aesthetic" emerges from creative necessity.

The delicate tiptoeing around class is something British people have grown up with. It starts with where you do your weekly shop and ends with 30% of MPs being privately educated. The simultaneous fetishization and fear of the working class is at once obvious and ignored, but with the resurgence of "chav" aesthetic from the catwalk to the suburbs, it's time to try and understand why rich people feel an obsession with exploiting poverty for lewks.

In some ways this fetishization feels apologetic for the wider socio-economic infractions that class disparity causes throughout our lives. Imitation is the best form of flattery after all. But the fact that my poor little working-class life is mined by high-end vintage shops is still unsettling. I suppose I have to thank Gossip Girl's Blair for telling us we're all middle class now, and Balenciaga for making the late 90's covetable, but all of this escape-play collapses what it means to come from where I did.

This transubstantiation of socio-capital, this fashion trope of class as performance is not new nor do I expect it to end anytime soon. When I see brands become cool again it's when they're worn on a middle class rich kid, kicking around Waitrose and not Wetherspoons, and it means it's time for me to try something new.

The people that dress like this understand that they can bend the rules of the game for their own gain. So what if they dress poor for a few years, it's not going to stop them getting a job when they really need to: as Jarvis Cocker said, 'You can call your Dad and stop it all.' But for someone like me, there's no escape route available.



WORDS
NAOMI MAEVE
(SHE/HER)

SARTORIAL SECTS: FASHION IN CULTS

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ART
ELLA EDWARDS
(SHE/HER)

During 2020's outbreak of the dreaded C-word, we saw self-proclaimed lone wolves turn to herd animals and social media usage spike like never before. Our wild goose chase for community was like gold dust to those that prey on the sequestered and susceptible. Cults and the crueler iterations of some communes were dealt a wealth of new grasshopper members to groom and smuggle under their thumbs, in surprising and surreptitious ways. Falling victim to falsehoods is easier than you might first think; a change of shoes is all it may take.

2019 saw director Ari Aster (of *Hereditary* fame) release the "idyllic" *Midsommar*, based loosely on the traditional eponymous Swedish festival. Apart from the liberal full-frontal nudity and retch-inducing sequences of OAPs getting their noggins smashed in with an oversized mallet, the film was an engaging discussion starter for issues of morality. Protagonist Dani is in limbo; feeling unable to split from her despondent boyfriend after losing her family,

she finds glorious community from the festivals' hosts, the almost Aryan Harga cult. Whilst her 21st century British and American peers drop like mayflies at the hands of the Harga, Dani is met with empathy, a support network, and purpose. One exemplary scene follows a panic attack actuated by the discovery of her boyfriends' drug-riddled infidelity, and as Dani crumbles to the floor, howling with animalistic anguish, the female Harga wrap their willowy arms around her and imitate her cries, tearing their throats raw with mimicked melancholy. It is a powerful scene; in one swift move the Harga have proven themselves more sympathetic than Dani's boyfriend (or the rest of her party) ever were.

Intriguingly, Dani's descent into total indoctrination is traced subconsciously through her wardrobe. Whilst her contemporaries' costumes remain largely typical of modern mainstream fashion – skinny jeans and block colour scoop-necks with the occasional hoodie – Dani undertakes

a veritable makeover. What began with the tentative donning of a Hargan apron spirals into traditional Swedish-festival-garb; a white linen dress cinched moderately in at the waist, endlessly flowy and feminine. A tulip tucked delicately behind the ear barrels quickly into her supreme outfit as the cult's May Queen; a robe constructed of riotous flora and fauna that bogs her down, crowned with an almost deistic wreath of the same materials. The carcasses of her reluctant compadres are unceremoniously disrobed and clad in Hargan attire, with the apex being the disembowelled bear corpse that Dani's still-living boyfriend is stuffed into. The Harga's predominance is reigned through complete subconscious and sartorial control of its victims. Those that reject the prototype will eventually be forced to fit the form, whether they like it or not.

Whilst these observations may seem obvious, it's decidedly trickier to spot the subtle brainwashing unless you're actively searching for it. Constantly surrounded by those white and blue ensembles, the flotillas of flowers adorning every head, Dani's descent is much more conspicuous. By the time she is swamped in the ultimate floral teepee of a circus costume, it is simply too late. The method is not unfamiliar. Uniform is a word with dual meaning, after all; the attire one wears to work, to school, to sports clubs, and also the orderly, regulated state of something. When wearing a skort and a sweat-smelling bib to volleyball, are you not falling victim to the same invisible cues as Dani? Are you not also part of the cult hivemind? It's a normal element of society, and thus forgivably easy to overlook.

An identifiable image is key to coagulating cult members into one indistinct entity, under which they can all be addressed. The Manson family were notorious for their iconographic ensembles; rural prairie-girl smock dresses and wild manes of hair that were synonymous with the hippie garb of the era, eventually transfiguring into unisex shaved heads that further congregated Manson and his followers into an identical herd. Heaven's Gate and their black-sweatpants-Nike-trainers getup, New Zealand's Gloriavale cult in their absurdly Puritan-slash-Pilgrim frock and sunhat getup... the list writes itself.

Symbiotic dress is alluring; it eliminates the idea of a social hierarchy, promoting ideas of a community in which every wearer is on an even footing. The lonelier humans among us can feel a sense of mutuality with another, based solely on the surface value of appearance, which is where things get disarming. It seems trivial, but whilst an outsider is busy taunting the robes and the beads, they unknowingly gloss over the insidious brainwashing that is borne from total control of appearance. Once you've taken that initial narcotic hit of communal empathy and synchronicity, you're understandably reluctant to give it up.

In the same stylistic vein as a mercurial 4am buzzcut, or reinventing yourself with a Cher Horowitz-esque shopping spree, a change in attire heralds a fresh start to a formerly dissatisfying human experience. However, when you are suddenly indistinguishable from your peers, the effects are diametric; you lose any semblance of self-identity, and are quickly coagulated into one singularity; one mind, one amorphous being. The uniform becomes the dehumanising tool that stops you thinking for yourself and attaches you to a leader, to a belief system. You cease to recognise yourself as an individual entity, rather a jigsaw piece reliant on the presence of other selfsame thinkers.

Now, I'm not suggesting that showing up to tennis club donned in Levi's and a turtleneck to separate yourself from your white-shorts-and-polo-shirt peers is necessarily a good idea, but where some uniforms denote practicality or a sense of camaraderie, it's clear that others have more sinister aims. Swap the sunhat for a baseball cap, ditch the Nike Decades, and, remember kids; don't drink the Kool Aid.

WORDS
HAILIE PENTLETON
(SHE/HER)

KINDA LOVE YOU, MISGUIDED MBTI

I see the little 'istp' on Charlie Spring's character profile and I'm instantly transported back to the time in my life when I too was defined by the complimentary four letter diagnosis offered over on the 16Personalities website. Something about watching Heartstopper, all wrapped up in the warmth of a group of queer teenagers establishing and navigating their identities, sent me on a nostalgic whizz down memory lane. The Myers-Briggs personality test was made for the girls, the gays, and the theys.

It's the perfect antidote to a teenage identity crisis. Like anyone with a fragile sense of self and an over-active tumblr account, I decked it down the rabbit hole of personality testing. Graduating from Buzzfeed quizzes (I'm a Jo March, a Hermione Granger, a mess x), I was introduced to the Myers-Briggs test mid deep-dive on Harry Potter lore (ew). I was, like so many other chronically online 2014 teenagers, awful at grasping social cues. I didn't spend much time with friends - mostly because I didn't really have any - and I never quite knew what people really meant when they were speaking to me. Discovering a framework that cut out some of that confusion and categorised all of my company into neat little boxes was my holy grail. Embarrassingly (or adorably, if we're feeling sentimental), I created a spreadsheet to keep track of the different 'types' of people in my life, and their predicted modes of communication. It was my roadmap through relationships; naturally, it got me lost a fair few times.

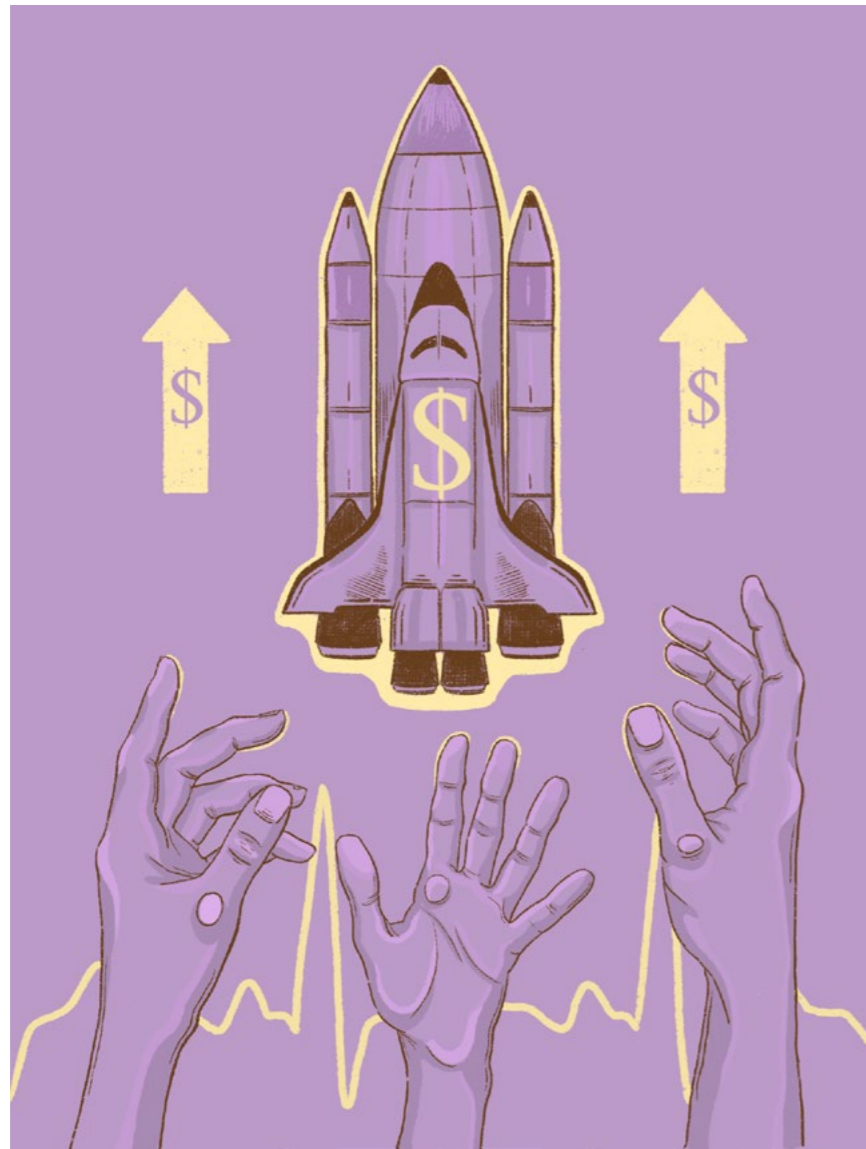
I learned that I wasn't like the other girls. My personality type is the rarest. You might even say I'm an empath. I'm an INFJ, just like Tilda Swinton, Benedict Cumberbatch, and Jesus (intense, huh). This type are characterised as advocates and idealists who "value close and deep relationships". They are empathetic, philosophical, and focused on the bigger picture. It's validating, being told that you have the potential to be such a fulfilled sounding person, with such noble aims, especially when you're a fourteen year old amidst an existential crisis. But that's all it is: potential. It turns out I'm not an INFJ, I'm just really autistic.

It's a recycled statement, but we love to put labels on things. Our relationships, our belongings, and so often, ourselves. Sometimes they're necessary, and

sometimes they're a replacement for introspection. In the case of the 16Personalities test, I'd say it's the latter. Since its conception in the 1940s, built upon the work of psychologist Carl Jung, the framework has been debunked as no more than a pseudoscientific means through which we can loosely identify where we fall along a spectrum of various traits. It relies upon false binaries - categorising people as either an introvert or an extrovert, organised or spontaneous, emotional or logical, and so on. Pathologising people after a few shallow questions, the test often pigeonholes those participants who fall somewhere in the middle of the categories. More often than not, the test results are inconsistent, assigning people entirely different labels one after the other. My partner's personality type has changed three times since his first time taking it eight years ago, and he's the most consistent person that I know.

However, despite the lack of consistency, and indeed any sort of legitimacy, it retains the affections of so many, especially in gen-z and millennial spaces. I've distanced myself from defining my personality with a four letter code, instead recognising the fluidity and multitudes that exist within each of us. But I still use it when I'm conjuring up characters in my writing, and I find it really entertaining to predict the results of new friends and acquaintances. For me, it's just fiction - a fun way to loosely learn about a person's preferences. For some people however, letting go of that label is a little harder. And it makes sense. Returning to my earlier point, there is something so comforting and validating about finding a label to explain away all of your quirks and caveats, your strengths and your weaknesses. We're all continuously searching for something to solidify our sense of self, a moment, an encounter, or a label that makes sense of the everyday confusion. We want to find people like us, other INFJs or ENTPs or ESTJs, to counteract the loneliness, or celebrate our sameness. And, at least in my case, we want to understand other people, and gain a better understanding of how those we love perceive the world around them. However, perhaps in true idealist fashion, relying on a pseudoscientific survey to gain those answers you yearn for is a little too unrealistic.

HOUSTON WE HAVE A PROBLEM:



THE INEQUALITIES OF PLANETARY ESCAPE

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SCIENCE & TECH

ESCAPE

WORDS
MAIA APPLEBY
MELAMED
(SHE/HER)

ART
MAGDALENA
JULIA KOSUT
(SHE/HER)

Fifty-three years ago, Neil Armstrong made history by becoming the first human to set foot on the moon. His famous line, 'That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind', signalling an American victory over the USSR in their efforts to safely land a man on the moon. Fast forward five decades and billions of dollars, the image of today's space race is very different.

The holy trinity of (or perhaps world's most difficult game of snog, marry, avoid) Branson, Musk and Bezos have each made it their individual mission to add space travel to their long and depressing list of "achievements". Whilst Branson wishes to commercialise the space travel industry, Bezos and Musk advertise their own childlike space fantasies as ways to save humanity from the global environmental disaster which they themselves have played a not insignificant role in creating. Space travel in 2022 has been transformed from a project of entire societies to the pastime of grotesquely rich individuals.

In 2020 Bezos' company Amazon emitted over 60 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, almost double the amount produced by the entire country of Norway in the same year. This statistic is deeply troubling: the creation of billionaires demands the exploitation of both people and the planet. Do we truly believe that this same social and economic system which produced billionaires can be used to solve a climate crisis?

In a tweet in 2021 Musk revealed his aims of forming a society on a new planet; by 2050 a 'self-sustaining city on Mars' would be built. While this isn't quite what I meant by the need for an overhaul of society, Musk is enacting the ultimate escape from Earth as we know it. He continued to reassure the twitter-sphere, not about the risks involved in relocating humanity to another planet, but that 'There will be lots of jobs on Mars!' I for one am grateful that the richest man on Earth is as concerned about my future career prospects as I am. Once on Mars, we can experience the same harassment and discrimination of a "systemic nature" faced by Tesla employees here on Earth - thank God! Unfortunately, NASA has since funded a study which has found Musk's dreams of colonising Mars impossible, due to the lack of carbon dioxide on Mars needed to modify the planet's atmosphere.

Fortunately, Bezos may have a solution to the impending doom we face by staying on Earth.

Unfortunately (anyone see a pattern emerging here?) that plan doesn't involve saving the planet we live on now, instead it entails the relocation of humanity, not to another planet, but to space itself. In 2019 Jeff Bezos' company Blue Origin detailed plans of placing 1 trillion people into space in spinning cylinders which would replicate the gravity and weather found on Earth. These cylinders will be named 'O'Neill colonies' after the physicist Gerard O'Neill first came up with the idea in 1976. Now with the backing of the richest man in the world could this ambition become a reality? In a strange turn of events, I must agree with Elon Musk on this one as he tweeted in 2019 that Bezos's plan 'makes no sense'. While this criticism seems strange coming from a man with plans to send us all to Mars, this tweet accurately exposes the real conflict of the egos driving this race to space, perhaps more so than the wish to save the future of humanity.

The final contender in the battle of the billionaires is Richard Branson who in 2021 was the first of the three to successfully reach the edge of space in his Virgin Galactic rocket, somewhat ironically named 'Unity'. After his successful mission Branson tweeted this message of hope: 'if we can do this, just imagine what you can do?' Perhaps Branson isn't aware that the \$250,000 price tag attached to his commercial trips to space, quite dramatically narrows the target market for his new business venture to celebrities such as Justin Bieber and Lady Gaga. Leonardo DiCaprio is also reported to have bagged a place on Branson's next rocket, suggesting his self-proclaimed title 'environmentalist' is simply a tagline in his Instagram bio and nothing more.

While the Earth continues to warm up and climate change becomes less and less reversible, fantasies of escape and debates on how this is achieved have become the norm. Branson, Musk and Bezos are utilising their combined net worth of \$436.8 billion to control the narrative surrounding escaping the Earth through space travel. Whether it is to enact a childish fantasy of zero gravity, or under the guise of saving future generations, what is clear is that there will always be a price tag attached to escaping the disaster caused by those at the top. While the figure of this price tag remains unconfirmed, it is clear that the inequalities which characterise our lives on Earth will not exactly be mirrored in space: only the richest among us will be granted the privilege of escape.

Alien Corn

WORDS
ZOHRA IQBAL
(SHE/HER
THEY/THEM)

A POEM SCRATCHED ON GLASS

I differ with all of this

amid the alien corn

so thick that you felt for a minute frightened of the jungle, its voracious appetite,

I thought of it as a gigantic mushroom
its hunger

food will escape you

gather seeds, roots, sprouts, shoots, leaves, nuts, berries, fruits and grains

I saw, felt, heard and smelt, at the same time
useful, edible, or beautiful, into a bag, or a basket, or a bit of rolled bark or leaf,

I felt tormented by hunger and thirst

or a net woven of your own hair, or what have you, and then take it home with you,

I ate some berries

home being another, larger kind of pouch or bag, a container for people,

I slaked my thirst at the brook

a radiant form
puffy and misshapen and tumorous

enlightened my path;

and again I went out in search of berries

I began to understand nature as something seamed and deep

into which one plunged, going dark.

A wound gives off its own light, a light
like the earliest olive oil
the first cut is the deepest
the container for the thing contained
skins slip so liquidly from the pulp
cracks in the wall where it gets hit.

The world is pouring through
flung up

whirling therein

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CREATIVE WRITING

the turn
I've missed her tidal shifts,

HERE IS A DANCE IN HONOUR OF THE GRAPE

My little sprat, my gill-less fish

jewel in her mermaid's purse with her tiny
feet,
has stopped nudging me,

ploofing out into strange and fantastic formations

the swapping of a male voice for a female one

sometimes feels cosmetic

in that sense,
it is an inclusive tradition

listen for the sea,

Perfect you
then reject you breathe

the crack

through

(the turtle's shell was cracked in one section)
repaired with little butterflies made from wood

35

You put him in a bag, and he looks like a rabbit, like a potato

The superstructure may look safe

The fruit
of the
pomegranate
brown red
globe

the infrastructure

is decomposing

in the heat

we made the thing that brings energy home:
Time's - (killing) - arrow

(words found from *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* by Ursula K Le Guin, *The People In the Trees* by Hanya Yanagihara, *The Beauty of the Husband* by Anne Carson, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, *Lapstrake* by Wendy Pratt, *Our Fatal Magic* by Tai Shani, *As A Blackwoman* by Maud Sulter)

ESCAPE

Sustainable Farming

WORDS
VIOLET MAXWELL
(SHE/HER)

at what point does my
skin contract into a waxen rind
keeping you inside me tightly
our love all curdled milk and sweetness

under one ceiling roped with lights
moving at the corners of our vision

i want to love you so
i fork hay onto your waiting tongue
empty my silos to keep you fed

this small ecosystem
i will plant a whole field's worth, this spring
i demure
it takes planning
but

us
in love, one
breathing organism
one ceiling roped with lights
one process of sowing and tilling each pore on my skin
so i may harvest for your nourishment
when i run out of hay
i will stretch locks of hair into the freshest of starches
you will never go hungry

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GLASGOW UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE
ESCAPE, SUMMER 22

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