

**Climate change: what can the individual
do to help the state of our planet?**



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SAPERE AUDE





Editor's Note

Welcome

Dear readers.

The Victorians talked about fin de siècle – the end of the century. It was a time, at the end of the nineteenth century associated with degeneration, and the 'dying of the light' but also a time to reflect over the social concerns of the previous century. There is something of this 'looking back' in society today, despite it being fairly young in the new century's lifespan, as we reach milestones in our history. In this issue, therefore, we are in reflective mood. Kate Bradshaw explores the impact of the Twin Towers attacks as we reach the twentieth anniversary of this seismic event, and recalibrates how we perceive this terrible tragedy. Grace Carter also writes one of her storming political polemics on the end of Capitalism, and examines the derision of Communism in a new light. Furthermore, our cover story this issue, reflects the global concerns of the recent Cop26 summit about urgent action required on climate change, the result of years of environmental negligence, and how we can make individual changes to support (or indeed offset!) the actions of big business and government.

For a little lighter relief, we have a great article from our Entertainment writer, Jacob Grage, for all you budding filmmakers out there on the processes of getting a film made and to market. Alison Turner has also explored the inspirational meteoric rise of tennis wunderkind Emma Raducanu, which highlights just exactly how much can be achieved at a young age with grit, determination and commitment. A fantastic role model for all of us! As always, we hope this issue encourages you to ponder on aspirations and consternations, and, in looking back, find the determination to move forward, as individuals and as a society. In the words of that great fin de siècle icon himself, Oscar Wilde, 'we are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars'.

Your faithful editor,

Mrs C Bennett

P.S As ever, thank you to this issue's contributors who have put in such hard work when the day-to-day has been so demanding. Please drop me an email if you are interested in writing for Sapere Aude. We are always on the hunt for budding journalistic talent to join our fantastic team!

Mrs Charlotte Bennett: Editor-in-chief
Mr Tom Eccles: Deputy Editor
Miss Sarah Callaghan: Creative Director
Alison Turner (Year 13): Lead Current Affairs writer
Jacob Grage (Year 9): Entertainment writer
Kate Bradshaw (Year 13): Features writer
Alexandra Hughes (Year 13): Features writer
Grace Carter (Year 13): Politics writer
Eve Grater (Year 12): Contributing writer



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The **THREE** steps to creating an **AMAZING** film!

By Jacob Grage

Our Entertainment writer, Jacob Grage, explores the process behind our favourite cinematic adventures, for all you budding film-makers out there.



We all love to watch a good film with some friends or family every now and then but have you ever thought about how these films are made and the months of construction put into these two hour video masterpieces? If you have or have not, the filmmaking process involved in these multi-million-dollar blockbusters can be incredible and some of the story can be so interesting. While the process can take a long time, I've made it into three steps that can easily be broken down into the fast-track to a film extravaganza! So, grab some popcorn, chill out, and tune into the world of filmmaking. Who knows, maybe you could be the next Steven Spielberg with these handy tips?!

Step 1 – Development & Pre-production

The start of the story is always an idea to create a basis for your film. Remember to write it down in only around fifty words or a tweet. If you're good at scriptwriting, you can get straight to it and start creating your script. If not, send it off to a scriptwriter and hope they make it into something amazing. Just remember to keep your credits at the forefront of your intellectual property.

For each scene and shot you'll need to plan all that out too. Use a storyboard to experiment and try to find something that you like and that looks good. You'll also want to start to get

some production staff to help you out with the process of making the film, from make-up to cinematography.

Next on the list would be finding different locations to film your scenes in. You have to firstly make sure all the costs, permissions, and availability is in order. Then do a location visit (or to be a bit posher, a recce) and check space, hazards, lighting, interruptions, and echo in the area.

Then, finally collect the actors. Audition them and see if they are up to what you want and if they can perform in front of a camera well. Get them to sign contracts or release forms for legal reasons and agree fees with them too. Then, make a shooting schedule to be prepared for the filming.



Step 2 – Filming

Are you ready to start filming? You need to make sure each shot is very carefully set up. Below

is a list of things you must go through before shooting:

- Framing – don't miss out anything important and don't include distracting or confusing content.
- Lighting – does the light fit the scene, does it look right, too bright or too dark? That's for you to decide.
- Focus – Is the shot sharp enough? Is the depth of field appropriate for drawing your audience's attention to your intended focus?
- Sound – Is there anything that might interfere with your film? If so and if you can do something about it, do it!
- Ready! - check that everyone is ready, say standby and start the recording!

Make sure, during the filming, you don't miss anything and make sure you have every shot you need on that set. Any shot missed, is another shot you have to add in another way. It's a good idea to film additional shots too so you have footage to play with if you decide you want to cut the scene more quickly later down the line.

Make sure to rehearse the scene a few times before filming it and position your cameras in the spot and at the angle you should put them in.

Then, just to check the cameras are working, turn them on and leave them for a bit and stop. You are then ready to film. Shout 'camera's rolling' and get going. Make sure to record as many shots as you need, if not more.

At the end of the shoot, check your list to make sure you have everything you wanted and need and haven't missed anything out.

Step 3 – Post-production

Get all of the recordings that you've done over the shoots (these are called your 'rushes') and either edit them yourself or send it off to an editor to sift through all the clips and put them together into a film.

If you are editing yourself (and there is plenty of free or cheap software out there) follow your storyboard(s) and use this as a template for your editing timeline. (You could even use an animatic, which is a presentation of your storyboard images in the right order and for the right duration; this is great technique for seeing if any of your takes are too long).

Then, once the shots are in order, trim them down and finish off the film and make it look amazing (a few filters and special effects may help here!).

Also, this is the time where producers grab photos and videos for promotional purposes and to help the sales of the film.

After everything's done, pitch your product to a distributor who will distribute it out to cinemas and film platforms around the world and, hopefully, watch your incredible piece grow and grow and grow. Or pop it on Youtube as an example of self-distribution that can lead to global recognition!



Acing the Game: How is a tennis superstar like Emma Raducanu conquering the world at 18?

By Alison Turner

The new titan of tennis, Emma Raducanu, burst into our consciousness this year with her incredible win at the US Open. However, Alison Turner, explores how, far from being an overnight success, Raducanu built her career, with a special regard for her mental health too.

Background:

Born on 13th November 2002, Emma Raducanu is ranked world No.22 and is the current British Number 1 in professional tennis. She is currently the reigning US Open champion, and the first British woman to win a Grand Slam singles title since Virginia Wade in the 1977 Wimbledon Championships.

She also holds both British and Canadian citizenship, and speaks fluently in English, Mandarin, and Romanian. Raducanu grew up in London after being born in Toronto. In June 2021, she made her WTA Tour debut. She reached the fourth round of Wimbledon as a wild card; despite being ranked outside the top 300.

At the US Open two months later, Raducanu became the first singles qualifier in the Open era to win a Grand Slam title, beating Leylah Fernandez in the final. She needed to win three qualification matches and seven tournament matches, and won all ten without dropping a set. She had only participated in two Grand Slam tournaments before, winning one, and she now holds the record for the fewest majors played before winning a title.

Emma Raducanu was still motivated to pursue a career in tennis even after having aced her GCSEs with three 8s and the rest 9s across Maths, Further Maths, English literature and English Language. While simultaneously building her professional career in tennis, Emma Raducanu achieved an A* in Mathematics, and an A in Economics in her a-levels.

Upbringing and where she found her passion for tennis:













Emma Raducanu was just 5 years old when she first started playing tennis, and as a child she had a passion for various sports, including basketball, golf, and ballet. She won her first ITF junior title within a week of her 13th birthday – the lowest age permissible to compete.

Raducanu began her professional career in 2018. During 2018 and 2019, she alternated between

junior and professional events. Although in 2020, many tennis events were cancelled due to the Covid 19 pandemic, Raducanu took part in exhibition matches and small tournaments in the UK. She won the LTA British Tour Masters title in December 2020. She also took time to focus on studying, preparing for her A-Levels (which she took in 2021).

Winning the US open:

In 2021, Raducanu became not only the first British woman to reach a Grand Slam final in 44 years, but also the first British woman to win the US Open since Virginia Wade was crowned champion 53 years ago.

Emma Raducanu United Kingdom			
A 16A	CHALLENGER CHICAGO, US	US OPEN	INDIAN WELLS MASTERS
Sat, 11 Sept Final - Arthur Ashe Stadium			
 E. Raducanu	6 6	 E. Raducanu	6 6
 L.A. Fernandez	4 3	 17 M. Sakkari	1 4
Wed, 8 Sept Quarter-final - Arthur Ashe Stadium			
 E. Raducanu	6 6	 S. Rogers	2 1
 11 B. Bencic	3 4	 E. Raducanu	6 6
Sat, 4 Sept Third round - Court 17			
 S. Sorribes Tormo	0 1	 S. Zhang	2 4
 E. Raducanu	6 6	 E. Raducanu	6 6

Raducanu qualified for the US Open after defeating Bibiane Schoofs, Mariam Bolkvadze, and Mayar Sherif in straight sets in qualifying. She advanced to the final without dropping a set, beating Stefanie Vögele, Zhang Shuai, Sara Sorribes Tormo, Shelby Rogers, Belinda Bencic, and Maria Sakkari. Raducanu defeated Leylah Fernandez in two sets in what was the first all-teenage women's singles final since the 1999 US Open between Serena Williams and Martina Hingis. She became the first woman to win the US Open without dropping a set since 2014. As a result of winning the US open, she gained more than 100 ranking places, breaking into the top 25 and

becoming the British No. 1. She became the youngest player to reach the final since Maria Sharapova in 2005. She was also the fifth player in the Open Era to reach the semifinal on her US Open debut. She won the title without dropping a set and as a result of her US Open victory, Raducanu rose to No. 23 in the world rankings.



Mental health in sports:

Winning major sporting tournaments, like the US Open, can create both mental and physical pressure for athletes, especially for young rising stars like Emma Raducanu. However, this issue is often not spoken about enough, can cause emotional strain in athletes, and can even sometimes lead to drug usage in sports, with the hopes of improving performance.

Mental health is an invisible struggle in sports, and makes it hard for athletes to speak up or pull out from major sporting events. However, during the Tokyo Olympics earlier this year, gymnast Simone Biles has battled mental health issues, making it hard to consider participating in the games. Biles has won seven Olympic medals, including four golds, which over time has set an expectation for her to perform well in events, making it hard for athletes to withdraw from games. Despite this, Biles made the brave choice to pull out from most of her events to improve on her mental state, and stated that she's "still scared to do gymnastics"

Simone Biles has demonstrated to everyone, including athletes, that it's ok not to be ok, and by putting her mental health first, Biles has shown the world that mental health is a cornerstone of our overall well-being.



So, how is Emma Raducanu conquering the world at such a young age?

While working hard, preparing for tennis tournaments, Raducanu was also busy spending a lot of her time studying, and is now only just getting the opportunity to concentrate specifically on physical development. Emma Raducanu has had a natural talent for tennis from a young age, after beginning to play competitively at just 6 years old. Years of hard work perfecting her shots on Bromley's practice courts, progressing through the age categories is ultimately what has built her up to this point in her career. Along with Raducanu's drive to become a successful tennis superstar, she also has shown awareness of the importance of her mental health, and has planned to take a week off after WTA Linz to "reset and be mentally and physically prepared" for the next preseason.

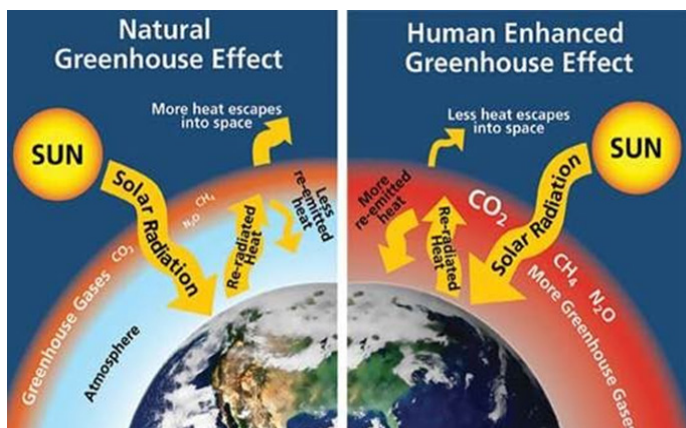
Therefore, a combination of defining factors are helping Emma Raducanu to conquer the world of tennis at just 18 years old, including her natural talent, hard work, and, crucially (and like Simone Biles alongside her) her awareness of her mental health.

Climate change: what can the individual do to help the state of our planet?

By Alison Turner

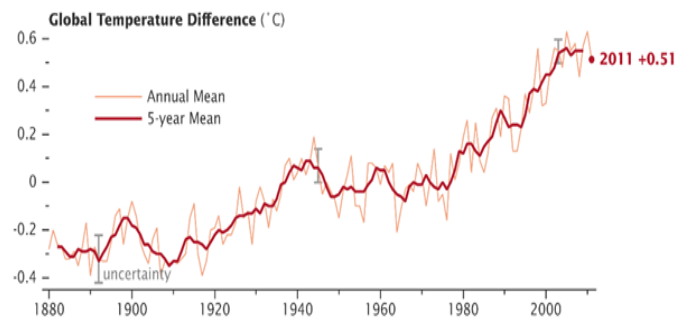
The recent COP26 summit has seen nations come together to discuss the urgent action needed to fight climate change, but Alison Turner explores how, if we work together, we can make significant change with our own actions, too.

Climate change, according to National Geographic, is a long-term movement in global or regional climate patterns. I'm sure we're all aware of the countless negative impacts that climate change is responsible for, like less predictable weather patterns and more frequent and destructive weather events including hurricanes, floods, downpours, and winter storms. Consequences can also be more prominent on a global scale, such as rising sea levels due to melting polar glaciers and ice sheets, as well as rising global temperatures, underlining the fact that climate change affects us all. So as individuals, surely, we should, without a doubt, be doing everything we can to help reduce the impacts of climate change. Climate change is a natural process that has always existed throughout the history of the planet; nevertheless, humans are the primary contributors to amplifying the impacts of global warming, as seen by the greenhouse effect (pictured below).



What are the main causes of climate change?
Changes observed in Earth's climate since the early 20th century are primarily driven by human activities, notably fossil fuel combustion, which produces excess greenhouse gases such as CO₂, CH₄, and

N₂O, which are later released into the atmosphere, raising Earth's average surface temperature. This is known as global warming.



As we can see from this graph, temperatures have been, and still are, rising at an alarming rate, with the primary source being global warming- driven by human activity. Given that we are the primary cause of the temperature increase, surely, we should be doing more to help reduce global temperatures back to a reasonable level, and help the state of the planet.

Aside from human processes & global warming, there are also natural processes that contribute to climate change. These include volcanic activity, variations in the earth's orbit, and cyclical ocean patterns like El Niño. As a result, it is even more critical that we, as individuals, take action to help our planet, as natural climate change will always be present. So, what can we do to help the state of our planet?

What can we, as individuals, do to help reduce the effects of climate change?

One of the best actions to take to reduce climate change is to reduce emissions. Although we have little control over what

large fuel-consuming companies release into the atmosphere, we can all still do our part to help protect the environment. Limiting our usage of vehicles and instead opting for walking or cycling is an easy way to reduce our emissions. Road traffic was accountable for 72% of EU transport emissions in 2016, and of that 72%, cars were responsible for 60% of those emissions, so just simply walking to work or to the shops whenever possible could have quite a significant impact on the number of toxic gasses emitted into our atmosphere.

Another way in which we can help the state of our planet is by saving as much energy as possible. This can be achieved by not leaving devices and appliances on standby, as well as setting the thermostat for more sustainable heating. Even just turning the thermostat down by one degree can save you up to £80 each year, in addition to being more eco-friendly. Investing in solar panels is one option to generate our own electricity in a sustainable manner. The generated energy can be used to power appliances and light your home in the long run. You can also profit from this by selling surplus energy back to the national grid, without burning fossil fuels or contributing to global warming. (Mrs Bennett's mum does this and just received a nice cheque for £900, she tells me!)



Another simple measure you can take to help the environment is to reduce the amount of waste you throw out each day. Excess waste has significant environmental consequences and contributes to the amount of greenhouse gasses released into the atmosphere, as each individual product has its own carbon footprint. Water wastage from wealthy countries alone would be the equivalent of the entire annual flow of the Volga—Europe's largest river—according to a UN report and the energy that goes into the production, harvesting, transportation, and packing of wasted food, meanwhile, generates more than 3.3 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide. So even if you just plan your meals ahead of time or only buy what you'll eat, it's still a great way to contribute to the planet's well-being.

What could happen if we don't take action now?

If we don't act now, the state of our planet could deteriorate to a point beyond repair. Some negative effects of climate change that are already taking place include: extreme weather events (like flash floods and droughts), melting of polar ice-caps, coral bleaching, destroying habitats and, threatening whole ecosystems. If we, as individuals, do as much as we can to help our environment, like saving energy or just walking to the shops instead of driving, this could improve the state of our planet before the damage is irreversible.



How the Twin Towers changed our world

By Kate Bradshaw

Kate Bradshaw explores the sea-change that occurred across the world in the wake of the 9/11 attacks: how they broke people apart but also brought communities together.

20 years ago, the whole world witnessed one of the most impactful terror attacks in history: 9/11. I'm sure you already knew this, but I wanted to discover and research the impact that this attack had on the whole world itself. This was a historic day, albeit a horrific one, for America as well as the other countries and groups associated with it, for example Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and the Islamic State. There have been many negative impacts of the shocking attack, including physical and emotional impacts on the survivors, and societal impacts on the whole world.

Many of these effects discussed in this article have typically been overlooked by most people. So, I'd like to bring light to these effects to find a deeper understanding of what really happened on 9/11/01. In the immediate crash, the planes that had been hijacked killed 87 people who were in the first plane, which crashed into New York's North Tower at 8.46am. or in the buildings that collapsed on 11th September. Overall, the total death count amounted to 2753.

Physical impacts

The majority of physical effects of 9/11 were related to lung function, or a lack thereof. As seen in the picture below, 410,000-525,000 first responders, clean-up workers and residents of New York were exposed to contaminated air released from the collapse of the twin towers. Of these people, 1366 have died from lung or other related cancers. Other related issues include asthma, asbestosis and pulmonary fibrosis.



Emotional impacts

A study of 9/11 victims/patients 7-16 months after 9/11 found that:

- People who suffered loss related to 9/11 were twice as likely to be diagnosed with depression, anxiety, PTSD and other mental
- 9

health issues.

- They were also more likely to suffer from problems with everyday functions and work loss.
- Also, people with loved ones or who knew someone who might have been a victim of the attack/ involved in the rescue and recovery of victims were twice as likely to have anxiety or an anxiety-related disorder.

Societal impacts

The devastating attack on the Twin Towers have obviously had a very negative mental and emotional effect on America as a whole, which subsequently led to many changes being made to society to make the country, and the whole world, feel safer. For example, immigration laws and international security have changed in America, tightening the amount of freedom those coming into America have. Air travel has also undergone changes to ensure terrorist attacks are less likely to happen. Furthermore, even media and entertainment outlets like television and music videos have been catered to ensure they do not promote any violence or terrorist attacks. For instance, the popular TV show Friends had to remove a joke about the Twin Towers, as the episode would have aired around a week after the disaster. This just goes to show how terrified the world was after 9/11, with many alterations and changes being made to make society itself safer and more positive than before.

Positive impacts

9/11, no doubt, had many everlasting negative effects, not just on America, but on the whole world itself. Despite this, I'd like to argue the positive effects the tragedy had on society. Sounds crazy, I know, but trust me. Of course, the negatives outweigh the positives, but a tragedy like this cannot go without its unintended positive by-products. Firstly, 9/11 helped to bring the New York community together, if not the world itself. Memorials, commemorations and the sort have all been dedicated to the attack which signifies the sense of community and the faith and hope that was installed in the citizens. Also, the devastating attack on the Twin Towers helped to bring about positive changes in attitudes towards taking the threat of terrorism seriously, to make the world a safer place, as mentioned above. For instance, changes in air travel and international security mean that the chances of a terrorist attack, regardless of where it takes place, is much less likely, and that is something we can trace back to that fateful day, in a way that can't be attributed to any terrorist attack which has gone before.



Incel Culture – What Danger Does It Pose to Society?

By Alexandra Hughes

Alexandra Hughes explores the disturbing online trend which has spilled over into horrifying violence.

What is an Incel?

Shortened from ‘involuntary celibacy’, an incel is a member of an online subculture of people who define themselves as unable to get a romantic or sexual partner despite desiring one.

Many incels find themselves sexually frustrated, leading to them placing blame on women for their misfortune. In the past this has been scrutinized as a factor in cases of violence against women, for instance in the more recent case of the shooting in Plymouth, where the perpetrator took the lives of 5 victims before shooting himself.



Jake Davison – the incel responsible for the fatal shooting of 5 people, including his mother, on 12th August 2021

Where Did the Term Come From?

Ironically, the term ‘incel’ was founded by a woman in 1997 who started a friendly website for people struggling with dating. The website offered advice and tips on how to approach others and was initially a safe place where people could vent about their loneliness.

However, after she left the community in 2000 the website rapidly deteriorated and became a male-dominated hate site where men accused women of discarding them. Their misogynistic view included the belief that women were shallow and rejected anyone who was not good-looking and that they

were only seeking out men for their financial prospects. Quickly the users in the ‘incel movement’ were condemning women for their virginity, rather than seeking out advice.



Elliot Rodger

In 2014 Elliot Rodger murdered 6 people and injured 14 more in a pre-planned attack that has since been labelled by authorities as an act of misogynistic terrorism.

Rodger carried out his vicious attack, stabbing three men one by one as they entered his apartment, and shooting and wounding several others with his car. Before setting his plan in motion, Rodger uploaded a document that detailed his hatred towards women, his frustration at his inability to find a girlfriend, his childhood and family conflicts and his contempt for romantic couples. His motive for the attack has been classified on various websites, including Wikipedia, as ‘incel ideology’, giving terrifying realism to the online hatred.

Known as the Isla Vista Killings, incel users online praised and glorified Rodger for his brutal attacks, designating him the title of the ‘incel hero’. Soon YouTube videos appeared online, some featuring a thumbnail of Rodger with the word ‘beautiful’ in bold letters next to the murderer. Shockingly, t-shirts featuring Rodger were also being sold with the tagline ‘supreme gentleman’. Rodger was not only admired but had developed a cult following.



These men argue that they are being oppressed because women are not readily available to them for sex; therefore, advocating and perpetuating a dangerous ideology that has evidently been a factor in the violence against women and men.

A screenshot of a tweet from Dr Andrew Gatley (@AndrewGatley) replying to @SkyNews. The tweet text reads: "Feminism has led to young boys feeling unwanted. An easy solution would be to ensure that no man between 18-15 is single, make sure that women available are given to these men." The tweet is timestamped 16:57 · 13/08/2021 and was posted from an iPhone. The background of the tweet is a solid blue color.

Today, modern incels uphold the view that they will forever be lonely and that this can only change if society itself changes. They believe that women only date men for their physical features and their biology; many incels attempt to prove this ideology through misreadings of

The Blackpill also indicates racist connotations within its beliefs. It indicates a hierarchy of desirable men with the top being 'Chads' and the bottom being 'Betas'. There are variations on the word chad, for instance 'Chang' being the incel term for an East Asian Chad and 'Tyrone' being the term for a Black Chad. Incels believe that women are only attracted to the top of the hierarchy and reject the Betas. Incels direct their hatred towards women for rejecting the bottom of the hierarchy and use slurs to express their contempt.



The dangers of this online culture are clearly significant; the fatal killings carried out by perpetrators such as Elliot Rodger demonstrate that perhaps society should reflect on the dangers that the internet can pose, and how effectively the problem can be policed. As individuals it is important that we raise future generations with ideals which focus on equality so that they are less vulnerable to incel culture. If we don't teach equality and respect then we may risk the possibility of more people being socialised into incel culture, which can have disastrous consequences.



INDECENT FASCINATION

By Eve Grater

Eve Grater explores how casual viewers of revenge content create an eager audience that unwittingly assists the perpetrators.



In certain crevices of the internet, explicit content thrives for the fascination of idle viewers. It seems reasonable enough, for many who've not fallen victim to revenge pornography, to be intrigued when - for example - a celebrity's private media becomes salacious publicity. Such a thing is not a foreign concept for a lot of us. There's been an inflation of such cases thanks to social media having a more prevalent position in our lives. Of course, the phrase describes a leak of a victim's personal explicit photos and videos by a certain perpetrator. Perhaps the victim knows the perpetrator, or perhaps not. The one consistent thing is that it is done to reap embarrassment and shame for the victim.

A recent and close example would be a page on a site called reddit, which was uncomfortably close to home. Within this page, young people in Leicestershire shared provocative and explicit images of girls they knew. This page soon gained huge traction, being posted on social media several times within its creation. It appears there was an allure to something so devastating. This only leads me to ask: is revenge pornography so established and shameful because of its apparent huge viewership? Is the casual viewer as guilty as the perpetrator in ensuring the horrible trend refuses to abate?

It seems bizarre to not suggest this is the case, as whenever something of the sort is leaked, it spreads like wildfire; and suddenly, everybody has seen this content.

Almost never are people viewing it with indecent intent, simply because it's fascinating. Never considering the embarrassment, nor the shame, nor the people involved; just the acceleration of such content has an appeal.

It's difficult to place a finger on exactly why everybody wants to look. In fact, it's impossible. The masses of people that merely scan revenge explicit content do it innocently, without a single thought of the victim. They don't see it as embarrassing; for it is just another explicit image which has been normalised by the rights we presume over celebrity bodies. One friend may mention someone's nude images and another person will want to look. It's an undeniable and terrifying trend.

The statistics regarding revenge pornography have doubled in the last two years, with 40% of people admitting they know a victim of it. Celebrities have come forward and spoken out about their own experiences. Yet, despite the stories, despite the statistics, this exposure to the topic routinely leads to the bloating of revenge content even more.

Therefore, the more known revenge pornography becomes, the greater the threat spreads. The perpetrators eat it all up; every single extra spectator is one more crumb of shame just to spit out, and truly, that is all they want. Therefore, we owe every victim the promise to not indulge the damaging intentions of the perpetrators; as the viewers disappear so will the criminal's purpose, withering into the dust where it belongs.

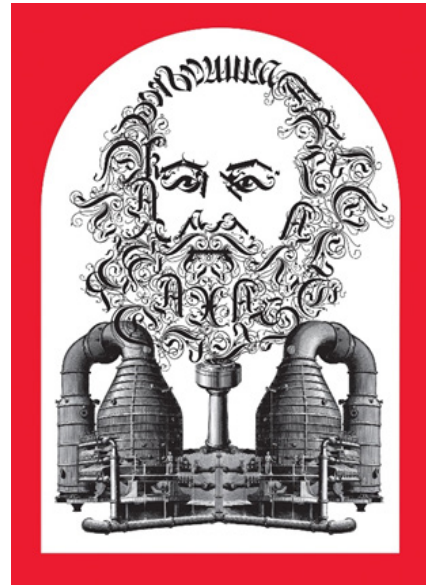
The End of Capitalism?

By Grace Carter

Grace Carter writes our searing political opinion piece on why she thinks we are wrong to dismiss alternative political and economic models.



Capitalism. The economic system our society has functioned under since before any of us can remember. Marxist thinkers would argue that capitalist propaganda transmitted by the bourgeoisie has brainwashed the majority of individuals into believing that this society promotes free will, equality and personal freedom. However, one could argue what is freeing about your only options being to be an exploited worker or death? Instead, it could be suggested that capitalism inherently encourages the concept of inequality and creates a vast social division between different parts of society (for example between social classes). As well as this, the concept of a free market disturbs the equilibrium of equal rights which is essential for an egalitarian society. It is not a stretch to suggest that society in its current state oppresses anyone who is not a straight, cisgender, able-bodied, white man? Certainly, people with disabilities should be supported by society yet they have universal benefits withdrawn and die, starving and weighing less than 5 stone. Institutional racism means that people of colour are disproportionately negatively affected by policies, practices, and procedures. Being gay is illegal in 71 countries and it is punishable by death. This is a system plagued with hierarchies that benefit a small percentage of people and yet we all appear to be in a state of false consciousness, drowning in oblivion when we are a hair's breadth away from understanding how to improve society for everyone.



Communism. A concept that is often slandered due to the misconception that under communism, everyone would have to share personal belongings. Yet, in the Manifesto, Marx explicitly says 'the distinguishing feature of communism is not the abolition of property (in general) but the abolition of bourgeoisie property'. Marx was not advocating for getting rid of working-class private property or personal belongings (so you don't need to share your toothbrush!). Rather, he wanted to get rid of 'the kind of property which exploits wage labour' – this is property owned by the bourgeoisie. For those people who laud a system like capitalism over communism and don't believe in abolishing bourgeoisie property, Marx says this: 'You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths'. It is possible that there is a different way to live if we leave the exploitation of capitalism behind us. Although we are hindered by the ideological dominance of the elite, the oppressed classes can, and hopefully will, generate counter ideologies to combat the ruling classes. Then we could truly be free.

When to go in and when to stay out: the role of the West in Afghanistan.

By Kate Bradshaw and Alexandra Hughes

The role of the West in Afghanistan has once more come to the fore again, in recent months, as the country descended into chaos and bloodshed, under the advance of the Taliban. Kate Bradshaw and Alexandra Hughes explore the complexity of the volatile situation and if it could have been avoided.

Why Was Order Enforced in Afghanistan?

Before the US and UK began sending troops into Afghanistan, militant groups had seized control over the country and their impact was devastating.

Founded in September 1994 in Kandahar, the Taliban quickly seized control over Afghanistan by 1996, overthrowing the Burhanuddin Rabbani regime and establishing the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Since then, the Taliban have denied UN food supplies to its malnourished citizens, oppressed women and have had their opponents strategically murdered. Foreign Governments have warned the Taliban that if they do not protect Afghans' rights then they may refuse to send aid, thereby worsening the humanitarian crisis.



However, the pivotal reason why the US first invaded Afghanistan was due to its 'War on Terror' after the 9/11 attack in which two hijacked airplanes crashed into the World Trade Centre, resulting in the deaths of 2,996 people. US citizens rightfully felt angry towards the US government for letting the

attack happen and of course Al-Qaeda for directly launching the attack, hence putting pressure on the government to counter-attack.



After Osama bin Laden was killed by US Navy SEALs in Pakistan, the reasoning for the US government to be in Afghanistan soon became

blurred, with President Biden and top military officials contradicting each other years later about what the US was aiming to do.

John Sopko, the special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, stated that "We really struggled to develop and implement a coherent strategy for what we hoped to achieve", whilst President Biden stated clearly that the US was sent to Afghanistan purely "Because we were attacked by Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda on September 11th, 2001, and they were based in Afghanistan." However, Biden appears to fail to acknowledge why billions of taxpayers' money was pumped into the US military in Afghanistan and what purpose they had there. Biden also states in an interview that the aim "was never supposed to have been nation building". Osama bin Laden had been killed so what did the US aim to achieve?

What Was the UK's Involvement in Afghanistan?

British troops were sent to the southern province of Helmand in 2006. Their intended

for reconstruction projects, but their arrival provoked a violent response from a resurgent Taliban.

Numerous operations were launched to try and push Taliban insurgents from key locations, with British troops regularly patrolling under threat of ambushes. The British Government mostly followed in the US's footsteps, with the government directing troops using a similar objective to the US. In 2009 there were 108 fatalities among British troops. Most British troops eventually left in 2014 with only around 750 people remaining to train the country's military. However, in 2021 after the Taliban successfully took back control over Kabul, the British Government was accused of abandoning Afghanistan citizens in a rush to evacuate the remaining British troops home.



How Did It All Go Wrong?

Primarily, the UK's biggest failure in Afghanistan was its close relationship to the US during its time there enforcing order. America was one of the biggest influencers in Afghanistan and held a lot of the power due to its size and hold the country has on the world. This meant that the US made many of the decisions during their time in Afghanistan, and the UK followed suit, even if the decision was proven to have negative effects in the long run.

In his interview the special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction states:

“We tried to design and build a military that looked and acted like we do, and that



didn't take into consideration the situation in Afghanistan. You had a, basically, illiterate military that was not used to highly technical weapons”

A lot of the issues above were key to the downfall of the Afghanistan reconstruction mission: not only did the US have an unclear objective, but they also failed to consider how uneducated the Afghan troops were. Leaving complicated, technical military weaponry to illiterate troops to defend the country was perhaps not a stable plan. Furthermore, Sopko also states that during the breakdown in Kabul, as the Taliban edged closer to recapturing the city:

“The State Department performed their - what we call the annual lobotomy. They pulled out 80%, 90% of the personnel who had been there for a year to replace them with new recruits.”

This, as Sopko details, was a particularly disastrous move because these new recruits did not know how to deal with the crisis. Overall, the fundamental failure of the US in Afghanistan seems to be as the general states:

“We didn't really have a strategy.”

What Can we Learn from This?

Clearly, the predominant understanding that we can conclude from the failure in Afghanistan is that we should be regulating what money is funded into military projects such as these, so that countries do not waste billions of taxpayers' money on a reconstruction project with no clear strategy.

