

Gazette Supplement



Encaenia 2023

Congregation

21 June

1 Conferment of Honorary Degrees

The Public Orator made the following speeches in presenting the recipients of honorary degrees at the Encaenia on Wednesday, 21 June:

Degree of Doctor of Civil Law

MICHELLE BACHELET

Adstat, Domine Cancellarie, femina olim Praeses quae nunc agmen nostrum praesens ducit. Et vere praesens saepe res publicas vidit in extrema ductas, qualia nos magna ex parte modo longe distantes observavimus, nec pleno acumine intuiti. Absit tamen ut fortunae semper prosperae fidamus. Tibi autem, Vice-Cancellaria, cordi puto fore quod haec honoranda primo studio Apollineo idcirco incubuit ut aliis ad dolorem ferendum prodesset, vel etiam, si posset, levandum. Vix attinet dicere eam dolorem cum corporis tum mentis passam novisse, neque ignaram esse civitatem populi sui ita aliquando inflictam esse. Eandem nunc salutamus ut quae artes et medendi et administrandi concorditer coniunxerit, rerum militarium perita pro patria propugnaverit, ad iura publica et apud suos et foris servanda contenderit; ne omittam quantum in gubernando praestiterit - satis enim praeses praesederat ut sinente lege civitatis iterum statim ad officium supremum populi consensu electa relata sit. Quae haec in republica versata magni fecit, quae insuper impetravit, ea legentibus necesse erit animadvertere quomodo numerum medicamina exspectantium valde minuerit, opum iniquitates turpes iniustasque sanaverit. Institutiones docendi ad melius corrigere, advenis statu carentibus veniam dare, vestigalia emendare contendit. Cives utriusque sexus ad aequitatem inducere conata est, matribusque subveniebat ut officiis functae liberos quoque curare possent. Naturae denique regnum et mundus ut procurarentur hortata satis bene gessit. Nuper ante omnes stabat qui pro iuribus omnium enituntur; certe eo clarius cognovit quae et quanta etiam nunc agenda ubique manerent; nam haec eius verba saepe audita sunt: quae in patria sua ipsius facta essent adeo acerba ac dira fuisse ut nemini fere optaret talia unquam iterum acciderent. Nihilominus tamen demonstravit quantum valeat conciliandi ratio, quanti concordia restituta facienda.

Praesento feminam fortem et firmam, simul medicam simul ministram et ducem populi, Veronicam Michaelam Bachelet Jeria, quondam Praesidem Rei Publicae Chile, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Iure Civili.

Paraphrase

My Lord Chancellor, here at the head of our distinguished line is a former President, one who has seen at close quarters many of the extremes of political crisis many of us here have observed only at a distance and with limited vision, though we do not count on our continuing good fortune. And, Vice-Chancellor, it will warm your heart to know that our honorand trained to be a doctor because she wished to help others deal with pain, and where possible to relieve it. I believe it is widely known that she is herself no stranger to pain, whether physical or emotional, nor to its place in the political history of Chile. Now we salute her and her harmonious combination of medical practitioner and administrator, defense and military expert, and campaigner in human rights both in her own country and internationally, not to mention her high standing and manifest skills in government, presidential enough for her to have been comfortably returned to power the moment the constitution allowed her re-election. As we read of the great aims and achievements of her political career, our eyes are drawn ineluctably to her drastic reduction of hospital waiting lists and of gross disparities in wealth, her overhaul of her country's education systems, her amnesty granted to undocumented migrants, her tax reforms, emphasis on gender equality, introduction of childcare for working mothers, and her successes in promoting protection of the environment. Having been so recently the world's most prominent voice for human rights, she will be acutely aware of much unfinished business around the world. In her own oft-quoted words, what once happened in Chile was so painful, so terrible, that she would not wish for anyone to live through such a situation again. But she has also shown some of the pragmatic strengths of reconciliation and realism.

I present a woman of courage and determination, doctor, public servant and leader alike, Verónica Michelle Bachelet Jeria, former President of the Republic of Chile, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

Admission by the Chancellor

Populi tui dux et propugnatrix dignissima, quae contendis ut dolores iniquitatis et iniquitates dolorum mitiges, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Iure Civili honoris causa.

Worthy leader and champion of your people, who strive to relieve the pain of injustice and the injustice of suffering, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

Degree of Doctor of Letters

LYSE DOUCET

Ecce vultus admodum notus, ecce vox quae etiam Latine translata nos vehementer permovere posset, qua audita nos nuntios et summae auctoritatis et saepe sollicitantes e regionibus variis accipere soliti sumus. Haud scio an haec femina ex omnibus Acadianis spectatissima - vel potius, ut quidam censent, ab Anna Shirley altera - id omnino probaret quod saepe apud collegas pronuntiatur, quod nullam fere rem gestam adeo necesse sit referre ut ideo parati esse debeant diem obire. Certum est hanc multa referenda aestimavisse propter quae pericula gravia parata erat adire. Et haec permulta adiit, quae per orbem terrarum momenti maximi esse visa sunt. Hac enim ita nuntiis docente cognovimus homines angustiis iniuriisque immensis subiectos esse ubi bella gererentur, ubi vis Naturae ex ratione nescioqua incerta vastitates effecisset. Familiariter se dicit hic illic iam vivere, et nuntiis hinc illinc emissis intrepida nobis ostendit quam constanter, quam mire homines virtute et misericordia ducti in vita manere potuerint quamvis extrema passi sint detrimenti ac doloris. Nam lucem, ut dicit, in tenebris dispexerunt, modos superandi pepererunt praeter expectationem. Haec conspicata nos docet eos qui belli vel tempestatis vi opprimantur saepe hoc ante omnia spectare, ut aliqua supersint. Et hoc quoque scit, hanc eandem pertinaciam modo meliora modo peiora efficere posse; ratione Darwiniana regente alios fortuna secunda, alios adversa affici. Saepe tamen mirum videtur quomodo in angustiis etiam extremis quidam resistant et perdurent. Veritas denique, ut audimus, aliquando mutabilis putatur esse; eo magis nuntiis huius generis confidamus, ut qui vera accurate referant, narrationes diversas examinent, res revera gestas ita praestent ut suo quisque iudicio percontatus uti possit quid profecto acciderit.

Praesento nuntium audacem, ardentem, quae nobis vera praestare studet, Lyse Mariam Doucet, Excellentissimo Ordini Imperii Britannici adscriptam, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Admission by the Chancellor

Vox integra, ad docendum et arguendum apta, cui confisi nuntios certos recipimus rerum maximi momenti peregre gestarum, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphrase

Behold before you now a famous face and, though silent at this moment, a famously evocative accent in which we have been used to hearing the most authoritative, if often the most disturbing, bulletins from many lands. I am not sure whether this lady, perhaps the world's best respected Acadian - or should I say second best after Anne of Green Gables? - wholly endorses what she calls a 'mantra in journalism', namely that no story is worth dying for. What we can say is that she has found many stories worth taking great risks for. The risks she has run are indeed legion, and the worth is recognized by viewers the world over, for through her stories we have been made aware of injustice and suffering beyond measure in places of human conflict and in climes that have felt nature's baffling powers of destruction and devastation. She is, she says, familiarly at home now in many countries, and from many countries this redoubtable reporter has also shown us the extraordinary resilience of people who have survived the extremes of loss and trauma through courage and compassion, 'to find', in her words, 'light in the dark, to find ways to live.' She sees, and shows, the overpowering drive for survival among victims of wars and natural disasters, but she knows also that the struggle to survive can turn human behaviour in almost any direction. It is for her a Darwinian process, with winners and losers, and often we see something miraculous in the ability of human beings to resist utter desolation. Above all, in these days of 'relative truth' we must depend on such as her for accuracy, for the balance of narrative and counter-narrative, for facts which help us to ask and answer for ourselves where the truth may be found.

I present a bold and passionate reporter, who seeks to show us the truth, Lyse Marie Doucet, OBE, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Impartial yet informative and challenging voice, on whom we depend for knowledge of momentous events abroad, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

PROFESSOR PAUL GILROY

*Ignoti comites prisca qui corpus adusti
Carmina novistis, vobis qua contigit ignem
Tangere divinum labris? Caligine capti
Qua reperire lyrae potuistis pulchra modorum
Viribus immensis aptae? Quis lumina primus
Attollens felix despexit vincula vates?*

Quare sic exordiar requiris? Nonne alia multa esse dicenda? Sed pauci, ut opinor, musicam hominumque genera - vel, ut ipse dicit, generis sinceritatem - adeo penitus una tractaverunt ut hic qui nunc adstat et genera et mores scrutatus, cum quo iuvat asserere me quicquid saltem communicare. Recordor enim ludum utriusque nostrum tali liberalitate atque indulgentia instructum fuisse, ut discipuli diversi animis coniterentur, cum tamen nunquam dissuasum sit ne ab incommodis aversaremur eis spectatis quae docebantur, quae cognita inter nos agitabamus. Et si ea legemus quae hic posteris annis scripsit, haud dubium est quin et nobis et aliis ideo quidem profuturum sit quod vexationem quandam experti videamur esse. Ea dico quae de gentibus dispersis, quae de causis, de varietate dispersionum consideravit quomodo etiam haec res publicas et mores hominum attigerint, ut alia innumerabilia omittam. Nam ad nova ac sollicitantia animum nostrum advertit; quae, ut recentia necnon apta laudata, iniuriis aliquando consociari vi mutua inspirante. Praeterea de statu rerum communium iurumque nostrorum scripsit, et qua ratione acta nostra et aliena explicemus. Nuper eum apud nos argumentis suadere audivimus ut de integro prudenter respiciamus quae acciderint, quae nunc fiant, quae denique futura esse videantur; hanc vocem dignam putamus quam diutius mente teneamus. Atenim praeterita velut aliena respicimus. Sed ex praeteritis tincta emergunt praesentia, ut et praesentibus et futuris pertinaciter obligati simus. Virum igitur

praesento, qui hortatur ut, immodica nationis gloria seposita, re verissima una agamus, qui vere doctus docet, Paulum Gilroy, apud Collegium Universitatis Londiniensis professorem, Excellentissimi Ordinis Imperii Britannici Commendatorem, Academiae Britannicae sodalem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Admission by the Chancellor

Studiose et doctor egregie, qui arguit quales nos homines fuerimus et ex quibus simus commixti, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphrase

*O black and unknown bards of long ago,
How came your lips to touch the sacred fire?
How, in your darkness, did you come to know
The power and beauty of the minstrel's lyre?
Who first from midst his bonds lifted his eyes?¹*

Perhaps I surprise by starting thus, while much else must be said, but few have written with such insight about music and identity - or, as he himself puts it, racial 'authenticity' - as the scholar of social and cultural studies who now stands here, one with whom I proudly claim at least something in common; my own memory of the school at which we were both educated is of a liberal ethos, one of pluralism and tolerance, but never any discouragement from being made 'uncomfortable' by what we were taught and what we pupils discovered and discussed among ourselves. And if we read what he has written over the intervening years we shall stand to benefit ourselves and others by our own discomfort. I refer both to the critical study of 'diasporas', their origins and differing natures and their roles in political and social cultures, and also much more. For he offers new and disquieting observations on how modernism and oppression can not only co-exist but even feed on each other, and reflections on the state of social relations and justice in our own communities, and on our understanding of the history of this and other societies. This year in Oxford we have heard our honorand's voice in a reasoned plea for a new, constructive understanding of past, present and likely future; it is a voice we have good cause to remember. The past is perhaps a foreign country, but the present is caused and coloured by the past, as therefore are our obligations to present and future alike.

I present an advocate of the truest conviviality, critic of nationalism, scholar and teacher, Paul Gilroy, CBE, FBA, Professor at University College, London, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Eminent student and educator in the histories and compound natures of our identities, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

¹ James Weldon Johnson, included in *The Book of American Negro Poetry*, edited by J.W.J. and published in 1922. The first and second stanzas of the poem stand as an epigraph to a chapter in the honorand's *The Black Atlantic* (London, 1993).

VAL MCDERMID

Maleficia, ut in proverbium venit, nil prosunt. Testimonii tamen ex altera parte videte quicquid. Nos saltem fructum haud minimum capiemus fabulis delictorum atque deprehensionum ab hac insigni auctrice elicitis allecti, commoti, fascinati. Haec inter animos domina eminet, inter ova aurea cerebri, ut ita dicam, ovans regnat, improbitatem hominum acriter indagat, cui denique Pugio Aureus est tributus. Qui centum annis posthac quaerent quomodo hodie vixerimus, eos putat ante omnia ad tales fabulas spectaturos esse, ubi ordinem actorum plenissimum bonorum et malorum invenient, ubi contortula nonnulla disputata conspicient. Ex libris innumeris eius quem primum legamus? Nobis ita quaerentibus respondet haec regina narratorum: quatenus terri placet? Ipsa intrepida puella, ut adhuc revocat, cum peteret ut in collegium Sanctae Hildae admitteretur, dominum interrogantem admonuit tempus iamdudum adesse discipuli ex schola communi tandem accipiendi, qualem, ut ipse dixerat, ibi nondum admisissent. Quod ut monitum ita factum est. Negotio olim acta diurna scribendi nimium occupata, quos primos libros peperit tantum diebus lunae post meridiem scripsit; paulo post in cursum illustrem et omnino laudatum Gordonem, Antonium, Carolam - quid multa? - produxit. Sed haec quoque commendo vobis, quae de scientiis investigandi polite composuit, quanta et quam perpetua rationi nostrae contulerint legis administrandae; haec enim de talibus indiciis pendet. Ex qua ratione dicit honoranda nostra ortam esse ipsam artem fabularum huius generis, et spem quoque partam esse delicta melius perscrutandi. Saepius tamen quod lege peractum sit parum iustum videri. Efficienter igitur scribendo, ad actionem promovendo, more huius accurate arguendo ac suadendo speremus nos talem repugnantiam recte aestimatam facilius posse dissolvere. Quare reverenter praesento Reginam Delicti ut appellatur, habitu familiari principem, Valariam McDermid, sociam Collegii Sanctae Hildae honoris causa adscriptam, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Admission by the Chancellor

Fifae proles, et maleficii et nemesis regnorum lumen, quae simul oblectat et edocet, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphrase

Crime, says the proverb, does not pay. But see here some evidence to the contrary. We, at any rate, can reap great profit as we respond to the allure of transgression and detection in the gripping narratives conjured by this distinguished writer, this master among minds, crown of ‘eggheads’, this keen and able student of human waywardness, wielder, no less, of the Gold Dagger. She believes that a hundred years hence those who want to know how we live now will go, above all, to the crime novel, for there they will find the richest range of good and evil players, and there they may see great themes of moral complexity. ‘How scared do you like to be?’ says this formidable reigning Queen when asked which of her almost countless books we should read first. Fearless herself even as a schoolgirl, she remembers her application to St Hilda’s; told by her interviewer that the college had till then not admitted a Scottish state school pupil, she replied that it was ‘about time they started’. And start they did. As a journalist with little time to spare she wrote her first books on Monday afternoons before launching the illustrious careers, admired by all, of Lindsay Gordon, Tony Hill, Carol Jordan and so many others. Also read, please, her fine study¹ of forensic science and its enduring bequest to our evidence-based legal system, for that, as our honorand says, is what gave birth to crime fiction as well as hopes of higher standards in criminal investigation. But still, she observes, too often what the law delivers does not feel like justice. Fine, provocative writing, incisive argument, and effective advocacy such as hers may help to understand, and even bridge, the gap between the two. In all courtly humility,

I present the Queen of Crime, a monarch gifted with the common touch, Valarie McDermid, Honorary Fellow of St Hilda’s College, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Child of Fife, luminary of the realms of crime and its nemesis, entertainer and instructor alike, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

¹ Val McDermid, *Forensics: The Anatomy of Crime* (London, 2014)

PROFESSOR SIR SIMON SCHAMA

*Signa vides valli et fossae, murumque vetustum
Cum pluit? Hic olim legio tum castra locavit
Caesar ubi Gallis solvit sua vela relictis.*

Hic iam puerulus - nondum enim didicerat illum poetam improbandum esse - memoria vetustatis captus est velut illecebra quadam potenti. Iam intellegebat homines, et quae egissent, hic illic diu permanere; non omnes mori. Ne putemus nil nisi hoc humani esse, terras domitas atque accomodatas immutatas, neque fines qui culta ab agrestibus separent neque terminos praeteritorum et praesentium tam facile statuendos esse. Sed immensitate rurum ac terrarum vix minus lata est vastitas scientiae eius. Dixit olim Rogerium Ascham, Elizabethae primae praeceptorem, nullo modo ordinis inferioris dominum fuisse sed oratorem publicum Catabrigiensem; ipse tamen Ascham scilicet opinatus esset maiores esse divitias ingenii huius quam ut recte enumerari possent. Quas igitur memoremus? Aenei Nasi sectatoribus cordi est quod ante apud nos de 'civibus', de novis illis rebus, docebat quam nobis destitutis apud Harvardianos receptus librum eum ex tot et tantis insignem edidit quem paene graviorem novimus - caveat lector - quam ut sublevemus, sed simul sublevatum - gaudeat legens - deponere nequimus. Spectantibus magis et magis dispersis sententias suas proprias commotis offert de rebus praeteritis regni nostri cum uniti tum saepe dissociato disserens, vel de modis picturae intellegendae et quemadmodum vitam nostram haec illuminet, vel etiam de gentibus, de eis denique qui 'in gentibus vivunt'. Et mox insuper de morbis antehac dire evagatis, de remediis vaccinis nos certiores factururus est. Quonam modo haec omnia efficit? Ne multa, studet. Verba Hillelis Senioris revocemus:

וְאֵל תֹּאמַר לְכִשְׂאֹפְנָה אֲשֶׁנָּה, שְׂמָא לֹא תִפְנָה

Praesento studiosum et doctorem assiduum, qui historiis evidenter explicatis res summi momenti nobis ostendit, Simonem Michaelem Schama, Equitem Auratum, Excellentissimi Ordinis Imperii Britannici Commendatorem, Academiae Britannicae sodalem, apud Universitatem Columbiae professorem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Admission by the Chancellor

Clius Musae satelles, quem observantem, quem libere docentem fructum gaudiumque capientes audimus et legimus, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphrase

*And see you, after rain, the trace
Of mound and ditch and wall?
O that was a Legion's camping-place,
When Cæsar sailed from Gaul.¹*

Here is one who at a tender age, before he was taught that we should not approve of Kipling, felt the 'potent magic' of historical memory, of the enduring presence of people and events in places; do not suppose, he urges, that civilization does nothing but continuously tame, alter and adapt the landscape, for 'neither the frontiers between the wild and the cultivated, nor those that lie between the past and the present, are so easily fixed.'² But his range is as wide as the most varied of landscapes. Once he said of Queen Elizabeth's tutor, Roger Ascham, that he was 'no low-rent don' but the Public Orator at Cambridge. But even Ascham would have realized that here we are faced by a true embarrassment of riches, and much more. What to mention? Brasenose takes pride that he taught us about the citizens of the Revolution before we lost him to Harvard and he published that one of his many books almost too weighty - caveat lector - to lift but, once raised before one's eyes - gaudeat legens - impossible to put down. To an ever wider audience he has offered new, provocative insights in the history of this united but often divided kingdom, in how to understand art and its illumination of our history, and of nations and those of us whose fate has been to live 'among the nations'³, soon to enlighten our perceptions of pandemics and vaccines. How does he do all this? He studies. 'Say not:' said the sage, ' "when I shall have leisure I shall study;" perhaps you will not have leisure.'⁴

I present a tireless scholar and teacher, a lucid exponent of history and its indispensable importance, Sir Simon Michael Schama, CBE, FBA, Professor at Columbia University, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

I present a tireless scholar and teacher, a lucid exponent of history and its indispensable importance, Sir Simon Michael Schama, CBE, FBA, Professor at Columbia University, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

¹ From 'Puck's Song' in R.Kipling, *Puck of Pook's Hill*

² The honorand's *Landscape and Memory* (London, 1995), p574

³ *Lamentations* 4.20

⁴ Hillel the Elder (in *Pirke Avot* 2)

Degree of Doctor of Science**PROFESSOR FRANCES ARNOLD***Natura enim non nisi parendo vincitur*

Quae in scientiis profecimus omnia fere, vel saltem maxima ex parte, ipsa Natura exemplo docente ab investigatoribus effecta sunt eam agentem imitatis vel etiam aemulatis et, si possunt, mente complexis quo modo quibusque condicionibus egerit. Huc accedit, quod pariter necesse habemus, sollertia animi. ‘Evolutionem’, ut hodie vocatur, usque ab origine vitae mirum in modum effecit eadem Natura, diligentia perenni observata. Mutando quidem, ut didicimus, atque accommodando superat vita, solumque hac vi evolvitur. Corpora et magna et minuta ita semper se mutaverunt, alia ut prosint, alia quae metuenda videantur. Quae proxima in agmine nostro venit investigatrix, scientiae machinalis prius perita, ad chemiam organicam operam adhibuit. ‘Evolutione directa’ explorata praecurrit, quae in officina corpuscula προτεινοντα consideret et inducat ut genere eorum aliquatenus mutato supersint, plus etiam valentia floreat cum vires quaedam hostiles eis consulto opponantur. Et hoc modo ἐνζυμα – quae efficiant ut per motus chemicos materiae nascantur – nova induci possunt, quo saniore vita et salubriore nos fruamur. Haec femina utraque scientia insignissima ubique apud collegas nota est; fama eius, ut unus ex nostris hic censuit, pariter ex ingenio et usu orta increbuit. Talibus peractis mutatae sunt et intellegentia et exercitatio scientiae chemicae, quod ex inventis innumeris proprius perscriptis tamquam operibus provisus manifeste apparet. Sed insuper hoc laudare velim, quod recte praefecta, assidue hortata, iunioribus exemplo fuit ut, si ita exprimere licet, directe ad haec vitalia studia augenda, dilatanda, prospere mutanda contendant. Ad linguam vulgarem conversi, ‘Vive’, exclamemus, ‘l’Evolution!’

Praesento indagatricem excogitatione et sedulitate egregiam, Franciscam Hamilton Arnold, Societatis Regiae sodalem, apud Institutum Technologiae Californiensem professorem, praemio Nobeliano nobilitatam, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia.

Admission by the Chancellor

Naturae socia et procuratrix praecipiens, quae monstras qua ratione homines viribus eius occultis uti possint ad angustias sublevandas, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universtatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia honoris causa.

*Paraphrase**Nature to be commanded must be obeyed.¹*

Much – may I say all? – of scientific progress has depended on our learning from Nature’s own workings, by copying, even emulating her actions, and where possible by understanding what caused and conditioned them; and then human ingenuity has been an equally essential asset. Evolution has, from the earliest origins of life, been the wondrous work of nature, patiently operating through time. Adaptability, we have learnt, is key to survival, and is the driving force of evolution. Organisms of all sizes have thus adapted, some of them to our advantage and others to be feared. Here next in our line is a scientist who has turned her expertise in engineering to ingenious use in organic chemistry. She has pioneered the use of ‘directed evolution’ that is, by observing and directing in the laboratory the survival and ‘mutagenesis’, and hence the strength and viability, of proteins against artificially imposed impediments, to develop new enzymes, those catalysts of chemical reactions which engender organic substances that keep us alive and enhance our lives. Both in engineering and in chemistry the great distinction of her achievements has been recognised throughout the scientific world, a distinction that arises, as one of our colleagues here has said, from both intellectual insights and practical delivery. Such work has transformed the understanding and the application of chemistry, as is shown by innumerable patents and industrial projects. But further, we must praise the example and leadership of our honorand for her encouragement of younger scientists and, if I may put it so, the directed enrichment and accelerated development of these vital subjects. Turning to Vulgar Latin, let us say, ‘Vive l’Evolution!’

I present an inventive thinker and energetic scientist of distinction, Frances Hamilton Arnold, Professor at the California Institute of Technology, Foreign Member of our Royal Society, winner of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Chemistry, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Ally and commanding steward of nature, who show how mankind may use her mysterious powers to solve the problems we face, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

¹ Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum* (1620), Book 1, Aphorism 3

PROFESSOR STEPHEN (STEVE) FURBER

‘Quidnam interest inter edulia ista et quae vi dimidia conducunt? Nonne eodem nomine vocantur, eadem sunt?’ His tamen debetur quod facile cognosceres quis opum publicarum insigniter peritus haec verba abhinc annos triginta fere edixerit. Cui quantum discrepat hic vir, qui multum prius haec internoverat; a puero mathematicus vere Olympius, pauloque post scrutator er machinator de aëre atque motorum regione huc descendit. Propter eum vidimus quanta tam fecunde AC ORNate a glande crescant. Idemque tam nitida machinatus effecit ut in scholis discipuli permulti mente capta viderent quantum prodesset scientia computatoria, quantum profecto quae hanc peperisset machinatio. ARMorum talium vi ab eo collegisque adhibita et prolata, magis et magis valuerunt, magis et magis efficacia haec minuscula in agendo se praebuerunt, adeo ut simul sodales et socii familiariores animi nostri fiant, quem ad aemulandum contendere videantur. Iam ubique per terras creberrimae sunt machinae huius generis, elementulis innumeris praeditae quibus in cogitando et agendo impendio minore alatur quam necesse fuisset deficiente praestantia, vel absente hac agilitate inventionis. Audio tot esse haec miracula paulula ut mihi saltem numero exacto non iam Latine exprimere possim; eum numerum sine dubio machinae hae tam animatae computatum subducere potuerunt. Cum hoc ducente Societas Regia abhinc decem annos scrutaretur quas facultates iuniores nostri haberent studiorum computandi, apparuit multum deesse copiis providendi, docendi, disciplinae promovendae. Etsi nuper haec aliquantum dicuntur profecisse, iter tamen longius adhuc conficiendum manet, ut locutione utar fortasse nimium inter dominos nostros trita. Ne tamen omittam quae humana propria sunt honorandi huius. Eum non solum mirificum, verum etiam placidum, comem commendo, collegam manifeste concordem, qui denique chordis suis sonum profundum, subvenientem profert, ut subtilibus eisdem offerentibus audire possumus: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2sBp3xDA>.

Praesento studiosum artis et modorum computandi, animo et auctoritate maximopere acrem et fecundum, Stephanum Furber, Excellentissimi Ordinis Imperii Britannici Commendatorem, Societatis Regiae socium, apud Universitatem Mancuniensem professorem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia.

Admission by the Chancellor

Inventor, artifex, effector et sodalis rationum communicandi, cognoscendi, certiora emittendi, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia honoris causa.

Paraphrase

‘Potato chips, semiconductor chips, what is the difference? They are all chips.’ Thanks to the development of the non-potato kind, you can quickly discover which prominent economist said this thirty-odd years ago. Here, by contrast, stands a man who knew the difference well before that, already in his youth a mathematician of Olympian stature, a scientist and engineer who came back to earth from the world of aerodynamics, one thanks to whom we saw what fruitful and comely growth proceeded from an acorn, one by whose elegance of invention so many of our schools and their pupils came to know the fascination and the benefits of computing and the ingenious machinery that enabled it. By strength of ARM, deployed and extended by him and his team, microprocessors have become ever more powerful, ever more efficient, ever closer associates and allies of the human mind they strive to mimic. Throughout the world now are innumerable devices whose myriad chips nourish human thought and action at lower cost than would have been necessary in the absence of such excellence and adaptability of computer design. I am told that there are at least one hundred billion such mini-marvels in existence, a number and a calculation achievable, no doubt, with the help of this advanced technology. But the Royal Society report on computing in schools which was led by our honorand a decade ago indicated serious deficiencies in the provision and encouragement of teaching and learning. More recent reports appear to show some improvements but, if I may borrow the politicians’ mantra, ‘there is still a long way to go.’ But let me not omit the more personal. I commend this magician to you as a calmly convivial and clearly collaborative colleague, and also as a supportive bass guitarist, as microprocessors will enable you to see and hear: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2sBp3xDA>.

I present a computer scientist of formidable creativity, energy and influence, Stephen Byram Furber, CBE, FRS, Professor at the University of Manchester, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Designer, builder, creator and guide of the technology of information, knowledge and communication, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

PROFESSOR MALIK PEIRIS

Virus et arma cano. Scis vero, Domine Cancellarie, apud Universitatem magnam Orientis haec verba in praeceptum admissa esse, sapientiam et virtutem. Nunc producitur qui tali principio fidelem se praebet, quem tria nomina adornant - scilicet a parentibus argute, humaniter providentibus electa - quae dotes concordiae et una utiliter laborandi concinunt. Quibus saepe laudatis perspicue praeditum hunc indagatorem celeberrimum, hominem lepidum ac commodum hodie honorare libeat. Modo nonnulla post saecula constituit Regia nostra Societas socium e Srilanka exortum adscribere, sed ut primus, ita dignissimus, praestat, qui studiis suis universitates nostras et patriae suae iamque etiam Hongcongensem velut ponte coniungit. Una cum collegis sollerter scrutatus illas vires subdole machinantes detexit quae morbi aviarii, et volucris et homini valde infesti, semen accendunt. Eius ARS postea visa est et alia hostilia debellare maximae acerbatis. Quibus diris adversariis a Natura 'corona' licet sit impertita, spem tamen habemus vim eorum exitialem reprimi posse. Ideo enim hic et comitantes eius enitent quod agnoverunt unde haec orta sint, quomodo componantur, qua ratione se exercent. Et haec studia quo tendunt? Ut omnes morbi huius generis eluantur. Forsitan sit medicamen omnium commune, sicut gradale illud sacrum, occultum videndum, sed quae mira hic effecit nos conspicati credimus multa ad salutem nostram adlatura, qualia prius animo ne fingere quidem poteramus. Aetate iam, ut nosmet putarem, provecta, adhuc adulescentulus videtur florere, ut tempus non minimum ad res publicas, ad opum servandarum disciplinam conferre placeat. Nonne nuper pervenimus quantum ad rempublicam gerendam pertineat verum ingenium, quantum prosit scientiae usus? Itaque nostra quoque interest ut huic ita bene velimus.

Praesento 'virologum' propugnantem praeter omnes novi et eximii ingenii, Iosephum Sriyal Malik Peiris, Regiae Societatis sodalem, apud Universitatem Hongcongensem professorem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia.

Admission by the Chancellor

Indagator praeclare, qui per investigationes Naturae minusculis maxime minacibus patefactis repugnas, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia honoris causa.

Paraphrase

Let us turn to virology. My Lord Chancellor, you will know that 'Wisdom and Virtue' is the motto of a great eastern University. True to its ideals now comes before you a man whose three given names (chosen, I imagine, with foresight by imaginative and humane parents) together betoken the gift of fruitful collaboration and harmony. And these indeed shine out among the qualities often praised in the distinguished scientist and warm personality we honour today. It took our Royal Society three and a half centuries to elect a Fellow from Sri Lanka, but here is a most worthy first, whose studies bridge our universities with those of his native land and now of Hong Kong. This ingenious investigator and his co-workers discovered the insidious mechanisms that powered the avian influenza virus, lethal enemy of bird and man, and later that of the famously Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome; to this and other tiny but dangerous organisms nature may have endowed a 'crown', but we may now hope that their destructive force can be checked; for our honorand and his collaborators distinguished themselves in identifying their origins, their structures and their workings. And the ultimate goal? Why, nothing short of eliminating the chances of future pandemics. Yes, the 'universal vaccine' may be the elusive 'Holy Grail', but his extraordinary achievements give us hope of once unimaginable life-saving interventions. We note that at an age which many of us would consider advanced, but for him is an extended youth, he has turned a good part of his time to studying politics and sustainable economics. I believe we have come to appreciate the potential good of bringing scientific competence to bear on policy. In thus wishing him well in our own interests as well as his,

I present a pioneering virologist, scientific warrior beyond compare, Joseph Sriyal Malik Peiris, FRS, Professor at the University of Hong Kong, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Renowned scientist, whose investigations both reveal and counter the most threatening of nature's *minuscula*, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

2 Encaenia

The Public Orator delivered the Creweian Oration:

Public Orator: *Nonnulli me rogant quanto prius has orationes componam quam hic... O Di immortales, oblitus sum! Insignissime Domine Cancellarie, licetne anglice loqui?*

Chancellor: *Licet.*

Public Orator: *O gratam libertatem!*

When asked how far in advance of this ceremony the orations are composed, including this one, I sometimes answer, savouring a grain of truth as I say it, that I have finished the Latin ones but am having problems with the English translations. But you may have noticed that the Latin can age quickly. For instance, I was able only to look forward to Sir Simon Schama's book on pandemics; it is now out, and in English I can commend it to all. I suspect that developments in microprocessors have already left my musings on chips rather stale by now, not to mention the potatoes. No doubt Val McDermid has advanced further in her investigations, and Malik Peiris is now poised to diagnose and treat our political and economic afflictions.

But the Creweian? Well, frankly, it has to be not much earlier than the night before, because so much can happen at the last minute in our world, or should I say in Greater Oxford? Great national leaders with Oxford 'connections', nay even governments, may fall, or face the music. College alumni fortunes rise and fall. And that is surely worthy of comment.

When some decades ago we decided to have the Creweian Oration in English - though, as you have seen, I have a Latin version I might have used had the Chancellor so ruled - I think it was the intention to make it sound something more like a mother tongue for many of us. Now according to some of my students my English sometimes sounds like a translation from Latin. I have not always taken this as a compliment. But perhaps that is just the way boring 'Received Pronunciation' sounds these days, and after all I have to keep your Latin receptors in play. Anyway, as employers still keep telling us, Latin is not without problem-solving potential. It will have occurred to some of us that our new monarch's agonizing problem with his obligation to defend 'the faith' might have been softened if we could keep his title in the Latin, *Fidei Defensor*, and allow him, and an increasing proportion of his subjects, to rejoice in the ambiguity of a language without a definite article. Well, 'discuss!', as we sometimes still say to our students.

For the moment, many will feel satisfaction that despite our close association with that institution (I mean the monarchy - where else but here on this day will you ever sing, or even hear, verse 2 of the national anthem?) the 'cause' (see verse 2) he may give us and our Oxford 'home' is not yet lost.

But that same absence of a Latin definite article can also lead to solecisms in other languages. A former leader, if I may dignify him with the title, of ours (Balliol, Classics), seems to have got the gendering of his romance 'le Bromance' with the French premier wrong, just around the week of our last Encaenia. Another case, perhaps, of toxic masculinity? Or was it in some short-lived kind of quasi-European spirit, sequel to that earlier even more fleeting Bromance, that time more, but not completely, feminized, between Tony Blair (St

John's, Law) and the late lamented Silvio Berlusconi? I am aware that not all of us get to see the *Daily Telegraph*, but my reading is wide and diverse, and there I learnt recently from my Italianist colleague Sir Ivor Roberts that the amorous dialogue ran as follows:

SB: 'Tony, I love you so much that if you were a woman I would propose to you.'

TB: 'And, Silvio, if you were as rich as you are, I would accept!'

Never mind, that's all in the past. *Sic transit*. Now, in our extended Westminster campus, has come the day of Lincoln PPE, following a brief fling with Merton (also PPE, fancy that), and on the playing field we look forward to more conventional rules of the game; enough of these classicists, but the day of scientists may, and probably should, yet come. For now, we remove our shoes before entering No 10, and remember the words of Lord Heseltine (Pembroke, PPE, former President of the Union) that he was not worried about so many political leaders coming from Oxford, 'as long as they are up to the job'.

There are also satisfying links for the Orator between the Latin and the English agenda today. My research on our guests' immense contributions involves much enjoyable and edifying reading, and in Val McDermid's novel *Insidious Intent* I found material of relevance to all of us. I shall return to this shortly.

As for toxic masculinity, here at the University we are much aware that gender matters, and is an ever richer subject for friendly debate, for recognition, and for balance-redressing. Nathaniel Crewe bids us show our gratitude to our generous benefactors. It is a pleasure to do so. The benefactors are legion, and we are honoured to see a number of them with us here today, to whom I direct our attention and our deepest gratitude. I pitch straight in. We may look forward to great new support for women in STEM subjects, thanks to a pledge from the Optiver Foundation and the new scholarship programme it will fund, over a period of five years, for thirty women from low- and middle-income countries to take up offers to study these subjects at postgraduate level. We shall see the first Optiver students here with us in October. The foundation will also develop new ways of assessing the socio-economic background of international students, so as to focus more and more on those with the greatest need for support.

Meanwhile in that language which is, as I have to admit, even more truly universal than Latin: *duo, tres, quinque, septem, undecim, tredecim, septendecim, undeviginti, et ceteri* - yes, congratulations, you've got it: these numbers are 'prime' - we have more than one reason for revering the famous Fields Medal, that handsome gold piece awarded once every four years to outstanding mathematicians under the age of forty who have, as its Latin inscription declares, aspired to 'transcend their own understanding and master the universe'. This year we take pride in our own James Maynard FRS of St John's College, and we congratulate him on winning the award for his contributions to analytic number theory and their 'prime' implications. Of course 'mastering' the universe should not be, indeed is not, gender-limited, as James's co-winner, the Ukrainian Maryna Viazovska, shows, and I believe I am not breaking confidences when I say that we hope to honour her here before very long. But I understand that nationally only 29% of postgraduate

researchers in Maths ‘identify as female’, as we now put it. A new endowment from XTX Markets, the global algorithmic trading firm, who clearly have keen, and exemplary, interest in such educational and intellectual advances, will fund the Maryam Mirzakhani Scholarship, commemorating the life and work of this Iranian mathematician, who in 2014 was the first woman to win the Fields Medal, died young in 2017, and yet will live on in the careers of women of any nationality working towards the four-year DPhil in our Mathematical Institute. And the same foundation will fund eighteen graduate students displaced by the war in Ukraine to complete a full-time taught master’s course at Oxford.

Toxicities better deserving of that label continue to engage our finest minds, and in our medical and related faculties much encouragement and support has come from generous benefactors who show faith in the way their funding will be used. The Howat Foundation, founded by Dr Malcolm Howat and Dr Margaret Howat in 2009, has already before now assisted our research in cancer treatment, and is now funding the Malcolm and Margaret Howat Chair in Clinical Oncology.

Meanwhile the Moh Family Foundation has given a substantial gift to support the work of our Pandemic Sciences Institute under its inaugural director Sir Peter Horby, strengthening, we believe, its ability to identify and counter future pandemic threats and ensure equitable access to treatments and vaccines around the world. The foundation is to fund another professorship and also five doctoral scholarships open to international competition.

There is much to say about diversity and inclusion. The collegiate University and its various projects continue to encourage, indeed rejoice in, the admission of suitably able and qualified staff and suitably able and promising students from all backgrounds. This year for the first time an Athena Swan ‘Gold Award’ has been won by an Oxford department, namely the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences. The award marks signal progress in the appointments and career developments of research and teaching staff as well as postgraduate students.

We continue to welcome, and value, newcomers from far and wide, and are grateful for the resources we are given to do so. The Mastercard Foundation has partnered with the University of Oxford to support a graduate Scholars Program at Oxford for young African students. The focus is on masters’ courses in subjects relevant to the Pan-African so-called ‘Agenda 2063’, about which I urge you to read more through the African Union website, for the donors have given much thought not only to the academic and technical training itself but to realistic practical follow-up programmes.

To the IKEA Foundation our thanks are due for funding their named Foundation Research Fellowship in International Relations. The current holder is studying the legacies of war and the implications of those legacies. The foundation has also given substantial help both to our Refugee Studies Programme and to the Refugee-Led Research Hub, which through its physical base in Nairobi aims to support aspiring researchers from displaced backgrounds to become research leaders. There is more: IKEA has greatly enhanced our Sustainable Finance Programme through funding four major projects aimed at responsible and lasting management of assets.

In her departing oration in October the former Vice-Chancellor speculated on what a time-travelling woman would have noticed in surveying the course we had taken in the past seven years. More diversity, for instance, in appointments in posts, impressive new buildings, and of course brilliant and effective research in medical fields, artificial intelligence, even humanities, not to mention ever-increasing engagement between University and industry and public. Crowning all, wafting above our students in post-pandemic relief were ‘mortarboards, occasionally flung so high one wondered if they’d return’. She encouraged us to mark our own homework, and her predicted grades were not all in the top bracket. She gave a B for bureaucracy - whereas I had always thought we were world-leaders in that field. World-betas, perhaps? The lowest grade was an eponymous F for ‘fossilized’. To support this and put it in historical context we were reminded of the words of an unnamed correspondent of the then Chancellor, Lord Curzon, in 1913: the University’s governance was described as ‘the worst form of governance ever devised by the wit of man’. But were we not, and are we not, a democracy? True, we may have often wondered whether we should think of ourselves as, or aspire to be, a direct or a representative democracy, but we remember that a while later Winston Churchill was minded (after being thrown out of office, I believe) to say that this was ‘the worst form of government - except for all the others that have been tried’. And I imagine you would agree we have as good reason now to savour those words as at any point in the lives of most of us here. But we have needed reminding, it is true, that democracy needs a present and active *demos*, and here in this theatre and its meetings and debates is where that body can most eloquently exercise its legitimate power and judgment.

This year seven of our academics in the humanities and social sciences have been elected Fellows of the British Academy, and eight of our scientists Fellows of the Royal Society, among them, I am proud to say, our new Vice-Chancellor. Among other honours, Domine Cancellarie - *Chapeaux Bas, et Honi soit qui mal y pense!* - though you will be too modest to sport it publicly, we rejoice in your Garter and your ascent to the highest level of chivalry, in which you will join us in congratulating those many of our colleagues who were recognized in the Birthday and New Year Honours: Professor Sir John Irving Bell, our Regius Professor of Medicine, is appointed a Companion of Honour. Professor E.J. Milner-Gulland is now a Dame Commander, and Professor Hermione Lee a Dame Grand Cross, among many Companions, Officers and Members of the order that still, for good or ill, carries the name of *Imperium Britannicum*. I propose that these titles are themselves greatly dignified by the obvious distinction not only of the charity workers and genuine public servants that have been so recognized, but of the scholars and researchers we thus see so openly valued. These days a CBE for services to scholarship is a recognition not to be sniffed at.

And let us turn our attention and admiration for a moment to those who have embarked on the earlier rungs of the ladder. Here before us are some of our prize-winners from each of our four divisions; their names and more precise achievements you may see in the booklet. At this point I always take pleasure in raising their eyes heavenwards. *In caelum suscipite*, look up to the sky, yes, up there, *discipuli et discipulae*, and observe the glorious divine femininity of that realm and its residents, from which Truth shines down,

unimpaired by the rain that tried to penetrate the roof and undermine a recent degree ceremony – congratulations to Vice-Chancellor and all her team then present for rescuing the ceremony. That’s the curriculum itself up there, or at least one version of it. Now please look down and straight forward. **Nullius** (*addictus iurare*) **in verba** (*magistri*), says the motto of the Royal Society, that distinguished assembly of minds that was, I am ashamed to say, greatly maligned by my predecessor, Public Orator Robert South, in his speech made in this theatre at the very first Encaenia in 1699. I, son of a late Fellow of that same Society, now sing the Orator’s recantation. **Nullius** (*addictus iurare*) **in verba** (*magistri*), beware of authority, and pursue truth for yourselves, or, if I may translate into the most contemporary English, be careful how you use what ChatGPT, even version 4, tells you. It (or is it they?) may have passed some tough exams, but it may still hallucinate, and there is growing evidence that it is learning, and probably enjoying, the human gift of malicious humour.

But take heart, for our Institute for Ethics in AI will do all that is humanly possible, and quite a bit more, to keep our eyes on the road ahead, and our hands on the wheel, if I may use such an old-world metaphor. Furthermore I am told that our Schwarzman Centre is set to work towards a definition of what ‘humanity’ adds up to. It seems these days to be much to do with the virtue of *fallibility*; I suppose any scientist will agree that making mistakes is valuable in itself, so long as we see them for what they are. Dr Eve Poole (I wish I could claim her as one of ours), as we shall read in her book coming out in August, believes that this is an important part of the ‘soul’ that we must give robots if we are to work with them in the long term. In her words the ingredients are ‘human emotions, our propensity for mistakes, our inclination to tell stories, our uncanny sixth sense, our capacity to cope with uncertainty, an unshakeable sense of our own free will, and our ability to see meaning in the world around us’.

And don’t forget the value of books. Bodley’s Librarian not so long ago won well-deserved recognition for his attention to book-burning – the grim history of it, that is to say. By happy contrast the conservation of his great Library’s holdings is secured through the generosity of Mr Thomas Barron, himself an acclaimed writer and conservationist, and long-term supporter of the University and its efforts to educate and research. He has now funded the post of Head of Conservation and Heritage Science, to lead what is commonly regarded as one of the leading conservation teams anywhere in the world.

And now, in that same wonderful painting Envy, Ignorance and Malice are for the moment ‘deplatformed’. But watch out, because two of them are lurking there behind the organ. Choir and organist, you too beware, as your splendid playing and singing may attract their evil eye – you’d better insert a couple of wrong notes somewhere, difficult though that may be for you. As you will soon sing to us, love is strong as death, but mark the full words in the Song of Solomon, and not set in Eleanor Daley’s beautiful piece, ‘Set me as a seal upon thy heart, for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.’

I ask these gifted students to stand, if modestly, for a moment and enjoy our applause and appreciation.

Now I don’t much like to preach (believe or not!), but I suppose that is a mode into which an orator may fall, or even willfully, or ‘recklessly’ (that’s the right word, isn’t it?) jump. Let me do so at one step removed, so to speak, and let us learn some truth from fiction, which can be less strange than reality. In a finely worded forensic depiction of one of her most colourful, or rather insidious, villains, Val McDerimid observes a psychological process which has on occasion been seen by parents, schoolmasters, sometimes colleagues, and very occasionally official enquiries. It is a nice little account of what we may call ‘habitual transgression’, a human condition which we must hope Oxford will not foment in its students or alumni. Once again, I quote:

‘As part of his forensic research [the miscreant had] read a paper recently by some guy called Tony Hill... about something called neural adaptation. Scientists had known about this in the physical world for a long time. When you pick up a pen, you’re aware of how it feels in your hand but very quickly your nervous system tells you not to bother registering that sensation. But it turns out the same thing happens with dishonesty. The first time you lie or commit a particular crime, it’s a big step and you’re conscious of it all the way. But the more often you do that same thing, the easier it becomes. He’d always thought that way because once you got away with something, you were less scared the next time. But apparently it was more than that. It was the brain adjustment itself. Wanting to be comfortable with the stuff that felt like crossing a line.’

I think we get the point.

Each year we take this opportunity to mark, and reflect upon, the loss of colleagues over the past twelve months. Some careers are long, some, when we lose young lives, much shorter, and this year some of us have had particular reason to ponder the meaning of such losses, and try to understand the meaning of such losses. I call to mind those names I have been kindly given by our colleges, and we shall remember: Lisa Lodwick, Robert O’Neill and Paul David, Fellows of All Souls; Vicky Neale, Bill Newton-Smith and Peter Morris of Balliol; Fr Joe Mutiniz, former Master of Campion Hall; John Bramble of Corpus Christi College; Peter Parsons and Peter Pulzer, Christ Church; of Green Templeton, Uwe Kitzinger, founding President, and Fellows Dame Valerie Beral and James Lovelock; Robert Conway, Harris Manchester; Rebecca Sitsapesan of Hertford; John Walsh, Hamish Scott and John De’Ath of Jesus College; Richard Bird and David Kenning, Lincoln; Clive Holmes of Lady Margaret Hall; Greg Stores and Ben Catling, Linacre; Keith Wills, Richard Sheppard, Catherine Wills, John Woodhouse and Sir Colin Blakemore of Magdalen; Derek Goldrei, Sir Joseph Hotung, John Muddiman and Donald Sykes of Mansfield; David Witt and Christopher Watson, Merton; Sir David Butler, Nuffield; Sir Alan Budd, former Provost of Queen’s; Donald Perkins and Barrie Juniper of St Catherine’s; Peter Mackridge, Joseph Olliver and Philip Stewart of St Cross; Iain Donaldson and Justin Gosling of St Edmund Hall; Gillian Brown, St Hilda’s; Susan Wood, St Hugh’s; Dominic Kwiatkowski and Wilferd Madelung, St John’s; Leslie Houlden, Trinity; Celia Kerslake of St Antony’s; Mike Nicholson of University College; and Ellen Rice of Wolfson.

Words of the Roman philosopher Seneca were in this connection movingly recalled a little while ago by a close Brasenose colleague of mine: ‘The people we have loved remain with us in large part... The time that is past is ours; nothing is more secure than what has already been... Let us find contentment in what we have already drawn from the well - provided our minds are not leaky sieves that let everything drain right through them.’

Last September’s Romanes Lecture by the Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin was delivered in this building on the subject of current threats to liberal democracy. By way of introduction he brought us back to the very first Lecture, that given by Prime Minister Gladstone in 1892. Gladstone had, at a particularly turbulent moment both for him and the country, taken the opportunity to encourage finding ‘wider perspectives within which to discuss public issues’, i.e. at the University. Modern politics, said the Taoiseach, by contrast offers little time for reflection, and ‘public commentary mostly equates discussion with delay. We are’, he said, ‘the poorer for this.’ He went on to quote from his countryman W.B. Yeats’ poem ‘The Second Coming’. He also reminded us of Fintan O’Toole’s ‘Yeats test’, observing that ‘the more quotable Yeats seems to commentators and politicians, the worse things are.’

In her farewell oration the outgoing Vice-Chancellor quoted – from Yeats. The words were: ‘I wonder anybody does anything at Oxford but dream and remember, the place is so beautiful. One almost expects the people to sing instead of speaking. It is all like an opera.’ Otherwise, though he lived here for quite some time, Yeats did not poetise much about this extraordinary place. Let us turn to optimism and leave Yeats just for a moment on the book shelf. This year there is no peroration to the Creweian by the Professor of Poetry. That happens next year, when we shall find yet another counter argument to Jan Morris’s on Matthew Arnold, whose inspiration, she said, ‘naturally dried up when he became Professor of Poetry.’ *Naturally?* I beg to differ! ‘But by then’, Jan Morris continued, ‘[Arnold] had already distilled, once for all, the lush fascination of this city, the haunted green idyll of its surrounding hills, its sense of calm and elegy...’

It was Arnold who wrote: ‘Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene! *There are our young barbarians all at play!*’¹ And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection, – to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side?’

O sanctam simplicitatem! Many things may have changed, and indeed have had to change. But remember the Truth that is there in that great vista above our heads.

With the inspiration of our finest colleagues and students, and above all on this occasion with the inspiration of our guests – no longer *honorandi* but now *honorati* (for, as you all know, in Latin the grammatical masculine embraces also the feminine) – we shall strive to deserve what Oxford, and its past and present afford us, ‘provided’, as Seneca said, ‘our minds are not leaky sieves that let everything drain right through them.’

Nunc est bibendum. Today we celebrate. And then, tomorrow, it’s back to work!

Gratias vobis omnibus audientibus habeo.

¹There Arnold nodded, I believe, towards Byron.