



The University of Cambridge  
Magazine for Graduate Students

GOWN MAGAZINE ISSUE 13 2009

Married Graduates at Cambridge  
Cambridge Alumni in Cyprus  
Science Journals Cover Art



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## Editorial

Very often, during the course of our postgraduate lives, we take things for granted and forget to celebrate and cherish each moment. For this edition, I would like to focus on five reasons why we, as graduates in Cambridge, should celebrate.

In the first place, here's to 800 years of Cambridge!

Let's celebrate 800 years of people, ideas and achievements! It's a time to rejoice at walking on the same streets on which Newton and Darwin walked, and to reflect on all those people who blazed a trail before us. The 800th Anniversary team organized a variety of worthwhile events throughout the year. Have a look at <http://www.800.cam.ac.uk/>

Here's to the Cambridge Market Square!

Located in the city centre, where Cambridge's heart beats, the Cambridge Market square has been a place to trade, shop, meet or just browse. Witnessing and quietly watching the town change, the market square is a significant landmark in Cambridge. In this edition, we place a camera there for 20 hours and capture those fleeting moments we often let go pass by unnoticed.

Here's to Cambridge alumni who make a difference...

Students come to Cambridge from all around the world. Some of them see their life transformed while in Cambridge and subsequently transform other people's lives when they share their expertise and knowledge. In this issue we focus on two Cambridge alumni from Cyprus and follow up their life after Cambridge!

Here's to having your family in Cambridge.

Our respect should go the fellow graduates of ours who combine study with married life. Balancing your studies with married life and parenthood can be tough and demanding, but the graduates we meet in this edition would not change a thing about it. Why should they?

Here's to fieldwork!

I would say that fieldwork is the best part of one's postgraduate course, at least for people reading in the social sciences. Theory becomes action and you start coming to grips with the object of your research. It is a period when you come to an awareness of both yourself as a researcher and the impact you knowingly or unknowingly make on people's lives.

Finally, here at Gown, we celebrate the commencement of a formal collaboration with the Graduate Union. Our common goal is to represent and promote graduate interests while offering a platform for Cambridge graduates to freely express their opinions, concerns and unique perspectives on graduate life in Cambridge.

We hope this issue urges you to celebrate what it means to be a graduate in Cambridge. Enjoy reading Gown!

*Louiza Mallouri*  
Editor-in-Chief



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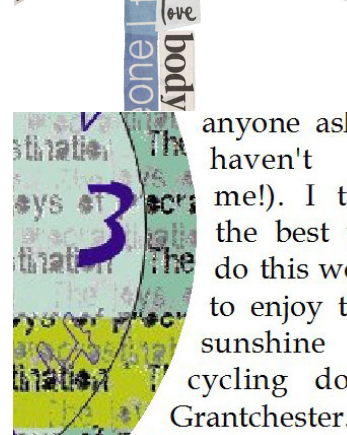
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# A • letter • to • the • graduate • community: •

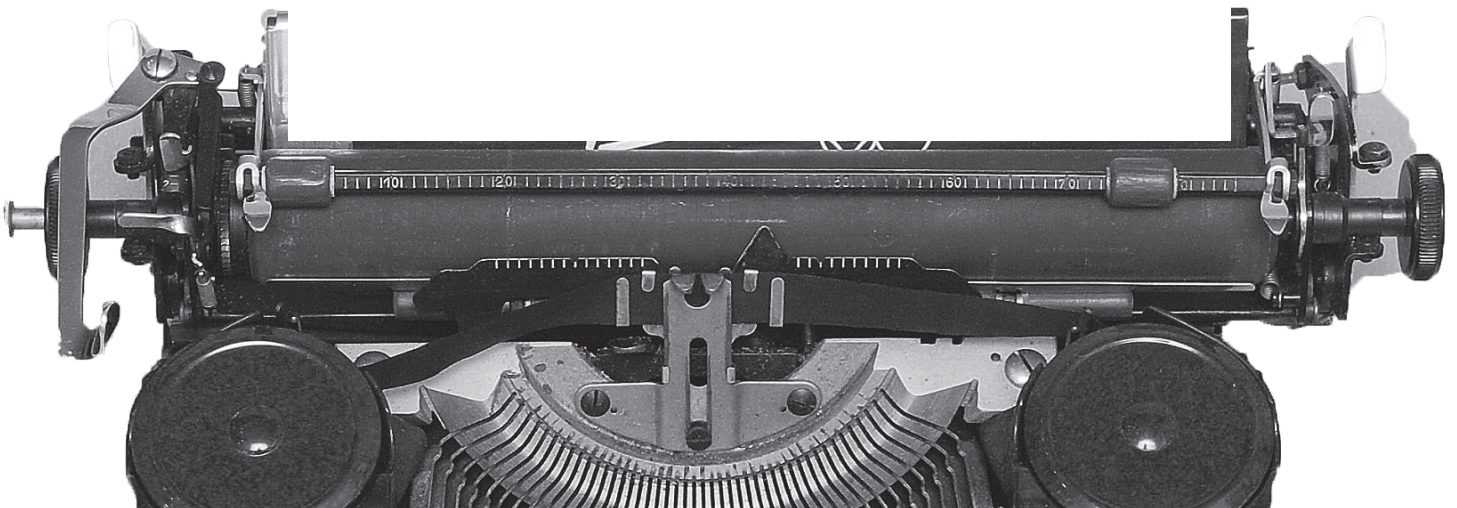
Successes, Pitfalls and the Way Ahead...  
thoughts from the current President

Fellow Graduates,

This year our Graduate Union turns 55, having been initiated by Mrs. G M Burkill, the wife of the then Master of Peterhouse, in 1954. What started as an idea to cook for 150 graduate students has grown into an organization that caters to a wide range of services for more than 6000 graduates. Our Welfare Workshops on time management and ways to work with supervisors have always been fully booked. Academic counseling sessions to help students who were on the verge of leaving Cambridge without their degree in hand have been very successful. Our various campaigns - the Review of Graduate Education, Rent Information, College Provision and Online Journal Provision, amongst others - have yielded a lot of useful information pertinent to the needs of our student body. Our various social events have been well attended. For example, the MCR Revolution Party, at the beginning of the Michaelmas term - spearheaded by Ents officers from all the Colleges - attracted more than 700 graduates this year. Our families programme - now run and supervised by parents with our backing, is one of our long standing successes. We are currently teaming with other family organizations within the university to provide even better services for our graduate families. Despite this growth and excitement, however, the GU has barely scratched the surface of what it can become. With 6000 of the most intellectually gifted students coming from all parts of the world, the GU does not yet reflect this potential.

Some of the reasons for struggling to tap into this potential are simply practical. The GU has one Sabbatical Officer which readily means that it is not possible to be effective with a body of 6000 plus graduates. Gathering important and pertinent information in order to carry out effective campaigns is therefore very difficult. Changing Presidents yearly impedes continuation. Although elected officers do a great job considering that they still have to work hard in their degree programs, it remains that they are part-time and they cannot always be present to help with all the work that is required. There is very little that can be done about the Sabbatical for the President and indeed the fact that elected officers have to be changed every year. To avert this we have employed a full time Executive Assistant who will work in the GU for at least 4 years, allowing us to have better continuity.

Other issues have been due to our inability to effectively advertise our services fully to our members. The Executive Assistant has made it possible for us to implement some of our advertising strategies. We have been able to send posters to all Colleges advertising our services and inviting them to take advantage of what's on offer. We recently had an MCR Presidents' Dinner at Churchill College - attended by 24 MCR Presidents - whereby we spoke about what we do, the vision we have for the future and pointing out their important role of being in the Council - the body that GU officers are accountable to. We took advantage of most of the orientation programs at the beginning of the Michaelmas term to advertise who we are and what we do. We've recently





revamped our website to make it more accessible and attract more students so that they may indeed find out about all the new things happening at the GU. Shortly, we will be adding video clips of GU officers talking about their initiatives, graduate students surmising about their experiences in Cambridge and about their work - all this to forge a better community. Why do we need this community when Colleges do such a fine job of creating their own? It is for the simple reason of having a collective voice as students in the greater university; that is the voice that needs to be taken to the various committees that we sit on so that we may be participants in the decision making of our own education - not mere by-standers or reactionaries to what would have already been decided upon.

How seriously does the university -and its various committees - take us as students? We have the unrivalled support of the VC, Professor Alison Richard; we are the only organization within the University of which she is a patron. Furthermore, we get financial support to the tune of £73,000 per annum. I have found the various committees on which we sit to be very interested in what we have to say. The ball remains in our court for now. What we need to improve on is communication with the College MCR presidents to be able to get timely information on matters of concern from grad students within their colleges. In the past we have struggled to present the 'student voice' and most of what committees ended up hearing are a few anecdotes and/or largely the opinions of the president of the time. This obviously gives a skewed view of what is going on in the graduate community and minimizes our impact as a student body.

Yet another factor that might be a cause of the untapped potential of our gifted student body could simply be that we tend to get stuck in small (albeit important) goals. Most of what we have been doing has to do largely with ourselves - which is understandable since the organization seeks to serve the needs of the student. Looking beyond ourselves, however, can have the effect of energizing us to greater heights. Most of us are here at the University of Cambridge because we want to do greater things - things that either have not been done before; or do what has always been done in better and different ways. In this light I have pledged to have the GU embark on yearly projects that seek to do things differently and in much bolder ways. In that regard, we will be celebrating the 800th university by holding a multidisciplinary graduate conference at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. Our students will present their

work alongside their counterparts in South Africa. In addition, noted Cambridge alumni will share what they have been doing since they left Cambridge. The VC will be opening the conference and many South African dignitaries are expected to attend. After the weekend conference the selected students will go to surrounding universities to talk about their experiences in Cambridge and encourage students to apply for graduate study here. This will occur concurrently with a conference by the GU in Cambridge - for those of our students who will still be here in August. This will feature a prominent academic speaker to share their work along side Cambridge students. The two day conference in Cambridge will be combined with a launch for the GU Speaker Series, where we intend to invite various speakers to deliberate on pertinent issues. The work presented at our first ever graduate conferences, both in South Africa and here in Cambridge, will be presented in our own Journal of Ideas. The call for papers will be out soon and we encourage all to apply.

What, in the long run will keep the GU improving and reflecting more and more of the student calibre that it represents? Ideas - "... ideas ... are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else" (Keynes); as we proceed we need to adopt 'big, hairy and audacious goals' (Schmitt) to begin to tap into the potential that the Cambridge graduate student embodies; to think in ways that will make the University look forward to our contribution as a group that comes with new and innovative ways of solving their own problems and those of others; to be known as group of students who don't simply have the only Graduate Union in the country, but those who are the only ones to reach far beyond their own needs to those of others in their own city, county and continent. I invite you to make a habit of meeting with other graduates in your newly refurbished GU facility, to discuss ideas that will make this organization truly one of a kind.

Regards,

*Siza Mtimbiri*

GU President

DESIGNED BY  
KLAUDIA BARTEL

# Attitude

By Joao Pereira

Designed by Andrew Caines



You're sitting next to the window in your hotel room. It's late, very late, and the only source of light inside is the screen of your laptop. There's still a lot to be done before you can go to sleep for a bit. You look at the flow of the night traffic on the streets of the city below, a city as many others before in which you have been but never took the time to visit, always in hotels whose glitter became boring and repetitive. You miss your family. You miss having time for yourself. You miss your days as a graduate student.

Having been a management consultant prior to starting my PhD, a lot of people come to me to ask how it is like "out there", what is it they can expect. My answer is always the same: it's different, and it can be amazing, or not. Not too helpful, I know, but fundamental. It is not a problem of the job you have, whatever it is, it is your attitude towards it. While this can sound a bit of a cliché, I have witnessed many cases in which it has made all the difference.

If you are a graduate student with limited prior professional experience, the private sector can be quite a shock to you. City jobs are more extreme, sure, as they usually require more time commitment and a constant "go get it" attitude. But it all boils down to what you make of your circumstance, and how you live and accept your decisions: the scenario I've presented at the start



of this article can happen to anyone in most jobs which offer a good paycheck. True, maybe if you're a high-flying banker the hotel can be more expensive than if you're a researcher working for a biotech company, but the same feeling of emptiness can entrap you in both circumstances. It happens to all of us, wherever we are, especially if we become so absorbed with something that we let go of so many other things, mostly by necessity, essentially by lack of time. We then feel it's time to stop, and suddenly we do stop, just for a while, but enough to question all of it: Is it worth it? What have I left behind? Do I really like this? Do I really want this? These questions may assault you during your time as a postgrad, but you can always postpone a decision, or maybe take a break to rearrange your thoughts, look around and think things through. You may then decide to continue, or to move on to something else. But when you're older and have a job, and a dream of a career and money to build a family, these questions become harder to face and they can build within us, sometimes turning into crisis and breakdowns. That must not happen, and it is something we can control.

When choosing your next professional step, a lot of research needs to be made in order to make sure you are applying for a suitable job. Talk to people doing the same thing, working in the same place, find out the success stories as well as the failures, who left, who stayed and why. After all this, you may have a better idea of how things work, but in the end you truly don't know unless you go there yourself. There will always be the need of a step of faith, a plunge, after which you

“there will always be the need for a step of faith, a plunge, after which you need to adjust and adapt to a whole new way of life

“maybe if you're a high-flying banker the hotel can be more expensive than if you're a researcher working for a biotech company, but the same feeling of emptiness can entrap you in both circumstances

need to adjust and adapt to a whole new way of life. And then you must wait several months before knowing how you truly feel about your new job. Whether you say you like or not, it will mostly be a matter of attitude – you need to be willing to like it regardless of what happens, otherwise you may be faced with the need to quit it altogether. A middle ground is hard to strike and impossible to maintain. The “kiss of death” in any company is when you are accused of lack of commitment, i.e. they see you don't like what you're doing.

The bottom line is that when you can't change things, you need to change your attitude towards them. You will miss your time at the university and you will have existential crisis in times of greater stress. You will wonder what went wrong. Everyone in all conceivable professional choices experience such times and the answer is the same every time: change your attitude and allow time to pass. Don't be afraid and don't jump into any decision. If after all you really want to change, do so, but only after giving the current one the best shot you possibly can.



i-cam

# The Joys of Procrastination

by Hetal Kiran Patel  
designed by Laurence Biche-Carrière

**M**y room is spotless, my wardrobe is arranged by colour, style and occasion, and my housemates have been force-fed a mountain of baked goods (I bake when I'm agitated, sue me!). My thesis, however, is only half a dozen pages long! I have a sneaky feeling that I'm not alone in this though! I'm procrastinating; I know I am and I know you do too ... it's just so easy to! There is always something on TV and even if there is not I have a mountain of DVDs I would happily watch for the 50th time! Phone calls home now last about 3 hours while I minutely describe to my mother how exactly my day was. And I am actually beginning to suspect that the Internet was designed to provide infinite possibilities for procrastination ([www.bored.com](http://www.bored.com) is particularly good at this!). I would give up my network cable but for the fact that I would probably go into acute withdrawal and a PhD student going cold-turkey isn't a pleasant sight for anyone!

I was determined to get my act together last Saturday and actually do something productive on my thesis. My parents have been wondering when I'm going to finish, my supervisor wants to know when I will get a job and free some desk space, while the student loans company wants to speak to me urgently (sh!, if anyone asks, you haven't seen me!). I thought the best way to do this would be to enjoy the rare sunshine by cycling down to Grantchester. I got a little fresh air, ate a scone (OK ... 3), I cycled back home (happily racing a gorgeous Labrador and trying not to mow down his Pomeranian friend), I sat down at my desk, ready to write ... and then Doctor Who came for dinner .... Needless to say, I spent the next 5 hours watching TV and then I fell asleep!

I know I need to get a move on if I ever want to get on with the rest of my life, but it's going to be a tough fight. And yes, it hasn't escaped my notice that I am procrastinating by writing articles for GOWN Magazine. Cut me some slack, at least I've been writing something! That's more than usual these days!







# Married Graduates at Cambridge

by Nitu Duggal

Designed by  
Klaudia Bartel

Along with the academically challenging life at Cambridge, there are a small number of graduate members who have also accepted the challenges of family responsibilities. As five married graduate members – M. Irfan, T. Denmead, N. Sastry, A. Bartel and S. Ghosh – share their experiences in this article, there is one experience that is common to all of them that is the delight of being close to their loved ones...





### Muhammad Irfan

is studying for a PhD in International Studies. He is a member of St John's College. A civil servant at the Ministry of Commerce in Pakistan, Irfan completed an MPhil in 2007-08 before starting his PhD this year. His wife Sharmeen is with him in Cambridge.

A  
married graduate  
is looking  
to balance  
full time studies  
on the one hand, and  
fulfil domestic  
responsibilities  
on the other

### The university centre brings married graduates together:

The university centre and the Graduate Union provide special places for families (even those with children) to get together and share their experiences. It is a way of bringing all those in a similar situation together, and learning from each other how to make the most of those opportunities. I know the university centre has special coffee mornings on Tuesdays (might need to check the correct day) for students with families and it is a good way to exchange views on life in Cambridge and how each one is coping with it.

### College has many facilities:

Accommodation is generally the most important issue for any married newcomers and I have been lucky in that my college provides independent accommodation for us. Usually this is an independent flat of 1 or 2 bedrooms and is self-contained.

The college also treats spouses as its members. Hence spouses have access to almost all the facilities that the student has. This means that they can eat at the dining hall / buttery, make use of the students' library, common room, fitness centre and any other facilities that the college offers its students.

Apart from that the college students' committee (the MCR / SBR committee) has a specific 'family rep' in its ranks that takes care of any issues or welfare concerns the family might have. Organising specific events for students with families and raising their concerns with the committee or bringing them to the notice of the college administration is one of the tasks of this rep.

The college nurse at the health centre is also available for spouses to take care of general ailments and also helps with the access to local GP clinics or hospitals. Personally I found our health centre to be of great help for me and my wife, as the nurse almost always had the right advice and answers for the questions we had.



## Gates Cambridge Trust provides funding for dependants:

Funding bodies, such as the Gates trust, have a special dependent's allowance which covers maintenance costs for the dependents of graduate students. This includes not only the spouse but also the children if the family have any. The amount is generally sufficient to cover BoGS cost requirement for having dependents in Cambridge.

Moreover, the Gates Trust also tries to involve scholars with families in its social activities. Most of the social events organized by the council are open to spouses and family members and some special events are also arranged so that the 'Gates families' can get to know each other better, and share experiences. The Gates community in this regard, is helpful, involving and supportive in every way.

## Responsibilities:

Apart from all there is to do at Cambridge as a graduate student, married life brings its own responsibilities. Your family needs your time and attention. There are domestic issues to be taken care of apart from studies. This also includes the added responsibility of managing an independent flat / married accommodation. Couple's flats do not generally have bedders come in to tidy up the rooms and general housekeeping and food etc are all your responsibilities. With this added responsibility, there is also an expectation of maturity that being a married graduate brings.

## Constraints on Time:

The biggest challenge as a married graduate is to balance your time commitments. A married graduate is looking to balance full time studies on the one hand, and fulfil domestic responsibilities on the other. At the same time, there is the whole Cambridge experience that includes seminars, talks, walks, clubs, different societies and a host of extra-curricular activities. Altogether the life of a married graduate is generally very busy.

## Challenges as opportunities:

Where there is a challenge, the experience itself is unique and enjoyable. I have always looked at challenges as opportunities. The best way is for your spouse and family to share your experience in every way. Let them be involved in all the talks, events, parties and get-togethers you would normally go to. It becomes enjoyable if you have your spouse with you, and you don't have to worry about having left someone at home alone. Getting your family involved in your daily activities also means you share the domestic responsibilities and the load is halved already. In this sense, being married may even come as a blessing.

## Suggestions for prospective graduates:

It is imperative to do your research about where you want to stay, which college you should choose, what facilities are available from departments and funding bodies etc. In this way, you will come prepared. If you are thinking of coming here and leaving your family behind for fear of the difficulties it might pose – think again. Cambridge might be the best thing that could happen to you as a married graduate – as it did to me. Let your family be a part of your Cambridge experience and it will not only enrich your life and your family's but also the lives of families that interact with you during your stay!

## Tyler Denmead

is studying for a PhD at the Faculty of Education. He is a member of Queens' college. From Brown University (USA) to Cambridge (UK), his wife Katherine and daughter Virginia have been an integral part of his experiences.

I think my wife and daughter have benefited very much from being able to meet so many wonderful people from around the world through existing resources for families

## Doing it all together:

We were advised by some graduate students that it may be best for the family to split up because of the time and pressure of being a graduate student, particularly the MPhil. But we decided that graduate school and living abroad was an experience the whole family should benefit from so we decided to try to work it out.

## Cambridge is friendly for kids:

I am a member of Queens', which has a wonderful nursery. The college is kid-friendly, hosting, for example, a Christmas party for kids every year. To be honest, I don't take advantage of the resources nearly as much as my wife and daughter, who attend family events through the Graduate Union every week.

## Work- life balance is tough:

It is a tough balance. My wife knows that I'm generally incommunicative and in another world for a few weeks toward the end of each term. I think we're both getting better at dealing with it, I'm a little less absent and she's a little more forgiving. But it was tough in the beginning, and still is tough.

## For prospective graduates with families:

Cambridge is a friendly place for families – with so much green space, a lot of young families, etc. I think my wife and daughter have very much benefited from being able to meet so many wonderful people from around the world through existing resources for families. My advice for prospective graduates for families is to sign up for the Child-care newsletter, go to the weekly coffee at the Graduate Union, meet people, and don't be afraid to ask parents who have been here for help. We are sympathetic to new students who are trying to figure out how to move, where to live, childcare, etc. and will always do what we can to help.



## Having a partner to talk to can be a great help when it comes to coping with the downturns of a PhD

### Spouse is part of college life:

The college provides excellent couples accommodation (flats). Spouses/partners are welcomed as part of the college, and can even get a college card that provides access to several common places such as the gym, library as well as meals in the college buttery. They are invited and included in all events. This lets me be a part of the college without excluding my wife from the activities.

### Supporting each other:

Having a partner to talk to can be a great help when it comes to coping with the downturns of a PhD. In my case, my wife is also a great person to brainstorm my ideas with. I also get to discuss ideas about her subject, which I find very interesting.

### Balancing work and home:

The main challenge is that being together and committing to do social things can take a significant amount of time away from work. It helps to have a strict separation between work and family/social life, with specific hours set aside for work.

### Advice for prospective graduates:

Pick a college that is friendly to married graduates (in my case, this happened almost by accident). Especially if you are not able to live close to college, it is difficult to get involved in all its activities, and get a complete "Cambridge experience".

### Nishanth Sastry

is studying for a PhD in Computer Science. He is a member of St John's College. Originally from India, he worked with IBM for five years in USA before deciding to pursue a PhD. His wife, Viji, was also a Cambridge graduate and is setting up a lab in the genetics department.





## Alex Bartel

is studying for a PhD in Pure Mathematics. He is a member of St John's College. His wife Klaudia and daughter Alina are with him in Cambridge

### The flexibility of doing a PhD and having a family:

I should mention that, apart from being unemployed, no other endeavour offers as much flexibility and in consequence as much quality time with the family as graduate studies. Typically, when studying for a PhD, you are not subject to a rigid time table and can decide when to work and when to play with the children on a day-to-day or even an hourly basis. Of course the particulars depend on how far away from the department you live, how essential it is to be in the department (as a mathematician I can sometimes work while lying on a sofa but as an experimental physicist I would have some trouble doing that, now that Newton et al. have covered most of the immediately observable laws of physics), whether the child is sent to a nursery or whether one has a partner who is able and willing to stay at home full time and so on.

Tricks like reading a novel before going to sleep, or playing a musical instrument, or watching a film, or chatting with your friends about something not work related, all these familiar methods of draining the brain after work completely pale in comparison with holding your baby in your arms for a couple of minutes

### Child interferes with work or work interferes with being with the child?

One question which is almost invariably asked by people who don't have children themselves is "how much do children impede your work". Obviously, the answer depends vastly on your work pattern, on the character of the child, on the support from your partner and on many other factors. But in fact, the child can even help your work. I only recently realised what an efficient insulator my daughter is between work and sleep. Sleepless nights, lying in the bed with open eyes and pondering over the question that has occupied my brain all day, used to be common for me and I tended to be rather worn out the next day, and none the wiser. For a year after my daughter was born, this phenomenon completely vanished. Tricks like reading a novel before going to sleep, or playing a musical instrument, or watching a film, or chatting with your friends about something not work related, all these familiar methods of draining the brain after work completely pale in comparison with holding your baby in your arms for a couple of minutes. In no time, everything that seemed important during the day is put into its proper perspective and you are guaranteed a reinvigorating and sound sleep. And believe me, waking up in the middle of the night to give your baby the soother (s)he has lost and then dropping back into bed is bliss compared to lying awake for hours and going in circles about an abstract problem. All this is not to say that a child does not take time away from work (although I tend to think the other way round, that work takes away time I would like to spend with my child). It is up to you to spend the time you do work the more efficiently.

### The Graduate Union:

The large play group organised by the Graduate Union is a fantastic meeting place for young parents and their toddlers. There are also different networks of students who support each other by sharing clothes, nannies and other useful things, or simply experience.

### Cambridge environment:

Cambridge is a caring and inspiring environment for a child to grow up in. You will start missing the adoring glances in your baby's direction from passers by and the helpfulness of your College officers and of people you have never met before if you eventually end up outside of the Cambridge bubble.

For prospective graduates:

The purpose of this article is not so much to encourage graduate students to become parents if they don't feel ready for it, but to take away the last fears of those who have all but decided anyway.



## Two good reasons for having a family in Cambridge:

1) We want to be together :) It makes my life more decent (I don't have to cook for myself).

2) Financially it works out well because she can work fulltime, so we can stay in a flat and still save more money than I could save staying alone in single accommodation.

## Home away from home:

The biggest advantage is of course you have someone of your own to share your thoughts with. You get the much required support and inspiration! You get a home away from home.

## Work- life balance:

Bringing research thoughts home is not always welcomed by my spouse, especially if the weather is dull and her mood is down. Also staying late in the lab on too many occasions can be disastrous for marital bliss. It is also difficult to study at home. But sharing domestic chores – cleaning, washing, shopping and completely giving up cooking saves a lot of time. Maintaining a work- life balance for a PhD student can be tough and needs to be practised meticulously. It becomes easier if your spouse is a bit lenient :)

## Advice for married graduates:

- 1) Start working early in the day so that you don't come home too late. You must be more organized than a single student.
- 2) You can share thoughts about your research/lab work with your spouse. It's needed for inspiration too, but don't discuss lab/supervisor problems at home: Manage them on your own.
- 3) Ensure that your spouse gets a job quickly. For freshers in the UK, searching for jobs at the local job centre and in local newspapers are the best options as agencies seek experience. Once experienced, agencies are good options. Private tuition at home is a good option too. For cheap

## Sourav Ghosh

is studying for a PhD at the nanoscience center. He is a member of Corpus Christi College. After completing an MSc in Biomedical Engineering from Oxford, Sourav decided to continue his studies as a married graduate in Cambridge. His wife Mahashweta works while he studies.

## You must be more organized than a single student

houses contact agencies and Cambridge classifieds. Classifieds are a good place for stuff like bikes, kitchen equipment etc.

4) Socialize on the weekends. Get to know your community. Go on some local trips sometimes. And

5) The first year is very demanding because of exams and report submissions. Five full working days should be utilized and spouses should be ready to sacrifice a Saturday if needed.







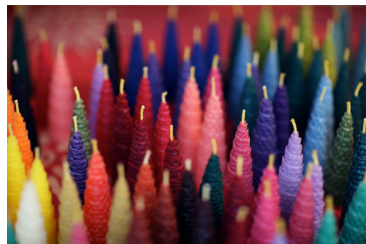
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Krystal Chen



Krystal Chen



Krystal Chen



Cheng Zhan



John Lee



Krystal Chen





## Cambridge Photo Page

### 20 Hours @ Market Square

Market Square, while seen as rather undistinguished, is one of the main landmarks of Cambridge and has been around for centuries. Originally there were buildings behind Great St. Mary's Church before being destroyed in a fire in 1849. Market Square was then created. At one stage it took up the whole area between Great St. Mary's, St Edward's, St Andrew the Great and Holy Trinity. These days, more modest in size, the stalls are open 7 days a week and sell a range of crafts, flowers, homemade food, clothes and all sorts of funky stuff.

On Sunday 14th December 2008, while people were busy Christmas shopping, we set up a camera and took hourly shots of the Market Square over a 20 hour period. During this time we infiltrated Market Square to capture every bit of the Christmas atmosphere emerging from the very centre of Cambridge. At the post-editing stage, we compressed the panorama photos according to their chronological order, i.e. the very left corresponds to the scene at 4am, the middle refers to that at 1pm, and the very right is the scene at 12 midnight. Candid and interesting photos were also selected to present "20 hours @ Market Square".

John, "It was a really unique and challenging experience taking photos for such a long period of time, especially under chilly and windy weather conditions. Nevertheless, it was indeed enjoyable and fun! I hope you will all like our photos."

Krystal, "It has been great fun working on this photo project despite the fact that minus degree temperatures made us shiver on the day. The first time I had ever carefully visualized what happens 'in this busy little 'heart of Cambridge'!"

#### Photographers

John Lee  
Krystal Chen  
Cheng Zhan



John Lee



Krystal Chen



Krystal Chen



John Lee



# Cambridge Alumni in Cyprus

Cypriot Engineers who have paired academic excellence with professional success

Designed by  
Klaudia Bartel  
Photographs by

by Louiza Mallouri

Andreas Papadopoulos

The University of Cambridge is one of the top academic institutions in the world. Its alumni have excelled in various fields such as that of academia, literature, media and politics. In this edition, Gown focuses on two talented Cambridge alumni who live and work in Cyprus. Andreas Papadopoulos and Ares Neophytou have both studied Engineering at the University of Cambridge; they have followed very different career paths and are now very successful in their fields. Andreas and Ares talk about their life in Cambridge, their professional development and offer valuable advice to current Cambridge graduates.

## Andreas Papadopoulos

Andreas has a BA in Chemical Engineering and a Masters in Engineering (First Class Honours), both from the University of Cambridge. He subsequently specialized in Finance for his Masters degree in Business Administration at Wharton Business School. Andreas worked in a multinational firm in the USA and Germany and is currently the Manager of Group Strategy at the Hellenic Bank in Cyprus. Andreas is also a talented photographer, adding his own personal signature when capturing the people and nature of his island.

### A Childhood Dream

When I was six years old, I visited Cambridge with my parents. It was then that my mum told me, 'When you grow up, you might come here to study'. It was, in a way, a dream for me from a very, very young age, and it was kind of natural from that age onwards that I was going to go to Cambridge. I kind of knew it!

### Life in Cambridge

Life was very much as I had imagined. College life, student life .... Cambridge is such a beautiful student city: one has her/his bicycle, wanders around, goes to lectures, parties with her/his flatmates .... I guess what was unexpected for me

was that studying was mostly self-driven: if you want to go to lectures you go, if you don't want to, you don't go. So if you don't like what you are doing, you are in trouble.

### A great many societies and one more

I love the number of societies the University of Cambridge has! As if there weren't enough, I founded one more: Cambridge University Table Football club. I remember we used to organise games against Oxford, which we won of course. I have no regrets regarding my life there, but I could have taken more advantage of the social aspect.

### Moving to the United States of America

After my studies in Cambridge I worked in the USA and Germany, gaining quite diverse experiences. In the USA everything has an extra zero at the end. Germany was fascinating because Germans are very disciplined and very organised. I felt that they may lack some creativity, but it was a great learning experience for me because they do things in a very organised manner.



### Moving back to Cyprus

It is always difficult to come back and make a new start. You start by taking a pay cut of 70%. You have to adjust to that, but the cost of living is much lower. There is also an adjustment in the sense that you need to learn the business world and see how things work.

### Career progression

When I came back to Cyprus there was no strategy department at the Hellenic Bank ... we started building with a few other people what is now the group strategy, which was quite a good challenge for me. I am in the fortunate position of seeing the entire bank; I can choose what to focus on while studying the opportunities outside the bank and I can see the areas of growth and the areas that need to be focused upon,



whether locally or abroad. Clearly, the amount of time and effort and vision you have to put into your job reflects how much job satisfaction you have in what you do.

## A parallel career in photography

Photography is more than a hobby. It's a very serious pastime and has been since the age of six when my parents bought me my first camera. I have been



taking photographs forever: capturing moments, whether you are recording them on film or on digital sensors and keeping them forever, is something very special. I am attracted to simplicity and to nature. Sure, I take photographs of people but the biggest pleasure comes from primitive ways of life: it could be a bird sitting on a stone at sunrise or it could be a beautiful full moon over a natural bridge built by the sea.

## Future goals

I suppose it is time I settled down, started a family and had kids running around...! Work wise, I am quite happy. I can see myself continuing my current job. As for other extracurricular activities, I have to mention water sports... that's my other passion, especially sailing and windsurfing although I would call myself a novice. The most fun is during the learning curve, however, and that's what I am looking forward to...

## Pieces of advice

Cambridge can be tough at times. For somebody coming from an environment where one was the best with little effort, suddenly everyone you're with was 'the best with little effort'. So it takes a little bit of time to adjust but it can really elevate your own standards because everyone has elevated standards. I would advise someone to have self-confidence even at times when they feel shaken. In the end they really get stronger. After finishing my exams I felt I could climb Mount Everest without any difficulty!

# Ares Neophytou

Ares holds a BA in Electrical Engineering and Information Science (First Class Honours) and a Ph.D. in Optoelectronic Engineering, both from the University of Cambridge. He has taught a variety of courses in electrical and control engineering to undergraduates, has spoken at international conferences and seminars, and has several technical publications to his credit. Ares Neophytou is co-founder and Director of Neodesy Limited, a firm that develops e-business and mobile solutions.

## Coming to Cambridge

I selected Cambridge for my undergraduate degree because it is one of the best universities in Engineering, and in Europe it is probably the best. I think the level of teaching is excellent and I think the supervision system is an excellent way of complimenting the lectures in terms of learning and working in small groups

## Career path

When I finished my degree, and even slightly before that, I knew that I did not want to stay in academia and research. So I tried to find a job in either management consulting or investment banking. It was very difficult to find a job in Europe because Cyprus at that time was not part of the EU so it was very difficult to acquire a work permit. I got a job offer in Canada doing research. It was a job I did not necessarily show much interest in but given the situation in Europe with work permits I decided to move to Canada. I worked there for a year and then spent the next one working for the National Research Council in Canada. Then I applied for the same jobs in the same companies I applied to in Europe and it was a much easier process. After only a few applications I got a job. By that time I had become a permanent resident of Canada so nationality did not matter anymore. I started a career in management consulting. I spent another 3 years working in France, Germany, Israel, UK and many other countries for shorter intervals.

## Why I returned to Cyprus

I got tired of flying. Having to take 100 flights a year could be approximately the same as a pilot's record. This type of lifestyle does not allow you to have a stable social life. At that time my brother was also finishing his PhD and he was very good at mathematical modelling and software. Along with a third friend who was also at Cambridge with us, (a former fellow of the Royal Society in Cambridge and currently a professor at Imperial College in Applied Mathematics), we decided to start a company doing financial models for the stock market. The idea was to use Cyprus as a good business base to create and market these models. When we came to Cyprus we met many different people and they threw in different ideas. We also pursued different ideas with the local banks. From all these different ventures we started 3 different companies. In the end the one that survived was the one my brother and I currently have.



## Founding our own company

Our current company was founded in 1999. The aim of Neodesy is to use the internet and modern communications to help people in the way they work and the way they live to make their lives more efficient and effective. With that in mind we had a very successful product at the beginning which was an internet broker service, a platform which was used by about 10 Cypriot stock brokers in 1999 – it was the bubble of the stock exchange so we had 30 % of the traffic of the stock exchange going into our server. We were their IT suppliers. Eventually all these stockbrokers closed down, so now we only have a bank serving on that platform. We then started offering different web-based products such as document management and content management, which was an innovation at the time in Cyprus. Unfortunately the Cypriot market does not appreciate 'high tech' much, at least not yet because companies do not understand the efficiency or the benefits they can have and do not invest very easily.

It is a very small market so if you create products and you sell them only once, it's very difficult to be a very successful company. We tried to move abroad as well, but this is also difficult for a small company. We do have some stable clients we



provide very specialized services to, so we are quite happy with the amount of effort we put in and the results we get. In the last couple of years we've diverged and decided to specialize in mobile internet and mobile software. We have also launched a brand called Telemobilo which is for these specific services .... The business has started moving but I think it will take a few more years before we have a lot of interest in this.

## Difficulties when moving back to Cyprus

The money that this company made, especially in the beginning, was comparable to what I was making abroad, but money is not such an issue if you are doing something you enjoy. I have friends in Cyprus with whom I have kept in touch with all these years so socially I didn't have much of a problem. Sometimes it's difficult to understand some of the behaviour and thinking in Cyprus, but then everyone complains about it, so the way to deal with it is to just find people with whom you can communicate. One of the things you learn in Cambridge is to be an individual and not to care too much about what other people think but to do what you think best. This is one of the best things I learned in Cambridge and if you apply this in Cyprus you can have a wonderful life.

## Being your own boss

When you have your own company you can inject a lot of your interests in the company. For example, I have an interest in creative activities so I can use mobile marketing and marketing in general, if it proves to be a viable business, as an outlet for my technologically artistic creativity. If we carry on more or less at this pace, I would be very happy because I would be able to control the workload and have a good life.

I'm looking forward to the future: maybe an opportunity will come up which will lead to bigger things but if it doesn't we are still happy enjoying the sun, sea and family life. It's a good thing to be able to manage your own schedule in a way that doesn't involve others. That's the great benefit of this way of life!

## Advice for aspiring entrepreneurs

The general advice would be to have a good idea and a passion for something and to pursue that. Be prepared to fail a few times and with a few ideas; you do not always succeed on your first attempt and your first idea will not always be a brilliant one. You have to be flexible and eventually you will get somewhere. It's not like a job where they tell you exactly what to do and what the salary is. Sometimes you start from one direction and you end up in another. As long as you like that direction it's fine. Flexibility, persistence and passion are probably the most important ingredients for progressing; however, success is something different: everyone has their own criteria of success.

# Science Journals Cover Art

By Mico Tatalovic

Designed by Andrew Caines

Science journals are the cornerstone of scientific research. Any respectful scientist publishes their research in peer-reviewed science journals to communicate their findings to the wider scientific audience. Many people are now pushing for open access publications and some even suggest that modern technology, with the possibility of sharing information and collaborating online through various networking sites and 'wikis', will eventually quench the need for expensive peer reviewed journals.

However, the reality is that most scientists still publish important work in science journals. This can lead to the stressful situation (that may potentially be detrimental to the quality of scientific research) in western countries, of the so called 'publish or perish' phenomenon where scientists have to publish a certain minimal number of papers in order to satisfy their departments and universities and to obtain further grants upon which their research depends. As such, these journals have the role of maintaining the high level of quality of published work as well as being interesting and attractive to readers. At the end of the day, if no one is reading the journals they become functionless.

The quality of journals varies and one way of looking at it is to compare the number of citations



made to the articles from different journals (the so called 'Impact Factor'). Whereas some journals have been around for a long time and have been recognised as the best (such as Nature and Science), others have only been around for a few years and are yet to establish their role as relevant and important messengers of modern science. With this distinction in mind, further distinctions in style, layout and the overall look of the journals are also evident. One of the most obvious and varying features is the look of the cover page of science journals. The cover art varies from none through to simple black and white drawings, to very complicated and elaborate computer



generated illustrations. A quick trip to any science library that displays the journals reveals this much, since cover art is the most visible part of any printed journal and the first point of contact with potential readers.

Some well established journals with presumably faithful readership, confident in the journal's quality and knowledgeable about its usual contents, have practically no cover art. The American Naturalist has a greyish blank page featuring only the title and no images of any kind. An artistic step up are the journals that always feature the same simple drawings such as Ibis and Insectes Sociaux or just the crest of the society that publishes the journal, for example Copeia. This may be black and white such as the drawings that feature on the cover of Australian Journal of Entomology, or in colour such as the drawing of animals on the cover of Ethology. Many journals will maintain the same image on their cover for many issues, but this may sometimes be more than just a simple peripheral drawing. A good example of this is the Animal Behaviour featuring Henri Rousseau's early 20th century painting (oil on canvas) of a tiger attacking a buffalo. This exemplifies how science can promote excellent art and how art can be used to promote and sell science. Other examples of this type of cover art are the Folia Primatologica and Crustaceana: an international journal of crustacean research that featured a reproduction of an 18th century water colour painting on its cover for a year. One of the issues of Functional Plant Biology featured a reproduction of a colourful stained glass based on a drawing by a scientist to whom that issue was dedicated. Some of these journals maintain the same cover artwork (or lack of it) for many issues, often for a year, sometimes even for many years.

Other journals prefer to change the cover art with each issue. Systematic Biology may feature a reproduction of a painting of tuatara (intriguing lizard-like animal) done in acrylic by palette knife in one issue and a photograph of snail shells in the next. Some journals constantly use photographs of the topics featured inside the journal. Cover images of scientists' research increases visibility of the work so lobbying to get one's work on the cover could be beneficial. Because of this, competition for whose work makes it to the cover of the journal can be fierce and very political. Sometimes it depends on whether the scientist is willing to pay the costs of producing the cover image. Photography art for covers is used by Animal Conservation, Ecology, Behavioural Ecology, Genes and Development, British Wildlife, Molecular Ecology and Evolution, to mention just a few. Whereas

photography seems quite a standard thing to put on a cover of a journal, some may be fascinating as is demonstrated by many of the photographs from the Wildlife Photographer of the Year Awards. Also, microphotography of cellular tissues and structures may be equally fascinating and more mysterious than anything we usually see in photos.

Recent advances in graphic design, illustration software and printing all mean that breathtaking 3D computer-generated images may be used to illustrate scientific ideas. Many journals have embraced this advance and regularly feature such images on their covers. Nature, Science and Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences use different artwork for each issue. Such artwork is flexible in that it can be used to demonstrate various ideas otherwise unrepresentable by photos.

However, it also has its caveats as some argue it can be misleading and scientifically inaccurate: it betrays some scientific principles while trying to illustrate others. Writing for Nature Julio Ottino, an engineer at Northwestern University, USA, states that science illustrations are often left in the hands of artists and as such may "deny the physics of the situation". They can be so 'realistic' as to appear real although they would not actually look that way at all if they were indeed real photographs. For example, one of the Science's cover images depicted 'nanocircuits' with carbon atoms showing and being held down by golden racks; however, if one can see the carbon atoms then gold atoms would also be visible. Also, the shadows and reflections depicted in the image wouldn't be there at the nanoscale the image is depicting. Another example is an award winning image of a 'nanolouse' - a small imaginary machine that lands and injects substances into red blood cell. However, at such a small scale forces and rules governing docking of such a machine and its interaction with the red blood cell would be nothing like they are at our scale; once again, the physics of the world we see is projected onto the nano-scale where things work differently. This image also depicts something that does not exist and is fantasy rather than science. Ottino suggests setting down rigid rules to render use of illustrations in science, including cover art, realistic and plausible so they do not violate the known laws of nature.

Not everyone agrees with this. In reply to Ottino, Ippollito, a professional science illustrator from the American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA, says the images used on covers are there to enhance the editorial rather than to illustrate the research. Science illustrations are often produced as that



collaborations between scientists and artists and they purposely omit detail to clarify the concepts they depict. Whereas he also agrees that cover art should be as accurate as possible, he thinks the readers are intelligent enough to make the distinction between a “beautifully rendered concept and the current state of research”. This is also embraced by the National Science Foundation, USA, which runs a yearly science and technology visualisation challenge to showcase the best photographs, drawing, illustrations and graphics for communicating science. So the opinions vary on the use of computer generated art work for science journal covers. This type of artwork definitely has the power to be versatile and to inspire imagination of the potential readers and so is also widely used by popular science magazines such as Scientific American, New Scientist and Cosmos.

So far, all of the examples discussed were straightforward attempts at illustrating some scientific topic or idea: from no artwork, through to simple drawings, famous and less famous paintings, photographs and 3D computer-generated artwork. There is, however, a recent conceptual development in cover art on science journals best

exemplified and pioneered by some of the Elsevier publishing group's journals. These include Trends in Cell Biology, Trends in Biochemical Science and Trends in Evolution. Here the science from the headlines and leading articles is used to make a mental association, almost a subconscious link in the tradition of surrealist artists, between scientific concepts and everyday mundane images. This then results in sometimes funny, sometimes weird, sometimes ironic and sometimes just interesting cover art. “The P13K inhibitor arsenal: choose you weapon” headline is illustrated by a photo of medieval weaponry (spears, swords etc), “SUMO-specific proteases: a twist in the tail” is illustrated by colour drawings of Japanese sumo fighters, “Asymmetric cell division” has a photo of an asymmetric looking bridge, “Individual recognition” is accompanied by a photo of many identical looking penguins packed together, “Water movements in the brain” is presented with an image of a fountain in a sunny park...

Stephen Ritter, senior editor and writer for Chemistry and Engineering News (C&EN) says

cover art might be losing its importance now that most journals are increasingly read online. However, most scientists interviewed for Ritter's article in the C&EN found it gratifying to have one's work feature on the cover. Yet he notes it is often expensive for a journal to produce cover art. On the positive side, once produced, cover art can be used for promotional material such as flyers, brochures and even calendars. Interestingly, journal cover art can promote sexual stereotypes as suggested by Jocalyn Clark's research published in the British Medical Journal that discusses cover art of the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA). This research found that out of the JAMA's covers featuring humans, images of men were always in authoritative roles and women were depicted either with a baby or in the nude. In such a way, journal cover images may promote sexual stereotypes.

So, artwork on cover journals is as varied as the journals themselves. Some have no art, others have traditional art (reproduction of old

paintings) and yet others use computer software to produce engaging 3D art. Some have the same cover for each issue; others change the artwork with each issue. Some only use photography, or

computer generated images; others may have art done in one medium for one issue and a completely different type of art for the following issue. Many attempt to illustrate faithfully some organism, structure or theory from the articles; others play with the ideas and associations resulting in smart yet unorthodox and colourful covers. What all this seems to illustrate is a move away from traditional science journals aimed solely at academics, to modern journals aimed at scientists, students, teachers, science communicators and lay audience alike. The diversity of art on science journal covers is intriguing and beautiful.

<http://pubs.acs.org/cen/science/84/8445sci1.html>  
<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=28304>  
<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v422/n6927/full/422015a.html>

“... this then results in sometimes funny, sometimes weird, sometimes ironic and sometimes just interesting cover art”





# BOOK REVIEW.

***Sex in Consumer Culture: the Erotic Content of Media and Marketing* edited by Tom Reichert and Jacqueline Lambiase; New York: Routledge; 2006; 369 pages; ISBN 0805850902.**

By Manzoorul Abedin

designed by Abderahmen Zoghbi

Freud might have overstated the case in claiming that everything people do can be linked to sex, but his ideas have had a deep impact on the development of theories and research models about sex and consumption patterns. Sex sells. It always has, beyond that cliché's inevitable appearance in media and marketing conversations. Despite the presence of sexual information in mainstream advertising, either in the form of sexual behavior, nudity, scantily-clad models, fetishism, or promises of sexual fulfillment and intimacy, few sources are available to those interested in studying this multifaceted phenomenon. Although sexual appeals are used to sell more products—and to boost popularity of media products such as television programming, films, magazines, music, and web sites—many scholars and consumers are still unable to describe “if” and “how” sex sells. *Sex in Consumer Culture: the Erotic Content of Media and Marketing* addresses these concerns by bringing together writers, thinkers, and researchers from several disciplines to examine what sex “is” in marketing, how it works, and how it may affect consumers and society.

Exploring how sex is used to eroticize media, chapters in the first section, entitled “Sexualizing Media”, describe the nature of sexual content in mainstream media forms, including film, music videos, video games, magazines and sports programming. For example, Mary Beth Oliver and Sriram Kalyanaraman in “Using Sex to Sell Movies: A Content Analysis of Movie Trailers” report the results of sexual content analysis in movie trailers. The authors indicate that in

addition to public relations efforts and the creation of a “buzz”, trailers are a primary form of movie promotion, in which sexual content is in a sizeable portion. A related piece, Julie Andsager’s “Seduction, Shock, and Sales” provides a concise review of sex in music video research, and argues that women such as Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, Madonna and Shania Twain brand themselves sexually and often rebrand themselves in relation to the status and goals of their music careers. Similarly, in “Voluptuous Vixens and Macho Males: A Look at the Portrayal of Gender and Sexuality in Video Games”, Stacy L. Smith and Emily Moyer-Guse show how sex also finds expression in video-game culture, stimulating not only “incalculable sales” of the game, but also producing a lucrative cult following. The authors draw on examples like Lara Croft, the animated and freakishly curvaceous heroine of the popular Tomb Raider video game, who inspired two subsequent films featuring Angelina Jolie.

The first two chapters of the second section (“Sexualizing products”) provide valuable overviews of the types and levels of sexual content directed toward two audiences: adolescents and internet users. Other chapters in this section examine erotic advertising content in specific product categories such as fashion, digital cameras, and beer. Carol Pardun and Kathy Forde examine “mediated sex” in their chapter, “Sexual Content of Television Commercials Watched by Early Adolescents”, and find that sexual content directed to these vulnerable audiences varies according to audience, race and gender. Although Jason Chambers is a historian, he interprets three rather contemporary and controversial beer campaigns as ways in which marketers attempt to sexually brand their products while appealing to young males, and suggests why two of these campaigns were more effective than the third. In “From Polo to Provocateur: (Re) Branding Polo/Ralph Lauren with Sex in Advertising”, Tom Reichert and Tray LaCaze carefully navigate their way through the use of sex in the fashion industry.



The authors speculate on how and why a successful fashion brand such as Polo/Ralph Lauren can successfully sexualize its image. Fashion advertising also serves as the subject of Debra Merskin's work on pornographic conventions used by women's clothing makers in advertising. She uses film, communication, and fashion theories to weave together sexually-oriented narratives that emerge from fashion advertising. While these pornographic codes may serve as subtext within such advertising, they work to normalize objectification of women and girls as sexually available.

"Sexualizing People", the final section of the book, focuses on people themselves as participants in erotic branding, as stereotypes, and as consumers of eroticized media. Corporate America often uses female workers to sexually brand products and services in live promotional activities. Using in-depth narrative interviewing of female employees, Jacqueline Lambiase chronicles and interprets these activities through semiotic analysis. Expected by their employers to generate "cocktail-party and call-girl vibes", these female employees use physical attractiveness, eroticized clothing, and well-known sexual scripts to sell products and attract attention. Using examples of people featured in the "Style" section of the New York Times Magazine, Stephen Gould shows how types of people become sexualized. Gary Soldow uses historical methods to demonstrate

the wily way in which marketers target gay audiences with homoerotic imagery. As the ultimate embodiment of "sexualizing people", a study by Larry Lance explores how people sell themselves when looking for romantic partners in personal ads. His analysis convincingly demonstrates that product manufacturers and media promoters are not the only ones who use sex to attract audiences, brand products and sell goods.

That sex is ubiquitous is no surprise. The visual "sex noise" surrounds us in films, music videos, television programming, web content, magazine, book covers and beyond. There is, therefore, a substantial need for addressing the issue of sex in consumer culture with insightful research and constructive debate. Because scholars from both the sciences and humanities have been discussing sexual appeals inside disciplinary boundaries, in my opinion, this collection allows dialogue to occur across those boundaries to create synergy among these varied perspectives. In addition, because sex is wrapped up in issues of power, sexuality, gender, and culture, it is important to talk about these appeals from multiple perspectives. To this end, *Sex in Consumer Culture: the Erotic Content of Media and Marketing* can help those interested in the nature, nuances and evolution of erotic appeals in media, advertising content and promotional culture.

W O R D F E S T  
R E V I E W

## Wordfest Review – "Advanced Banter: The QI Book of Quotations"

On Sunday 30th November at 10pm, Cambridge's Wordfest was rounded off with an hour of comic banter from John Lloyd and John Mitchinson – the people behind the successful TV show QI and, most recently, the authors of "Advanced Banter: The QI Book of Quotations".

The audience was poised for an evening of comedy from two people who have made their living out of being funny, and in the main they lived up to expectations. John Lloyd, who is also responsible for such comedy classics as 'To the Manor Born' and 'Not the Nine o'clock News', delighted the audience with tales of his days in Footlights; even reviving an extremely funny sketch about punting. For someone who is best known for his work behind the scenes, he had the ease and presence of a stand up comedian. In contrast John Mitchinson contributed very little and seemed uncomfortable on stage; unequal to the comic banter of his colleague. This awkwardness was compounded by occasional moments of confusion

and disorganization and the sense that the pair was under rehearsed. However, the duo still managed to win over the audience with their wit and humour.

While the aim was undoubtedly to publicize their book "Advanced Banter: The QI Book of Quotations", the majority of the evening was focused on the evolution of QI and how the pair came to be interested in fascinating facts, including those relating to kangaroo vaginas and tides in the Mediterranean! The huge success of the TV show meant that this deviation was well received even though it detracted from the main reason behind the talk. However, eventually the conversation turned to the book in question with John Mitchinson reading out certain selected examples. The book aims to provide the reader with quotations for any situation, which is no exaggeration given that it lists topics ranging from Aliens right through to Windows, offering the perfect aid to any conversation! All in all the evening lived up to its humorous expectations and was an enjoyable and comic close to the Wordfest. It not only highlighted the enjoyment that comes from knowing interesting facts but also the fun of having witty quotations based on observations from life.

by Liane L. Smith



## The Laws of Attraction Vol. 2

by Lapson Fan  
designed by Andrew Caines

### Women – The substance of dreams

While our female counterparts have gained sophistication and greater complexity in their selection of a potential partner, we males have sadly progressed very little from our ancestral caveman mentality. The same qualities which were judged to be attractive by our hairy ancestors are still very much the same as the ones we use today, namely the aspects which display fitness for reproduction, fertility and sustenance. These include youth, waist-hip ratio, breast size and general body mass. Having said that, the non-physical qualities have become more important for the male in the modern age, especially when choosing a long-term partner.

### Youth

A woman's reproductive value decreases exponentially after the age of 20 and, as such, evolution favours men who are attracted to youth in a mate as she is more likely to be successful at reproduction. One study across 37 cultures demonstrated that men, on average, prefer women 2.5 years younger than themselves. Nigeria and Zambia lead the table with preference for women 6.5 to 7.5 years younger. This study was done on men predominately in their prime and I'm sure if subject groups were older the age gap would likely to be larger. Youth is such a significant factor that even if you fell down the ugly tree and were hit by a frying pan on the way down, there would be old men out there who would find you attractive. This preference of youth has also led to a preference for physical features that suggest youthfulness such as full lips, clear eyes, smooth skin and lustrous hair.

### Body mass

Body mass Index (BMI) is another universally important determinant of attraction. There are very few fat women who are considered to be attractive. To many men, a good figure is more important than facial features as it is much easier to hide a face (paper bags can be handy)

than a body. What constitutes a good figure differs across various cultures: most of modern society considers slim and slender body mass to be ideal while some historic cultures had a preference for plumper body mass. What is interesting, however, is the suggestion, in a book by David Buss, that men historically had no preference for any particular build, but rather



evolved to prefer whichever female build was associated with higher social status. This means that if fatness was a positive trait we would all be walking around with fat girls.

It is worth noting that just as men over-estimate the muscle bulk considered attractive by women, women over-estimate men's preference for thinness. In one study women were asked what their ideal and most attractive build were. Women choose slimmer than average for both

choices; but when men were independently asked to choose the female build most attractive to them, they chose figures with average builds.

### Waist Hip Ratio

Despite cultural differences in exact ratios of preference, there seems to be a general trend for certain ratios. For example: women with waist hip ratio of 0.7, waist circumference that is 70% of the hip circumference, are considered to be more attractive by European men. Many of the hot movies stars such as Marilyn Monroe had hip ratios of around 0.7. For other cultures the preferred ratio varied from 0.6 in China to 0.8-0.9 in South America. For those who are more visually oriented, 0.7 is violin-shaped, while 0.8-0.9 is violin-shaped viewed on a wide screen TV.

### Height

The preference for height probably arose as a consequence of the fact that tall women were more likely to be man-beaters than short women, so there is a selection/survival pressure for men to choose partners who are shorter than themselves. It seems that shorter women have greater reproductive success, which is not surprising considering that men generally perform badly when in regular fear of their partners. Other postulated advantages of shorter females include the perception that they seem more youthful.

### Breast Size

We all have heard the phrase "size does not matter", but sadly it does not apply in certain cases, especially in physical attributes such as breasts. Despite cultural differences, the majority of men consider bigger breasts to be better, as it perhaps indicates greater fertility. It is this fascination with the larger size which drives many women and even girls to consider breast-enhancing surgery.





### Prototypicality

Studies have shown that when given a picture of a face, the more familiar it is – i.e. the more exposure you've had to it – the more it is deemed to be attractive, so don't despair if you are facially challenged – persistence will win you the day. In a particularly interesting experiment, subjects were asked to rate images of individual faces and then of the images when the faces were merged together. There was greater attraction towards the morphed faces compared to the individual faces. One interpretation of this experiment is that the morphed face contained features shared by most faces and is therefore the prototype. The prototypical face would seem to be more familiar and safe hence more attractive as there is an underlying preference for the safe and the familiar. The classical concepts of beauty are extensions of this prototypicality.

### Skin tone

Our skin tone ranges from light to dark, even in races with similar colour. The preference for the spectrum depends heavily on the culture, although there have been significant changes in Western culture in the last century. Traditionally, light skin was the preferred tone as it was a symbol of status, but nowadays darker-toned skin is the new craze. Some have suggested this as the result of the association of tanned skin with wealth (holidays abroad as the sun seems to miss the UK rather a lot) and health. The Eastern cultures still consider light skin tone/color as an essential component in the definition of beauty. Take Japan for example, where all girls take an umbrella with them when going out in the sun and the only tanned people are the porn stars; although I'm not quite sure how being tanned became associated with porn. Suggestions are welcome.

### Smell, pheromones and all that jazz

It really amazes me sometimes at the tolerance of the women with the smell of the many members of the male species who still smell like

they're living in a cave some time around 2000 BC. The smell of females, on the other hand, is very important to the male. One of the quickest ways to drive away a guy is to smell badly; but, thankfully, the numbers of smelly girls are far less than those of smelly guys.

Other than the obvious smell, subtle scents which are not consciously processed, such as the fabled pheromones, can also influence the way we select our potential partners. A study by the Philadelphia's Monell Chemical Senses asked a group of 82 straight and gay men and women to sniff underarm sweat collected from 24 donors of different gender and sexual orientation. The preferences of gay men were strikingly different from those of heterosexual men and women, and lesbian women:

- . Gay men preferred the odors of other gay men, and heterosexual women.

- . The smells of gay men were the least liked by heterosexual men and women, and lesbians.

So, next time you find a guy you instantly dislike for no apparent reason, it is probably because he is gay.

According to the lead researcher, their findings support the contention that gender preference has a biological component that is reflected in both the production of different body odours and the perception of, and response to, these odours.

A second study looked at the response of the brain to two

compounds suggested as potential pheromones: the testosterone derivative AND, and the estrogen-like steroid EST.

A total of 36 heterosexual men and women, and gay men were asked to smell samples of AND, EST and ordinary odours such as lavender while their brains were scanned. It was found that:

1. AND activated a part of the brain called the hypothalamus in homosexual men and heterosexual women, but not in heterosexual men.

2. EST activated the hypothalamus in heterosexual men alone.

Hypothalamus plays a major role in studies of animal sexual behavior and the detection of

“ one of the quickest ways to drive away a guy is to smell badly...”

animal sexual behavior and the detection of pheromones had been linked to a specific organ in the nose, the vomeronasal organ. Although this organ is absent, the response to the pheromone compounds may suggest the existence of other mechanisms of detection.[1]

Research by Astrid Juette and Professor Karl Grammer from the University of Vienna has found that men's perception of a woman's attractiveness is also altered by the pheromones. In their experiment, 66 men were exposed to synthetic vaginal

pheromones without their knowledge and then asked to rate the attractiveness of pictures of different women. They found the women to be more attractive after exposure to the pheromones; they also had increased testosterone in their saliva. Extrapolation from this study suggested that attractive women would make other less attractive women more attractive. An interesting concept, I have to say, so it might be something after all for less attractive women to have fit friends.

### Consequences of being attractive

I would like to finish the article with some comments about the social consequences of attractiveness, as there are some very interesting studies looking at the differences in individuals on opposing ends of the spectrum.

We all make assumptions about people we meet, some good and some bad. For those who are attractive, assumptions are more often associated with positive qualities such as success, intelligence and popularity. Many attractive people do have these qualities, but it's often due to a self-fulfilling prophecy as they are more likely to receive when growing up the kind of attention that helps to develop these characteristics. This extra attention could also cause opposite traits such as vanity, selfishness and narcissism.

A study conducted by the London Guildhall University on a cohort of 11,000 showed that those who described themselves as physically

attractive earned more income than those described themselves as less attractive. The less attractive population was on average 13% behind in the income race, and there was a further 5% decrease for those who were overweight. Sub-analysis of the study showed

that attractiveness in men played a much bigger part compared to the women, and contributed to as much as a 40% increase in income. It is thought that these findings were consistent across Europe. It is worth noting, however, that this was a very limited

study as it used self-reported attractiveness, rather than any objective criteria, and there were many confounding factors such as self-confidence, which is linked to higher income and physical attraction.

Attractive men and women are also more sexually active, have more partners, engage in a wider variety of sexual activities and have more casual sex, according to Nancy Etcoff of Harvard Medical School. In addition, they are apparently more prone to infidelity and more likely to have open relationships. Personally, that sounds like the bitter raving of someone who's never had an attractive girlfriend.

And for the finale, one question I would like to ask our readers is this: Are attractive people happy? You would have thought they would be, what with all the benefits I have listed above. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that there are a lot of attractive guys/girls who are not. Perhaps being physically attractive is not as wonderful as it would seem.

[1] Just for the reader's interest, you can purchase bottles of these pheromones for extortionate prices. Who knows, maybe a spray will lead to hordes of women falling all over you.

“ attractive men and women are more sexually active, have more partners, engage in a wider variety of sexual activities and have more casual sex...”





## Postcard from Bangladesh

# Closer to Nature at its Best

by Manzoorul Abedin  
Designed by Klaudia Bartel

Although most dictionaries say a large area of trees clumped together is a forest, someone with firsthand experience will probably insist that a forest is much more than this. Step inside and you'll discover a wide variety of plants, with lots of different animals living among them, and most of all, an outlandishly adventurous landscape. Talking about adventure, there could hardly be a better example than the Sundarbans. Just the name conjures up images of dense forest, wild royal Bengal tigers, untamed but placid spotted deer and a tropical wet terrain. The Sundarbans is perennially one of the most sought-after destinations in Bangladesh. Dense mangrove forests typically make it difficult to approach the Sundarbans, but for those who dare, it is one of the most natural and alluring places on earth.

The Bengali word Sundar generally means beautiful or pretty and ban/s means forest. However, it is widely believed that the name Sundarban was coined either from the forests of Sundari trees or from the forests of the samudra (sea), i.e. Samudraban, or from its association with the primitive tribe Chandrabandhe which was corrupted into the name Sundarban. The generally accepted explanation is its derivation from the Sundari tree, the most common tree in these forests. The forest lies at the mouth of the Ganges and is spread across areas of Bangladesh and West Bengal, India. The forest covers 10,000 sq. km, of which about 6,000 is in Bangladesh. Declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1997, the Sundarbans is intersected by a complex network of tidal waterways, mudflats and small islands of salt-tolerant mangrove forests. Sundarbans flora is characterized by a spectacular abundance of mangrove vegetation, including Sundari, Keora and Gewa creating one of the most lush yet intense jungles on earth. There are also extensive areas of sea and fresh water marshes, open grassland on sandy soils, and raised areas of terrestrial shrubs and trees providing numerous lookouts that consistently produce postcard-perfect snapshots.

The Royal Bengal Tiger is synonymous with the Sundarbans - its last stronghold. Considered the largest subspecies of big cats, the great Bengal tiger is believed to have migrated from south China and south-east Asia twelve thousand years ago. A male tiger can be as large as ten and a half feet in length and weigh more than five hundred pounds. The tiger's coat is deep amber, and the lines of its characteristic black shadow-stripes appear abstract and sophisticated. Solitary and secretive yet extremely aggressive, the Sundarbans' tigers are amphibious, and their diet includes meat and aquatic prey. Also included among other mammalian fauna are spotted deer, barking deer, Rhesus macaques, jungle cats, leopard cats, the Indian porcupine, the otter, Rhesus monkeys and wild boar.

The Sundarbans boasts a wealth of about fifty species of reptiles, the largest being the estuarine crocodile. Species of lizards, turtles, and snakes are well-represented, including the King Cobra, Russell's Viper and Rock Python. Green frogs are common, as are skipper frogs, cricket frogs and tree frogs.

One can also explore the ecological diversity of the Sundarbans with its rather large variety of birds. Both resident and migratory, there are waterfowls, egrets, storks, herons, bitterns, sandpipers, curlew, and waders to be seen along the muddy banks. There are ample opportunities for bird-watching, with many species of gulls and terns, especially along the seacoast and the larger waterways. Kites, eagles, vultures and harriers are represented by about twenty species, along with nine species of kingfishers. The rich avifaunas of the forest include species of woodpeckers, barbets, owls, bee-eaters, bulbul, shrikes, drongos, starlings, mynas, babblers, thrush, oriole and flycatchers. The Sundarbans is reputed to have nearly four hundred species of fishes in its varied aquatic habitats, including both the pelagic and demersal fishes. Incredibly, about twenty species of shrimps, eight species of lobsters, seven species of crabs, several species of gastropods, and six species of pelecypods have been reported to inhabit this area. Insects are varied, the most important being the honeybee *Apis dorsata*. Locally known as "Mouals", the professional bee collectors gather honey for three to four months (April-June) during the flowering season - a livelihood that has survived through the centuries.

Only a few people live permanently in or around the Sundarbans. They include the bawalis (collectors of golpata), mouals (honey collectors) and woodcutters. Their dwellings are usually at the edge of the forest and the houses are built on platforms supported on 3-5 m high poles of wood or bamboo. Some people, especially the bedyas (gypsies) live on boats. There are unique local rituals and a whole slew of related activities and attractions. For instance, Bonbibi Mela (in January) is a time when indigenous people - including fishermen, wood-cutters and honey collectors - enter the forest to extract forest resources and pray for a safe return to Bonbibi, the local forest deity. The Dubla Rash Purnima Mela (normally during the beginning of November) provides an intimate glimpse of devotees congregating in long lines at the water's edge in the early morning hours, holding their offerings and awaiting blessing after joyous celebrations the night before. Another awe-inspiring spectacle is fishing with trained otters. This unique traditional fishing technique is found only in Bangladesh. Fishermen from in and around the area breed and train their otters to increase the catch. Although they work mainly in the rivers north of the forest, they also enter the Sundarbans.

While the Sundarbans is starting to mature as a global tourist destination with its consistent popularity as a world heritage site, touring the place can be physically demanding, yet unique and unforgettable for the adventurous and gutsy. There's something eerie and majestic about this large, diverse forest.



# Hetal's Guide to PhD Attitudes

## Changing attitudes of a typical student

and training, but also a great way to grow and develop as a person. Here, I present the changing attitudes of typical student along the course of their PhD.

### Attitude to

#### Holiday

**First year.** Well, I'm planning several weekend trips around Europe, doing volunteer work in Africa and then back-traveling around America.

**Second year.** I think I had better concentrate a bit more on my research, to be honest, but I'm still heading off back home for a bit of R+R every now and then.

**Third year.** I am far too busy for any sort of break whatsoever even though I am over-worked, over-stressed, procrastinating my backside off and fast approaching burn-out!

**Fourth year.** Holidays??? Well, I suppose Hell might be nice this time of year and it would be a lovely change right about now.

### Attitude to

#### Spare time

**First year.** So this would be all the hours I'm NOT working right!?! Erm ... I don't think I'm going to answer this one because my supervisor might be reading this!

**Second year.** I'm working hard but I'm still trying to maintain a good work-life balance. I even managed to get 23 minutes of sun exposure yesterday! Impressive huh!?!?

**Third year.** Too busy to answer! Must do RESEARCH!!!

### Fourth

**year.** Spare time? What the hell is that!?! I even read research papers in the bathroom!

**First year.** Does rowing, clubbing, drinking and partying count as work?

**Second year.** I am averaging 8 hours a day. Of course, most of that is taken up by surfing the internet and checking my emails but...

**Third year.** I am working every hour available, I have even moved my books, computer and a sleeping bag under my desk so I can keep working. What idiot decided that there should only be 24 hours in a day??? That is so not enough!!!

**Fourth year.** \*Mindless drivell, incoherent gibbering and psychotic drooling.\*

**First year.** Student-Teacher

**Second year.** Boss-Worker

**Third year.** Academic Colleagues

**Fourth year.** Prison Warden-Death Row Inmate

### Relation with

#### Supervisor

**First year.** It's too soon to even start thinking about it

**Second year.** Yeah, I suppose I will attend, but it's really for the parents, you know. It's not a big deal.

**Third year.** I am wondering if I will ever get there! There is so much to do and so much to write and I just cannot picture myself ever finishing at this point.

**Fourth year.** Everyone around me is submitting and graduating and moving on with their lives but I still have a ton of things to do, chapters to write, papers to complete, results to get... I'M NEVER GOING TO GRADUATE!!!

### Attitude to

#### Work Hours

**First year.** Sure I would recommend it! I'm really excited about my work and I really think I can make a difference in my field. Who wouldn't want the chance to do that?

**Second year.** It is really stressful and there are so many deadlines to meet and I am still not quite sure what my actual work is about yet. You would need to consider whether it is the right thing for you though.

**Third year.** Run for your lives! Save yourselves, escape while still you can!!!

**Fourth year.** Do I recommend it? Yeah, if you want a soul-destroying, hope-crushing, under-paid, over-worked, completely under-valued existence! In short, not in your life!

### PhD recommen-

#### dation

### Attitude to

#### Graduation

**Fourth year.** Everyone around me is submitting and graduating and moving on with their lives but I still have a ton of things to do, chapters to write, papers to complete, results to get... I'M NEVER GOING TO GRADUATE!!!

by Hetal Kiran Patel  
Designed by Laurence Biche-Carrière



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