

Gazette Supplement



Encaenia 2011

Congregation

29 June

1 Conferment of Honorary Degrees

The Public Orator made the following speeches in presenting the recipients of Honorary Degrees at the Encaenia held in the Sheldonian Theatre on Wednesday, 29 June:

Degree of Doctor of Civil Law

HIS EXCELLENCY GIORGIO NAPOLITANO
Eleventh President of the Italian Republic

CANCELLARIVS MAGISTRI SCHOLARES
VNIVERSITATIS OXONIENSIS
OMNIBVS AD QVOS PRAESENTES LITTERAE
PERVENERINT
SALVTEM IN DOMINO SEMPITERNAM

CVM diu ex more nobis fuerit civitatum externarum Praesides praecipuo aliquo honore quantum possumus insignire, eosque praesertim quorum labores et civibus suis et benevolentiae inter gentes profuerunt;

CVMque Vir Excellentissimus GEORGIVS NAPOLITANO, Rei Publicae Italicae Praeses, civitati praesideat quae nobiscum artissimis amicitiae vinculis coniungitur;

CVMque Saturnia illa terra, magna parens frugum, magna virum, omnibus maximam moveat admirationem;

CVMque Italicorum mos cultus artes orbem terrarum illustraverint;

CVMque nos Oxonienses res Italas Romanorumque triumphos per octo iam saecula examinaverimus;

CVMque studia recentioris quoque Italiae diu apud nos flourerint, quae promovit ipsorum civium magna liberalitas;

CVMque ipse adhuc juvenis periculum suscepisset ut tyrannidi resisteret patriam in libertatem vindicaret;

CVMque in rebus arduis mentem aequam tranquillam incorruptam semper servaverit;

CVMque ad summum gradum honoris abhinc quinque annos plausu universo sit creatus;

CVMque cives suos, gentem animosam ac facundam, consilio et ratione gubernaverit;

NOS ERGO, tanti viri prudentiam sapientiam humanitatem admirati, in frequenti Congregationis Domo praedictum Praesidem DOCTOREM in Iure Civili renuntiamus eumque vi ac virtute huius Diplomatis omnibus iuribus et privilegiis adficimus quae ad hunc gradum spectant.

IN CVIVS REI TESTIMONIUM sigillum Vniversitatis quo in hac parte utimur adponendum curavimus.

Datum in Domo nostra Congregationis die xxix^o mensis Iunii A. S. MMXI.

Admission by the Chancellor

Praeses humanissime, qui cum in cives tuos beneficia maxima contulisti, tum aliarum gentium principibus exemplum fidei atque integritatis praebuisti, ego Cancellarius auctoritate mea et totius Vniversitatis nec non vi ac virtute huius Diplomatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Iure Civili.

Paraphrase

THE CHANCELLOR MASTERS AND
SCHOLARS
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
TO WHOMSOEVER THESE PRESENTS SHALL
COME
MAY THE LORD EVER PRESERVE AND KEEP
YOU

WHEREAS it has long been our custom to confer such honours as are in our power on the Heads of other nations, and more particularly on those whose achievements have both conferred benefits on their own citizens and advanced goodwill among nations;

AND WHEREAS His Excellency GIORGIO NAPOLITANO, President of the Italian Republic, is head of a state to which we are bound by close ties of friendship;

AND WHEREAS Italy, in Virgil's words the land of Saturn, great mother of crops, great mother of men, excites the admiration of all people;

AND WHEREAS Italian culture and civilisation have illuminated the whole world;

AND WHEREAS we in Oxford have studied ancient Rome—'Italian history and the triumphs of the Romans', to quote Virgil again—continuously for eight centuries;

AND WHEREAS Italian Studies too have long flourished among us, with generous support from citizens of Italy;

AND WHEREAS President Napolitano underwent danger in his youth to struggle against tyranny and champion his country's freedom;

AND WHEREAS he has remained calm, fair and incorruptible, however critical the circumstances;

AND WHEREAS he was elected head of state five years ago to general approbation;

AND WHEREAS he has guided his fellow citizens, a spirited and eloquent people, with a judicious hand;

NOW THEREFORE WE, in admiration of his eminent sagacity, wisdom and culture, do here in this full House of Congregation pronounce the aforesaid President a DOCTOR in our Faculty of Civil Law, and by the virtue and power of this Diploma we invest him with all the rights and privileges which belong to that Degree.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF we have caused to be affixed to this instrument the Seal of the University thereunto pertaining.

Given in our House of Congregation on the 29th day of June in the year of Salvation 2011.

Admission by the Chancellor

Most learned and liberal President, who have conferred great benefits on your own country and provided the leaders of other nations with an example of patriotism and probity, I as Chancellor, acting on my own authority and that of our whole University, and by the power and force of this Diploma, admit you to the degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

Degree of Doctor of Civil Law**JUSTICE EDWIN CAMERON**

Justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa

De mente atque ingenio eius qui prope me nunc adstat longo sermone disserere possim. Etsi infantiam magnae difficultates circumsteterunt (quas in libro de vita sua brevitate eloquenti ipse descripsit), apparebat a puero magnis eum rebus esse natum. Et in scholis patriae et Oxoniae excellebat, ubi praemio Rhodesiano aliisque palmis ornatus est. Iuris consultus ad Africam regressus et in foro et in bibliotheca florebat: nam cum ad honores haud segniter ascendit tum novam editionem libri pandectarum magna ex parte perpolivit quem noster Iuris Civilis Professor Regius primum scripserat. Adde quod misericordiae ac iustitiae studio ardens, pro virili parte contendit ut quosdam inique capitis damnatos vindicaret; ita reos a carnifice rempublicam ab exterarum gentium opprobrio liberavit. Quapropter eum putaveris dignitate sine cura sine periculo diu esse fructurum; sed dis aliter visum. Ingravescebat per terram pestilentia, crudelis ipsa, sed eo crudelior quod nonnulli civitatis principes causam eius et naturam pertinaciter abnuebant. Praeterea dolorem augebat pudor: si quis se illo morbo affici confessus est, periculo contemptus atque odii apud homines se commisit; erant etiam qui necarentur. Hic tamen vir, cum illa aegrotatio eum invasisset, nec se miseratus est nec casum celavit, sed verum palam est locutus. In libro quem iam memoravi se ut testem obtulit; intellexit enim sicut medicamine corpora ita verbis et fortitudine pavorem animi levandum: 'Hic morbus,' inquit, 'virus est non scelus.' Quare laudatur et prudentia huius in iudicio et in publico audacia; ipse pater patriae adfirmavit eum inter novos Africae Meridionalis heroes esse numerandum, qui exemplum aliis imitandum praebuerit.

Praesento virum qui doctrinam atque auctoritatem suam ad miseros iuvandos adhibuit, Edwinum Cameron, in summo collegio reipublicae Africae Meridionalis iudicem, Collegii Keblensis et alumnum et socium honoris causa adscriptum, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Iure Civili.

Admission by the Chancellor

Iudex doctissime et humanissime, qui testimonio tuo aegros consolatus es metuentes corroboravisti, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Iure Civili honoris causa.

Paraphrase

It would be easy enough to discourse at length about the intellectual qualities of the man standing beside me. In spite of difficult times in his childhood (about which he has written with an eloquent terseness in his memoir), it was already clear when he was a boy that he

was marked out for great things. He shone at university both in his native land and at Oxford, to which he came as a Rhodes Scholar and where he won several prizes. On returning to South Africa he flourished as a practical and an academic lawyer alike: he achieved rapid promotion but was also the lead author of a new edition of *Honoré's South African Law of Trusts*, a work originally written by our own Regius Professor of Civil Law. At the same time his compassion and concern for justice led him to fight vigorously in defence of a group of men wrongly condemned to death; his activity rescued the prisoners from the gallows and his country from an international outcry. One might therefore have predicted for him a long, safe and untroubled enjoyment of his professional success, but destiny had other ideas. The Aids epidemic was spreading across the land, a disease cruel in itself and made crueler by the obstinate refusal of some of the nation's leaders to acknowledge its origins and character. Shame added to the sufferers' misery: anyone who admitted to having caught the contagion risked isolation and public hostility; some were even murdered. But when our honorand was affected, he did not succumb to self-pity or hide the fact, but spoke the truth openly. In the memoir that I have already mentioned he presented himself as a 'witness to Aids', realising that it is not only the body that requires attention; panic too needs to be treated, with the language of comfort and courage: in his own words, this disease 'is a virus, not a crime'. Accordingly, he is admired equally for his wisdom as a judge and for the bravery of the stand that he has taken; Nelson Mandela, no less, has called him 'one of South Africa's new heroes'—a man who has provided a pattern for others to follow.

I present a man who has brought his expertise and his public standing to the support of the afflicted, Edwin Cameron, judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, former student and honorary fellow of Keble College, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

Admission by the Chancellor

Learned and compassionate judge, whose witness has consoled the sick and strengthened the fearful, 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**PROFESSOR SIR GEOFFREY ERNEST****RICHARD LLOYD**

Historian of Ancient Science and Medicine

Quamquam de litterarum republica nonnumquam loquimur, hic quem nunc produco vivida vi animi tantas victorias reportavit ut Iuppiter imperium sine fine ei dedisse videatur. Nam si ea modo spectabis quae de Graecis scripsit, sane miraberis de tot rebus eum tamque diversis disputavisse, et fortasse rogabis, ut illi rustici,

quomodo tot res istud contineat caput unum non ita magnum.

In hoc tamen viro maxima doctrina cum maxima interpretandi facultate coniungitur. Opera eius explanare conantem impedit me Latini sermonis egestas, quoniam, ut ipse dixit, homines antiqui nullo verbo scientiam (ut nosmet dicimus) definiebant; immo Romani verbum invenerunt, aliter tamen adhibuerunt. Nemo Graecorum scientiam (nostro usque sensu) melius descripsit; rationem scientiae a cogitationis genere a maioribus tradito subtiliter distinxit; monstravit Graecos modo contraria modo similia collocando rerum naturam explicavisse. Quod si se tantum ad Graecos examinandos dedicavisset, iam satis gradum honoris causa tributum esset meritis; sed iam senior linguam Sericam ab initio didicit ut sapientiae orientis studeret et eam cum Graeca componeret. Si in popina Serica Seras ipsos epulari videris, scis te bene eam elegeris; ita cum hic scholarum seriem apud nos habuisset, magnus numerus Serum qui aderant auctoritatem eius satis attestatus est. Nescio utrum philosophus an historicus an scientiae naturalis explicator potius vocetur, hoc tamen scio, si saepem conspexerit, eam protinus transilire velle. Terminus deus templum Iovis Optimi Maximi in Capitolio olim tenebat; quem colebant Romani, hic proruit. Uni ex libris *Magia Ratio Experientia* inscribitur, quae verba ad ipsum adhibere possis: ratione enim excellit; experientiae rerum haudquaquam caret; nos cum opera eius legimus, virga quadam magica tangi videmur.

Praesento Protea reducem, in quo facundia Cambrensis doctrina Cantabrigiensi commiscetur, Galfridum Ernestum Ricardum Lloyd, equitem auratum, Academiae Britannicae socium, apud Cantabrigienses quondam philosophiae antiquae professorem et Collegii Darwiniani magistrum, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Admission by the Chancellor

O sol laudande, qui orientem et occidentem simul illustras, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphrase

We talk about the republic of letters, but the man whom I now present has won such extensive intellectual victories that he may seem to possess that boundless empire which Virgil supposed Jupiter to have given the Romans. You need look only at his books on Greek themes to marvel at the quantity and range of the subjects on which he has written. One may even wonder, like Goldsmith's villagers, how it might be 'That one small head could carry all he knew'. In this man, however, deep learning is matched by corresponding depth of analysis. A difficulty with describing his work in classical Latin is that, as he has pointed out himself, the ancients lacked a

word for science; that is, the Romans invented the word, but they applied it differently. No one has written better about Greek science (in the modern sense); he has acutely analysed the distinctions between scientific thinking and 'traditional' patterns of thought; and he has shown how the Greeks categorised the world through the use of both polarity and analogy. So if he had devoted himself to ancient Greece alone, he would amply have earned this honorary degree; as it is, in mid career he turned to the comparative study of Chinese science, and learnt the language for this purpose. If you go to a Chinese restaurant and find Chinese eating there, you know that you have made a good choice; similarly, when he gave the Berlin Lectures here in Oxford, the number of Chinese faces in the audience bore witness to his authority. It is hard to know whether to call him philosopher, historian or scientist, but this is for sure, that he has only to spot a fence to want to jump it. In ancient times the god Boundary occupied the Temple of Jupiter Best and Greatest on the Capitol - a deity whom the Romans worshipped and whom he has overthrown. One of his books is called *Magic, Reason and Experience*, words that can be used of its author, for he excels in reason, he has no lack of experience, and when we read him, we feel the touch of a magic wand.

I present a Proteus *de nos jours*, in whom Welsh fluency meets Cambridge learning, Sir Geoffrey Ernest Richard Lloyd, FBA, emeritus Professor of Ancient Philosophy and Science and former Master of Darwin College, Cambridge, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Admission by the Chancellor

Wondrous sun, who illumine west and east at the same time, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Degree of Doctor of Letters

MARILYNNE SUMMERS ROBINSON

Author

Favete linguis, quaeso; adest enim auctor cuius orationem neque in spiritu grandi saxa et montes quassante neque in commotione terrae neque in igni sed sibilo aurae tenui audietis. Si quis merita scriptorum sermonis abundantia iudicabit, fortasse quaeret cur nobis eam placuerit honestare; sin, ut suasit Callimachus, arte nec catena Persica litteras aestimabis, magnum ingenium salutabis. Ubi primam e suis fabulis edidit, cui *Oeconomia* inscribitur, constabat inter omnes fere novum sidus in caelum processisse; sed per quinque lustra, quamquam libellos de aliis rebus fecit, alteram commenticiam typis committere noluit. Tandem *Galaad* scripsit, cuius titulus vicum rusticum in media Civitatum Foederatarum regione fictum significat. Narrat de sua vita de uxore iuvenili de filiolo unico presbyter iam senex, immo meditatatur; nam primo nihil credas eventurum esse, illum suas modo cogitationes explicaturum.

Sed paulatim capit lector narrationem figura pulcherrima fingi. Haud pauci sunt auctores qui scelestos coloribus vividis depinxerunt; haec, quod multo rarius in fabulis invenitur, hominem valde bonum creavit. Aliam quoque rem perdifficilem gessit: quamquam mulier est, viri mentem tamquam suam repraesentat. Vergilius, cum de divini gloria ruris locutus esset, monstrare voluit, ut puto, nescioquem splendorem in vita illa agresti latere; ita haec ostendit res cottidianas sancta simplicitate illuminari. Quae autem in tertia e fabulis eius (*Lares dico*) πρωταγωνιστεῖ Gloria vocatur; quod nomen forsitan eam deridere videatur, quam spes fefellit et desolatam reliquit. Atqui in hoc quoque libro, qui vix sine fletu legi potest, in luce pietatis et patientiae pagina quodam modo collustrari videtur. Huius auctoris Musa e partibus Americae profundissimis, ut ita dicam, oritur: spumam et strepitum in vadis excitent alii; haec ponti altioris aequora explorat.

Praesento fabularum tetricum subtilissimam, quae balsamum in Galaad invenit, Marilynne Summers Robinson, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris.

Admission by the Chancellor

Pectoris humani scrutatrix acutissima, quae lacrimas rerum laetitiamque pariter expressisti, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Paraphrase

Hush, please; for here is an author who speaks not in a rushing wind that shakes the rocks and mountains nor in earthquake nor in fire but in a still small voice. If the criterion of an author's work were mere quantity, you might perhaps wonder why we have chosen to bestow an honorary degree on her; but if you follow Callimachus' commandment to judge by quality and not by the Persian chain, you will acknowledge an exceptional talent. When she published her first novel, *Housekeeping*, there was general agreement that a new star had arisen, but in the next quarter of a century, although she published non-fiction, a second novel did not appear. Finally, however, she wrote *Gilead*, the title denoting an imaginary small town in the Midwest. The narrator is an elderly minister, who tells the tale of his life, his much younger wife, and his one small son. Or rather, he meditates upon these things, for at first it seems that nothing is going to happen, and the narrator will reveal only his thoughts to us, but gradually a beautifully shaped story emerges from his reflections. A good many writers have given us colourful villains; this one has brought off the much rarer achievement of representing a truly good man. She has also managed the very difficult trick of successfully inhabiting the mind of a narrator of the opposite sex. When Virgil spoke of 'the glory of the god-filled countryside', we may suppose him to mean that ordinary rural life contains a kind of splendour, and likewise she shows commonplace existence irradiated

by a sanctified simplicity. Indeed the principal character in her third novel, *Home*, is called Glory, a name which may seem bitterly ironic for one who has suffered desolation and the frustration of her hopes. And yet even in this book, which cannot easily be read without tears, the pages seem to be illuminated by the heroine's sense of duty and fortitude. This is an author who draws her inspiration from what the French might call *l'Amérique profonde*, and while some other writers splash noisily in the shallows, she makes her way towards the depths.

I present a most subtle weaver of story, who has found balm in Gilead, Marilynne Summers Robinson, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Admission by the Chancellor

Penetrating analyst of the human heart, who have brought out equally the sadness and the joy of life, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters.

Degree of Doctor of Science

PROFESSOR ELIZABETH HELEN BLACKBURN

Molecular Biologist

Cunctorum animalium corpora e cellulis sunt fabricata, quae assidue in plures dividuntur; sed quotienscumque fit divisio, earum materies (quiDNAm, quaeso, Latine dicam?) aliquantum in peius mutatur. Conteritur enim minima pars cuiusque seminis et aboletur; causa quidem adhuc non intelligitur, sed eventum patet omnibus. Inspice te ipsum: eheu, quo ille iuvenilis fugit nitor corporis? Licet cellulae nostrae usque noventur, senescimus et dilabimur; atqui vis obscura in eis latet quae illa detrimenta restituere aliquatenus valet. Ecce magistra quae haec arcana in lucem prodidit. Antehac docti intellexerant in cacuminibus chromosomatum minutas esse particulas, quas telomera vocaverunt; exordiis etiam minoribus consistunt, cuius ordinem prima haec femina describere potuit. Eadem cum conlega enzymam invenit quae telomerum reficit si pars forte defracta est. Primum protozoo cuidam studuit; nunc vero scimus ordinem in omnibus animalibus unum et eundem esse, sive in fermento sive in hominibus; id quod momenti est maximi. Cancri enim cellulis temere et effuse sese multiplicantibus creantur, quas si reparare poterimus, morbum fortasse sanabimus. Adde quod haec monstravit illam enzymam in hominibus negotio et anxietate oppressis hebetiorem fieri; quapropter verum est senectam accelerare curas. Ex quo Deucalion lapides coniecit, genus humanum iuventutem diurnitatem desideravit, nec cito consequetur; quare si haec debilitationem corporis omnino prohibere poterit, non solum gradum honoris causa tributum merebit sed praesens dea habebitur. Maximis interea laudibus propter reperta ad vitam extendendam seniumque levandum

valentia ornatur. In Tasmania nata, insula a nobis remotissima, Americam diu habitavit; sed quoniam scientiae semper crescenti nullum spatium vel terrae vel aequoris est impedimento, orbis terrarum civis recte potest vocari.

Praesento rerum minutarum scrutatricem oculatissimam, Elizabetham Helenam Blackburn, apud Universitatem Californiensem Sancti Francisci biologiae et physiologiae professorem, praemio Nobeliano nobilitatam, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia.

Admission by the Chancellor

Magistra ingeniosissima, quae ad intimum naturae arcanum penetravisti, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia honoris causa.

Paraphrase

The bodies of all living things are made up of cells, which constantly divide, but with each division, their DNA (for which I struggle to find a Latin word) slightly degrades, and a little bit gets rubbed off. The cause of this behaviour is still not understood, but its consequences are all too evident. Examine yourself: alas, where has the sleekness of youth gone to? Although the cells of our bodies continuously replace themselves, we age and fall apart; and yet there also exists in them a hidden repair mechanism. Here is the master scientist who has shone light upon these mysteries. It was already understood that there are molecular mechanisms (known as telomeres) controlling the ends of chromosomes, but she was the one who made the breakthrough of taking a telomere and sequencing its DNA. She and a colleague also discovered an enzyme which repairs the telomere if a piece of it is broken off. She began by working on a protozoan, but it now turns out that this sequence is universal in all living organisms, from yeast to human beings; so the discovery is of profound importance. Cancers are caused by cells dividing uncontrollably; if this can be checked, the possibility of a cure is in sight. She has also demonstrated that the enzyme is less active in people who are under pressure; so it is true that stress advances the process of ageing. Ever since the Flood, mankind has yearned for eternal youth, a hope that will not soon be realised; if she can succeed in preventing us ageing altogether, a honorary degree will not be enough: she will be deified. As it is, she is much praised and honoured for discoveries which can help to prolong life and improve the quality of old age. Born in Tasmania, an island very far from us, she has long lived in America, but since no distance of land or sea can hold back the progress of knowledge, she may fittingly be called a citizen of the world.

I present a keenly acute investigator into the smallest things, Elizabeth Helen Blackburn, Morris Herztein Professor of Biology and Physiology at the University of California, San Francisco, Nobel Laureate, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Admission by the Chancellor

Brilliant scientist, who have penetrated nature's most inward secrets, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Degree of Doctor of Science

PROFESSOR DAME LINDA PARTRIDGE
Geneticist

Hanc quam nunc produco volucres observare per totam vitam delectavit; in tirocinio iam famam fortitudinis adepta est quod vel in insulis remotissimis ad aves raras melius videndas imbrem et tempestates indefessa sustineret. Non ignorat igitur perdicem trepidam esse nec procul a terra se tollere; cuius rei causam Ovidius in *Metamorphoses* explicavit. Erat Athenis puer nomine Perdix, mente ingeniosa praeditus; qui spinis in pisce notatis et in exemplum tractis serrae usum repperit. Sed mox a Daedalo avunculo suo, invidiae dente morso, ex arce praiceps missus est; quem Minerva suscepit et in avem transfiguravit. Quapropter ille casus antiqui memor etiam nunc prope humum volitat nec nidum in ramis construit. Cuius timiditatem quidem haec femina non praebet, idem tamen praebet ingenium. Laudant enim eam homines docti quia experimenta ad nodos solvendo a nemine antea laxata excogitare possit. Hoc exemplum profero: muscis quae drosophilae vocantur perspectis, monstravit quanto saepius inter se coeant, tanto breviores vitas eorum fieri; quod num ad genus humanum attineat, nec scio nec scire quaesivi. Causam probavit esse non simplicem sed geminam: mares ipsa coitione laedi, feminas vi peptica in semine latenti. Praeterea, modos quibus senescant et muscae et mures scrutata, ostendit animalia, etiam vetera, si minorem cibum esse cogantur, diutius tempus esse victura. Ita cum voluptatem de nobis detraxisse fortasse videatur, spem potius auxit; namque nos repertis eius et corpore saniore senescere et senectutem ipsam feliciter producere docemur. Vita quamquam longissima cito conditur; beneficia quae haec laboribus suis attulit diu manebunt.

Praesento feminam quae e parvorum scrutatione magna invenit, Lindam Partridge, Excellentissimi Ordinis Imperii Britannici dominam commendatricem, Societati Regali adscriptam, et Collegii Sanctae Annae et Collegii Wolfsoniani alumnam, in Collegio Universitatis apud Londinienses Biometriae Professorem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia.

Admission by the Chancellor

Muscarum domina, cuius opera et laudem commovent et grates, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia honoris causa.

Paraphrase

The lady whom I now present has been an enthusiastic bird-watcher throughout her life; as a student she acquired quite a reputation for her indomitable endurance of rain and storm on remote islands in pursuit of rare species. She must therefore be aware that the partridge is a timid bird which likes to fly low, and Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* tells a Just So Story to explain why. Once upon a time there was at Athens a clever and inventive boy called Partridge. Observing the serrated spines on a fish, he took it as a pattern, and invented the saw. His uncle Daedalus, consumed with jealousy, threw him from the Acropolis, but the goddess Athena caught him up and transformed him into a bird. And that is why the partridge, remembering his unpleasant experience, still flies near to the ground and does not build its nest in trees. The present honorand does not share his nervousness, but she does match him in creativity. Her colleagues praise her for an ability to devise the decisive experiments that nobody else had thought of. For example, her work on fruit flies has demonstrated that their lives are shortened in proportion to the amount of sexual intercourse in which they engage; whether the same applies to human beings, I do not know, and I have not pursued enquiries. She has proved that there is no one cause: it is the act itself that affects the male flies, whereas the females are affected by peptide components of the seminal fluid. She has also investigated the ageing process in both flies and mice, and shown that if the diet of animals is reduced, even when they are already old, their lives will be prolonged. This sounds like bad news for us, but in fact it is good, for her researches are helping to make old age healthier and to extend its period enjoyably. Even the longest life soon comes to an end, but the benefits of her work will endure for a great time.

I present a scientist who has made big discoveries from the scrutiny of little things, Dame Linda Partridge, DBE, Fellow of the Royal Society, former student of St Anne's and Wolfson Colleges, Weldon Professor of Biometry at University College London, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Admission by the Chancellor

Lady of the Flies, whose work excites both admiration and gratitude, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Degree of Doctor of Science

PROFESSOR OLIVER SMITHIES
Biochemist

Vergilius exiguum murem inter eas pestes adnumeravit quae agricolas inلودere solerent, Horatiusque versu satis noto tumorem poetarum ita deridet: 'Parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.' Hodie tamen virum honestamus qui muribus non ad damnum

hominum sed ad beneficium usus est atque ex illis parvis animalibus magnum scientiae montem extruere potuit. Abhinc undecim lustra rationem proteina extrahendi reperit quae in humoribus corporis latent. Postea artem murum elidendorum excogitavit (sic docti festive dicere solent), quam forsitan haud arduam factu esse putes. Sed re vera opus perdifficile exegerat; modum enim invenerat quo adhibito unum ex illis seminibus quae indolem et naturam animalium creant ab aliis separare poterat. Itaque per eum stat ut biologi nunc unumquodque ex viginti milibus seminum murinorum singillatim scutari possint; ac cum maior pars eorum etiam in hominibus exstet, queunt docti nostra quoque corpora melius intellegere. Ipse toti fabricationi murum in praesenti studet ut causas morborum in hominibus comprehendat eosdemque sanet.

Quamquam multos iam annos Americam habitavit, est in regione Eboracensi natus et eam comitatem semper exhibuit quae illi patriae propria esse dicitur; Oxoniae educatus est, ubi primum proteinis studuit, nec altricis oblitus est. Nam pro liberalitate sua pecuniam dedit ut docti apud Collegium Balliolense peregrinentur et nobiscum colloquantur. Animum iuvenilem in senectute usque servavit: officinam suam cotidie visit, et ubi vacuus est, etiam nunc in aeronave sua velifera volare gaudet: ut Icarus enim caeli cupidine tangitur, ut Daedalus, quem ingenii quoque acumine aemulatur, per auras cursu placido labitur.

Praesento magnum rerum naturae indagatorem magnum Oxoniae amicum, Oliverum Smithies, Collegii Balliolensis alumnum et socium honoris causa adscriptum, apud Universitatem Carolinae Septentrionalis ad Collem iuxta Fanum sitam Pathologiae et Medicinae Professorem, praemio Nobeliano nobilitatum, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia.

Admission by the Chancellor

Magister et amice, qui et murum et hominum arcana patefecisti, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Scientia honoris causa.

Paraphrase

Virgil counted the 'tiny mouse' among the pests that make mock of the farmers' labours, and Horace laughed at poetic pomposity in the well-known line, 'Mountains shall labour and a silly mouse be born.' Today, however, we honour a man whose work has turned mice from being a nuisance into a source of benefit to humankind, and built a whole mountain of useful knowledge. Back in the 1950s he developed a method of separating the proteins in bodily fluids; later he invented the technique that has been nicknamed the 'knockout mouse'. You may think that it is not all that hard to knock out a mouse, but in fact this was a very difficult achievement: he had discovered a means of disrupting each gene individually.

Thanks to him, biologists can now examine every mouse gene, amounting to some twenty thousand, one by one, and since most of these genes are shared with human beings, his work has led to a better understanding of our own bodies. He is himself continuing to study the structure of mice as a model for understanding human disease and curing it.

Although he has lived for many years in America, he was born in Yorkshire and has always shown the warmth that proverbially characterises the natives of that county; he was educated at Oxford, where his study of proteins began, and he has not forgotten the old place. He has generously set up a visiting fellowship scheme which enables people to come to Balliol and share their wisdom with us. The passing of the years has not dimmed his youthfulness of spirit; he is in his laboratory daily, and he still likes to spend his free time flying his glider; like Ovid's Icarus, he is 'touched with desire for heaven', and like Daedalus, whom he rivals in power of invention, he slips calmly through the skies.

I present a great natural scientist and a great friend of Oxford, Oliver Smithies, graduate and honorary fellow of Balliol College, Weatherspoon Eminent Distinguished Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Nobel Laureate, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Admission by the Chancellor

Master and friend, who have uncovered the secrets of mice and men, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Science.

Degree of Doctor of Music

SIR GEORGE HENRY MARTIN

Record Producer

Vates noster, cum insulam sonis iucundis et innoxii mirabiliter repletam descripsisset, sane significare voluit illum locum vi quadam magica esse suffusum. Nostro tamen tempore cantus ubique in domibus nostris in tabernis in ambulatione per vicos percipere solemus. Ei igitur qui modos musicos vel requirunt vel canunt vel orbibus sonoris mandant magnam partem mundi nostri figurant; inter quos vir agmen hominum hodie honorandorum nunc concludens praecipuum locum diu occupavit. Cum iuvenis esset, arti musicae antiquae studuit atque et tibia et clavicymbalo canere didicit, sed numeros vi vivida vibrantes et volventes non minus dilexit. Anno MCMLXIII, ut cecinit poeta Oxoniensis, omnia mutata sunt: tum primum mares et feminae inter se coiisse; tum de amore Constantiae tandem legere licuisse; tum hic quem produco carmina Scarabaeorum primus orbi phonographico maioris latitudinis commisit. Quamvis cantatores maximam laudum partem occupare soleant, opus est etiam eis qui organa dextere eligere et sonos bene servare sciant; quas res hic optime gessit. Huius sine laboribus num vitam Eleonora tam intente audiremus, num

de hesterno die tam maeste meditaremur, num symphonia et solitudine Piperis adeo excitaremur?

Postea hic magum illum Shakespearianum quodam modo imitatus insulam Montis Serratis mirabilibus replevit; officinam ibi ad orbes phonographicos faciendos instituit; quam cum tempestas delevisset, iterum in Britannia condidit. Propter liberalitatem suam adhuc in illa terra honestatur. Constat inter omnes eum, licet inter cantores musicae popularis, homines impotentia ac petulantia famosos, multa per lustra versatus sit, mentem aequam animum lenem habitum generosum semper praebuisse, ita ut si illi eum non imitentur, tamen revereri soleant.

Praesento musicum in quo ars et ingenium coniunguntur, Georgium Henricum Martin, equitem auratum, Excellentissimi Ordinis Britannici commendatorem, ut admittatur honoris causa ad gradum doctoris in musica.

Admission by the Chancellor

Artifex ingeniosissime, cuius opera omnes fere in orbe terrarum homines audiverunt, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Musica honoris causa.

Paraphrase

When Shakespeare imagines an isle 'full of noises, Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not', we recognise him to mean that the power of magic pervades the place. In modern life, however, we hear music everywhere, in our own homes, in shops, and as we walk the streets. So those who compose, perform or record it shape a great part of our world, and the man who now completes the sequence of this year's honorands has long held a special place among them. In his youth he studied classical music, learning both the oboe and the piano, but he enjoyed rock and roll as well. In 1963 the world changed: according to our own Philip Larkin, this was when sexual intercourse began, between the end of the Chatterley ban and the moment when the present honorand recorded the Beatles' first LP. Although it is the singers who usually get the star billing, arrangers and recording managers are also essential, and he has shown a masterly command of these skills. Without his interventions the life of Ms Rigby would not be so compelling, and we should not muse so wistfully upon Yesterday or be so keenly concerned with loneliness and Sergeant Pepper's band.

Later, as a kind of latter-day Prospero, he filled another island, Montserrat, with wondrous noises, building there a recording studio; after a hurricane destroyed it, he reconstructed it back in England. His generosity still receives public recognition in Montserrat. Despite spending his career among pop singers, a class with a reputation for loud self-indulgence, he is famous for his mildness, unflappability and gentlemanly style, and while his stars may not all copy his example, they regard him with deep respect.

I present a musician in whom the technician and the artist are combined, Sir George Henry Martin, OBE, to be admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Music.

Admission by the Chancellor

Master of your craft, whose productions have been heard by almost everyone in the world, I on my own authority and that of the whole University admit you to the honorary degree of Doctor of Music.

2 Encaenia

The Public Orator delivered the following introduction to the Creweian Oration:

Orator: *Honoratissime Domine Cancellarie, licetne anglice loqui?*

Chancellor: *Licet.*

Orator:

Each year, as I enter the Sheldonian Theatre, I am reminded of the fly on the chariot wheel: 'Behold how mighty I am! What a great noise I make, what a cloud of dust I raise!' As when the Queen entered Westminster Abbey on 29 April, the moment I step inside the building, I am greeted by a glorious blaze of trumpets, and tempted to feel, 'See how they honour me! Hear how magnificently I am celebrated.' And in a way that sentiment is not altogether mistaken, for at Encaenia we do celebrate ourselves. We commemorate and celebrate our benefactors, past and present, we rejoice in the faith that they have put in us, and more soberly, we reflect on the responsibility of showing ourselves worthy of that trust. These days we are constantly being asked to clothe our purposes in the language of bureaucracy, but in reality the truth is very simple: we learn, teach, study and write, and we try to do each of these things as well as we can.

Among the most splendid gifts that we have received is one from Eni, the Italian oil giant. Oil in this case is not the stuff that we see in television advertisements being pressed by lovably wrinkled peasants in sun-dappled olive groves, but the stuff that comes out of the ground. It is fitting that we should acknowledge this benefaction on the day when we have the privilege of bestowing a degree on Italy's head of state. He will have noticed that the entire ceremony was conducted in Italian—of an old-fashioned kind—but we can assure him that we do this every year. As it happens, my very first duty as Public Orator was to prepare the citation for President Napolitano's predecessor, President Ciampi. On that occasion the president gave me a medal. I just thought I would mention it. The medal showed the Quirinal Palace on one side, and on the other a very satisfactory map of England with only two places marked: Londra and Oxford.

Heads of State receive a degree by diploma; the legalistic form and much of the wording are traditional. The most remarkable of such ceremonies occurred in 1814, when in the presence of the Prince Regent the degree of Doctor of Civil Law was conferred on the King

of Prussia and the Tsar of Russia, both of whom immediately exercised their new rights by voting for the conferment of the same degree on the Duke of Wellington. Cheered by this show of confidence, he went on to defeat Napoleon a year later almost to the day: so perhaps the Battle of Waterloo was won in the Theatre at Oxford. At all events, His Excellency is now one of us. I hope that he has read the small print. He may be summoned from the Quirinal on a Tuesday afternoon to give his opinion about Mr David Willetts—or perhaps to issue a presidential pardon.

Among the changes of the past year has been the appearance of this building. Restored to what are believed to be its original colours it now looks more sober and yet, curiously, more splendid. It has been given a state-of-the-art sound system and I am told that I am now for the first time audible throughout the theatre. This is described as an improvement. The University would not of course dream of changing the experience of the historic seating which you are so much enjoying at this moment. I have heard much great music in this building, and I remember especially a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius*. Near the end, the tenor soloist describes the state of Purgatory – 'Take me away... There let me lie Motionless and happy in my pain'. That seemed to sum it up.

If you have been thinking that the theatre feels more airy and spacious and wondering why, the answer lies in the removal of the brass chandeliers that hung from the ceiling. It is a vast improvement, and Robert Streater's painting can now be seen much better. Two of the allegorical figures represent Arithmetic and Astronomy; they will be looking down with especial pleasure on the Beecroft Charitable Trust's large gift for the Programme on Computational Cosmology. Arithmetic will delight too in the magnificent gifts from Mr George Soros through the Open Society Foundations for the Institute for Economic Modelling at the Oxford Martin School and from the Skoll Foundation for the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at the Saïd Business School. Meanwhile, the Orator can confirm that his workplace conditions are satisfactory. It was recently reported that Miss Mariah Carey has named her son Moroccan after a room in her New York apartment block. My son shall be named Sheldonian.

Newspapers and think tanks continue to publish university league tables, and we go up a place or two in one, and down a place or two in the next. With that care in the selection of evidence that marks the truly creative scholar, I pick out our top place in *The Times Good University Guide* for the tenth year running, and the QS World Rankings' judgement that Oxford is the best in the world for humanities. At a time when the study of humanities faces especial difficulties that is a welcome tribute. We can hope to be even better now that the Stanley and Zea Lewis Family Foundation has endowed the Stanley Lewis Chair in Israel Studies. Two months ago the BBC revealed that

Magdalen College Oxford had won University Challenge for the fourth time, breaking the record previously held by Magdalen College Oxford. Overall, an Oxford team has won fifteen times, more than twice as many as any other university. Meanwhile, Mr Ian Bayley of Balliol, who won the Brain of Britain title last year, has now been crowned Mastermind Champion. And there is even more good news: after exhaustive investigation *The Times* has declared Oxford to be the brainiest town in Britain. Bath was in second place, and Cambridge third. It must be admitted that the paper's criteria were idiosyncratic: their researchers checked the bookshops and deducted marks if they had sold too many of the works of Miss Katie Price. So if the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge is spotted in Blackwell's buying *Jordan: Pushed to the Limit* by the dozen, we shall know that they are fighting back.

To sustain these successes we must be able to attract the best students, and that means that we must be able to fund them. That will be helped by a generous gift from the Victor and William Fung Foundation to establish the Li and Fung Scholarships and from the Islamic Development Bank for the IDB-Oxford University Clarendon Scholarships. Dr Andrew Yuen has also given generously to the Oxford Thinking campaign. In turn, the University delights to recognise its students' achievements, and this year it has invited two faculties or departments in each of the divisions to nominate an outstanding prizewinner. Their details are in your programmes: they are Benjamin Eidelson of Oriol and Javier Takamura of St Catherine's in Humanities, Andrew Roocroft of Christ Church and Tim Hele of Exeter in Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences, Katherine Wright of St Edmund Hall and Sarah Wheeldon of Lincoln in Medical Sciences, and Henning Tamm of St Antony's and Charles Brendon of Exeter in Social Sciences. For a strictly limited period they are on show in a theatre very near you; I now ask them to fight back the modesty common to all Oxford men and women and stand to receive your applause.

An American friend once told me that she had finally worked out why Limeys are so over-represented in *The New York Review of Books*, and Oxonians in particular: it was the weekly tutorial essay that had honed those skills. Now that the Thomson Reuters Foundation has made a grand benefaction for the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism we shall perhaps find out if she was right. Scientists need a particle accelerator or two, but everyone needs books; two especially munificent gifts have come from Dr Charles and Mr George David for the Bodleian Libraries and from Dr Chung Kin Kwok for the Chung Kin Kwok Chinese Studies Librarian. Our museums are equally a vital part of our teaching and study. Here I record two very substantial benefactions from bodies to which we already owe an enormous amount: from the Linbury Trust for the Ashmolean Museum, and from the Wolfson

Foundation for the University Museum of Natural History, and also for Wolfson, Jesus, Somerville and Regent's Park Colleges. The Ashmolean is currently showing a stunning exhibition of treasures from Macedonia. It has been described as the finest loan exhibition ever to have come to this country from Greece, and it is not to be missed.

The fascinating science blog on the University's website keeps us laymen up to date with some of the extraordinarily varied enquiries that our researchers are pursuing. It also wins this year's prize for least successful appeal for public sympathy: the prize goes to its headline 'Malaria parasites get jetlag too.' We have received splendid gifts from the George Institute for Global Health for the George Centre for Healthcare Innovation and from the Barclay Foundation for research in the Department of Psychiatry into the effect of craniofacial abnormalities on the relationship between parents and children in infancy. Scientific research indeed helps to make the world a better place. Professor Tim Key of the Cancer Epidemiology Unit has brought hope to children everywhere by showing that there is no evidence that eating more vegetables reduces the likelihood of getting the disease. But I have spoken too soon: Dr Peter Scarborough, of the University's BHF Health Promotion Research Group, has been insisting on the difference that 'getting your five a day could make to the nation's health'. And there is no need to stop at five, he adds: the more vegetables you eat, the better. So eat up your spinach, boys and girls: there is cabbage to follow.

The alumni magazine, *Oxford Today*, got into a spot of bother for producing an issue without women in it. The magazine made amends by devoting its next number to communities that have suffered from years of prejudice and discrimination. Accordingly there were sixteen pictures of women (if I have counted right) and seventeen of Old Etonians, with Mr Cameron's shining countenance appearing three times. The explanation was an article on Oxonian Prime Ministers, with each one depicted. Christ Church received especial prominence for the same reason. It was last year, however, that the oratorical spotlight fell on Mr Cameron; this year it shifts to Mr Ed Miliband of Corpus. Previously, the Labour Party were told that they could have any leader as long as he was Brown; this time they could have anyone as long as he was fortyish and had read PPE. And indeed Oxonians matching that description came first, second and third. Mr Miliband promptly published an article in the *Daily Mirror* saying that he was in favour of the working class, and an article in the *Sunday Telegraph* saying that he was in favour of the middle class. I missed the article in *Horse and Hound* saying that he was in favour of the upper class. Worrying for so many of us.

Mr Miliband has not forgotten the old place: as he told one interviewer, 'The best four weeks of my time at university were when we had a rent dispute with the college.' Ah,

the joys of youth! Let no one say that life at Oxford is all work and no play. The four great offices of state are already all occupied by Oxonians; in a desperate attempt to prevent the same becoming true of their shadows Mr Miliband appointed Mr Alan Johnson as his shadow chancellor. I could have told him that it wouldn't work. Meanwhile, the change of government has brought even tighter state control over universities. As the widow Pargetter accurately observed, after Nigel fell off the roof, 'It seems so unreal.' But perhaps the better comment comes from the Old Testament: as King Rehoboam told his subjects, after another change of government, 'My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.' The number of Oxonians in politics makes it annoyingly hard for us to criticise governments of any stripe without criticising ourselves, but Congregation has skilfully found a Cambridge man to pick on. Now that's called bullying: he can't help it, and it's very unkind.

Across the Atlantic, Ms Kagan of Worcester was confirmed as a justice of the Supreme Court, as anticipated in last year's oration, and it is now indeed the case that the Supreme Court contains more Oxonians than Protestants. Meanwhile Mr Russell Feingold of Magdalen represented Oxford and Wisconsin in the Senate until the start of this year, while Ms Susan Rice represents Oxford and the US at the United Nations. Last autumn we celebrated in appropriately grand style Mr Leonard Blavatnik's gift to found the Blavatnik School of Government, one of the largest donations that the University has ever received. He will have noticed that our alumni have been doing quite a lot of government already; so he must suppose that it is possible for the world to be governed even better than it is now. What a strange notion. There is a moral aspect to politics, and Mr Alonzo McDonald has given a very substantial endowment to the already established McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics and Public Life. According to the University's press release it will allow Oxford's experts to pursue, among other things, the morality of the financial crisis and the principles behind bankers' activities. We hope that they will be able to develop some very small camels and some very big needles.

In their most recent elections the Royal Society and the British Academy have each chosen eight of us as fellows. The new Fellows of the Royal Society are Professors Hagan Bayley, Alan Grafen, Ian Horrocks, Alex Kacelnik, Steffen Lauritzen, David Manolopoulos, Fiona Powrie and Angela Vincent. The new Academicians are Professors Eric Clarke, Robert Gildea, Cecilia Heyes, Terence Irwin, Aditi Lahiri, Emilie Savage-Smith, Michael Sheringham and Roland Smith. We congratulate them all. There have been 31 elections from this University to the British Academy in the past four years; it is a remarkable figure. There are the usual comings and goings among Heads of House; it is so hard

to keep the staff. But Mr Richard Smethurst at least, at Worcester man and boy, and Provost since 1991, can claim a length of service to rival a Wodehousian butler; Professor Jonathan Bate will take his place. Even Mr Smethurst cannot challenge some of the figures from earlier centuries—Theophilus Leigh, for example, who was Master of Balliol for 59 years of the eighteenth century. According to a history of that college, 'For the next sixty years the Senior Common-room simmered with discontent.' (*Plus ça change.*) 'The best excuse for the Fellows was the character of Dr Leigh himself. Habitually and as a matter of course he sided with the more wrong-headed reactionaries'—as distinct, of course, from the right-headed reactionaries—'... [and] excited in the College a prejudice against the harmless and industrious Scotsmen of the Snell Foundation.' One of those industrious Scotsmen, Sir Drummond Bone, will become Master of Balliol this autumn (harmless? I do hope not), succeeding Mr Andrew Graham. Professor Roger Cashmore retires from Brasenose to be followed by Professor Alan Bowman, Lady Kennedy will follow Dr Diana Walford at Mansfield, Sir Mark Jones will succeed Professor Andrew Goudie at St Cross, and Mr Will Hutton will take over from Dr John Landers at Hertford.

The New Year Honours List brought knighthoods to Professors Rory Collins and David Butler; Professor Charles Godfray, Dr Christopher Brown and Mr Mark Damazer received CBEs and Professor David Mant an OBE. In this month's Birthday Honours Professors Christopher Hood and Wendy James were made CBE and Professors Richard Darton and Jeremy Thomas OBE. Again, congratulations all round. Another don has received a more unusual recognition. In September Mr Newman of Oriel was beatified by the Pope. I understand that one more miracle is required for full canonisation, and so I direct His Eminence's attention to the funding gap.

As ever, I end by calling to our minds those friends and colleagues who have died in the past year, among whom were John Barnett, research lecturer in physics, Keith Batey, Student of Christ Church, Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Visitor of Balliol and High Steward, Baruch Blumberg, Master of Balliol, Alison Brading, Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, David Cockaigne, Fellow of Linacre, Anthony Crowle, Fellow of Linacre, Philippa Foot, Fellow of Somerville, Paul Foote, Fellow of Queen's, Sir Marrack Goulding, Warden of St Antony's, Margaret Hubbard, Fellow of St Anne's, Margaret Jacobs, Fellow of St Hugh's, Richard Kindersley, Fellow of St Antony's, Wilfrid Knapp, Fellow of St Catherine's, Brian Lloyd, Fellow of Magdalen, Gudrun Loftus, Lecturer at St John's, Gilbert McKay, Fellow of St Peter's, Patrick Martineau, Fellow of Wadham, Elaine Matthews, Fellow of St Hilda's, Robin Matthews, Fellow of All Souls, Basil Mitchell, Fellow of Oriel, Eric Newsholme, Fellow of Merton, Simon Price, Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, Daniel Quillen, Fellow of Magdalen, Julian

Roberts, Fellow of Wolfson, Lord Rodger of Earlsferry, Visitor of Balliol and High Steward, Ben Ruck Keene, Fellow of Corpus Christi, Brian Simpson, Fellow of Lincoln, Thomas Tinsley, Fellow of St Cross, Mary Tregear, Fellow of St Cross, Stephen Wall, Fellow of Keble, Gordon Williams, Fellow of Balliol, and Lord Windlesham, Principal of Brasenose. *Requiescant in pace et in aeternum luceat eis Dominus Illuminatio Mea.*

We do not usually allow our honorands the right of reply: who knows what they might say? But by a happy chance, we gave an honorary degree to Professor Hill last year, shortly after his election to the Chair of Poetry. As far as I know, he will speak in prose, but undoubtedly with the spirit of a poet. So I conclude with the words of William Blake, and invite you to 'Hear the voice of the bard.'

CREWEIAN ORATION 2011

The Professor of Poetry delivered the Creweian Oration, 'in commemoration of the Benefactors of the University according to the intention of the Right Honourable Nathaniel, Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham'.

MY LORD and Chancellor:

To the extent that I can be said to understand the agenda, I am to be brief, cheerful, to praise benefactors and benefactions; and above all to avoid any suggestion that some benefactors may be more equal than others. The University has established its own picturesque ceremony of recognition, one to which nothing that I say would sufficiently add; nonetheless let it be said that 'a wealth of benefactors' is a noble locution, only a little below a 'convocation of eagles' and far above a 'murmuration of starlings.' Art and scholarship have for many centuries been fostered by wealth. Thomas More's friend John Colet founded St Paul's School with the fortune left him by his father; with part of the residue he settled an annuity on Erasmus. The Wedgwoods settled an annuity on Coleridge. Osbert, Sacheverell, and Edith Sitwell adopted the impecunious William Walton.

Allow me, in this my first venture upon the Creweian exercise, to speak of a period, some sixty years ago, when I was the beneficiary of this University's plenitude of benefactions. In 1950 I came up as a commoner to read English, funded by a Worcestershire County Major Scholarship which in those days was awarded on the results of a written examination. I lacked the brilliance of my near-contemporary Christopher Ricks but I worked hard and did well in Finals.

*In exigua patria natus sum.*¹ My father, a Worcestershire village bobby, had left school in 1912, aged thirteen, without any kind of academic qualification. He shared with my mother, a school-leaver at the same age, a profound respect for education, particularly higher education; and my graduation ceremony, held in Latin in this building, through which they sat in raptly grateful

bewilderment, moves me in recollection. You will readily comprehend the commingling of incredulity and indignation with which I endure the braggart promises of ministers, and of those who would push them from their stools, that henceforth, under their jurisdiction, places of higher learning such as this University will no longer be preserves of the rich. In the early 1950s undergraduates from working-class homes such as mine may have been in a minority; but it was a substantial and significant minority in a community that was smaller than it is now.

It is of course more than likely that in the articles of admission to the Chair of Poetry, and the even more stringent deeds of foundation for the Creweian Oration (deeds and articles that, for whatever reason, have not come my way) there is to be found a clause forbidding the speaker to broach any matter of politics *while in his cups*. I am not in my cups. I am, I believe, *compos mentis*. Moreover, with all due respect, I remind the assembly that we are seated here at the end of a month which began with the University's vote of no confidence in the Minister of State for Universities and Science.

It was a bold step and I applaud it. But could it not be said, by some nagging bounder, that the protests of the English universities as a whole smacked somewhat of the 'aged party' of folklore, en route to the Lord Mayor's Banquet, crying 'stop thief!' after the ragged scruff (an old Etonian in disguise) who is racing off with his wallet? It would perhaps have been nobler in the corporate mind (continues the nagging bounder) if some protest, some recollection in the style of the old *grand remonstrance*, had been uttered from the hearts of our universities some years before the collapse of the world economy. *Areopagitica* would have been a fine model of elan and gravitas for such a protest against the increasing degradation of national learning; for instance:

And perhaps this is the doom which *Adam* fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say of knowing good by evil. As therefore the state of man now is; what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear, without the knowledge of evil?²

Some present may be asking: what does this clown of a poet mean, or intend when he alludes to that archaic debate about good and evil? Let me respond with two words, 'consumer' and 'punter.' Some thirty years ago, when I used regularly to drive up the old A1 en route from Cambridge to the north of England, I would pass a large roadside service area dominated by a huge set of mechanical teeth, inviting weary pilgrims to dine. I always thought of it as the castle of Giant Despair, and memory recalls the jaws uttering *ho! ho! ho!*, but I think memory misrecalls at that point. A month or so ago I heard the Prime Minister in interview refer to the public as 'consumers

of the media'. I have heard people who visit art galleries described as 'consumers of culture' and theatre-goers referred to as 'punters.' Whenever I hear such phrases I recall those mechanical choppers on the Great North Road.

Those in this audience who are expert in mediaeval law will protest that my grotesque swipe at this monstrous figure of the Consumer shows no awareness of fourteenth-century distinctions concerning *res consumptibiles*³: there is just and proportionate consumption. Quite so. My concern is not with proportionate consumption but with a monstrous, insatiable consumption such as Veblen prophesied.

The *Oxford English Dictionary*, that great beacon of our national soul and our native intelligence, tells me that 'punter,' which it traces to 1706 as a term used in card games for money, and to 1873 as referring to 'one who gambles in stocks and shares, or on football pools;' has, since 1934, also applied to 'the victim of a swindler or confidence trickster,' and, since 1970 to (a) the client of a prostitute, (b), 1977, someone attending a pop concert which the performer herself or himself described as 'crap,' (c) to a Lourdes pilgrim (1980).

What this clown poet wishes to emphasize is that, coming up from an underprivileged background, although out of his depth for the greater part of his freshman year, he yet knew, at first instinctively, subsequently by daily experience, that none of his instructors regarded him as a consumer or a punter.

If there is today even one university in Britain which would see nothing amiss in regarding its students as consumers or punters, then we are condemned, in Milton's terms, to knowing good by evil, and the future of our institutions of learning is indeed desperate.

I see our long-term salvation not only in the young resident teachers and researchers but also in a new generation of wandering scholars, created by force of economic circumstance, numbers of them first-class graduates of this University, who, without security of tenure, move from place to place, serving each temporary lodging with total commitment, total integrity. In ways that will not be evident for a generation, they are destined to be our civilisation's benefactors. I end, therefore, as I began, by praising this University's grand inheritance of benefaction.

My Lord and Chancellor, I beg leave to hold my peace.

¹ *A Dialogue Between Reason and Adversity* [a late Middle English Version of Petrarch's *De Remediis*], ed. F.N.M. Diekstra (Nijmegen Catholic University, nd) Part 2, p. 10: it is *Adversity* who speaks.

² John Milton, *Selected Prose*, ed. C.A. Patrides (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1974), p. 213.

³ E.F. Jacob, *Essays in the Conciliar Epoch* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1943), p. 91.