



THE OXFORD RESEARCH CENTRE IN THE HUMANITIES



ANNUAL REVIEW | 2017–18



# 45+

research networks



major  
research  
programmes

# 10

# 48+

knowledge  
exchange fellows



global  
south visiting  
professors

# 7



# 350+

research-led events  
with audiences totalling  
over **18,000** people



# ABOUT TORCH

Launched in May 2013, TORCH stimulates, supports, and promotes research activity of the very highest quality that transcends disciplinary and institutional boundaries and engages with wider audiences.

## CONTACT US

TORCH  
The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities  
Humanities Division, University of Oxford  
Radcliffe Humanities  
Radcliffe Observatory Quarter  
Woodstock Road  
Oxford  
OX2 6GG  
UK

[torch@humanities.ox.ac.uk](mailto:torch@humanities.ox.ac.uk)  
[www.torch.ox.ac.uk](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk)



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# WELCOME



Professor Louise Richardson



Professor Karen O'Brien

## **Professor Louise Richardson** **Vice-Chancellor, University of Oxford**

Since its inception, TORCH has supported individual researchers and academics, as well as collaborative projects and initiatives across the disciplines. It has encouraged and deepened myriad conversations which ensure that Humanities at Oxford will continue to flourish. For researchers at all stages of their careers, across faculties, departments and divisions, TORCH offers a creative and supportive space in which to come together to develop innovative approaches to interdisciplinary research.

I have watched enthusiastically the support given by TORCH to international Knowledge Exchange projects such as Storming Utopia, and seen its commitment to public engagement with research, with recent highlights including participation in the national Being Human Festival. TORCH's ongoing commitment to exploring what it means to be human in today's world through its *Humanities & Identities* series is another example of how humanities can contribute to the ongoing discussions beyond the academy.

As Vice-Chancellor of the University, I am delighted to see TORCH grow from strength to strength and, along with my colleagues, am very pleased to see the growing impact of TORCH's work in the wider community.

## **Professor Karen O'Brien** **Head of Humanities Division, University of Oxford**

As Head of Humanities at Oxford, I have watched with great pride as TORCH has gone from strength to strength over its first five years. In a short space of time, TORCH has already become an invaluable resource, providing support to researchers working across the Division. Our thanks in particular must go to Professor Philip Ross Bullock, who has led with great vision since his appointment as TORCH Director in October 2017.

In addition to its core aim – that is, facilitating interdisciplinary research – TORCH also promotes public engagement with research (PER) both within and beyond the academic community. By providing seed funding, support and opportunities for collaboration with external partners, from the National Trust to local community groups and charitable organisations, TORCH encourages researchers to engage with ever wider audiences in a mutually beneficial knowledge exchange. Several TORCH researchers were acknowledged in the Vice-Chancellor's Public Engagement with Research Awards, and the Humanities Division PER Summer School gave Early Career Researchers the opportunity to develop their own public engagement with research projects. As we move forwards, these local, national and international partnerships will continue to showcase and support the humanities at Oxford.

TORCH's Annual Headline Series *Humanities & Identities*, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, has highlighted the relevance of humanities research to us all. As we begin our 2019 Annual Headline Series, *Humanities & Performance*, I look forward to witnessing the exciting new collaborations to arise from the interdisciplinary research that TORCH supports.





*Professor Daniel Grimley*

**Professor Daniel Grimley**  
**Associate Head of Humanities Research,**  
**University of Oxford**

TORCH's outstanding success over the past five years is a strong indicator of the value that this collaborative research environment offers to the development of the Humanities at Oxford University. We will continue to encourage these collaborations and to assess their impact as part of the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework (REF).

TORCH has enabled researchers to work beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries, fostering conversations across multiple fields and facilitating wider reach and impact through knowledge exchange, public events, and partnerships.

The TORCH support network is now joined by the Business Engagement and Partnerships team shared with Social Sciences, alongside colleagues working with the Creative Industries and Heritage Engagement. We look forward to exploring and developing innovative new ways for researchers to collaborate with external partners in industry and business.

TORCH encourages researchers to engage with ever wider audiences in a mutually beneficial knowledge exchange. *Professor Karen O'Brien*



*Professor Philip Ross Bullock*

**Professor Philip Ross Bullock**  
**TORCH Director (2017 onwards),**  
**University of Oxford**

It has been a true privilege to serve as TORCH Director this last academic year and I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the academics who lead its programmes, networks and other activities, as well as engaging with the diverse and intellectually curious audiences who attend a wide range of public events. It has been a particular pleasure to work closely with the TORCH team, led by Dr Victoria McGuinness, whose recently completed PhD in Museum Studies from the University of Leicester has been a cause of real celebration for us all.

Consulting widely with researchers across Oxford Humanities and beyond, I quickly became convinced of the ways in which TORCH could develop in new directions, whilst continuing to support the many initiatives that have become its trademark. A major area of growing importance is the role that TORCH can play in supporting international collaborations, whether by facilitating partnerships with key overseas institutions, or bringing world-leading scholars to Oxford. Oxford is also an outstanding centre for research into the creative and performing arts, and our headline theme of Humanities and Performance in 2019 will allow us to celebrate the many existing partnerships between Oxford academics and key arts organisations, as well as positioning Oxford as a leading voice in the local, national and international performing arts world.

TORCH has always and will continue to work with Oxford academics across a range of disciplines, support and further interdisciplinary research, and promote collaboration and inclusivity. It is this visionary, innovative approach to research that marks TORCH out as a leading hub in the humanities and of which I am thrilled to be part, as well as working with the TORCH team, colleagues in the Humanities Division, and all of the Humanities Faculties in broadening the TORCH academic community.

# MOMENTS



## Hidden Beneath the Surface: Untold Tales of Neurodivergence and Mental Difference

Oxford, like many cities, can be a place where those who are neurodivergent or have mental ill health can often go unseen and unheard. This event brought together a panel of students, staff, and researchers to explore practical solutions, chaired by Marie Tidball (TORCH Knowledge Exchange Fellow).

OCTOBER 2017



## Me and My Beliefs: Challenges of Identity and Society

In this talk, Bishop Libby Lane – Britain's first woman bishop in the Church of England – explored the pathway that brought her to this position, addressing an area of identity not always covered in diversity debates. Shaista Aziz, Ja Elsner and Elleke Boehmer joined her in discussing what it means to be a person of faith in Britain today and how this impacts on diversity.

NOVEMBER 2017

## Imagining the Divine: Art and the Rise of World Religions

The Ashmolean Museum, Empires of Faith, and TORCH co-hosted this public event on 'Imagining the Divine: Art and the Rise of World Religions' with Professor Mary Beard and Neil MacGregor. Chaired by Dr Mallica Kumbura Landrus, participants at the event discussed how contemporary religions developed during the transition between the ancient and medieval worlds across Eurasia and Africa, and what relevance this has today.



JANUARY 2018



## Reading Bass Culture: Linton Kwesi Johnson in Conversation with Paul Gilroy

Acclaimed Jamaican-born British poet and performer Linton Kwesi Johnson coined and popularised the term dub poetry, a form of performance-based oral poetry inspired by reggae music, and in 2002 became only the second living poet published in the Penguin Modern Classics series. In this seminar, Johnson explored the formation and development of his poetry and the inter-generational and transatlantic relationships that nurtured it and shaped its political underpinnings.

APRIL 2018

## Tales of Love and History: James Ivory in Conversation

Oscar-winning American film-maker James Ivory (*Maurice* (1987), *Call Me by Your Name* (2017)), a 2018 TORCH Visiting Professor, spoke at an event at the Sheldonian Theatre about his experiences with the legendary Merchant Ivory productions, in partnership with producer Ismail Merchant and screenwriter Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. Ivory was in conversation with Professor Richard Parkinson, Dr Katherine Harloe, and Professor Jennifer Ingleheart.



NOVEMBER 2018

# Some of our highlights from 2017-18

## Post-War: Commemoration, Reconstruction, Reconciliation

This Mellon-Sawyer Seminar Series ran events throughout 2017 and 2018, bringing together academics, politicians, activists and policy makers from many different fields, joined by novelists, poets, artists and musicians whose work has marked war in some way. Events in the Series included public concerts, seminars, lectures and workshops.

2017-18

## Being Human Festival 2017: Lost Late

TORCH led Lost Late in collaboration with the Pitt Rivers and Oxford University Museum of Natural History – a special late night opening of the museums to explore the art and science of Lost and Found. Live performances of dance and music, digital installations, film, workshops, interactive talks and exhibits brought the museums alive for a whole evening, with Humanities researchers converging with University collections.

NOVEMBER 2017



## LGBT Lives: Narratives and Representation

This event brought together a panel of researchers and heritage professionals whose work explores LGBT narratives, identities and representation, marking the 50th anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the UK. The panel discussed the representation and inclusion of LGBTQ+ narratives in museums and spaces, including the National Trust, theories of sexuality and gender, as well as the historical and current treatment of the LGBT community, particularly in modern Russia.

NOVEMBER 2017



FEBRUARY 2018

## Celebration of the Centenary of the Birth of Olive Gibbs

Olive Gibbs, born in February 1918, was a Labour councillor on the City and County Councils who saved Jericho from destruction and had the Cutteslowe wall demolished. She was also a founding member and the national chair of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). This event was part of the Oxford International Women's Festival, which marks the centenary of partial women's suffrage.

## Reni Eddo-Lodge in Conversation with Rebecca Surender

At this sold-out event at the Sheldonian Theatre, Reni Eddo-Lodge (author of *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* and winner of the Jhalak Prize 2018) spoke with Dr Rebecca Surender (Pro Vice-Chancellor and Advocate for Diversity, University of Oxford) about Eddo-Lodge's book. This was a *Great Writers Inspire at Home* event, part of the *Postcolonial Writing and Theory Seminar Series*, and a culminating event in the *Postcolonial Writers Make Worlds* project.

JUNE 2018



## Victorian Light Night

More than 2,500 visitors converged on the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter on 16 November 2018 for TORCH's *Victorian Light Night*, part of the national Being Human Festival and Oxford's Christmas Light Festival. TORCH and researchers from the ERC funded 'Diseases of Modern Life' Project teamed up with the award-winning Projection Studio for a spectacular 3D projection and sound show onto the original Radcliffe Infirmary. The evening featured stalls, games and performances by researchers from the 'Diseases of Modern Life' Project, all themed around the Victorians' concept of the 'speed of life'.

NOVEMBER 2018





# NETWORKS

We currently support over 45 research networks, which reach across disciplines to build communities of scholars from a range of career stages to work together on innovative projects. For information about all of our networks please visit [www.torch.ox.ac.uk/networks](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/networks)

#SocialHumanities

Affections and Ethics

Ancient Dance in Modern Dancers

Colonial Ports and Global History (CPAGH)

Comics and Graphic Novels: The Politics of Form

Creative Multilingualism

Crisis, Extremes, and Apocalypse

Critical Visualization

Diplomacy in the Early Modern Period (1400-1800)

Fiction and Human Rights

Gender and Authority

Globalising and Localising the Great War

Life Itself in Theory and Practice

The Long History of Identity, Ethnicity, and Nationhood

Migration and Mobility

Negotiated Texts

Nordic Network

Oxford Phenomenology Network

Oxford Psalms Network

Oxford Song Network: Poetry and Performance

PastNet Network

Queer Studies Network

Rags to Riches: Experience of Social Mobility since 1800

Rethinking the Contemporary: The World Since the Cold War

Romanticism and Eighteenth Century Studies Oxford

Theatre and Performance

Urban Rhythms Network

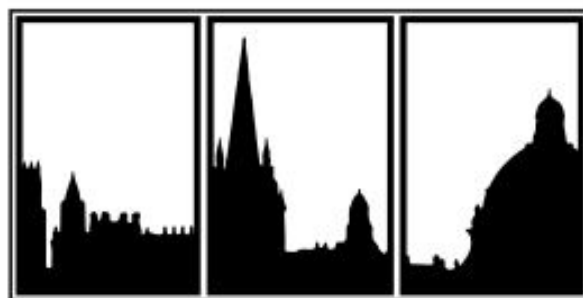
Violence Studies Oxford

## Oxford Comics Network

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/comics](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/comics)

The purpose of the network is to bring together those engaged in the creation and analysis of comics. Our academic programme is therefore necessarily interdisciplinary, creating a space where, like comics, multiple strands unite. Our approach to comics is broad in terms of definition and geography, directing attention to the creation and reception of graphic narratives in different contexts and cultures. Talks this year have featured considerations of romance, the Gothic, and ecocritical accounts of Japan in the wake of the Fukushima incident. The coming year sees a soft relaunch of the network under new convenors who look to build on the successes of the first two years, continuing with the bi-weekly seminars and working towards another conference. In the latter aim, we are inspired by the forthcoming publication of *Documenting Trauma in Comics: Traumatic Pasts, Embodied Histories, and Graphic Reportage*, the volume based on conference proceedings from the 2017 event hosted by the network and edited by its founder, Dominic Davies. We are also expanding the scope of the network's blog as a space for discussion of themes in Comics Studies by postgraduates across the country. The committee look forward to another year of stimulating events and welcome proposals for collaboration.

**Dr Enrique Del Rey Cabero (Medieval and Modern Languages) and Dr Michael Goodrum (TORCH Research Fellow)**



**OXFORD COMICS NETWORK**

## Colonial Ports and Global History

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/cpagh](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/cpagh)

Funded by TORCH, Colonial Ports and Global History (CPAGH) is the first interdisciplinary network of its kind at Oxford, fostering collaborative thinking about colonial ports and global history, and bringing together a diversity of researchers in terms of their cultural backgrounds, career stages, colleges and disciplines (Anthropology, History, Musicology).

The Founding Members' wide-ranging specialisms extend from the Niger Delta, neo-colonialism in New Orleans and Odessa to Ottoman and Indian manufacturing centres, and East Asian ports. They all share a keen interest in postcolonial theory and the ways it can materially enrich epistemologies of global history.

In creating a shared enterprise that transcends different concepts and methodologies, CPAGH will facilitate new knowledge exchange across disciplinary canons, crucially advocating global history as an interdisciplinary practice, and formulating a global research ethics around local perspectives and narratives.

CPAGH's planned events for the academic year 2018–19 include a multimedia launch at the Grade II listed St Luke's Chapel, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter; a two-day conference at TORCH titled 'Sensing Colonial Ports and Global History: Agency, Affect, Temporality'; public engagement at the Pitt Rivers Museum; and a workshop with A-Level students during a College Access Week.

**Dr Yvonne Liao (Music), Julia Binter (Social Anthropology), Olivia Durand (History), Dr Katharina Oke (King's College London), Min-Erh Wang (Musicology) and Dr Hatice Yıldız (History)**



## Diplomacy in the Early Modern Period (1400-1800)

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/diplomacy-in-early-modern-period-1400-1800](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/diplomacy-in-early-modern-period-1400-1800)

The TORCH Network on Diplomacy in the Early Modern Period (1400–1800) is a platform for the study of early modern diplomacy. Through its events, the Network investigates how official and unofficial diplomats contributed to shaping our modern world. We are particularly interested in ambassadors' diplomatic and networking activities, in their role as cultural mediators, and in the position they occupied within the Republic of Letters.

Since its launch in September 2017, the Network has been bringing together a large number of scholars from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds, including History, Modern Languages, Art History, English, and Philosophy. Between November 2017 and June 2018, the Network hosted 11 seminars on a broad range of subjects, including diplomatic relations between the European powers and the Ottoman Empire, the evolution of diplomatic practices through the early modern period, diplomatic ceremonial and gifts, etc. These activities proved very popular, attracting both national and international academics as well as members of the broader public.

The Network's activities culminated on 11–12 June 2018 in a two-day international symposium on the theme of 'Diplomacy and Gender in the Early Modern World'. Thanks also to the collaboration of the amazing TORCH staff, the conference proved extremely successful both in terms of organisation and content. Indeed, some of the most original and challenging papers delivered at this conference will be published as a special issue of a leading established peer review journal in the field, the *International History Review*. This will guarantee utmost visibility to the selected papers and the Network itself.

**Dr Ruggero Sciuto (Medieval and Modern Languages)**

## NETWORKS

CONTINUED



### Gender and Authority

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/gender-and-authority](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/gender-and-authority)

Who gets to speak, and who holds 'authority' in the arts, in the public sphere, in academic institutions and in politics? What are the gendered configurations of authority? By bringing researchers from different disciplines across the Humanities and Social Sciences into conversation, the Gender and Authority Network aims to answer these questions and to advance our understanding of the question of authority in the artistic, cultural and political fields, and specifically where they intersect with issues of gender.

Among our events, we held a seminar devoted to LGBTQ+ identities, featuring papers on transgender debates by Dr Elliot Evans and representations of lesbian communities by Dr Charlotte Ross and a double book launch chaired by Dr Jennifer Burns (University of Warwick) of two monographs: Alberica Bazzoni (University of Warwick), *Writing for Freedom: Body, Identity, and Power in Goliarda Sapienza's Narrative* (Peter Lang, 2018) and Dr Ursula Fanning (University College, Dublin), *Italian Women's Autobiographical Writings in the Twentieth Century* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2017). Our Second Annual Lecture was given by Dr Lorna Finlayson (University of Essex) on the topic of 'Women and the Politics of Representation'.

Furthermore, the Network is putting together an edited volume for *Palgrave Macmillan Series in Gender Studies* that will include contributions from several disciplines as well as a distinctive intersectional perspective on race, class and sexuality. This year we continued to be actively committed in engaging with the wider non-academic audience through the Podcast Series *BOSS*, co-produced with Dr Kira Allmann. Among the topics we discussed were issues of language, post-porn, masturbation, decriminalising sex-work, and intersectionality.

**Dr Adele Bardazzi (Medieval and Modern Languages), Dr Alberica Bazzoni (University of Warwick), Marzia D'Amico (DPhil in Medieval and Modern Languages), Vittoria Fallanca (DPhil in Medieval and Modern Languages)**

### The Long History of Identity, Ethnicity and Nationhood

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/the-long-history-of-identity-ethnicity-and-nationhood](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/the-long-history-of-identity-ethnicity-and-nationhood)

The underlying aim of this network is to rethink the existing theoretical paradigms of ethnicity and nationalism studies, considering in particular the constantly shifting definitions and uses of racial discourses, their intersection with religious identities, and the gendered dynamics of pre-national, national, and imperial discourses across cultural contexts in the pre-modern and modern period. Our seminar series aims to foster interdisciplinary discussion around these themes, and since Michaelmas 2017 we have hosted talks by both early-career scholars and senior academics on a wide range of topics, including the following: The Phoenicians and 'national' identity, the Solomonic myth in Ethiopian nationalism, ethnicised religion and the 'war on terror', Richard Wagner and the German 'national' ballad tradition, theoretical reflections on macro-nationalism and Basque, Catalan, and Galician nationalism, and a recent presentation by Professor Robert Gildea on his upcoming book, *Empires of the Mind: Explaining Charlie Hebdo, the Windrush Scandal, and Brexit*. The network has come under the leadership of new convenors since Michaelmas 2018 and we are working towards organising a conference exploring the definition of race in relation to religious identity in a global context, from the medieval period to the present. Our seminars are supported by the Stanford program at Oxford as well as TORCH and have a growing following of academics, graduates, and undergraduates in History and Modern Languages. The convenors also have regard to TORCH's public engagement remit and members of the public have attended and will attend future papers.

**Dr Elisabeth Bolorinos Allard (Medieval and Modern Languages) & Dr Angela Flynn (History)**





## Migration and Mobility

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/migration-and-mobility](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/migration-and-mobility)

People are mobile, and arguably always have been. Yet, in recent years, migration and mobility have been pushed onto the agendas of government and non-governmental actors alike, have been covered widely in the media, and have generated societal discussions about ways of belonging and exclusion. In a time when migration and mobility are raising political, environmental, social, and ethical questions, there is a pressing need to rethink these fundamental concepts in creative, multidisciplinary ways.

This network was launched in October 2017 in order to bring researchers of all aspects of migration and mobility from all disciplines together to develop the migration and mobility research agendas at Oxford. It has since grown to over 100 members. We discovered shared interests and exchanged ideas in twice-termly 'academic speed-dating' events around keywords such as 'family', 'exile', or 'inclusion'. In an event aimed specifically at doctoral students and early career researchers, we began to create an interdisciplinary cohort of young migration scholars. A highlight was our two-day conference in May 2018 on 'Rethinking Inclusion, Exclusion, and Human Mobility'. Organised together with the student-led Oxford Migration Studies Society, it explored the theme in six multi-disciplinary panels with researchers from all over the UK.

**Lena Rose (DPhil in Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology)**



## PastNet

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/pastnet-network](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/pastnet-network)

How do social networks evolve over huge time-scales? How did geography constrain or enhance the development of past social networks? These are fundamental questions in both the study of the human past and network research, yet our ability to answer them is severely hampered by the limited development of spatial and temporal network methods. Thanks to the support of TORCH, the PastNet community of Oxford-based scholars from the humanities, the natural and physical sciences was able to exchange ideas of how this issue could be overcome.

We hosted a number of networking and discussion-based events, including a full-day meeting on the use of network science to study human evolution and a discussion on how network methods for the study of the past could in fact be used to study the future.

Our main activity was a two-day international conference preceded by a two-day practical workshop, the response to which revealed the timeliness of the issues that keep PastNet scholars awake at night: the workshop was sold-out in one week, and 64 conference abstracts from humanities, natural and physical science scholars were received, of which 30 outstanding abstracts were accepted for presentation. The conference took place in the Taylorian in early December 2018, when we welcomed more than 130 scholars mainly from Europe, the US, and Asia, who share PastNet's passion for exploring how network science can enhance the study of the human past.

**Professor Kirsten Shepherd-Barr (Faculty of English), Leah Broad (Faculty of Music), Professor Daniel Grimley (Faculty of Music), Eveliina Pulkki (Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages)**

## NETWORKS

CONTINUED

### Queer Studies Network

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/queer-studies-network](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/queer-studies-network)

Launched in November 2017, Oxford's first interdisciplinary Queer Studies Network aims to open up new avenues for engagement with queer theory, marginalised voices and LGBTQIA+ experiences, art and activism. QSN comprises University of Oxford scholars, staff members and students; the heritage sector and members of the wider LGBTQIA+ community in Oxford and beyond.

During its first year, QSN hosted popular fortnightly research lunches. Students and faculty shared work and developed ideas through feedback and discussion; topics included queer representation in dictionaries, queer prisoners in Francoist Spain, homophobia and lesbian AIDS activism.

The network proudly welcomed several notable international academics, including Professor Margaret McGeehee (the Atlanta Televisual Drag Scene) and Professor Chris Freeman (Christopher Isherwood). With a transnational focus, QSN hosted a number of scholars/practitioners with perspectives from Palestine (Walaa Alqaisiya), India (Dr Sneha Krishnan) and China (Li Maizi of 'China's feminist five'); Dr Mojisola Adebayo on Afriquia (Black/Queer) Theatre and a pop-up LGBTQIA+ migrants exhibition alongside a talk by asylum seekers in conjunction with the Rainbow Pilgrims project.

Reaching beyond Oxford, QSN publishes a blog and an upcoming podcast of weekly seminar series and one-off events including autism and gender dysphoria, Black feminist activism and a big gay data hackathon.

**Ruth Ramsden-Karelse (DPhil in English), Mara Gold (DPhil in Classics) and Eleri Watson (DPhil in Englishs**



### Rethinking the Contemporary: The World since the Cold War

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/rethinking-the-contemporary-the-world-since-the-cold-war](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/rethinking-the-contemporary-the-world-since-the-cold-war)

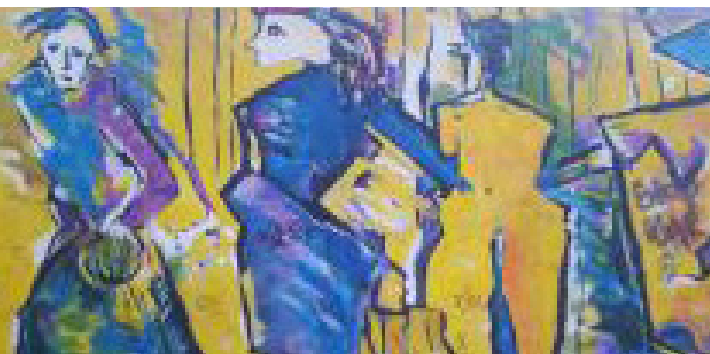
Over the past two years, we have organised a number of extremely well-attended events in which we focused on two major themes: neoliberalism and the economy, and the politics of ethnicity and identity. There were lectures by the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (NYU) on failure, design and risk; the sociologist Luc Boltanski (EHESS Paris) on the enrichment economy; the historian Samuel Moyn (Harvard) on human rights and neoliberalism; the literary theorist Robert Young (NYU) on Frantz Fanon; and the anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff (Harvard) on crime, sovereignty and the state. We also convened two panel discussions, one on nihilism in our times with the writer Pankaj Mishra, the historian Shruti Kapila (Cambridge) and David Priestland; and the other on populism with the philosopher Akeel Bilgrami (Columbia), the historian Shruti Kapila (Cambridge) and the foreign correspondent and author Saeed Naqvi (Delhi).

**Professor Faisal Devji (History), Professor David Priestland (History), Professor Marilyn Booth (Oriental Studies), Professor Stephen Smith (History)**

### Theatre and Performance

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/theatre-and-performance](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/theatre-and-performance)

Although it lacks a drama department, Oxford is full of researchers working on aspects of theatre and performance across many languages, cultures, and periods. Our network launched in September 2017 with a symposium on 'Theatre and the Experience of Time', with talks by Jane Goodall, Sue Jones, Laura Marcus, David Wiles, Baz Kershaw, and a practical session with director Jonathan Heron.



## Violence Studies

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/violence](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/violence)

The Violence Studies research network has come a long way since it commenced in earnest in 2016 when our founder, Wolfson Scholar and History DPhil student Rachel Kowalski, began hosting fortnightly seminars at Wolfson College. The funding, advice, and administrative support TORCH has generously provided the network since we came under their expert wing in early 2018 has allowed the network and its activities to go from strength to strength.

Violence Studies' 2018 programme of events has created spaces in which connections have been built, new and innovative research has been shared, and dialogue surrounding the study of 'violence' has flourished. Our panel events brought scholars with varying areas of expertise together to discuss a specific theme. Speakers included a mix of established academics, PhD students and early career researchers, and the audiences who attended and participated in the lively Q&As that followed were equally diverse.

In October 2018, Violence Studies co-hosted a two-day conference with the University of Exeter's Centre for the Study of War, State and Society. Two primary themes, 'Writing Violence' and 'Understanding Violence', were explored by 25 speakers across a programme of nine interdisciplinary panels.

In the coming academic year, the network will consolidate the fruits of this year's activities, by expanding the network, and producing a publication output. The network will also endeavour to develop activities that will make violence research accessible at a popular level.

**Rachel Kowalski (DPhil in History)**

Other highlights of the network's first year were Jessica Goodman's conference on *Death, Dying and the Dead on Stage*, Emma Whipday speaking on practice-led research, and "in conversation" events featuring Carol Rocamora talking about Chekhov, a round-table to provide background for a 2018 Garsington Opera première based on a Chilean novel, and the playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins talking with Sos Eltis about his play *An Octoroon*.

The network is co-convened by Julie Curtis, Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, and a dynamic community of postgraduate students who have been extremely proactive: Cédric Ploix, Kitty Gurnos-Davies, Hannah Greenstreet, Alex Thomas, Hannah Simpson, and Gabriela Minden. Their Theatre & Performance Reading Group, which meets several times per term, has covered topics ranging from "drag" to "postdramatic theatre" to "postcolonial theatre". Past and upcoming events organised through the network prioritise Knowledge Exchange between academia and the theatre industry. This is reflected in the recent symposium on 'Collaboration in Theatre' that brought theatre practitioners such as Bryony Lavery and Zarema Zaudinova (Teatr.Doc, Moscow) into conversation with academics and graduate students.

**Professor Julie Curtis (Medieval and Modern Languages) and Professor Kirsten Shepherd-Barr (English)**



# PROGRAMMES

Our 10 research programmes bring together existing major research groups and individuals working in the same field to collaborate and incubate new ideas. For information about all of our programmes please visit [www.torch.ox.ac.uk/programmes](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/programmes)

Digital Humanities

Enlightenment

Environmental Humanities

Heritage

Medical Humanities

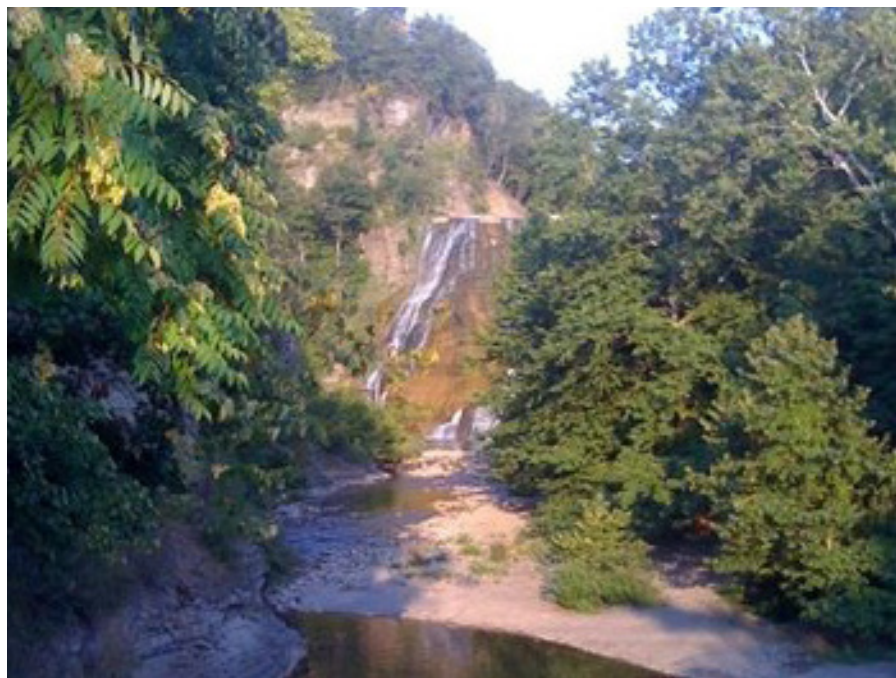
Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation (OCCT)

Oxford Medieval Studies

Performance

Race and Resistance Across Borders in the Long Twentieth Century

Women in the Humanities



## Environmental Humanities

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/envirohum](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/envirohum)

The Environmental Humanities network has flourished this past year with generous funding support from TORCH for activities related to the humanities and the sciences. We welcome researchers with an interest in the physical environment and especially in the dynamic role played by the Humanities in relation to environmental thinking.

Our lunchtime seminar series on landscapes and identities continued, and we began with a poetry reading and commentary by Bernard O'Donoghue, followed by a number of wonderful talks including living with volcanoes in Iceland, Delius in the garden, Russian lyric and landscape, theories of natural beauty, built environment and modern prose, and trees in Akkadian and Sumerian literature.

We sponsored two highly successful conferences, the first of which, 'Trees and Wellbeing: Past, Present and Future', was co-organised by Christiana Payne and Fiona Stafford, and took place at Oxford Brookes University on 18 May 2018. The conference aimed to bring together researchers and practitioners from a wide variety of disciplinary and professional backgrounds to discuss how, and why, trees, forests and woodland can make us all feel better. Postgraduate bursaries were made available through our TORCH grant.

A conference entitled 'Change of Air: Atmosphere, Health, and Locality in the Romantic Era, 1760-1840' took place at TORCH



on 14th September 2018, and was organised by Rhys Kaminski-Jones and Erin Lafford. Responding to recent and diverse critical discussions of the significance of air in Romantic-period writing, the conference sought to consider the explicit connections between how air, health, and notions of locality were being explored in the long eighteenth century.

The Programme also supported the launch event of a postgraduate environmental history group, the workshop 'Writing History in the Anthropocene', held on 23 May 2018. In conjunction with Oxford's Centre for Global History, this was part of John L. Brooke's Astor Visiting Lecture. It provided a forum for graduate students from a range of disciplines (history, anthropology, archaeology, among others) to present their research and discuss approaches to analysing humanity's changing ecological entanglements across various time periods, led by Professor Brooke.

**Professor Fiona Stafford (English) and Allison Adler Kroll (DPhil in History)**

## Medical Humanities

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/medical-humanities](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/medical-humanities)

Medical Humanities activities have continued to expand over the past year, supported by the Humanities Division research team and in Faculties and Colleges. More information is available on the new TORCH website. Some projects include:

- **Humanities and Healthcare:** New funding from the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) and the Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF) is supporting partnerships with healthcare organisations and medical sciences which seek both to improve the ethos of healthcare and push the boundaries of humanities research in this field. Dr Sally Frampton (History, Academic Fellow) and Louie Fooks (Policy Officer) are taking this initiative forward through research, engagement and policy development.
- **Understanding Postgraduate Medical Ethics Education:** This project, led by Dr Andrew Papanikitas



## PROGRAMMES *CONTINUED*

(Primary Care Health Sciences) and Dr John Spicer (Health Education England) focusses on the role of moral philosophy in postgraduate medical curricula, developing insights from other Oxford projects such as Compassion in Healthcare and Marketisation, Ethics and Healthcare.

- **Diseases of Modern Life:** This project, led by Professor Sally Shuttleworth (English) focusing upon ideas of stress, modernity and health in the nineteenth century, continued its academic and public programmes. These included an interdisciplinary symposium on sleep and stress, organised in collaboration with the Royal Society, and Victorian Light Night, a public engagement extravaganza at TORCH, where attendees were treated to a visual and sound installation about the speed of Victorian life, projected onto the Radcliffe Infirmary.

Lastly, supported by AHRC funding, I have co-authored a Royal College of Physicians/Oxford Healthcare Values Partnership report entitled **Advancing Medical Professionalism**. The report explores the professional skills, values and attributes essential to the modern doctor. I am now working with healthcare colleagues to embed the report's approaches in medical training, CPD, and medical practice.

**Professor Joshua Hordern (Theology and Religion)**

### Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation (OCCT)

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/occt](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/occt)

Perhaps the most exciting event at the Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation research centre (OCCT) this year has been the launch of our new MSt in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation. As I write, we are in the midst of selecting the new cohort of master's students who will join our lively community of postgraduates, early career scholars and senior academics from across the literary humanities faculties.

Meanwhile, OCCT's research continues to develop. Our postgraduate-led discussion group has been considering the particular challenges of translating from literatures deemed 'minor', including recent Polish and Greek



OXFORD  
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CRITICISM &  
TRANSLATION

writing and poems composed in Beddawi refugee camp in Lebanon. Our seminar series on 'Fiction and other Minds' has explored intersections between comparative literary study and cognitive science, while our research strand on 'Translation and Criticism' has staged a variety of workshops, talks and readings. Part of this work, under the title 'Prismatic Translation', is now supported by the AHRC-funded Creative Multilingualism programme: it includes an investigation of 544 translations, into 61 languages, of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* which will (we hope) produce some engaging digital visualisations, and workshops in translational creativity at a multilingual local school, Oxford Spires Academy, whose results have been published by Picador in *England: Poems from a School*.

We have supported two important conferences, 'Literature, Democracy and Transitional Justice', and 'After Clarice: Lispector's Legacy', both of which have generated books that are being published by our imprint Transcript. Oxford Translation Day, held each June, is our popular, translation-centred literary festival. We are also collaborating with the humanities research centres of the Universities of Chile, California (Irvine) and Western Cape to form a Mellon-funded Global Humanities Institute on 'The Challenges of Translation': after an initial meeting in Oxford the Institute will open its doors in Santiago de Chile in July.

**Professor Matthew Reynolds (English) & Dr Eleni Philippou (English)**

### Oxford Medieval Studies

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/oxford-medieval-studies](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/oxford-medieval-studies)

The overarching theme for Oxford Medieval Studies in the previous year has been to make more visible the huge range of events and colourful activities of the large number of academics and students from across the University to enliven the conversations among ourselves and members of the public about all things medieval – with huge success: the platter of plenty which is the Medieval Booklet has been downloaded from the revamped Oxford Medieval Studies starting page over





500 times last term, over 600 times this term alone, a weekly newsletter has been established and the Twitter feed has picked up a lively group of engaged followers.

The annual Medieval Studies Roadshow proved a particularly enjoyable forum for the recipients of Small Grants to showcase their events and for medievalists of all stripes from across the University to meet and hatch plots for future collaboration. In the past few years, lecturers have included Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (UC Berkeley) and Carolyn Muessig (Bristol); this term Simon Gaunt (London) will be speaking; all of these events and more are documented in the form of blog and podcasts. All were very well attended and led to fruitful discussions over drinks. OMS provides vital financial support and publicity for annual reading groups on Anglo-Norman, Medieval Italian, and Middle English and regularly sponsors interdisciplinary events such as the annual Oxford Medieval Graduate Conference and the Early Medieval Britain Seminar.

Among the many events organised by ECRs and graduate students benefitting from the Small Grants scheme were conferences and symposia on topics as wide-ranging as Gender and Medieval Studies, Medieval Heresy, Mourning in Italian Poetry, Carolingian Reform, Space and Dimension in the Late Antique and Byzantine

Worlds, Teaching Old English in Britain and Ireland, Medieval Fanfiction, Medieval Studies and the Far-Right, the Performance of Texts, Textual Articulation and Division Across Cultures, Scholasticism in Late Medieval and Early Modern History, and a series of talks about the reception of Ovid at the Ashmolean. Other activities supported by OMS included a trip to Stonyhurst to examine the collection of textiles, a Medieval Pilgrimage walk and Church Crawl, and a summer school on Old Frisian. Plans are afoot for a Medieval Mystery Cycle to be performed in April 2019 in and around St Edmund Hall, involving students and members of the public. OMS also hosts a friendly weekly coffee morning in the Weston Library for Oxford-based medievalists and visiting academics.

In January 2018, Henrike Lähnemann and Vincent Gillespie took on the Co-Directorship of the Programme; in January 2019 Francis Leneghan took over from Vincent Gillespie. Huge thanks are due to Sophie Marnette who set up the Network and transformed it into a Programme that is lively and growing.

**Professor Henrike Lähnemann (Medieval and Modern Languages) and Dr Francis Leneghan (English)**

## PROGRAMMES *CONTINUED*

### Race and Resistance Across Borders in the Long Twentieth Century

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/race-and-resistance-across-borders-in-the-long-twentieth-century](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/race-and-resistance-across-borders-in-the-long-twentieth-century)

The Race and Resistance Network, with the support of TORCH, has put on an exciting programme of diverse events relating to the broad topics of race and resistance within Oxford and beyond. The network is necessary because we have yet to achieve a decolonised curriculum at Oxford. Those who research these topics often find themselves alone within their departments with no other faculty members or students with whom they can engage in debate and share ideas. Through our events and networking opportunities, in the past two years Race and Resistance has allowed like-minded scholars to connect with each other and has provided a forum for them to discuss their experiences and research. The network has also aimed to provide a space for academics to connect with the community. So often in Oxford, 'town' and 'gown' do not mix, and those outside the University have no opportunity to engage with the academic work happening in their own city.

Our keynote academic lectures have included a seminar on The Hip-hop Archive and Research Institute at the Hutchins Center, Harvard University by its founder Professor Marcyliena Morgan; a lecture on 'Sport and the Black Freedom Struggle' by Dr Frank Guridy of Columbia University; 'Consumerism and the Pragmatics of Race in the Making of Apartheid' by Professor Deborah Posel of the University of Cape Town; and a discussion on 'Writing Black Women's Biography' with the Rothermere American Institute's Visiting Harmsworth Professor Professor Barbara Savage.

We have also hosted speakers from outside the academy including acclaimed author Reni Eddo-Lodge to discuss her recent book, *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*; former member of the South African Parliament and National Peace Committee Peter Gastrow speaking about his journey through 'Race, Prejudice and Change in South Africa'; and former Black Panther and lifelong activist Bob Brown to discuss neo-colonialism.



Race and Resistance has also held a number of film screenings accompanied by expert panels including *13th*, with a panel on the prison industrial complex in America, and *Black Panther*, with a panel on race and representation in Hollywood.

Beyond lectures and discussions, the network has hosted a very successful Oxford and Empire walking tour through which attendees learned about various aspects of the University's involvement with Britain's imperial past. It has also held a host of reading groups, student research presentations, and 'academic speed-dating' events.

#### Sage Goodwin (DPhil in History)

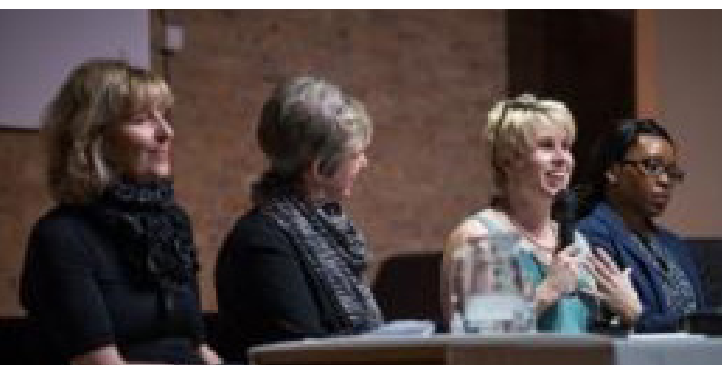
### Women in Humanities

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/women-in-the-humanities](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/women-in-the-humanities)

Over 2018, Women in the Humanities (WiH) organized a series of events to commemorate the centenary of women's suffrage in the United Kingdom. These began with the Bodleian's launch of the *Sappho to Suffrage: Women Who Dared* exhibition, curated by WiH co-director, Professor Senia Paseta. The exhibition in the Weston Library, which was open until February 2019, highlighted items from the Bodleian's holdings which were made, written or commissioned by women. On 8th March 2018, WiH hosted the University's official International Women's Day event at the Weston Library on the theme of 'One Hundred Years of Women's Suffrage, How Far Have We Come?' Leading figures from business, the arts and education led an engaging discussion on the status of gender equality today and in the future.

In May 2018, WiH co-hosted an event with History Acts which brought together activists and historians to discuss reproductive rights in Ireland in advance of the referendum on the 8th amendment of the Irish constitution. Throughout the year WiH also worked with MaD Theatre Company to produce a play, entitled *It's the Wrong Way to Tickle Mary*. The play, which commemorates





the 100 year anniversary of the First World War and passing of the Representation of the People Act, is part of a major project, 'Housing, Culture and Women's Citizenship in Britain, c.1945 to the present', which is led by WiH co-director, Professor Selina Todd and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the University of Oxford John Fell Fund.

At the beginning of Michaelmas Term WiH hosted a major international two-day conference entitled 'Women's Suffrage and Beyond: Local National and International Contexts'. The conference invited speakers from across the world to consider the historiographical debates which have underpinned scholarship on the women's suffrage movement, whilst also reflecting on the gaps that remain. The conference was followed, just a week later, by the 2018 James Ford History Workshop on Women's History in Britain and Ireland, co-hosted with the History Faculty. The workshop provided an opportunity for historians at all career stages to think collectively about recent developments and future trajectories in women's history in Britain and Ireland and to also consider the position of sex equality in the academy. It ended with a special lecture by Professor Susan Grayzel, one of the world's leading scholars of British women's history.

All of our events and initiatives have been featured on our new website, [wih.web.ox.ac.uk](http://wih.web.ox.ac.uk), launched this year and funded by a grant from the Vice Chancellor's Diversity Fund.

**Professor Senia Paseta (History), Professor Selina Todd (History) and Dr Alexandra Hughes-Johnson (History)**

## Heritage

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/heritage](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/heritage)

The TORCH Heritage Programme is a new development for 2017-18. It has grown out of the Thames Valley Country House Partnership, a suite of Knowledge

Exchange Fellowships with a range of organisations in the UK and international heritage sector, and the dynamic Heritage Pathway graduate training programme. The TORCH Heritage Programme aims to make this wide range of activity greater than the sum of its individual parts, and to provide a central access point for students, researchers and academics in the Humanities who are interested in developing mutually beneficial projects with the UK and international heritage sector.

Highlights from the academic year 2017-18 include: a two-day international conference on Jewish Country Houses, with participants from across the UK, Europe and America, which broke new methodological ground and has resulted in a major funding bid to the AHRC; a knowledge exchange project with Medieval Coventry Trust which explored Women of Influence in Medieval Coventry resulting in an exhibition and public events during Heritage Open Days; brokering three AHRC-funded collaborative doctoral awards with English Heritage, Historic Houses and the National Trust; active participation by Digital Humanities scholars in Historic Royal Palace's 'Fashioning Victoria: Curating the Royal Image for Dynasty, Nation and Empire' AHRC Network; *Art of Power: Treasures from the Bute Collection at Mount Stuart* at the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow; and the further development of the flagship National Trust Partnership, led by Alice Purkiss.

The Programme has also been successful in securing two John Fell Fund grants. The first establishes, in partnership with Professor Heather Viles (School of Geography and Environment), the Oxford University Heritage Network, with the aim of further enhancing Oxford's ability to develop world-leading interdisciplinary research projects with the UK and international heritage sector. The second has enabled Imelda Dooley Hunter to join in August 2018 as Creative Industries and Heritage Support Officer, with the brief to further develop the University's work with UK creative industries.

Oliver Cox was re-appointed to Arts Council England's Designation Panel for a second term and has joined the British Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies as Heritage Officer, the Heritage 2020 Helping Things To Happen Working Group, and was elected as chair of the Digital, Learning and Skills Advisory Group for The Heritage Alliance.

**Dr Oliver Cox (Heritage Engagement Fellow)**



# EARLY CAREER

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/earlycareer](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/earlycareer)

The Division's training team works with TORCH in order to help Humanities early career researchers hone and develop the skills they use for their projects, gain first-hand experience engaging in collaborations and make the first steps towards pioneering and influential career paths. Designed to resonate with TORCH's research themes, this year's programme has offered early career researchers opportunities to immerse themselves in the world of Heritage and Creative Industries and to consider how their research and teaching might be articulated through objects held in the University Museums, all via a series of pathways.

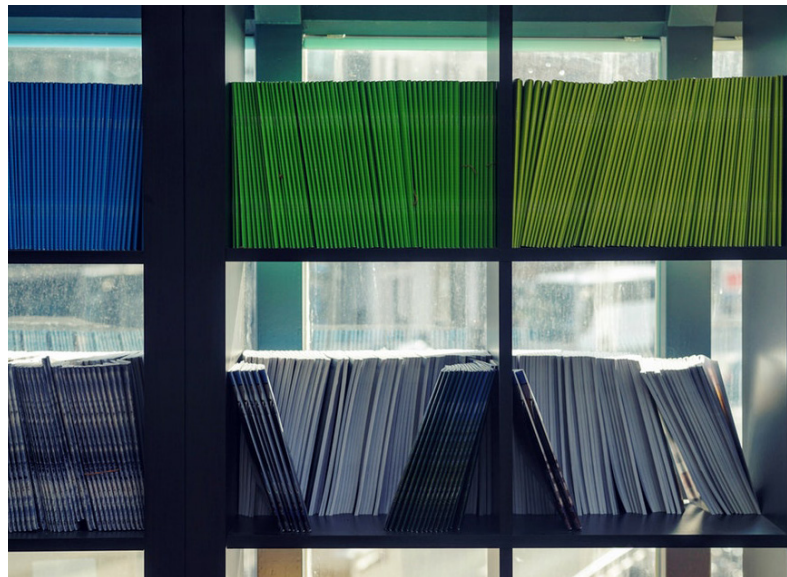
Experiential, hands-on learning is the cornerstone of our approach, with researcher-led initiatives and projects being generated through our AHRC-TORCH Graduate Fund and the AHRC-TORCH Public Engagement with Research Summer School. All of these mechanisms are in turn run (with support from the Training team) by early career researchers, namely Dr Lidia Zanetti Domingues (History) and Hanna Smyth (DPhil in History).

**Dr Caroline Thurston, Humanities Researcher Development and Training Manager**

## The AHRC-TORCH Public Engagement with Research Summer School

The AHRC-TORCH Public Engagement with Research Summer School (PERSS), now in its fourth year, shows no sign of slowing down! It continues to be the highlight of the 'training year', filling the TORCH Seminar and Common Rooms with researchers full of enthusiasm and energy for their research and its potential to involve the public. This year we received an unprecedented number of applications, filling all available places and a waiting list within three days of opening registration. We were delighted this year to welcome researchers from the Open University and Cambridge University as well as from within Oxford, and we hope to continue the success of this cross-institutional approach in future years. Some highlights:

- #PERSS18 tweets were seen by 4,044 people throughout the week, significantly raising the profile of the programme



and providing a platform for participants, speakers and interested individuals to connect with one another.

- Funding and in-kind support were awarded to five projects developed during PERSS, including a podcast, two exhibitions at local museums, and two stand-alone events. We are also delighted that three participants were invited to contribute their projects to the Oxford Science and Ideas Festival programme.

## The AHRC-TORCH Graduate Fund

This year the AHRC-TORCH Graduate Fund awarded £5,000 to seven interdisciplinary researcher-led projects. Applications were peer-reviewed by the Student Peer Review College, offering researchers experience in the principles and practice of peer review. We highlight here a podcast series awarded funding through the 2017-18 Graduate Fund: "Singing Windrush: Calypso in Britain". The series was written, researched, recorded and produced by Gwendolen von Einsiedel (DPhil in Music), Michael Joseph (DPhil in History) and Jake Thorold (DPhil in History). The podcasts coincide with the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the Windrush and follows in the footsteps of famous calypsonian Lord Kitchener, using his life as a way to consider calypso culture and the experience in Britain of Windrush migrants more broadly.

## The Baillie Gifford Writing Partnerships Programme

Launched in October 2018, the Baillie Gifford Writing Partnerships Programme offers all graduate and early-career scholars in the Humanities Division at Oxford the chance



to be paired with a writing partner for regular writing meet-ups, working independently in each other's company. Partners are assigned by the Programme Coordinator according to meet-up preferences (time, place, frequency) as well as research interests, career stage, and other needs (for example, mental health-related). A range of ongoing support is then provided to help participants make the most effective use of their writing partnership: from weekly writing tips to writing bootcamps and one-to-one troubleshooting conversations.

In its first term, 48 master's and DPhil students and early-career academics from across the Humanities Division were introduced to writing partners through the Programme. In the baseline survey, motivations for joining the scheme included: increased accountability for meeting writing goals, a more structured working week to help reduce tiredness and anxiety, social connection and learning, and a demystification of the writing process. The Programme achieved significant benefits for participants on all dimensions measured, with the strongest improvements reported on four dimensions: helping participants feel better about how much writing they get done, improving their ability to focus, adding structure to their week, and enhancing their sense of social connectedness. The single most helpful element was reported as being the practice of goal-setting for a timed work session, followed by

the chance to talk about academic life and professional expectations and learning that others experience the same kinds of difficulty as you do. Many participants expressed gratitude for the existence of the Programme and the changes it has already helped create in their working lives and wellbeing.

**Dr Emily Troschianko – Baillie Gifford Writing Partnerships Programme Coordinator**





# SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCHERS



## JC Niala

**DPhil in School of Anthropology & Museum Ethnography**

My doctoral research focuses on urban gardeners in Oxford and my other research interests are centred on the historical period around WW1 to WW2 examining the lives of black women scholars and African soldiers. It is not easy to find a space that not only welcomes but actively backs work that crosses disciplinary boundaries. TORCH is that space, and the wonderful team continue to support all of the different strands of my work both morally and practically. It is nearly impossible to engage with a TORCH event and not leave with a new connection, project or way of seeing things. My first TORCH project was the *Women in Oxford's History* podcast where I started as a researcher before going on to co-produce episodes in the second series.

In the summer of 2018, I attended the TORCH Public Engagement with Research Summer School which inspired me to use Public Engagement with Research as a central part of my DPhil research methodology. I won the Summer School competition and so TORCH is assisting me to produce Urban Garden Food, a website-supported podcast series that I am currently developing that will allow me to have a conversation about urban gardening with other researchers and the public as I carry out my work. TORCH lead by example when it comes to fostering a spirit of collaboration, delivering excellent events and generously sharing knowledge. It's a place full of promise, where everything is possible.

It is nearly impossible to engage with a TORCH event and not leave with a new connection, project or way of seeing things. JC Niala



# Dr Emilia Terracciano

**TORCH Humanities & Identities Fellow,  
funded by the Andrew W. Mellon  
Foundation (Ruskin School of Art)**

Dr Emilia Terracciano's research project investigates the relationship between art, nature and technology in the global south. Working with notions of bio-intimacy, race, and futurity, the first chapter titled 'Agro-futurism: Weaponising the *Mais Granada*, Engineering the Revolution', traces the violent history, use and exchange of bio-technologies in the twentieth century. Agriculture, arguably the first form of technology, opened up a field in which the asymmetry of colonial relations could be tested, and contested, creating not only its own empire of 'frictions' but also offering competing visions for the hearts and minds of the dispossessed, disenfranchised, and 'darker nations of the world'. Animating the urgent negotiation of other realities and futures, agriculture occasioned vital and intimate alliances between humans and the vegetal world.

Haunted by the memories of the Great Famine (1876-78) in India, revolutionary Maharashtrian refugee and botanist Pandurang Sadashiv Khankhoje played an important role in envisioning the formation of Comintern-inspired plantations in Mexico. Fascinated by the technological and militant possibilities offered by plant-gene manipulation, Khankhoje pioneered numerous agronomical experiments in plant breeding. Developing novel varieties of high-yielding, drought and disease-resistant crops, Khankhoje's plantation experiments were far removed in scale, time and space, from Mahatma Gandhi's later call to peasants to grow 'banana, beetroot, yam and pumpkin' in times of precarity in their own vegetable garden plots. By contrast, Khankhoje's large-scale plantation efforts were devised to ward off the global possibility of malnutrition and starvation. These experiments gained greater visibility through the documentary efforts of photographer Tina Modotti and the Soviet, sci-fi inspired murals of artist Diego Rivera. Memorably linked to very real struggles, these agro-futuristic visions hold the contested promise of sustenance to a globalised Third World. This rich but forgotten archive, complicates the meaning, context and ethics surrounding contemporary discussions on the resurgence of food justice, monocultures, and sovereignty of movements.

Alongside this current project, Emilia is writing an essay about the work of artist Naiza Khan on the politics of

scale, marine worlds, and more-than-human-resources linked to the expansion of the port of Karachi, Pakistan, for the Pakistan Pavilion at the 58th edition of the Venice Biennale 'May You Live in Interesting Times'. Her essay on the environmental sculptures of Mrinalini Mukherjee will be published by Met Breuer, New York, in conjunction with the first retrospective devoted to the artist, later this June.

At Ruskin School of Art, Emilia co-teaches the course: 'Globalisation, Photography, and the Documentary Turn'.





# SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCHERS



## Professor Fiona Stafford Faculty of English

The Environmental Humanities programme promotes research with an environmental dimension and encourages links between the Humanities, the Sciences and external organisations. Regular seminars showcase research, bringing together people with different backgrounds but shared interests – or a willingness to become interested. Since the series was launched, we've discussed such varied topics as Icelandic volcanoes, Sumerian nature myths, medieval whales, Russian music, eighteenth-century air, London trees, the National Trust, marketing the Lake District, American Nature Poetry, landscape-painting, marine archaeology and nineteenth-century attitudes to rabid dogs.

My own work, rooted in Romantic literature, draws on reading and the world outside to understand the intricate relationships between literature, history, myth, politics and the natural world. The symbols and stories of long literary traditions have often grown from the distinctive characteristics of particular phenomena – the yew's associations with graves, antiquity and eternal life spring from its toxicity, from being planted in churchyards and from a unique capacity to regenerate: some ancient yews have been alive for thousands of years. Poppies, in contrast, have suggested young lives cut short by war since the days of Homeric epic, perhaps because the scarlet petals bloom and fall so fast, perhaps because their morphine fumes overcome us with sleep. Research into the literary meanings of plants has led me into the fields of medicinal history, art, political image-making, farming, natural and local history, conservation, horticulture, forestry, plant sciences, woodwork and, above all, outside into the woods and fields to see at first hand the natural phenomena that have sustained human imaginations. My recent books are new nature writing crossed with literary and art criticism and informed by numerous disciplines: *The Long, Long Life of Trees* (Yale UP, 2016) and *The Brief Life of Flowers* (John Murray, 2018). And I've gathered invaluable insights and new perspectives from people who work with wood, trees and flowers to unearth hidden connections between writing and the natural world.

Since its inception, TORCH has been a vital structure of Oxford Humanities. *Professor Ankhi Mukherjee*

## Professor Ankhi Mukherjee

Faculty of English

Since its inception, TORCH has been a vital structure of Oxford Humanities, one which helps actualise the force of cognate disciplines as they intersect with each other or triangulate with other institutions and a general audience. In 2017, I was awarded a 'Leadership Fellows' Grant from AHRC for 18 months, which included funding for TORCH to host the website of my project, "The Psychic Life of the Poor: A City Unseen in Mumbai, London, and New York." TORCH very ably disseminated the activities (and findings) of this collaborative enterprise. More importantly, the wide audience it mobilises helped the hermetic work of the scholarly cell, field, and archive become instrumental forms of knowledge exchange: blogs, podcasts, networking, photo exhibition.

"Global Hungers," the international conference in which my project culminated, hosted foundational figures of postcolonial studies (such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak) aided (in part) by TORCH's conference and workshop funding. Similarly, its Mellon-funded Global South Visiting Fellowships enabled me to invite to Oxford Professor Supriya Chaudhuri, the pre-eminent Indian intellectual and academic. TORCH was the ideal forum in which Chaudhuri could showcase specialised research interests relevant to scholars and students of English while also fostering multidisciplinary dialogue in a humanities framework.





# KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

TORCH continues to expand its innovative programme of Knowledge Exchange (KE) activities, facilitating the mutually beneficial sharing of ideas, data, experience, and expertise. This year, TORCH has been supported by three Knowledge Exchange Champions: Professor Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, Professor Richard Scholar, and Professor Wes Williams. We are very grateful to each of our Knowledge Exchange Champions for their excellent contributions over the past year, and we wish Kirsten and Richard – our outgoing Champions – the best of luck in their future projects.



TORCH now has Knowledge Exchange firmly embedded within its wide range of interdisciplinary and otherwise mutually beneficial research and engagement activities. Both the cross-divisional KE Seed Fund and the Humanities-specific KE Fellowships programme continue to attract high numbers of exciting applications, from a wide range of faculties.

This year we were able to award nine fellowships, with highlights including 'Words as Weapons', a project led by Professor Tom Kuhn (MML) exploring the relevance of Brecht's political writings through collaboration with Sphinx Theatre and Crisis Skylight, a homelessness charity; 'Trauma, Resilience and Motherhood', a project led by Professor Daria Martin (Ruskin School of Art) examining the impact of trauma on the relationship between mothers and their children; and 'The Jewish Country House', a project led by Professor Abigail Green (History).

I have been engaged with KE in its various forms for several years now, but have only taken on the role of KE Champion at the start of 2019. I look forward to working closely with our KE Fellows and both championing and nurturing knowledge exchange work across the Division and beyond.

**Professor Wes Williams (French), Knowledge Exchange Champion**

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/knowledge-exchange](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/knowledge-exchange)



## The Jewish Country House

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/the-jewish-country-house](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/the-jewish-country-house)

English country houses are often framed as representing a 'quintessentially' English history. Some of these buildings were home to generations of the same aristocratic English family, and the stories that surround them emphasise the family's relationships (whether positive or negative) with the close-knit local community. And as the 'National' in the 'National Trust' suggests, the narratives built around these houses are concerned with a conception of England that stops at its borders, and has little to do with international communities.

But many English country houses have different stories to tell. Abigail Green's project highlighted the many houses bought, built, and lived in by Jews throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Acknowledging the Jewish stories these houses tell, Abigail says, introduces 'a new way of conceptualising the country house — rooted not in Englishness but in pan-European relationships.' Jewish families owned country houses across the whole of Europe, and these buildings demonstrate 'the integration of Jews into European culture and society and the ways in which they helped shape it.'



In partnership with Historic England, the Fellowship resulted in a programme of alterations to the Historic Building List, acknowledging the buildings' Jewish heritages. The project has also established a continuing relationship with the National Trust; some of their properties participated in the European Days of Jewish Culture for the first time as a result of working with Abigail. The Fellowship has led to academic outputs, including a conference providing the basis for a Special Issue of the *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, and Abigail has developed a bid for an AHRC grant to continue expanding this project.

**Professor Abigail Green (History)**

## The Quill Project: broadening understanding of how US Constitutions are written

[www.quillproject.net](http://www.quillproject.net)

Quill's interactive representations and bespoke software have opened up the history of the 1787 Constitutional Convention in the United States. Through Nicholas Cole's Knowledge Exchange Fellowship, the project is now developing dynamic partnerships with The Constitutional Sources Project (ConSource), a non-profit organization connecting people to the documentary history of the creation, ratification and amendment of the United States Constitution, and the Law Library Microform Company (LLMC), a non-profit consortium of 500+ research libraries providing digital access to legal materials. Nicholas has been working with these collaborators on materials for public educators in order to broaden understanding of constitutional processes and democratic institutions. The Knowledge Exchange partners planned to come together in February 2019 for a workshop in Pembroke College. This week-long event involved both

public seminars to explore the digital presentation of historical records, as well as an opportunity for the partners to craft a joint funding proposal with a view to creating a comprehensive online collection of materials relating to US constitutional history, with a particular focus on the processes which created US state constitutions, a much-neglected area of constitutional history.

**Dr Nicholas Cole (History)**

## Reformulating Islamic family laws

2018 was a critical year for long-standing debates about Islamic family laws in many parts of the world, including the UK. Here, we saw several high-profile court cases, a government 'Green Paper', and the long-awaited independent review 'Applying sharia law in England and Wales'. These reengaged major questions relating to religious laws as they exist in the UK, and the complexities that occur when Islamic laws and civil laws do, or do not, encounter each other.

The TORCH-supported project 'Reformulating Islamic family laws', headed by Justin Jones of the Faculty of Theology and Religion, attempted to open another platform for the discussion of these pertinent questions. The project has been host to a range of activities in both the UK and India, but the major event in 2018 was the holding of a workshop: 'Reformulating matrimony in Islamic law: new questions and responses among Muslims in Europe.' This workshop brought together academics from across the UK and Europe, and also, a number of community practitioners and non-academic legal professionals, so that these different groups might exchange perspectives. Among the latter were the *imams* of King's Cross and West Ealing mosques; Aina Khan, head



of the 'Register our Marriages' public awareness campaign; Amra Bone, the UK's first female *shari'ah* council panellist; Musharraf Husain, head of the Karimia Islamic Foundation; and Bana Gora, of the Muslim Women's Council.

We held open and challenging discussions on the non-registration of religious marriages, the influence of *shari'ah* councils, the difficulties associated with obtaining *shari'ah* divorces, and the pressing needs for mutual recognition between these two legal systems. The workshop will give rise to an edited journal volume, an online blog series, to be hosted by the Harvard-based portal Sharia Source, and further collaborations, especially with the University of Tübingen and the Max Planck Institute for Legal Anthropology in Halle.

### Professor Justin Jones (Theology and Religion)

#### Scoring the City

I am excited to continue and deepen my collaboration with John Bingham-Hall and Theatrum Mundi (TM) through a Knowledge Exchange Fellowship awarded by TORCH. The fellowship provides £10,000 for the project, *Scoring the City*, developed together with Bingham-Hall, director of TM. This experiment at the intersection of music and urban design takes inspiration from graphic scores in music as dynamic forms that could offer new models for the relationship between architecture, design practices, and social life: in other words, between scoring and performing urban space.

Over 12 months we propose to host four workshops in very different cities, with common challenges: London and Paris, two global cities needing to create flexible space to accommodate rapid economic and socio-cultural change; and Belfast and Beirut, cities marked by conflict needing to find common spaces across sectarian divides. These workshops will invite architects and composers to collaborate to create scores for sites in transition that challenge the static nature

of the architectural blueprint. The process will culminate in a publication of these scores and a launch event.

I am co-director of the research group *Recomposing the City* and artistic director of the record label Optophono. *Scoring the City* follows my collaboration Theatrum Mundi on the Beirut-London exchange workshop *Urban Soundscape* and the *Politics of Memory*, and a subsequent edition for Optophono, *'Acoustic Cities: London & Beirut'*, that I am co-curating with Bingham-Hall with support from the Institute of Global Prosperity at UCL.

### Professor Gascia Ouzounian (Music)

#### Women's Suffrage and Colonialism: New Perspectives and Collaborations

*Women's Suffrage and Colonialism: New Perspectives and Collaborations* is a new Knowledge Exchange research project that operates in partnership with both the University of Oxford and the National Trust. The overarching aim of this project is to connect academic research on transnational women's suffrage campaigns within the British Empire to collections, properties and people associated with the National Trust.

By focusing on three main research areas – women's transnational political interactions and alliances; race, ethnicity and nationalism as a criteria for citizenship within the Empire; and the relationship between colonialism, nationalism and citizenship – this KE Fellowship, led by Dr Alexandra Hughes-Johnson, will explore the collections of the National Trust in order to highlight colonial and suffrage histories that are currently unfounded.

The KE Fellowship, which builds on previous work with the National Trust as a Trusted Source partner, will not only foster ongoing research linked to the National Trust's 2018 *Women and Power* programme, but it also seeks to contribute to the National Trust's 2022 public programme on *Legacies of Colonialism*.

### Dr Alexandra Hughes-Johnson (Women in the Humanities Research Fellow and Co-ordinator)

#### Lande: the Calais 'Jungle' and beyond

I was awarded a Knowledge Exchange fellowship in September 2018, for a collaborative project with Louise Fowler at MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology). I am currently working as a researcher at the Pitt Rivers Museum







for the 'Lande: the Calais 'Jungle' and beyond' exhibition. Through this work, I have developed new approaches to contemporary collecting in impermanent spaces – using archaeology as a method to understand undocumented people in the present. Thanks to the KE fellowship, I have been able to work with MOLA to further this work by collaboratively developing a programme to record and interpret more than 3,000 objects from the Calais "Jungle", collected by the artist Gideon Mendel.

When we applied for the funding, the situation at Calais had somewhat been 'forgotten' and we thought that our archaeological approach was particularly appropriate: it is at the core of our discipline to look at abandoned and discarded objects to understand people. It is also a political gesture: archaeologists create heritage and give it value. Dismissing the material culture of the 'Jungle' as trash is just another way to ignore the historical reasons of why there were up to 10,000 displaced people in Northern France between 2015 and 2016.

In the few months since we have been awarded the fellowship the situation at Calais has made front page news again, with an increasing number of people trying to cross the Channel in small boats. This, to me, has made our work feel more urgent and relevant. At a time when nationalism and xenophobia seem to dominate political discourses in the Global North, it is particularly important to be using the tools of our discipline to challenge these anti-immigration narratives, and the KE fellowship, as well as the wider TORCH network, have made this possible by not only funding our project, but also by providing the space and opportunity for discussion and debate, which has been invaluable.

**Sarah Mallet (DPhil in School of Archaeology)**



## Should 'Ethics education' help doctors practice what they preach?

Dr Andrew Papanikitas (Oxford) and Dr John Spicer (Health Education England), have been working on the TORCH project 'Understanding postgraduate medical ethics education,' (UPMEE). The idea that doctors should have a thoughtful approach to good, bad, professional and unprofessional is uncontroversial. Many scandals involving uncaring, reckless or even murderous clinicians in the UK have ensured that the topic remains current – and beg the question of whether undergraduate education is enough. Is something in the workplace undoing ethical principles learned as a student? Does doing the right thing cost too much? Medical ethics, or the study of right and wrong, professional and unprofessional is included in all medical school curricula. It is also included, albeit to a much more varying degree, whilst doctors are training in all postgraduate curricula – which vary from bland statements like 'doctors should be ethical' to comprehensive statements about the philosophy underlying medicine. Doctors who are qualified also express educational needs in this area, whether this is related to a specialised role, such as healthcare commissioning, or survival in a workplace full of competing duties, unrealistic demands and consequent moral distress.

The project so far has had a number of elements. These have included outreach activities such as teaching ethics to trainees at Oxford University Hospitals. Two knowledge exchange events are taking place in February and March 2019. The first is a briefing and discussion with policy and education stakeholders at Health Education England. The second is an advanced study seminar at St Catherine's College for stakeholders and academics to think specifically about ethics in postgraduate curricula. UPMEE is also supporting a medical student special study module and engaging with a number of early career and doctoral researchers at Oxford and beyond, aiming to incubate the nascent field of postgraduate medical ethics education.

**Dr Andrew Papanikitas (Primary Care Health Sciences)**

# RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS



Research engagement is at the heart of all TORCH activities. By supporting researchers to collaborate across disciplines and with a wide variety of external partners, TORCH is able to extend the scope of events and research projects and maximise their impact.

TORCH works with academics to magnify the effects of their research, both within and beyond the academic community. TORCH facilitates links between researchers in practical and rewarding ways, and has a particular interest in nurturing multi- and cross-disciplinary projects; collaboration between academics at different career stages.

Key projects and collaborations have developed through our long established heritage knowledge exchange team. This includes the partnership between the National Trust and Oxford University, which followed on from the Knowledge Transfer Partnership, funded by Innovate UK and the AHRC.

Building relationships in these ways with external organisations and connecting them with researchers is at the heart of our new directions into local, national, and international engagement support, including connecting with

Oxfordshire Theatres, business engagement, and strategic international projects.

In the past year, TORCH has supported and partnered with schools, museums and galleries both locally and nationally, while also fostering relationships with policymakers, cultural and charitable organisations. The breadth of this engagement is invaluable to researchers and external partners alike, enabling an exchange of information and ideas to take place with ever wider and more diverse audiences.

Here we share with you a selection of some of our key research engagement events from the past year.

**Dr Victoria McGuinness, Head of Research Partnerships**

## Victorian Light Night – Being Human Festival

Although modern life may seem hectic, with its surfeit of technology and the stress of instant communication, these ideas are not unique to the 21st century – the Victorians, too, were concerned about the 'speed of life', as inventions such as the telegram accelerated their pace of living. In an attempt to draw parallels between the Victorians and ourselves, a collaboration formed between TORCH, researchers from the 'Diseases of Modern Life' project, and the award-winning Projection Studio, resulting in a spectacle of an evening: the Victorian Light Night.

More than 2,500 people descended on Oxford's Radcliffe Observatory Quarter on Friday 16 November, members of the public and University alike. Organised as part of the Being Human Festival 2018, a national festival promoting public engagement with humanities research, the event included games and crafts for all ages, music and dance performances, and 15-minute 'lightning talks' by researchers from the 'Diseases of Modern Life' project on various aspects of their research.

Undoubtedly one of the most popular events of the night was a stunning sound and light show, designed by the award-winning Projection Studio (Ross Ashton and Karen Monid), which was projected onto the original Radcliffe Infirmary building, now home to the Humanities Division. Following a competition at Cheney School and their 'Rumble Museum', the designs of three winners were also incorporated into the projections.



There was particularly enthusiastic engagement between researchers and members of the public, in the spirit of the Being Human Festival. With Dr Alison Moulds, visitors were able to learn about the plight of the Victorian retail worker and share their own horror stories of working in retail, while Dr Jean-Michel Johnston led a session showing participants how to create their own messages in Morse code. Other activities and games included Mycelium with Dan Holloway; Medical Marvels with Dr Sally Frampton; the opportunity to dress up and pose for the Victorian photo booth; and colouring in Victorian Christmas cards – which, as it turns out, were surprisingly creepy! Dance performances inspired by Victorian understandings of digestive health were led by Dr Emilie Taylor-Brown, David Pirie, and Jonny Berliner.



## National Trust Partnership with Oxford University

In 2018 the National Trust and Oxford University announced a new research partnership designed to connect cutting-edge research with the conservation charity's historic places and collections across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Marking the first investment of this kind by the National Trust in a university, the partnership is creating new opportunities for interdisciplinary research, knowledge exchange, public engagement and training between the two organisations across a range of academic disciplines.

The venture has grown out of the Trusted Source Knowledge Transfer Partnership which ran from 2016-18 and was funded by the National Trust, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and InnovateUK. Based out of Oxford's History Faculty, Trusted Source provided a means to bring academic research into the National Trust's interpretation, drawing on experts to create online articles that enhance visitor engagement with the properties, landscapes and collections in the charity's care, supporting its ambition to move, teach and inspire its visitors and supporters.

Moving forward, the expanded National Trust Partnership supports new research, knowledge exchange and training through a range of workstreams at both organisations, including academic research placements and consultancy, conferences, workshops, lectures and events, in addition to



student opportunities. The partnership is based in Oxford's Humanities Division and is intended to be interdisciplinary, building partnerships across the University's academic Divisions in addition to the wider research and heritage sectors.

**Alice Purkiss, National Trust Partnership Lead**  
**Vanessa Moore, National Trust Partnership Support Officer**

## Reni Eddo-Lodge in Conversation with Rebecca Surender

TORCH was delighted to welcome Reni Eddo-Lodge – author of *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* and winner of the Jhalak Prize 2018 – to the Sheldonian Theatre on 14 June 2018. Audience members had the opportunity to





hear Eddo-Lodge in conversation with Dr Rebecca Surender, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Advocate for Diversity at the University. This sold-out event was introduced by Professor Elleke Boehmer (English).

Over 800 people formed a huge and diverse audience from across Oxford city and beyond, giving us the opportunity to share the aims and work of the *Humanities & Identities* Annual Headline Series. This event connected with projects in the University, including *Great Writers Inspire at Home*, part of the *Postcolonial Writing and Theory* Seminar Series, and the *Postcolonial Writers Make Worlds* project.

## Tales of Love and History - James Ivory in Conversation

TORCH was thrilled to host Oscar-winning director, James Ivory as a Visiting Professor in 2018. At *Tales of Love and History: James Ivory in Conversation*, an event in November 2018, the Oscar-winning American film-maker spoke about his experiences with the legendary Merchant Ivory productions, in partnership with producer Ismail Merchant and screenwriter Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. Merchant Ivory is celebrated for the rich cultural diversity of its films, which are often set in India, France, England and America, and are distinguished by their visual poetry, fiercely egalitarian attitudes, and quiet wit.

The conversation touched on questions about the use of the historical past in Merchant Ivory films, about James Ivory's own experiences of literary adaptation as both director and writer, and about the representation of love and cultural diversity. As well as films such as *A Room with a View* (1985) and *The Bostonians* (1984), the conversation considered the recently re-released ground-breaking same-sex romance *Maurice* (1987), whose screenplay featured in the Ashmolean's exhibition *No Offence*.

James Ivory was joined by three outstanding academics whose research engages with the themes of diversity, equality, inclusivity, love, desire and storytelling that are central to his life's work: Richard Parkinson, Professor of Egyptology at the University and author of *A Little Gay History: Desire and Diversity Across the World* (2013); Katherine Harloe, Associate Professor of Classics at the University of Reading who is currently working on an edition of the love-letter of Johann Joachim Winkelmann; and Jennifer Ingleheart, Professor of Classics at the University of Durham and author of *Masculine Plural: Queer Classics, Sex, and Education* (2018).





# BOOK AT LUNCHTIME

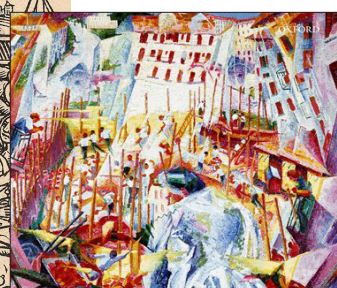
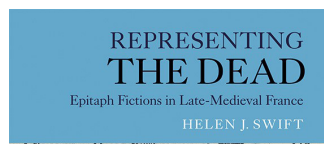
Book at Lunchtime is a series of bite-sized book discussions held fortnightly during term-time, with commentators from a range of disciplines. The events are free to attend and open to members of the University and the public alike. Each term TORCH features books from a wide range of subjects, and as this academic year began midway through TORCH's 2016-2018 Annual Headline Series, *Humanities & Identities*, this year's *Book at Lunchtime* texts have followed the Annual Headline Series in theme.

Michaelmas term 2017 kicked off with a discussion of *Representing the Dead* by Helen Swift, before moving onto Laura Marcus' *Late Victorian into Modern*, Stefanie Lenk and Georgi Parpulov's *Imagining the Divine* and William Whyte's *Unlocking the Church*.

In Hilary term 2018, TORCH welcomed James McDougall to talk about his book *A History of Algeria*, Cleo Hanaway-Oakley to discuss her monograph *James Joyce and the Phenomenology of Film* and Clare Harris of the Pitt Rivers Museum with her book *Photography and Tibet*. Finally, in Trinity term 2018, TORCH hosted panels to discuss Josephine Quinn's *In Search of the Phoenicians*, Emilia Terraciano's *Art and Emergency: Modernism in Twentieth-Century India*, Antonia Fitzpatrick's *Thomas Aquinas and Bodily Identity* and Lion König's *Cultural Citizenship in India*.

As we move into our next Annual Headline Series – *Humanities & Performance* – we look forward to showcasing even more outstanding works by a diverse range of authors.

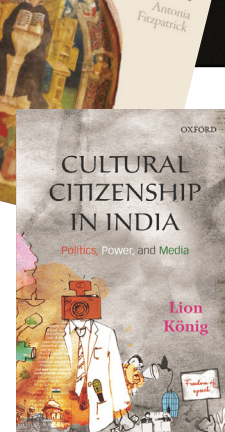
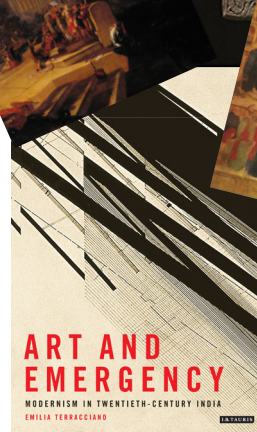
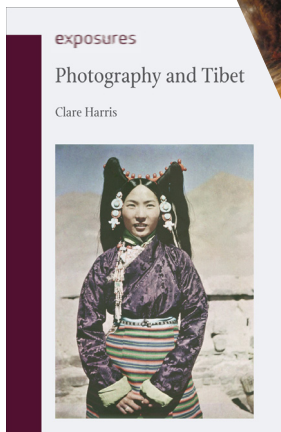
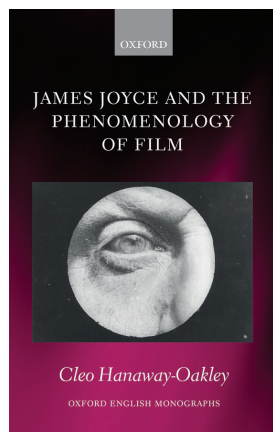
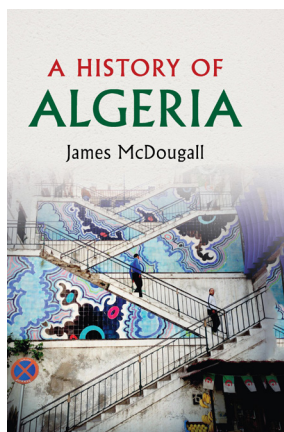
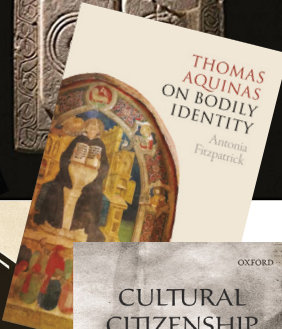
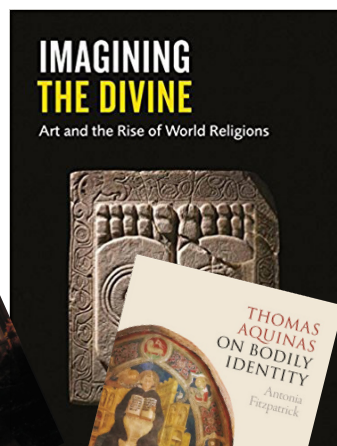
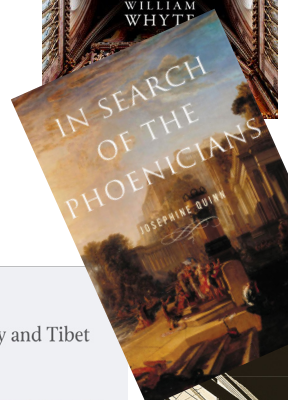
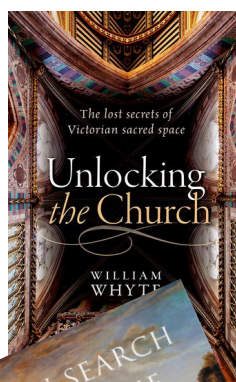
For suggestions for our Book at Lunchtime series, contact the TORCH Communications and Events Officer, Sarah Wright ([sarah.wright@humanities.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.wright@humanities.ox.ac.uk)).



## Late Victorian into Modern

Edited by Laura Marcus, Michèle Mendelsohn, and Kirsten E. Shepherd-Barr

Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature





# TORCH | ANNUAL HEADLINE SERIES

## HUMANITIES & IDENTITIES

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/annual-headline-series](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/annual-headline-series)

*Humanities and Identities* was the TORCH Annual Headline Series from its launch in the autumn of 2016 to the end of 2018, and continues to be co-led by Professor Elleke Boehmer (English). Following a significant grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and funding from the Vice-Chancellor's Diversity Fund, the series focused on multiple research areas relating to diversity and inclusion. Its aim was to bring together researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, creative thinkers and wider communities interested in forms of self-identity past, present and future. Across the project's lifespan, we were proud to support initiatives from researchers working across the humanities and beyond on areas linking to all aspects of diversity and inclusivity.

Conversations and discussions on all areas of inclusivity from gender and sexuality to race, class, poverty, disability, and religion were explored through the *Humanities & Identities* programme. Following the launch of the Annual Headline Series in autumn 2016, TORCH looked at some of the most pertinent issues of our time.

In June 2018 we welcomed Reni Eddo-Lodge, winner of the Jhalak Prize 2018, to speak about her book *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*. The event took place at Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre, with Eddo-Lodge in conversation with Dr Rebecca Surender, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Advocate for Diversity at the University.

Kwame Dawes, TORCH Visiting Professor and Chancellor's Professor of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, held a residency in November-December 2018. Key events included *The Poet as Witness*, a writing workshop for poets; *The Poetic Arts of Africa* and the *School Curriculum*, an event examining issues of 'canon' and 'Empire'; and *What is a Decolonial Curriculum?*, a captivating panel discussion and workshop exploring practical and theoretical ways of decolonising the academic curriculum.

In summer 2018 TORCH facilitated a series of workshops, *Queering the Map*, which explored the ways in which



research deploys a queer lens to transform, disrupt and challenge fields of scholarship, and how that productive dislodging of perspective informs teaching (and could do so more profoundly), at both an individual and a more systemic level.

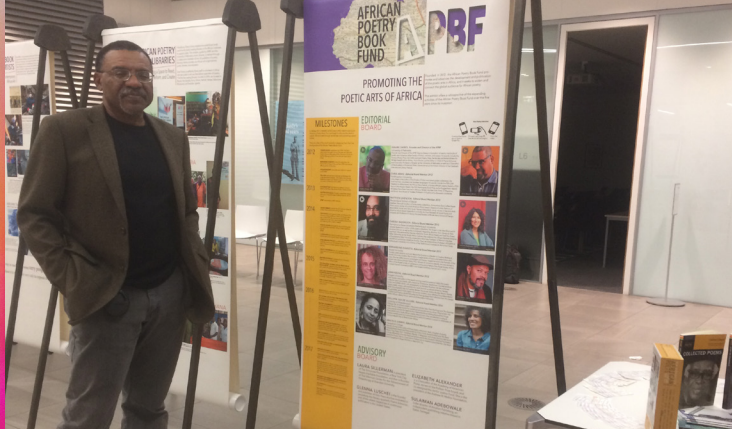
Another workshop, *Diversity and Mental Illness*, was held at St Catherine's College in October 2018 as part of the TORCH Annual Headline Series. The workshop featured talks as wide-ranging as 'The Politics of Depression and Depressive Politics', 'Challenges for Accepting Neurodiversity' and 'The Hermeneutics of Recovery: Facilitating Dialogue Between African and Western Mental Health Frameworks'.

*A State of Risk: Humanities in a Time of Crisis* took place in November 2018. This colloquium explored the concept of risk, increasingly felt to be endemic to modern societies and threatened by ecological catastrophe, political repression, social injustice, economic inequality, and the rapid constriction of personal and intellectual freedoms. Attendees reflected on the role of the humanities, a set of disciplines directly reflecting on the world, on life and on choice, in responding to these crises and understanding or interpreting risk. One of our panellists, Supriya Chaudhuri, TORCH Global South Visiting Professor and Professor Emerita in the Department of English, Jadavpur University, also spoke on *The Social Life of Modernism: Conversation, Literary Community, and Espionage in 1930s Calcutta* as part of her residency in an event earlier that term.

The events highlighted above are just part of a broad range of events spanning the *Humanities & Identities* Annual Headline Series. TORCH is very grateful to all our speakers, panellists and other contributors across the past year and we look forward to continuing to support researchers with our 2019 Annual Headline Series, *Humanities & Performance*.

**Professor Philip Ross Bullock, TORCH Director**





## Mellon Global South Visiting Professorships 2017-2020

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/torch-global-south-visiting-professors-and-fellows](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/torch-global-south-visiting-professors-and-fellows)

The TORCH Global South Visiting Professorships Programme is designed to bring world-leading figures to the University of Oxford for at least one term and be included in the teaching and research environment, hosted by leading academics in the humanities. Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Programme is a collaboration between the Faculties of the Humanities Division and Colleges of the University of Oxford.

TORCH was delighted to welcome a new cohort of Global South Visiting Professors and Fellows in Michaelmas Term 2018-2019. Professor Supriya Chaudhuri, Professor of English (Emerita) at Jadavpur University, Kolkata (India) was among them. She is an expert of Indian Modernism and participated in lectures and graduate workshops while in Oxford.

Professor Jok Madut Jok was also awarded a Global South Visiting Professorship. Jok is co-founder and Executive Director of the Sudd Institute, an independent research organization that conducts and facilitates research and training to inform public policy and practice in South Sudan.

Finally, Dr Nana Oforiatta Ayim, a writer, filmmaker and art-historian, came to Oxford as a Global South Visiting Fellow. Nana is the director of ANO, a non-profit organisation she founded in Ghana, her native country, to uncover and create new cultural narratives of the African continent.

Karin Amatmoekrim, an award-winning author and a researcher in Dutch postcolonial literature originally from Suriname, is currently in Oxford as a Global South Visiting Fellow. TORCH is delighted to announce that three more Global South Visiting Fellows from Puerto Rico, South Africa and India will come to Oxford in Trinity Term.





# MELLON HUMANITIES & IDENTITIES CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS 2017-2018

[www.torch.ox.ac.uk/annual-headline-series](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/annual-headline-series)



**TORCH welcomed proposals from Oxford researchers in the humanities or in collaboration with humanities scholars for workshops/conferences relating to the headline theme 'Humanities & Identities'. Below are a selection of those that were successful in their bids.**

## **Migration, Memory and Identity | 18 May 2017**

Co-hosted by TORCH and the Pitt Rivers Museum, this event considered how identity, memory and migration are woven together and threaded through into narratives that we see in literature, history, politics and current issues facing the world today

## **Travelling with Coetzee: Other Arts, Other Languages | 29-30 September 2017**

This conference aimed to consider both the transmission of Coetzee's work into other languages and art forms, and the consistent engagement with other languages and art forms within his published work and archive. Convened by Dr Michelle Kelly (English) and Professor Elleke Boehmer (English).

## **Hidden Beneath the Surface: Untold Tales of Neurodivergence and Mental Difference in Oxford | 10 October 2017**

Miranda Reilly shared her experience of creating a Disability Trail for Oxford's museums, helping to bring some of those hidden stories to light. Sonia Boué undertook groundbreaking work with the Arts Council. Dan Holloway spoke about the business case for institutions such as Oxford both enabling and supporting individuals in the workforce and removing barriers to recruitment and progression.

## **After Clarice: Lispector's Legacy | 17-18 November 2017**

This conference not only commemorated 40 years since the death of the celebrated Brazilian writer

Clarice Lispector, but also aimed to analyse her legacy and influence as it has developed in the decades since. Convened by Dr Claire Williams (Medieval and Modern Languages) and Dr Adriana Jacobs (Oriental Institute).

## **LGBT Lives: Narratives and Representation | 22 November 2017**

This event brought together a panel of researchers and heritage professionals whose work explores LGBT narratives, identities and representation. The event was chaired by Philip Ross Bullock (TORCH Director), with speakers including Professor Richard Sandell (Professor of Museum Studies, Leicester University), Rachael Lennon (National Public Programme - Content and Research Manager at the National Trust), and Dan Healey (Professor of Modern Russian History, Oxford).

## **Me and My Beliefs: Challenges of Identity and Society | 28 November 2017**

Bishop Libby Lane became Britain's first woman bishop in the Church of England. In this talk, Bishop Lane explored the pathway that brought her to this position and addressed an area of identity not always covered in diversity debates.

## **Race, Identity and Music: Navigating the Caribbean migrant experience through Calypso | 14 June 2018**

Leading calypsonians Tobago and d'Lime performed at St John's College Auditorium in Oxford to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the arrival of the *MV Empire Windrush* at London's Tilbury Docks. The performance was followed by a rich discussion on the history of calypso



music, the legacies of the Windrush, and Caribbean culture in the UK with a panel of experts. Convened by Gwendolen von Einsiedel, Michael Joseph and Rosie McMahon.

### **Global Hungers: The Problem of Poverty in Postcolonial Literature | 25 June 2018**

This one-day conference showcased interdisciplinary research on poverty in the fields of postcolonial, comparative, and world literature. With topics spanning from the colonial use of hunger as an ideological battleground to contemporary refugee and environmental crises, attendees examined literary, cultural, and critical interventions which align the humanities in the fight against global poverty. Convened by Professor Ankhi Mukherjee (English).

**You can keep up-to-date with the latest news, events and opportunities surrounding our 2019 Annual Headline Series, *Humanities & Performance*, through our newsletter and website.**

### **Classical Theatre and the Middle East**

Professor Fiona Macintosh (Classics)

### **Learning to be Human?**

Dr Victoria Elliott (Education)

### **The Historiography of Queer Cosmopolitanism**

Colton Valentine (English)

### **New Voices in the History of War: II**

Hannah Simpson (English)

### **Queer Modernism(s) III: Queer Networks**

Lloyd Houston (English)

### **Activist Histories of Ireland: Historical, Transnational and Contemporary Perspectives**

Dr Andrew Phemister (History)

### **Women & Power: Redressing the Balance**

Alice Purkiss (Humanities Division) &  
Professor Senia Paseta (History)

### **Autofiction - Theory, Practices, Cultures - A Comparative Perspective**

Hannie Lawlor (MML)





# HUMANITIES AND SCIENCE PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

## **Changing Lives: childhood experience, cumulative adversity, and supportive environments across the life course**

We owe our interdisciplinary collaboration to the inspiration and support of TORCH. We were both appointed to our first permanent jobs, as associate professors at Oxford, in 2014 and met through being tutors at the same college. We realised we had a shared interest in the impact of adversity on children, and how this affects peoples' lives in different ways. Yet, we work in utterly different disciplines – as an experimental psychologist with a background in social and genetic epidemiology and as an historian of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain with interests in social change and identity. A few months after we met, TORCH advertised the opportunity to apply for a pair of Andrew W. Mellon doctoral studentships, designed to encourage researchers in the sciences and humanities to work together on a new shared research question. We were fortunate to be awarded the studentships for our project 'Childhood adversity and lifetime resilience'. The project examined the impact of childhood neglect and abuse across the life-course. This opportunity allowed us to gradually develop methodologies to bring quantitative and qualitative approaches into dialogue with each other in examining the impact of childhood abuse and neglect.

The TORCH doctoral students, Michelle degli Esposti and Jono Taylor, are now completing their theses and publishing articles from their research; the warm and inspiring intellectual space offered by TORCH has been essential to their success. Their publications include a co-authored journal article, which describes an important new data source 'iCoverT'. By combining their skills as a statistician and an historian, the resource will enable researchers to explore long-term trends in child maltreatment in England and Wales. Our initial research collaboration has also grown, through the award of further funding from the Wellcome Trust and the Economic and Social Research Council, so that we have been able to develop important knowledge exchange partnerships with policy-makers and practitioners.

In addition to on-going invaluable support from TORCH, from 2019, our research will also be funded by the Calvea Foundation. This will allow us to develop our interdisciplinary project 'Changing Lives: childhood experience, cumulative adversity, and supportive environments across the life course' at a much larger scale. Two post-doctoral researchers and two new D.Phil. students will expand our research into how adversity and inequalities shape people's lives in modern Britain. Without the flexible and innovative initial support of TORCH, none of this would have been possible.

'Changing Lives' is original in combining evidence and approaches from psychology, epidemiology, and history to investigate how cumulative adversity and inequalities shape people's lives. We know that exposure to early life adversity is associated with poor psychological and physical outcomes across the life course. Yet, importantly, not all children who experience adversity are affected in the same way or to an equal extent – or indeed, statistically, at all. We have remarkably little evidence about the types of social and individual support, as well as the potential turning points, that make a difference across the life-course.

This project has three research strands. The first is an in-depth epidemiological analysis of detailed longitudinal databases in order to examine the relationships between early experiences of adversity and adult mental and physical health outcomes, and to identify potential mechanisms of change. The second is an in-depth qualitative and quantitative study of the lives of people born in Oxfordshire in the mid-twentieth century. This will explore how early experiences, family relationships, and support structures across the life course influence the health and well-being of older adults. The third is an investigation of childhood experiences and the changing impact of adversity and inequalities, using psychological and historical evidence.

Our research brings together the strengths of historical and psychological approaches in pioneering ways, so as to explore



the deeply contextualised, quantitatively and qualitatively measured, life-long impacts of cumulative adversity in childhood. In so doing, the collaboration engages with two central challenges within our own disciplines – of how to integrate social and historical context into psychological and epidemiological analyses of individual characteristics; and of how to take seriously individual diversity and subjectivity within our studies of society. We hope that the findings of our research will also help to provide important evidence for policy-makers and practitioners who work to provide the best support for young people growing up in adverse circumstances today.

**Dr Siân Pooley (History), Dr Lucy Bowes (Experimental Psychology), Michelle Degli Esposti (DPhil in Experimental Psychology) and Jono Taylor (DPhil in History).**

## Medieval Science

The collaborative efforts of the Medieval Science Project this past year has seen an impressive co-authored research publication in *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale*, and a number of ongoing developments.

The project's most recent publication was researched and written by the DPhil students leading the project, Joshua Harvey (Experimental Psychology) and Timothy Farrant (Theology), under the title: 'Washington D.C.: "Aspectus and Affectus. Robert Grosseteste, Understanding and Feeling".' Following two well-received papers delivered at Georgetown University the year previous, Joshua and Timothy had co-authored a short publication (of a similar name) by invitation in *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval* – and given its positive reception by the journal's editor, they were invited to prepare an expanded version of the conference report for consideration in the prestigious *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale*. This offered Joshua and Timothy the opportunity to both reflect upon the intersection of medieval theology and science in a formal publication (on the aspects of their work that relate to the collaborative efforts of the Ordered Universe Project), and further allow their project to gain exposure in a widely-read venue in their shared discipline. The piece was accepted, and was published under congrès terminés in vol. 59 of the journal in the summer of 2018.

The co-authored publication's emphasis on the intersection of science and theology reflects the ongoing doctoral work of Joshua and Timothy, and their shared interest in ideas surrounding perception in the Middle Ages. This is seen in Joshua's doctoral work in the fields of sensory perception and information processing, and has resulted in three publications on sound, light, and imaging in the peer-reviewed journals *Applied Optics*, *Optics and Lasers in Engineering Science*, and

*Perception*, as well as several abstracts and posters presented at conferences. By providing a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms underpinning perceptual observations and scientific theory in the Middle Ages, these publications shed new light on medieval natural philosophy, and demonstrate the value of collaborations between historians and scientists to both disciplines.

From a theological standpoint, Timothy has also developed approaches to medieval observations of the natural world within the context of medieval ideas about Creation. This has seen him develop a coherent plan for the remainder of his thesis which explores the reception of Augustinian theology in twelfth-century texts on scripture and animals. In many ways, these interests have developed out of collaborative efforts, and aim to hone in on how medieval intellectuals perceived and 'read' nature on a semiotic level, in order to achieve a deeper sense of reality. The implications of reading medieval texts in this way has resulted in the acceptance of an article exploring (in part) the significance of Augustine's hierarchy of celestial vision in the Middle Ages, and will soon be available to read in *Philosophy and Theology* in 2019.

The work of Joshua and Timothy has additionally seen their continued involvement in the Ordered Universe Project and its exploration of the writings of Robert Grosseteste. This involves ongoing attendance at conferences and symposia, as well as a sustained interest and involvement in outreach efforts such as Oxnet's Access Summer School at Pembroke College, Oxford (which impact has seen two years of students benefit from the project's work).

Upon completion of the final writing-up stages of their doctoral work, Joshua and Timothy plan to continue their collaboration, and both intend to pursue post-doctoral research. Given the impact of Joshua's publications especially, it is likely that he will continue to play a part in the direction of the Ordered Universe Project. Both Joshua and Timothy are extremely grateful for the generous support of the Mellon Fund which has enabled a fruitful collaboration, a deeper interdisciplinary appreciation of medieval scientific thought, and has already resulted in a number of significant research outputs. Without the kindness and continued interest of the Mellon Fund, none of these achievements would have been possible. For this reason, outreach and impact have become priorities of the project's members as they continue their careers in academia.

**Timothy Farrant (DPhil in Theology and Religion) and Joshua Harvey (DPhil in Engineering)**



# DONATING TO TORCH

TORCH is funded by various sources, including the University's John Fell Fund, with additional support from Trusts and Foundations, as well as private donors. TORCH is grateful to have also received funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, as well as other donations totalling over £3 million for the years 2013–2020.

TORCH has now completed its fifth full year in operation (2017–18) and continues to support, facilitate and encourage interdisciplinary research. As part of the University of Oxford's Humanities Division, TORCH is based in the Radcliffe Humanities building in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter.

By providing small amounts of seed-funding to new research networks, TORCH has become an invaluable testing ground for innovative research projects. These projects are supported by TORCH's infrastructure, which offers free rooms for events, website hosting and advice and investment from the TORCH team. Selected on a highly competitive basis, funding for networks lasts for up to two years, after which many networks apply for further external funding, bringing in valuable research grants to the University. Many go on to be more established research programmes at TORCH, using new approaches to tackle some of the challenging questions of our time.

TORCH is a very young institution in the University of Oxford's 900-year history, but it has already made a great impact in the University, in the UK, and internationally, and with support, its impact will continue to grow.

The TORCH vision immediately inspired me and I felt compelled to contribute from the beginning. At a time when so much research is becoming so highly specialised and inaccessible to the layman, it is critical that we support initiatives that will break down the barriers and refashion the way in which the humanities are presented, taught, thought about and communicated to future generations.

*Julian Schild, alumnus,  
Pembroke College, Modern History*

We are extremely grateful to all our supporters. If you would like to give a gift to TORCH, please contact Dr Victoria McGuinness (Head of Research Partnerships):

**[victoria.mcguinness@humanities.ox.ac.uk](mailto:victoria.mcguinness@humanities.ox.ac.uk)** or online via the University campaign:

**[www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/torch](http://www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/torch)**

# TORCH | THE OXFORD RESEARCH CENTRE IN THE HUMANITIES

## TORCH TEAM

Professor Philip Ross Bullock, TORCH Director |  
philip.bullock@wadham.ox.ac.uk

Dr Victoria McGuinness, Head of Research Partnerships |  
victoria.mcguinness@humanities.ox.ac.uk | 01865 615362

Dr Justine Shaw, Operations Manager |  
justine.shaw@humanities.ox.ac.uk | 01865 611165

Sarah Wright, Communications & Events Officer |  
sarah.wright@humanities.ox.ac.uk | 01865 280101

Sarah Bebb, Projects Officer |  
sarah.bebb@humanities.ox.ac.uk | 01865 615335

Krisztina Lugosi, Events and Administration Officer |  
krisztina.lugosi@humanities.ox.ac.uk | 01865 615365

Professor Johannes Zachhuber, Strategic Lead for Humanities  
International Partnership | johannes.zachhuber@trinity.ox.ac.uk

Dr Lidia Zanetti Domingues, International Officer |  
lidia.zanettidomingues@stx.ox.ac.uk | 01865 615365

Zun Swe, Finance Assistant |  
zun.swe@humanities.ox.ac.uk | 01865 615335 (until March 2019)

## KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Professor Wes Williams, KE Champion (from January 2019)

Professor Richard Scholar, KE Champion (until December 2018)

Professor Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, KE Champion (until April 2018)

Barbara Zweifel, Knowledge Exchange Support Officer |  
kesupport@humanities.ox.ac.uk

Dr Hannah Manktelow, Project Officer  
(Connecting Researchers with Oxfordshire Theatres) |  
hannah.manktelow@humanities.ox.ac.uk | 01865 611166

Dr Katherine Collins, Humanities & Identities Project Officer |  
katherine.collins@humanities.ox.ac.uk | 01865 615367  
(until January 2019)

## HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT

Dr Oliver Cox, Heritage Engagement Fellow |  
oliver.cox@humanities.ox.ac.uk

Alice Purkiss, National Trust Partnership Lead |  
alice.purkiss@humanities.ox.ac.uk

Vanessa Moore, National Trust Partnership Support Officer |  
ntpartnership@humanities.ox.ac.uk

Imelda Dooley Hunter, Creative Industries & Heritage Support Officer |  
imelda.dooleyhunter@humanities.ox.ac.uk

## BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Esther Brown, Head of Business and Partnerships for Social Sciences and  
Humanities | esther.brown@socsci.ox.ac.uk

Sarah Colgan, Business Engagement and Partnerships Manager |  
sarah.colgan@socsci.ox.ac.uk

Kay O'Regan, Business Engagement and Partnerships Manager |  
kay.oregan@socsci.ox.ac.uk

## RESEARCHER TRAINING

Dr Caroline Thurston, Humanities Researcher Development and  
Training Manager | caroline.thurston@humanities.ox.ac.uk |  
training@humanities.ox.ac.uk | 01865 615332

Michelle Laynes, Humanities Training Assistant |  
michelle.laynes@humanities.ox.ac.uk

Hanna Smyth, TORCH-AHRC Graduate Project Coordinator  
(until July 2018) | hanna.smyth@exeter.ox.ac.uk

Dr Lidia Zanetti Domingues, TORCH-AHRC Graduate Project Coordinator  
(until July 2018) | lidia.zanettidomingues@stx.ox.ac.uk

Sumner Braund, TORCH-AHRC Graduate Project Coordinator  
(from October 2018) | gradprojects@humanities.ox.ac.uk

Glenn Cahilly-Bretzin, TORCH-AHRC Graduate Project Coordinator  
(from October 2018) | gradprojects@humanities.ox.ac.uk

## TORCH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Professor Karen O'Brien | Professor Daniel Grimley | Professor Philip Ross  
Bullock | Professor Elleke Boehmer | Professor Wes Williams | Professor  
Joshua Hordern | Professor Peter Frankopan | Dr Felix Budelmann | Dr James  
McDougall | Dr Liz Frod | Professor David de Roure | Dr Natalya Din-Kariuki  
| Dr Andrew Fairweather-Tall | Dr Victoria McGuinness | Dr Thea Vidnes

## EDITORIAL INFO

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