

THE COLUMNS

by pupils; for pupils

HSD's Newsletter: Issue 99



Editor, Izzy

Happy New Year! Whilst it's been a while since we've been in publication, and a lot has happened since, we at The Columns are still (mostly) the same. With prelims finally out of the way, I'm sure everyone can breathe a sigh of relief that at least they're over. Whilst we've all been quite stressed these last few weeks, hopefully things will start to calm down. For us at The Columns though, things are heating up. Next week will mark our 100th edition, where we'll be exhibiting a variety of articles from all across the school, both staff and students. If you've contributed something already, be on the look-out for a special invitation in your email inbox to a very special celebration of journalism and the history of The Columns, with a few VIP guests...

Dook – To Dip or to Plunge

Maisie Laffoyette

There are many traditions to celebrate the New Years. I couldn't think of anything worse than plunging into the frigid temperatures of the River Tay. However, in Broughty Ferry people do this willingly. I'm of course referring to the New Year's Day Dook.

The Dook is one of the largest events in Broughty Ferry. The event is now run by YEABBA, which is a local open water swimming club that has existed for 140 years. However, the tradition was started by the 'fisher folk' who bathed in the waters of the Tay every morning except for the Sabbath. While the Dook is fun, to make it more exciting they host a fancy dress competition as a charity event, and this year's main sponsor was Invercarse Hotel. People dress up in a whole range of outfits such as: Barbie and Ken, festive costumes, marine animals and superheroes. This is great for family and friends to brush away the previous year's cobwebs and start the new year fresh (and chilly.)

In the Dook's 140-year history they've only had to cancel once, in 2021 due to Covid's restrictions. The Dookers are so determined that in 1989, when the Tay was frozen, they had to break the ice to be able to plunge. To celebrate the millennium they had a relay team swim from Tayport to Broughty Ferry in only two degrees Celsius, and most of the team could only be in the water for three minutes at a time due to the cold. As cold as this was, the coldest Dook on record at Broughty Ferry was minus three degrees Celsius.

On January 1st, 2024, Broughty Ferry was invaded by 318 Dookers and over three thousand spectators, making it one of the largest in Scotland. While I enjoyed being one of the spectators this year and cheering on the swimmers, you'll never find me in the water on the first of January.

VITO ANTHONY MARCANTONIO

Woodlawn Cemetery is over 400 acres of non-denominational burial ground in the Bronx, New York. Hidden away, in the vast expanse of final resting places, is one grave that was not meant to be there. The headstone reads “Vito Marcantonio”. The man died in 1954, suddenly, aged only 51. He died with a rosary in his pocket. By his faith and his wish, he should have been buried at St. Raymond’s, the Bronx’s only Catholic cemetery. But his body is not there. Cardinal Spellman denied him last rites. What kind of heresy could Marcantonio have committed to be censured in death? Was he an arsonist? A mob boss? A murderer?

No.

Marcantonio was a seven-time US Representative, uncompromising in his commitment to liberty (“Vito Marcantonio Papers: 1935-1953”). The Cardinal’s vindictive act intended to distance the church from Marcantonio, to bury not only the man but his politics. To cloister Marcantonio’s relentless progressive lobbying away from the public eye, to shroud his words to history. But within dusty congressional records, Marcantonio's spirit still shines. Particularly, his opposition to H.R. 5852.

Proposed by Mundt and Nixon, the ‘Subversive Activities Control Act of 1948’ (H.R. 5852) was a measure to combat the dissemination of communism. Originating from the Un-American Activities Committee, the act required all communists to register with the Attorney General. It denied passports and non-elective federal jobs to communists, giving the Attorney General power to designate organisations “communist fronts”. The bill capitalised on American public hysteria during the second Red Scare. The fear of communism was visceral, the world had just witnessed Mao’s rise to power.

However, H.R 5852 didn’t just attack the left: it undermined The Constitution and its guaranteed freedoms. It didn’t just attack communists either: the legislation critically failed to define the term ‘communist’ . Left to interpretation, almost anyone could be silenced for political dissent.

Vito Marcantonio would point this out in his opposition. He declared, “this anti-communist attack reaches out and destroys the rights of all those who disagree with the views of those who are today seemingly in power” (Congress, House of Representatives, 5842). He argued against the “violence to the constitutional guarantee of due process” and compared it to legislation instituted by Mussolini and Hitler (Congress, House of Representatives 5842). Rising above hysteria, Marcantonio would get to the heart of H.R. 5852; “The question before the House,” he said, “is whether or not we shall have the courage to defend the democratic traditions of our Nation and the democratic foundations on which our Government is based, despite the hysteria which is mounting every day to the accompaniment of the fast beating of war drums”.

The democratic principles Marcantonio references within his speech is seen in his voting record. He advocated anti-lynching measures and abolition of the poll tax. From the start to the end of Marcantonio’s career, he would stand by his fundamental moral principles: democracy and equality.

On the 19th of May 1948, the Subversive Activities Control Act passed in a landslide victory (Congress, House of Representatives 6150). Marcantonio would be labelled a “NATIONAL SCANDAL AND INTERNATIONAL DANGER”, becoming a pariah in the anti-communist fervour . He was secretly pursued by the very government that he faithfully served for most of his life. The FBI tracked his every move, as revealed in an FOIA request that produced a 25-part, 933-page file (Federal Bureau of Investigation). Marcantonio was shunned by all his colleagues, regardless of party affiliation. Association with Marcantonio’s voting record became political suicide. Congress passed bipartisan legislation preventing political party cross-filing, designed specifically to bar him from running in his own district.

On the 3rd of January 1951, the majority would succeed in damming the representative’s political prospects. Marcantonio would lose his seat. He died suddenly, three years later.

In his pocket was a rosary.

This display of faith did not matter to the Catholic Church. What mattered was Marcantonio’s politics. A belief in fundamental freedoms had already cost the Representative his career, and Cardinal Spellman would ensure Marcantonio paid a price even in death. For adhering to his principles Marcantonio lost his final resting place.

In his last speech to Congress, Marcantonio explained the politically damning but morally correct decisions he made. “I have stood by the fundamental principle which I have always advocated. I have not trimmed. I have not retreated. I do not apologise, and I am not compromising”. These words would be echoed years later, by John F. Kennedy. Kennedy claimed that courageous leaders would always do their duty “in spite of... consequences... obstacles... and pressures -- and that is the basis of all human morality”.

In his opposition to the Subversive Activities Control Act, Vito Marcantonio fought in the public interest against the will of a tyrannical majority. His arguments that began on the house floor continued in the Nations courts. *Aptheker v. Secretary of State*, *Albertson v. Subversive Activities Control Board*, *United States v. Robel*: case after case of lower and Supreme Court rulings declared the Act unconstitutional, until it was repealed by Nixon himself in 1971, seventeen years after Marcantonio died.

The courage of Marcantonio’s public opposition the Mundt-Nixon bill, and his defense of free speech would define his life and death. He would not receive last rites and the American people would largely not remember his name. Yet, Marcantonio's legacy is very much alive. It lives on in the politicians who championed his causes posthumously, in ratifications and amendments, in repetition of rhetoric and case law, and in the new generation of politicians who stand for equality and against tyranny.

Vito Anthony Marcantio's body may lie in Woodlawn cemetery, but his political legacy continues. As J.F Kennedy said, “A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea lives on”

HOW TO SURVIVE IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY (IF YOU ARE A WOMAN)

Izzy Clark

Congratulations! Somehow, you've managed to actually end up in mythology! If this was intentional, please take a moment to pat yourself on the back and give yourself a round of polite applause. If not, and you're frantically scanning this guide in a fit of panic, fear not, because we are here to help! Whatever your current mythological predicament may be, we've got the solution in our simple and highly rated guide: "How to Woman".

(If you are not a woman and you are trapped in Greek mythology, this guide is not for you. Sit back, have some olives, and relax.)

Before you're born, check who your parents are. If your father is also your half-brother, and your parents are mother and son, it might be better to just not be born in the first place (sorry, Antigone.)

If one or more of your parents is a god or goddess, you might be slightly better off, but there's still a non-zero chance you'll end up kidnapped, assaulted, hunted down or brutally murdered. If your father happens to be a king, or a priest, or someone else remotely important, then prepare yourself to be taken prisoner when your walled city inevitably falls when you bring a wooden horse inside and enemy soldiers jump out and burn everything down. If your parents are just ordinary, regular peasants, you might think you're safe, but you still run the risk of being turned into an island if you're particularly unlucky. (You laugh, but this has happened multiple times.)

Next; avoid heroes. Avoid strangers. Avoid everyone, really. Do not go within a ten-mile radius of anyone remotely heroic (read: anyone with a Y-chromosome). Do not make eye contact with anyone in armour. Forswear the company of men at all costs, if you must. (Note: just because you try this, does not mean it will succeed.)

You might get the attention of Aphrodite, known hater of single women, who will rig your brilliantly engineered running race/proposal to force you to marry whoever is faster than you (unlikely, but still alarming possible). Other options include settling down somewhere with someone nice enough to let you choose your own children's names.

However, fate will quite likely have you killing your own husband, killing your own children, or killing yourself when he leaves you to go and found the city of Rome.

For the love of all that is holy, avoid gods. This bit is probably easier said than done because the gods are everywhere and generally don't take "no" for an answer. Avoid horses, swans, bulls, snakes and magical showers of gold, because you will get pregnant. Also - steer clear of flower fields, cupboards, and your own house, and if you think you'd be safe in a temple, be prepared to have your hair turned to snakes or for no one to ever believe anything you say ever again.

If you do have the misfortune of attracting Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon, or Hades, promptly prepare for imminent and unavoidable transformation into a bird of some kind. This is the better option.

Do you want to spend the rest of your life as a plant?

If offered a parting gift by said god, have an answer prepared - either commit to becoming a man, or to invulnerability, whichever seems more appealing.

Per the last point, do not get pregnant. This is the most important piece of advice here because getting pregnant is the worst thing you can do. If your husband is human (or you think he is, and you can never be 100% certain - was it your husband?), then prepare for your future child to be a raging terror on the Peloponnese, or a princess who will, in all likelihood, get kidnapped by some strapping young hero and then launch a thousand ships with the power of being really pretty. If your husband is a God, the same will probably be true. However, if your son displays any of the following personality traits: pride, curiosity, ambition or basic humanity, please prepare to lose him in a poetically tragic and sometimes comedic way befitting his fatal flaw.

Note: if the father of your child is Zeus, run. Do not trust old women pretending to be your former nursemaid (you didn't have one). Do not seek sanctuary in the home of foreign kings, lest they send your teenage son out to kill a snake-haired monster. Do not give birth, even if you actually can and the goddess of childbirth isn't being held hostage! And, above all else, check your baby's beds for snakes that your infant son will probably strangle to death – not all babies are Hercules.

All of this, as I'm sure you'll have guessed, is a lot easier said than done.

To best ensure your survival, try to remain inconspicuous. Keep away from ominous mazes with half-bull-half-men living in the centre, opportunities to kill hundreds of Greeks in a battle you are certain to win, and simple boxes that are far too easy to open. We're not saying Pandora had it coming, but that was almost too predictable.

Do not do anything to draw particular attention to yourself, such as being pretty enough to be kidnapped by the Prince of Troy, getting angry at your husband for being the Prince of Troy, or being a mother or sister to the Prince of Troy. Do not associate with Paris, the Prince of Troy. Even if you think you're being secretive by hiding out in a paradisaical island, do not count yourself out of the equation, because your solitude will be ruined by, predictably, men.

Do not turn them into pigs (this should not be your first instinct, we're concerned if that's your first instinct, why would that be your first instinct?)

Alternatively, do not show them any kindness, lest you get emotionally attached to them and live the rest of your life in devastation when he inevitably has to leave to his wife and children. Attachment issues are real, people.

Having reached the conclusion of this emergency guide, you may be left with the extremely valid question: "what am I supposed to do then?" We hear your anguished cry, wayward time traveller, so fear not!

You have a grand total of one semi-viable option if you are so set on being a woman in Greek mythology (or if you're stuck), and that is forgoing a mortal form and ascending to godhood. As a goddess, you may still run the risk of being chased down as a horse, snake or bear (all by Zeus, so steer clear), but, at the very least, you still have the power to turn offending men into deer, trees or birds. Additionally, your transformative abilities can also be used on women turning them into herbal shrubbery, cows or weasels, saving them from the ultimate predicament - being a woman. At least you'll invent mint this way.

We hope this emergency guide has helped you navigate the dangerous life of being a woman in Greek mythology. If you're still alive after reading this and haven't been smited by Hera, consider leaving us a review once you get back to your regular timezone. If not, please leave this pamphlet in a dry location to ensure its preservation, so that we can continue to aid the universally-displaced for centuries to come.

Oscar Nominations

India Simpson

This week the film industry has been buzzing with the announcement of the nominations for the 96th Academy Awards, the 2024 Oscars, by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science. Whilst 'Oppenheimer' was the most nominated, with 13 nominations, its partner, 'Barbie' missed out on key nominations, much to the shock and dismay of many.

Barbie smashed the box office, grossing \$1.446 billion and becoming the highest-grossing film of 2023, and the 14th highest of all time. It has simultaneously overtaken 'Parasite' as the 'most-watched' film on Letterboxd. 'Barbie' truly defined the film year of 2023. In the Oscar nominations for this year, 'Barbie' was nominated for 'Best Picture', 'Best Original Song' ('I'm Just Ken' and 'What Was I Made For?'), 'Best Supporting Actor' (Ryan Gosling), 'Best Supporting Actress' (America Ferrera), 'Best Adapted Screenplay' (Greta Gerwig and Noah Baumbach), 'Best Production Design' (Sarah Greenwood and Katie Spencer), and 'Best Costume Design' (Jacqueline Durran). Notably, 'Barbie' missed out on nominations for 'Best Director' for Greta Gerwig, and 'Best Actress' for Margo Robbie.

It's 'Barbienneimer' pairing, 'Oppenheimer', did not feel a similar loss. Receiving 13 Oscar nominations, it is the frontrunner for the 'Best Picture' award. Alongside 'Best Picture', 'Oppenheimer' received nominations for 'Best Actor' (Cillian Murphy), 'Best Director' (Christopher Nolan), 'Best Supporting Actor' (Robert Downey Jr.), 'Best Supporting Actress' (Emily Blunt), 'Best Adapted Screenplay' (Christopher Nolan), 'Best Production Design' (Ruth DE Jong, Claire Kaufman), 'Best Make-Up and Hairstyling' (Luisa Abel), 'Best Original Score' (Ludwig Goransson), 'Best Cinematography' (Hoyte van Hoytema), 'Best Costume Design' (Ellen Mirojnick), 'Best Film Editing' (Jennifer Lame), and 'Best Sound'. This was far from unexpected, as critically acclaimed as the film is. It is the highest-rated film of the year on Letterboxd, and I think that is deserved. Personally, I'm rooting for this film at the Oscars this year.

The next most nominated is 'Poor Things', directed by Yorgos Lanthimos, which received 11 nominations, including 'Best Picture', 'Best Actor', 'Best Director', 'Best Supporting Actor' and 'Best Adapted Screenplay'. Next was Scorsese's 'Killers of the Flower Moon', which also fared well in the nominations.

Another notable nomination was John Williams for 'Best Score' on the latest Indiana Jones film, which is his 54th Oscar nomination. He also broke his own record, at 91, as the oldest person to be nominated in a competitive Oscar award category.

Overall, the 96th Academy Award nominations have outlined a close run for the Oscars this year. 'Oppenheimer' is predicted to come out on top, but there are always some unexpected calls, and we will just have to wait, on the edge of our seats, and see.

2024 Oscars

Jack Mitchel

Earlier in the week, this year's Oscar nominations were announced. They include films such as *Oppenheimer*, *Poor Things* and *Maestro*. Also on the nomination list is *Barbie*, but it controversially does not include individual awards for the lead actress Margot Robbie and the director Greta Gerwig, while Ryan Gosling appeared for Best Supporting Actor. The 96th Academy Awards will take place on the 10th of March in Hollywood.

The first took place in 1929, in the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. Only 270 people attended, after a private dinner function. It remains the only Academy Awards not to have been broadcast – either on radio or television. Fifteen golden statues – that were the same all those year ago – were awarded, including Best Picture for a silent film, *Wings*. Since then, over 3,000 Oscars – named after a librarian's uncle – have been awarded to films such as *The Godfather*, *Forrest Gump*, and *Titanic*.

Last year's ceremony, hosted by Jimmy Kimmel, celebrated films such as *The Whale*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. They won two, four and seven awards respectively. The three aforementioned films won all of the major awards: Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actor and Best Supporting Actress. The ceremony was only watched by 18.75 million people which, despite improving on the last two Academy Awards, is nowhere near the almost 40-million strong audience figures of the early 2010s.

As mentioned before, the nominations for this year's Academy Awards have been somewhat controversial due to the omission of awards for *Barbie*. Margot Robbie's co-star Ryan Gosling – who has been nominated for Best Supporting Actor – said it was an 'understatement' to say that he was 'disappointed'. The British record producer and songwriter who was also nominated – this time for the song 'I'm Just Ken' – said that there is no 'just Ken, it's *Barbie* and *Ken*. Despite this, the nominations have quite a balanced view of the films of 2023.

EDITORS' NOTE

Well done to all those who completed their prelims. Many thanks to all the contributors this week, and a reminder that the columns is always looking for new submissions. If you would like to write an article, head along to our Monday lunchtime club, or simply send an email to one of our editors. Next week is edition 100, so any articles sent only have to be 100 words. Sending in an article is a great opportunity, allowing you to gain experience and inform the wider community with something you are passionate about.

Editor Ruby

Have a fab weekend!

THE COLUMNS TEAM