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The Dreaming Spires: Rhodes Scholars at Oxford

Rebecca Gorlov

Oxford University holds a unique and enduring sway over the British psyche. In the public mind it represents all that is adored and reviled in British society; the veneration of the past, affection for tradition, the importance of sporting pursuits, and the cult of privileged youth. Curiously enough, its intellectual aspect is rarely alluded to. But then the British are a pragmatic lot and it is probably for this reason that the nation, if not the University, ranks education as one of the more minor attributes associated with Oxford.

The pre-eminence of history abounds. Step through the gates of a college into the front quad, and it often feels as though one has been transported back decades, if not centuries. It is not only the fabric of the buildings that is responsible for such an impression. The fondness felt by the University and its members for arcane ritual is clearly in evidence, from the daily need for formal dress at dinner, to the dawn May Day celebrations at Magdalen College. The *Summer Eights* regatta in May still finds the river bank packed for bumps races, blazer-wearing rowers and their supporters whiling away time before exams.

The Oxford immortalized by Evelyn Waugh in *Brideshead Revisted*, it would seem, lives on. Yet some things have changed, and perhaps the most dramatic of these changes is the diverse nature of the student body. Gone are the days when it was possible to get a good job without a decent degree or even a degree at all. Today most students are from far more egalitarian backgrounds than their predecessors, and, even if it appears otherwise, must devote some time to the serious business of studying. What does remain, despite recent attempts at reform, is the old fashioned tutorial system, a method of teaching that is replicated only at Cambridge. Indeed, in spite of these changes, or perhaps because of them, Oxford remains a peculiarly and stubbornly British institution. And yet, in the interest of international relations, it is in this environment that new Rhodes Scholars find themselves each year.

A recent and much publicized article in *The Harvard Crimson*, written by two recent Rhodes Scholars, was highly critical of Oxford, detailing the Scholars' "frustrating academic experience" there. Melissa Dell (USA 2005) and Swati Mylavarapu (USA 2005), both reading social and economic history, felt that their time at the university had suffered from the lack of

direct supervision from tutors, the Oxford “brain drain” to better-paying universities in the United States, and long holidays. Nor did they find that Oxford, as a provincial university town, quite lived up to expectations. It was Dell and Mylavarapu’s implicit acknowledgment that there are reasons other than the receipt of an Oxford degree to apply for the Scholarship that is of particular concern to Elliot Gerson (USA 1974), the American Secretary of the Rhodes Trust. As he, perhaps naively, told *The Crimson*: “I found it almost breathtaking that they ended their article suggesting that no one should apply for the Rhodes unless they wanted to go to Oxford. Why else would people apply for the Rhodes?”

Why else indeed? But in fact, of the myriad of reasons that people apply to the Rhodes Scholarship, the opportunity to attend Oxford is ranked fairly low on the list. American Scholars apply to the Rhodes for its reputation as a passport to career success, the international exposure that it provides, and the opportunity to receive a scholarship for what would otherwise be an expensive graduate education. One of the women from the 1978 cohort was bemused by Gerson’s surprise at the Scholars’ unfamiliarity with the Oxford system. She herself recalls being the only person in her year who had even researched her course of study before arriving. As she told us, none of the Rhodes Scholars in her year knew anything about Oxford!

This degree of ignorance might seem surprising given the rigors of the selection procedure and the type of person that it attracts, but it is undoubtedly due in part to the fact that the Scholars-elect are from academic institutions that are hugely different from Oxford. Additionally, potential Rhodes Scholars are interviewed by a selection committee of local notables and former Scholars from their region, rather than by Oxford academics; were it the latter, they might be compelled to do a bit more research. Oxford’s standing in the academic community may also have something to do with it. The University, though consistently found in the top 10 in both *Newsweek* magazine’s and Shanghai Jiao Tong University’s tables, is routinely outranked by its wealthier American counterparts including Harvard, Stanford, Yale, the California Institute of Technology, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of California at Berkeley. While its position is not something to be sniffed at, Oxford has suffered from decades of under-funding, one of the most visible symptoms of which is the steady decline in big-name academics that it is able to attract. Thus, any prospective American Scholar who is solely concerned with getting the best available education may well opt for a university closer to home.

Students have always complained about Oxford, and a number of the criticisms voiced by

Dell and Mylavarapu resonate with those shared by the Rhodes women who have participated in this study. Nevertheless, looking back, the women who volunteered to participate in the Rhodes Project generally appreciated their Oxford experience and felt stronger for having gone through it. Those women were not chasing the “lure of the Rhodes title,” indeed, many were not aware of or knew very little about the Scholarship before being prompted to apply by well-meaning teachers or mentors.

There are many reasons the respondents to the surveys of The Rhodes Project have chosen the life and career paths they have. But one element their biographies all share is their actual time of study at Oxford. It was Cecil Rhodes’ hope and conviction that this experience would mold its recipients for life. This essay explores how Rhodes women actually experienced Oxford, to see what they took away from it. It is grounded in the voices of the women themselves as they reflect upon their time in Oxford, ten, twenty, even nearly thirty years after they “went up” to the dreaming spires.

Innocents Abroad

Culture shock is common for new arrivals at Oxford. But how much does that have to do with the academic side of things, and how much of it is the broader experience? British students, hardened by years of school lunches, are well prepared for three more years of institutional cooking. But in the days before Starbucks and decent restaurants, Rhodes Scholars were often unhinged by the cuisine. Katherine Eban (Finkelstein) (USA 1989) remembered: “I was depressed; the food was horrible—you could not get a good cup of coffee anywhere in the whole city. We used to joke it must have been a Soviet plot to dismantle any potential American leaders; send them to all to Oxford, feed them horrible food and force them to suffer the bad weather.”

The first cohorts of female Scholars also did not expect that their accommodation would consist of small, often ill-lit rooms, subject to draughts, freezing temperatures, and a dire lack of heating - not the most comfortable way to survive the cold, wet Oxford winter. Other Rhodes women found themselves experiencing discomfort of an entirely different variety. Some were admitted to newer colleges which bore little resemblance to the Oxford portrayed in lithographs and novels.

One Rhodes Scholar from the class of 1978 recalled her time at St Catherine’s:

I was in a room facing towards the bell tower, which looked terribly like a guillotine. The

plumbing used to make strange noises and the forks were a funny shape because St. Catherine's was an extremely modern college. I, and a lot of other people who had just arrived, took a great deal of pleasure in making jokes about things which seemed to us to be rather scary actually. I found the whole business of being in these cement buildings and looking out on a guillotine-like structure to be completely different from the vision of Oxford which I would have expected.

Other problems associated with settling into a new country were more substantive. Martina Vandenberg (USA 1990) described Oxford as a place that was “completely foreign... despite expectations that we could drop in and fit right in because we had English as the same language.” The differences in national character, temperament and attitude went far beyond the superficial. Virginia Seitz (USA 1978) sensed that her tutors were uncomfortable with the loudness and talkativeness they associated with North Americans. Rachel Klevit (USA 1978) could still recall her first meeting with the then Warden of Rhodes House, Sir Edgar Williams. He called her into his office and began reading through her file, never once looking up. When at last he spoke, he said: “So you're at St Catherine's, it's a hideous place. I see you're reading chemistry - awful subject. You must row.” Tiny Rachel replied that she didn't think she'd be very good. Sir Edgar finally looked up at her for the first time, studied her a moment, and said, “You'd be a damn fine cox.” Instead she took over the ballroom of Rhodes House to teach ballet to other Scholars, both male and female – a move that was not well received by the Warden.

Perhaps the English sympathized with Max Beerbohm's Duke of Dorset who held, “in his enlightened way that Americans have a perfect right to exist. But he did often find himself wishing Mr. Rhodes had not enabled them to exercise that right in Oxford.”¹ To many Rhodes Scholars, Oxford struck them as archaic, pretentious, and self-involved. The formality associated with many Oxford traditions was also alien to some North American Scholars.

Maggie Little (USA 1983) recalled:

I was at University College and they had a Senior Common Room dining event for everyone

¹ Max Beerbohm, *Zuleika Dobson* (London: Minerva, 1991), p. 16.

doing graduate degrees in political theory and philosophy. It would have been a dozen of us around the table in the Senior Common Room, with seven courses and every wine, and the most famous philosophers then living sitting next to us: Peter Strawson ... unbelievable. And, on the other hand, the snobbery of these events [was incredible]. I'll give you an example. I had one dress. I just had no money. It was the dress I did my interview in, it was what I wore to the Senior Common Room once a term for two years and I remember, towards the end of the second term, the then president of University turned to me and said, "That's the same dress, isn't it?" And it was. Anyway, at the end of the dinner came the three wines; Madeira, claret and port are passed around. You have three little glasses in front of you and I grabbed something and poured it and he [Peter Strawson] said, "My dear, you just poured the Madeira in your port glass."

Rhodes Scholars did not anticipate the sense of privilege surrounding the university and affected by a number of its members, but neither was it a calamity. Many Scholars found these cultural differences interesting. Little said, "I didn't feel under-confident; it didn't matter at all. I really remember being around this odd culture which is absolutely fascinating and beautiful and saying, 'Wow! That's not how they do it back home.'"

The Dreaming Spires

Many Rhodes Scholars have commented that, academically, Oxford was a relatively easy ride compared to their undergraduate experience. It should be noted, though, that the workload was often related to the degree taken. Little, for instance, who read for the notoriously challenging BPhil,² described the degree as having been "agonizingly difficult." Though she was effusive in her praise of Oxford's great training in philosophy, she also notes that adapting to the rather diffuse system was challenging for American students:

...the BPhil itself is absolutely excruciating ... I remember sobbing every night for the first two months. I didn't understand, I didn't know what to do, because suddenly you're not doing homework, you have no classes. They tell you, "Don't go to the lectures, just think." To add to the allure, you get to meet with a tutor once a week. I had no idea what my first tutor was saying. Never had I experienced this before. I'd always been the smart person. Then at a

² BPhil (Bachelor in Philosophy). Graduate degree in philosophy.

departmental party I met an Australian guy doing a DPhil in Philosophy, who became a very good friend of mine. And he said, "It's a really hard degree, if you ever need to talk to anybody, just give me a call." So we met and talked for three hours and all he did was share these horrible stories and I felt so much better. And I still remember going back to my now husband, and saying, "Oh my God, it's not just me, it's the degree!" From then on Graeme, the Australian, was my mentor and helped me understand all sorts of things. And the rest you just endure and work your ass off.

Heidi Hauffe (Canada 1989) remembered that:

My impression was that many Rhodes Scholars were not happy at Oxford. A lot of them appeared to be confused by the system of independent study, they said they were used to being given a textbook, told; "study this chapter, here's the lecture, and this is what you have to know." But Oxford doesn't work that way, you have to take the initiative. It was an enormous leap into the dark and although some of us felt liberated, a lot of people felt they just couldn't handle it, it was too different for them.

Yet Hauffe had only praise for the teaching she received:

It was fantastic. Oxford is one of the few universities in the world where you get such close contact with teaching staff. In North America, at least in biology, my subject, you have huge classes, you might just be able to see the professor with binoculars, but in Oxford I had several one-on-one tutorials every single week with researchers who were well-known in their field of expertise. I had an extremely human and incredibly understanding supervisor for my DPhil. He is still one of the finest people I have ever met.

Others found that there were more practical applications of this style of teaching. Lois Quam (USA 1983) explained:

I especially found the tutorial method to be a lot like real life, a lot like running a company, as

compared to how I was trained in college where you write a paper and take a test and then you kind of go away. Well, in my job, [like in a tutorial] much of it is [deciding what] should be done in a given situation and ... defending and arguing for it then and there.

Yet Oxford's much prized teaching system was not always well regarded by the Rhodes community. The college system is deemed by the university establishment to provide a very strong support network: academically through one's tutors, and pastorally through moral and senior tutors. Several women, however, spoke of having few bonds with academic staff. Those who came to Oxford from small colleges spoke of feeling at sea, unprepared and overwhelmed. Nancy Coiner (USA 1977) though well taught, felt inadequately prepared for studying Theology. She remembered telling her first tutor that she had "studied Luther, Calvin, Augustine and Aquinas and I still don't know what you are talking about. You know the Rhodes is not a biblical scholarship." Her tutor's response? "Sink or swim, dear." This lack of encouragement was notorious.

According to several of the women interviewed, some Oxford tutors were practically stereotypical in their ineptitude. Others were severe and unforgiving or too sweet and "past it." Perhaps most derided were those tutors who made a virtue of scholarship for its own sake, with little or no thought given to its practical application. Eban had little respect for her tutor's academic ambitions, remembering his:

Deciding that he was going to study the unread, unpublished epic poems of the English Civil War and that it was going to be some point of political and literary fascination. These poems had been suppressed and, of course, not been published because they were so terrible, just so awful. When he sent me to read these things, the poems came in twelve volumes and it was just a nightmare. I was in the freezing Duke Humphrey's Library. I was so depressed and I just thought he was just creating this phony niche for himself and then sending me out to do all the work for him. I feel that I learned almost nothing.

Some women felt their gender to have been an issue, even if it was typically seen as an implicit one. The absence of mixed colleges at Oxford until the 1970s created a rather male environment that the admission of women could not easily disturb. At the very least, gender seemed more important at Oxford than it had elsewhere, particularly in North America. Stephanie

Dangel (USA 1984) remembered that the only women on the staff were secretaries. Yet her male tutors, she notes, did not treat her differently than they did their male students. An earlier Scholar, Barbara Grewe (USA 1978) thought that women were second-class citizens at Oxford. At the time of her Scholarship, women were accepted to only ten colleges: five all-women institutions, five co-ed. This meant that women were excluded from the majority of colleges, including many of the better-known ones. Although women could take tutorials at the all-male colleges, in order to do so, a male student from the college would have to be “swapped” for a tutorial at the woman’s college. In practice this gave female students significantly less access to academics at the more prestigious colleges, as their students were reluctant to opt for tutorials outside the big-name establishments. More than a decade later, others continued to feel overlooked. Vandenberg spoke of a woman she knew who was “trying to write a Master’s thesis in a particular issue relating to women’s organizations, and she couldn’t find anybody to supervise her. They all told her it was a stupid topic.”

Though this was not everyone’s experience, some Scholars did find Oxford antiquated in less than glorious ways. Vicky Kiechel (USA 1979) was among the first women to matriculate from Pembroke and recalled an Oxford “still wedded to the medieval curriculum.” Her personal academic experience she likens to “ramming my head against a brick wall,” the contest being between “my insistence on the value of original thought, and their demand for obedience to intellectual authority, an argument neither of us could or should win.” Kiechel grieved that, “there was little room at the table for works standing outside of the ‘acceptable’ tradition.” A decade later, when Sarah Nuttall (South Africa 1989) was at Oxford, the preference for the traditional was also marked. Nuttall was used to being in a politicized university environment and surprised to find that Oxford only catered to certain academic interests. She had gone up to write her DPhil on contemporary South African women’s autobiography, and remembers that when she told people at parties that her period was contemporary, their response was, “Oh, I am sorry.”

Others found the eccentricities of their supervisors endearing. Hauffe recalled a research trip to Italy with one of her tutors:

I drove from Oxford to Italy with my new supervisor (a typical academic, tall and thin with bushy hair and beard) and we ill-advisedly took a minor Alpine pass from Switzerland into

Italy. It was snowing and almost dark. We were in a rickety old departmental van full of mouse traps, hay, mouse pellets and other equipment for field work and we didn't speak one word of Italian. The border police stopped us and they wanted to know what was in the back of the van. We immediately opened the back of the van to show them. I didn't know at the time but many English people make absolutely no attempt to communicate with non-English people in anything but English! They just speak louder and louder and slower and slower and they think that will be enough to make the people understand. So my supervisor takes out a mouse trap from the back of the van and said very slowly: "mouse trap"..."MOUSE TRAP"... "MOUSE TRAP." I was practically rolling around in the snow because the police looked so quizzical. I eventually conjured up my high school French and managed to say "Research, 3 weeks, mice," and the policeman laughed, stamped our passports and let us go. Before our next field trip, I took some lessons in Italian!

Academic Tourism?

Those who took a second BA, rather than a graduate degree, generally had a lighter workload and a less serious work ethic. Although several of the women who took a graduate degree felt they would be bored pursuing a Bachelors degree, many of those who sought the BA found the lack of academic pressure favorable. For many of the women, their primary concern at Oxford was to enjoy themselves. Dangel remembered how liberating it was that "[the majority of] Rhodes Scholars had been nerds for most of their lives, [but at Oxford] were suddenly told to enjoy themselves." Susan Craighead (USA 1986) felt there were advantages to studying within a different academic system: "No one knows what the hell you are doing [at Oxford]. For two years, you are off the radar screen. I mean those stupid grades they give you in Greek letters [sic], no one has any idea."

But not all enjoyed this lack of rigor, and some felt that they had learned very little. One Rhodes Scholar (USA 1990) remembered: "For us in the 1990s, Oxford sometimes felt like a waiting program for life. You had to stay there for two years, sometimes feeling like you were accomplishing nothing or wasting time. And you couldn't leave because of the shame involved in not receiving with sufficient grace, or face, this gift that you had been given."

Amongst the women surveyed, however, it was common to regard the Rhodes as a hiatus, a chance, for better or for worse, to veer off-track for the first time in years. Maureen McLane (USA 1989) said, "Some people had been on an incredibly fast track somewhere, and here they found

themselves in another place. In Oxford their coordinates were a little different; I think some felt unmoored.” For some, winning the Rhodes provided an excuse to be in England and to travel; for others, it fit seamlessly with their academic ambitions, for the Rhodes was a way they could get paid to complete a DPhil. Thus, for these Scholars, being in Oxford was not about the Rhodes per se. For the more disenchanted Scholars, being in Oxford was simply the price they had to pay for receiving a Rhodes. But whatever the motive for accepting the Scholarship, McLane suggests that for young women at the beginning of the rest of their lives, Oxford could provide “an incredibly timely two years of suspended exploration.”

Nadine Baudot-Trajtenberg (Canada 1978) recalled:

For Rhodes Scholars [studying for a second BA] there is very little pressure, because everyone already has a BA. Because the sense is that this is not the end of the road for you, so it is the parenthesis where you can choose to do things differently. You can choose to meet people with whom you do not necessarily think of keeping in contact with afterwards. So there is an enormous amount of that. It is an amazing parenthesis to have. The people who ran the Rhodes committee told me that you are given this opportunity for you to be different, think, do — to choose a different world and find something new.

Scholars and Students

Even those who did not enjoy being at Oxford made friends there — many lifelong — and this, according to the women interviewed, has proven one of greatest gifts the University had to offer.

What stands out about these friendships are the ways in which the women interviewed tended to gravitate towards people of similar backgrounds — whether culturally or on the basis of their perceived values. Anita Mehta (India 1978), as an Indian Scholar, felt closest to those in the international community. Many Scholars thought it a shame that their peers did not break out beyond the circle of Rhodes Scholars. Making acquaintances with British students was rare among the female Rhodes Scholars in this study. In addition to a perceived unfriendliness among the natives, the difference in age, attitude toward work, and (no doubt) in maturity between the Rhodes Scholars and the average undergraduate, contributed to the Scholars’ failure to integrate with the rest of the student body.

Others who felt disenchanted with their Rhodes peers found it easier to make friends within their colleges and the graduate community. Little had reservations about some of the “go-getters” she came across at Oxford, who struck her as “a lot of silver-spoon-in-mouth, over-privileged, padding-their-resume-since-they-were-three-years-old kind of junk.” Imogen Dickie (New Zealand 1994) knew male Rhodes Scholars who “got off the boat from the States, bought a three-piece suit and spent three years pretending to be English, which is ridiculous.”

Although making friends or networking with those who would end up in the same place as you was acknowledged as worthwhile, it was not something most of the women surveyed considered to be very important. One Rhodes Scholar (USA 1991) recalled that it was “the guys [who were] dividing up what they would do in each other’s administrations.” In contrast, the women’s responses revealed that connections tended to be made for the sake of friendship alone rather than with an eye to the future.

A Window onto the World?

There was near unanimous agreement among the Rhodes women surveyed that their time at Oxford was an opportunity to immerse themselves in different cultures and perspectives and broaden their horizons. For many women, meeting people from international backgrounds was important; for Scholars who had never been abroad before, this proved especially eye-opening. In addition, England’s proximity to the rest of Europe allowed many Scholars to travel extensively during their time at Oxford. Shazia Azim (Pakistan 1993) described the Scholarship as “the opportunity of a lifetime;” Susan Campbell (USA 1978), as “two of the best years of my life.” For many Americans, including Virginia Seitz, being abroad gave them “an appreciation for the fact that there’s a world out there that isn’t America.” Cristina Rodriguez (USA 1995) remembered:

Europeans, and Canadians and Australians of the type that I was interacting with had much more liberal views [than Americans]. The way that [the Rhodes Scholarship] also globalizes your perspective is that it makes you realize that in fact, even though the U.S. is the most powerful country on some level, and affects goings on in the rest of the world, ... it just doesn’t matter that much. It’s not the center of the universe. There are other centers of activity that people gravitate towards. And I consider that in some ways a liberal opinion that challenges the idea of American dominance. That was probably part of it, having people who were not particularly critical but who also had different views about how the government should interact

with citizens and how big a government should be, what the definition of social is, what limitations social welfare might impose upon the autonomy of individuals, that kind of thing. Seeing people who seemed very similar, Canadians, people from Britain, Australians, but who had very different views about that, was part of what creates the shift in perspective.

Not that these revelations didn't sometimes come at the expense of the British approach to some subjects. Dangel remembered the experience of studying history from a rather unfamiliar perspective:

Modern History at Oxford starts at 40 A.D. So it's not what most people think of as modern. One of the areas that I had studied a lot in the States was the Revolutionary War and the Founding Fathers and all the Great Principles. And to suddenly be studying it in England, where it wasn't even called the Revolutionary War, it was called "the War of Independence." It was not viewed as a war about fundamental principles, but was basically seen as an administrative blunder on the part of those running the government in Britain. That if they had just done a better job and had had a better king at the time you would still be part of the United Kingdom. And suddenly it was like, wow, how can you think that? It really sort of shook my foundations and eventually I came to the conclusion that it was probably somewhere in between. That it wasn't all about personal liberty, but it wasn't all about administrative bumbles either. It definitely changed my perspective on being an American.

Eleanor Brown (Jamaica 1994) noted that although Oxford was not an overtly political place, the students helped her develop an international perspective. Her West Indian background, in fact, facilitated her entry into certain social groups. During her Scholarship, the West Indies cricket team was viewed as the best in the world and Brown found that Australians and Zimbabweans would talk to her about cricket. She did not find being in England much of a culture shock, presumably because, though Jamaican, when her parents were growing up, Jamaica was a British colony. Others found that in this distinctly de-politicized environment, Oxford allowed many Scholars to study what they could not at home. Nuttall, for instance, found that for the first time she had access to books that were banned in her native South Africa.

And for those who felt they were used to a less academic background, Oxford opened up possibilities. Banuta Rubess (Canada 1978) commented:

Many American Scholars come to Oxford from another Ivy League university, and this means they come to Oxford jaded. They knew what it meant to be in an academic environment of the like-minded, of the sharpest thinkers, of an international renown. For me, it was a first. For the first time in my life, I met with people who thought like me, who were passionate about ideas, who felt discussion was the food of life.

Being in an environment of high-achievers also helped the Scholars to get over the initial awe of having won the Rhodes. As Renée Stone (USA 1985) told us:

The people that you meet there [made a difference] — I was very intimidated about being a Rhodes Scholar when I got the Rhodes Scholarship, but after you get to Oxford, there are a couple of hundred Rhodes Scholars wandering around, and no one really thinks you're very special. Most Rhodes Scholars get over that notion after a pretty short period of time. Everyone at Oxford is pretty smart and no one really thinks you are [any different], which was nice.

The Rock of Ages

In fact, there may not be any North American analogy for the relationship between Oxford and England, a relationship which puzzled and interested many Scholars. Leah Niederstadt (USA 1994) said:

I don't think, as Americans, we have any idea of what it means to be at Oxford. I think that Oxford is Harvard and more. What Harvard has in the American psyche, Oxford has that ten times. It's not just this amazing institution — because of the British colonies it's known all over the world and it's almost this way of life. As an American I don't fully understand it, but it is the beyond all for Brits.

It is this aspect of Oxford as an unchanging constant, a university in a provincial town which manages through its staff and students to exert a powerful influence on politics, science, the arts, business, the law, finance, and so many other avenues of British and international life, which has proved so pervasive. Its attachment to former members remains as a sort of stamp of

identification, extended even to those who wear their association with it lightly. Oxford's resilience certainly made an impression on some female Scholars.

Few who studied there would disagree with Nuttall's view that "Oxford is the kind of institution that says to students, 'I am going to have an absolutely huge impact on you and you're going to have no impact on me.' Students can't take ownership of Oxford but Oxford takes ownership of you."