**EXEMPLAR STATEMENTS**

**Humanities, incl. Law**

**Politics and Sociology**

I remember being told at nine years old that I spoke 'like a white girl'. The comment remained distinct because despite such discourse being a ubiquitous reality prevalent within the context of my playground politics and, even more tragically, deemed unharmful, it grew to cause me great discomfort. I began to realise that 'whiteness' was socially constructed as synonymous with intellect, eloquence and success and 'blackness' the complete counter, in order to facilitate a power structure which denigrates one group to celebrate another. Such a realisation forced me to interrogate the social construction of race, the tools used to perpetuate such discourse and fundamentally where such a narrative stems from. On looking into societies where race-relations have been the cause of revolution, reformation and change, I became exposed to the inexorable reality that politics holds the propensity to facilitate or breakdown social justice. Such a realisation sparked my understanding of the importance of politics and sociology as a multifaceted force inseparable from one another.

The most important principles of politics and sociology to me are social justice, human rights and activism. It is such ideas that particularly resonate with me and act as a centrepiece for my areas of interest. My study of segregated America is often my reference point for the various, often oppositional, means of response to injustice, as exemplified by the Civil Rights movement, versus the Black Power Movement. Often these differing reactions stem from different experiences and forms of socialisation. It has always interested me that many rebel groups such as the Black Panther Party allude to an image predicated upon a hegemonic masculinity and how such a construction can inadvertently exclude women and the effects of that. I identified the inextricable link between politics, history and sociology in my reading of Michelle Alexander's 'The New Jim Crow' and her discussion of the 'Prison Industrial Complex'; I began to see how capitalist systems plague minority communities, arguably intentionally more than others for institutional profit. She discusses capitalist economic gains as a result of black incarceration and the reality that policy-making determines social conditioning. My reading of Marx's 'Communist Manifesto' and his discussion of the exploitation of the working class provided me with a foundation for much of my wider reading in politics.

At the age of 14 I began writing poetry; I became transfixed with using language as a means to articulate the complexities of contemporary life. Since this time I have performed across the UK with poems inspired by feminism, Pan Africanism and politics. I became involved in my local youth council and proceeded to represent my borough of Greenwich on a national level in the UK Youth Parliament with the hope of bringing change to my community. However, I soon became disgruntled at the fact that ultimately I felt that the changes we could make were limited. The same difficulties that the UK's parliamentary democracy faces of limited representation and apathy, I found in my youth political field. For this reason I founded an organization called 'RevolYOUtion' in 2014, hoping to provide young people in my area with a platform to speak on socio-political issues plaguing our communities. Since our formation we have delivered a programme providing over 20 hampers for young, single mothers to our local hospital. We have set up a YouTube channel whereby we get young passionate speakers to vocalise their opinions on socio-political issues and we have a debating forum to establish a foundation for healthy discourse. I have always been in love with my community whilst equally being angered at the realities that take place within it.

Studying politics and sociology will enable me to channel my frustration into a critical and more effective means of understanding the world in which I live and think.

**Politics and International Relations**

Over the past year, NATO conducted its largest wargame in Eastern Europe since the Cold War, Macron has had an unprecedented election campaign in France and both Merkel and Putin have entered into the last years of their current terms in office. These seismic events, and the conditions that have led to these, have made the study of Politics in Europe vitally important, in order to analyse and shape these events as they evolve.

'The New Cold War' by Edward Lucas was written prior to the civil war in Ukraine, and Russia's annexation of Crimea; as such, it is interesting to analyse the book with the benefit of hindsight. It is clear that Lucas was correct in predicting that the policies of managed nationalism and use of soft power towards the former Soviet states would escalate, once again making NATO a significant organisation. Vladimir Putin's Russia is unique in terms of its politics in Europe, and research into its foreign policy has heavily driven my choice to study European Politics. Furthermore, studying the causes of the Cold War in History has led to me to compare the origins of that conflict to present day Ukraine, where both Western and Russian expansionism can be blamed in each. The role of NATO, and now the European Union, has had a dramatic impact on the foreign and domestic policies of most European nations,

In recent years, Europe has been subject to a rise in nationalism. This ideological shift to the right is something that was explored in my Politics A-Level, and is partly due to the failure of left-wing parties to appeal to voters that feel disenfranchised, and in some nations, the inability to adequately adapt to repression or co-option of their policies. This has particularly been the case in Germany, where the SPD (who initially experienced rising support under Schulz’ leadership) have failed to capitalise on the weaknesses of the Merkel-led CDU government, whilst the Green’s support for same-sex marriage and opposition to nuclear power have both been co-opted by the CDU in the past few years. These, along with Germany’s economic success since reunification, has been instrumental in maintaining the dominance of Merkel’s chancellorship over the past twelve years.

My Sociology A-level has been of use in analysing the conditions that have led to Italy’s political and economic issues since the end of the Second World War. The study of crime was something that added to my understanding when reading John Dickie’s ‘Mafia Republic’, that explores Italy’s issues with the ‘Ndrangheta, Camorra and Cosa Nostra. The ‘Mezzogiorno’ region of Italy has traditionally been a key area of Mafia control, and this can be explained through Merton’s Strain Theory. The underdeveloped economy of Southern Italy led to many turning away from legitimate means to the illegitimate opportunities that organised crime presented. A similar pattern can be seen in the former USSR and Yugoslavia, where Glenny identified the concept of the ‘McMafia’, or the expansion of organised crime in these areas due to the absence left by the fall of communism. Whilst Glenny cites the heroin trade being largely a product of the Bulgarian secret service, a similar pattern can be seen through government corruption that was in Yeltsin’s Russia, and Putin’s regime, such as with the Ryazan bombings, that many journalists, such as David Satter, argued were conducted by the Russian FSB. This shows how the study of Sociology has been useful in analysing economic and political events in Europe and Eurasia.

None of my family have ever attended university, and this makes the opportunities presented to me by studying at university so much more enticing. Too few of the UK's politicians and diplomats have come from working class homes, and I believe that through education, this can be changed to create a truly representative political class, in both domestic, and European affairs.

**Human, Social and Political Sciences**

Throughout my life I have been surrounded by strong women. The conversations I have had with them from an early age led to my interest in sociology. On my 12th birthday I received 'How To Be A Woman' by Caitlin Moran - a book that changed how I viewed the world. It sparked my interest in gender, and debates about whether it is socially constructed, which in turn led me to other feminist writers, such as Germaine Greer. The way she decided to own the word "cunt" shocked me at first - it was a word I was taught to hate, to label as dirty. Yet she interpreted it as a strong, powerful word, one that describes a vital part of herself. This early reading, thinking and discussion led me to begin to construct my identity as a sociological thinker.

One study I found fascinating was Anne Oakley's 'Sex, Gender and Society,' where she explores the ways in which gender socialisation occurs from an early age. Learning about the views of the New Right and their beliefs in traditional notions of gender, sexuality and a woman's place in the home, I found myself even more persuaded by the challenge to these societal norms presented by feminist thinkers. This led me to the work of Beverly Skeggs whose book 'Formations of Class and Gender' allowed me to explore the lives of marginalised individuals from a new perspective. Skeggs' methodological approach to researching this study was cutting-edge at the time. The use of an "impassioned ethnography" resulted in a rich understanding, and giving a voice to those that had previously been ignored, "carers". Through this I became interested in reading about other female experiences, and Sylvia Plath's 'The Bell Jar' resonated very deeply with me. I am interested in the taboos around mental health; it is encouraging that there are more efforts being made to rid mental health from the misunderstandings that surround it, such as the Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn's introduction the first ever shadow minister for mental health, Luciana Berger.

I enjoy making connections between my A level disciplines. In English, I am fascinated by political readings of texts, from a Marxist or feminist perspective. For example Marxists would read the Jazz Age setting of 'The Great Gatsby' as representing the corruptive nature of late stage capitalism. A novel such as 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' is interesting to evaluate from a feminist viewpoint it presents a typically feminist image of sisterhood, yet the novel was written by a man. Therefore, the authenticity of this portrayal of female experience can be questioned as it could be seen to reinforce male dominance over female expression. Studying the changing role of women in history through looking at suffrage provided a lens in which to consider the extent of change that has taken place. Though there has been a great deal of change, there is still so much work to be done, particularly concerning the representation of women in parliament. Mhairi Black's candid account of her experiences as a young woman MP further highlights these debates. Studying the Civil Rights movement in the US helped to shape my thinking about the issue of race and ethnicity in society: change has happened, but again that change is superficial. In my opinion, racism has not disappeared but has become institutionalised in different ways, as we see in the US in the shooting of unarmed black men such as Michael Brown.

Studying US politics, I have enjoyed debating controversial issues such as capital punishment, abortion and gun laws. Here, I have found the writing of Guardian columnist Gary Younge interesting, for example in his recent article concerning the Oregon shooting, where he explores the idea that the US political system is "helpless". He makes a point that many have made: the US spends astonishing amounts of money on NASA and futile wars, yet cannot solve the issue of gun violence at home. I am excited about the opportunity to explore these issues and ideas, and more, at university.

**Anthropology**

I have always been interested in anthropology, even before I fully understood what the term meant. Coming from an Irish Roman Catholic background, I have always found it interesting how religion has affected the Irish culture, from its laws to its beliefs, and how this differs from those in England, despite the two countries being so geographically close. My passion for the subject was reinforced by my memorable trip to Tanzania and Kenya in 2014, which was both an exhilarating and a life changing experience for me as I immersed myself in the lifestyles of a completely different culture. Experiencing a society so different from my own inspired me to think about more about cultures, and made me want to study them in more depth.

Jeremy MacClancy's book, 'Exotic No More', furthered my passion for the subject and made me realise how important social anthropology is in the world around us and how it affects almost everything; from food security to child labour, and even from race to religion. John Monaghan's 'Social and Cultural Anthropology' helped me to understand the ever-evolving perspectives on social anthropology, which is driven by its increasingly global nature. I was interested in Richard Dawkins' view in 'River Out of Eden' that Western science holds a complete authority over 'tribal myth', yet I completely disagreed with it, as I agreed with the anthropological view that neither way of viewing the world is more true than the other.

What captivates me the most about social anthropology is the idea that we are all one human race, yet so many different cultures and societies can act in so many diverse ways, and this is the reason why I would love to study it at degree level. My interest in anthropology began on another continent, but I soon began to see that this is only part of the story. I was very intrigued by Professor Pat Caplan's talk at the annual Gold lecture in Anthropology about the "big society" and food poverty in the UK. It opened my eyes to the idea that anthropology is not only the study of different cultures from around the world, cultures which are exotic and "other", but also within our own society in the UK. I am lucky enough to have been educated at a comprehensive school which takes its intake from an area of widespread ethnic diversity, and this has helped me to appreciate the richness that different cultures bring to a community.

My various A Level subjects align very closely with the issues that social anthropology raises. Religious Studies has helped me to understand how an individual's beliefs can lead them to committing acts of terrorism or other heinous crimes, and how religion can directly affect a culture's values and practices. Particularly relevant in today's society is the debate within Islam on the nature of war and the requirement that war should only be for self defence - and what that actually means for us today. English Language at A2 has not only helped me to develop my communication skills, but my critical and analytical faculties as well. Language variation and change is a fascinating subject, and after attending a lecture at the British Library, I know that you give away where you are from and how you have been socialised simply by opening your mouth. Government and Politics helped me understand how forms of government can alter society and the way people live, especially in complex places such as the USA.

I have many interests outside of academia, and in particular, sport. I enjoy playing a variety of sports including swimming, rugby, and cricket, and have achieved success in these areas. For example, I was selected to play cricket for my district, and I have won the Jack Petchey award for outstanding achievement in swimming. I have played rugby for Kent District for the last 2 years, getting to a final county trial and also trialling at Irish Exiles. I am also currently training for the Bath Half Marathon, running in support of Cancer Research UK.

**Religion and Ethics**

I have always had an interest in different cultures and ways of life that may seem alien to our own, and this has developed into a passion for ethics, philosophy and religious studies. Watching events unfold across the world, such as the shocking way homosexual people are treated in countries such as Uganda and Russia, has convinced me that degree in Religious Studies would give me greater insight into the most pressing ethical concerns facing humanity.

Within Religious Studies we have been exploring both the foundation and application of ethical concepts and theories, such as situation ethics and how it can be applied to everyday life. I found it interesting how different followers of the theory could apply it in various situations; for example, the issue of abortion. Situation ethics always focuses on the most loving outcome, but there are controversies over whether this should be specific to the mother or the unborn child. The issue therefore turns upon whether we consider the foetus a person. The “personhood” argument is typically used in this situation, describing the state of being an individual or having human characteristics and feelings, but it can still not be agreed whether or not this applies to a fetus.

In the philosophy of religion we have looked at the question of the existence of God, which as an agnostic was of particular interest to me. I was fascinated by evidence such as the teleological argument developed by William Paley, which argues that the design and order of the universe must be the product of a designer, leading to the conclusion of God’s existence. However, other evidence such as the existence of suffering and evil in the world contradicts this, due to the logical problem that it would be impossible for God and evil to co-exist – I find these arguments very powerful. This lead me to explore independently, looking at more modern examples from J L Mackie, such as “The problem of evil”, where he argues that if God exists, God is an omnipotent and wholly good being. A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can, and there are no limits on what an omnipotent being can do, however, evil still exists in the world.

I am also studying Government and Politics, and have found it fascinating to learn about the political processes that keep our country running, such as how laws are made and how electoral processes work. I recently visited the Houses of Parliament and went on a guided tour of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. It was a truly worthwhile insight into how parliament works and, considering the current debate as to whether young people are alienated by Westminster, I now feel more engaged with British politics. Philosophy is at its heart a subject that engages with the most pressing issues of the day. From Plato’s republic to the liberalism of J S Mill, philosophy has a long history of theorising the state. Having seen first hand where and how the big decisions are made I am inspired to explore political ideas from a philosophical perspective.

I recently attended a conference in Southwark Cathedral, where guest speakers included Shami Chakrabarti, the director of the pressure group Liberty, as well as Hugo Rifkind, a journalist for The Times newspaper. I found the experience extremely valuable as well as informative as I got to witness debates and develop my opinions on issues such as international aid, the bedroom tax and the legalisation of cannabis. I even got to share my own opinion on the government’s education cuts as part of a debate. My highlight of the day was Chakrabati’s passionate speech about whether or not prisoners should be allowed to vote. This encouraged me to do my own research on Liberty, and the more I discovered about the pressure group the more certain I became that humanitarian work is definitely something I want to do one day.

**Sociology and Social Policy**

I am interested in contemporary issues such as inequality, unemployment and social exclusion, and I am interested in how as a society we can find solutions to these problems. What are the key factors that affect our well-being? What are our basic needs, and who is responsible for meeting those needs? As a sociology and social policy student, I am looking forward to exploring these issues and ideas, and to think critically about contemporary society and social institutions.

My interest in Social Policy was initially sparked through learning about the New Right view of the Welfare State and our supposed dependency culture. Here, I had finally found an issue which affected me in a way that lead me to want to know more, and try to understand and explore this group’s ideas, which appeared to me ignorant and distorted. A contemporary policy which sparked my interest was the Welfare Reform Act 2012, which introduced a “Universal Credit” in order to encourage people on benefits into paid work and reduce working families’ poverty. However, it seems to me impractical and illogical to think that the reduction of the benefits of vulnerable people can take working families out of poverty. I believe that the government is simply attempting to abolish benefits and legitimize unfairly low wages which families cannot survive on without state support.

Reading Young and Willmott’s ‘Family And Kinship In East London’, I became fascinated by what happened to communities when people were encouraged by government to leave their cramped, overcrowded inner city terraces for modern, well-equipped homes in the suburbs. Young and Willmott’s housing study lead me to read Lynsey Handley’s ‘Estates’, an absorbing personal history of Britain’s various housing policies since the late 19th century. I enjoyed reading from a first-hand perspective what life on a council estate feels like, and also seeing comparisons with the detached plans of ministers such as Harold MacMillan to “meet demand” and simply “get more houses built”. Living in London, I have been brought up in an environment where the most deprived estates exist next to swanky new-build flats and Georgian terraces. The changes in my own local high street have been huge and controversial, and I am interested in exploring how cities develop and change, and how scholars have theorised and explained these changes.

I have also developed an interest in methodological perspectives and their application. Following a lesson on Sudhir Venkatesh's methods, I went on to read his book ‘Gang Leader for a Day’, which addresses the many ethical weaknesses of using participant observation in research, while exploring in depth the world of Chicago’s gangs from an incredibly involved viewpoint. Although Venkatesh’ work was groundbreaking, as sociologists we must question, how far is too far? At what point do the risks outweigh the benefits?

Studying Jez Butterworth’s contemporary play ‘Jerusalem’ I was inspired to think further about how social policy affects us all, and specifically those who resist it. I found it helpful to apply Marxist theory here, in order to explain the way capitalism rids people of their sense of identity, just as the protagonist loses his belief in myth and legend, which defined his way of life. Studying Spanish has also helped me in formulating arguments, both orally and on paper - we often discuss issues such as race and poverty, and exploring these in another language really helps to sharpen my thinking. In our globalized world, the ability to speak another language is significant, especially a world language like Spanish which is more and more relevant each day. Being a part of the debating group has also facilitated my ability to present an argument.

I am excited about the prospect of university life and study, and looking forward to the challenges and opportunities it will bring.

**History**

I am intrigued by the way that our interpretations of the past are so rooted in our own life experiences. Whilst visiting several sites of the D-day landings, and Rouen in Northern France, I was fascinated by the visible impact of WWII on the area, including gunshot holes at the Palais De Justice in Rouen, and its legacy in street names such as, ‘Rue de Winston Churchill’ in Montville. I enjoyed the way history could be experienced in a tangible way; this sparked my interest in how previous events can continue to affect our lives today. The past’s impact on the present can also be seen on a wider scale in modern politics.

In my study of the Russian Revolution, I have been particularly interested in the way in which factors and events could be interpreted differently to offer new outlooks on the development of events - such as the factors that contributed to the overthrowing of the provisional government my Lenin’s Red Army. I am excited about the opportunity to further develop my understanding of interpretation within my study of the Cold War. Carrying out coursework on the nature of German government will allow me to extend my independent research skills. Due to my specific interest in 20th century Europe, I watched a series of Open Yale lectures on European civilisation, including French, Russian and British history. I found Professor John Merriman’s combination of broad overview and in depth analysis of the impacts of specific factors in the evolution of Russia, 1917-1945, particularly enlightening – for example, the focus on how life in Russia every day, was directed by actions at the top through tools such as propaganda. In addition, ‘The Cold War’, by John Lewis Gaddis has given me a helpful overview of events to support my studies, ‘Gulag’, by Anne Applebaum, offered me a new a perspective on a specific area of life in Russia, and I have pursued my interest in Britain’s colonial past through John Keay’s ‘India: A History’ and the documentary series: ‘Empire’; which dealt with the lingering mark left by the British Empire on the country today. I subscribe to the BBC’s History magazine; a regular feature I find engaging offers historians’ perspectives on modern day developments: for example the way in which responses to Europe's refugee crisis can be examined through looking at responses taken by countries in the past. I enjoy learning about the ways history is formed and how it informs decisions in our society.

My other A levels have enabled me to continue to contextualise ideas in history. In English, I enjoyed studying Victorian poetry, and writers such as Rossetti and Tennyson have shed new light on the role of women in Victorian society, offering me a new perspective on the history of the suffrage movement in Britain (I was fascinated to learn that Rossetti, whose poetry seems to have such empathy with the fallen girls she portrays, was a lifelong opponent of female suffrage). Studying feminist theory through both a literary and sociological lens, it was interesting to have studied its roots in the suffrage movement. Exploring the context of Shakespeare's ‘The Tempest’ shed new light on notions of colonialism. Studying global events in geography, helped me to further understand how far reaching the effects of historical events can be in creating current situations, such as the current conflict in Syria.

Volunteering for Cancer Research and Team London projects such as ‘Summer Streets London’, I assisted in the coordination of various events throughout the day, helping me to improve a range of organisational and interpersonal skills.

I believe that a Degree in History would help me to better my understanding of how our modern day lives are intrinsically linked to the past.

**History**

For me, history is in the truest sense a 'humanity'- a word conveying how vital the study of people and society is to historical understanding. For this reason I am interested in reading the works of Marxist historians such as George Lichtheim and EH Carr, exploring one of the most important social and historical movements to have emerged in the 20th century. History is a subject capable of provoking endless debate. Reading books by historians such as A.J.P. Taylor and Eric Hobsbawm has opened my eyes to the complexity of many issues surrounding modern Europe and its creation. I have particularly enjoyed exploring the causes and effects of war and revolution through innovative perspectives such as Taylor's consideration of Sonderweg Theory in examining the causes of WWII.

In geography, the contemporary nature of the issues studied such as climate change and the growth of megacities is something I love. In this sense, geography appears to be the study of the future, where history appears to be about reflection on past - but in fact, the two subjects are intrinsically linked. The study of 'superpowers' in geography, for example, links closely to the study of the Cold War which examines the relations between the USSR and the USA - something it is vital to understand in order to grasp why the USA is still a superpower today. The Cold War is so relevant due to its lasting influence on global politics, economics and ideologies that can still be felt today. To further explore the connection between history and geography I have undertaken an Extended Project focusing on the areas of nuclear power and energy security, which encompasses a variety of diverse disciplines from physics to politics. This project served as a crossover between my historical and geographical interests as the Cold War served as a vital backdrop to the rise and fall of nuclear power. Doing this project also enabled me to develop vital research skills.

The ability to contextualise any area of learning is something I love about studying history; as well as being a subject in its own right, it forms an essential basis of other areas of learning. Another example of this is the study of Gothic literature I am currently undertaking. Studying the women's emancipation movement in history has enlightened me as to the different attitudes towards women at the time - in novels such as Dracula, the presentation of women suggests a fear of female sexuality, which could be seen as a manifestation of a more general fear of the growing power of women. The study of Englishliterature is very important to me as I love to read and I believe that there is as much to be learnt from fiction as from any textbook. Historiography has taught me that interpretation can be both fascinating and useful to historical study and, in my opinion; literature provides exciting interpretive insight into whole historical periods - reading Tennyson's poetry, for example, illuminated aspects of my study of Women in history. Another example of this is the study of the Russian Revolution I have enjoyed so much. Authors such as Tolst oy, Dostoevsky and Gogol have captured my imagination through their exploration and criticisms of the complex society they lived in and helped me greater appreciate the socio-political mood of the period which led to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

Many skills I have gained through mathematics aid my historical appreciation. One example of this is logical thinking - a skill essential to mathematical problem-solving - which allows me to approach historical disputes in a new light. Where these skills can help resolve problems in maths, in history they inevitably lead to the opposite as history is an infinitely complex subject for which there is never one true answer. Where some may find this prospect frustrating, I find it refreshing as it highlights the complex nature of the world we live in and makes for far more rich and fascinating study.

**Geography**

Geography is a unique subject in the sense that it is the study of the past, present and future. Through it, we can analyse how humans interact with and learn from their environment. By understanding a person's environment you can analyse them as an individual – their geography provides the context. For instance, you cannot view human rights issues in isolation: the environment in which they occur is key.

Universal access to education is of huge importance to me. In a lecture at the Royal Geographical Society, Anne Cotton drew upon the statistic that 65 million girls globally are not in education. Not only is the exclusion of women from education morally unjust, it has detrimental effects on the economy. Both the World Bank in 2012, and the UN in their recent sustainable development goals, have advocated the importance of equal access to education. On a local level I have tried to improve access to education within my community, by supporting younger students advance their literacy skills. I have also advocated the opinions of other students as the secretary of Student Voice.

Although keen to participate in overseas volunteering, I was aware that top down aid schemes are not always the most effective way of helping communities. In the summer of 2014, after raising 3860 pounds, I embarked on a four week expedition to Tanzania to participate in bottom up aid work. Here, I gained an insight into the problem solving that often occurs in communities where there is a lack of natural resources, or money. The Masai I met were using small scale recycling to generate economic revenue and sustainable footwear (they used strips of old tyre to create sandals). The money earned from this, and other tourism ventures, let the Masai put their children into formal schooling. Their ingenuity showed me what can be learnt from resource-scarce communities. My belief in the capacity of humans to triumph over problems such as overpopulation and sustainability was developed through reading Population and Development by W.T.S Gould. Gould's book explores the contrasting theories of Malthus and Boserup; fundamentally I perceive Malthus' projections of society to be bleak and inaccurate. Chris Goodall's Ten Technologies to Fix Energy and Climate provides a key example of how Malthus' opinion can be undermined by human ingenuity. In chapters 9 and 10, Goodall refers to biogas tanks and biochar as examples of ways to halt climate change while benefiting humans. His writing is representative of the important role new technologies will play in solving the issues that arise due to population increases.

I find that geography enhances and enriches my understanding of each of my A level disciplines. Studying the Russian Revolution, I became interested in the theory that the spatial distribution of Russia's population was a key cause of the continued Tsarist rule. If the population had been more condensed, revolutionary ideas would have permeated the population more rapidly. The way in which people can be influenced or excluded by their access to a space, through the use of architecture, is something I researched while at the Sutton Trust summer school.

Geography is currently central to political and economic debate. In the USA, President Obama has given Shell permission to use Alaska's coast (in the Arctic region) to find oil -something they have decided to not pursue. The USA's decisions on contentious issues such as the utilisation of Arctic resources will set global precedents. The debate over where we need to draw the line over the commercialisation of resources is explored in Karen Piper's book The Price of Thirst which concludes that the commercialisation of the basic resources humans need for survival, such as water, is criminal. It is an important book as it provides the liberal counter - argument to the widespread capitalist perspective. I am excited about exploring these issues and concepts, as well as new ones, at university.

**Geography**

Travelling around Cuba at the age of fourteen, the subject I enjoyed so much in the classroom began to come alive for me. I saw first hand how political, ideological and economic factors influenced the country's geography: the restrictions on travel abroad, the controls on earning money through private business, and environmental innovation in response to the loss of economic support from the Soviet Union. This resulted in a high use of solar panels to compensate for the loss of non-renewable energy and the development of urban organic gardens, 'organoponicos', as a means of feeding the population.

More locally, I have been interested in the redevelopment of the notorious 1960s Ferrier Estate and the Council's vision of a more diverse and balanced community. The Estate is a prime example of failed modernist architecture and planning, but it could be argued that the redevelopment, with its emphasis on central planning and social engineering, is making the same mistakes again. These ideas are discussed in Harvey's section on architecture in The Condition of Postmodernity where he outlines the differences between modernism, where planners decided what people wanted, and postmodernism, which has been driven by the market. During my work placement in TPS Architects, I looked at ways of designing buildings to make them more sustainable and wrote an article for the company's intranet about green roofs and wind turbines.

Attending an Art History course, I became intrigued by the way artists' work often links to the geography of an area, such as Mondrian's Composition 2 which reflects the grid lines of New York streets. In literature, too, I have found connections with geography: in Anna Karenina, Levin's account of farming gives an insight into pre-communist Russia and depicts him trying to develop a relationship with the serfs. I am particularly interested in how literary texts reflect and are shaped by the society in which they are created - in English I am exploring the notion of outsiders in society in Anna Karenina and Brave New World. The issue of climate change is one of the most important facing us today, and studying chemistry has given me an insight into the processes driving it. It is also one of the factors exacerbating hydro-meteorological hazards. In Geography we are currently studying theories of human behaviour including determinism, behaviourism and structuralism and how they interact with physical processes to create tectonic hazards, and how this can lead to different outcomes for communities. Globalisation and the creation of a global consumerist culture are predominant issues in today's society.

This summer I volunteered at a community called 'Sunseed' in Southern Spain which aimed to be as sustainable and self-sufficient as possible in a semi-desert environment; here, I made sourdough bread which we baked in a solar oven and used cactus leaves to make compost. I also attended a seminar on Transition towns, and watching the film 'The Economics of Happiness' reinforced the idea that localisation could be a solution to problems such as peak oil and food shortage. In northern Argentina I stayed in an eco tourism centre in 'la selva' and saw how tourism can be used to conserve the rainforest and reduce anthropogenic climate change by helping both wildlife and indigenous people.

Through the study of R.S, I have learnt to look more theoretically at the balance of human needs and happiness against that of the environment. I have seen first hand how physical processes interact with people to create some of the biggest hazards facing the world today, and also how people can find small scale local solutions. I see a geography degree as enabling me to take up a career that plays an active part in this movement. I love writing creatively, and have attended an Arvon Foundation course. In the future, I would love to explore new ways to write about geography to help people to see its relevance in contemporary society.

**Law**

The UK's legal system, in principle, does a two-fold job of protecting our rights, whilst also protecting us from authoritarian rule. This is important in the UK, as unlike the USA, we do not have an entrenched constitution. However, the lack of a codified constitution allows the UK's legal system flexibility in updating its legislation in response to societal changes. In 2015 the UK introduced a law on the growing issue of revenge porn, with a maximum prison sentence of 2 years. Although revenge porn doesn't cause the same physical trauma as other assaults, it is an invasion of privacy that can have impacts on a person's mental health. Despite the progressive nature of the ruling, it fails to do enough to rectify the blurred lines between the cyber world and its real life effects. The right of an individual to have control over their body was central in the first court case I saw, while shadowing barrister Nadia Silver. The case resonated with me because it demonstrated the very real impact the law has on people's lives. Whilst the case I watched was clearly an area protected by the law, there is an ongoing debate as to where the exceptions in human rights are - for example, in 2013 Amnesty fought for prisoners to have the right to vote.

Another recent case, People v. Turner, has been used to exemplify the dramatic imbalance there can be in the sentences of black and white men tried for the same crimes. While Brock Turner served a sentence of 3 months, Corey Bates, a black man charged on the same counts, was sentenced to 15+ years in prison. Prior to this case I had a sense of how problematic judicial activism could be, from looking at the ruling notes of cases such as Smith v. Ministry of Defence, but People v. Turner deepened those concerns. As well as making me reassess my thinking about judicial activism, the case made me think further about my own privilege as a white woman. For instance, I know that institutional racism will never be a problem for me; I have also considered my trip to Tanzania in 2014 and can now see that I participated in what is now bring termed 'voluntourism'. Although I now question the long term benefits my trip had on the community, I do not regret learning some of the skills the experience taught me.

Equality, to me, in a legal setting, means every defendant having a fair trial, humane treatment, and a presumption of innocence until they are proven guilty. Podcasts such as Serial and Undisclosed cover cases of legal injustice, where defendants have had an unfair trial or been subject to a biased police enquiry. The case of Joey Watkins, in particular, was riddled with issues from the outset, and it opened my eyes to the realities of wrongful convictions, the processes that occur to overturn them, and the involvement of charities in this. By completing a law degree I will be able to play my part in this process, to help defend the vulnerable and the wrongly convicted.

In comparison to the US, where the highest court of appeals is the Supreme Court, UK citizens are able to take their cases all the way to the ECHR. However, following the result of the EU referendum, and the Conservatives' plans for abolishing the HRA and its associated benefits, it is unclear for how much longer we will have this judicial structure. When Article 50 is enacted next year it will affect legal procedures in all areas of the law. For example, food standards legislation that is currently enforced by the EU will become redundant, and the UK will have the ability to enforce the deregulation of aesthetic standards which cause mass food waste.

I am currently working to fund a trip to the refugee camp in Calais with Care4Calais before I undertake work placements and volunteering later in the year. One of the placements I have lined up is at Toynbee Hall, where I will be working as a volunteer legal assistant for 4 months. I also plan to gain experience in other areas of legal practice, to fully prepare myself for embarking on a law degree.

**Law**

My interest in law stems from the desire to ensure we all have the opportunity to live in a just and equitable society. The law provides stability and control which helps to produce a safe environment. The more I learn about law the more I appreciate what an impact it has on so many aspects of mine, and everyone's, life.

Since starting at sixth form I have been able to not only develop my understanding of thelegal system but also attend an ongoing programme run by the London School of Economics along  with University College of London called 'Pathways to Law'. This programme has allowed me to visit 'The Chambers' and Supreme Court, and enabled me to participate in various different aspects of the English Legal system where I met and worked with law students, teachers and professionals; giving me an insight into all aspects of a legal career. This was furthered by work experience given through the programme with the law firm DLA Piper. It was here that I had the chance to experience the variety of roles that exist within a large working firm. I have also had a placement at Allen and Overy with the 'Smart Start Experience'. This enabled me to take part in workshops, which developed my abilities in public speaking, debating, negotiation and presentation skills.

My A Level disciplines have allowed me to develop a range of skills which will be valuable to me in the study of law. Through English literature A Level, I have developed my analytical, interpretative and evaluative skills, and I have learnt how to construct a coherent, well-argued and well-evidenced argument. For my A2 coursework, I have chosen to explore the presentation of the effects of war in Regeneration and the poems of Wilfred Owen. I have particularly enjoyed the opportunity to research, plan and write independently which this part of the course offers. In addition, sociology has enabled me to acquire knowledge and a critical understanding of contemporary social processes and structures.

In my free time I train in ballroom and latin dancing. I have been dancing for four years in this extremely disciplined and competitive sport. I have been successful in competitions all over the country, gaining first places in the National Grand Finals held at the Blackpool Tower Ballroom and the annual Stars of the Future Open competition. I believe my involvement in this sport has helped build my confidence. I have learnt to be competitive, but also how to be gracious in both defeat and triumph. In my spare time I have also completed voluntary work at my local youth club, organising and supervising activities for eleven to fourteen year olds. During the London Marathon 2011 I volunteered on a Water Station. These activities have helped me to develop my organizational abilities and provided the opportunity to work with a variety of new people. I have also participated in voluntary work at my dance school; this consisted of supervising children during rehearsals and chaperoning during the annual show, which also required me to use my communication and leadership skills.

At my old school, I was elected as a peer mentor. This involved working closely with the new intake of Year 7 pupils, helping them to settle into the new school environment and providing support with any problems they had incurred during the transition from primary to secondary school. I completed a training programme, which provided me with skills in befriending, active listening and problem solving and helped me to be a positive role model for younger pupils.

I am an ambitious and determined student who is passionate about the law, and I look forward to a future working in the legal profession. Neither of my parents had the opportunity to attend university so this is a completely new experience for me and one which my family and I are really excited about.

**Law**

My interest in the law stems from an outrage at the injustice in the world. One person who has inspired me to succeed is Doreen Lawrence, the mother of Stephen Lawrence, who was murdered not far from my home in 1993. Her campaign against the Metropolitan police's conduct of the investigation led to the McPherson report, which laid bare the institutional racism in the force. Her drive to both highlight and combat injustice has

Another local case with a national significance that has inspired me is the trial of Lee Rigby's murderers, and I was interested in how conflict arose within the differing levels in the judiciary specifically regarding the sentence length of his killers (this event happened 20 minutes from my home). Outside of the classroom, I have been reading Criminal Law by Catherine Elliot and Frances Quinn, in order to gain an understand the judicial system, and how different factors can affect the decision made by a jury. I found the book's exploration of the concept of voluntary manslaughter was particularly illuminating.

I also like to keep up with national and local politics and I am not afraid to involve myself when I feel there is a need to speak up. This is why I recently lobbied with my local MP, David Evennett, about my concerns around cycle safety - having suggested that cyclists should have to take a test similar to the driving test to enable them to be safe on the roads, I was pleased to receive a letter from the House of Commons which informed me about the latest cycling legislation being put forward in Parliament. As my passion for law has increased, I have worked hard to develop my confidence - this is why I joined my sixth form’s Student Voice, where we debate ideas and campaign on issues of importance to the whole school community. One of the reasons I want to study law is to give a voice to those in society who may feel that they are not heard. Entering the network scholar scheme at Herbert Smith Freehills law firm has helped me to hone my communication and presentational skills, which will help me to speak out for the voiceless.

My A level studies are also integral to my decision to apply for law. Within my studies in politics, I have been interested to explore the increasing conflicts between the judiciary and the government. The subject has also taught me to put together a cogent, balanced and well-evidenced argument. Studying sociology has opened my eyes to political theories such as those of Marx, whose ideas about the class system still resonate today, where we still see the injustice of the dispossessed. Marx's critique of capitalism has driven me to pursue a career in law in which I will seek to close the gap between the rich and the poor and the injustices that this gap is fraught with. Geography has given me a wider, global perspective on issues which face us as a society, such as climate change and supply of oil, as well and I am interested in how we can solve those problems, on a local or international scale.

Whilst shadowing a barrister at 1 Pump Court Chambers, my intrigue in this field has been further augmented. I remember one day leaving the Southwark Crown Court completely perplexed by the different statuary powers of different courts within the UK. I was confused due to such case involving the High Court not having the power to convict. This increased my thirst to discover more. This work experience also helped me to understand the cruel nature of some types of cases that will be put forth to me in my future career as I was able to shadow a defence barrister who was defending a man being convicted of sexual assault.

This experience confirmed my desire to become a barrister. This is due to the confident and analytical minds that I met during this week - to know that these people are what stand between an acquittal and a conviction truly inspires me to strive forward to be part of the legal system.

**Law**

Law establishes the framework within which we can flourish, as free citizens, in a democracy. This idea is supported by Britain's former senior Law Lord, Tom Bingham, in his book "The Rule of Law" - the book implies that without the judicial framework provided by the Law, Britain could descend into a "practice of genocide" or "the gulag and the concentration camp", which has been the consequence in some countries. I like the fact that the study of Law is both academically rigorous and endlessly relevant to our everyday lives.

Studying history has supported me in the development of many essential skills required in a successful Law student. It has taught me to become assured in presenting clear and logical arguments, both orally and on paper, as well as to become adept in the analysis and evaluation of sources of evidence to support an argument, and to assess the reliability of the source in its context. It has also taught me not only to construct but also to deconstruct arguments, and to successfully contest a prevailing point of view - for example, the Revisionist view that The Cold War emerged merely because of the dominance of Western imperialism (I would highlight other factors, such as the hostility between the superpowers following the Bolshevik Revolution). Exploring judicial cases within my study of the Civil Rights movement illustrated how Law can advance the social and economic position of a previously disenfranchised demographic - the Brown vs. Board of Education case perhaps best highlights the power and reach of legal persuasion. Studying sociology has equipped me with the ability to understand how society structures itself. I was fascinated by sociology of the family, and this has helped me to contextualise my studies in Law. According to G.P Murdock, the idea of the family is a social construction created in order to perform particular functions within a society, contributing to its stability.

I am a confident public speaker; in year 10, I received a Jack Petchey public speaking award and was also chosen as their representative to compete in competition at a regional level. I strive to continually improve this skill, partly through my A level drama, which obviously demands strong communication skills - being in front of a judge may not be so daunting for someone who performs to various audiences! However, I also value the other skills that drama has equipped me with, such as the importance of ensemble awareness. In no other subject is the emphasis on development of rapport within a team quite so crucial - it is integral to the success of any piece. As lawyers are required to work with a variety of people from all walks of life, the ability to communicate with sensitivity is critical. My study of English has also helped me to further hone my communication skills, as well as my critical and analytical abilities.

I am excited by the idea of helping people and creating a more just society through the study and practice of Law. I have demonstrated my commitment to the community through the active role I play in my sixth form's Student Voice. Through this work I have been given access to many valuable experiences, such as meeting Sir Nick Serota at the Tate. Following Michael Gove's EBACC announcement, we discussed the possibly detrimental impact the changes could have on creativity within education. During the debate we concluded creativity wasn't limited to the arts, but was rather a crucial element in any truly liberal curriculum. It was inspiring to discuss such matters with such an important figure in the Arts world.

After attending a Becoming a Barrister conference hosted by The Bar Council, and listening to the riveting speeches of the numerous barristers and hearing first hand their commitment and experience, I knew that this was the right career for me. Marcia Wieder once said "Commitment leads to action. Action brings your dream closer." I am truly committed to my dream of becoming a barrister.

**Philosophy, Politics and Economics**

Philosophy and politics appeals to me because I'm interested in thinking about how we collectively behave and how societies can be analysed: abstractly, in terms of their political philosophy; actually, in terms of how they are in fact organised; economically, in terms of how money, wealth and desire work. Although these levels of analysis can be conceived of as different, in important ways they also coincide. I don't think each implies the other, but there is a relationship there that I would like to understand in a deeper way.

I study philosophy now because I remembered taking part in Philosophy for Children sessions at primary school; I have greatly enjoyed the A-level course, most particularly moral philosophy this term. I have read quite a bit of Mill independently and admire his clarity and directness as a prose stylist, and am also very interested in the political outcomes of his consequentialist ethical viewpoint. Utilitarianism raises questions about the redistributive nature of justice and is a good example of a philosophical theory that can be tied to a particular political outlook and discussions about the nature of a just society. I am also reading Dworkin on political systems as he was mentioned at my summer school at the University of London, where I was also introduced to the Gini coefficient and the Lorenz curve. Justice, political philosophy and economic analysis really are tied up with each other. Besides this I am now grappling with the challenge of Nozick, reading him as a response to Rawls and disagreeing with his libertarianism. Given my personal circumstances, I value equality more than he does!

Through my studies in my other A level disciplines, I have also been developing my critical and analytical skills as well as my independence as a thinker. For the A2 coursework in English, we were given free choice of texts - I'm writing about Octavia Butler and Margaret Atwood on the topic of dystopian fiction between the 70's and the 90's. Both the novels I'm looking at present and critique particular ideologies probably because of the specifics of their cultural context, which I have enjoyed independently researching. English and philosophy have made me confident as a reader, and careful in my analysis of text and ideas, as well as helping to hone my writing skills. History has taught me to think critically about the past's presence in the present and to be able to evaluate evidence drawn from a range of sources and defend strongly reasoned conclusions, I've also had to do this in drama. My favourite part of drama is the study of the theories of practitioners such as Stanislavski and Artaud, and I have enjoyed applying them to my own work. I have specialised in Brecht, and studying him led me to read The Communist Manifesto, which inspires his ideas within Epic Theatre, in order that the audience can engage with the contemporary social issues. I also love being taken out of myself on stage and the subject has definitely made me a confident public speaker.

Outside school I have taken part in a debating week run by 'Debate Chamber' and often go to lectures open to the public at the LSE, most of which are about current issues in economic policy. I am enjoying feeling my way into the economic mindset, which is quite different to that of the other subjects I am doing. It has to do with quantitative reasoning, which has been a challenge for me, but an enjoyable one.

I'll be the first person in my family to go to university if I get in and I really am aware of the value of the experience: I'm not going to waste a single second. I don't know what the long term holds, but I know that for me, the point of education is to help us understand the world, so we can change it for the better.

**Ancient and Modern History and Classical Civilisation**

My friend enjoys mocking my love of history with the words 'don't worry, it's all in the

past'. However, in the ten minutes of Strictly Come Dancing I watched, an Adonis and goddess danced to the seminal 80s song 'Venus', now also associated with razor blades. Present culture, it seems, has adopted elements of the ancient past in some of the most surprising places, such as celebrity dance competitions and shaving ads.

I am exploring my passion for ancient history through each of my A level disciplines. In Italian, I have enjoyed Fellini's rendition of Petronius's 'Satyricon' and compared his vivid depiction of the debaucherous Romans to that of the original text. Through the study of Francesco di Giorgio's paintings of the "ideal city" in art, I have examined the influence classical architecture has had on the Renaissance perception of municipal perfection. For my EPQ I produced an introduction to the influence of ancient art and mythology on some of the most famous artists of all time. The resurrection of the 'classical myth' in art, particularly during the Renaissance and Baroque era by Michelangelo and Bernini, deeply resonated within me, as I saw how indispensable the ancient world has been in shaping the entire history of human creation. I found Giorgio Vasari's "Lives" to have a surprisingly modern voice which brought alive for me the practices of artists during the Renaissance. I have always found Lorenzo de Medici's vast collection of ancient art intriguing and reading about Isabella d'Este gave me insight into the female perspective on art collecting. It was interesting to see the extent to which the patriarchy has brushed her aside, dismissing her interest in smaller pieces as a feminine affliction.

I have recently become interested in the imposed notions of East and West, and the idea of an ancient ideological divide being portrayed as a geographical boundary, similar to the exoticisation of the East by Herodotus. I attended a Cambridge lecture on Great Exhibitionism and think this 'othering' or exoticisation of the East laid the foundations for the nationalistic and expansionist propaganda that raised tensions then, tensions which continue to affect relations today. Even if one accepts the notion of an east-west divide, our Western study of the Cold War still leaves out so much of history, deemed 'irrelevant' to the European. Hobsbawm explores the notions of conflicting ideology in the 'Age of Empire' linking 19thc Imperialism to later tensions throughout the 20th century. I am interested in looking at history from alternative perspectives, rather than discounting them as Niall Ferguson does, labelling the history of the oppressed as 'apologist-for-empire crap".

In English I have been exploring Duffy's use of the female voice in 'The World's Wife';

through her examination of the persistent nature of myth she presents a compelling challenging to the patriarchal construction of the female. I find the subverting of Ovid's "Metamorphosis" for the post-feminist cause to be a wonderful use of the ancient legacy. At the UNIQ summer school I was able to discuss with Prof. Bert Smith whether or not the Aphrodite of Knidos was indeed the first female nude sculpture; if so, then arguably it forms the origins of the male construction of and possession over the female. I was directed to Lucian's 'Amores' and found the passage describing the defiling of this statue incredibly relevant to Duffy's Pygmalion's bride, particularly when examining the pedestal nature of idolatry. Sylvia Brinton Perera's "Descent to the Goddess" offers a fascinating insight into the application of Jungian psychoanalysis to gender politics, and the notion of the conflicts implicit within the gender politics of antiquity is something I am keen to explore further at university.

As well as pursuing these academic passions I also fence - one of the first modern Olympic sports. Even my outside interests have been shaped by my love of ancient history.

**Economics and Politics**

The current political and economic climate of the West is very concerning. Uncertainty over Brexit, Trump and rising populism leaves me curious about their significant impacts. Due to Brexit, Britain has to re-think its trading partners as well as the issues with the leaving process, in terms of the high court ruling, which undermines both the will of the people and the role of parliamentary sovereignty. This is one example of how Economics and Politics are intrinsically linked. Economics is concerned with the allocation of resources and managing the distribution of goods and services. This allows me to dissect reasons for issues such as Brexit, exploring the possible solutions.

In his book 'The Populist Explosion' John B. Judi shows how the great recession has transformed US and European politics, as we saw populist candidates win or become part of governing coalitions. He says Brexit could be contagious, which we have now seen in Trump in the US. In A-level Politics I enjoy studying the Electoral College system, which is particularly relevant due to Trump reaching the required 270 Electoral College votes, despite Clinton winning the popular vote. When analysing the results, Trump won because he was able to win Florida and key states such as Pennsylvania, who have not voted Republican for many years. The Democratic party are in a critical position as the GOP has the Presidency and control of the Governorship, the House and Senate in 25 states. The main concern is the potentially detrimental effects of a Trump presidency.

In Economics I have enjoyed researching the ways the government can manipulate macroeconomic instruments to stimulate the economy. I like learning about supply-side, monetary and fiscal policies because I am fascinated by how hard it can be for the government to manage a modern economy. The work of the political economy pioneer Adam Smith in "The Wealth of Nations" is mirrored today, with the Conservative Party's "austerity" programme since 2010, which has impacted hugely on UK households. John Maynard Keynes advocated that spending and state interference could be a good way to stimulate the economy and raise GDP through aggregate demand. This approach backfired in Greece as it put them in a state of recession. Likewise, Obama's stimulus package in the USA following a recession in 2009 is also said to have failed, with the House speaker at the time John Boehner saying the 'stimulus has turned out to be a classic case of big promises and big spending with little results'. I conclude a free market economy is the best approach to encourage competition, leading to lower prices and better quality products for consumers. Nonetheless, Keynesian economics helps ease financial pressure off consumers and prevent instability. I found the article by Ryan Bourne in the City A.M headlined "The Trump-Hammond-Keynesian consensus is wrong: Higher infrastructure spending does not equal greater growth" particularly compelling, because he gave analysis that the British government should weigh up the value of spending against other options including growth enhancing tax cuts. Sociology A-level has helped me understand how society works and the different reasons social problems have arisen. I am particularly interested in the study by Talcott Parsons on meritocracy, which is the idea that everyone should be rewarded according to merit, which is hotly contested.

Outside of school I have attended a backbench business debate on youth crime in Parliament, put forward by Chuka Ummuna. I was part of the group of 6 who attended the 2016 BASE competition held at the institute of Chartered accountants. I took part in a two day summer school workshop at UEL where I learnt how to trade on Bloomberg trading platforms. I am also a Level 8 Football Referee. After I gain my degree in Politics and Economics I hope to work in financial institution where I can apply my political and economic prowess to the ruthless and fascinating world of finance.

**Anthropology**

Discussing mental health and ethical economics with a Colombian Shaman instigated my need to learn more about the human experience in its entirety. Since this encounter, I view our world as a constantly transforming jigsaw; by which Anthropology is the art, science, and discipline of understanding each piece. As a species we can be so very similar in our needs and biology; and yet, throughout our evolution we have developed many ways in which to purposefully differ from one another.

Considering the current humanitarian crisis in Syria, or issues with our climate, it could be suggested that our detachment from each other, and from our environments, has left the world in a state of dis-ease. By studying Anthropology I aim to delve further into these concepts, and to uncover the many variables which link, divide, and explain human beings. Whilst reading 'Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East' by Fatma Göçek and Shiva Balaghi, I came to learn how individuals absorb their gender via socialisation; but that it is only when the gender-role is performed that the concept of gender is reified. Also, roles vary depending on their context; and Katy Gardner's 'Songs at the River's Edge' emphasises how the expectations of a woman in rural Bangladesh clashes with those held within Western society.

Having enjoyed learning from these texts, as well as others by Simone de Beauvoir, Emily Martin and Raewyn Connell, I am eager to explore gender and kinship in greater detail. Furthermore, In 2014 I travelled independently to Mocoa in Putumayo, Colombia, to observe Shamanistic rituals and ethnobotanical knowledge, directly. My cross-cultural exploration highlighted just how social and cultural perspectives can conflict. For example, mental health is often stigmatized in Western society. Whereas, Shamans consider the flexibility of the mind to be a gift. Moreover, I've come to learn how indigenous people (and their lands) continue to be exploited - irrespective of the laws which seek to protect them. For this reason, I feel an urgency to dedicate my future to the study of Anthropology; and to go on to support vulnerable communities like these, as a knowledgeable and capable Ethnographer.

My determination has been shown, I think, through the fact that I am teaching myself an intensive A-level (where both the AS and the A2 components are studied in one academic year, only); this has required that I utilize the many skills I have built throughout my life. Having to ensure that I am meeting my own deadlines, and covering enough of the syllabi, has involved constant organisation and self-motivation. Also, I have chosen to venture outside of textbooks, and to attend lectures at Universities like LSE and KCL. By actively pursuing my education, and by having to establish my own ideas of what 'good' looks like, I have encountered new routes of questioning; expanded upon my skills in more depth; whilst also having gained more confidence overall.

Consequently, my fascination with humans and cultures began due to books, theatre, TV

programmes, lectures and art; and will continue to increase courtesy of these platforms.

Nevertheless, nothing could amplify my passion for Anthropology quite like my journey into the Colombian jungle; and, it is this exact journey which has inspired me so greatly during this next phase in my life: my journey to University.