

THE BOWDOIN REVIEW

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Letter from the Editors

To highlight works that were buried by the finals, graduations, and farewells of May 2023, we are reprinting our 27th edition. This time, however, we turn the page, putting away the contributions of the Class of 2023. In this update, we are delighted to introduce readers to our newest submissions: on page 6, Will McDonough writes of the endurance of physical media such as vinyls and DVDs, even in the age of streaming. On page 16, Jason Olaru-Hagen recounts the underhanded, racially-motivated, and deadly persecution to which the FBI subjected the Black Panther Party in the late 20th century; he emphasises that the government has yet to confront their crimes, and so Americans must remain vigilant. On page 28, Lydia Branson shares, in curt metre, conflicted feelings about home, the small town of Cape Elizabeth in Maine. On page 31, Rin Pastor evokes the romance of Romeo and Juliet's Balcony pas de deux as they explore the performance that is love.

We are proud to present the Bowdoin Review of the 2023-2024 academic year. Formerly known as the Bowdoin Globalist, our publication has grown much since its days as the campus international affairs magazine. Today, we celebrate submissions about politics, culture, and society anywhere in the world, in whatever media are deemed fit by our writers, artists, and poets. We hope readers find what we have compiled in this edition as meaningful as we have.

JOANNE DU
Editor-in-Chief

NOAH SAPERSTEIN
Editor-in-Chief



Table of Contents

<i>Is The King Losing His Marbles?</i> Patrick Sullivan	2
<i>An Oldie But A Goodie: The not-so-finite death of physical media</i> Will McDonough	6
<i>The Return of The Liberal Arts</i> Aidan Sheeran-Hahnel	9
<i>What Women Want (or the Realities of Female Submission in a Heteronormative World)</i> Anna Guethoff	12
<i>The Limits to Whom Freedom Applies: The Repression of the Black Panther Party</i> Jason Olaru-Hagen	16
<i>The Resurrection of Susan Meachen</i> Ai Lee Woods	20
<i>Digital Photography</i> Chris Dehney	22
<i>Etchings & Prints</i> Layla Rafimayeri	25
<i>Film Photography</i> Mason Daugherty	26
<i>On The Cape</i> Lydia Branson	28
<i>An Offering to the Masculine</i> Dylan Beckett	29
<i>The Disfigured Man</i> Charlotte Iannone	30
<i>Balcony Pas de Deux</i> Rin Pastor	31

Is The King Losing His Marbles?

By Patrick Sullivan

At the turn of the 19th century, a Scottish nobleman stood atop the Acropolis of Athens, surveying the ruins of its famous Parthenon. In 1798, the British Crown had appointed this man, Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin, as ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. In poor health and middling status, Lord Elgin made his way to Constantinople, seeking a turn of fortune. The events that followed resulted in immediate and eventual controversies. Elgin's colonialist attitudes towards the sovereignty of Ottoman-Athens contributed to Britain's ever-growing imperial power and dismantled one of Classical Greece's great monuments.

When Elgin arrived in Constantinople, the Ottoman Empire was still geographically powerful. It governed much of the Middle East, northeastern Africa, and Greece. This last territory no doubt intrigued Elgin, a man known for his interest in antiquities. In Greece, Elgin saw an opportunity. The over 2,000 year old Parthenon had fallen into disrepair due to age, and to an extent, a lack of attentive stewardship. Its condition was only made worse by a Venetian bombing in 1687. By the time Elgin reached Athens, the Parthenon was far from the great monument it had been in millenia past.

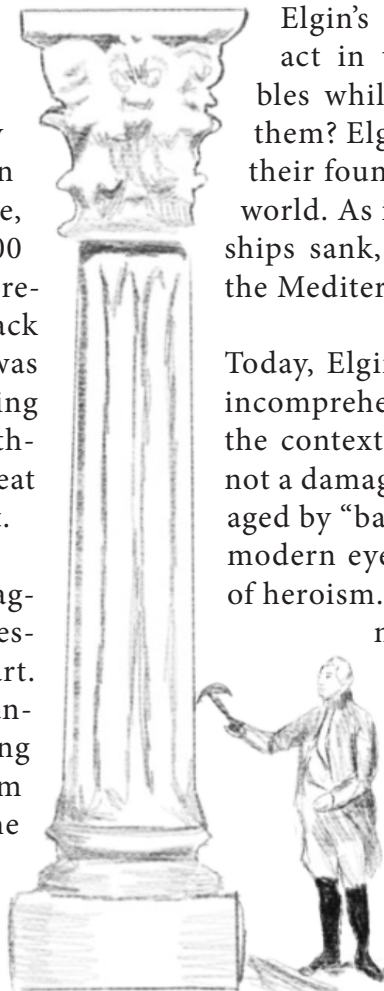
The scene lends itself easily to the imagination: a desperate nobleman and a destitute monument covered in priceless art. Claiming he was concerned with the dangers posed to the future of the surviving marble reliefs, Elgin sought a permit from the Ottoman government to remove the sculptured ornaments and to "rescue (them) from such impending ruin". While the British Museum bases its right to the marbles off the existence

of this permit, others, including the Greek government, the former head of the Acropolis Museum in Athens, and Turkish academics, deny that this permit existed.

Elgin quickly began his removal of the sculptures now known as the "Elgin" or Parthenon Marbles. According to a report he published, Elgin demolished the homes of those living on the Acropolis during the excavation, "selected and purchased" items from Athens' poor, and, of course, cut statues and reliefs off of buildings on the Acropolis itself.

Here lies the fundamental contradiction of Elgin's enterprise: how could he claim to act in the interest of preserving the marbles while at the same time blatantly deface them? Elgin literally tore the marbles out from their foundations and shipped them across the world. As if by an Olympian curse, one of these ships sank, entombing numerous sculptures in the Mediterranean.

Today, Elgin's self-perception as a savior seems incomprehensible, but it makes some sense in the context of his time. What Elgin feared was not a damaged Parthenon, but a Parthenon damaged by "barbarism" and "peasants." What to the modern eye is destruction was, to Elgin, an act of heroism. Removing the Parthenon's reliefs removed them from the Eastern sphere of influence. Not only did this wound the East's cultural wealth, but it enabled what was, in his view, a more enlightened audience to gain access to important historical artifacts. As Elgin saw it, there were no downsides to his actions. He would gain fame and fortune for himself, and would contribute to the edu-



Alfonso Garcia

cation of his fellows. The reliefs, he reasoned, did not belong in Athens. To him, the marbles represented a civilized ideal incompatible with his contemporary, “uncivilized” Athens. Removing them was not really an act of charity, but of self-assured superiority. Even ancient stones are not above the evils of imperialism.

It is possible to dismiss Elgin’s hypocrisy as a product of his time, but even when Elgin returned to Britain in 1806, he incited mass controversy. Many of his countrymen published bitter criticisms of his conduct, including Lord Byron, who wrote a poem, “The Curse of Minerva”, chastising the “Scot” (Elgin) who hailed from a “bastard land”. Byron’s poem rejects and curses Elgin’s actions. The poem shows that bringing the marbles back to Britain was not a universally accepted action. Evidently, there were those of Elgin’s contemporar-

ies who did not condone his theft. It is also important to note why Byron disliked Elgin’s actions. In Byron’s poem, the speaker describes Scotland’s “barren soil” that “stints the mind”, birthing a people “foul as their soil”. Clearly, Byron was not a man outside his time. He was not above colonialist thinking. Byron’s love for Greece was not a love for its inhabitants, but for those who had lived on its land thousands of years ago. Byron falls prey to a temptation extremely prevalent in historical studies, a romanticization of the past. So, while Elgin engaged in more explicit colonialism targeted abroad, Byron too expressed colonialist tendencies, only targeted towards England’s neighboring subject, Scotland. Despite his colonialist attacks on Elgin’s homeland, Byron remains proof of the fact that there was backlash against Elgin, however misguidedly it was framed.



The Parthenon Marbles currently residing in the British Museum
Photo by Tony French via Alamy.

While Byron's lines themselves contain colonialist sentiment, the point stands: it is anachronistic to shield Elgin from judgment entirely through claims of ignorance. There was greater nuance in Elgin's age than he displayed. So great was the debate over Elgin's actions that a special Parliament committee formed to determine the marbles' fate. Shockingly, Parliament decided the best course of action was its own acquisition of the marbles, which it could then entrust to the British Museum.

Attempting to save face, Elgin designed a response to his critics. In Memorandum on the Subject of the Earl of Elgin's Pursuits in Greece, Elgin extensively listed the marbles he removed and the conditions these marbles faced in Athens. When explaining these conditions, Elgin played on the colonialist fears of his contemporaries, continuously noting the "backwards" habits of the Ottomans and Greeks. This succeeded in quelling public anger, but it did not stop Parliament from forcing Elgin to sell the marbles to the crown for £35,000, less than half what it had cost him to acquire them. That Parliament could force such a sale implies there was more than just money at play. Elgin, according to Memorandum, took great pains to get the marbles to Britain, it doesn't follow that he would sell them for such a small sum. Why didn't Elgin resist this decision? His future depended on these marbles; he had made a name for himself with them. Elgin had removed the marbles with the motivation of profit, yet Elgin sold the marbles for half his costs, essentially agreeing to financial ruin. Elgin's acceptance of Parliament's decision suggests he was avoiding criminal charges .

All that was 200 years ago. Though Memorandum silenced British anger against Elgin, Greek independence inflamed a new battle. Athens, the capital of the Hellenic Republic, wanted the return of the marbles as a symbol of the nation's democratic establishment. Ancient Athenians originally constructed Parthenon and its adorning marbles to commemorate their victory over the Persians and retention of their independence. Millennia later, modern Greeks sought the return of these marbles to assert a new independence.

In 1983, Greece submitted its first formal appeal for

the marbles' permanent return. Since this official proposal, the British Museum has waged a public relations war to hold the marbles in its halls. Under a section of its website titled "Contested objects from the collection", the British Museum outlines its case. Among its claims, "It is universally recognized that the sculptures that survive are best seen and conserved in museums." As the Greek government makes clear, that isn't the case. The website also describes Athens' new Acropolis Museum as a place built to hold the marbles which remain in Greece. The museum was, in fact, built with empty display spaces waiting to be filled by the marbles Elgin took. A final highlight, "His (Elgin's) actions were thoroughly investigated by a Parliamentary Select Committee in 1816 and found to be entirely legal." This is disputed; moreover, the investigation was conducted by members of Parliament who stood to gain great prestige were they to declare these famous treasures legal British property. The British Museum attempts to justify holding the marbles, and, to an audience without much exposure to Elgin's history, likely succeeds. The website gives a cheery overview of why the marbles should remain in Britain, but the reasons outlined don't survive scrutiny. The Greek government has waged a sustained campaign to reclaim the marbles, yet they remain in Britain. Why?

The answer, the more accurate answer, has to do with bureaucracy rather than with noble humanism. Quite simply, the museum asserts that the British government gave the marbles to the museum, so by British law the museum trustees own the marbles. To return them would violate the law, meaning any potential return would require new Parliamentary legislation.

This is a convenient shield. Museum trustees have no responsibility to return the marbles. There is no accountability. No public outcry at the injustice of keeping the marbles in Britain can harm the museum itself. Moreover, the Greek government cannot force parliamentary action, and neither Parliament nor the British public have an incentive to push for necessary legislation.

Without bureaucratic restrictions, the return process is more straightforward. In 2022, the Hornian



Keaghan Duffy

Museum and Gardens, a charity museum in London, announced the return of six of their 72 looted Benin Bronzes, in addition to a plan to return more of the bronzes in the future. As it functions independently, the museum was able to, in response to criticism, deal with the Nigerian government directly. This isn't the case for the British Museum.

Recently, the potential for a deal between the Greek government and the British Museum has made headlines. This deal, according to George Osbourne, the museum chair, would send some of the marbles to Greece for a period, in exchange for artifacts never before shown outside of Greece. This quid pro quo of art is common in the museum world. Some objects are lent in return for others, usually when one of the museums is creating a themed exhibit. That any marbles could return to Greece is promising, but this exchange maintains the possibility that the British Museum may demand the marbles back. This possibility is a major sticking point in the negotiations, one the Greek government refuses to yield to. The Parthenon marbles belong alongside the Parthenon. Unlike

many thousands of other objects decorating museum walls and archives around the world, these marbles are explicitly tied to Greece. They were designed to decorate the Parthenon; they should be viewed in the context of Athens. Today's dialogues are more promising than those of the past, but much more is necessary.

The current discussions will not end with the marbles' permanent return. They may not even end with temporary returns. They have at least succeeded in creating a new bout of controversy surrounding the British Museum. With more public awareness and interest in Elgin's story and his wrongdoings, there is greater hope for a permanent return. Bureaucracy and governments, the two greatest bulwarks against the marbles' return, are purposefully structured against change. One can only hope that, however gradually, the British will come to acknowledge their history, and the Greeks will be reunited with theirs.

An Oldie But A Goodie:

The not so finite death of physical media

By Will McDonough

If you were born before 2007, there is a high likelihood you remember walking past a bin in Walmart filled with 5 dollar DVDs. Maybe you dug around until you found one that had a cool cover, or an actor you recognized from something else, and you convinced your parents to buy it. If you remember this, there's also a strong likelihood that you've never bought a DVD for yourself. I reference 2007 deliberately, as that was the year Netflix first added streaming, forever changing how people consume film and television. It took some time for DVDs to go away, but as streaming became more efficient and accessible, sales of DVDs declined, leading many to believe why would I buy a movie when it's probably on Netflix?

The biggest and most infamous example of the death of DVD is of course the death of Blockbuster. Blockbuster's collapse ceremoniously showed that people had moved on from DVDs and especially from rental. What happened to Blockbuster shows a trend in how people wanted to watch movies: the easiest way they can.



Karam Sutham

That trend was not unique to films: the exact same thing happened to music. Napster jump started the decline of physical music sales, and the later accessibility of Spotify and Apple Music essentially eliminated the need to buy CDs. A 2022 Statista report shows that CD sales peaked in 2000 with almost a billion sales, then dropped by 50% in 2007 as digital music grew, slowly reaching their lowest in 2020, with only 31.6 million sales. According to RIAA Revenue Statistics, in 2022, streaming accounted for 84% of recorded music sales, with physical sales only comprising 11% (the other 5% is attributed to digital downloads or synching). While streaming remained completely dominant, an interesting trend continued in 2022: an increase in Vinyl sales.

Vinyl is not exactly rare anymore, something which, on the surface, does not make a lot of sense. As a medium to consume music, it was essentially killed in the late 80s with the CD boom. CDs brought with them greater convenience. They were cheaper, easier to store and easier to play. People were drawn to this convenience, much like streaming is easier than renting a film. CDs were slowly destroyed by digital download and music streaming, following the trend of consumers seeking convenience. Then soon after, in complete contrast to consumer trends and to the innovation made for the consumption of music, Vinyl sales slowly increased in the 2000s, with a massive jump of 49% growth from 2019 to 2020, and an even bigger growth of 51.4% from 2020-2021 according to RIAA. Vinyl beat out the more "accessible" CD in physical media sales last year. This seems unique to music: it's rare to see people still using the brick mobile phones of the 80s today, and you definitely do not see them on sale, but chances are you've walked past a record store or two, or even seen some vinyl in Walmart.

But why is vinyl, the less accessible form of listening to music, still growing in popularity? The reason vinyls stuck around, when they had no real need to, is because they have a sense of culture. Putting a record on a record player feels a lot more engaging than pressing skip on Spotify five times

until you find a song you want to listen to. Engagement with entertainment has always been a draw for people. Concerts and movie theaters have not died to streaming because people enjoy the feeling of participating in the media they watch (even if streaming is doing damage to theaters, the feeling still holds true). Vinyl provides a similar sense of participation, a feeling that has been lost when we can so easily hear one song for 30 seconds before going to the next one, or watching a quick 30 second preview of a movie on netflix then scrolling past. Engagement with media is often tied to a sense of difficulty. There is a sense of accomplishment in dropping a needle correctly or inserting a disk in a slot. These are small inconveniences, but getting past them adds to the enjoyment of whatever it is you are watching or listening to.

The same feeling of engagement helped keep DVDs alive, but the want for that engagement with movies at home never quite hit for DVDs like it did for vinyl. Those who kept physical copies of their movies or tv shows are likely big film buffs or collectors, instead of the wide array of people who might have a record. Unlike vinyl, DVDs have yet to have a cultural resurgence.

This could be because they have not been gone that long, and no “nostalgia” pull has kicked in en masse. Owning records became “cool” to many people. This trend started with millennials, sort of coinciding with the hipster movement and a want to not let the past go away. This trend got picked up by Gen Z, who are now the biggest drive behind vinyl sales. A Gen Z customer is about 25% more likely to purchase a record compared to any other music listener, according to Luminate’s end of year music report.

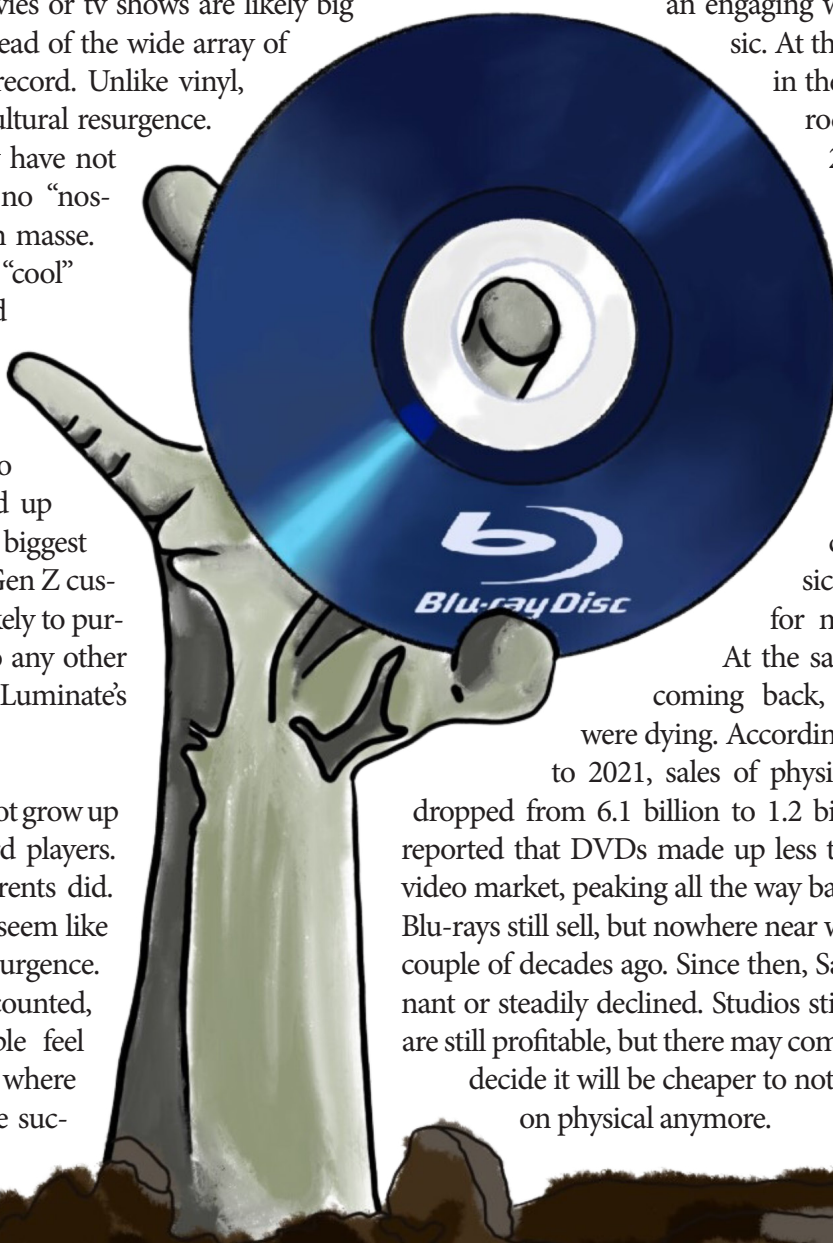
Millennials and Gen Z did not grow up listening to music on record players. Their parents and grandparents did. Nostalgia, therefore, would seem like an unlikely reason for its resurgence. It is a feeling not to be discounted, however. Oftentimes, people feel nostalgic for the decades where their parents were kids. The suc-

cess of shows like Stranger Things, decade themed parties, and movies like back to the future, show that there is such a thing as generational nostalgia. When people put a record on a record player, they do not just engage with the music, but engage with the past. The past people engage with is often mystified. People often speak more about the good in the past than the bad, causing most to think about the 80s as a fun time with fun music and movies, and to forget about all other issues that were prevalent at the time. The past becomes ideal because it appears as a happier, simpler alternative to the stress of today. All of these feelings coalesce, so if someone heard their grandparents say records “just sounded better” than music these days, when they listen to a record, they are inclined to agree. The engagement with the music and the blend with the past is what stopped vinyl from dying, but records have gotten big enough again that nostalgia no longer needs to be the driving force behind its purchase. Gen Z has become its main consumer. Records are no longer simply a fun way to feel retro, but also just an engaging way to experience music.

At the start, records bought in the 2000s were primarily rock, or old used ones. In 2022, Taylor Swift and Harry Styles lead vinyl sales, according to Business Insider. For music, physical media is back, and it appears like it will stick around.

If physical media can come back for music, can the same be said for movies and television?

At the same time records were coming back, DVDs and Blu-rays were dying. According to Wired, from 2011 to 2021, sales of physical video transactions dropped from 6.1 billion to 1.2 billion. In 2018, CNBC reported that DVDs made up less than 10% of the home video market, peaking all the way back in 2005. DVDs and Blu-rays still sell, but nowhere near where they did nearly a couple of decades ago. Since then, Sales have become stagnant or steadily declined. Studios still release them as they are still profitable, but there may come a time where studios decide it will be cheaper to not release certain movies on physical anymore.



If that happens, it will become impossible to ever actually own a copy of a film or show. This is frightening to some massive movie- and TV-lovers. Even if you buy a movie digitally, you are still only buying a license to view it. Should the service you bought it on disappear, your movie goes with it. Netflix and HBO MAX have even removed original shows from their library to avoid paying royalties. In those cases, if you never bought a physical copy of the show, you can never watch the show again (legally, that is).

Fear of this happening is not enough to cause a DVD resurgence. Only avid fans of smaller shows or movies are really worried about this, a general audience who watches bigger shows or movies can probably rest easy knowing their favorite show will always be available. That being said, the fear some had did lead to something interesting. In certain corners of Twitter, after shows were dropped, a hashtag saying, “#investinphysicalmedia” started popping up. This got mostly noticed by people already into movies, but it could begin to reach those who haven’t bought a movie since they were a kid. Maybe the next time they get into a movie, they actually decide to buy a blu-ray. Some would not even need to buy a DVD player, as an Xbox or Playstation already has one built in.

This hashtag coincides with something that already exists, retro DVD stores. There are still stores in built up towns, likely a town that has a record store that sells used DVDs. Right here in Brunswick, Maine, the store Bull Moose has an expansive movie catalog, and even some old records, books, and video games. This store still treats DVDs as retro. They serve as a fun connection to childhood, or something for a collector to purchase. Initially, vinyl was like this too. Gen Z has begun to engage with physical video again, even if an exponential growth has not started yet.

At Bull Moose there is a section for something called the Criterion Collection. The Criterion Collection is a company that special releases certain films in better quality and formatting for at home release. These releases are typically more expensive prestige blu-ray discs with unique designs and limited availability. The Criterion Collection special releases films that hit a certain standard of importance and quality, often releasing films that did not achieve great box office success. By the early 2000s, the DVD end of Criterion had become a staple for cinephiles. Large collectors and movie fans often seek out these blu-rays much the same way music fans sought out prestige and rare vinyl two decades ago. The Criterion Collection connects to all of the facets of

why physical media still exists. Its complexity in operation and maintenance and the investment required bring strong feelings of engagement and prestige. It feels impressive to own one of these blu-rays, much the same way it felt impressive to own vinyl when it made its comeback.

Vinyl did not return overnight. It became a fad, something unique to try, and then it became common to want to buy a record. DVDs have this potential too. Warner Brothers recently released a Blu-ray anniversary box set for Superman: The Movie (1976) and while it was still banking on nostalgia, that is a major film studio promoting a physical media item over announcing the movie was on streaming. DVDs could follow the same trend as records quite easily. An initial nostalgic interest opens the physical media market back up again, and causes growth. This could become a niche cultural thing, taken on by the next generation to be spread farther and become quite common, much like Gen Z following Millennials in purchasing records. Important to this prediction is a timeline of



Karam Sutham

events. It took two decades for vinyl to make a comeback after its death, and we are approaching two decades since the death of the DVD. Where DVDs are right now reflect closely with the state of vinyl in the early 2000s. These are strong signs, but they are still simply signs. This is all just a prediction with some small evidence, no numbers show a strong indication that a DVD resurgence will happen in the same way, if it happens at all. That said, no one saw records coming back either. While the content of this article became a bit abstract, it shows that if you bought a record player, you might want to hesitate on throwing away your DVD player.

The Return of The Liberal Arts

By Aidan Sheeran-Hanel

We live in a day and age where academics have become so hyper-specialized that college-educated individuals aren't expected to know what 7 squared is, as long as they know how to write well. Nor are they expected to have the skills to navigate issues of government or society, as long as they can produce a working program. Even in strongholds of the liberal arts such as Bowdoin College, it's becoming the norm for students to take only a few introductory-level courses to satisfy distribution requirements, then to study only within their chosen distribution for the next four years. It seems that we no longer value the liberal arts.

Occasionally, however, I get a reminder that the liberal arts still has a place in our society. For instance, on March 9th of 2023, the Bowdoin College Board of Trustees announced Williams College Dean of Faculty and McCoy Professor of Psychology Safa Zaki as the next president of Bowdoin College.

In their speech, they highlighted her work as a computational cognitive scientist, and how her "ability to transcend traditional borders in disciplines" has informed her thinking on "what the liberal arts curriculum for the 21st century should look like." Listening to such a statement from representatives of an elite academic institution, I heard whispers of change in the air around me. I felt them brush over my body, leaving my hair on end, before coiling in my ear and whispering to me, "The liberal arts are returning." Since then, I've paid particular attention to those winds of change, and I've heard their whispers all around me. I hear them in the headlines. I hear them in the abstracts of research papers. I hear them in the Spring 2023 course catalog. Together, they tell a coherent story: society is once again realizing we cannot understand the world around us by applying only one lens of understanding to it, and that the liberal arts are now more important than ever.

It's important to understand that things weren't always this way. To call oneself an academic while remaining ignorant

on issues of politics, philosophy, biology, mathematics, and more—the liberal arts—was once impossible. I will try to share with you a brief history of how things once were, and why they have changed, but please understand that I am no expert on this subject.

The story begins in the sixth century B.C., with Pythagoras of Samos. Most famous for his discovery of the geometric property known as the "Pythagorean Theorem", Pythagoras also wrote on the sphericity of the Earth, the location of planets in the sky, and the transmigration of the human

soul. In other words, he was a scholar in

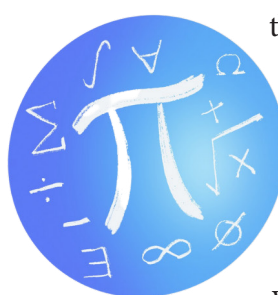
the fields of mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy—a scholar of the liberal arts, although the term did not come around for quite some time. Instead, Pythagoras coined a different name for himself: philosopher. Derived from the Greek

words for "lover" and "wisdom", the

word philosopher described those who pursued wisdom of all sorts. The tradition of liberal arts was established under the name of philosophy.

Fast-forwarding two hundred years, the story takes us to the 4th century B.C., when Plato founded Academia: the first academic institution, and the original school of philosophy. Pupils studied mathematics, dialectics, natural sciences, and statesmanship. So, the word "academics" first became associated with the tradition of the liberal arts. Aristotle, an early student of Plato's Academy, reasoned on questions of regime and human nature concurrent to what we now call political philosophy, yet he also philosophized on the trajectory of an arrow in flight and the concept of infinity—concepts we now associate with the fields of physics and mathematics. Through his rigorous interrogation of the liberal arts, Aristotle established a name for himself as one of the greatest thinkers of all time.

This interdisciplinary ethos of academia remained at the forefront of academics for centuries. By the Italian Renais-



Karam Sutham

sance in the 16th century AD, the polymath Galileo Galilei combined his knowledge of astronomy, engineering, and mathematics to develop an improved telescope, with which he made enormous astronomical discoveries. He also used his mathematical methodology to form a unique interpretation of the Bible. By combining knowledge in unique ways, Galileo embodied the liberal arts, and changed the course of history because of it. Another renaissance figure, Niccolò Machiavelli, was an Italian diplomat who wrote some of the most infamous philosophical works of all time by combining his knowledge of history, government, and religion. And then there was the paragon of the Italian Renaissance, painter Leonardo Da Vinci, who wrote treatises on anatomy that informed his monumental paintings and was also a polymath who conceptualized engineering marvels such as flying machines and solar power. Then, by the 18th century, philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau combined his knowledge of biology, zoology, and sociology to write on human nature and the root causes of inequality. Astonishingly, in his essays Rousseau conjectures that orangutans are primitive humans, establishing a controversial principle of Darwinism an entire 200 years before Darwin came to the scene. Rousseau goes down in history as one of the most influential philosophers of all time, yet he also was a great scientific thinker. Rousseau, Da Vinci, Machiavelli, and Galileo all stood at the pinnacle of academia for their ability to interweave their knowledge of the liberal arts together to come to profound conclusions.

This way of thinking fell out of popularity, however. What follows is far from a comprehensive history of why this is the case, yet I attempt to identify two major causes. The first of these is the degradation of aristocracy. By the turn of the 19th century, the French and American Revolutions marked the tolling of the bells for aristocracy across Western society. With the fall of aristocracy came the dispersion of economic resources across Western society so that far fewer had the complete economic freedom to not work, and to instead spend their time traveling the world, socializing with renowned nobles and academics, and studying all knowledge across multiple disciplines. In case such a lifestyle sounds familiar, it may be because you, the reader, are currently living in the closest thing to it. As Professor Jean Yarbrough often says, college is the most aristocratic time of our lives. Aristocracy falling resulted in a sharp decline in the number of individuals with the time and resources to become adequately educated in the liberal arts.

The second of these causes is the rise of capitalism in the

early 19th century. As capitalism took hold across western society, a culture of consumerism emerged such that questions of knowledge and enlightenment took the back seat to the acquisition of wealth and material well being. Academics, in many ways, became a means to an end rather than an end in and of themselves; they became increasingly tied to industry. Perhaps mirroring this connection to industry, academics began to almost take on the nature of an assembly line. A great thinker could spend their entire career hyper-specializing in one field, similarly to how workers in factories spent all day performing one specific task. Combining the work of these great thinkers resulted in a period of unprecedented growth in knowledge, just as combining the work of factory workers resulted in increased production. An overzealousness for this growth, however, seems to have left us narrow-sighted and unwilling to look outside our immediate disciplines.

So, our story takes us to the present. When meeting fellow students, we're asked whether we are "STEM" or "humanities" people. A physics major need not know anything about biology, and a government & legal studies major need not know anything about philosophy. There are, still, the social sciences, which maintain a tie between the scientific method and humanist questions. However, we are far from valuing the holistic knowledge of the world around us that used to light our way forwards since the dawn of academia.

Fortunately, I believe things are changing once again. As I look out onto the world around me, I see an ever-increasing need for collaboration between the disciplines, and others seem to be recognizing it as well. It seems now more than ever that nothing is truly isolated. What I mean is, no phenomenon can be understood entirely by only one discipline anymore.

Consider computational machine learning. AI technologies like ChatGPT are a combination of computer science, mathematics, linguistics and more. They promise to impact almost every discipline. Although far from perfect, these technologies are capable of crafting complex arguments and ideas in subjects ranging from philosophy to computer programming. With a little imagination, one can imagine how, down the road, computational technologies such as ChatGPT will be revolutionary in these fields. There could be a future someday where no academic on the forefront of their field doesn't understand the inner workings of computational machine learning and how to wield it.

Another example: abortion. To be a doctor today in America means more than to understand the human body and what ails it. With the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, many doctors find themselves with a choice as to whether they should break the law and perform abortions in states where doing so is now illegal. Such a decision is an amalgamation of ethical, moral, religious, and political concerns. At what point is civil disobedience just? At what point does a life begin, and by extension, what makes us human? What will happen to me if I perform this abortion? None of these questions are easy, and they cannot be thoroughly answered without a deep familiarity of the subjects at hand. This deep familiarity is exactly what the study of the humanities hopes to achieve. Although doctors have always been expected to be versed in the humanities, given the moral implications of their profession, this need for a liberal arts education is now many-times heightened by the increasing politicization of medicine.

Alternatively, with the increased influence science now has over society, those involved in politics or law can no longer hope to make well-informed decisions without scientific literacy. Take the recent lawsuits made against TikTok and Instagram for purposefully designing their app to be addictive to teenagers. How can a judge or politician interpret such allegations without fluency in statistics, psychology, and technology? Yes, they can hire cabinet members and aides to interpret these decisions for them, but at some point they must understand the principles of such dilemmas themselves, so that they can properly address these issues on a public stage. In 2018, Mark Zuckerberg was the subject of a Congressional hearing about Facebook and data privacy. On live Television, legislators asked him questions such as “How [does Facebook] sustain a business model in which users don’t pay for [the] service?” and “Did you know that the Motion Picture Association of America is having problems with piracy and ... this is challenging their existence?”. Such questions illustrate just how little these legislators knew about the issues at hand, and inspire little faith in their ability to resolve them. To properly serve democracy, it is imperative that politicians have a holistic understanding of the society they are elected to represent, so that they can think critically about the many

new types of problems that are surfacing.

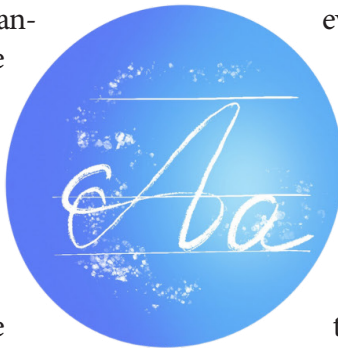
At first, examples such as these are overwhelming. Each of us has a finite amount of time and cognitive capacity to work with, yet it seems that the issues we care about are increasingly tied to a vast array of other subjects, each of which are worth devoting a lifetime to understanding on their own. When I first realized this, I felt a sense of panic set in as I realized the clock was ticking and I had a lot of keeping up to do. Indeed, it seems that nothing any of us ever do will be enough to fully understand even a small cross-section of the world around us. As my panic subsided, however, I found myself left with a sense of wonder.

Is there not something beautiful about the interdisciplinary nature of these issues? To me, the fact that artificial intelligence can now approximate art, or that science cannot be isolated from politics, implies that there’s something universal—something true—that inspires all these subjects. And, through the study of all of them, I can begin to converge upon that abstract and divine concept. It’s as if the world around us is a painting on a canvas, and as we study more disciplines, we become aware of more and more colors on the painting. Only, with a holistic understanding of the liberal arts, can we begin to see that painting for what it actually is, exposing the truth.

Now, finally, it seems that we are beginning to understand this idea once again. Or at least, some of us are. That day, on March 9th of 2023, when I heard the winds of change whispering in my ear, the next President of Bowdoin College Safa Zaki addressed the college and said the following:

“Especially in this moment, with the challenges that face us today, with the racism and structural inequality, with climate change, with emerging technologies that will change how we interact with society and with each other, this is the time to lean in on the liberal arts because true progress on these complex issues and many others isn’t going to come from a single discipline, but from the varied approaches reflected in our curriculum”

Indeed, the liberal arts are returning. And I, for one, can’t wait to behold what they show us.



what women want (or the realities of female submission in a heteronormative world)

By Anna Guethoff

Trigger Warning: discussions of rape, pornography, and other explicit sexual content.

It must have been a few weeks into the first semester when the email came out. Frankly, I'd been expecting it; and how could I not, when one of my O-Trip leaders recounted – in a lengthy but admittedly endearing way – how she met her boyfriend? From the way she talked about it, she had me convinced that, come late September, I too would find myself in the midst of my very own campus romance. So, the moment that email, with its neon pink headers and sparkly GIFs, appeared in my inbox, I filled out the questionnaire in a manner that seemed... most compatible with the person I had my eyes on. (And don't pretend you didn't). At any rate, long story short, I didn't contact my match – because why would I? – and then, like most of us, I think, I forgot it ever happened.

That was until I received another email in my inbox several months later. (No, I'm not talking about DataMatch.) The Marriage Pact had sent the Bowdoin student body a campus report, a record of arbitrary information about us – the participants. Most of the data regarded political orientation, sexuality, religious affiliation, and intended or declared majors – in short, run-of-the-mill figures that I could probably find on the Bowdoin website. Then, however, I stumbled across the "Points of Disagreement" heading – that is, the points of disagreement between male- and female-identifying individuals on campus – and my interest was piqued.

Q: "I generally like to take control during sex"
The statement was so innocuous, so insignificant; and yet, the divergence in responses between men and women could not be more starkly depicted in a set of data. Almost half of the male respondents fell into the "give me the reins" category, while only 13% of female respondents replied in the same way; on the other hand, about two-thirds of female participants fell into the "id rather not" category, while less than a fifth of the male

population answered the same. Of course, there is much about the composition of this data that is unknown; it has limitations, ambivalences as to how these categories were determined, how responses were aggregated – not to mention, each participant's identity. Nevertheless, this information is gripping, germane – a window into the Bowdoin microcosm.

To be honest, when I first saw these results, I was taken aback.

Then, I paused.

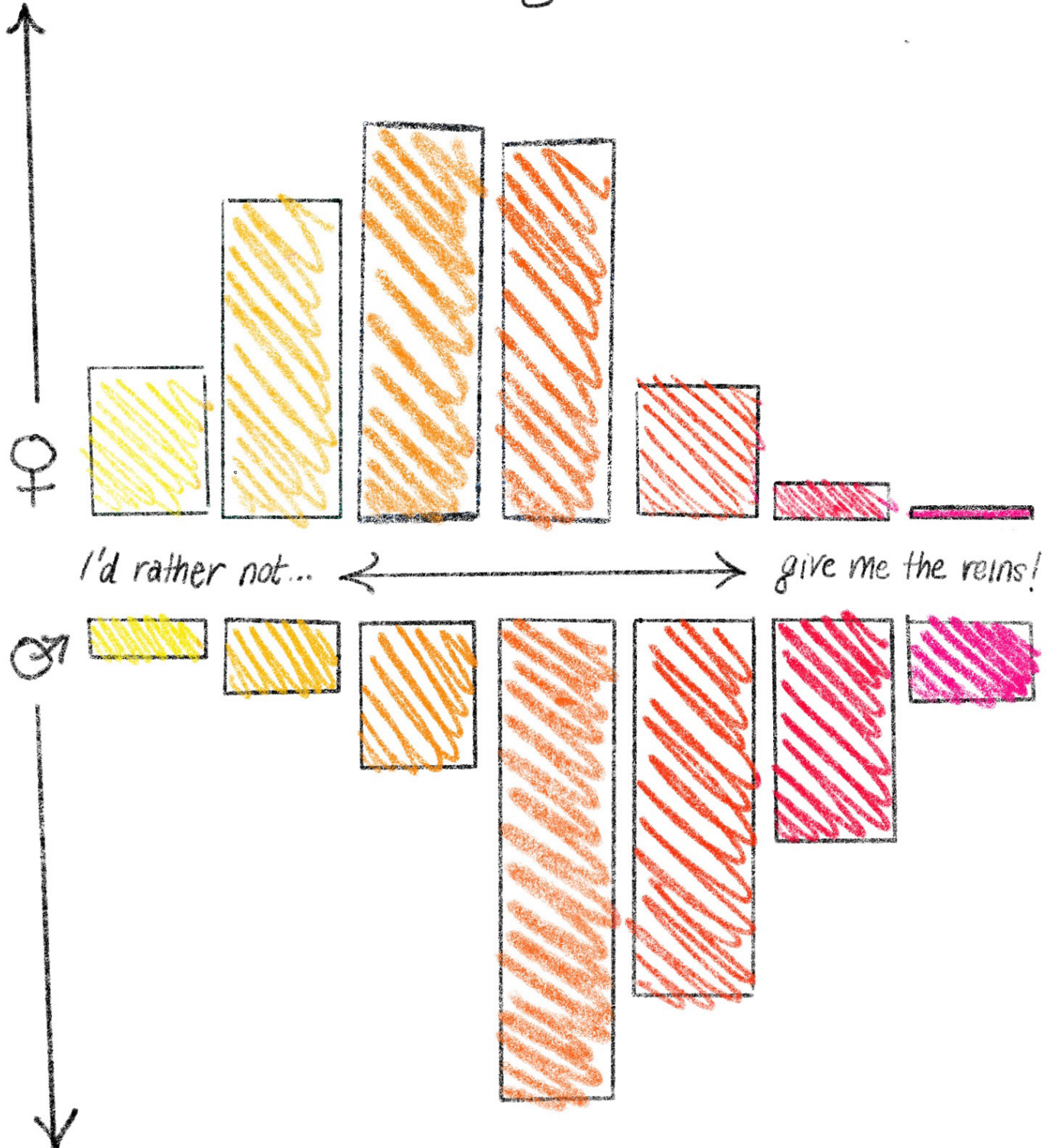
Was I actually surprised, though? No, not really.

But I think a part of me wanted to be, wanted to believe the female students at an institution of higher education – with its feminist student groups and organizations, with its Sexuality, Women, and Gender Center – would resist the gendered status quo. In a category that inseparably wrestles with power dynamics, with dominance and submission, with heteronormativity, why were women acquiescing to the patriarchy, blindly accepting socially-enforced norms? Why were they being anti-feminist?

That made my thoughts stop in their tracks. Of all the women that I have met on campus, not one of them has not been empowered; not one of them has not been powerful.

To me, then, the data that had initially been a source of surprise now became a paradox – a nonsensical contradiction that originated from the conflict between the truth of Bowdoin women and the truth of socio-sexual gender roles. Because this data is so reminiscent of broader societal trends, it became pertinent to examine the broader influences on the community, on what could have shaped this data. But what could have feasibly informed a statistic on sexual power dynamics and the gendered divide?

"I like to take control during sex."



Despite the expansion of sex education in schools over the last half-century, visual pornography remains the leading “teacher” of sexual intimacy and intercourse for much of the world. Indeed, by the age of 18, 93% of boys and 60% of girls have been exposed to some form of online pornography. Consequently, the content of pornography very much determines the popular perception of what intercourse and other activities should look like. And yet, much of its representation of sex is disparate from actual practices. For instance, while popular mainstream – and, for the purposes of this article, strictly heterosexual – porn depicts anal sex in 55% of all videos, only about 4% of Americans actually engaged in the act in their most recent sexual encounter. Beyond this, visual pornography – directed predominantly toward a male audience – also frequently promotes fervent sexual aggression toward and objectification of women, with women receiving 97% of physically aggressive acts in porn.

This is not to say that viewing pornography causes sexual violence – or even higher incidences of sexual violence – against women; however, it also cannot be refuted that it leaves a lasting impression on its viewer. Case in point, according to *Psychology Today*, many adolescent male virgins believe pornography to be an accurate and authentic portrait of sex – and are further disappointed when they realize it isn’t. As seen here, viewers begin to internalize the gender roles that are propagated and proliferated on their screens – an endeavor to belong, to be considered “normal.”

And yet, while this standardization of sexual male dominance lodges itself into the individual psyche, this process only truly explicates the male responses in the Marriage Pact survey. Indeed, it very much excludes women, many of whom, unlike their male counterparts, prefer to read rather than watch it. This reality, then, uncovers another avenue of acquaintance with sexual intimacy – one that is divergent from the male-focused visual medium and re-centers the narrative on the female experience.

Erotica – and the broader smut genre – has neatly carved out its space in human societies for centuries, a low-light alcove hidden from the mainstream. It was not until the early-20th century – and the definitive end of Victorian sexual puritanism – that erotic literature, such as Pauline Réage’s *The Story of O*, wheedled its way onto the bookshelves of suburban middle-class women. With the advent of the internet, ease of access to this type of story – now

most commonly in the form of fanfiction – only grew, as online platforms like Fanfiction.net, Wattpad, and Archive Of Our Own enabled individuals to write and publish their own erotic scenarios for others’ enjoyment. In fact, some of the most popular erotica novels that are purchasable in bookstores today – *Fifty Shades of Grey*, *After* – were originally pieces of fanfiction written by women for women. And this constitutes the crux of fanfiction’s significance in this conversation.

Within the fanfiction community, the vast majority of writers – and, for that matter, readers – are women. Indeed, in 2010, over three-quarters of people with active accounts on Fanfiction.net, one of the largest fanfiction databases available, identified as female. While not all fanfiction is simply porn without a plot, the genre as a whole arguably offers a more reliable look into the conception of sex and sexual intimacy from the female point-of-view than the belligerent, impersonal depictions in porn. Here, women can dictate their own preferences and not be subjected to a man’s will – not be silenced. And yet, the truth is that a massive quantity of female-written smut fics mirrors the very same aggression and male domination that characterizes much of visual pornography. These stories are not particularly “empowering,” not ambitions to abolish the sexual objectification of women in the broader social psyche; these are stories that perpetuate these notions.

When analyzing the tags of Archive Of Our Own – font size determined by the frequency of use – the largest phrase is “Sexual Content,” followed closely by “Fluff” and “Angst;” however, if we were to focus solely on the sexually-explicit tags, the next highest would be “BDSM” and “Non-Consensual.” And once you click on one of these tags, a whole new world is opened. In these stories, one of the most recurring themes – though rarely mentioned by name – is degradation: always verbal, but often accompanied by some form of physical act of belittlement, such as choking, spitting, or spanking. More than that, there are almost 100,000 entries under the Rape/Non-Con – that is, non-consensual – trigger warning for fics marked M/F – a heterosexual pairing; were you to include homosexual and polyamorous pairings, that figure would more than double. As with visual pornography, there is an inexplicable popularity of – what can only be described as – “rape fantasies” on fanfiction websites, of intimately violating a person’s – or, more accurately, a woman’s – sexuality and individuality; because yes, in a heteronormative world, it is the woman who is unremittingly the object of male sexual

aggression, who invariably submits.

But the most shocking thing about this? Women are asking for it.

Unlike published literature, which is usually the product of a single author's mind, many works of fanfiction are commissioned by readers. Many requests are anonymous – and understandably so – but their content is often released with the published scenario. Thus, on AO3 or other sites, one account's published works may be a product of several different minds. Sometimes, however, you would never be able to tell, something that highlights the ubiquity of these fantasies, of this romanticization of sexual violence and female submissiveness that exists not only on a male-targeted platform but also on fiction databases for women.

If the sexual dynamic between men and women is so often predicated on male dominance and female submission, as could be conjectured through its prevalence in both gender-specific medial forms – and the Marriage Pact data – and the power differential strongly benefits men, are we supposed to accept that women are committing self-sabotage and oppressing themselves?

According to second-wave feminists, the answer would be a resounding yes. A figurehead of the feminist movement in the mid-20th century, Betty Friedan and her *The Feminist Mystique* (1963) defined much of this period's discourse on women's empowerment and gender equality, and formally reified the idea that a human's most essential desire is a “will to power, ‘self-assertion,’ ‘dominance,’ or ‘autonomy’” – or, in other words, “the courage to be an individual.” Both human, men and women must, therefore, be fundamentally striving for the same attribute: dominance. In contrast, then, men and women must be fundamentally escaping the same attribute as well: submission. However, with patriarchal systems of power constituting the very cornerstones of society, the repression of women coincides with a dispossession of dominance – one that extends beyond the public sphere and penetrates the private.

Expounding on Friedan's definition of human drive, Catharine MacKinnon – a contemporary of hers – asserted that “sexual desire in women, at least in this culture, is socially constructed as that by which we come to want our own self-annihilation.” Based on the patterns of erotic literature and its obsession with non-consensual and degradative encounters, MacKinnon does not seem too far off. Indeed,

she appears to have synthesized a sensical explanation for female submission, whereby subordination is eroticized as female and “femininity as we know it is how we come to want male dominance, which most emphatically is not in our interest.” True, subordination has an irrevocably feminine characterization, gendered features that align with stereotypically-female descriptions; however, to disaffiliate the female with the feminine – to contend that femininity is tantamount to submission in sex or otherwise, and thus individuality – entirely seems extreme.

Yet, this definition was rigid, cemented into the literature; and those who opposed it – opposed this erasure of femininity and the accompanying anti-heterosexual sex movement – were labeled “anti-feminist.” Notwithstanding, this schism within the second-wave feminists eventually gave rise to third-wave, sex-positive feminists with a much more fluid understanding of “womanness” and feminism. Unlike previous iterations, third-wave feminism is decidedly pluralistic, its foundation being an acceptance that every woman's experiences are unique. For instance, while Friedan and her contemporaries advocated for women to work outside of the home, Black women had historically worked outside of the home out of necessity; thus, many preferred to stay home and raise their own families, rather than care for a newly-working white woman's children. Similarly, third-wave feminists allow several alternative definitions of feminism and womanness to exist simultaneously, greatly diversifying the manner in which gender equality and women's issues are discussed.

Women's liberation now is about perspective, about intersectionality and individuality – an individuality acquired not strictly through traditional forms of dominance; it is about choice and nonjudgment, about uplifting and empowering other women. Whether “she wants to be spanked before sex, wants to own a BMW, is a Zen priest, wants to be treated ‘like a lady,’ prioritizes racial oppression over gender oppression, loves misogynist hip-hop music, still speaks to the father that abused her, gets married, wants to raise three kids on a farm in Montana, etc.,” she can be a feminist. And if she would rather not “take the reins” during sex as seen on the Marriage Pact survey, that does not mean that she is oppressing herself or submitting to the patriarchy; she simply knows what she wants, and there is nothing more empowering than that.

The Limits to Whom Freedom Applies: The Repression of the Black Panther Party

By Jason Oлару-Hagen

On January 17, 1969, leaders of the Southern California chapter of the Black Panther Party (BPP) John Huggins and Alprentice Carter attended a meeting of the UCLA Black Student Union where members discussed the appointment of the new director of the college's newly created Afro-American center. As the meeting adjourned, a member started an argument with Huggins which descended into a fistfight between the two. As Carter tried to intervene, another attendee at the meeting, Claude Hubert, walked up and shot Huggins in the back. As Carter rushed to take cover behind a chair, Hubert opened fire, killing him instantly. Within a few seconds, both men lay bleeding on the floor of Campbell Hall, an academic building that had long hosted impassioned discussions and insightful lectures. Now, it was the site of a murder incited by the US federal government.

In popular memory, the Cold War was an inevitable contest between the capitalist West and the communist East: the former promised freedom for a loss in equality, while the latter guaranteed equality but denied freedom. Many Americans perceived the superiority of their political system through the lens of this dilemma: although the economic inequality in their society was lamentable, it was a lesser sin than the violations of civil rights inherent to a communist regime. However, this was a false dichotomy for racial minorities in the US at the start of the Cold War. The most prominent example of this was the South's system of racial segregation, where African Americans were denied both civil rights and economic equality. At the same time, many countries in the third world were just gaining their independence and deciding whether to choose communism or capitalism as their political economic systems. Racial segregation severely impacted the US's relations with these countries and made communism, long associated with racial egalitarianism, appear more attractive. Along with the strength and fervor of the Civil Rights movement at home, the need to repair the United States's reputation abroad also drove the federal government to pass many of the Civil Rights movement's demands into legislation.

From a legal standpoint, this was supposed to integrate

Americans of all races equally in the market economy and the political system and end the contradiction in America's promised freedoms posed by segregation. However, as should be evident to anyone alive today, the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts did not wipe away the legacy of centuries of slavery and segregation. In the years after their passage, radical militant groups like the BPP grew in membership. Founded in Oakland, California in 1966, it was joined by many who had supported Martin Luther King Jr's struggle for civil rights just a few years earlier and were eager to expand those victories further in the social, economic, and political realms. The BPP's Ten Point Plan demonstrates what made them unique; demands like quality healthcare, public education, and an end to foreign wars of aggression and police brutality still ring true today—decades ahead of their time.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the Panther's ideology did not stop at social democracy: they believed that overthrowing capitalism and establishing socialism was the best way to end systemic inequities. However, the threat that this radical vision of change posed to the wealthy white business elites in both the Democratic and Republican parties led J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the FBI, to classify the BPP as "the greatest threat to internal security of the country." The FBI went on to wage a campaign of repression against the group that was unprecedented in reach and brutality. The program, named COINTELPRO, sought to restrict the BPP's ability to act as a political organization in a supposedly open and democratic society by intentionally stoking divisions, both within the party and in its relations with others, in order to bring about the party's demise. The authoritarian repression employed by the FBI in this effort demonstrates the hypocrisy of the capitalist West's promises of political freedom. Furthermore, the lack of accountability for these civil rights violations until today serves as a green light for the national security state to continue using such tactics. Given that many of the social ills identified by the BPP are still present in the United States, considering this history will allow us to better understand the obstacles that movements for racial equality may face today.



Anna O'Neil Yeh

Rainbow Coalition, a united political movement made up of the Chicago Black Panther Party, the Puerto Rican Young Lords, and the Appalachian Young Patriots remains one of the BPP's greatest legacies and becomes even more significant in light of unyielding FBI attempts to foster divisions and derail the party's efforts to cooperate with like-minded movements. One of the most consequential examples was the split between the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the BPP. The SNCC had been founded in 1960 as a youth wing of Martin Luther King Jr's nonviolent movement, but it had grown in numbers and radicalized over the late 1960s so that its politics began to fall more in line with those of the radical Black Panthers. Stokely Carmichael, head of the SNCC, was also an Honorary Prime Minister in the BPP, and he sought to merge the two organizations into one that would be more power-

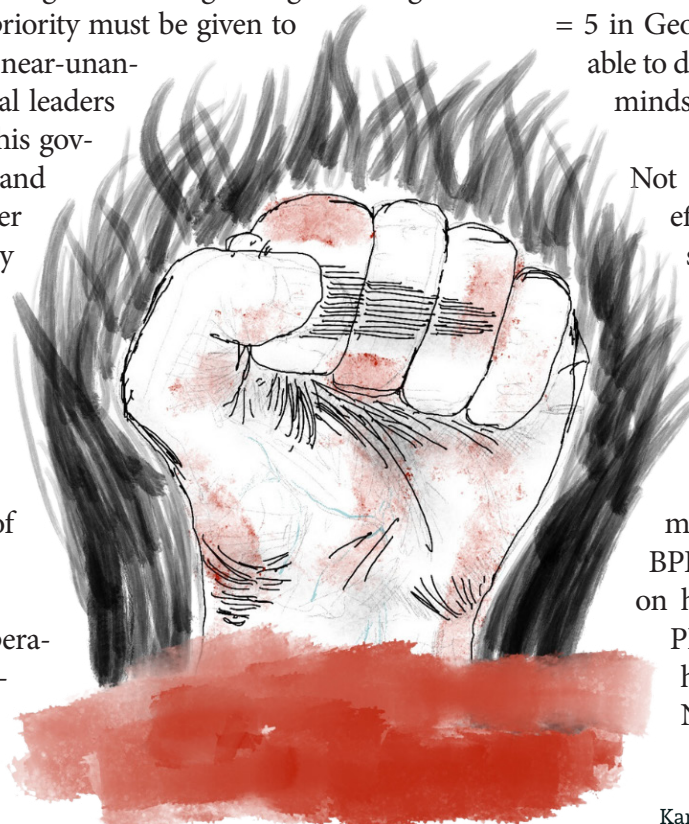
soon detected and sought to foil. A March 1968 memo from Hoover states he "feared the rise of a black nationalist messiah" and that only Carmichael had the "necessary charisma" to become one. On July 10th, a COINTELPRO proposal recommended "convey[ing] the impression that CARMICHAEL is a CIA informer" by planting fake informant reports credited to Carmichael in the mailbox of another BPP member and telling FBI informants in the BPP to spread the rumor. The results were swift: on September 5, 1970, Huey Newton issued a statement as BPP Minister of Defense charging "that Stokely Carmichael is operating as an agent of the CIA," and Carmichael was expelled from the SNCC. Only a few months after Hoover singled out Carmichael, a misinformation campaign had created an alternative truth not just for larger society but for the members of the party themselves too. This level of

dystopian social control exerted on a group pushing for the commendable goals of racial and economic equality demonstrates to whom the limits to freedom apply in American society.

The BPP sought to work with and politicize otherwise apolitical organizations to strengthen its influence. The BPP's ideology emphasized the role of the "brothers on the block," the young, poor African Americans left behind by the economy of the late sixties and early seventies, that had become unemployed or had turned to crime. Unlike previous leftist movements that often dismissed the criminals and the unemployed, the BPP considered them optimal revolutionary subjects against the racist capitalist system that had kept them down. Fred Hampton's initially successful efforts towards a merger with the Blackstone Rangers, a several thousand-member strong South Side gang that would "have doubled the Party's national membership," showed the theory's applicability. However, the FBI learned of the plan early through informant William O'Neal, who had managed to maneuver into the upper ranks of the Chicago BPP. Hoover approved the mailing of fake letters to Hampton and Jeff Forth, head of the Blackstone Rangers, claiming that each man had a hit out on the other. Relations between the two "degenerated into antagonism" as O'Neal "energetically" exacerbated the conflict. Cooperation with other groups of all forms, political and apolitical, was systematically handicapped by FBI manipulation. At the same time that the Klu Klux Klan was committing atrocities against civil rights organizers, the FBI decided that priority must be given to destroying the Panthers. The near-unanimous support among political leaders and intelligence officials for this government campaign of terror and violence against the BPP further demonstrates the insufficiency of civil rights legislation. Racial equality may have been the law of the land on paper, but the fervent anti-communism and white supremacist sympathies of those in power prevented the realization of that equality.

On top of preventing cooperation with receptive organizations, the FBI sought to

deepen the BPP's divisions with organizations with which they peacefully disagreed into violent conflict. The United Slaves, another black liberation movement led by Ron Karenga, emphasized cultural changes on the individual level compared to the BPP's focus on politics, and while these conflicts in priorities led to disagreement, the groups still had sympathy and common cause with one another which unfortunately would not last. A November 1968 memo from Hoover called on fourteen field offices to "to fully capitalize upon BPP and US differences" and recommends proposals that take advantage of contexts of "gang warfare" and "threats of murder and reprisal" to obscure the government's involvement. Cartoons were created and distributed by the FBI in Los Angeles in which both groups threatened violence against one another. This led to a ratcheting of tensions, culminating in the murder of John Huggins and Alprentice Carter, an event for which the "Bureau assigned itself a good deal of credit." In this case, later investigation revealed the FBI's true reach: George and Joseph Stiner, who were present at the meeting where Huggins and Carter were shot, "are believed to have been police infiltrators of US, injected as an expedient to raise the tension between the US and the BPP." FBI infiltration of two political organizations operating in a supposedly free society was so extreme that the agency was able to fabricate evidence to inflame tensions and encourage the consequent murders, all the while falsely attributing these actions to the US and BPP both in the minds of the general public and in those of many of their own members. Just as Big Brother was able to convince Winston Smith that $2+2 = 5$ in George Orwell's 1984, the FBI was able to distort the historical record in the minds of political activists.



Not content with foiling the BPP's efforts to work with other groups such as the SNCC as they radicalized in the late 60s, the FBI further sought to foster dissension within the party just as much of the New Left experienced fractures in the early 70s. One of the most important manifestations of this trend in the BPP was the party's ideological split on how to respond to COINTELPRO repression. From the party's headquarters in Oakland, Huey Newton advocated for turning

away from armed struggle, which alienated the Panthers from more moderate parts of the black community, and instead focusing on their social programs and lobbying for improvements in government policy. In exile in Algeria, Eldridge Cleaver argued that the party should escalate its armed struggle in response to the law enforcement crackdown. Although this debate was an internal affair, the “between sixty and seventy infiltrators” working within the BPP by 1969 alerted the FBI to the conflict. A December 1970 memo from the FBI field office in LA recommended sending false correspondence to Cleaver to provoke him to “openly question Newton’s leadership” and to take advantage of the “distance and lack of personal contact between Newton and Cleaver.” After the recommendation circulated to other FBI field offices, “nearly a hundred similar and well-documented correspondence efforts” were undertaken to exacerbate the Newton-Cleaver rift. The resulting rise in tensions not only further weakened the party, but also led to the murder of two members in New York City: Robert Webb, who was “loyal to Cleaver,” and Samuel Napier, who was “loyal to Newton.”

Importantly, these murders weren’t seen as collateral damage by the FBI. They were the whole point of the misinformation campaigns: efforts were “intensified” when it became apparent that “the resulting tension was sufficient to cause physical violence among group members.” As the government crackdown in the late 1960s pushed all New Left movements to consider the turn to reform or armed struggle, the BPP, under Huey Newton’s leadership, was poised to choose the former. Although the FBI didn’t create the ideological split between Newton and Cleaver, the COINTELPRO operations deepened it by making the choice between reform and armed struggle more pressing and divisive. Furthermore, Cleaver’s uprising against Newton’s leadership may have been subdued, had it not been for the torrent of misinformation each side of the conflict received as they were thousands of miles away from one another. FBI interference knowingly forced a divide and radicalization in the BPP’s politics, facilitating the bureau’s public justification and operative ability to repress the party’s political potential. Much of the government criticism against the Black Panther had revolved around their belief in armed self-defense, which critics wilfully misrepresented as support for wanton violence against white people. If politicians truly believed these arguments, they would’ve favored Newton’s policy of putting down arms in favor of reformist politics. Instead, their attempts to disrupt this transition demonstrated that the political elite, both Dem-

ocrat and Republican, actually wanted to destroy any hope of universal emancipation among black Americans.

Although the violence and suffering caused by FBI misinformation efforts were extensive and deserve more emphasis in public discourse, the government’s willingness to violate the constitutional guarantees of life and liberty were best demonstrated by the targeted assassinations that were ordered. In mid-November 1969, FBI agent Roy Mitchell had informant William O’Neal draw up “a detailed floor plan” of Fred Hampton’s apartment. On December 3rd, O’Neal slipped a barbiturate into Hampton’s drink that ensured his immobilization in a Chicago police raid at 4 AM that night. After barging through, police immediately shot Panther Mark Clark and, with O’Neal’s map memorized, proceeded to spray bullets into the wall of Hampton’s bedroom, one of which struck him in the left shoulder. After the shooting subsided, officers entered the room and one was overheard saying “he’s barely alive; he’ll make it.” Two shots then rang out, followed by Officer Camrody’s declaration that “he’s good and dead now.” In the aftermath, authorities portrayed what was really an FBI-directed assassination as a Chicago PD illegal gun seizure that the Panthers themselves had escalated to violence. For the crime of uniting a multiracial coalition for political and economic justice which sought to fully realize the promises of the Constitution for their members, J. Edgar Hoover was appointed as Fred Hampton’s judge, jury, and executioner.

This focus on the BPP is not intended to minimize the deadly suppression faced by other movements that were fighting for justice. This extreme repression extended to explicitly nonviolent groups as well. For example, FBI agents in Birmingham had passed information to the Klu Klux Klan to facilitate “attacks on civil rights workers.” The lack of accountability for intelligence officials that perpetrated these crimes, and their continued relegation from the sources of historical education for most Americans serve as a *carte blanche* for the continuation of such authoritarian practices today. Many of the problems that the Black Panther organized against fifty years ago today still plague the country today. The murder of George Floyd and the outpouring of protest in response demonstrates that many Americans in condemn our nation’s systemic inequities. Activists for such causes must remain vigilant of a government that was never forced to learn its lesson for terrorizing activists of generations past.

The Resurrection of Susan Meachen

By Ai Lee Woods

The act of pseudocide, or faking your own death, has long been a part of both fiction and reality. With the advent of the internet, faking your own death is easier than ever. Pseudocide is relatively common in niche internet communities, as indie yarn dyers become overwhelmed with orders, and fanfiction authors hope to get a few more views. Faking one's death via the internet has become almost commonplace; what is less common is coming back.

Susan Meachen, a self-published romance author, "died" in the fall of 2020. She had written fourteen books and cultivated a small but devoted community of readers. In addition to communicating with her readers, Meachen had also participated in several Facebooks writing groups for authors within her genre.

Her unexpected "death" was announced via a Facebook post supposedly written by her daughter. Although the initial post was mostly vague in its wording, it suggested that Meachen had taken her own life. There was no way for Meachen's followers to know that she was still alive.

Although uncommon for writers who use their own names and faces, pseudocide is a somewhat expected phenomenon within the fanfiction community, many of whom do not share their own names and faces. Many of the people who fake their own deaths within fanfiction communities are young teenagers. One of them, Berklie Stolz, has recently come clean about their pseudocide in a TikTok posted in September of 2021. Eleven years ago, Stolz was a semi-popular fanfiction author on fanfiction.net, going by the pen name Blay. With no prior warning to her readers, Stolz penned a post, claiming to be someone who had been friends with Blay in real life. She wrote that Blay had died from lung cancer and

that her ongoing stories would now be stopped after the friend published the last few updates stored on Blay's laptop. In her comments on Tik Tok, Stolz explains that they think that they wanted the attention that came with making the post. They got plenty of attention, in the form of 183 comments on the post. Stolz claims that a new comment rolls in every few months. Aside from attention, Stolz did not gain much from her pseudocide. This was the case for a lot of fanfiction authors who faked their own deaths. In the comments of Stolz's Tik Tok, viewers reminisce about how this used to be a common occurrence. They talk about how they cried over deaths, but mostly, there seem to be few hard feelings directed toward Stolz.

This is not the case for Susan Meachen.

Meachen's death left her community of readers and authors reeling. Rumors of bullying gave way to accusations and harassment. Other authors were accused of having bullied Susan Meachen into taking her own life. It destroyed what once a safe and supportive community.

Somehow, the story does not stop there. Meachen's account continued to post. Someone posted on Meachen's account, claiming to be Meachen's daughter, and asked for people to purchase her mother's final book. An anthology of short stories that was written in memory of another author was dedicated to Meachen. Readers donated to help support Meachen's family.

Then, in January of 2023, Meachen returned from the dead. The revelation came, once again, in the form of a Facebook post. It explained that she was "ready to write again." Meachen has additionally said that it was not her choice to fake her own death. She claims that her family made the decision that

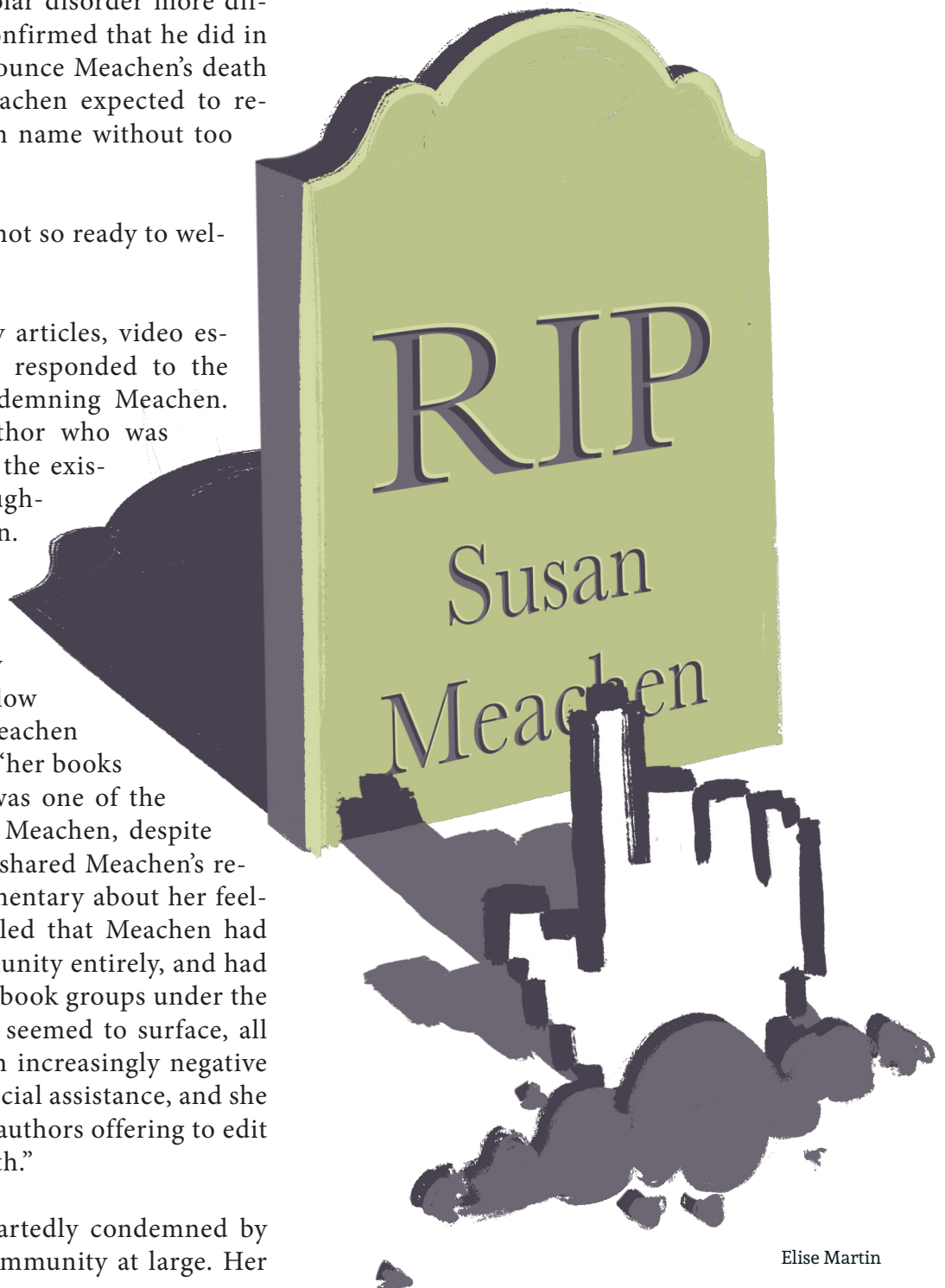
was best for her mental health. She explains that she is in a better place now and is hoping to rejoin the romance community. In a New York Times article, Meachen claims that her poor mental health was due to an “addiction” to the online communities she had joined. She claimed that participating in the communities and writing would put her in a manic state, and that she was unable to log off of her online life. She explains how the “book world” made her struggle with bipolar disorder more difficult. Meachen’s husband confirmed that he did in fact tell his daughter to announce Meachen’s death online. Two years later, Meachen expected to resume writing under her own name without too many issues.

The romance community is not so ready to welcome her back.

The backlash was big. Many articles, video essays, and commentaries all responded to the controversy, almost all condemning Meachen. To Candace Adams, an author who was friends with Meachen, even the existence of Susan Meachen’s daughter was called into question. The “daughter” had similar syntax and grammatical errors as Susan Meachen. She now questions the legitimacy of the daughter’s posts. To fellow author Samantha A. Cole, Meachen faked her own death so that “her books would get attention.” Cole was one of the authors accused of bullying Meachen, despite having been her friend. She shared Meachen’s return post along with a commentary about her feelings of betrayal. Cole revealed that Meachen had not even left the book community entirely, and had instead remained in the Facebook groups under the name T.N. Steele. and more seemed to surface, all of it painting Meachen in an increasingly negative light. She had asked for financial assistance, and she had accepted free help from authors offering to edit her final book after her “death.”

Meachen has been wholeheartedly condemned by the romance and reading community at large. Her

name is more well-known than it was before, but at the cost of her fans and community. Like many fanfiction writers before her, Meachen chose to leave the writing community in a way that should have been permanent, even if it were not true. Unlike those fanfiction writers, however, her “death” had much more real consequences.



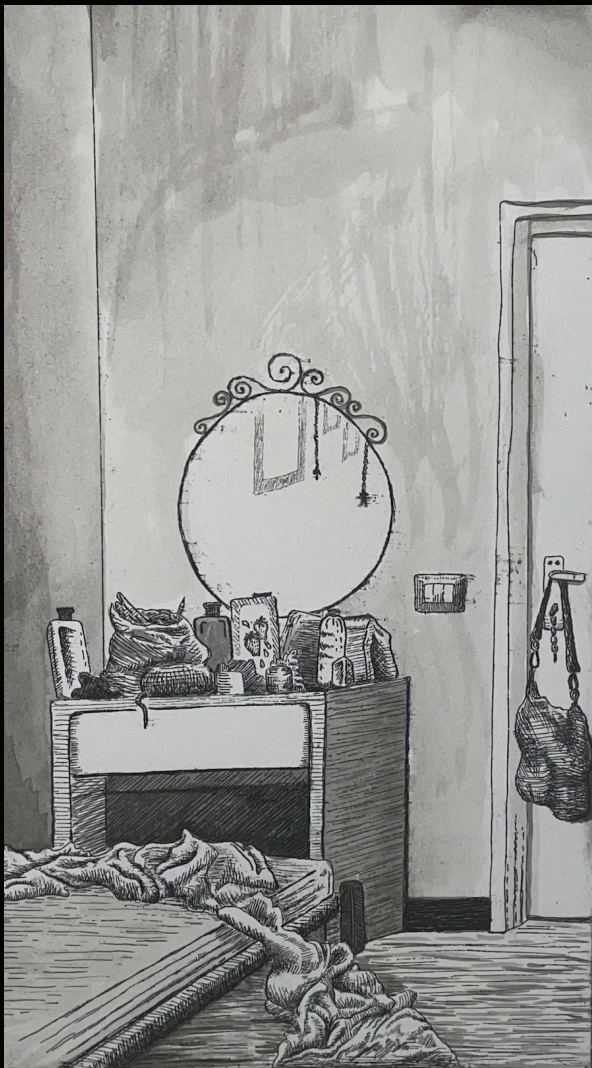
Chris Dehney: Digital Photography

“My photos represent me... they show the types of things that I find meaningful”

Chris Dehney, Class of 2023, unearths primitive vulnerability in his photography, subtly forming an intimate relationship between viewer and subject through magnified portraits of wildlife. Dehney expresses universal emotions by capturing candid moments in crisp focus, each containing sentiments of social familiarity. As a biology major with current sights on medical school, Dehney has an aptitude for visual precision and an interest in anatomy and form. As he wrote: “National Geographic definitely inspired me. I’ve grown up watching every nature documentary since I can remember”. Trained in lacrosse, Dehney is an established athlete, practiced at honing in on qualifying moments. He celebrates energy and vitality in his artwork, stemming from an appreciation of the natural world: “I think about... the brilliant blue I’ve seen in the eyes of cormorants the innocent playfulness of a baby highland gorilla... a heron spearing a flounder... it’s partly just about getting outside of our day-to-day and seeing something you’ve never seen before”. Dehney’s work synthesizes a range of ubiquitous feeling as he draws upon empathy to attract visual intensity. He has a linear approach, embracing the silence lying between lens and subject while respecting the distant yet detached collaboration between the two. Raised in Wilmington, Delaware, Chris Dehney has proven his artistic expertise through a learned visual proficiency in wilderness environments.

- Austria Morehouse 25’





Layla Rafimayeri: Etchings & Prints

“These prints are a letter to my future self about who and where I was in fall 2022... They are a tiny piece of myself and a glimpse of my habits and my self-image,”

Layla Rafimayeri’s artist notebook is an environment of its own, filled with pencil illustrations and scribbled words: a symphony of visual self-expressions. As an accomplished musician, bass guitarist, and cellist, Rafimayeri, Bowdoin Class of 2024, has an intuitive approach to visual arts; she is fueled by creative talent and guided by music as a muse. In her finished prints, anchored in her mastery of detail, resolute use of fine lines, and aptness for ornate maximalism, one can see her patience and focus, instilled by years of formal training and habit. Rafimayeri’s provides insight to her process in a few words: “you practice your whole life to be able to execute anything well.” While her polished works speak to a deliberate assessment of form, close attention to detail, and artistic dexterity, her natural artistic tendency is free-flowing. Rafimayeri, an NYC native, draws inspiration from urban diversity. With a penchant for trinkets and found objects, she inventively uses novel ornaments, stamps, and decorative motifs to fashion her expressiveness and extroversion. Rafimayeri composes sophisticated and elegant pieces- her artistry being a concentrated and harmonious blend of satisfyingly resonant poetic and stylistic designs.

- Austria Morehouse ‘25

Mason Daugherty: Film Photography

“Photographs can legitimize and dignify people’s lived experiences,”

Landscape, documentary, and architectural photographer Mason Daugherty, Bowdoin Class of 2025, chronicles his travels across the United States with his camera, embracing each new location with a “fresh set of eyes” and a desire to integrate into new spaces by using earnest explorations to create gratifying, amiable works that highlight the beauty of ‘place’, both natural and constructed. His photographic series from Charleston, Savannah, and the landscapes surrounding his hometown outside of Dallas convey an idyllic spirit tempered by a recognition of humility and wonder for the forces that shape our interconnected spaces. Daugherty’s images are colored beautifully, and present a mid-century impression of ‘place’ on the cusp of a greater shift. He documents settings that are rich with history, yet dated with early signs of decay, in conflux with new architectural developments set to outpace what was originally built in a bygone era. Reminiscent of the works of esteemed photographer Julius Shulman, Daugherty’s photographs work as a device of preservation, making a mark and keeping a record of environments: “.. there’s fragility in a lot of places you may not realize,” Daugherty explains. Daugherty triumphantly showcases by his own rules and rhythms of acquaintance, with inevitable restless undercurrents, beautiful sites of lasting wonder and resilience.

- Austria Morehouse ‘25



On The Cape

By Lydia Branson

This is a strange Maine town
it is small
and cold
most of us hate it here
most of us will tell you
all we want is to leave

and this is true
we cannot wait to be free.

This town is wrought with an eerie feeling
we cannot seem to shake
it follows us everywhere
not that there are many places to go.

The thrashing sea off of this cape
carries the stories and secrets
of the families and people here
it drowns out the whispers
of old money childhood suicides
in guest houses off private roads
of Wall Street businessmen
who do coke after family dinner
of unlicensed teenage boys
who drive themselves home drunk
and die in the dark
of the model mothers who chain smoke
to avoid relapse and rehab
of the rapists and the raped
and of the children of trauma
who will never admit they've been harmed.

The sky is dark with the aches we refuse to acknowledge.

But all of this is shrouded
by the everyday mom fights
plastic surgery stories
busted parties in finished basements
town council meetings
state titles and bake sales.

There is little rest from perceived perfection.

Teenagers congregate in church parking lots to party

they drive in circles around the surrounding towns
venturing to the edge of the cape
and watching the waves swallow the seafoam
often wishing the currents would welcome them too.

We cannot help but crave the chaos
we find in the bend of the waves
they beckon us.

Some of the best nights of my life
have been spent driving from beach to beach
running under moonlight
laying in gravel parking lots
and staring into the stars and darkness beyond.

It is on nights like these I forget
where I am from
and I learn how to live
how to honor the moments
only teenagers can garner.

I can only hope
I will always remember how and why
I loved as deeply as I did.

But even so
there's got to be someplace
better than here.



An Offering to the Masculine

By Dylan Beckett

The earth had borne him wet, of salt and rain,
his body made of muscles I know well:
As capable of pleasure as of pain;
to follow Death the Honest's sweet compel.
I cannot give his body just detail;
In him existed every man's physique.
The world realized, from muscled to most frail,
that Father Earth had redefined the weak.

He carried not a sword or noble crest,
no throne had he to lay a warring spine
And armored not was battle-stranger breast
Not even thyrsus held beneath sunshine.
His music issued from no instrument
no lyre, lute, or horn of sounding war
Violence had not made his songs dissonant;
For battle hymns were played by men of yore.

His story is a tapestry of tales,
the patches told from peoples 'cross the sea.
His breath of song like wand'ring summer gales
Nèer rested on an ear: always ran free.
Though never wandered through my ears, his voice
described to me by creatures of the wood
"alights upon the limbs and makes rejoice
that being whose tired tears do run as blood."

In sacred grove that echoes soaring strains
within the valley made by sprawling thighs,
a mushrooms rises, watered by the rains
that fall from clouds of dancing lover's sighs.

And in the later canopy of sleep
where hearts do come once they have had their dance
a lover, movèd, may begin to weep,
oèrwhelmed from meeting, suddenly, romance.
Their tears are echoed, then, by his bright eyes
that after sunset still are filled with light;
rivers flow less dutif'ly and wise
than droplets issued in the hold of night
rolling down through lover's parted lips,
his tear, like rain, lands lightly on their tongue,
bringing forth a deluge now from drips
as hearts eclipsed in grief are kindly wrung.
Yet listen now, for oèr the hills he swiftly comes!
His song is landing lightly on my ear,
he walks with flow'ring fingers and mycorrhizal thumb,
hear his song drift, like the deepest knowledge of a
child, through the wind:

"Oh, I am no saintly thing.
I'm borne of dirt and wish of wing.
Oh, let's relearn how to play.
Come cry with me and lay down the day.
Oh! be dappled by the sun and come beyond,
Dance deeply, joyfully, embrace my flowering wand,
leave your inhibitions, leave your blade,
sing this song with me, and join in the parade!"

I weep, he weeps, I sob,
I become all things, am became by all things, we are
reborn...

The Disfigured Man

By Charlotte Iannone

Your hunt for me begins
when my grandmother's swing set creaks *repent*,
repent,
like a sleepwalker pacing the border of dreamland.

The murmurs appear in the shape of a bird call,
twinkling over the trees.
They glow silver as the new year's tinsel,
tinsel that tore my skin away on this hunt,
crying, *repent*, *repent*.
I've had blood curdle in my hollows.
I've had street signs peeled green from my tongue.

You made me hate my homeland.

I signed your deed to sell it all away,
signed it with an invisible ink pen.
Everywhere I shine it are the words of the dead.

Your hunt for me begins when we nurse the curb
and I open up the passenger door
and bid you goodbye,
reaching across the middle console
to hug your shoulder to my chest.
Perhaps that was the last time I meant it.

Now I grasp at the straw figures we once were,
slow dancing in the rain at the end of my driveway,
headlights painting us with spider eyes.
I see the ghost horses combing through us now,
performing surgery on the golden thread that joined us.

The hunt for me begins when my mother's image
calls out to me from the blackness.
Don't fear the night, she calls, to the melody of a song I
used to know.
Though you were born into the morning,
the night spanned your forging
and it is no enemy.

Tonight, I leave a trail of spent straws in my wake,
howling across the hills, creeping
past the kids smoking in the low sump,
pumping out glimmers of syrup summers.

Out of smoke I write what I will say
when you trap me:
I wish I'd been more honest.
I wish I'd been more bold.
I cannot live to relive my fevers,
to see all my locks picked and broken,
to curl in the cold of these stone overpasses
we once drove through, our voices echoing across the
arch.
I wish I was a weed growing up around the third rail,
indomitable against your law
that has sullied my shores
and tossed me into the night on your chain.

I wish I could hate my homeland.

balcony pas de deux

By Rin Pastor

soft snow, soft self, sin slit sun,
blood congealed like sorrow in my mouth,
larynx full, every dawn a new molt.
here is a story: there is a knife in your hand
and freedom a cut away.
you wanted this, didn't you?
half heartworm, half chrysalism.
my aorta emptied into you,
dresden's ashes on your tongue, altar to time
sun sat, starstruck.
now the days pass slowly and wearily
like swallows strangled in eden.
now you are drowned in reverie,
now you pollinate my polaroid dreams.
here is a story: you kiss me in a room filled with golden light.
this is performance and communion,
limeburnt stage become audience,
their gasps our chorus, their applause our elegy.
here is a promise: i will live in your silhouette
if you live in mine.



Lauren Russler



NOVEMBER 2023