

THE BOWDOIN REVIEW

Confronting New Normals

Politics | Culture | Society

THE BOWDOIN REVIEW



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Letter from the Editors



This edition marks our 24th print and our 11th year in operation. Founded in 2011 as the Bowdoin Globalist, the Bowdoin Review has changed its character from focusing exclusively on international affairs, expanding to accommodate a broader range of student interests. Our mission is simple: to provide the Bowdoin community with a platform to publish their views on the world beyond campus.

We live in unprecedented times. As the contributors to this edition show, the boundaries of what is normal are being continually tested and reformed. In the age of technology-augmented realities, Mason Daugherty, a cyborg in his own right, argues on page 2 that the fusion of man and machine is here to stay. The cost of immunity here on campus, as K Irving illustrates on page 31, is shouldered by underpaid Maine immigrants, a reality made normal by the fact that it is concealed. Through it all, we are confronting new normals while endeavoring, as Lily Dinsmoor does on page 14, to meditate and find peace and gentleness through it all.

We extend tremendous thanks to those who helped make this print edition possible while reacclimating to in-person classes during the Fall. Each edition requires that students take time out of their busy lives, challenge their own beliefs, and venture to make their points of view known. We invite you to engage thoughtfully and to leave with new perspectives.



JARED FOXHALL
Editor-in-Chief



LAUREN KATZ
Editor-in-Chief

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Cyborgs Walk Among Us

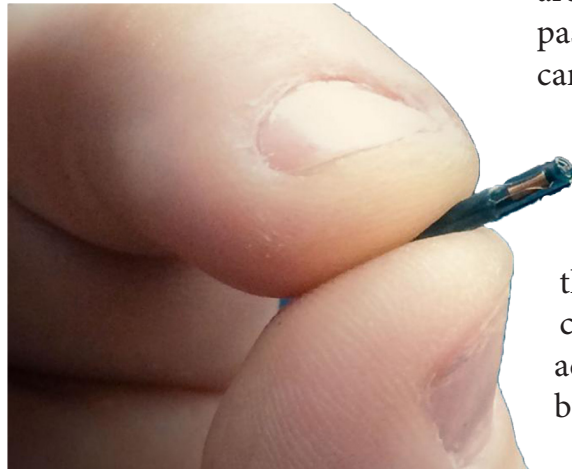
By Mason Daugherty

Since 2017, I have been a walking cyborg. No, not the Hollywood type (looking at you Terminator and RoboCop), but instead, a “vanilla” cyborg, if such a concept exists. Put simply, I have a microchip the size of a grain of rice in each of my hands. And since my arrival on Bowdoin’s campus this fall, I have used one to act as my college OneCard.

Imagine: you’ve just trudged across a snow covered quad and are eager to get back into your warm dorm. What if instead of rummaging through your pockets for your OneCard, you unlock the door by presenting your bare hand to the sensor? This is my reality, and it is quickly becoming that of others around the world, too.

Traditionally, fusing technology with the human anatomy has been reserved for those with life-altering conditions. Subsequently, it is costly, and accessible only to the top one percent. These highly effective technologies are usually designed to restore lost bodily functionality. Pacemakers, hearing aids, and even artificial hearts are all examples of “biohacks”: augmentation to enhance the human body.

This trend in biohacking begs the question: is there a space for minor quality of life improvements that are accessible and affordable for the average person? Can a healthy individual, without access to vast wealth, enhance their body and living quality with technological implants? Yes, they can, and I among others are living examples. An emerging community of amateur biohackers has proven that anyone can embrace and benefit from cybernetic enhancements.



“The human body has limitations, but biohackers are constantly thinking of how those limitations can be overcome — how life can be made better or more convenient (like removing the need to carry around keys all the time) through the use of technology.” — Dina Spector

Radio-frequency identification (RFID) microchips are presently the most popular form of biohacking and are what I have implanted in my hands. In the same family as Near Field Communication (NFC) and Bluetooth, RFID is commonly used in pets and supply chains for identification purposes. For instance, RFID is being used to power cashier-less grocery stores much like Amazon’s. Each chip stores identifying information and functions as a tiny computer, storing information like a small USB flash drive. OneCards are a form of Low Frequency, passive RFID, much like the cards and keyring devices that you might use to access an apartment parking lot, check into the gym, or even navigate Disney theme parks. On Bowdoin’s campus, we use OneCards to access residential and academic buildings, dorm rooms, and dining halls.

The capability to implant people with microchips has its roots in the field of medicine as far back as the innovation of pacemakers in the 1950s. In 1998, Professor Kevin Warwick of the University of Reading reported the first microchip implantation for human identification purposes. The use of RFID has only

expanded in the decades since. Governments (true to fashion) quickly found a use for this breakthrough, and corporations followed suit: in 2004, the Mexican Attorney General's office implanted 18 of its staff members to control access to a secure data room. Later, nightclubs across Europe use implants to allow VIP entry and enable automated payments. Since, reports of people implanting themselves with commercially available RFID tags for a variety of applications has become a familiar, if not regular, occurrence.

Moreover, the hype around biohacking and microchipping has exploded: just look at the TikTok account @robot_scott,

which has just over 700k followers and 9.3M likes. Millions of more views on the topic can be found on YouTube, and there exists an active 3000+ member forum with 91.8k posts as of the time of writing.

People are, as we've seen, willing to grant technology a great deal of permission to dig into their personal lives. It is now standard to carry a supercomputer in one's pocket, with assistants driven by artificial intelligence

to make day-to-day life more seamless (Siri, GPS Navigation). Furthermore, the prevalence of cosmetic surgery shows that healthy people are willing to undergo extremely invasive procedures for superficial reasons.

These two phenomena led me to implant a microchip of my own: permissiveness of the intrusion of technology into personal lives, and a willingness to apply super-



ficial changes to healthy bodies. Biohackers view bodies as adaptable and upgradable utility vehicles, a perspective that places biohacking as the next step in human evolution. For instance, humans at birth possess five senses, and that is traditionally seen as it. In a biohacker's eyes, this number isn't definite. In fact, some biohackers have implanted magnets to their fingers' nervous ends, and in doing so have gained the ability to feel magnetic fields, effectively giving

them a literal sixth sense. These examples just touch the surface, and there are many more avenues for interfacing with the environment on the horizon. One such example lies in the homing pigeon, who have magneto-sensing cells in their beaks. Should humans decode that genetic information and implant it (via Gene drive or other pathways), humans may eventually be capable of knowing where

magnetic north is without the use of a compass.

Let's take it back to the keys for a second, a piece of metal cut machined specifically to authorize you to go through a door. Why can't the door just know who I am and open? This is what many

RFID implants address, allowing identification and authorization using implants alone. Beyond building and home access, these chips can be used to start cars and unlock safes or computers.

The simplicity of it being inside of my hand is the biggest draw; I don't need to think about charging the chip, or if I have it with me. People who have been microchipped, myself included, feel that the technology actually becomes a part of their anatomy.

So, you want in. Now what? Retailers have popped up selling inexpensive implant kits that include everything you need to get going. Because the chips are so small (about the size of a grain of rice), the implanting procedure is quick and not very invasive. It's akin to getting a vaccine, just with a fairly large needle. You'll walk out with a small bandage and a few days of swelling. The chips are usually inserted in the fleshy area between your thumb and forefinger. Once implanted, you can feel it if you're trying, but it's not something that you regularly notice. Doctors, piercers (or a friend, as

was the case for me) perform the injection for you. To make the microchip "work," implantees can use various USB devices to read and write data. This device is what allowed me to write the contents of my personal One-Card onto the microchip in my hand. It's a simple process.

Looking forward, the intersection between technology and the human body brings with it not only exciting possibilities, but also pressing ethical and philosophical dilemmas. Should we accept both the unintended and unknown consequences that come with giving

technology greater presence in our bodies? I say we absolutely should, as pushing the boundaries of what it means to be human is inherent to the human experience. As put best by Zoltan Istvan, author of *The Transhumanist Wager*, "We shouldn't forget our sense of being human is ultimately based on millions of years of evolution. Like it or not, we are still stardust from eons ago-- and not just biological humans. Our evolutionary heritage is the cornerstone of why human beings are what they are: mammals that are becoming gods."



The Warped Love Languages of



By Kate Tapscott

The first date is supposed to be about love languages. At the start of the second episode of the sixteenth season of *The Bachelorette*, nine men follow a trail of heart stickers to some unused alcove of the Palm Springs La Quinta resort where 39-year-old Clare Crawley, their leading lady (for the time being), gazes down at them from a makeshift castle tower à la *Romeo and Juliet*. The host, Chris Harrison, bids each man to “speak to Clare’s heart” as a test of their competency in the first language of love: words of affirmation.

Given that they’ve only just met the woman, on a reality TV show no less, there’s not much to affirm. Some of the men interpret the task as a college interview or perhaps a networking event and launch into an elevator pitch about their own strengths. Army veteran Ben gives a long-winded spiel on his propensity to “choose the harder path over the easier one” which he prefaces, bizarrely, with “from my heart to

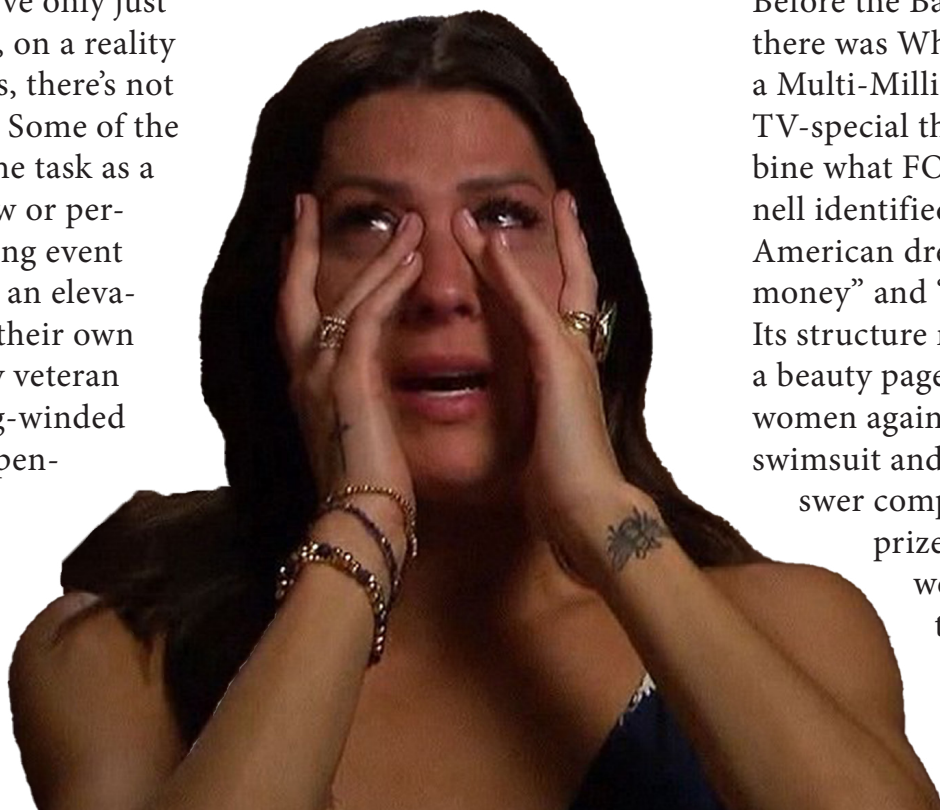
yours, Clare.” The next suitor gestures towards a painful past, enigmatically referencing the many layers that he “just can’t wait to peel back” with Clare (“be that onion!” she replies encouragingly). Others boldly try their hand at gassing up a woman they just met, their limited vocabulary producing awkward statements like “when I saw your energy and your spirit...” Riley gets points for dramatic flair, composing a couplet about the *Bachelorette* complete with a kiss on the hand. Front-runner Dale rounds off the challenge with a rambling

speech concluding with the utterly meaningless statement, “I am who I am, and I’m here,” which he delivers with a smug grin as if it matched the Shakespearean quality their setting evokes.

A cut back to the tower shows our *Bachelorette* utterly giddy, as if she can’t quite believe her luck. The tragicomedy reaches its apex when Clare tears up, remarking, “It’s been a long time since I’ve heard such kind things from men.”

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Before the *Bachelor* franchise, there was *Who Wants to Marry a Multi-Millionaire*, a reality TV-special that sought to combine what FOX exec Mike Darnell identified as the two “huge American dreams:” “winning money” and “getting married.” Its structure mimicked that of a beauty pageant, pitting 50 women against one another in swimsuit and question-and-answer competitions for the prize of marriage to a wealthy man, whom they only saw in silhouette.



Investigations shortly after *Multi-Millionaire* aired revealed that the lead, Rick Rockwell, was a domestic abuser with a restraining order filed against him by a previous girlfriend. It was unlikely that he was really a multi-millionaire, or even a millionaire, journalists speculated, citing his ordinary-sized house with a discarded toilet in the backyard. While modern-day dating shows have evolved in the decades since, this program provided the template for the disturbing combination that still defines its successors: a doggedly romantic façade concealing an utterly empty interior.

Looking at the photo of Rockwell and his chosen bride (who sought an annulment shortly after the honeymoon), his rictus grin and manic gaze, I am struck by what feels like the most disturbing and bizarre feature of the reality dating show premise—how uncritically it selects someone to hold up as worthy of unquestioning, idealistic love.

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Producer Mike Fleiss laid low for two years after the *Multi-Millionaire* fiasco before pitching the concept for a new show in which one guy dates 25 women and proposes to one. The *Bachelor* premiered on ABC in 2002, to widespread acclaim. The

show codifies the conventions of heterosexual courtship with its own lexicon: a relationship progresses from group dates to one-on-ones, then meeting the family (“Hometowns”) and “Overnights,” complete with time alone in the “Fantasy Suite,” all designed to culminate in a proposal. Each episode, the women vie for a rose, signaling the Bachelor’s decision to keep them around for another week.

These reality dating shows trade less in romance than in female vulnerability. Host Chris Harrison’s signature superlative—“most dramatic season ever!”—is earned by heavily anticipated “catfights,” outbursts, and zoomed-in, heavily-mic’d footage of contestants in tears. The supervising producer of *The Bachelor* reportedly incentivized producers with \$100 rewards

for catching women crying or puking on camera. Fleiss is on record for telling *Entertainment Weekly*: “It’s a lot of fun to watch girls crying. Never underestimate the value of that.”

In 2019, the Bachelor Nation YouTube account published a video under the title “Most EPIC Bachelor Breakups & Breakdowns EVER!” It’s four and a half minutes long, and it’s mostly clips of women crying. Some of them sob so hard they can barely breathe. One lies with her head on the tiled floor, wheezing. She says she’s having a panic attack. Often the women are trying to get out of the shot, covering their faces with their hands and hunching down. But the camera always follows.

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The censor box, also known as the “Black Box of Shame,” appears fairly frequently on Clare’s season of *The Bachelorette*—but not in the context you might expect. Three of the first five group dates revolve around a variation on a traditional sport in which the men are instructed to compete in a state of partial, occasionally near total, undress. The most daring producer brainchild comes in the second episode, in the form of the novel “strip dodgeball.” The losing team of men progressively strips off their shirts and shorts before finally doffing their jockstraps in a grand romantic gesture and heading back to the resort in nothing but their sneakers. The Black Box of Shame does overtime, only to be put

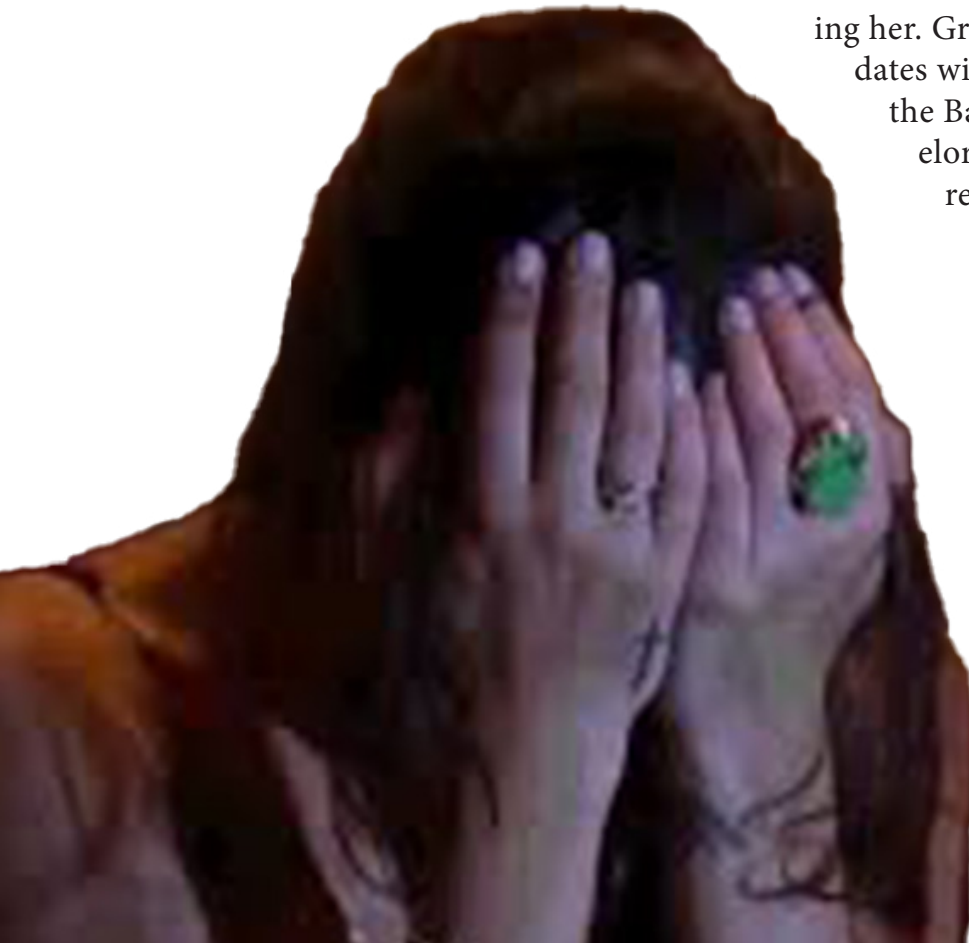
to work again a few weeks later for “splash ball” (Bachelor-speak for water polo) in too-small Speedos, followed by a shirtle wrestling match next episode in which the men oil up to fight over the jubilant Bachelorette. “This is a girl’s dream, honestly,” she quips.

Chris Harrison introduced the pilot episode of the gender-swapped version of *The Bachelor* as “the first time in TV history” that “a woman has all the power.” Indeed, *The Bachelorette* often gives the impression of an alternate universe in which women rule. Or rather, one woman rules. The men by and large regard their leading lady with a sycophantic devotion, pursuing her affections single-mindedly and without demur since before even meeting her. Group dates with the Bachelorette re-

quire the suitors to humiliate themselves on a regular basis, chugging cow intestine and water scorpion smoothies, performing musical numbers, and, of course, stripping naked in her name. The ritualized vulnerability continues in the constant bids for the men to disclose past traumas, whether at a candlelight dinner with the Bachelorette or into a microphone in front of a live audience. A state of self-abnegating worship is considered a moral baseline, any variation from which is swiftly and severely punished; a contestant from a previous season who had insulted Bachelorette Kaitlyn Bristowe for being “shallow” literally begs forgiveness on his knees during the Men Tell All special. The show uncritically endorses the practice of throwing oneself upon the altar of the Bachelorette as the truest form of love.

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After hearing of the strip dodgeball date, contestant Yosef Aborady declares he has something he wants to get off his chest. “I’m not gonna back down from anyone, including the Bachelorette,” he declares in a talking head before pulling Clare aside. The date concept was one of several red flags for him, he tells her, deeming it “classless” and “immature.” As Yosef lectures Clare with all the self-importance and condescension of a preacher at the



pulpit, the pretense of civility eventually becomes unsalvageable. “You’re not setting the right example for my daughter,” he chides. “I’m ashamed to be associated with you.” After several failed attempts to interject, Clare finally cuts him off. “I would never want my children having a father like you.” “Believe it, you’re not fit to be a mother of my child,” Yosef retorts. As he retreats, he hurls insults in his wake. “I expected way more from the OLDEST BACHELORETTE in history!” he taunts, cupping his hands around his mouth. “Remember, you’re almost 40! Hey, she’s all yours, boys.”

Yosef joins the ranks of the many Bachelor and Bachelorette contestants who for one reason or another end up

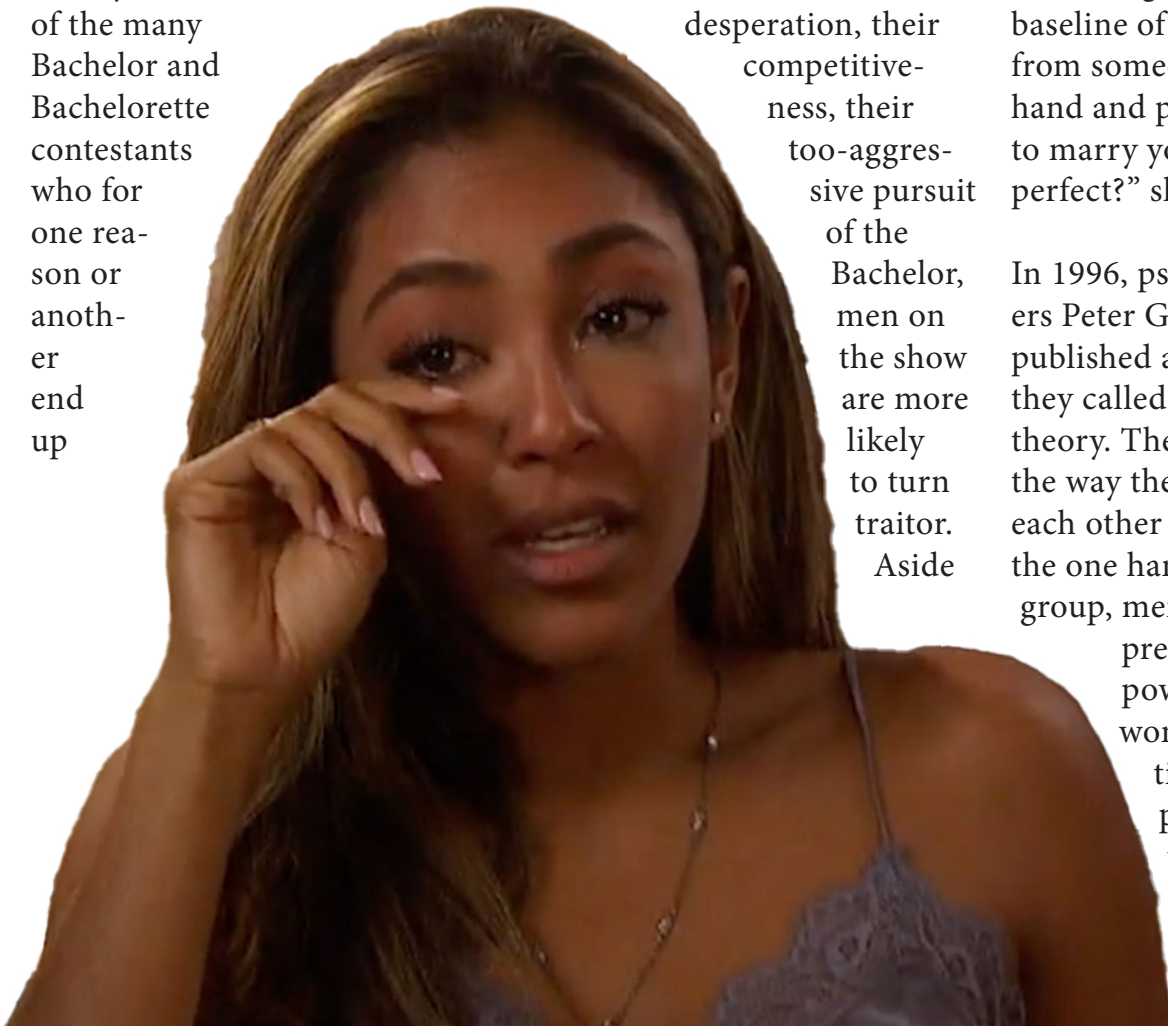
getting the villain edit. 2011 Bachelorette contestant Bentley Williams makes it clear in his interviews that he doesn’t care about the lead, nor does he find her attractive, but he continues to string her along while regularly disparaging her to the camera. “I’m gonna go make Ashley cry. I hope my hair looks ok,” he says in a particularly damning talking head. More common—almost ubiquitous in present day seasons—are the men who go on the show hoping the publicity will give their career a boost, often leaving behind girlfriends on standby back home. The trend that emerges is striking: whereas female villains are

condemned for their desperation, their competitiveness, their too-aggressive pursuit of the Bachelor, men on the show are more likely to turn traitor. Aside

from the typical post-break-up spite, they open up another possibility: that all the hand-kissing and flattery will suddenly mutate into disdain. Or, even more disturbingly, that it will reveal itself as empty from the beginning.

After Yosef storms out, Dale intercepts a crying Clare. She receives his bland words of support with such anxious gratitude it’s painful to watch. “Literally all I’ve ever wanted is a man like Dale who’ll come over and protect me and make sure I’m ok,” Clare says tearfully in a talking head. She seems almost incredulous that one of the men came to comfort her, though that seems like the baseline of what you’d expect from someone kissing your hand and professing an intent to marry you. “Why are you so perfect?” she gushes.

In 1996, psychology researchers Peter Glick and Susan Fiske published a paper on a concept they called ambivalent sexism theory. They observed that the way the genders relate to each other is paradoxical. On the one hand, as the dominant group, men historically (and presently) hold more power and status than women, and they justify their continued privilege by viewing themselves as superior. But heterosexual men also depend on women





for love, sex, and domestic labor. This intimate interdependence creates a tension—men want to maintain their position of power and keep women in their place, but they need to have positive intimate relationships with women. Therefore, sexist ideology must function to maintain the power of men while allowing for, even encouraging, heterosexual intimacy.

Ambivalent sexism theory suggests that two types of sexism complement each other to

achieve this goal: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism refers to ideas that are easily identifiable as anti-feminist—anything from “women are stupid and crazy” to the more subtle “women are sexually manipulative, conniving, whiny, etc.” Benevolent sexism is much more socially acceptable and harder to condemn. It represents women as beautiful, fragile flowers who deserve protection and adoration from men. Think of your classic chivalry—women are purer and more moral than

men, therefore they need to be cherished, make sure you tell them they’re beautiful every day. (On Michelle’s season, which is airing right now, one of the group dates has the men act like schoolchildren, riffing off the Bachelorette’s profession as a teacher. “How many times is it acceptable to call me beautiful in a day?” she asks the class. They all answer “infinity.”) The researchers found that this paternalistic praise doesn’t conflict with overtly sexist hostility – they go hand in hand. Benevolent sexists, more often than not, are also hostile sexists.

“Hostile sexism provides the threat and [benevolent sexism] the solution. Ironically, fearing men’s hostility can drive women straight into men’s arms seeking protection... from other men.” (When Chris Harrison comes to console Clare, he reassures her: “that’s the great thing about this—you’re going to find a guy that’ll protect you and never let somebody speak to you like that.”) A hit Motown song in the 1970’s includes the lyric, “I would kiss the ground she walks on, cause it’s my word, my word she’ll obey.” It’s so absurd and disturbing, this farce of respect for the purpose of subjugation. Like kneeling in worship of a woman but kneeling on her neck.

—

In the 2005 “Access Hollywood” tape, all you can see for

a while is the outside of the bus.

Billy Bush: Sheesh, your girl's hot as shit. In the purple.

Trump: Whoa! Whoa!

Bush: Yes! The Donald has scored. Whoa, my man!

Trump: Yeah, that's her. With the gold. I better use some Tic Tacs just in case I start kissing her. You know, I'm automatically attracted to beautiful — I just start kissing them. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything.

Bush: Whatever you want.

Trump: Grab 'em by the pussy. You can do anything.

Bush: Uh, yeah, those legs, all I can see is the legs.

Trump: Oh, it looks good.

But the part I find most dis-

turbing is when they get off the bus. The actress the men had spotted welcomes them both politely. She has no idea they've been gawking over her, objectifying her, discussing the prospect of sexually assaulting her. "Hello Mr. Trump," she says, "pleasure to meet you."

On each season premiere of *The Bachelorette*, the men arrive in separate limos. Sometimes they dress up in a costume or do some gimmick trying to get laughs, but most of them just walk out and say something like "you look absolutely beautiful." The *Bachelorette* is always tickled. But I'm always wondering what they're saying before they get out of the limo.

—

In an "unprecedented" twist, Clare is smitten with Dale by episode four and doesn't want to continue with the remaining men. She's hyperventilating with the anxiety of whether Dale will get down on one knee (of course the woman isn't allowed to propose), and her relief when he finally does pop the question is palpable. They jet off on a blissful honeymoon. (Clare and Dale broke up for the second time this September.) Not to worry, Chris Harrison tells the remaining men, who are feeling a little cheated at this point. "Gentlemen, your new *Bachelorette* is on her way here right now. That's right, you guys have a brand-new *Bachelorette*." (Note the language of possession and the direction it goes.) The woman that walks in is Tayshia Adams, a bubbly phlebotomist from California. The men are instantly smitten. One of them exclaims: "I like her way more than Clare already!"

Clare was made out to be a bit of a desperate cougar on *The Bachelorette*. It's easy to ridicule her earnest sentimentality, the ways she gushes over men doing the bare minimum. I myself found her desperation cringeworthy and alienating. But what was her sin, really? In my weaker moments, I can confess to the same vulnerability: wanting to hear kind things from men; wanting to believe them.



THE LOSERS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

By Robyn Walker-Spencer

“Russia wins the climate crisis.”

At least, that’s what Abraham Lustgarten of the New York Times argues: as the climate continues to change, and temperatures rise in the global North, Russia will see its climate become more agreeable. If you concede the point about it being a competition at all, there’s a lot of truth to what he says. While being a country with 25% of its landmass above the Arctic circle is not typically anyone’s vision of a farming haven, melting permafrost in Russia equates to more arable land. Meanwhile, countries close to the equator face drought and flooding, heatwaves, and wildfires. Sub-tropical regions are quickly becoming inhospitable; Lustgarten believes that a great migration is about to take place to northern nations such as Russia, most of which is currently unoccupied.

As the largest global exporter of natural gas, Russia is not par-

ticularly incentivized to fight climate change. A global switch to renewable resources means moving away from the exports that are 60% of Russia’s GDP. The recent estimates of natural gas in the Arctic, made more readily extractable with melting permafrost, is even more financial motivation for Russia to expand drilling and exports.

Few can refute the growing urgency of our changing climate unless that change presumably benefits you. In the summer of 2020, America watched in horror as the West Coast skies blazed orange while wildfires raged; in the summer of 2021, the effects of the fires were not just observed from our screens, but felt in our lungs as well. As temperatures rise, the climate is rapidly becoming unsuitable for life on Earth. The last two decades have been the hottest on record. Extreme temperatures are responsible for 5 million deaths annually. Why should Russia care? In the great game of self-interest versus cooperation, Russia has historically chosen the former. Climate change

disproportionately affects those close to the equator, and, as we know, there are a plethora of reasons for Russia to completely disregard climate policy and embrace the economic benefits. There are plenty of reasons for other northern nations to follow suit.

But let me be clear: for northern nations to disregard the climate crisis is a dangerous mistake. Of course, this is true for the rest of the world. However, northern nations, in light of the assumed economic benefits, are at risk of complacency despite being equally vulnerable to the imminent consequences of climate change.



First: melted permafrost does not simply become arable land, and rather comes with a host of challenges. When land that has remained frozen for thousands of years begins to melt, huge volumes of carbon are stored in the land that are released into the atmosphere, resulting in global implications. The dangers of melting permafrost are northern-specific, too. Shifting ground puts pipelines at risk of breaking, leading to dangerous oil spills. The foundations of apartment buildings in the Russian city of Yakutsk are already crumbling.

The melting permafrost threatens trade and domestic travel as well. Ground settling caused by melting is a slow process, and even as countries try to replace damage to roads and highways, cracks will reappear within a year. Approximately 2,000 km of Canada's highways are at risk of damage from thawing, a problem that the country has already put millions of dollars toward fixing. Warming temperatures mean lots of melting. Fixing the damage will quickly become a money sinkhole. Putin's 2003 assertion that rising temperatures would mean Russians "could spend less on fur coats, and the grain harvest would go up" disregards the high cost of maintaining a

crumbling country. Russia refusing to give up its dependency on oil fails to acknowledge the global shift from fossil fuels. At the UN Climate Summit in Glasgow, the world's economic giants pledged to fight climate change, with the US committing to reduce emissions to 50 percent by 2030. India declared net-zero by 2070; it aims for half of its energy sources to come from non-fossil fuels by 2030, which is



significant for a country whose population makes up 18 percent of the global population. The development of renewable energy industries and infrastructure are more important than ever. The demand for renewables increased by three percent in 2020 and will only continue to do so. Nearly a third of all global electricity is generated by renewable energy, a proportion that is steadily increasing. Whether or not Russia participates, the world is advanc-

ing against climate change. Russia's position is not as strong as it thinks it is. A large influx of immigrants may not be the blessing that some believe it could be. While Lustgarten argues that a mass climate-inspired migration to the global north would provide a significant source of labor to support Russia's underpopulated industries, historic trends of climate-driven migration do not suggest a smooth transition. Chaos and instability such as that caused by Guatemalans fleeing drought at the US border or the massive influx of Syrian refugees into Europe would likely negate any economic benefits. While climate-driven migration is inevitable by this point, it is in Russia's best interest to mitigate its impact as much as possible.

Ultimately, northern nations, despite contributing the most to global emissions, will benefit the most from the climate crisis. But the benefits do not outweigh the consequences that are both global and local to these nations. The nations of the global north must push Russia to embrace a policy position that combats climate change. There are no winners when it comes to climate change—we need to stop acting like there are and demand change from all.

A Reminder to Meditate

By Lily Dinsmoor

Right now it's 7:50 am and I'm on a train to Boston. The sky is purple-gray and the sun is hitting the fall trees with gold. I've just finished a ten minute mindfulness meditation. It would be a lie to say that I feel better, or even different than how I was feeling before the meditation. So why did I do it? Why have I been doing this consistently for the past year and a half?

While I don't feel different, I am more aware of how I feel right now. I know that I'm a little tired, but not as tired as you might expect, having woken up at 6:30 pm. I'm calm in the way that early mornings sometimes bring calm. I'm having a little trouble being present, but I've had trouble with that all weekend.

I'm not fully aware of what meditation can and can't do. I've tried to use it to ward off anxious feelings, despite the fact that I've just told you it doesn't change how I feel. What is true, though, is that I will swear by meditation. I will call it life changing and recommend it to everyone I know. There is some cumulative

effect in taking time each day to myself. And I'm not the only one who finds some benefit from this; meditation practice among adults in the US has tripled from 2012 to 2017. As of 2015, the "meditation and mindfulness" industry has brought in an estimated \$1 billion in revenue.

I have a lot of anecdotal evidence for the benefits of practicing meditation. I used it every morning to break a horrible streak of insomnia this past summer. First thing in the morning, I would sit in the side yard



at home, the only place that felt really private. I would feel the sun on my face and visualize it pouring through my body. It

helped me to separate sleep from wakefulness, day from night. It gave me a routine in the midst of an entirely unstructured season at home.

I've begun to use meditation as a sort of cure-all. I turn to it when I feel busy or tired or agitated. It's hard to explain, but the more I practice mindfulness, the more I can see how integral it is to all other aspects of being my best self. When I feel present, it's like there's just a tiny bit more time between each moment. If I'm having a conversation with someone, it seems like there's a split second where I can pause before I speak and make a decision that considers how my words will make the other person feel. My ability to make decisions seems connected to my ability to be present.

A Western application of the traditional Buddhist mindfulness meditation is used for a variety of conditions. Mindfulness meditation, specifically, refers to a practice of experiencing the present moment without judgment. This can include thoughts, feelings, and sensations. It's thought to help with ADHD, anxiety disorders,

chronic pain management, and Tourette's, among other conditions. That meditation is so widely applicable is profound to me. It gives people a way of relating to their experiences—a way to hold it, as my abnormal psych professor, Hannah Reese, put it. It seems too good to be true that something as simple as sitting and focusing on your breath can give so much back to your life. However, there's evidence that mindfulness meditation works on a neurological level.

People who experience one depressive episode are much more likely to have more in the future. Not only that, but it takes less stress to provoke a second episode; having a depressive episode creates pathways that influence how the brain responds to stress in the future, priming the brain for distress.

But what if you could do the opposite; what if you could prime your brain to respond more the way you want it to?

Contrary to common belief, the adult brain is not stuck with a set number of neurons; it has the ability to grow new ones throughout life.

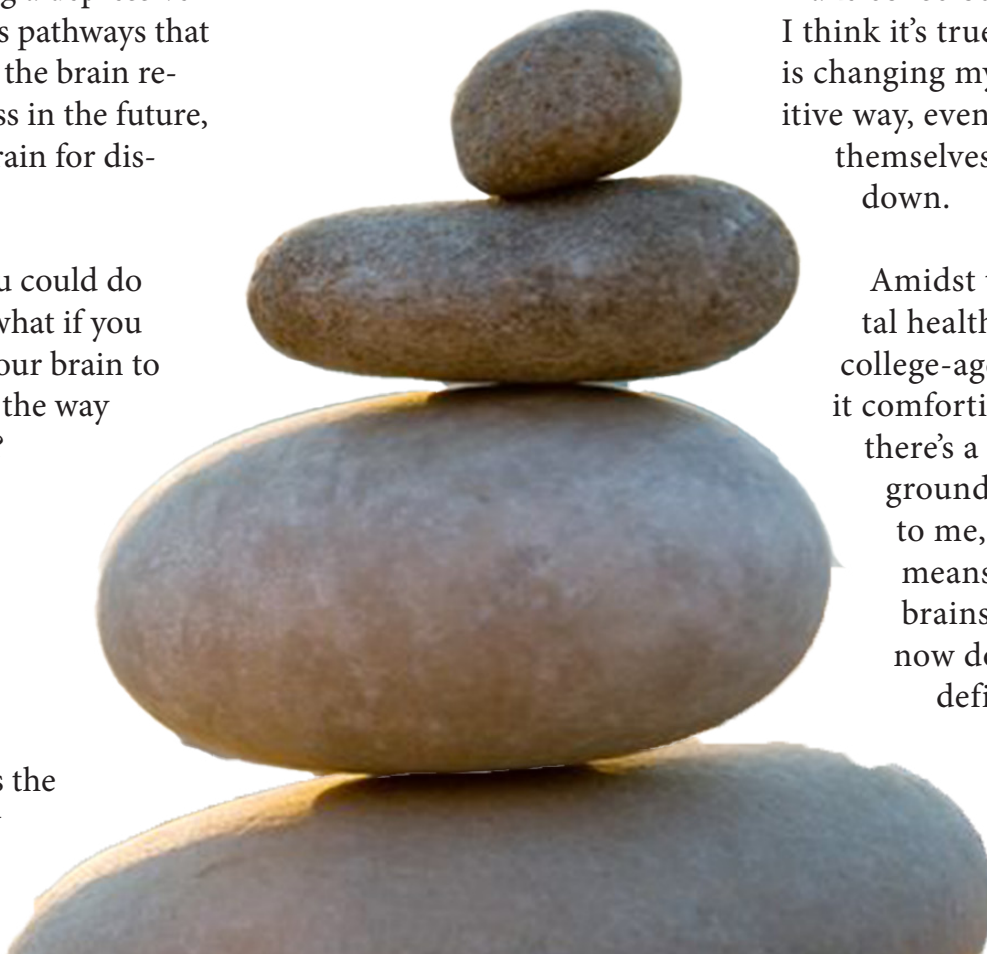
This is called neuroplasticity: the brain's vast ability to adapt to its environment. Not only can the brain grow new neurons, but it can strengthen existing pathways, change patterns of activation, and increase the size of certain regions. While neuroplasticity is known to be greatest in children, gradually decreasing in adults, it remains that everyone's brain has the capacity for change. Environmental factors can actually shape the way you think and react.

This idea is central to cognitive behavioral therapy. When you compare a brain scan of someone with OCD with that of a neurotypical person, there's a difference in the activity of

certain regions. However, the patterns associated with OCD typically normalize with treatment, whether it be medication or therapy. The fact this is possible confirms that lasting neuronal change is possible.

I had left campus for Boston because I was feeling uncontrollably anxious. When I feel that way, it's hard to believe that meditation is working, or that I'm in any better of a place than I was before I started. But there's a key difference: I'm better able to sit with negative emotions, and I don't struggle to make them go away. And they always do go away. I am so much more aware of how I'm feeling, and am more able to make conscious decisions. And I think it's true that meditation is changing my brain in a positive way, even if the changes themselves are hard to pin down.

Amidst the current mental health crisis among college-age students, I find it comforting to know that there's a way to hold our ground. Beyond that, to me, neuroplasticity means that what our brains look like right now doesn't necessarily define who we are, how we should feel, or who we can become.



Stoicism in the Modern Day

By Song Eraou

Stoicism is making a comeback. In recent years, there has been a rise in self-help books and blogs based on stoicism such as “Stoicism Today”, “How to Be a Stoic”, “Daily Stoic” and “Traditional Stoicism”. These books and blogs market stoicism as a tool for people to lead happier, peaceful, and more productive lives. They are only a small part of a larger movement often referred to as Pop Stoicism, which is an effort to place stoic philosophy in the modern context. What, you may ask, does our modern day society have in common with Ancient Greece and Rome that makes stoicism still relevant in the 21st century? The answer to this question can be found in the core tenets of stoicism.

Founded by Zeno of Citium in Athens in the early 3rd century BC, stoicism is a school of Hellenistic philosophy of personal, eudaimonic virtue ethics informed by its system of logic and its views on the natural world. These days, when most people think of a stoic, they imagine an emotionless person not bothered by any events. This makes stoicism seem like an unappealing philosophy, in a world that values emotions and prioritizing mental health. While

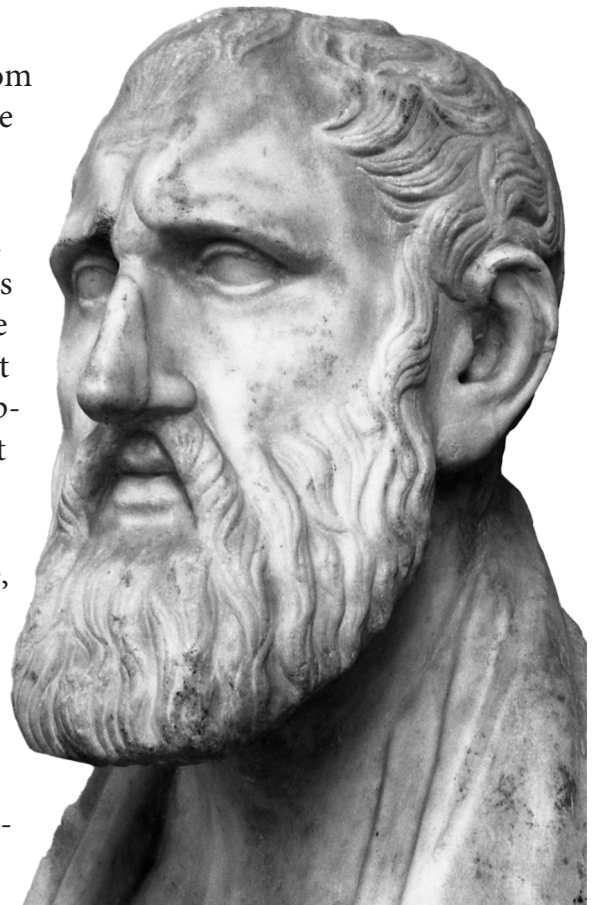
it is important to acknowledge our feelings and create a world where those feelings are nurtured, stoicism offers an alternative model of handling our reaction when something bad happens. As Epictetus, a Greek stoic philosopher, wrote:

“Some things are in our control and others not. [...] The things in our control are by nature free, unrestrained, unhindered; but those not in our control are weak, slavish, restrained, belonging to others.” — Epictetus, *Enchiridion and Selections from the Discourses*

The stoic path to freedom and happiness lies in the ability to distinguish between what is in our control and what is not. In the passage, Epictetus notes that confusing the two leads to suffering. It is irrational to be unhappy about things we can't change. Imagine a situation in which your car breaks down. Of course, the first reaction you might have is to feel bad about the situation. You might ask yourself: “Why did this happen to me of all people?” or “Why did I not

get the car serviced on time?” According to stoic philosophy, doing this confuses what you can and cannot control.

To maintain peace of mind and to resolve the issue at hand, you must focus on things you can affect—your impulses, thoughts and actions. You can't stop the car from breaking down, but you can get it fixed. Your feelings on the matter might be an impediment to finding a remedy to the situation. You might, for example, relate it to how this is just one of the many



things that went wrong in your week, leading your mind into a spiral of negative thoughts that, at the end of the day, have nothing to do with the situation and only prevent you from thinking clearly.

The example of your car breaking down is a simple example. What about the harder issues we face in life, such as when someone we love dies, or when we fail to get a promotion at work after having worked tirelessly for it? The stoic approach to this is to say that it is all a matter of perspective.

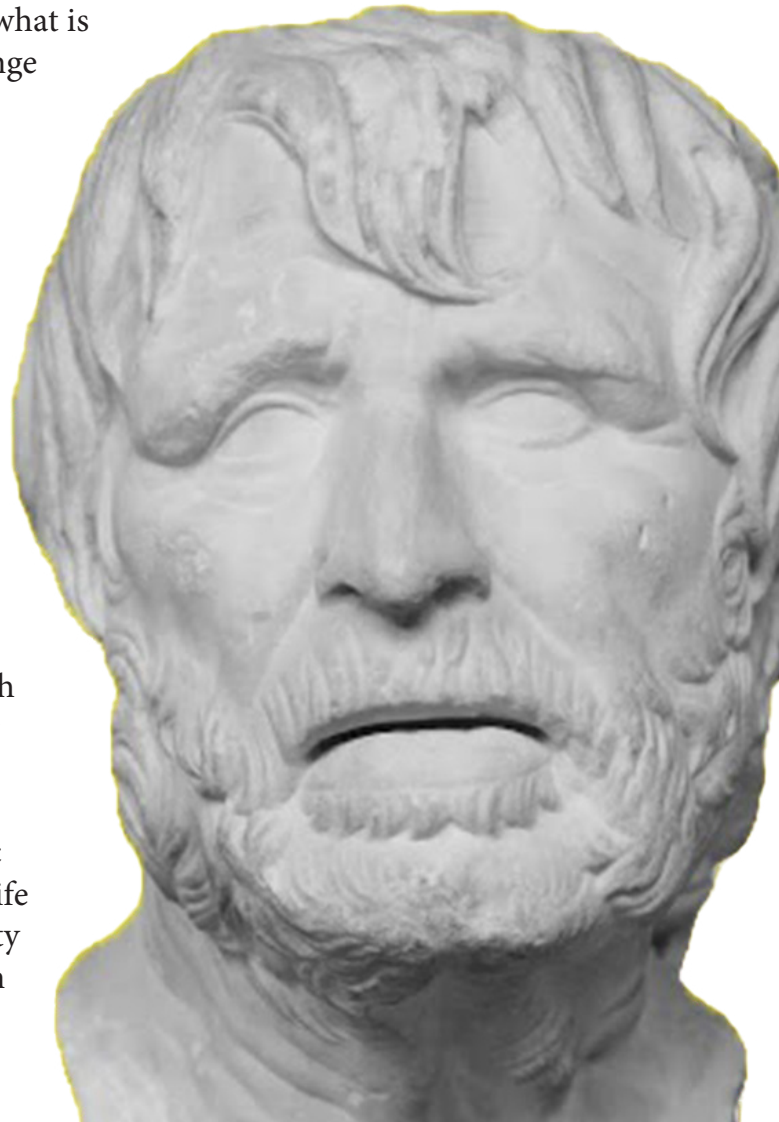
“...every event is the right one. Look closely and you’ll see. Not just the right one overall, but right. As if someone had weighed it out with scales. Keep looking closely like that, and embody it in your actions: goodness—what defines a good person.” — Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*

Here, Aurelius makes the point that our world is a delicate balance and everything that happens happens for a reason. This may seem like something typical we hear today and it may not offer much comfort, but the stoics actually had an explanation for this based on stoic physics. The stoics understood the cosmos to be a single god, one which is rational and the basis of all which exists. The stoic god is not separate from the universe, rather it is a divine element immersed in nature itself. Since the world

is ruled by divine reason, everything that happens is the most rational of an infinite number of paths.

Although any reader with a basic understanding of modern physics might find issue with this, there is value in acknowledging that from this conception of how the universe functions and how reason fits into that equation, the stoics were able to offer an explanation of why certain things happen in life and how to deal with tough circumstances. Working on the assumption that everything happens for a reason, stoic principles dictate that what is left to do is to change our perspective. If we are able to see the reason behind the worst things that happen to us in life, it will alleviate the pain we feel when they happen. The anguish we feel over a situation only comes from poor judgment of the situation, which gives it power over us. Of course, this is easier said than done, and the stoic sage spends their life refining their ability to judge a situation in order to achieve peace of mind. These are only

some of the ways we can use the teachings of stoicism as guiding principles. As we can see, there are many reasons why stoicism is still relevant today, especially in its usefulness in helping us deal with the daily struggles we face as humans. In fact, it is well known that Aaron Beck and Albert Ellis, the fathers of cognitive behavior therapy and rational emotive behavior therapy, drew from stoicism in developing these techniques. This explains why stoic principles are often used today as a form of self-help.



The question then arises, should philosophy be used as self-help? On one hand, using stoicism as self-help leaves out certain aspects of stoicism and emphasizes others. For example, there is a tendency to cherry-pick ideas from stoicism, leaving out ideas that are important, but harder to

understand. For this reason, Pop Stoicism is often criticized for its inaccurate understanding or inappropriate use of stoic philosophy. Then, there is the fact that stoicism is a philosophy based on an understanding of the natural world which is now outdated. Some might argue that since these foundational assumptions do not hold anymore, pop stoicism is simply a futile attempt to make sense of an ancient ideology.

On the other hand, Pierre Hadot argues in “Philosophy as a Way of Life” that stoicism was always practiced as a way of life. More precisely, stoicism is the art of living. The difference between

modern philosophy and ancient philosophy is that while modern philosophy is focused on developing philosophical discourse, ancient philosophers put philosophy into practice and used it to calm the worries of the soul and to lead better lives. Thus, even if the foundational beliefs that made stoicism come into being are outdated, the philosophy still serves its purpose as long as it helps us lead better lives. Considering the unimaginable and unexpected loss suffered by many due to the ongoing Covid pandemic, I would argue that the existence of this philosophy—which helps us find hope in light of the suffering we endure as human beings—is needed now more than ever.

Having expressed the potential I see for the use of stoic philosophy today, I will leave you with a warning on the danger of self-help books by author and philosopher Giuliano Baggini. Baggini warns that self-help books are based on the assumption that humans know what we want

and know what a good life looks like; what’s left to do is close the gap between life as it is and life as we’d prefer it to be. This is not what philosophy is for. Philosophy should force us to question what it means to lead a good life, even if that means asking the hard questions.

The takeaway should be that there are many aspects of stoicism which make it relevant and useful today. I would recommend anyone to learn more about stoic philosophy, whether from an intellectual standpoint, with the intention of using it as a self-help tool, or even just to cure the curiosity one must feel after reading this article. However, we must also heed Baggini’s advice to avoid the trap of using philosophy to reassert what we already know. We can do so by continuously seeking out knowledge and not simply accepting what appears to be true. Philosophy is meant to challenge us and help us lead better lives, even if that means facing some cold, hard truths.





The Most Devoted Fanbases in Professional Sports

By Zane Bookbinder

Home-field advantage is a big deal in professional sports. When a team plays in its home stadium, the players don't have to travel; they feel more comfortable with their practice and rest routines and tend to play more confidently. But the biggest reason why National Basketball Association (NBA) teams win 60.6% of their home games is the impact of fans on the game. Crowds can disrupt communication, distract oppo-

nents, and give the home team an energy boost. Two years ago, when Michigan visited Penn State for a college football rivalry game, the fans made so much noise that the Michigan players couldn't hear their quarterback call the first play. They were forced to call a timeout before the game had even started. Last NBA season, the Philadelphia 76ers were 31-4 in home games, but just 12-26 on the road. Unfortunately, these raucous environments, as well as fan-base traditions, were suspend-

ed in 2020, as COVID protocols emptied, or nearly emptied, stadiums. The three teams that benefit most from home-field advantage—Duke University's Men's Basketball, the Green Bay Packers, and Borussia Dortmund—have dedicated followers and unique traditions during typical seasons, but all of that energy vanished in 2020. For the first time in NFL history, home teams had a losing record.

The Duke Men's Basketball team entered March Madness as a number-one seed 15 times since 1980, winning five national championships in the same period and boasting a history of excellence with which few schools can compete. Duke has produced NBA stars like Hall-of-Famer Grant Hill, All-Stars Kyrie Irving and Zion Williamson, and proficient scorers JJ Reddick and



Brandon Ingram. The Blue Devils' success can surely be attributed to talented players and good coaching. However, the team's student fanbase, the Cameron Crazies (named after Duke's Cameron Indoor Stadium), are a vital aspect of the school's energy and winning culture.

Cameron Indoor Stadium is quite small, with a capacity for fewer than 10,000 fans. Of these limited seats, 1,200 of the best are reserved for students. To get a ticket, students compete in trivia contests and wait in line for hours, ensuring that only the most dedicated fans get seats. Before Duke's home games against rival UNC, thousands of students participate in "tenting" in the line dubbed "Krzyzewskiville" after Duke's beloved basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski, camping outside for weeks in the middle of winter for a coveted ticket.

Of course, dedication doesn't end with the ticket. Always ready to fight for their team, Crazies arm themselves as they enter the stadium with a "dirt sheet" of ammunition against the opposition: the names of ex-girlfriends, legal mis-

haps, embarrassing quotes and incidents in each player's past, and potential chants intended to rattle Duke's opponents. For example, when Duke played the University of Virginia's Cavaliers in 2016, the dirt on Malcolm Brogdon, NBA Rookie of the Year in 2017, read, "kicked out of his local YMCA when he was fourteen years old because he was fighting his brother after a game of 21."

All of this organization, energy, and intensity propelled Duke to a 75-9 home record from 2015-2020. In 2020, however, no fans were allowed into Cameron, and Duke went just 8-5 at home. After a disappointing season, the Blue Devils

missed the NCAA Tournament for the first time in twenty-five years. The Crazies continued supporting the team through virtual watch parties and trivia contests, but Duke struggled without the energy, noise, and intimidation they usually provided. For the college basketball powerhouse, the end of the pandemic can't come quickly enough.

More than one thousand miles north of Cameron Indoor Stadium, the small city of Green Bay, Wisconsin is home to the Green Bay Packers football team and its rabid fans, known as the Cheeseheads. The city has slightly more than 100,000 residents, making it the smallest National Football League (NFL) market by nearly a factor of four (New Orleans being next at 390,000 people). Typically, professional sports teams that begin in small markets have moved to larger cities where they can sell more tickets and jerseys, but the Packers organization has a unique attribute

that prevents such a move: the team is publicly-owned.

Most NFL teams are owned by the wealthiest families in the world, who often seek



to maximize revenue at the expense of their players and fans by increasing ticket and food prices, pushing for longer seasons, and maintaining nearly all of the decision-making power. The Packers, though, are owned by about 360,000 shareholders. The team has offered shares to the public five times since 1923, with each share costing \$250 at the most recent offering in 2012. Outside of these five windows, shares

cannot be bought or sold, and ownership is strictly handed down within a family. The team requires that no singular person owns more than 4% of shares, ensuring that the Packers will remain publicly owned.

What does holding Packers stock mean? In reality, absolutely nothing. Buying shares of the team has been called ‘the worst investment ever.’ Unlike buying a company’s stock, which pays dividends and has

the ability to increase in value, Packers stockholders will never see their money back. Shareholders do, however, receive a souvenir certificate, the chance to buy exclusive merchandise, and a ticket to the annual shareholder meeting in Green Bay. Essentially, becoming a shareholder is equivalent to joining an exclusive fan club which happens to support the team when it is struggling financially. As bad of a deal as it

might seem, the Cheeseheads will buy shares at any price to support the organization.

During the 2020 season, the Packers played in an empty Lambeau Field. Many Cheeseheads were concerned about COVID risks and said they wouldn’t have bought tickets even if they had been available.

Wayne Sargent, known as the “Ultimate Packers Fan”, noted that “going to a football game [...] is not just to watch the game. It’s the tailgating, meeting up with seasonal friends, and enjoying the comradery of others that makes it a special day.” Since none of that could happen in a safe and enjoyable way, Packers fans decided to put their traditions on hold in 2020. After beating the Los Angeles Rams in the Divisional Round of the playoffs, Green Bay fought hard but was knocked out by Tom Brady and the Buccaneers, who won the Superbowl two weeks later.

While the Cameron Crazies and the Cheeseheads both have small, tight-knit fanbases in their respective areas, a whopping 52% of German soccer fans support Borussia Dortmund, also known as BVB. Borussia has been described as ‘more of a religion than a team’ and as ‘the best-sup-



ported, most fun, coolest club in the world.' Borussia's motto is "Echte Liebe," which means 'real love' and captures the organization's energy perfectly. The team's fans are welcoming and high-spirited, taking a more wholesome approach to their love of BVB than the Crazies do when Duke plays. In 2017, a UEFA Champions League game was cancelled at the last minute, so Borussia fans opened up their own homes to visitors who

had come to support the opposing club. The team self-admittedly doesn't have the resources or prestige to compete with franchises like Barcelona or Real Madrid, but BVB's community makes it a special place for developing players to join. Young stars like Christian Pusilic and

Erling Haaland have enjoyed playing for Borussia at the beginning of their careers, because Dortmund is a club that truly cares about its players and wants to see them grow.

When 80,000 fans stream into Signal Iduna Park on game days, nearly all of them arrive in yellow jerseys with banners,

flags, hats, and scarves. The most unique section of the stadium is the "Yellow Wall," a 25,000-person standing capacity grandstand behind the northeast goal. The grandstand is only 75,000 square feet and has a slope of more than 30°, making the section a steep and tightly-packed area that looks exactly like a wall of people. Opposing teams have shared their fear of this intimidating group of fans, while Borussia



players say they get goosebumps every time they run onto the field. The Yellow Wall uses noisemakers, songs, and mass choreography to display messages.

BVB players certainly take advantage of the energy boost. The team scored a league-high of 52 goals at home in 2018,

and boasted a win rate of 82% before 2020. But when the pandemic emptied stadiums, the Yellow Wall advantage was lost. Borussia has only won 46.2% of its home games since.

So what do these three teams, playing different sports in different parts of the world, have in common? In their own unique ways, all three have created cohesive, energetic, and fun communities where fans

can unite around sports. Unfortunately, the pandemic has interrupted many of the traditions that these face-painting, costume-wearing, banner-waving supporters thoroughly enjoy, losses that have clearly impacted team performance. But thanks to social media,

fans have kept in touch virtually, continued watching games, and maintained lively communities. As the vaccine rollout continues and restrictions are lifted, these enthusiasts will be happier than ever to stream back into stadiums and give their favorite teams a powerful energy boost, once again.

The Critical Gap in Texas Education

By Nancy Xing

On October 14, 2020, in a training session to the Carroll independent school district, Gina Peddy, the district's executive director of curriculum and instruction, suggested that if teachers kept a book about the Holocaust in their classroom, they should offer a book with an opposing perspective.

It's a line directly out of an extremist blog, but in the context of classroom education. How did we get here?

When suggesting literature on Holocaust denialism, Peddy was directly referencing the newly-implemented House Bill 3979. H.B. 3979, coined by legislators as "The Critical Race Bill," was passed on June 15 and was made effective this September. Under an ostensible need to enhance Texas's social studies curriculum, the bill regulates teaching by enforcing the denial of racial guilt to protect white consciousness.

The portion of the bill in question mandates that teachers cannot be required to discuss current or controversial events. If they do, they must discuss the topic without "giving deference to any one perspective." Furthermore, these teachers cannot introduce certain race-related

ideas that the bill delineates. To get a sense of what those prohibited ideas are, look no further than the bill's explicit ban on the New York Times' 1619 project, a centering of US history on black oppression.

fesses itself to be race-neutral, but the overwhelming historical context of white US dominance makes clear that these bans serve only to soothe the guilty conscience of white people. When racism is openly articulated, it is cast as historically distant and



The bill sparks worrying parallels to censorship of media by authoritarian regimes. But alongside that worry is an intriguing undercurrent of white insecurity within the bill's text. The bill outright bans any notions that an individual is, by virtue of their race or sex, "inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive." Banned is the idea that someone "bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of [their] same race or sex." The bill pro-

irrelevant. For example, slavery is declared a "deviation," a "betrayal," and a "failure" of the authentic founding principles of the United States.

In its deference to white guilt, the bill has caused cascading impacts in the US education system. The bill's inaccurate marketing as a ban on critical race theory (CRT)—an academic lens that focuses on racial oppression as intrinsic to US history—has polarized Texas school boards

and already led to promises from political candidates in other states to “ban CRT”. The reality is that critical race theory was never widely taught in K-12 schools, but educators are now deterred from engaging in general racial discourse.

For example, James Whitfield was accused of teaching CRT and put on leave after writing a previously applauded letter to the school community during the Black Lives Matter protests. He was a Black principal in a primarily white neighborhood. In the Carroll independent school district, a district with a history of privilege and racism, conservative parents have pressured the school board to retract lessons which would place a focus on race and diversity. These impacts are doubtlessly products of the bill’s outright ban of race-related ideas, and the bill’s section on “free debate” is predicated on equally worrying concepts.

The old adage is that in the marketplace of ideas, public dispute leads to the best ideas succeeding and the immoral or incorrect ideas perishing. HB 3979 clearly mimics this principle with its mandate to give equal weight to opposing perspectives. However, it ignores the fact that expressing ideas is never free or equal: when media representation and audience reception privilege certain voices over others, the group consensus will likely be fraught with bias.

More worrying is the fact that under HB 3979, many ideas about race will never surface in the first place. Teachers, confused by the vague wording of the bill, are experiencing a chilling effect under the scrutiny of parents and lawmakers. This applies not only to racial discourse, but ripples to politicized topics ranging from climate change to reproductive rights. A Texas state lawmaker has requested that superinten-

dents check from a list of titles if their schools contain books that address feminism, teenage sexuality, LGBTQ+ perspectives, and reproductive rights. Teachers will have little time to introduce a wide range of literature, much less debate the inequities presented in that literature, if they are too busy rifling through their shelves at the behest of politicians.

HB 3979 steps backwards from racial progress, ignoring the US’s current racial climate and politicizing education. Its equivocation of viewpoints masks white nationalism under the rhetoric of free speech. Texan teachers have already expressed concerns about the bill, unsure how to negotiate its suppressive effect on classroom debate. In a state with a public school population of 5.3 million students, the effects will be dire. In a country that struggles to channel social unrest towards constructive policy, the stakes are no less high.



SHOEGAZE

By Wilder Short

*“You made me
acknowledge the devil
in me/I hope to God
I’m talking meta-
phorically/Hope that
I’m talking
allegorically”*

Shoegaze is a genre of indie/alternative rock that originated from a few people playing with guitar pedals, vocal effects, intense amp feedback, and holding a constant, trained focus downward at the pedals they were constantly fiddling with. What started off as a joking label for poor stage presence quickly inspired a genre of music that would influence decades of future artists to explore the limits of sound—sound as a shapeless form of noise. The Jesus and Mary Chain, my bloody valentine, Cocteau Twins, and Slowdive are pillars of the genre, and all are artists with disciples in the mainstream music world now, artists like M83, Beach House, and Grizzly Bear. This began, like any great story, in Scotland.

“Don’t you forget about me/
Don’t, don’t, don’t, don’t/Don’t

you forget about me” — “Don’t You (Forget About Me)” by Simple Minds

Scottish music in the early 80s was suffering. There was an attempt to be more like their neighbors down south, who were wildly successful for several reasons—the Second British Invasion was happening, the post-punk and new wave bands were kicking off, and Duran Duran had released “Girls on Film”—hard to compete with that, and the Scots’ attempt was to no avail. A few artists had started to spring up, like Edwyn Collins-led Orange Juice, but nobody was shaking things up or, more importantly, keeping up with the aforementioned post-punk and new wave movements.

There was, in the Scottish music appetite, a hunger for electronic, synthpop sounds, and

no longer a craving for guitar bands. The death of the six string happened roughly in this time, with musicians replacing guitar sounds for electric drum kits and synthesized keyboards.

Fast forward halfway through the decade, and we get to 1985 and Alan McGee. Alan McGee,

a Scottish youth who was frustrated that there was nothing to be proud of in Scotland (when it came to music, or anything else at the time, except for Kenny Dalglish and Sir Alex Ferguson, Scottish football icons), and annoyed that the Sex Pistols weren’t allowed in Scotland. With friends, a dream, and a considerable loan, he started Creation Records, birthing Scotland’s soon-to-be-leading prestigious independent record label, which focussed on young artists who were pushing the envelope. Alan McGee, looking to find the next Public Image Ltd and Sex Pistols, meets the Reid brothers, Jim and William; together, they act as manager and record producer. In doing such, Alan McGee, and the Reid

brothers, inadvertently started down the path that would lead to shoegaze.

*“Don’t You forget
about me/ Don’t,
don’t, don’t/ Don’t
you forget about me”*

**“LISTEN TO
THE GIRL AS**

**SHE TAKES ON HALF THE
WORLD/MOVING UP AND
SO ALIVE IN HER HONEY/
DRIPPING BEEHIVE, BEEHIVE”
— JUST LIKE HONEY BY THE
JESUS AND MARY CHAIN**



While there isn't truly a first major accreditation of the term to a specific band, The Jesus and Mary Chain fall chronologically into first place. Their signing story is anything short of miraculous. Alan McGee and Bobby Gillespie connected over a demo tape of theirs, and after Alan heard Jim and William Reid's The Jesus and Mary Chain perform a soundcheck before a gig in 1984, he made the decision to sign them on the spot. They created an aura of violence, controlled chaos, and power that didn't already exist amidst the synths and sounds of electronic keyboards and drums of the time. William Reid's out-of-tune

guitar and Douglas Hart's two string bass ("That's the two I use. I mean, what's the fucking point spending money on another two? Two is enough," he was quoted saying) combined for a cacophony of distortion and feedback that was good. Really good. And with that, The Jesus and Mary Chain worked to release their debut record, *Psychocandy* (1985), paving the shoegaze path from one lovely Glasgow neighborhood. Bobby Gillespie, of Primal Scream fame, played drums on this record, and the trio (along with good old Douglas Hart on bass) recorded a record that would achieve critical acclaim. Their

out-of-tune guitars, the playing of said guitars into amps, and the usage of damaged amps all combined into what we now have as a seminal Scottish record. "Just Like Honey" blew up almost immediately, and the band escalated to high heights for the alternative indie rock scene of the 80s and 90s—ironic, given that Jim Reid hated performing.

The music served as a form of revolt for a time that needed one. People were fed up with the abandonment of 60s and 70s era rock sounds packed with the missed fervor and energy that came with kickass performances. The Jesus and Mary Chain sound

was synonymous with bulldozing barriers, screaming to the world, and punching squares in the face. As their popularity thrust them into the limelight, so did their reputation as a band whose performances spurred on violence. Several shows of theirs ended in brawls, broken equipment, and smashed bottles that littered the venue floors. The Jesus and Mary Chain offered a reaction to the times, a reaction to a formality and abandonment of individuality from mainstream artists in the 80s, rejecting the need to be featured on shows like Top of the Pops or the newly-birthing MTV to be seen as good.

Also, it's not like Maggie Thatcher would have been listening to The Jesus and Mary Chain, which was a pull for many people.

**“WHEN I LOOK
AT YOU/OH,
BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S
REAL/ONCE IN A WHILE/
AND YOU MAKE ME LAUGH.”
— *WHEN YOU SLEEP BY MY
BLOODY VALENTINE***

While The Jesus and Mary Chain were more on the aggressive frontline, when it came to the genre, they opened the door for other high-distortion guitar bands. Their performances stood

as something largely antithetical to the genre at large, which was emphasized by the lack of violence from an artist like my bloody valentine. An artist that is now synonymous with establishing and truly setting the foundations for shoegaze, my bloody valentine is what can only be described as having a sound similar to staring at the sun for too long, looking away, and still having the imprint of the sun in your vision. Like The Jesus and Mary Chain, my bloody valentine won over Alan McGee's eyes and ears after opening for his band Biff Bang Pow! in 1988 and landed a deal



with Creation Records. They would go on to release *You Made Me Realize*, an EP that featured 5 tracks. It ranged in sound, with a song like “thorn” echoing Buzzcocks' raucous guitar playing, while a song like “drive it all over me” contrasted with soft-vocals over repeated guitar riffs, something which you could easily hear as an influence on The Smashing Pumpkins' *Siamese Dream*. It debuted well—in fact, well enough to earn them a deal for their debut-album, *Isn't Any-*

thing, which was released later that year. The album soared to the top of the UK charts and set a standard that avant garde rock was not dead amidst a sea of electronic, mass-produced pop rock of the time. Alan McGee, now riding the Creation Records wave of both signing and managing a number of critically acclaimed up-and-coming artists, was rightfully thrilled, giving them carte blanche for their next record in 1989.

Fast forward two long years and *Loveless* is released, but not without the group recording in nineteen different studios, a gruel-

ing number of engineer switches, singer/guitarist Kevin Shields falling out with Alan McGee, and the album bankrupting Creation Records. While receiving an

initially lackluster

reception, *Loveless* now sees attention as the album that plugged mainstream audiences into the shoegaze genre. The group's sound culminates with this record and stands for everything Kevin Shields had hoped it would stand for. Album opener “Only Shallow” opts to shock-and-awe audiences with rearing drums and throbbing guitar tracks that work in conjunction as much as against one another,

a battle for sonic space. This, along with Bilinda Butcher's soft, dreamy vocals (recorded typically after a nap, or while half-asleep) has listeners simultaneously existing in a soft dream world while blasting ear drums with strumming and tambourine smashing.

"When You Sleep" is a softer track, something that arouses feelings of love and trancelike fixations with loved ones. The song features something Kevin Shields brought to life, his "glide guitar" technique. To generate the sound of multiple guitars with just one handy, Shields holds the vibrato bar while strumming. The effect causes strings to change their tuning, going incredibly taut or loose as can be, and when mixed with his reverb pedals, gives us a guitar sound like on "When You Sleep." The album's sounds join to create a wall of sound that is hard to decipher, making it impossible to really pinpoint what noise is coming from what instrument, and the beauty of it is an album that remains one of the purest and beautifully haunting pieces of music to come from the genre and from the 90s. Guitar rock wasn't dead, as Alan McGee and other youths once thought; it was just waking from a deep, deep slumber.

"SINGING ON A FAMOUS STREET/I WANT TO LOVE, I'VE ALL THE WRONG GLORY/AM I JUST IN HEAVEN OR LAS VEGAS?" — HEAVEN OR LAS VEGAS BY COCTEAU TWINS



Releasing *Heaven or Las Vegas* in 1990, Cocteau Twins delivered sounds of a delicate nature that heavily contrasted with The Jesus and Mary Chain's overwhelming rawness and my bloody valentine's domineering wall of sound. If The Jesus and Mary Chain and my bloody valentine stood for shoegaze as rock, Cocteau Twins were shoegaze as pop—or as it can be called, dream pop. "Ethereal" is often used to describe the genre and is the one word that really encapsulates the sound of this record—whether it's Elizabeth Fraser's instrument-like vocals or Robin Guthrie's thumping drum machine loops, it really feels like listening to a dream. Their songs are hard to decipher lyrically because they weren't written to hold some greater meaning; instead, they were written for sonic synthesis with the instruments (i.e., to sound

good when you press play). The record's opener, "Cherry-Coloured Funk," is a testament to the genre's emphasis on a sonic blitz. Guitar reverb drips throughout the track, serving as a blanketing of sorts for the marauding drum track and angelic vocals. Songs like "Heaven or Las Vegas," or "Wolf in the Breast," are more pop-oriented, and are songs you could picture groups like Beach House or Real Estate releasing. The sounds, similar to my bloody valentine, are meant to overwhelm. Joy, ecstasy, elation, whatever emotion you wish to

use, is this record and this group. The album has a pulsating energy that can only really make you wonder how you haven't heard something like it before, something that sounds like a transcript of dreams that speak to life, death, and to pop-fueled advancements within the new genre.

"LISTEN CLOSE AND DON'T BE STONED/I'LL BE HERE IN THE MORNING/'CAUSE I'M JUST FLOATING/YOUR CIGARETTE STILL BURNS/YOUR MESSED-UP WORLD WILL THRILL ME" — ALISON BY SOUVLAKI

Slowdive, all throughout this period, were relatively in the background as a young bunch of kids that were semi-interested in

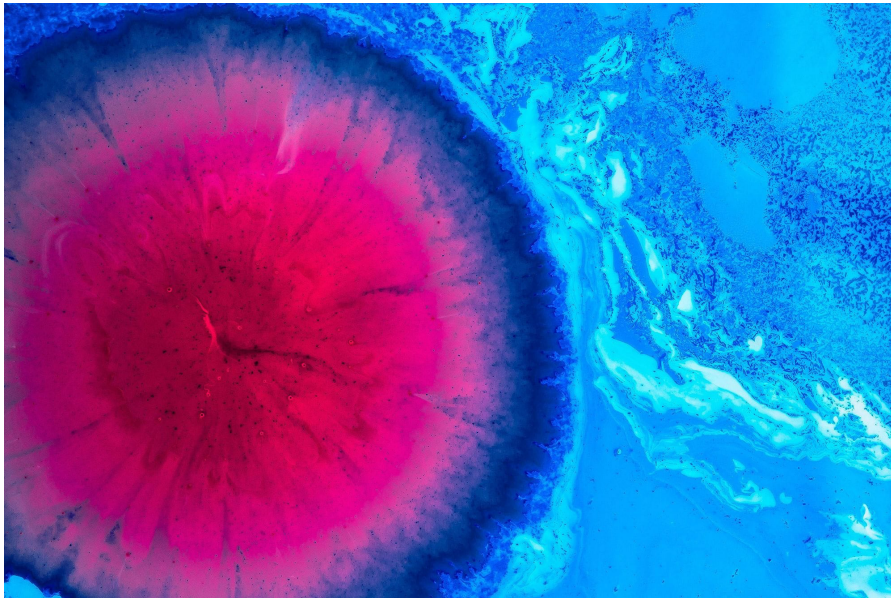
Siouxsie and the Banshees and abstractly playing guitar. They signed with Creation Records when they were all 19 and had released a few singles and EPs for the first few years. Just For A Day was their first release, to a relatively muted response from the press. The early 90s saw the beginning of a downward trend of acceptance for the genre, and Slowdive were dragged along with it. Dreary, boring, lackadaisical guitar playing with muted vocal emotion wasn't cutting it anymore

against the rise of Britpop, with groups like Oasis and Blur taking headlines for general hooliganism and rip-roaring stadium performances (long live the Gallaghers). As teenagers, this was obviously hard to hear. It's hard enough as

it is to not do well on an essay in class; imagine not doing well on an album released internationally. When they went back into the studio in 1992, they had one goal in mind: make a pop record. They brought in the likes of artists like Brian Eno for inspiration, pushed themselves with their songwriting, and eventually came to release *Souvlaki* in 1993.

The album, as probably expected, was panned on release. A poor

press campaign, dying love for shoegaze, and an overall desire to just crush the dreams of a teenage group produced quotes like, "I would rather drown choking in a bath full of porridge than ever listen to it again," from Dave Simpson of *Melody Maker*. Harsh. However, *Souvlaki* has since been recognized as a masterpiece in the genre. Comfy, pillow-like guitar sounds combine for beautiful tracks like album opener "Alison" or "Here She Comes." Their sound differentiates itself from



my bloody valentine, and Cocteau Twins, and The Jesus and Mary Chain by taking a chilled stance on the aggressive, beat-the-audience's-ear-into-submission style of sound. Slowdive sounds like what I imagine floating through space feels like, balancing on a fine line of tension and release. The tension is felt on a track like "When the Sun Hits," which builds to a crescendo-ing of vocals, drums, and guitars. It's a beautiful track and one that feels at times like nostal-

gia, and at others like the furious nature of a long walk home on a rainy night. The group draws heavily from ambient music, from artists like Aphex Twin and Brian Eno, and it's clear to see the differentiation from their predecessors.

"I HAD A GOOD RUN PLAYING HORSES IN MY MIND/LEFT MY HEART OUT SOMEWHERE RUNNING/WANTING STRANGERS TO BE MINE" — *DRUNK IN LA* BY BEACH HOUSE

These shoegaze pioneers' legacy is clear in artists like Deerhunter, Animal Collective, Perfume Genius, The Spirit of the Beehive, and DIIV. The fascination with the study of dreams, the

subconscious, and what the mind sounds like when played out with a guitar and some friends is a wonderful one, and one that spawned a genre of music that seemed to exist with and against the signs of the times. It died out as the 90s decided to latch themselves onto grunge, with groups like Nirvana, Hole, and Soundgarden—but not before giving us a glimpse at what it sounds like to dream out loud.

The Cost of Immunity

By K Irving

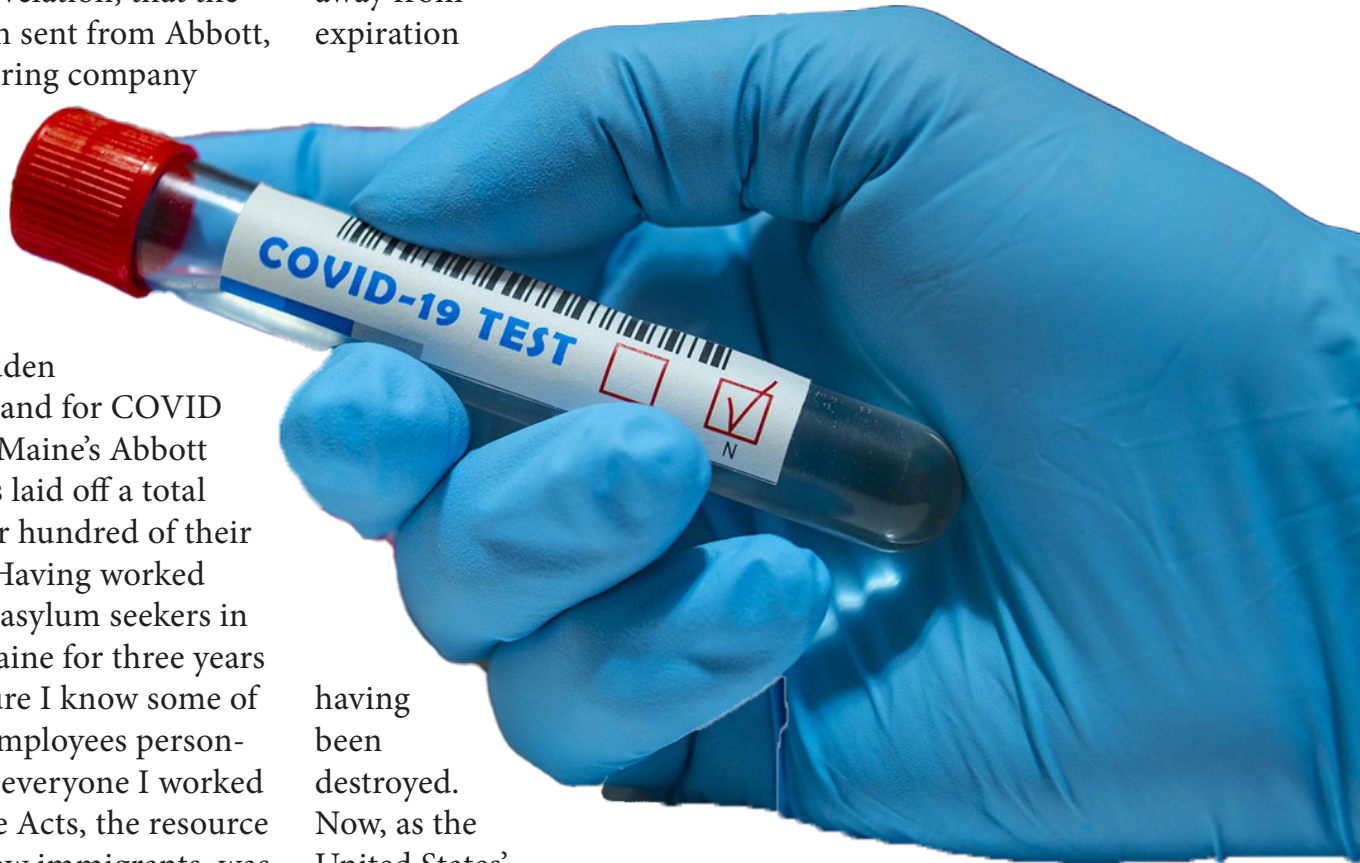
On the last day of Bowdoin's fall break, each student was requested to pick up an at-home test from Coles tower to administer themselves before classes picked back up. When I removed my testing kit from its cardboard "do not tamper" sleeve, I noticed, in a moment of solemn revelation, that the test had been sent from Abbott, a manufacturing company based in Southern Maine.

In June of 2021, following a sudden drop in demand for COVID testing kits, Maine's Abbott Laboratories laid off a total of about four hundred of their employees. Having worked closely with asylum seekers in Portland, Maine for three years now, I am sure I know some of these fired employees personally. Almost everyone I worked with at Hope Acts, the resource center for new immigrants, was an Abbott employee, a former Abbott employee, or an aspiring Abbott employee. Their team is composed almost entirely of new Maine immigrants.

Alongside the firings, claims were made that Abbott was

forcing their workers—most of whom have families back in Angola or the Democratic Republic of Congo without access to COVID tests—to destroy the surplus of testing kits that were no longer being bought up. The New York Times reported an alleged 8.6 million tests months away from expiration

with ease. Workers have returned to gruesome hours and a wage that stands at thirty-five cents over Maine's minimum. This time, the employees will be manufacturing tests instead of destroying them.



having been destroyed. Now, as the United States' vaccination rates have halted and even the fully vaccinated have proven fallible, Abbott's need for workers has returned. Abbott, being one of the only consistent employers of newly work-permitted asylum seekers, has replenished their workforce

At first blush, the Abbott firings are almost understandable in terms of the unpredictability of the pandemic. But contextually, letting their employees go after having forced them to destroy remaining tests comes off as

careless. Late last summer, the Trump administration drastically changed the process of applying for work permit authorization. Before this, asylum seekers had to wait 180 days; now, the wait period is only 365 days, and applicants are immediately refused authorization if they digress from the strictly regulated process even slightly (illegal entry into the United States, a single missed biometrics appointment, etc). The switch means that asylum seekers will rely on General Assistance from the city for considerably longer than they used to. In essence, extending the wait period for work permit applications was a very poorly veiled, last-ditch effort that evidently further fuelled the rhetoric that new immigrants relied too heavily on federal financial assistance.

Since my sophomore year, I have worked at Hope Acts nearly every month that I have been on break from Bowdoin. This past holiday season, in the thick of the pandemic, my roommate and I baked a Congolese-American stuffing to be delivered to the doors of each resident of the Hope Acts residential building. We enjoyed our meal and celebration over Zoom. I wanted to hear what the residents thought

of the stuffing, but most were working and couldn't make the celebration. Presumably, some were working the holiday at Abbott. I don't know whether those same residents were laid off six months later, but I can assume that Hope Acts was the only support system those workers had in the wake of the firings.

At Hope Acts, there is not much that can be done for those who have received their work permits but aren't yet employed—that is, aside from Hannaford gift cards and job applications sent to employers that are known not to hire non-citizens. The truth is, these grassroots organizations, composed largely of retired white Mainers, are

the backbone of immigrant support in Maine, and they shouldn't

be. With each new drastic increase in the asylum seeking population, shelters become increasingly over-

run, churches fall short of the demand

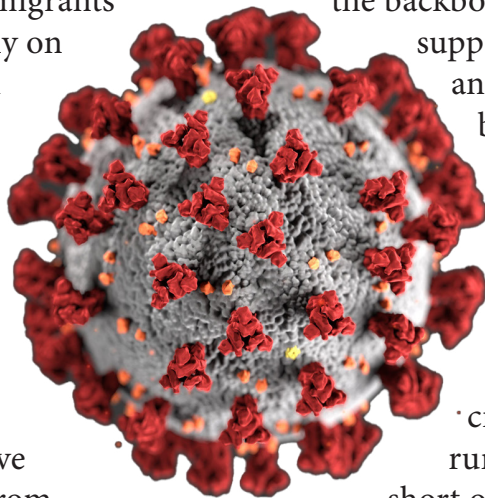
for food, and Hope Acts must refuse more desperate housing applicants day after day.

Enter rich, private institutions: namely colleges, who tout strong relationships with their surrounding communities. It would stand to reason that colleges like Bowdoin would

make tangible efforts to serve asylum seekers during periods of massive influx, but they don't. Mid-summer in 2019, my boss told me excitedly that she had heard Bowdoin being asked to house some new Brunswick immigrants, as the emergency housing in Portland was closing. At the end of July, I read that instead, the newcomers had relocated to a complex in Brunswick landing.

Throughout the pandemic, what once was a crumbling support network has become a glaringly insufficient one. Organizations like Hope Acts can't do much for asylum seeking workers who continue to be subject to COVID outbreaks, are fired and rehired along with COVID surges, and are just generally treated as fully interchangeable by employers who know they have no option but to return to the factory when called upon.

The impossibility of being a new asylum seeker in Maine far exceeds issues of workplace conditions and treatment. In fact, a position at Abbott is what many of my clients have aspired towards as a far-down-the-road position. In Portland, the housing crisis is more rampant than it ever has been, with city officials neglecting to create long term solutions for emergency housing, instead sequestering newcomers to motels to fend for themselves, sometimes for months on end. In these strip-mall adjacent motels, asylum



seekers have no translator, and oftentimes no phone. They have no bus fare. Even if they did, they would have no way of knowing how the Portland metro works and no knowledge of where to go.

Nonprofit groups, sometimes church organizations, bring food to those who live in the motels. These asylum seekers can't work, because the wait time to apply for a work permit doubled during the Trump administration and hasn't been upturned yet. And because they can't work, they can't make deposits on apartments, leaving it up to nonprofits, once again, to fundraise money for the deposit and to serve as liaisons between housing applicants and landlords who refuse to house asylum seekers.

The climb towards livability for asylum seekers in Maine is as treacherous as it is lonesome, and a job manufacturing at Abbott is oftentimes the pinnacle of the journey rather than a step along the way to more favorable employment. When I opened my neatly-packaged at-home

test kit to reveal that it was an Abbott test, my heart sank in remembering having heard of the layoffs and all the times I congratulated clients on their new jobs at Abbott, knowing how long it must have taken them to secure a job, a place to live, a means of transportation.

It is unlikely that institutions like Bowdoin will ever thoroughly examine the relationships it has with the asylum seekers and asylees that have proved the backbone of their COVID testing initiatives. It is hard to say if colleges are responsible for community-building and for advancing more robust storefronts on the dwindling main streets of their college towns. These immigrants often eventually find employment at the schools and have continued to support our COVID protocols throughout the pandemic—at times, at their own risk. There are countless avenues through which to examine the one-sidedness of the relationship between new immigrants and private institutions like Bowdoin, but Bowdoin's use of Abbott tests perfectly

exemplifies the glaring inequalities present in corporatization of pandemic health and safety.

Abbott will continue to attempt to desensitize Maine immigrants to the pandemic that has categorically affected their demographic the most; tiny nonprofit organizations will continue to bandage the gaping wound that is a severe lacking in housing and resources for new Mainers, as it is all that they can do; colleges like Bowdoin will continue to supply students with tests made by workers who don't have access to the same tests, who were paid to destroy tests rather than use them in vulnerable communities, and who face inevitable relocation or firing during Abbott's next downswing. Once we stop ignoring the pandemic altogether, I imagine the cycle will take new form: a corporation, either Abbott or one that hasn't yet entered play in Maine's employment field, will utilize Maine immigrants—those who know Maine as more than just Vacationland—to make life for rich Mainers and out-of-staters more comfortable.



Black Is Front Lines

By Jared Foxhall

(The names of key individuals in this essay have been removed for the sake of anonymity.)

“I survived. I felt the pain of an unsolicited knife and fought back. I gave myself credit for my resilience.

Throughout hardship comes strength so I can achieve happiness and I can love and care for myself in the way that I need to. The strength within me is inherent. I hold my head up high, I will never give up; I’m here, and I’m staying.”

These words were delivered on November 16 in the Westchester County Court by Osita Douboulay at the sentencing of Robert McCallion, a white supremacist who stabbed his 17-year-old daughter H eight times. The attack took place on March 13, 2020, the same night Breonna Taylor was fatally shot in her apartment in Louis-

ville, Kentucky by police officer Myles Cosgrove. McCallion received 15 years for attempted murder and a hate crime. Unsurprisingly, the police found a small arsenal of illegal semi-automatics and white supremacist propaganda in his apartment.

On March 13, I had just returned home from school after being ejected from campus during the first wave of the pandemic. Top of mind for my family, and everyone else’s, was the virus. This was right before people began wiping down groceries with disinfectant and crossing the street when anyone approached. On that night, we were dealing with a different kind of virus, one not so easily mitigated by a vaccine; one where Black skin is and has always been the first line of defense.

My sister, Zia, called the police that

night. Zia and her friend Y accompanied H to visit her father in Avalon, a complex of cushy riverside apartments with a private pool when McCallion approached them dressed in a hooded sweatshirt. H had gone upstairs to retrieve something, and while Zia and Y waited by the car, McCallion exited the apartment building and aggressively approached. He swung a punch at Y, causing her to drop a box of perfume. She dodged and the glass shattered, providing an opportunity for them to escape behind the building and into the trees. This is when Zia dialed 911. From their hiding spot up the hill, they could hear H’s screams he descended on her with unspeakable cruelty. In this neighborhood of Ossining, New York—a majority white, liberal, and upper-middle-class town in New York’s illustrious suburb, Westchester—the police showed up within minutes. When the police and the ambulance arrived, Zia and Y watched from the parking lot as H was carried on a stretcher into the emergency vehicle, her blood visible on the white walls inside. This is when Zia called our mother. We arrived shortly



after.

I remember thinking that the scene could have just as easily been caused by an elderly person falling down the stairs. It seemed calm considering the circumstance. What my mind can't seem to wrap itself around is that on this very same night, possibly in the same moment, a small army of police officers let 10 shots sail through Breonna's front door, killing her in her own home.

For me, these two incidents, by way of cruel fortuity, are intimately linked. Breonna's story, her murder, made the international news. H's story had a brief run in local online publications. She managed to survive the attack, and after undergoing facial reconstructive surgery, will recover decently from the physical wounds. If McCallion were successful, would she have made it onto the New York Times? What if the hate crime was committed by a police officer? If H were a black man, would there have been more press coverage? Does an instance of hate-based violence only gain notoriety if the murderer gets off, if there's no justice? What if McCal-

lion had gotten 10 years instead of 15? What if he got five? What if H was a protestor enthralled in street revolution, marching in tight braids and black boots? Would people have noticed if she were defacing public property when she was stabbed?

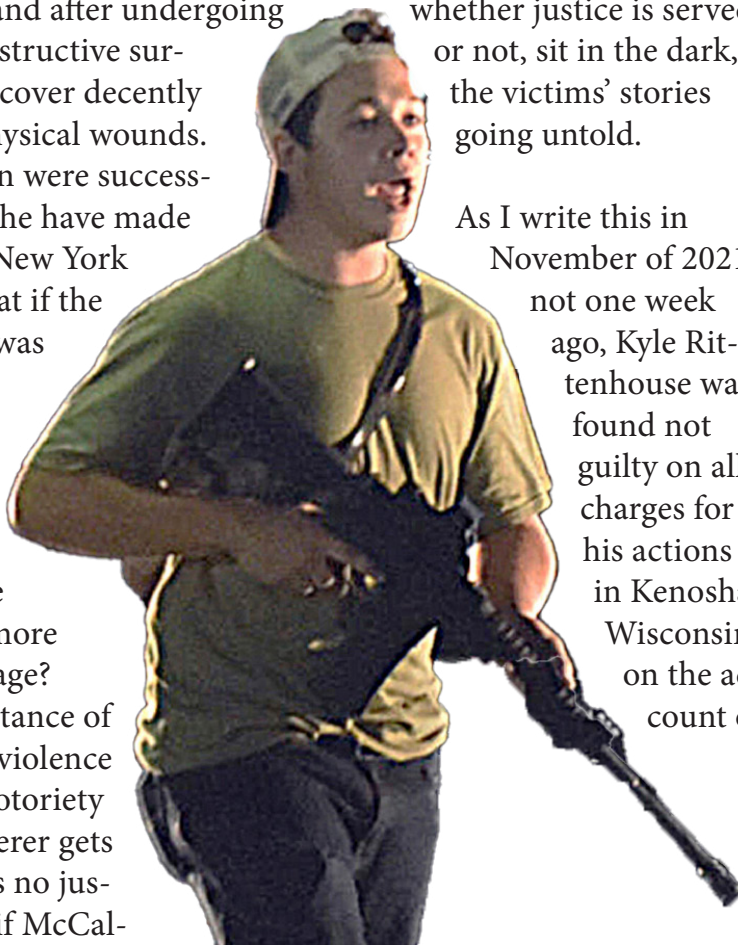
There are several possible reasons as to why this story did not get the coverage or public outrage it deserved. For one, there were no pedestrians filming, no video of the incident to go viral. H is also a black woman and acts of racial violence against black women—committed by police or otherwise—tend to not get the same notoriety and travel the same media distance as they do for black men. Most acts of violence in this country, whether justice is served or not, sit in the dark, the victims' stories going untold.

As I write this in November of 2021, not one week ago, Kyle Rittenhouse was found not guilty on all charges for his actions in Kenosha, Wisconsin on the account of

self-defense: first-degree intentional homicide, not guilty; attempted first-degree intentional homicide, not guilty; first-degree reckless homicide, not guilty; two charges of first-degree recklessly endangering safety, not guilty. Rittenhouse shot three white men, killing two of them and wounding the third, at a BLM protest responding to the actions of Kenosha police who shot and severely injured Jacob Blake, a 29-year-old Black man, in 2020 with no repercussions.

Rittenhouse's reasoning in court for being in Kenosha was to protect a car dealership from being vandalized and to provide medical aid. Viral photos of Rittenhouse from that hot night in August show a 17-year-old boy, oily-faced and pubescent, radiant with red flare lights and self-righteous rage, still several years away from ordering a drink, one year shy of being able to join the military, donning a backward baseball cap and dressed unambiguously for beer pong—only he is carrying a semi-automatic Smith & Wesson M&P 15. Rittenhouse appeared in his first national television interview on Fox News's Tucker Carlson Tonight soon after the Wisconsin jury acquitted him on all charges. The world is currently rattling with his story, amplifying his voice and experience through the global media echo chamber.

BLM activists argue, convinc-



ingly, that the jury's verdict emboldens white supremacists to antagonize protestors of police violence against black Americans. It sends the message that you can show up with an assault rifle and if anyone dies, a self-defense claim will keep you out of prison. This spectacle provides the perfect stage for a repeated

American drama. It's just unintelligible enough for consumers of all sides to bite down and get riled up, for the Right to rally behind Rittenhouse as an upstanding citizen, and for the Left to point out the court ruling

as another glaring example of systemic white supremacy. If we take a step back, we realize that none of this is new or surprising.

If we look at it too closely, however, and allow it to consume our view, we forget that the most frequent instances of racial hate and violence are far less media-friendly. They are quickly and silently delivered, they are dealt with, and are tucked away. We forget that there are violent racists walking through our very own backyards and that black skin and all

people of color are always the first line of defense. Sometimes, three black girls in a parking lot are the first line of defense. McCallon got 15 years (which seems low to me, but I'm no legal expert) and pleaded guilty on all charges. He has been tucked away and dealt with by our legal system. But justice,



even when delivered, is not an antidote for the virus of depraved violence in this country. We have some answers for how to fix our legal systems. We have models for reimagining our prison systems away from corporate slavery. We know that the police in this country need reformation to address racial trauma in inner cities; but no one has successfully proposed how to unsew the seeds of hatred planted in every single town in this country, how to intervene before the attack.

According to the FBI, hate

crimes have risen to their highest level in over a decade in the United States. In 2020, there were 7,759 hate crime incidents, 470 more than in 2019 and at an increase of six percent, steeper than previous years. The McCallion attack, assuming it made its way into FBI records, is just one of these hate crimes.

Anti-Black hate crime was the most common at 2,755 out of 4,939 incidents motivated by race, ethnicity, and ancestry broadly. Hate crimes are defined by the FBI as a criminal offense against a person or

property motivated in whole or in part by an offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity—so there's a lot in there, and they're not all stabbings and killings. But some of them are, and probably an increasing amount.

This past summer, my family took a vacation upstate to Lake Placid, NY in the Adirondacks. It was a much-needed respite for us after a year and a half of pandemic grind and burnout. We spent the nights watching The Great British Bakeoff,

cooking to avoid eating out, and laughing around endless rounds of Bananagrams, which I have resolved to never be able to win. During the day, we walked as a family through the old Olympic village between hiking and kayaking. On the day before our return home, my sister and I snuck out into the light rain for a swim. The water was warm, the air was cool and steamy. We circled the lake three full times, shivering as we unpacked the year.

The topic of conversation was primarily family. We expressed enormous pride for what our parents went through to be able to provide us with the life we have, through all the trauma and hardship. We praised our mother, an immigrant to this country from Nigeria at 17 without a high school diploma, who, through eight years of grueling persistence and lack of pay, managed to carry her education nonprofit through the pandemic. We praised our grandparents, who built and operated schools in Calabar, Nigeria while my mother was growing up and just barely survived the violent horrors of the Biafra civil war. We praised our father, who came out of humble origins to provide financial stability for us and who had survived 9/11 by finding shelter in a bakery refrigerator in downtown Manhattan. We counted all the little moments, the near deaths, the ones who didn't make it, that sum to create our improbable existence.

Sitting at the edge of the water, made mirror-still in the rain and empty of other tourists, Zia reflected on how the attack on H had impacted her. She expressed deep remorse for H and her family for the wrenching trauma that they experienced. Ultimately, though, she was getting through, journaling daily as a way of processing her emotions and new anxieties. I was probing because I was curious, especially since we had spoken so little about the event and its lack of news attention made it feel as though it didn't happen. At the same time, that day in 2020 calcified into a feeling for us that events like those were somehow even more present, that the possibility for violence could approach from anywhere, that McCallion could spring forth from the placid lake at any moment. But still, we entered the water and swam until our arms and legs ached from treading.

After our swim, in silence, we sat in this feeling of dark, disheartening astonishment—and a bit of pride—that this country that has given us such a beautiful life, could at any moment deliver an unsolicited knife. As privileged as we are, we stood reminded of what it means to be American in that moment—to be Black in America.

We took our time on the way home, weaving and rewinding our way through the suburban blocks to delay our return to


the Airbnb. When darkness descended, we began to notice rows of Blue Lives Matter flags on the lawns. We became more and more aware of our wet, exposed Black bodies in this empty, red-white town, and in a moment only understandable as prejudiced fear, we increased our walking pace. We quickly found our way back to the laughter and the Bananagrams and the British Baking Show.

Today is Thanksgiving. My family is mixed-race, so there will be Nigerians and Mayflower-descended Anglo-Saxons enjoying a strange combo of Obe Atta stew and Yorkshire Pudding. We will laugh until our stomachs hurt and forget that the cruel world exists. There is much to be grateful for. But when we pray together, as we usually do, Zia and I will remember H's words and recite the mantra:

“Throughout hardship comes strength so I can achieve happiness and I can love and care for myself in the way that I need to. The strength within me is inherent. I hold my head up high, I will never give up; I'm here, and I'm staying.”



This edition is dedicated to the loving memory of Theo Danzig '22.



**THE BOWDOIN
REVIEW**