

Rollins College

Rollins Scholarship Online

The Independent

5-2016

The Independent Ed. 3 Vol. 2

Rollins College Students

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.rollins.edu/independent>

Recommended Citation

Rollins College Students, "The Independent Ed. 3 Vol. 2" (2016). *The Independent*. 6.
<https://scholarship.rollins.edu/independent/6>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by Rollins Scholarship Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Independent by an authorized administrator of Rollins Scholarship Online. For more information, please contact rwalton@rollins.edu.



*The
Independent*



To The Independent Co-Founders:

Congratulations Graduates!

Scott Novak & Mary Catherine Pflug



The Independent

ED. 3 VOL 2

SPRING 2016

ROLLINS COLLEGE CENTER FOR INCLUSION AND CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT
ATTN: THE INDEPENDENT
BOX 2764 - 1000 HOLT AVENUE, WINTER PARK, FL 32789
THEINDEPENDENT@ROLLINS.EDU

STAFF

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

HANIA POWELL

CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

CARMEN CHENG

CO-FOUNDERS

SCOTT NOVAK

MARY CATHERINE PFLUG

HEAD CONTENT MANAGER

AMBER APPEL

ILLUSTRATOR

ELISE HICKMAN

PHOTOGRAPHER

CHRISTINE MARTIN

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

ELISE GRZEBIENIAK

COPY EDITORS

AVA BENHAM

MORGAN MCCONNELL

ZOE MITCHELL

CREATIVE WRITING EDITOR

CAITLIN CHERNIAK

STAFF WRITERS

HIND BERJI

LAUREN BISHOP

NICK DARBONNE

ANNA KEELER

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

KATHERINE AMMON

SIANNA BOSCHETTI

BARBARA HUGHES

PAUL KEGEL

TEDDY MEISSNER

MICHAELA O'DRISCOLL

DAVID SMITH

CARLEY RAY

DANIEL UDELL

Cover featuring photography by Christine Martin

Please send all letters to the editor submissions and articles to
theindependent@rollins.edu

Fonts in use: Centennial LT Std, Directors Gothic, Air Condensed, Air Compressed, Rage Italic Std, Couture, Piccadilly Std, Dumpling, Magneta, Exoritura Pro, Forte Mt Std, Lemor/Milk, Worst Paint Job Ever. Logo design by Mary Catherine Pflug

The opinions stated in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of The Independent, its staff, advertisers, or Rollins College.

This magazine is dedicated to the memory of Hamilton Holt
Editor and Publisher of The 'Original' Independent from 1897-1921 and Eighth
President of Rollins College from 1925-1949.

Letter from the Editors

Dear Reader,

In the United States, most of us grow up saying the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of every school day, excitedly waving American flags on the Fourth of July, and getting gold stickers on tests about our young nation's struggle for independence. However, it seems that as we get older, this early patriotism begins to wane. We may still enjoy an Independence Day picnic or hang a flag in our front yard, but as a people, our involvement in the system that governs our lives has fallen low on our priority list. Indeed, much has changed since 1776, and we're currently facing a domestic threat to democracy in the United States unparalleled by any in our history: too many of us have stopped voting.

With the seemingly ceaseless reports of corruption within our political system, the virtual state of gridlock in our congress, and the partisan bickering that has come to saturate the election process, the American populace has begun to lose interest. Or rather, begun to lose hope. The resulting lack of voter engagement is evident in the data. According to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center on international voter turnout, the U.S. lands 31st among the 34 developed countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, most of whose members are highly developed, democratic states. For a country that prides itself on setting an international standard for democracy, this signifies a crisis.

However, low turnout isn't solely the result of apathy on the part of the American people. There also exist socioeconomic barriers that prevent certain populations from being able to vote, such as a lack of access for Americans who can't afford to take a day off from work and voter ID laws that disenfranchise large numbers of low-income voters. Change must happen on both an institutional and social level, but significant progress isn't possible without a shift in attitude towards voting in America, not just in presidential elections, but also those of the House and Senate and on a state and local level.

For this reason, while there are many informative and insightful articles in this issue of The Independent, if you have time to read only one of them, it should be "Too Polite for Politics" by Rollins senior Scott Novak. The article makes a poignant commentary on the threat that polite avoidance of political discussion and debate poses to our democracy. Scott contends that we need to listen to the points of view of others and share our own, regardless of any social discomfort it may cause. As educational philosopher Robert Maynard Hutchins once warned, "The death of democracy is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference, and undernourishment." May we all heed this warning, take Scott's advice to heart, and not stray from active engagement in debate, community involvement, and elections alike.

Sincerely,

Hania Powell
Editor-in-Chief

Carmen Cheng
Chief Creative Officer



Send some letters to the editor,
we would love to hear from you!

CONTENTS



Photo courtesy of Scott Cook

POLITICS

THE FORUM

3
Time Marches On, but These Walls Stand Still: A Meditation on Flux, or My Time as a College Radio Disc Jockey
Nick Darbonne

5
The Charity Crisis: Rethinking Service in America
Michaela O'Driscoll

8
Answering Questions About Visual Impairment
Lauren Bishop and Morgan McConnell

11
GMOs: The Solution to World Hunger
Teddy Meissner

13
Student Refuses to Vote; Recognized as “Edgy” and “Fashionably Apathetic”
Sianna Boschetti

14
Too Polite for Politics
Scott Novak

17
He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named: Talking Trump
Daniel Udell

SOCIETY & CULTURE

22
The Duck Lipped Revolution
Hania Powell

24
The New Blackface
Hind Berji

THE ARTS

25
Album Reviews
Nick Darbonne

28
Summer Book Reviews
Amber Appel

32
Someday You Will
Anna Keeler

34
Poetry Selections
Various

35
Dear Alzheimer
Anonymous

36
Chamber Music
Christian Chicoye

38
Cultural Coalescence: What Does it Mean to belong to a Community?
Hind Berji

42
Featured Artist
Bekki Charbonneau

43
The Power of Fonts
Mary Catherine Pflug



TIME MARCHES ON, BUT THESE WALLS STAND STILL: A Meditation on Flux, or My Time as a College Radio Disc Jockey

Written by Nick Darbonne
Photography by Christine Martin

I think a lot about the earth without people. It's easy for me to imagine an unpopulated world when, past midnight, I sit in the DJ booth of our campus radio station. There's no noise other than what I'm broadcasting. I can go outside and hear nothing, save for the continual sprinklers and the intermittent flick of my lighter as I chain smoke. Actually, I stopped smoking a while back. It was stupid.

The thing that's always struck me about WPRK is how lived-in it looks. You'll know what I'm talking about if you've ever been to the basement of Mills and seen the walls of the office painted four different colors as stickers, posters, and assorted memorabilia accrued through the years cover an increasingly large area. The couches are dusty; they reek with the odor of years of sweat. Record labels used to send stickers bundled with promotional CDs; you can see presumably rare ones plastered on desks, promoting albums like

Dizzee Rascal's *Boy in da Corner* or Mogwai's *Hardcore Will Never Die, But You Will*. They don't send many these days.

I can never stop wondering about the people who've come before me. These things are proof they've existed. A sense of humor permeates the place; it has accumulated. Jokes now removed from their context are scattered about. There's a cryptic phrase writ in Sharpie declaring "you are the cheese." There's a drawer taped shut. There's another that warns the reader that if they were to open it, "serpents would end [their] life." I don't know who's responsible for these; I don't ever want to know.

There's no use for this knowledge. I don't question the people who come in or the people who work here. They all have their own stories and different levels of psychic tethering to the place. Some are too strong. They say they used to work here as students

twenty years ago. They call in, visit, linger, stare; some still DJ. They'll tell you about their glory days. But many more people are transients. They come in only to work or volunteer, and then they leave. The station has no pull for them. They haven't left behind pieces of themselves. Why should they? Why would anyone want that?

I met a girl a while back when I volunteered. That was my initial pull. The station alienated me at the time because it was run primarily by one monolithic friend group. There was, however, the opportunity to listen to tons of music in order to help the music director with her Sisyphean task of labeling and writing comments on new releases—which was cool for a while. Since then, I've grown tired of just how much music is churned out by all these groups who try really hard to sound like *that one band*, only tweaking bits and pieces so no one thinks



they're unoriginal. Imitation's the sincerest form of flattery and all, but can we at least be honest about it?

I first set foot in the station three years ago. It's hard to believe that. I freak out a lot about the passage of time. Virtually everyone on staff at the time has left (the DJ continuity is a bit better, but not by much). There's a photograph pinned to a board of what I assume to be the dorky staff of WPRK in the 90s. Henry Rollins stands in the center, a foreboding but calming presence. I've recently realized that punk rock is so important to me because of that calm. Amid the fury and emission of rage, there is peace. I don't know if too many people feel that way anymore. It's weird, because I didn't like punk much until she came along. I think she carried more anger than I did. She opened me up to the anger I hid. She said my principal emotion was anger. She said a lot of other things that will not leave me, but that one is foremost. She was probably right.

I don't think any of us expect to fall in love, or expect that when we do, it will last. Maybe serial daters expect to fall in love a lot. Or those of us raised on Disney films or romantic comedies. Or those of us who, for whatever reason, are eager to let slip those three jagged words that suck the air out of my lungs and paralyze me because it feels like they could hit a wall or fall into a void and never be recovered. "I love you" is hard to say, even though the words are simple. You can even learn to say it in every language by reading a travel guide. In case, you know, you fall in love with someone you've met at a Parisian café as you two struggle to verbally communicate.

It's hard to recount all these details and not be overcome with emotion. Sometimes the feelings are so strong I can't articulate them. I can scream, though. I think that's where angry music comes from. It's telling that you can't convincingly transcribe a scream.

Even so, all the screaming won't get across how it feels to watch time pass you by, or to watch people pass you by. We exist in

this matrix of seemingly infinite space and seemingly linear time, but I still can't escape some of the feelings I'd get when I spent time with her here. There's a phenomenon called "conditioned place preference." It shows up in users of amphetamine, who develop attachment to places where they've taken the drug. Researchers like to mess around with rats and condition them to prefer certain places over others; it's a Pavlovian kind of deal. If God is a scientist, I'm a rat.

I bring her up because for a while after she ditched me, I'd expect her to show up whenever I was at the station. It was sort of paralyzing. Like me, she had ties to the place, but she took on a new life of sorts upon realizing someone else was a better fit for her. In a way, I idealized her new boyfriend. He was on the socially acceptable side of deranged; he harbored a casual coke habit that he used to enhance his social interactions and his day-to-day life. All the anti-drug bullshit you're fed doesn't take away the glamor and brazen live-fast-die-young spirit that fuels many an addict, even the functional ones. *Especially* the functional ones.

I'm leaving out the whole story. What's important is that we weren't fully compatible at that point in our lives. We left each other neither entirely guilty nor wholly blameless. I wasn't initially willing to accept these gray areas. Worse still, nothing had prepared me for the permanence of memory and the oppressiveness of physical space. WPRK itself remains in constant flux while unchanging in nature, and my relationship with the space mirrored this: there were too many

things I could not shake. They were the late night conversations the three of us had (her, her soon-to-be boyfriend, and me) about yearning and feeling stuck and movies that spoke and art that sang and our pasts. There was that one weekend when, barely knowing each other, we impulsively drove hours to the beach. There were his friends and his clients (because he was a dealer) and the girl he was actually in love with who was a struggling heroin addict (who seemed to never truly want him) and her manipulative boyfriend (who was to be reviled, though he was always

nodding off and thus didn't seem too bad) and there was some complaining and there was the acknowledgment that all this was temporary and that we wouldn't be friends long and that we wouldn't be in Orlando long and there were the oft-invoked tenets of Buddhism, which is sort of about understanding flux and the transient nature of all reality, which was an illusion anyway.

I know it's all an illusion, but it feels real enough for me. I can't begin to imagine the stories other people have had within the same space, within the multicolored walls and the mustiness, and possibly in the very same headspace as the perpetually confused, pensive mess that I was so long ago. Expect it to continue *ad infinitum*, unknown to the rest of the world, small workings creating our individual realities and making or crushing our dreams accordingly. I hope I don't become one of the people who drops by the station to reminisce on a long-dead dream.

I've learned that the earth ages without us. ■

There's a phenomenon called "conditioned place preference." Users of amphetamine develop attachment to places where they've taken the drug. Researchers like to mess around with rats and condition them to prefer certain places over others; it's a Pavlovian kind of deal. If God is a scientist, I'm a rat.

THE CHARITY CRISIS:

Rethinking Service in America

Written by Michaela O'Driscoll

There are roughly 1.5 million nonprofit organizations currently in the United States of America, 350 thousand of which are dedicated to “human services”—feeding the hungry, assisting crime victims and offenders, providing job training, housing the homeless, helping people prepare for and recover from disasters, maintaining playgrounds and athletic fields, acting as advocates for children, offering programs to help youth mature into adults who contribute to society, and so on. That equals one nonprofit dedicated to “human services” for every 350 people in this country, and yet in the year 2014, 1.2 million public school students were identified as homeless in this country, there were 46.7 million people living in poverty, and there were approximately 2.4 million people in prison. These statistics beg the question—what is the problem here? Why aren't these people being taken care of? Why does child poverty and homelessness still exist in this country, especially considering the amount of wealth we have? There are thousands of nonprofits doing incredible work with amazing people who have devoted their lives to the cause of others, but the truth is—as is reflected in this data—this work and passion is not enough.

This being said, the general attitude of Americans, particularly young Americans, toward charity is positive. Young people more than other demographic groups invest time and energy into volunteerism and social work. But the reality is that although most people would agree in theory that charity is important, necessary, and helpful, few actually live their lives in a way that reflects this sentiment. This is understandable. Living in this fast-paced world is exhausting. We're constantly being bombarded by the atrocities that exist in this country; the injustice is overwhelming, seemingly unending, and not getting better. Even compassionate people can become fatigued and discouraged by the relentless media coverage of poverty, homelessness, and crime.

We're constantly being bombarded by the atrocities that exist in this country; the injustice is overwhelming, seemingly unending, and not getting better. Even compassionate people can become fatigued and discouraged by the relentless media coverage of poverty, homelessness, and crime.

Unfortunately, even within nonprofit organizations, there can be apathy toward the vision for change. Talk

is good, but it's cheap. Roxanne Spillett, president of Boys and Girls Club of America paid herself \$1.8 million in 2014. As the visionary for an organization meant to broaden the opportunity of disadvantaged children, there is really no way to reconcile such a salary with a true desire to carry out that mission. In recent years, CEOs at 78 of the top US charities were paid between \$500,000 and \$1 million salaries. Is it really possible to keep perspective on your mission when you live a life of excess? These kinds of funds could change lives; instead, they sit in the pockets of the higher-ups. There is something wrong with how we're going about charity and our overall perspective toward it in our society.

I have been involved in a local 501c3 children's nonprofit for the past twelve years, where I have gained a lot of perspective on how people serve and how effective nonprofits really are in creating change. This organization works to provide resources to underserved children all over greater Orlando. Every Saturday morning, the organization buses in around 400 kids ranging from 4-18 years old for breakfast, games, crafts, and mentorship. Most of these kids live at or below the poverty line, a lot of them in trailer parks, extended stay hotels, and section 8 housing. For 13 years, this organization has tried to pull these kids up out of their circumstances and give them equal opportunity to succeed. It's been a struggle. I've learned that breaking the cycle of poverty is complicated and the barriers to escaping it are seemingly endless and compound each other. A lot of these barriers exist for these kids just as a byproduct of where they live and the circumstances of their parents. These children did nothing to dictate their socioeconomic status. Growing up working at this nonprofit, constantly confronted with this reality, I realized the extent of my own advantage in life at a fairly young age. Every week I hung out with kids my age who hadn't eaten since their school-provided lunch the day before, who didn't know how to read at ten years old, who sometimes smelled like cigarettes and urine, who had no shoes on their feet, who watched out for their younger siblings as if they had to protect them from something. I had to deal with none of these things, but I watched as these kids did.

So, I've pretty much always known about my privilege. I was born with more than a lot of other people. I'm white, middle-class, have two loving parents, and grew up in a stable home environment. My intelligence was cultivated with the help of good teachers, supportive parents, and private school. All of these things got me where I am today. I've worked hard, but there is no way I would be here without the head start I was given. I wonder how many people would say that their current success is based solely on their own hard work and initiative. All of us who can

With this realization came guilt and resentment. Why was I the one given these things while others did without? Why was I born into a loving, financially stable family while others live in poverty and environments of hostility? I felt guilty because I didn't know how to make it right, and I felt resentful of the system that allowed for this kind of inequality.

afford to live comfortably have been given some advantage, but the hard truth is that not everyone is given the same opportunity to succeed. We cannot live our lives ignoring this fact, although some people do.

For me, with this realization came guilt and resentment. Why was I the one given these things while others did without? Why was I born into a loving, financially stable family while others live in poverty and environments of hostility? I felt guilty because I didn't know how to make it right, and I felt resentful of the system that allowed for this kind of inequality. So, at a pretty young age, I started out on a quest to reconcile my privilege, to use it for the good of others, and a lot of the hard work I did in high school was with this in the back of my head: I had better work hard, because not everyone has the same ability to succeed as I do. I believed it was my duty to get to a place in life where I could really give back.

I can't speak for everyone, but I think that a lot of us are aware of what we've been given, and we plan to live lives that reflect our commitment to serving others in some capacity. But for some reason, we tend to start to feel entitled to what we have as we progress through our lives. Our mindset of service shifts from something that is our duty to something that is "nice to do." We do it to make ourselves feel good; it's not really an obligation anymore, and so a lot of times it falls by the wayside. It's just some extra nice thing we do for those poor people, who really, let's be honest "have brought it on themselves." I mean, "we don't really owe anyone anything, do we?" We've worked hard for what we have and where we are. *Wrong*. And don't forget it. This perspective on service is what's keeping kids homeless and filling our prisons. When it's not our duty, it doesn't get done.

I believe that your privilege doesn't have to be a burden you bear. It can be a tool that empowers you to become the best human you can be. It can be what motivates you to create a life reflective of your deep-seeded belief that you have been given more, and so you must give more. I truly believe that what our society needs is a perspective change. Our current perspective, the one that drives how we think about our nonprofit sector and volunteerism in general is one that views service as an addition to our already busy lives, something extra we do once or twice a month that makes us feel warm and fuzzy inside. I'm not preaching specific political reform or new legislation, although I do think those things can be used to combat our societal problems as well. I'm simply pleading for a perspective shift, which I am certain will go a distance much greater to decrease poverty and inequality

in America and the world. Our perspective should be that our privilege means we have a duty. If we truly change our thinking, we also change our behavior. Even just a few individuals changing their behavior can be what changes the perspective and the circumstances of those around them. We can leverage our talent, our time, our privilege, and ourselves. This can take so many different forms—a physician who provides care for the uninsured, an artist who does workshops for kids in her community, a business owner who hires ex-felons. Service is not just a weekend activity; it's a way of living. It's engaging with people and entering into relationships. It's not compartmentalizing service into a corner of your life, but letting it consume your being and identity. It can do so much more for others and for you if it is seen this way.

Most of all, it means taking a step in—living outside of yourself with the people around you. This is counter to our individualistic society, where the ultimate concern is often personal success. We need to take responsibility for the wellbeing of other people, refuse to give up on them, and make it our mission to see them succeed. That's not three hours on a Saturday morning, which is what I personally have treated it as for years; that's every minute of every day.

I was listening to a sermon on relationship and community a couple months ago, and the speaker told an anecdote about two trees they had growing in their yard side-by-side when he was a kid. One started to die, so they called the arborist to take a look at it. His diagnosis was that the tree had contracted some sort of disease and was on its last leg. He told them though that unfortunately, even though only one of the trees was diseased, both would end up dying in the next year or so. The roots of the trees had grown together over years of close proximity, and each root system had become completely dependent on the other. Because the one tree was dying, the other would as well. I argue that this also applies to our human relationships—the hurt of the one leads to the hurt of the other, but also, perhaps not with the trees but definitely with people, the success and health of the one can elevate the success of the other—and it should. If we live our lives aware of the reality of our connectedness and our duty to one another, we can make this world a better place to live in. No one gets left behind, and everyone has a chance. So, while I began this article by identifying the need to rethink service in America, what I am finally calling for is a rethinking of our humanity, how we relate to those around us, and how a change in that thinking will affect the state of the world. ■



ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Written by Lauren Bishop and Morgan McConnell

As visually impaired students with two very different levels of sight, we are often asked about our experiences. Because the number of visually impaired students on Rollins' campus is increasing, we hope to explain our perspective. Of course, these are only our personal opinions; other members of the visually impaired community may have disparate views. Still, we thought that it would be beneficial to answer some of the more general questions about visual impairment.

How much can you see?

One day, I was at a costume store, browsing all of the options before Halloween. I looked closely at the different outfits and decorations, barely using my cane as I strolled through the aisles. Anyone watching me would probably realize that I am not completely blind.

"Excuse me," a middle-aged man said. "I just wanted to let you know that when I first saw you, I thought to myself, 'Oh, that poor girl.' Then, I realized that it's a costume. You got me!"

I guess that he noticed my expression.

"Wait," he stammered. "Are you actually . . .?"

"Visually impaired?" I finished for him. "Yes."

I was so upset that I had to leave the store.

Visual impairment falls on a spectrum. Some people may still be able to see, while others are completely blind. This means that some of us can see large objects and read with magnification. Meanwhile, others may occasionally run into walls and use braille and screen readers. Likewise, some of us may rely entirely on a mobility cane, while others may alternate between using one depending on the situation. Some people only need their canes in certain lighting. Other times, people may have blind spots that slightly obscure their vision. Some people may have what appears to be perfectly good vision but struggle with depth perception, which requires them to use a cane when going down stairs. In fact, some people carry small identification canes that they use so other people can identify them as visually impaired, even if they do not need the cane for travel.

Another thing that many people do not realize is that the amount of vision a visually impaired person has can vary at any given time. A person can be walking on a sunny day, pass under a tree, and temporarily lose sight because of the rapid change in light. Even streetlights may not be bright enough for someone who is visually impaired to see at night. There may even be good and bad eye days. For instance, if someone still has enough sight to read, that person may experience eyestrain after reading for an extended period of

time, resulting in a temporary loss of vision.

With such a wide variety of eye conditions, situations that are easy for one person may cause problems for another; it all varies. Sometimes it can be challenging to articulate why we can see some things and not others, because we do not always understand ourselves.

What is the most difficult part about being a visually impaired student on a college campus?

In terms of academic accommodations, there are few difficulties. Rollins is very accessible, especially when compared to other colleges. The most difficult part about being a visually impaired student is not the schoolwork but the social aspects. While everyone is extremely friendly, you would be surprised how difficult it can be to establish new friendships when you cannot see people's faces. It always feels like you are surrounded by strangers. On occasion you can have conversations with people and not even know whom you are talking to. There comes a point when it is awkward to ask people for their names, and some people seem to feel uncomfortable when they realize that you do not recognize them. It appears that most sighted people are under the impression that the visually impaired possess supernatural voice recognition abilities. While there are some who have mastered this form of identification, most of us are not so skilled. If you know people who are visually impaired, please say your name when you are speaking to them. It will be much appreciated.

Another issue is that the visual nature of social media makes it difficult to stay connected. Platforms like Instagram and Snapchat are not accessible. Thankfully, some social media platforms are improving their accessibility (Facebook now describes pictures to a minimal extent), and this will likely make things easier in the future. However, until this technology is perfected, there will always be a social barrier.

How do you do your schoolwork?

This depends on the degree of vision that the person has. Some people can read with magnification, using either a handheld magnifier, e-book with increased font, large-print texts, or other devices. For example, a CCTV allows the user to increase font size, change color, and scan the page to convert it into audio. People may switch between reading with magnification and using an e-reader based on how long the assignment is. If an assignment is too extensive, reading may fatigue the eyes and take up an unnecessary amount of time. This is when VoiceOver technology, which automatically comes with all Apple devices, and audio books become useful. (If you don't feel like reading an assignment and have an iPhone, go to Settings → General → Accessibility → VoiceOver. Now, you can do your laundry and your

WE ARE NOT VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE WHO HAPPEN TO BE STUDENTS; WE ARE STUDENTS WHO JUST HAPPEN TO ALSO BE VISUALLY IMPAIRED.

homework at the same time!)

Some individuals may rely on their screen reader 100% of the time. Others may switch between braille and the screen reader depending on the assignment. For math, science, and foreign language, people will use braille if they have the proper materials, including a braille display or braille books. A braille display is like a braille computer screen. There are little pins in the braille display that form the dot combinations. Small holes in the surface of the screen allow the pins to rise. Some e-books are accessible this way, while other books have to be hardcopies.

When it comes to writing, most assignments are typed, because the computer can read the assignment back to you. It also announces which letters you are typing. However, the setup of the keyboard allows you to type based on memory so that you do not need sight to type. (Actually, no one should look at a keyboard when typing.) Students with more sight can handwrite on paper with darker lines or larger spacing for increased writing size. Students may also opt to write with markers or 20/20 pens as opposed to regular pens and pencils, because the thicker lettering is easier to read.

Is it offensive to ask you questions about your visual impairment?

It is not at all offensive to ask questions about visual impairment; if anything, it is preferred. However, it can be difficult for someone who is visually impaired to open up or explain to people what he or she can and cannot see. We don't want to weigh people down with all the details if they do not want to hear them. However, it is nice to be able to explain to people what it is like to be visually impaired so that they can be more educated on the different kinds of visual impairment. Asking questions allows this conversation to start; just don't make all of your conversations about their eyesight. People with disabilities are normal people and have a variety of interests. Your relationship with someone who is visually impaired or disabled in any way should go beyond that disability.

How do you feel about people asking you if you need help?

This tends to be a more nuanced issue, and everyone has a

slightly different perspective on it. If you see someone who is visually impaired and you genuinely think that he or she needs help, always feel comfortable to politely offer your assistance. People's willingness to help is always appreciated. Even if help is not actually needed, it is nice to know that people are kind enough to offer. The problem really only occurs when people offer help and then refuse to accept that the visually impaired person does not require assistance. Here's an example from an experience of mine on campus:

I approached a flight of stairs. As I was about to walk down them, a man stopped me.

"Do you need help going down the stairs?" he asked.

"No thanks. I'm good," I declined.

"No, let me help you," he insisted.

"No, really. I'm good."

"No, no. Here."

The man then grabbed the arm that I was using to hold my cane. He proceeded to pull me down the stairs, restricting my ability to guide myself. If it were not for the fact that I was already familiar with these steps and had a handrail to hold on to, I would have fallen. The ironic part is that there was actually a ramp only a few feet away.

There's nothing wrong with offering help, but nobody wants to be grabbed by a strange man and pulled away after saying no. Be polite. Help and respond to us as you would to any able-bodied person that you think may need assistance.

Conclusion

As you can see, there are many different ways to experience visual impairment. The most important thing to remember is that disability does not significantly alter the fun that we have on campus. Having a disability is only one small part of a person. We are not visually impaired people who happen to be students; we are students who just happen to also be visually impaired. All students have the same goal in mind, and in this sense, we are not at all different. ■



GMOs: The Solution to World Hunger

Written by Teddy Meissner
Illustrated by Carmen Cheng

“When 50 million people in the richest country on the planet are hungry, that’s a crisis.” This statement by Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA) emphasizes one of our nation’s largest issues. High numbers of citizens have gone hungry across America following the 2008 financial collapse, and little has been done to stop it. Biotechnologies have played an important role in the effort to increase nutritional value, food security, and sustainability while reducing prices in America. These methods harness cellular and biomolecular processes to develop technologies and products that help improve our lives and the health of our planet. These include both animal cloning and genetically modified crops, though the former should take a back seat to the latter; genetically modified crops boast more advantages than disadvantages. Thus, the solution to our hunger crisis lies in GMOs. In order to feed a growing population, Americans must stop cloning meats and start producing more genetically modified crops.

During his first presidential campaign, President Barack Obama made it his mission to end child hunger by 2015. Rep. McGovern responded, stating, “We haven’t done a goddamn thing to do that, to be honest.” Since the 2008 economic crisis, there has been a dramatic increase in hunger levels from over 27 million consumers to about 50 million. According to the Cooperative Development Institute, in 2013, one in seven households was food insecure and 5.6 percent had very low food security. During this same time, households with

children were 9.9 percent food insecure. These 3.8 million households were often unable to provide adequate and nutritious food for their children in that year.

In an effort to ease these difficulties, many programs have become available to help those who need food. The largest of these programs is Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which benefits thousands of people around the globe through food stamp programs. Anticipated drops in funding for SNAP benefits may be on their way, but for now, those receiving stamps qualify for about \$1.49 a meal.

While this money is beneficial, \$1.49 per meal is simply insufficient. With America’s population growing approximately three million people per year, hunger will certainly continue to present itself as a problem.

Animal cloning is the process through which an entire genetically identical organism is reproduced from a single cell taken from a parent organism. In January 2008, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) concluded that meat and milk from the clones of cows, pigs, and goats, as well as their offspring, are as safe as the conventional sources of meat. In theory, cloning seems like a viable option to solve the current food crisis, but a closer look reveals that cloning animals has many negative implications. For example, animal cloning promotes farming while disregarding animal welfare and environmental impacts. Additionally, cloning is an unreliable technology that can result in the loss of subject organisms or severe

The solution to our
hunger crisis lies in GMOs.

Food security and sustainability continue to be some of the world's most pressing issues, and the only logical answer is actively pursuing a more plant-based diet through the use of GMOs.

mental and physical injury. With more than 95 percent of cloning attempts resulting in failure, it is common to see oversized heads, twisted limbs, malformed kidneys, bloated fetuses, and immune system deficiencies, as well as surrogate mothers suffering from severe health problems. Is it worth continuing this practice for the mere five percent of animals that do make it through the cloning process unscathed?

The FDA disregards animals' health problems and instead emphasizes that better technology is on the way. However, there is no data that suggests this is the case. As Rudolph Jaenisch, a cloning researcher at MIT, said, "There's been no progress. I mean it. Zero. The only thing we've begun to realize is how big the problem is." Another leading cloning researcher and professor at Rockefeller University, Peter Mombaerts, said that an "extremely efficient" version of cloning would have only a 20-30 percent success rate. Though a significant amount of money, research, time, and effort has gone into improving cloning, in its current form, it is inhumane and unjustifiable to continue with these efforts. Additionally, raising livestock for consumption utilizes many more natural resources than agriculture does.

For these reasons, if we really want to increase food production, we need to pursue better technology in agriculture. Genetically modified crops produce high yields at a great success rate, providing the best opportunity to produce more food. Before discussing GMOs, however, it is important to understand the benefits of a plant-based diet, and/or the benefits of balancing Americans' meat and plant consumption.

In his article, "Why Everyone Should Eat More Plants", Rich Roll tells us the average American consumes only six percent of their daily calories from fresh fruit, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and seeds. This diet has resulted in high rates of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and obesity. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, these health problems account for approximately 75 percent of the billions of dollars spent on healthcare every year. It is important to note, then, that a plant-based diet is the only nutritional protocol known to prevent, and in some cases reverse, all four of the major illnesses that plague us: heart disease, cancer, lung disease, and diabetes. If we ensured that 94 percent of our diet came from natural foods, these illnesses might simply vanish. A plant-based diet can, for example, help control a gene linked to cardiovascular disease and

plaque buildup in arteries, or change the genetic expression and alter the function of critical cellular components responsible for forming and sustaining tumors. Toni Tarver, author of "The Chronic Disease Food Remedy", informs some studies have even concluded that lycopene from tomatoes appears to lower the risk of prostate, lung, and bladder cancers, while other studies have shown that foods rich in anthocyanins, such as blueberries and strawberries, significantly reduce death from cardiovascular disease.

GMOs, then, have an important place in the future of the American diet. If more plants are grown in America, lifestyles will be healthier and the food crisis might vanish. By genetically modifying crops, we can cheaply produce large quantities of food, feeding large numbers of people who are in turn able to lead a healthy lifestyle. The need for increased crop production requires that the plants in question be able to cope with the challenges of production. Droughts, climate change, weather, and soil types are all factors that genetic modifications can address while increasing farmers' yields and consistency. The need for an increase in food production of approximately 50 percent by 2030, constrained by land requirements and energy and water limitations, requires the expansion of GMO production.

The most common arguments against GMOs are that they have unexpected side effects, are environmentally unsafe, and are less healthy than eating organically. GMO foods have had antibiotic features that make them resistant or immune to various diseases and viruses. Genetic modification often mixes or adds proteins that aren't indigenous to the original plant or animal, which can cause new allergic reactions in the human body. Additionally, there are also concerns that GMOs harm the environment with the chemical pesticides and herbicides commonly used with these crops. Birds, bees, and butterflies are important to our environment as pollinators and biological control agents. The toxicity of the chemicals used can put these critical species to our ecosystem at risk. Organic activists also attack the acceptance of GMOs; however, while organic farms may use less products to grow their crops, their crop yield is smaller and unpredictable due to relying on seasons, weather, and soil. Additionally, organic foods are higher in cost and are often impossible for most low-mid income families to afford.

Currently, however, only theories can support the pitfalls of GMOs. In an article titled "Yet Another Study Confirms GMOs Are Safe, So Why Are Bans Still Spreading?", it's stated that, "the scientific debate over the risks associated with genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is over; the science is settled. The problem is the anti-GMO movement is not based on science, but rather ideology — and ideology, at least for now, has trumped science." The U.S. National Academy of Sciences has also repeatedly found genetically modified foods to be safe, noting that after billions of meals served, "no adverse health effects attributed to genetic engineering have been documented in the human population." Some studies have even found that genetically engineered crops can benefit the environment. The National Academy of Science's 2010 report found that, up to the date of publication, GMO crops had reduced insecticide use, reduced the use of the most dangerous herbicides, increased the frequency of conservation tillage and no-till farming, reduced carbon emissions, reduced soil runoffs, and improved soil quality.

Food security and sustainability continue to be some of the world's most pressing issues, and the only logical answer is actively pursuing a more plant-based diet through the use of GMOs. While the challenge of feeding the hungry will not be solved by any single approach, there have been more than 2000 studies that have examined the health and environment effects of GMOs and none have documented reliably any significant negative effects. The National Academy of Sciences, American Association for the Advancement of Science, the World Health Organization, and the Royal Society of Medicine alongside dozens of major independent science organizations, have found no evidence that they are less safe than conventional or organic foods, and in some cases may be safer, less costly, and more sustainable. We cannot afford to ignore this viable option to stop hunger. ■

Student Refuses to Vote; Recognized as “Edgy” and “Fashionably Apathetic”



Reproduced by permission of HongQi Zhang - 123RF

Written by Sianna Boschetti

With the 2016 presidential election rapidly approaching, most people are preparing to head to the polls. Student Katie Wenzel '17, however, stands apart from the mainstream population for her decision to abstain from voting.

“Sure, I’m politically active, but voting just isn’t that important to me,” said Wenzel. “We’ve got all these problems in our country – gender inequality, racial injustice, police brutality, economic distress – but it’s not going to go away just by me driving twenty minutes and checking a box at the poll.”

According to a 2014 Census report on voter demographics, voters from the ages of 18 to 24 consistently have the lowest turnout at the polls, with only 38% of young voters participating in the 2012 election. The decision to abstain is not unique to Wenzel; it’s a common trend among young voters.

Yet not having her voice heard in the upcoming elections does not seem to bother Wenzel as much as one would expect for a “politically active” citizen. She argues that change cannot be enacted by simply voting for the right candidate; change, she says, will take a lot more than a new Commander-in-Chief.

“The president isn’t nearly as huge of a role in American politics as people make them out to be,” she said. “There’s still, like, Congress and governors and mayors for bills to

get through, too. Do we even elect them into office? Is that a thing?”

Her disinterest in voting, she claims, is not caused by a lack of political knowledge. “I consider myself extremely politically aware,” she said. “I listen to NPR.”

Several of Wenzel’s peers seem to share her sentiments. Some even praise her desire to avoid the polls this November.

Emma Lawton '17 said, “She’s always been an independent thinker.”

“I can’t really blame her,” said Alice Karsten '18. “I’m not a fan of any of the candidates, really, so I don’t care that much about who wins, either.”

“[Wenzel’s decision to abstain] is pretty admirable, I’d say,” stated Samuel Duprey '18. “By not voting, she’s sticking it to the man in the most effective way possible. Nothing says, ‘I don’t approve of your system’ like not participating in the changing of the system to begin with.”

Tara Lefticone '16, Wenzel’s roommate, feels differently. “She won’t stop talking about how ‘politically aware’ she is, but she also keeps bringing up how she won’t vote. It’s almost like she’s bragging about it or something,” Lefticone reported. “Also, I’m actually looking for a new place to live now, if anyone is looking to rent a room. I’m quiet. No pets. No allergies, if you do have pets. Oh, and unlike Katie, I’m

voting, and I’m not constantly telling the story of that one time when some girl called me ‘an independent thinker’ for ignoring the polls.”

Despite her choice to abstain, Wenzel does claim to be politically active. She reportedly considered voting in the 2012 election and has engaged in many arguments with her parents over topics such as “the future of this country.”

“I’ve even been to political rallies before, and I love it,” she said. “Bernie Fest was a great time. They had music and vegan hot dogs.”

“Oh God, Katie and her ‘political awareness,’” Lefticone responded. “I have so many stories about that. One time, she turned on the TV and the news was on. She said ‘Ew’ and changed the channel to *SpongeBob SquarePants*.”

Wenzel claims to have faith that the rest of the population will make the right choice without her casting a ballot of her own. “I love this country, and even if I don’t vote, I’m sure that America won’t let me – or themselves – down.”

Again, Lefticone disagrees. “Now Katie has started saying she’ll move to Canada if Trump gets elected. She honestly thinks moving to another country is the easiest way to prevent changes she doesn’t want to see made to her own country,” Lefticone said. “She can’t even afford the large box of Bagel Bites at Target.” ■

feedback: theindependent@rollins.edu



TOO POLITE FOR POLITICS

Written by Scott Novak
Illustrated by Elise Hickman

Our culture tells us that political debates should be off the table for polite discussions. But Scott Novak argues that in a time of fervent polarization, increased political dialogue between friends and family may be exactly what we need to save our democracy from itself.

There are two subjects American etiquette tells us to avoid in so-called ‘polite conversation’: religion and politics.

My extended family ranges on the political spectrum from conservatives who attend the Conservative Political Action Conference each year to liberals who consider President Barack Obama’s *Dreams From My Father* one of the best books they have ever read. There are some who are more moderate in their ideological alliances, as well as those who remain apathetic, put off by the intense level of partisanship in today’s American politics; but for the most part, my father’s side of the family is Republican, whereas my mother’s side is Democratic.

Given this range of views, my mother usually warns me before holiday gatherings to “avoid any political discussions.” I understand why she does this, of course. As anyone who has sat around the proverbial Thanksgiving dinner table knows, political talk with family members is often — to borrow a phrase Thomas Hobbes uses in *The*

Leviathan when describing the life of man in the state of nature — “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” The solitariness of these tense conversations emerges from each person lying firmly ensconced in their particular ideology; the poorness, from the quality of a discussion reduced to simplistic talking points; the nastiness and brutishness, from how these discussions quickly become personal and accusatory; and the shortness, from how these discussions end after a minute or so of a back-and-forth that is uncomfortable for everyone at the table.

I also understand why my mother’s holiday warning is always directed specifically at *me*. Ever since it dawned upon me in high school that, as a gay teenager, I did not have the same rights to marriage and protection from discrimination as my classmates, I have known that political decisions have the capacity to impact millions of lives, for better or worse. So naturally, I had few qualms about informing as many people as possible that a vote for a Republican president in 2012 was a vote against my rights, a vote against my future.

Around the same time, I penned a pro-choice column for my Catholic high school’s newspaper, a controversy that traveled all the way up to the Superintendent of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. It also inspired

three faculty members, as well as the school principal, to write aggressive letters that condemned not only my views, but also me as an individual for holding such views. (Later, the principal issued a public apology for her personal attacks.) Although I did not savor the *ad hominem* arguments in some of the letters, I did value the many intense discussions on abortion the column sparked within the school.

I now work for a progressive political consulting and design company called You Should Run that refuses to advise any candidate whom would vote against a woman’s right to safe reproductive healthcare; so, not too much has changed. My mother’s warning applies now more than ever, and even though I do love political debates, I engage in political discussion at the Thanksgiving dinner table *only* if a family member says something politically ignorant first; for once someone flings open the doors of discrimination and bigotry, it is impossible for me to remain silent. On most occasions, this condition for me to enter into a political discussion does not occur, and I suppose that is for the best.

Nevertheless, although a social etiquette that demands everyone be too polite for politics may indeed ensure the smoothness of family gatherings, I believe this taboo on political discussions is toxic to a well-

functioning democracy. As political scientists have observed for many years now, the American populace (and by extension, our two-party political system) has grown increasingly polarized. Thanks in part to this intellectually poisonous politesse, the bubble around each of us grows denser by the day.

However, there exist other factors that increase the bubble's impermeability as well. For example, the technological revolution of the Internet has produced Facebook algorithms that show us more of what we 'like' to see and less of what we don't on our newsfeed. It is also not uncommon for people to 'unfriend' someone whom posts a political idea with which they do not agree.

Although a social etiquette that demands everyone be too polite for politics may indeed ensure the smoothness of family gatherings, I believe this taboo on political discussions is toxic to a well-functioning democracy . . . Thanks in part to this intellectually poisonous politesse, the bubble around each of us grows denser by the day.

The news media exacerbates this polarization by emphasizing stories that match their ideological color and spinning the ones that don't. Furthermore, most of the media Americans consume happens to align with their own political preferences. A 2014 Pew Research Center study found that 47 percent of consistent conservatives count on Fox News as their primary source for government and political news, as do almost 31 percent of those who hold mostly conservative views. Compared to Fox News, "no other sources come close," the study says. On the other hand, consistent liberals had a wider range of main sources for political news. No source was named by more than 15 percent of consistent liberals and 20 percent of those who identify as mostly liberal. Despite this fact, the researchers do note that "consistent liberals are more than twice as likely as web-using adults overall to name *NPR* (13 percent vs. 5 percent), *MSNBC* (12 percent vs. 4 percent) and the *New York Times* (10 percent vs. 3 percent) as their top source for political news."

This same study also found that we are significantly more likely than in the past to share similar political preferences to the people we marry, befriend, and live around geographically. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the study documented our personal and political polarization to be at a 20-year high.

But wait, there's more! We not only isolate ourselves from each other more than in the past—we also apparently hate those who disagree with us more, too. Democratic attitudes regarding the Republican Party went from 16 percent as very unfavorable in 1994 to 38 percent in 2014. Likewise, Republican attitudes regarding the Democratic Party went from 17 percent as very unfavorable to 43 percent in those same years.

All of these data are extremely concerning for the state of our democracy. In this two-party system, good governance is not possible without measured compromise. The number of bills passed by the 112th Congress was 283, the lowest recorded total in congressional history. A close second in terms of being the least productive Congress in history is the 113th Congress, which ended in 2014, passing 296 bills. As the American people have witnessed, if some form of compromise between the two parties is not eventually reached, the government can literally shut down, lacking an approved budget.

The extremism within one political bubble has reached such heights that a reality television star who has repeatedly degraded women, Mexicans, Muslims, and the physically disabled through both his rhetoric and proposed policies now has a serious shot at winning the presidency.

We cannot continue on in this deplorable manner. Now is not the time for silence on either side. But instead of shouting into the air about how the side opposite of us is bigoted or corrupt, we need to start talking to each other in a respectful manner. We need to listen to where the other side is coming from and engage in their views in a way beyond spitting back at them the preconceived sound bites we hear on television. Last but not least,

The Independent

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

SEND US AN ARTICLE &

SUBMIT YOUR ARTWORK!

theindependent@rollins.edu

*See facebook.com/theindependentmag
for submission guidelines.*

**INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING
IN THE INDEPENDENT?**

*We offer affordable rates and
discounts for student groups
and non-profits! visit our
website for more information.*

**STAFF POSITIONS
STILL AVAILIABLE!**

**We need
Designers, Illustrators
and Advertising Reps**

*Join our team by filling out
an application online.*

*See www.theindependentmag.org
or email at theindependent@rollins.edu*

we need to not be ashamed to admit we are wrong and willingly change our views when they do not align with the current evidence.

Of course, these words are easy to write, but how does this look in practice? For conservatives, it may be the act of listening to why a Sanders supporter does not think carpet-bombing the Middle East would be effective or moral, rather than calling the supporter a dirty socialist and walking away. For liberals, it may be the act of listening to a Trump supporter explain how they back this candidate because of the economic hardships they have experienced, and then responding directly to those fears, rather than calling them a bigot from the start of the conversation. If the label of bigot does apply, then it means explaining how Trump's policies would negatively affect our fellow Americans instead of launching a personal attack on the person's character. Personal attacks may be morally justified, but if your goal is to open the person's mind, such methods will probably only succeed in making the person feel more threatened by, and thereby more closed to, your ideas.

Another way to build successful discussions with those who hold opposing views from you is to find the interests and values that you *do* share with them. As two

human beings living on the same planet, there must be at least a few things that you can both agree upon.

The Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE) is an inspiring example of what is possible when vastly different political constituencies work together to create positive change. SACE consists of a diverse coalition of Tea Party activists, environmental groups like the Sierra Club, retail and restaurant groups, and religious organizations like the Christian Coalition of America. In 2015, SACE put together a \$2 million campaign for the Solar Choice amendment here in Florida, a state constitutional amendment that would have ended the state law that prohibits citizens from buying electricity from anyone other than a utility. Because of this law, only those who have the capital on-hand to invest in solar panels can build them. This amendment would make solar panels more accessible by repealing this law and allowing Floridians to install leased solar panels on their rooftops at no upfront expense.

Although the amendment did not get enough petition signatures to qualify for the 2016 ballot thanks to a deceptive 'Smart Solar' campaign launched against them by the powerful utility industry, SACE plans to

have their amendment on the ballot in 2018. Debbie Dooley, a SACE member who helped found the Tea Party and directs Conservatives for Energy Freedom, explained her support for clean energy environmental initiatives in an interview with Rolling Stone, saying, "Conservatives champion free-market choice, not government monopolies that stifle competition." Maybe it would be more productive for liberals to build on this value of market choice rather than label Tea Partiers anti-science when it comes to the issue of climate change.

If you do decide that you no longer want to be too polite for politics any longer, you will probably get into some heated discussions. But that's okay. The point is to start understanding the lived experiences and perspectives of the other side, even if that sometimes causes moments of discomfort. So long as the discussion does not devolve into personal attacks, debate is essential for the upkeep of an educated democracy.

We must work to overcome this cultural anti-intellectualism, this juvenile fear of sharing with each other ideas that matter. In a time of increasingly dangerous divisions, facilitating political dialogue between friends and family may be the only thing that can save us from the tyranny of our bubbles. ■

feedback: theindependent@rollins.edu

THE ODYSSEY

WE WANT YOU!



ARTISTS



VIDEOGRAPHERS



WRITERS



PHOTOGRAPHERS

Join our talented staff, which ranges from the very detailed English major to the media junkie, pop culture loving, lacrosse player. The Odyssey consists of a tight-knit group of writers, social media experts, videographers, designers, and more who are looking to take their journalistic and media passions to a national level.

- email rollinsodyssey@gmail.com for more info -



<http://theodysseyonline.com/rollins>

FOLLOW & LIKE US ON



He-Who-Must-Be-Named: Talking Trump

Written by Daniel Udell

Illustrated by Elise Hickman

In the present-day political climate, Donald Trump appears to be analogous to a bizarre version of Voldemort from the *Harry Potter* novels. In the fantasy series, citizens of the wizarding world fear to speak Voldemort's name, for decades only referring to him as He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named. Toward the climax of the series, it is revealed that by someone actually speaking his name aloud while he is in power, Voldemort is able to track those bold enough to address him by name and hunt them down, justifying the fear and paranoia exhibited throughout the bulk of the series by those who had lived through his first rise to domination.

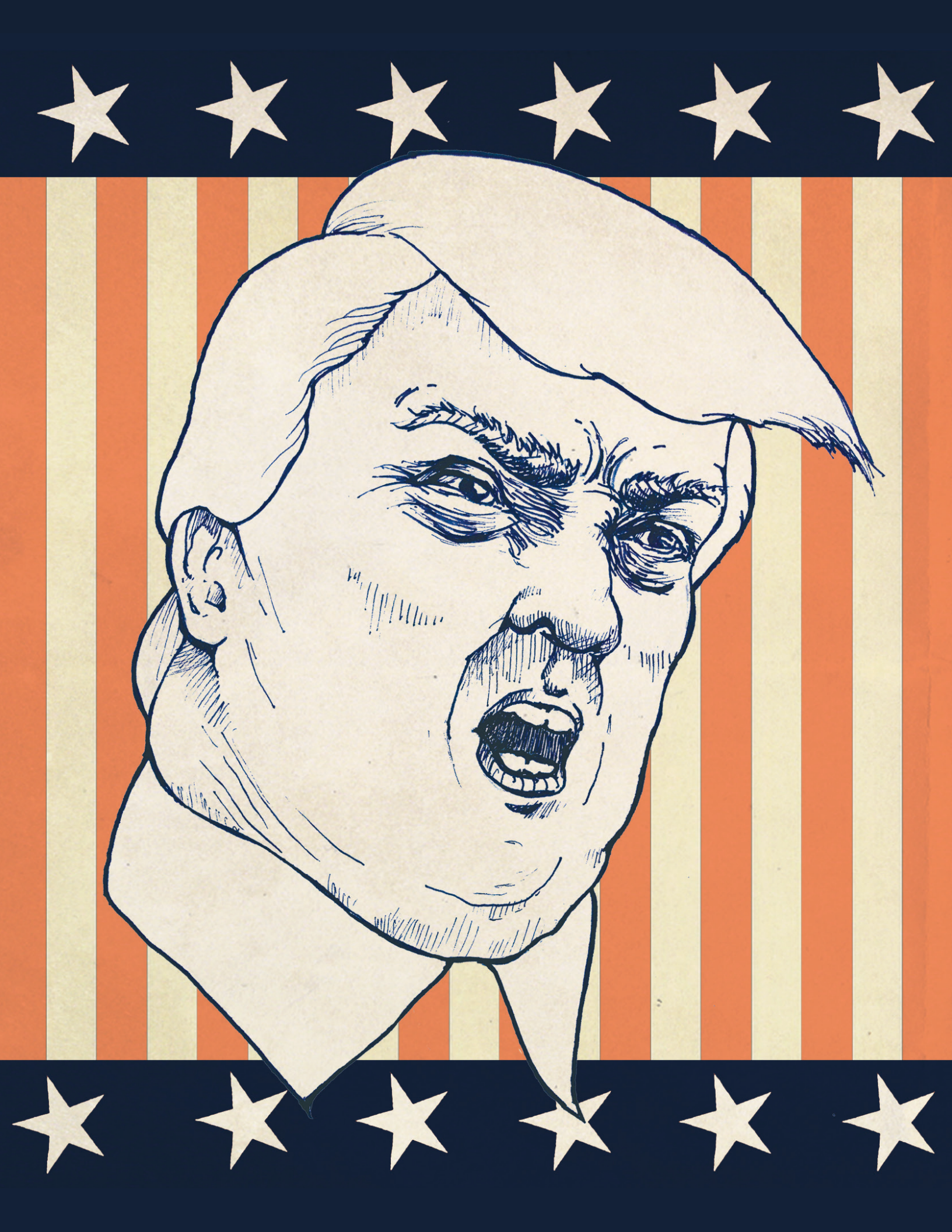
Trump, in our context, is He-Who-Must-Be-Named; for months, it has seemed that we can't go a single day without him being brought up as the latest subject of controversy and discussion. He has been ever present in the news cycle, often turning the race into a spectacle of outlandish sound bites, reeling the election into a competition determining who can receive the most amount of attention, negative or positive. Whenever his name is uttered, particularly with disapproval by an individual of influence, in very Voldemort fashion Trump swoops in and publicly shames any who dare criticize him. In the process, he creates a sense that denunciation of Trump is a punishable offense. Both characters (and rest assured, the Trump you see in this race is a character) inspire passion and support from hooded, racist, and historically dangerous groups (the Death-Eaters and the Ku Klux Klan). Both characters suffer from superiority complexes, show a dangerous lack of empathy, and lead with iron-fisted authoritarianism.

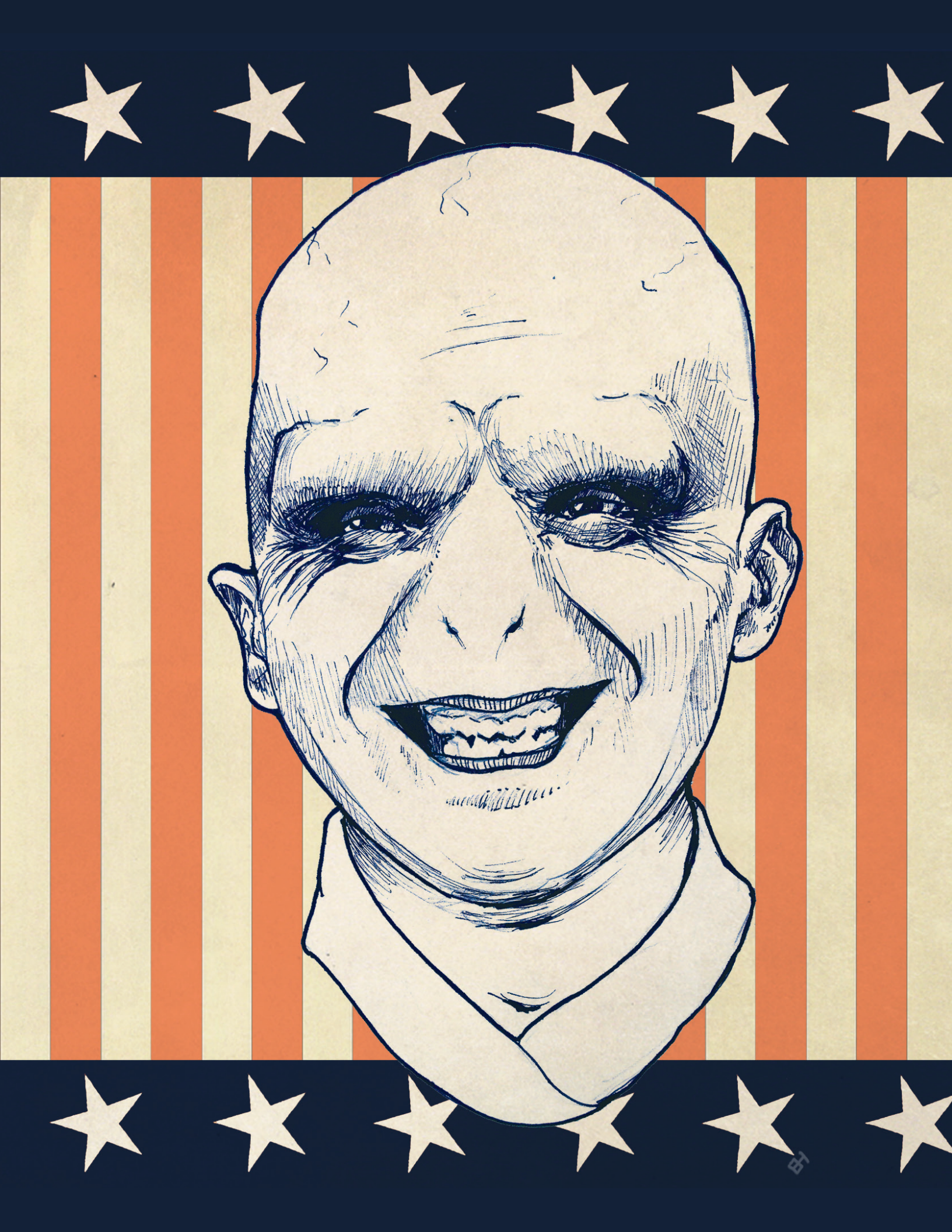
I use this analogy largely to point to the way we speak about Trump as instructive of his overall place in American culture. Part of why we struggle so much to come to terms with a character like Trump is that he was not always like this, and even now there are days when he can almost come across as comically entertaining. When we discuss Donald Trump, who are we talking about? The Donald from the 90's who frequently derided the right and openly supported left-leaning policies? The Reality TV Star Donald from the early 2000's who permanently ingrained himself into popular culture with his trademark slogan, "You're Fired!"? The often overlooked racist

Donald of the early Obama administration who spearheaded the "Birther" controversy amidst the rise of the Tea Party, publicly and disrespectfully challenging the sitting President of the United States on his birthplace, constantly implying that President Obama was not truly an American, and subsequently did not deserve respect or support? Or the new and improved Donald of the 2015-2016 election cycle, one who has perfected the art of stealing the spotlight by whatever means necessary, even if it means stooping to levels of rhetoric and prejudice not seen since the 1930's? It is nearly impossible to get a lock on Donald Trump simply because he has remained so consistently inconsistent over the decades, all the while remaining a mainstay in our popular culture and effortlessly dipping back and forth between his Donald Trump "Trump" persona and his genuine self. Lately, it is hard to tell where the character of Trump ends and the flesh and blood individual begins. And this is why Donald Trump is so dangerous.

Lately, it is hard to tell where the character of Trump ends and the flesh and blood individual begins. And this is why Donald Trump is so dangerous.

We have a nationally recognized celebrity who is known for being predictably unpredictable, one who aims for a train-wreck quality to attract attention and who performs as if he's been pining for an Oscar his entire life. We know that he is genuinely intelligent, and we know he is capable of real insight and political savvy, particularly with how the media





BT

conveys information to audiences. Trump's entire brand is reliant on marketing himself as the best at anything he does, like a carnival barker, and cable news companies are appallingly incentivized to showcase him at every opportunity because he brings in viewers, and thus, brings in profit. Regardless of what he says, the media will gladly parrot his talking points out to the world unchallenged, knowing that by challenging Donald Trump, they lose their ticket to unbroken profit and endless constructed stories to run around the clock.

What's worse, because we've only been publicly exposed to this version of Trump, the media character, we don't know the real Trump well enough to judge his true motives. Character Trump wants to be President, and an unabashed fascist one at that. But what does Real Trump want? How ambitious is Trump, on a personal level? Is this a dare to himself to see if he can really do it? Can he really say whatever he feels like, off the cuff, whether he truly believes what he's saying or not, and deceive millions of voters into believing that he actually cares about them or their interests? Is he working for broader powers at play, dismantling the already unstable GOP from the inside, ensuring a potential victory for Democrats, who will likely pour out in outraged droves to fight him at the ballots in November? Was this all a personal joke that just went too far and now he has to see it through? Even if he does genuinely want to be President, if he loses, will he simply turn around

to intent, then we face an existential crisis where the very fabric of the American politic is at a tearing point. If Trump is truly conning the world and seeing how far he can impersonate the Wizard of Oz before an eventual defeat, or even if he pretends to have conned us as a means of saving face, there will be riots in the streets and all faith in the United States will be wiped clean both domestically and internationally. The situation we currently have with Donald Trump is terrifying no matter how you look at it; because in any scenario, the American people have been failed by their politicians, their traditional watchdog institutions, and their own countrymen and neighbors. If Trump wins, we stood by and allowed for conditions to marinate and stew for the past two decades that allowed fascism to creep into the most powerful country in the world, effectively ending the American Experiment that the Founding Fathers initiated with the Declaration of Independence, a document specifically designed to safeguard against tyranny. If Trump loses, it will be by such a close margin that any respect and good faith in the American voters will be tarnished and the sitting President will have to preside over a truly broken and ugly post-Trump America.

How do you talk about such a nightmarish situation? With family? With friends? On the news? By and large, we don't discuss any of this at all, either by choice, ignorance, or by the honest nature of being so overwhelmed by such an unimaginable scenario facing the American identity. How do we talk about Trump when, even by World War II standards, we have never seen such a perfect storm of potential calamity? Compound this with impending environmental damage that will gradually sweep different parts of the world, either by flooding or drought; the growing racial tensions between a shrinking (and well armed) Anglo-American majority and a growing and indignantly informed minority demographic; the real blowback from the Bush and Obama Administration's War on Terror and the real nightmares abroad who wish to bring death and totalitarian theocracies upon the world; the growing restlessness of the Millennial generation that increasingly views their political system as corrupt and purposefully undermining their chances at fair economic opportunities; and the daily existential crisis of mass shootings around the United States, and we find ourselves on the brink of what may be a global crash of proportions not seen since the fall of Rome.

But rather than talk about any of this, informing the public of real issues and planning for real tragedies, we talk about Donald Trump, unsure of the one we're talking about that particular day. And like a spell or a curse, we're left powerless to do anything. So how do we responsibly talk about Trump? Or rather, is even uttering his name at this point another weapon for him to spread his influence into every corner of the American spirit? When we discuss Trump, are we foreshadowing the end of the American Experiment started hundreds of years ago, or are we doing everything in our power to argue and fight against it?

Here are some ways we can fight it: hold those

Regardless of what he says, the media will gladly parrot his talking points out to the world unchallenged, knowing that by challenging Donald Trump, they lose their ticket to unbroken profit and endless constructed stories to run around the clock.

and pull back the curtains to the world, exclaiming "Fooled you! You almost let me be President of the United States, and I was pulling your leg the entire time!", only to turn the entire stunt into a marketing tactic for his next big reality TV show *The Candidate*, where he presumably trains and hires political candidates to support in the 2020 election? Or will he try to undermine the Democratic president for the next four years, building even more steam and outrage for a second and far more lethal attempt at the White House in 2020? The equally sad and terrifying answer is: these are all perfectly plausible conclusions regarding the true nature of Trump, and we can't talk about all of them at once; we have to consider all of them as serious as the last.

If Trump is serious about this race, from word

It is the ethical obligation of journalists and we as viewers and media consumers to call out bullshit when we see it, wherever we see it, and to not rest until the curtain is dragged from the stage and the tent is cut down from the circus show.

who report on Trump and spread his message accountable. Outlets like CNN and MSNBC, sometimes more so than even Fox News, showcase Trump's hate speech and do so without any real critique or condemnation, allowing for his message to stand in a vacuum. There has been a recent trend in news media where an interviewer will ask someone who has made blatantly racist or inflammatory comments, "Are you a racist?" When the person interviewed (in this case Trump) deflects, the interviewer drops it and moves on as if that settles the case. You cannot ask a racist "Are you a racist?" and then nod in agreement when they deny it. That's like a police officer asking a thief caught on camera if he stole anything, and when the thief says he didn't, letting him go without further questioning. In no other scenario is that socially acceptable except in our media culture. It is the ethical obligation of journalists and we as viewers and media consumers to call out bullshit when we see it, wherever we see it, and to not rest until the curtain is dragged from the stage and the tent is cut down from the circus show. When you hear someone supporting Trump, politely but sternly ask them why, and when they give a weak answer or factually incorrect response, correct them, provide facts, and provide alternatives that incentivize them to continue learning on their own. Name-calling or giving up only convinces the other side that their position, views, or stances are acceptable. Lastly, stay vigilant, stay informed, and encourage all of your friends, politically active or not, to vote in November. There is one way to silence Trump once and for all – destroy him at the ballot boxes this fall.

Be it Sanders or Clinton on the Democratic ticket, even if your first choice isn't the chosen candidate, you must vote. If Clinton wins and the Sanders supporters don't show up to vote, Trump will win. If Sanders wins and the Clinton supporters don't show up to vote, the election will come dangerously close. We must unite, win over our

Trump-supporting neighbors, and prove once and for all that America is not a breeding ground for fascism. If we can come through this stronger and more united than ever, then this will be the greatest challenge the United States has faced since the Civil War, and it will definitively say to the world: We choose progress, not the darkness of the past. That said, even if we pull through this, the sense of victory will not last for long. We've crossed a line as a nation that cannot easily be taken back, and regardless of the next President of the United States, the geopolitical world will collectively live in a post-Trump America and all that entails. We've allowed decades of corruption and regression to slip by us and we are seeing the fruits of those distracted years today; it will take decades and more to begin reversing the current developments we see around us, assuming we can even redirect course without some serious power struggle.

On a final note, don't let Trump eclipse real news from around the world. There are heartwarming stories, violent tragedies, and international crises happening every day, and often times they are glossed over in favor of discussing Trump. Sometimes, the best thing to do about Trump is to simply ignore him for a few days. What Trump wants and feeds off of is incessant attention and spotlight on himself, in either praise or criticism. As hard to believe as it may seem sometimes, the world does have bigger problems than Donald Trump, and it is a disservice to those struggling with these problems and hurdles to ignore them in favor of a man who, at the end of the day, will say anything to keep you interested and tensions high. So if you do feel the need to bring up Trump, on social media, in conversation, or in class, balance it with other worthwhile stories that also deserve attention to help bring balance back to the national conversation. If all we ever do is talk Trump without considering the ramifications, then whether or not he is President-Elect, we all serve his agenda. ■

THE Duck Lipped REVOLUTION



Written by Hania Powell
Illustrated by Carmen Cheng

Selfies: we've all heard of them, we've all complained about them, and most of us secretly love to take them. For those few who have not been exposed to the selfie—that is, the new age Henry David Thoreau's, the “technology is the Devil's handmaiden” types, and those who still see throwing computers and smartphones into the harbor as a relevant act of revolution—put simply, the selfie is the act of taking a picture of oneself. However, in the years since the first confused Yankee held his hulking Kodak backward, the reputation and role of the selfie in our society has radically changed. Their presence in the world can be a unifying force, but also a divisive one. They're a technological and social hallmark of our generation up there with YouTube celebrities, mobile blogging, and Britney Spears.

Selfies, whether we like it or not, saturate our society and reveal much about our lifestyle and the modern condition. They've come to transcend culture, class, race, and creed. Likely a result of our sensationalized media and modern penchant for soap operas and reality television, people tend to speak of selfie culture in extremes. Some see it as a revolution; some see it as a plunge toward Armageddon. Selfie culture has been described by the great orators of our time in a myriad of ways; I turned to UrbanDictionary to gain access to the words of these critical thinkers. A few of the most beautifully articulated definitions include (rather predictably):

Proof that the human genome is gradually degrading. This Bieber generation term is used to describe a photo taken by a person wielding a smartphone, with their pre-teen friend twerking in the background –Chainsaw 0352

A form of mental illness in which a self-obsessed ego maniac takes a picture of themselves. They make shitty faces in the camera and use crappy filters. Then they post it on Instagram or Twitter with #selfie or some other #. Or really these idiots can post it on any other damn site. A lot of times mentally ill people take a selfie of doing something bad. Watch the news. You'll see. –RatchetTay

The taking of a picture of yourself and posting it on Facebook because you have extremely low self-esteem and you need people to comment to tell you how hot or pretty you look. In reality you just look desperate for attention. And no matter how attractive you might be, you still look pathetic. –Haterofdesperation

And getting straight to their point, my personal favorite:

The beginning of the end of intelligent civilization. –Future Sociologist

As made clear in the text above, selfie culture has proven a point of great contention among the scholars and academics of my generation. Understandably so: there are few subjects in this world so worthy of critique, so emblematic of an ethical crisis within developed society as teenage girls potentially feeling good about themselves. As RatchetTay so poignantly noted alongside their woeful misunderstanding of mental illness, selfies are not just about showing off your newest accessory; too often, selfies are the accessory to crime. Watch the news. You'll see.

Of course, as an active participant in this selfie culture (for ample evidence regarding this statement, stalk any of my 235 social media accounts), I have my own thoughts regarding the subject. If my opinions seem to be influenced by how great my eyebrows look through the lens of an iPhone 6 camera, I can assure you that my finely honed narcissism is completely relevant to my analysis. It took me years to establish this shameless self-confidence, and selfie culture nourished and nannied this egotism when nobody else would. Selfie culture has raised me from my preteen years, and now I feel obligated to speak in its defense.

I will now go on to detail why, if you experience a sense of righteous fury or existential fear for the future of the human race when you think about selfies, you may want to reconsider your stance. Why is it that selfies get such a bad rap? Why is it that self-proclaimed

bibliophiles and old souls everywhere feel forced to distance themselves from the selfie in order to validate their intellectual worth? Is it too 21st century? That may make sense, given the fact that nothing seems to piss off the baby boomers and aging Gen Xers more than a teenage girl pursing her lips for an indulgent photo (I don't recommend ever uttering the word "selfie" within 20 feet of this population; I've never seen a 31 year old man sporting crocs and patchy facial hair get so heated), but I propose that there may be another reason we see such a backlash against this phenomenon; why people feel such a need to draw a divisive line between selfie-taking and maturity and intelligence.

Hear me out here: Who takes the most selfies? Teenage girls. Why? Ideally because it makes them feel good about themselves. But who profits off of teenage girls feeling good about themselves? Pretty much nobody. Actually, pop culture (and the avalanche of advertising and consumptive media that comes with it) is pretty much built on the backs of self-loathing teenage girls. Buy this diet pill to become skinnier! *Buy this makeup to become more attractive! Buy this outfit to make you more desirable! Buy this bra to make your boobs bigger! Buy this curling iron and maybe you'll stop hating yourself!* The selfie is a miracle of this generation, given the outrageously unrealistic beauty standards and expectations for teenage girls that saturate our society. The last thing girls are supposed to feel is *confident* about their own appearance.

Think about the last time someone gave you a compliment. How many women would reply with a simple "thank you," or even more heinous, an "I know"? It took me years to stop myself from humbly rebuking compliments: *No, my hair looks really awful today! Thanks, I still have to lose five pounds though. What? No, these pants totally make my ass look fat.* It's not attractive for a woman to know how hot she is. But that's what makes the unapologetic selfie so awesome: it's a massive *fuck you* to a society that says you're not allowed to love how you look without hours of Photoshop, signing your soul away to the gym, and forever forsaking banana pudding. The selfie is revolutionary simply because it is mundane: normal girls taking pictures of their normal faces, and normal girls feeling good enough about themselves to want to share their face with the world. After all, if we love ourselves, what can they sell us? Viva la selfie! Fight the system with duck lips and peace signs! Yes, on a large scale, self-love is a revolution. But then on a *small* scale, even revolutions have etiquette one must adhere to. Selfie culture is a complicated beast, and attempting to tame it is a daily minefield of potential social faux pas, misplaced filters, and bad lighting.

Like all great revolutions, selfie culture comes with its perils. There are many battles to be fought each day, many obstacles to surmount. The most daunting of these trials, the most ferocious of villains, is often hiding right in front of your eyes—quite literally. It's your face. And thanks to the demons of modern technology, it can too easily catch you by surprise. On frequent occasion, opening the front camera mirror on your phone is the modern version of falling into the Labyrinth. It might happen quite accidentally, in your mission to blog a quick photo of your latest Starbucks Triple, Venti, Half Sweet, Non-Fat Caramel Macchiato, only to be confronted with a creature bearing a striking resemblance to the Minotaur staring back at you in horrified shock. You then spend countless minutes navigating a maze of newfound flyaway hairs and sweat-smudged eyeliner only to find yourself back at the beginning; slightly more frantic, perspiring, and

just as taurine as before.

But this is not to belittle the liberatory potential of the selfie. While there may be a certain art to working one's angles, the selfie is so much more than perfecting a carefree half-smirk. It's no coincidence that the word doubles as a slang term for rubbing one off; the selfie is about self-love, about feeling so good about your face that you *have* to share it with the world. Of course, like the practice of polishing the pearl or taking a turn at the self-serve station, it should be noted that one can have too much of a good thing. For your own health and the sake of not turning your friends' Instagram feeds into a one-woman self-exploratory contemporary portrait art exhibit, you may want to limit yourself to two a day, tops. A sprained wrist is no unlikely risk for the avid selfie enthusiast.

Then, of course, there remains the art of the advanced selfie—the selfies that take practice and commitment to execute successfully. Perhaps the most gratifying in this elite category is the toilet selfie. Now, this takes *years* of practice and finesse—it is not for the selfie amateur. Those who are new to the field may be shocked to hear of this practice, but I can assure you that among seasoned pros, it's a common one. There's no law that states that pooping and looking good are mutually exclusive. In fact, the post-poop glow is often the ideal time to snap a quick close range selfie. You're relaxed and satisfied, and with the right cropping and filter, the toilet selfie can easily become a contender for the essential bi- or tri-daily social media update. My personal preference is to stage a small celebration of my post-poop-pic success through subtle allusions hidden within the caption: #hotshit and #hotpieceofass are just a couple of my favorites. Only the most experienced of veteran selfie takers will catch whiff (pun intended) of your game upon encountering this selfie, and even then, the toilet selfie retains an air of mystery and intrigue that is unparalleled by its more socially acceptable counterparts.

Finally, of course, is the selfie that must be addressed, the most fraught of them all, and perhaps the most important: the Bad Day selfie. Now, selfies have great power. While they have the potential to build you up, they also have the damning ability to tear you down. We all have those days: when your face seems to be so asymmetrical you could mistake the mirror for a Picasso; when your nose feels so big those things that once resembled nostrils could find a suitable home on the face of Mars. But this doesn't mean you should avoid the selfie, absolutely not! This is the time when the selfie is *most imperative*; when one must return to its roots and truly embrace its namesake. The selfie is for you. It is not for the sake of a like-count or gaining a new follower; it is all about having the self-confidence to thrust your mug out into the world without fear of a negative reception. The easiest way to feel good about yourself is to *tell yourself you look good*. Project those feelings onto every social media platform you have access to. *Scream your pretty face into existence*. This is the true liberatory potential of the selfie. Nothing feels better than saying *fuck it, I look good*. Say it often enough and you'll inevitably start to believe it.

I've often heard that revolution starts at home. I say this revolution started with the first flip phone camera. The selfie is about self-love, something that our society can't profit off of, and that makes it dangerous. So hold your phone like a picket sign, don that crappy filter like a Vendetta mask, and just know that every selfie you post has an unwritten but ever-present caption: *I am enough just the way I am*. Viva la Selfie. ■

It's not attractive
for a woman to know how
hot she is. But that's what
makes the unapologetic selfie
so awesome: it's a massive *fuck
you* to a society that says you're
not allowed to love how you look
without hours of photoshop,
signing your soul away to the
gym, and forever forsaking
banana pudding.

THE NEW BLACKFACE

BY HIND BERJI

Remember *Breakfast at Tiffany's*? Audrey Hepburn slowly walking down Fifth Avenue at dawn in her sleek Givenchy gown, peeking into the Tiffany's window display? Remember her eccentric bathtub couch, or her funny cat named—what else—Cat? Do you recall Mr. I.Y. Yunioshi, her greedy Asian landlord, played by Mickey Rooney, a white actor? The buckteeth, buffoonish, clumsy mannerisms, tapered eyes, and bumbling accent can go unnoticed when you're watching the classic film through a whitewashed lens.

We're appalled but not all that surprised at old Hollywood's penchant for using blackface or yellowface, but we don't seem to take issue with the modern equivalent. This practice hasn't really changed—instead of portraying Asians through heinous caricatures or demonizing Native peoples, we now have white actors playing these characters.

Thus we are met with a greater challenge in today's film industry: preventing the erasure of culturally diverse characters and actors entirely from the plot.

Even when diverse characters are included in scripts, white actors portray them. The most fundamental issue is the idea that racial integration in the entertainment, or any creative-based industry is not innate. We are taught to look at white as a default race, which is why we often cast white actors in roles written for people of color.

It isn't necessary to showcase people of color in a sugarcoated, positive light. Recognition should be genuine and well deserved, but if minorities in the entertainment industry are not given a fair chance, how can they be judged on merit? This seems to be a major reason why critics of #OscarsSoWhite had a problem with Spike Lee's call for a mandatory Hollywood quota system. Celebrities like Jada Pinkett Smith were so outraged at the lack of African American acknowledgement that they called for an Oscars overhaul and boycott.

Why all the fuss about the Academy Awards? For starters, for the second consecutive year, all 20 nominees for the 'actor' and 'actress' categories were white. Statistics only confirm the topic Hollywood studio execs have been stalling on for decades: 94% of the more than 6,000 Academy voters are white.

Chris Rock contributed to the criticism in his role as the 2016 host by stating, "If they nominated hosts, I wouldn't even get this job," and, "It's the 88th Academy Awards which means this whole no

black nominees thing has happened at least 71 other times." From there on out, Rock dedicated almost all of his airtime to taking jabs at the diversity issue while adhering to the Academy's idea of a compliant, and, most importantly, black host.

Whoopie Goldberg had a similar understanding of the issue: "Why is this a conversation we only have once a year? Every year we get all fired up, and then the rest of the year nobody says anything." She has a major point here. Why do we only show outrage at this issue when we see it dressed in Valentino, waltzing across the Dolby Theatre?

There were no people of color nominated in the most popular categories at the Academy Awards, but that isn't to say that no person of color won big on Oscar night. British Indian filmmaker Asif Kapadia won an award for best documentary feature on Amy Winehouse. Pakistani activist, journalist, and filmmaker Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy won for her film on honorary killings titled *A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness*. And, for the second year in a row (the first was for *Birdman* in 2015), Mexican filmmaker Alejandro González Iñárritu received an Oscar for best achievement in directing for *The Revenant*.

Iñárritu stated, "The debate is not only about black and white people, I think diversity really includes brown...we are also yellow, Native American, Latin American...the complexity of the society of the world is much more than one or the other." He went on to muse that there is room for 'brown' Oscars. Turns out that the model for the actual trophy was Mexican actor, screenwriter, and director, Emilio Fernández. Oscar is brown, after all.

MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

The true representational issue isn't that there are a scant number of diverse actors in the first place; it's the entertainment industry's refusal to recognize and utilize talented people of color.

Moreover, this is primarily an American issue. How can a multicultural society have such disinclination towards representational roles? We cannot progress professionally or politically when our entertainment channels only recognize and celebrate a white population.

The argument has been made that a well-known, white celebrity will give a movie more commercial success than an unknown minority

actor, but that argument is fallacious when you look at the careers of highly esteemed black, Latin, and Asian-American actors worldwide. Furthermore, the global appeal of diversified actors can only improve the commercial success of an otherwise solely American box office hit.

Recent films that dipped into the whitewashing pool, on the other hand, have failed tremendously at the box office. Director Joe Wright's take on the boy who never grew up in *Pan* featured a white, non-native Rooney Mara as Tiger Lily. After a meager \$15.3 million opening weekend in North America, it hardly seemed like the \$150 million budget was worth it. Cameron Crowe's Aloha tried to pass off Emma Stone as a half-Asian native Hawaiian woman. It made only \$37 million globally. Johnny Depp's pathetic justification of playing Tonto in *The Lone Ranger* (he claims to have Native blood) didn't suffice, either. And who can forget the Scandinavian Prince of Persia himself, Jake Gyllenhaal? We all know how well that did in theaters.

M. Knight Shyamalan's version of the uber popular Nickelodeon show *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, featured white actors who played characters who are of Asian heritage. The villains, however, were portrayed by dark-skinned actors.

When Ridley Scott was asked why his movie *Exodus: Gods and Kings* didn't include Middle Eastern actors for the roles of Ramses and Moses, he responded that it would be impossible to fund a film "...and say that my lead actor is Mohammad so-and-so from such-and-such. I'm just not going to get financed."

It seems that the only time we see Middle Eastern and Asian actors of Arab, Indian, or Persian backgrounds get decent roles are when they play terrorists, kidnappers, or thugs. It doesn't take much imagination to vilify these characters in fiction since we already do that in reality.

As Iñárritu noted, "I think one of the problems that we are suffering from is there are no moderate platforms to talk about it deeply...that in a way it's deciding the destinies of people around the world — not only here — by the color of their skin."

This topic runs deeper than skin tone—it was never just about race. And it shouldn't be. It's also about sexuality, and gender, and disability, and economic background; it's certainly about the ageist attitudes of an industry obsessed with youth. Storytelling, in all its visual and popular forms, is powerful. It can be ideological, and it can be exceptionally nuanced. We can't accept an all-white narrative in mainstream media even when the stories are written about people of color. We're past the days of silent pictures. Why can't we hear the marginalized voices? ■

We cannot progress professionally or politically when our entertainment channels only recognize and celebrate a white population.

I think a lot of bands are self-conscious. Not in the “don’t look at me!” way, but more in the way that makes everything they do seem calculated for maximum effect. “How can we get the most indie cred?” they may wonder. “How can we get Pitchfork to cover us?” “Should we cite Television Personalities as an influence, or would that reference confuse more fans than it would impress?”

This is all my imagination. But if you follow whatever’s “hip” in music these days, you’ll know what genres are cool to like and which aren’t. Mainstream pop music is cool to like now. Jam bands aren’t. Codeine-inflected rap is in. Ska punk is out.

Purple doesn’t care that they have some really uncool influences. Red Hot Chili Peppers? Every longboarder on every campus in California sings “Under the Bridge” at the urinal. Have they no shame? They don’t, because their popularity won’t rest on a consistent Instagram aesthetic. It isn’t that Purple as a band reminds me of anyone in particular; it’s that they give off the vibe of simply not caring. They’re drawing from all the music you probably like but won’t admit to liking. The eponymous sixth track of *Bodacious* even starts with vocalist Hanna Brewer cooing in her scratchy voice, “You won’t admit it.” I drew the connection myself; it’s probably not a self-referential thing.

The album actually takes off much earlier. Opener “Backbone” is a melodic punk anthem on being tough carried by Joe Cannariato’s groovy bass, Taylor Busby’s guitar borrowed from the heavier side of indie rock, and Brewer’s squeaks. (She also happens to play the drums on the record.) Then you get to the second track, which is my favorite because it’s honestly the most Red Hot Chili Peppers-meets-Beastie Boys thing ever. You’re either excited or repelled by that description, but it’s the only one I can give. It’s a weird funk-rap-rock hybrid where masculinity and femininity seem diametrically opposed: Busby alternates vocal duties with Brewer on the track and belts his lyrics in a hyper-masculine disposition (he literally goes “Hoo-hah!” over and over) as he invites her to get in his minivan with the “shag on the seats,” offering to love her like a “bag of that good green.” She responds in a series of taunts: “Yeah, I know you want this.” They seem to get along. They’re going to have a good time in his minivan.

There are a few moments where it really hits me that this is a true crossover record. A bit of softer, dreamier indie rock rears its head, especially on “Bliss” and the No Doubt-indebted “Pretty Mouth.” The songs still have an edge to them, but don’t situate themselves in any far-out genre that would leave them inaccessible to all but the headiest of heady kids or the most indie of indie kids.

Yeah, the music on *Bodacious* carries with it the odor of day-old pot smoke. It goes without saying that there are more than a few weed references on the album. But what stands out more is the way Purple unabashedly embraces a kind of sweaty party music that’s been pushed aside in the mainstream in favor of... I dunno, trap music. They combine a bunch of genres like funk, garage rock, reggae, and punk, which aren’t combined too often by bands with any talent. So I think something about Purple is different. This isn’t music that will win you any points if you use music taste as an accessory or own an *Unknown Pleasures* shirt, but if you want to let loose, you could do way worse. Actually, I’ll say it: *Bodacious* is the most fun genre-bending, all out rock album I’ve heard this year. You’re pretentious and boring if you disagree, and you only bought that shirt because you saw Joseph Gordon-Levitt wear it in *500 Days of Summer*.



BODACIOUS

Purple

PIAS, 4/1



ERASER STARGAZER

Guerrilla Toss

DFA Records, 3/1

Though it's become somewhat of a nebulous term in the days since its formative years, punk rock has stayed instantly recognizable because it denotes an attitude more than it does a sound. This is as good a time as any for a brief history lesson: "punk" music emerged as a back-to-the-basics approach to rock music, usually expressed through musical minimalism utilizing the trappings of furious, lo-fi garage rock. It served as a direct response to the complex, overwrought sounds cultivated by progressive rock bands like Yes and Genesis, as well as the increasing commodification of rock music (arena rock, glam rock, and radio-ready rock in particular). Punk musicians weren't rock stars. They were just *punks*, because the whole point was to dismantle stardom; anyone could be in a band. Anyone could be a punk. That gave you the creative freedom to do whatever you wanted. This was the ethos.

These days, people look back on the movement with pointed criticisms: it's in vogue to complain about how punk was very white and male-dominated. It was, but that doesn't *totally* delegitimize it. Considering how the fury and energy translated to offshoot scenes like hardcore, emo, riot grrl, queercore, even whole other genres (hello LCD Soundsystem), it's safe to say that punk rock's musical legacy is forever enduring. Whatever Guerrilla Toss is doing is part of that DIY trailblazing lineage. There is no pretension. There's not even a rubric against which to measure their existence as a band. They're just being themselves. In that way, the band doesn't sound like anyone in particular, but it's easy to notice pieces of dance-punk outfit The Rapture and a few other experimental "art-punk" bands like Black Dice or maybe more obscure acts like XBXXR or Palm.

You can approach their music more readily if you know that it functions as a sort of catharsis; so it says on the press release DFA handed out. This is the time to mention that DFA Records happens to be the record label of LCD Soundsystem frontman James Murphy. And DFA tends to put out dance music. So this is dance music. It's weird dance music, though. You might not want to dance to it if you're *normal*, but the music has an immutable danceability. There are groovy bass lines and there's rawly recorded, unconventional percussion. There are wilting guitars and jolts of weird synthesizer sounds, plus a bunch of random noises, screeching, sirens, and... horns? There's also Guerrilla Toss's frontwoman Kassie Carlson yelling about chocolate and cinnamon sugar. She yells and shrieks about many other things, but I can't remember much of what she says. What I pick up instead is her energy. Her lyrics themselves are as abstract as the music; in her performance she wields the ferocity of a mad poet. She is the most powerful presence on this album, even if the whole thing feels really amateur.

And it does. I guess in conventional terms, this album is annoying. Of course, I know that it's supposed to be annoying. It's also trance-like: the music itself is designed to be experienced in a state very different from our day-to-day one. (I'm not necessarily talking about drugs; the substance-free "high" that shows up in the right place and time is superior.)

Eraser Stargazer needs you to be in a trance because it has a sound that demands your full attention. There are a ton of forces at play in the music, from the moments of repetitive percussion to the math-rock influence that will jerk you out of the hypnosis and compel you to dance. If you want to experience whatever Guerrilla Toss is channeling, leave your expectations at the door.

I think some of their power might be diminished on record. Supposedly they put on an insane live show. As it stands, this album is a capsule of that energy, standing as both monument to unrelenting creativity and the soundtrack to it.

Little attention is paid to harsh noise music outside of a small following. Most people, casual listeners and critics included, will not engage with a noise record. Put simply, it is the most abrasive, difficult genre in existence. I, however, am a freak. Though I don't regularly torture my ears, I will occasionally have moods where some noise-led therapy is necessary. This record in particular pulses with anger and seethes with misanthropy enough for even the most jaded noise veteran. (I'm kind of hoping those people don't exist.)

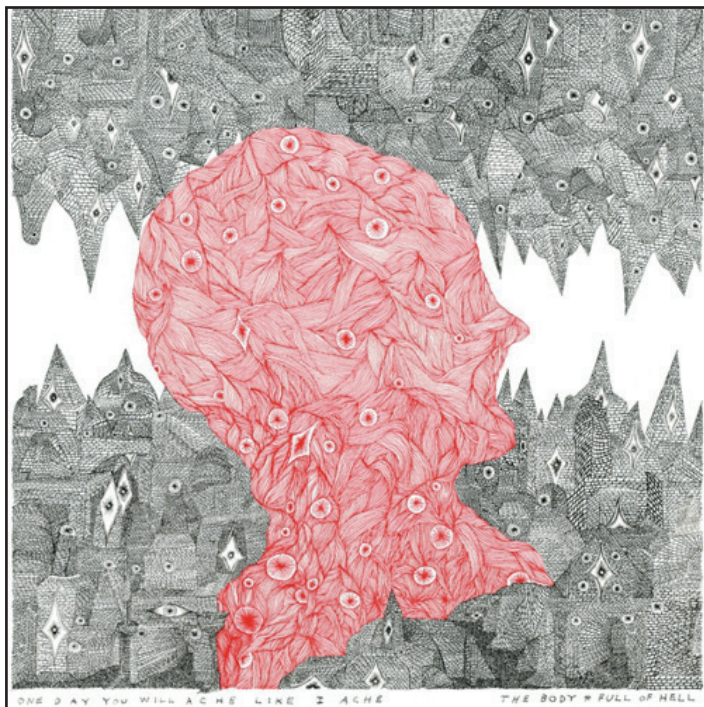
Full of Hell is a really great grindcore band out of New England. They came to my attention through their record with legendary Japanese noise maestro Merzbow. For those not in the know, grindcore is hardcore punk and thrash metal taken to their limits. It's often made a joke of, as few bands can play skillfully and with precision enough to avoid sounding like a bunch of trashcans being thrown at each other. Even then, few bands make it sound interesting. Full of Hell does.

Likewise, The Body is a similarly uncommon metal act, mostly because they decry all other metal acts. (According to interviews, they listen to very little metal.) Whatever they're doing is experimental and boundary pushing: their sound combines elements of doom metal with industrial noise and ambient music. Their most recent album, *No One Deserves Happiness*, was pretty much an all-encompassing pit of despair. Naturally, these two bands mesh well. If, like me, you try and seek out the most extreme music imaginable, you can rest easy for a while. This one is intense.

The music on *One Day* tends to evoke the feeling of waging an impossible war. On the album's second track, "Fleshworks," there's a voiceover played to the backdrop of a hellish industrial soundscape. We hear a woman recount in detail a failed suicide attempt. This album is unafraid to take you to the pit, only to taunt you with a track called "World of Hope and No Pain." The song's about as abrasive as anything else on the record; its irony is a hopeless struggle in a burning hole. Standout track "The Little Death" is probably the closest to a traditional black/doom hybrid metal sound, but it too is foreboding and rougher than what I've come to expect in the genre. Even the instruments want to make noise before they want to make music. It isn't enough to give us standard extreme metal; everything here is coated in a toxic sludge.

It is, put simply, one of the darkest and heaviest albums I've had the pleasure of sitting through. It's a different darkness than say, Charles Manson's 1970 album, which also terrified me (but would you believe that it's really good?). It's an ambiguous darkness, because you don't know what the intent behind the music is. If I'm remembering correctly, there's a moment on Manson's album where you can sense the room he's in. You hear the conversations and laughter of the women in his cult. They're sharing a joyous moment. Then they all begin to make music together. You know exactly what is going through their minds; you know how that story ends. With *One Day*, even the bands themselves refuse to talk about context. I can't even speak as to the lyrical content of *One Day*. It's unintelligible. The Body's Chip King provides high-pitched shrieks that sound as though he's undergoing extreme emotional or physical torment. Full of Hell's Dylan Walker is less shrill when he yells, but it's still a tortured sound. But what does it matter? The music happens to be louder than both of them. This music is oppressive; this music is the music of hell.

All we're left with to ponder is some of the most extreme, inaccessible, abstract harsh noise accompanied by tortured screams and pounding, pulsing, grinding, thrashing rage. At the very least, I can tell that this is the music of aching. To ache like this is to ache without salve.



ONE DAY YOU WILL ACHE LIKE I ACHE

The Body/Full of Hell

Neurot Recordings, 3/25

Summer Book

For when you book it to the beach, or get bet

Written by Amber Appel

Illustrated by Carmen Cheng

OMG Shakespeare

By Brett White and William Shakespeare

It's nearly impossible to escape grade school without being force-fed Shakespeare. The sonnets, the plays, the iambic pentameter; it defines our English education. While Shakespeare is taught as the epitome of fluidity, beauty, and poetry in language, have you ever missed the actual plot of the story because of the unique style? I know I have. I've read an entire scene between just two characters only to have no idea what actually transpired. It made the tests impossible without Sparknote's frank and easy-to-read *No Fear Shakespeare*. However, now you can buy the most popular Shakespeare plays written in the most contemporary language of the land: text message.

You can buy such adaptations as *YOLO Juliet* and *Srsly Hamlet* at your local bookstores. It was a fantastic day when I found this hidden gem, and I couldn't resist buying the first book. I have no guilt, because I have never understood *Romeo and Juliet* so well. The book has group texts, abundant emojis, relationship statuses, Facebook posts, slang, and plenty of LOLs. For those familiar with social media, Shakespeare has never been so readable and entertaining. The whole series of *OMG Shakespeare* will help you understand the stories unburdened by the tricky Elizabethan language. Even if you have no trouble with the Shakespearian language, it is still a hilarious experience to see this adaptation in action.

Something to note is that, with this cyber version of

the text, these books lose some of their power in translation. Language is a powerful tool, and an emoji heart can never capture the full spectrum of one of the most powerful emotions felt by humankind. By moving Shakespeare to text lingo, it detracts from the emotions and literary genius of the original plays. It is said that you never should break up with someone through text, and the reason becomes viciously clear by examining the differences in language between each version of the same story. When Romeo describes his love in the language of Shakespeare it bleeds through the pages, while in text it comes across as superficial. It is a fascinating phenomenon that reveals the importance of language.

Even the most tragic of the Shakespeare plays becomes comedy in this format. In addition to *YOLO Juliet*, there is also *Srsly hamlet*, *Macbeth #killing it*, *A Midsummer Night #nofilter*. If the titles themselves don't crack you up already, then I can assure you that the highly relatable characteristics of social media as used by Hamlet, Romeo, Mercutio, and more, most certainly will. If the humor isn't enough for you to give this book a try, then I recommend reading it for the candid snapshot of one of the world's newest languages. But remember that this book isn't evidence that social media is destroying language and romance, because no matter what happens, Shakespeare will still be forced upon future generations for centuries to come. #Foreals. ■

Book Reviews

between the covers.

The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy

by Douglas Adams

One of the most widely published books in the universe is *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*. Well, not the actual book, but its fictional counterpart. With the words “don’t panic” stamped on its cover, this ideal book for the many travelers of the cosmos contains a vast index of answers and information regarding the many things one has a probability of running into in the infinite expanse of space. This is the very book that Ford Prefect is revising and updating when he is stranded on a terribly boring planet called Earth, but he won’t be there for much longer. Or a more accurate statement is that in a few minutes, the Earth won’t be there any longer. The bar in which Ford and his good friend Arthur Dent, a most uninteresting earthling, are drinking will be incinerated along with the rest of the planet when a troublesome fleet of Vogons vehemently destroys Earth to make way for an interstellar highway. This may be the end of the road for the experienced interplanetary explorer and Arthur, that is, unless they can catch a ride with a thumb aimed skyward.

Arthur will have to drastically adjust his lifestyle in order to even achieve at the very least the hope of coping with the adventures he will be exposed to. He will stutter the word, “What,” more times than there are atoms in a star. Time and time again, the threat of obliteration will be averted with a wide variety of coincidences that will save Arthur, Ford, and the other colorful characters they interact with, such as Zaphod Beeblebrox, the two-headed President of the galaxy, and Marvin, a manic-depressive robot. The hilariously wacky adventures of the group will

keep the reader zooming around in space long after the book concludes at the Restaurant at the End of the Universe.

Douglas Adams has incorporated so much randomness and improbability into this small 200 page sci-fi novel that my confidence in my own capacity for randomness has been compromised. Douglas Adams is the type of author who will interrupt his story to hypothesize what happens to all the ballpoint pens after they are lost; apparently, they all end up on a self-sustaining planet living happy and full lives in a pen society. I can’t compete with his dedication to the unexpected, but I aspire to.

Not only does this story entertain the reader with the fictional history of the universe, but it also provides the answer to the “ultimate question” in its pages. If you don’t appreciate books with a raw display of humor, at least read this one for the passage explaining how a race of highly intelligent beings dedicated their energies to creating a computer powerful enough to calculate the answer to life, the universe, and everything. It takes seven and a half million years to compute the answer, and the reader is present when the day finally arrives for “Deep Thought” to make its reality altering statement.

This book lacked a resounding theme and symbolism, but as a wonderfully charming and hysterical sci-fi, Douglas Adams hit gold. It’s not a book for a typical school assignment, but one can also learn much about how towels are essential for hitchhiking, how the number 42 is more than just the solution to seven multiplied by six, and how robots with “people personalities” suck. ■

The 100

By Kass Morgan

So, the apocalypse finally happened. It wasn't aliens; it wasn't a solar flare; it wasn't the perfect storm, nor a volcano; it was the humans. They nuked themselves. Of course, they were all aiming for their enemies, but the radiation and destruction that resulted from the nuclear warfare forced them all to abandon their home, Earth. Now humans live in orbit, miles above the planet from whence they came, in a patchwork of space stations from every country. The remains of the human race may be safe from the noxious atmosphere, but not for much longer.

Time is running out for the inhabitants on the stations, or more specifically, the air. After 200 years in space, Earth resembles an abandoned pool with a broken filter and no cover, filled with leaves and June bugs; but now it's time to test the water for survivability. A decision is made to re-colonize the Earth by sending down the most able-bodied, respectable citizens. Just kidding; they send the juvenile delinquents, one hundred of them to be exact.

Just think about it: one hundred hormonal criminals completely separated from any governing body and given the entire planet to do whatever they want. It's quite a picture. I imagine it would look like a woodsy Fox Day—and like Fox Day, this story could have gone in many different directions. The author chooses the best one possible.

The four narrators of this book may be the age of most college students, yet they do not carry themselves that way. Bellamy, Wells, Glass, and Clarke have all suffered tragedies and have matured beyond their years as a result; these character traits give the book a serious and calculated tone. It is not a classic survival story, nor is it a teen romance, even though it has plenty of “ships” to have fun with and root for.

This sci-fi book also contains elements of mystery. The four main characters and the remainder of the one hundred all have a hidden past. Slowly, buried secrets begin to surface about them and the system that put them there. Due to these stories told in flashbacks, this book becomes less about survival and more about relationships.

This is the first book of three, and while the second installment is teased as being closer to science fiction, this first book is an almost purely human story that is centered more on the drama than the actual character development. While enjoyable, this book seems to be better suited for television than a piece of literature. And it is. The television show of the same name and premise is on its third season, which I have been avidly watching. For those who have also seen it, long live Clexa. If you can, you should watch the show, but just in case you don't own a TV, you can always read the book. ■



The Devil Wears Prada

By *Lauren Weisberger*

If I were to go up to someone and demand, “Make me dinner reservations at that restaurant reviewed in the newspaper I was reading last week,” they would leer at me like I was a loon and back away slowly. This is a ridiculous request for anyone to make, yet when Miranda Priestly says “jump,” you jump. In *The Devil Wears Prada*, when Miranda makes a command, it is followed in a blink of an eye without hesitation or question, because in the fashion industry and in her esteemed position as editor of *Runway* magazine, her opinion is the only one that matters. She holds her power over people and makes them dance like puppets. To be her assistant would be hell, but when Andrea lands the job all she knows is that it is a position that “a million girls would die for.” Sounds like a great opportunity to enhance a resumé, until you realize that expression should be interpreted more literally.

If Andrea works for the “Dragon Lady” for one year, she can get a position at any newspaper, including her dream career of writing for the *New York Times*, but the question is: can she last that long? She must fulfill every one of Miranda’s outlandish requests, and they are quite outlandish. For example: securing a steak dinner for Miranda’s lunch while simultaneously obtaining the next Harry Potter book before it is published. Andrea is on call at all hours, and as she becomes increasingly immersed in the fashion world, all other aspects of her life begin to fall apart. In order to make it throughout the year, she has to become the kind of girl who cares about how she looks and leave her old friends behind repeatedly. She is mercilessly pulled

apart by the pressures of her work and the growing strain on her relationships with loved ones. This book may seem like a book about a girl who starts loving her shoes more than her boyfriend, but that is a shallow, almost slanderous, comment on an impactful lesson on where happiness and true success originate.

Yes, it’s true that Andrea makes some significant mistakes, but overall, her character is representative of what happens when a person is repressed and blackmailed. She is learning to manipulate people in order to keep Miranda happy, all for the promise of achieving her career goals. As the year wears on, she is warped into one of her boss’s drones and loses her individuality. The friendly sweater-wearing “Andy” gives way to a career consumed and stiletto-wearing stranger. Andrea begins to learn that not all of the evils in life are obvious; sometimes, they wear Prada.

Given the nature of Andrea’s character, the reader sympathizes equally with both her and the people she leaves behind in her career-focused pursuits, causing us to question: how far will she go? It may be a book aimed at girls, but it succeeds in focusing on some of life’s toughest lessons, while entertaining us with Andrea’s outrageous plights and extravagant errand running. It could definitely pass for a “beach read,” but there is a dark underlying layer that gives *The Devil Wears Prada* surprising depth. It’s worth a read. However, if it gives you pause to carry around a book with a fashionable shoe on the cover, you can always balance it out by pairing it with *1984* by George Orwell. No one will question it. ■



Someday You Will

Written by Anna Keeler
Photography by Elise Grzebieniak

The sky's lining was so intricate Janah's mother could have done the patchwork. Variations of blue flowed and tangled themselves against the wisps of white until each stitch of wind was visible to the naked eye. It was no accident of summer. It was the work of god, who no doubt cared too much about how the sky looked to leave the grunt work to the angels, and for once, wanted to do more than just admire his work.

It'd been a while since she entertained the notion of god, but in moments like this, it was hard not to. Absentminded mumbling from the soft hum of the radio, the Smoky Mountains tracing across the horizon, washed out bands of green that flowed from cloud to earth. It was in these moments that the sky, that cliché body that she'd always been told to avoid talking about in her poems, became that much more noticeable. Inescapable. Maybe it was the lack of intelligent conversation. The horrible country station. Those damn mountains that seemed to block out the sun.

More likely, it was the fact that she'd been dragged out of bed at eight in the morning to follow her mother from craft shop to craft shop, looking for threads and paints and picture frames. All of these details matted into her mind in equal parts nostalgia and irritation, and she was too tired to remember she wasn't supposed to notice or care.

"Janah, did you hear me?" her mother said.

The woman's eyes were focused, mouth pinched in the frustration of having to stop mid sentence to grab her attention.

"Yeah, you need to get gas after we go to JoAnne's."

She wished her father had come along. Not that the trip would be any more enjoyable, but the long, silent moments weren't near as awkward with the man acting as a barrier between the two.

"You know, I was reading the paper this morning," her mother said, reaching into the backseat. She grabbed her purse and set it on the center console. "Looks like they'll have some good

yard sales this weekend. We should check them out like we used to.”

The hesitation on the last few words pulled at Janah’s chest, her boredom superseded by guilt. She knew deep down that her mother was making an effort, more of one than she had in the three years since she initially kicked her daughter out.

Janah hesitated before saying, “Sounds fun.”

Her mother paused again, the anxious uncertainty betraying her cold face. “It’s probably been a while since you’ve done that, huh?”

“Actually, I went a few weeks ago.”

“Really?”

Janah grinned, looking toward her mother. “You wouldn’t think so, but there’s a lot of those up in Illinois. I guess selling next to useless stuff on your lawn is a universal thing.”

Her mother chuckled, her face lighting up for the first time all morning. “You don’t say?”

“Yeah,” Janah said. “Marjorie got me up so damn early she practically had to drag me out of bed. I still haven’t recovered.”

As quickly as the tension between them faded it grew again, her mother’s attention back on the road. “Uh-huh.”

Janah turned away, the palpable distance making her stomach grind. As much as she tried to meet the woman halfway, she could still see it all there: the distance, the heartache, and even to an extent, the hatred that settled below the surface, paling her once bright eyes. She wondered why her mother had invited her back home in the first place if it was going to be this unbearable. She said she’d made her peace with it all, but still treated Marjorie’s name like the cuss words she’d never allowed in her house.

But that was the difference, Janah thought; she could smack the curses right off her mouth, but this was the one she couldn’t punish away, no matter how hard she tried.

Static came in and out, drowning out the sound of the Blake Shelton ballad on the radio. Her mother reached over and shut it off. The car was quiet again, except for the sound of car keys jangling against the steering wheel.

Janah hated silence in general, but didn’t mind it as much now. It was better than the alternative. Talks of fire and brimstone. Quoting bible verses that neither of them ever really understood. How God, Jesus, Lord and Messiah, Lion of Zion, forbid it, and so did her mother, because the musings of men who followed an invisible deity mattered more in the Dunbar household than the children they gave birth to. It would have been funny if it didn’t hurt so bad. Then again, order and rules always mattered to her mother more than people did. And neither of them were stupid, just stubbornly set in their ways. And as much as Janah liked to buy into the anecdotes she heard in the Gay-Straight Alliance, she knew it would never happen for her.

They pulled into the parking lot of the only JoAnne’s in Pigeon Forge, and her mother killed the engine.

“Listen, Janah, I’m willing to work on things, but I told you,

I don’t want to know about any of that.”

“Any of what? I was just saying—”

“Janah.” The way her mother said her name had that sense of finality that it had when a conversation with children was over, and she wouldn’t hear any more. She didn’t know why she expected any different, for this conversation or the whole trip. She had no idea she was at her breaking point until her face fell into her hands, loose sobs getting caught in her warm tears.

Her mother didn’t reach over to comfort her, sitting uncomfortably with her hands knitted in her lap until Janah sat upright, leaning her head against the seat. She wiped her eyes and nose on her arms.

“Oh for heaven’s sake,” her mother said, reaching into her purse and thrusting a bundle of fabric in the girl’s direction.

Janah took the cloth from her mother’s hand, wiping her face down until it felt clean enough.

“I’m gonna go in and get what I want,” she said, unbuckling her seatbelt. “You can come in once you’ve stopped with your little tantrum.”

I’m not a child, Janah wanted to say. But her mother had already slammed the car door before she could open her mouth. She watched as the woman disappeared into store, eyes lingering long after the automatic doors had shut.

She sat there coughing and sniffing for another few moments, moving only to wipe a stray tear off her cheek. With nothing else to turn to, she focused on the sky, still as crafted as it had been before the fight. Had this been one of her stories, it would be gray clouds and torrential rain, washing away her sorrows in the stereotypical manner that stories had about them. Real life wasn’t symbolic, though. There was no great playmaker out there pushing people’s lives into pretty poetic boxes. As Janah saw it, circumstance was circumstance and the universe didn’t have the literary training to write things to make sense. And there was no point in putting faith in a bigger meaning that didn’t exist.

She had no idea how much time had passed, but it was clear her mother was making no effort to be fast. Janah unbuckled her own seatbelt and stretched her legs, fist still balled around the cloth her mother gave her. She unraveled her fingers to see it was one of the hand

stitched handkerchiefs she made and sold sometimes to the old ladies at church. It wasn’t as elaborate as the other ones, a simple taupe square with rose gold stitching. She turned it around to the lower right side, making out the letters at the bottom under a stick cross: John 13:7. The years between Janah’s rebelliousness and Sunday school lessons weren’t enough to erase the knowledge of her mother’s favorite verse: “You don’t understand what I’m doing now, but someday you will.”

Janah bit the inside of her lip and dropped the hankie to the ground, grinding it under her shoe. When she saw her mother approaching again, she sat up straight and dried her eyes. She’d wasted enough tears on things she couldn’t change. ■

Real life wasn’t symbolic,
though. There was no great
playmaker out there pushing
people’s lives into pretty
poetic boxes. As Janah saw it,
circumstance was circumstance
and the universe didn’t have
the literary training to write
things to make sense.

THE SENATOR CIRCA 1500 B.C. – JANUARY 16TH, 2012 A.D. BY DAVID SMITH

Like a sentinel to time you stood, and watched, in silence
that was loud and long. For countless centuries Timucuan canoes
slid by beneath, between your knobbly cypress knees,
and on the banks the shell mounds grew high.

Old man, tall and proud, broad-shouldered,
heavily-mustached, swaying slightly—always there.
Showing the way, keeping us safe.

An institution you already were when the old world noisily arrived
hacking and slashing never satisfying its hunger for lumber
and turpentine. But you survived; your friends, the Timucuan, never;
they too, hacked and slashed, and marched away, in tears, leaving the land forever.

Did you want to scream and cry out but were afraid to let go?
Did you wonder why you were spared and left all alone?
Did you feel the end coming like a wise man knows?

In the dry night the discarded match, careless doom, catches you quickly;
countless creatures take flight from the sanctuary of your being to return no more
while the crackling destruction mercilessly consumes your body,
then frees your beautiful soul.

A long time you were, old man of the woods.

PRIMEVAL BY KATHERINE AMMON

Gray slashes across the horizon,
merging the sky and sea.
Mist tumbles over the icy waters.

The thunder roars.

Twin lights speed 'cross the blackened plain.
The steel beasts are fleeing,
well aware of the predator-prey relationship.

The rain droplets fall

In sheets, stinging like nettles.
Red mothers are screeching,
searching for their children.
They know that Nature is indifferent,
less thoughtful than animals.

The sun rises

above its cloudy bosom.
Rays like kaleidoscopic blossoms
saturate the air.
The gentle warmth dries up the tears.

The cars keep on.

PEA IN THE POD BY CARLEY RAY

She was tiny,
So very tiny.
She could fit in my hand.
We were alone,
Her pea in my pod.
Her heart was nervous,
So very nervous.
I kept her warm.
I was good.
For her, I was good.
I tried.
I tried really hard,
And her growth was my proof.
But she was tiny,
So very tiny.
So tiny that
She broke easily.
I couldn't keep her warm.
I couldn't keep her safe.
She was squeezed out of me
Like a pea from a pod.
And I was alone,
So very alone.



Photography by Christine Martin

Dear Alzheimer

Dear What Is Left,
When does something really end? How do we know if something is truly over?

Five letters, two vowels, and three consonants
Years of real life, life that can't be changed, altered or rejected.
All those moments and memories to be infected
Disease, deterioration of the mind, loss of hope
It took years to even begin to cope.
Now here I am, wondering when the next earthquake will come
Come and break apart another part of my life and family

Five letters,
Apart they are nothing
Together they create an individual
In your eyes, someone exceptional
What do your eyes offer now?
Fear.

If only you could hear
If only you could remember,
Remember five letters.

The end is never clear
It comes flying towards us like a spear
For many, that hurdling weapon slowed down for months
For me, it hit the day you forgot those five letters
Forgot the meaning and significance
Destroyed my innocence

That is how we know.

From,
Your Five Letters

CHAMBER MUSIC

A little ways from Mount Pleasant, amid the glamour of a newly built strip mall, sits a grand testament to the devout. The ancient relic climbs into the heavens and covers the town with its gothic spire, transforming the nearby shops into a collection of lightless squares. Its somber bells ring out across the borough as a siren's call to those who attend its service. From the archway, a homily can be heard rumbling in its walls. The baritone voice skirts the ceiling and descends upon the mass of crowded pews while the sworn, in their Sunday best, rise from their seats and parade down the aisle, their palms to God as they approach the raised pulpit. Like a mother bird, he lowers the tiny bundle of Christ into their waiting hands. It is only after this ritual that I, a bearer of the priesthood, take my place in the confessional chamber.

It was a colorless afternoon when I first heard her voice. Rainy bullets were striking the capital as the townsfolk, smothered in their raincoats, made their way into the church. There was a harpsichordist there, a young and amiable woman in a green knit dress, who worked her fingers around the delicate strings of her instrument while another priest, a frail frame in his billowing robes, stood behind the lectern and read a passage from Romans. The congregation followed along with their pocket Bibles.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy... and peace... as you trust in him," he bellowed, "so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

The end of each verse was showered with

amens.

At length this pattern of verse and amen continued until the homily had ended. A hymn was sung and the audience massed into the aisle to receive their pieces of altar bread. As they processed, I retired to the chamber and waited. It was not long before I heard the door of the patron's chamber open, shut, and a heavy weight rest on its kneeler. The disciple on the other end let out a light cough before voicing their confession.

"Forgive me, Father," the frail voice spoke, "for I have sinned."

The inflection was strikingly familiar, soft and sleek as the wind. Its cadence sliced through the lattice like a blade and cut into the reaches of my soul. It was a voice that reminded me of my mother.

In my infancy, she would take me to church and we would recite verse together. In the evenings, she would sing me sweet, hymnal lullabies before I slept. She was there when I first sat in confessional and there when I became a man of God, a woman who supported my religious ventures until her very end. And although her passing did leave in its wake a season of torment and misery, it was only that. Brief. It was only when the voice in the chamber stopped that I hastened back into reality. I thought for a minute, uttered a short penance, and dismissed her.


That night, exhausted, I lay awake thinking of the woman in the opposite chamber. Unable to put my thoughts to rest, I stumbled out of bed toward the bathroom sink and splashed my face with water to relieve my

eyes of their bitter sting. In the washroom mirror, I noted the faint circles under my eyes and the sickly pallor of my skin. Unnerved, I promptly returned to bed. I could not help but turn her voice over in my head until I fell into the embrace of sleep. Still, there was something unsettling about the entire ordeal.

The days that followed were uneventful, and passed as quickly as the clouds of a hot summer. And since it had only been a few days since my brush with the woman, I was all the more surprised to hear her, once again, on the other side of the chamber. I didn't listen this time. The little I do remember is of no importance, as these trivial confessions did little to shape my perception of her person. I was enamored by her voice and her voice alone, and merely listening was enough. To her most recent confession I feigned reproach, gave a quick penance and sent her away. Throughout the day, even as patrons filled the chamber across from mine, her voice still echoed.

I felt myself beginning to wane. I could bear it no longer. Did this woman have no heart? Every other day she would arrive to discuss some new, deviant behavior. And although she showed neither remorse nor any semblance of compassion for what she had done, I still looked forward to her arrival. Why? The voice! I couldn't stand it! It had become my undoing. What once was a soothing lullaby had turned into an illusory nightmare.

In order to strengthen my resolve, I desperately needed to disclose these issues with someone of similar condition, and who better



than another priest? I decided to visit a church a few towns over; a quaint little monument in the center of George's Square. It was a busy Sunday then, and there were several patrons lining its vestibule, fanning themselves while they waited for entry through the corridor. I made myself small and slipped in with the crowd. After some time, the group pushed forward and spilled into the adjoining room. I hastily made my way toward the confessional, turned the latch of the patron's chamber and stepped inside.

Until then, I had never realized how imposing those caskets were, their padded kneelers and varnished, wooden walls. I knelt on the rest, crossing my arms and placing them on the shelf in front of me. It was silent, silent enough to where I could hear the muffled breath of the priest in the opposite chamber. I cleared my throat and began my confession,

"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. Three weeks have passed since my last confession."

"What brings you?" was the hoarse reply.

"Every other day at around noon, a woman sits across from me in confessional. Her voice sounds like that of my departed

mother, and I can't help but focus on it. I fear that this obsession may be interfering with my livelihood."

Although it lasted only a few seconds, there was a short, blistering silence. It hung in the air, as if the priest were savoring it. Digesting it. He took a heavy sigh before starting again,

*Although she showed
neither remorse nor any
semblance of compassion
for what she had done, I still
looked forward to her arrival.
Why? The voice! I couldn't
stand it! It had become my
undoing. What once was a
soothing lullaby had turned
into an illusory nightmare.*

"You're a priest, then?"

"Yes, Father."

"And how often do you think of this woman?"

"Far too often."

It was like pulling teeth. It pained me to admit it. The toll this took was far beyond the scope of my description.

"Alright. Two 'Our Fathers' is your penance. May God bless you."

"Thank you, Father."

Unsatisfied, I crossed myself and left the chamber, exiting the church as the congregation filed back into their respective pews. The sound of a harpsichord tumbled out of an open window. I walked home in the dark.

Three Sundays passed, and I had not eaten in days. I neither had the will nor the desire to. Last night's stew sat cold on the stove and the bread had already gone stale. The contents

in the fridge were beginning to fester and rot. The apartment was a mess and the desire to put a face to this voice continued to haunt me. At length, I decided I had had enough.

It began like any other day. I arrived at the church, as I always did, at a quarter to noon. I walked past the harpsichordist, the pastor, the priests, and the congregation before stopping at the confessional. My heart jumped. I could scarcely contain my excitement as I crept into the chamber. It would be any time now that the woman, the woman with my mother's voice, aired her confession.

Suddenly, the chamber jostled. I craned my neck into the lattice but could not make out anything in the black. My hand lay pensively, steadily, on the latch of the chamber door. I stayed there, crouched in the dark, ear to the grate, fingers constricting the latch like a serpent, until, until...

I heard it.

"Forgive me, Father, f—"

With all the force of an ox, I tore the chamber door open and jumped out. The harpsichordist stopped her tune, the priest paused mid-homily, and the congregation turned, reflexively, toward the back of the room. I did not care. My arm shot out toward the latch of the second chamber door. I flung it open.

There are few things in this world that make men fall to their knees in despair. That make a man's blood run cold and his veins turn stiff. Little compared to these when my eyes, and the eyes of the congregation, fell upon the empty chamber. ■

WRITTEN BY CHRISTIAN CHICOYE PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTINE MARTIN



RD P.
HALL
7302
CHI PSI LODGE

FDC

CULTURAL COALESCENCE:

Does it Mean to belong to a Community?

BY HIND BERJI



Moko Jumbies performing at Rollins College, Photography by Scott Cook

The name says it all. *Transcommunitality: Laura Anderson Barbata, Collaboration Beyond Borders*, an exhibition featured at the Cornell Fine Arts Museum, merges cultural integration with social intervention. Describing herself as a transnational, transdisciplinary, and bicultural artist, Laura Anderson Barbata develops collaborative, participatory projects that form a sense of social cohesion among various communities.

As an artist, Barbata is “interested in the language of art to facilitate and bring about and inspire exchanges between groups of people. What I call it is an exchange of knowledge. Through my work as an artist, I look in ways in which all of us can build and construct these relationships. And it’s all built on reciprocity. If you see my other projects, they also have to do with the exchange of knowledge and reciprocity; promoting respect and cultural values. And all of this is done in dialogue with everybody around you.”

In *Transcommunitality*, her pieces incorporate stilt-walking communities who use the practice as a way of preserving historic customs. With the aid of traditional craftspeople and artisans who contribute not just their skills but years of tradition and experience, Barbata’s work features vibrant, embroidered textiles and meticulously sculpted woodwork.

Her work suggests that the past, present, and future of cultural traditions can flourish with the right kind of support. Barbata’s transdisciplinary approach incorporates design, textile use,

movement, dance, and music, allowing the works to come to life in the form of a procession. Barbata’s role as artist, creator, participator, and observer during these processions helps move her overall collaborative exchange of knowledge.

One of Barbata’s most prominent and longest-running projects is with the African diasporic performance group the Brooklyn Jumbies. Najja Codrington, Ali Sylvester, and Kiel (Keys) Curlan Alibocas bring a modern spin to the Moko Jumbie, a West African figure that Barbata first encountered in 2000 when she began working with the Keylemanjahro Moko Jumbies of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Moko Jumbies originated in West Africa as spiritual deities and are used in celebratory processions such as Carnival.

Similarly, working with the Zaachila community within the Mexican state of Oaxaca, Barbata created costumes and, with the Brooklyn Jumbies, performed for the stilt-walking group Los Zancudos de Zaachila in their annual celebration of patron saints San Pedro and San Pablo.

“We really focused on building bridges and connections with other traditional stilt dance groups,” Barbata said. “For example, the Los

Zancudos de Zaachila in Oaxaca, they did not know about the practice in West Africa, or in Trinidad and Tobago, or in New York. And people in Mexico City don’t know about the Zancudos de Zaachila.”

Barbata’s collaborations don’t just bring together different communities; they bring together different individuals within a

The Moko Jumbie continues as community guardian, never ceasing to honor a legacy of evoking an ancestral spirit. There are no hierarchies between Barbata, the Jumbies, and the groups they work with; everyone is on equal ground (unless you happen to be on stilts, of course).

single community. Under any other circumstances, these individuals may not have the opportunity to congregate, each adhering to what Barbata and Najja Codrington, one of the previously mentioned founders of the Brooklyn Jumbies, call their “circles.” Codrington refers mostly to the inner city communities the Jumbies work with in New York City: “Most people, especially inner city youth, are not fortunate enough to even move outside their own circle. We teach them about their culture and about other people’s cultures. We’re an active learning experience.”

Thus, the Moko Jumbie continues as community guardian, never ceasing to honor a legacy of evoking an ancestral spirit. There are no hierarchies between Barbata, the Jumbies, and the groups they work with; everyone is on equal ground (unless you happen to be on stilts, of course).

“With the stilts, it actually helps them a lot because whereas before they had to physically look up to adults, now the adults are looking up at them. Symbolically, it’s the same. It’s the difference between Superman and Clark Kent; when they’re walking around the street, nobody notices them, but when they have the stilts on, everybody wants to take a picture. It gives them a sense of self worth.”

Sometimes, looking at society from an elevated perspective also allows us to see the rough patches within our own communities. While Barbata strives for transcultural integration with various communities, she understands the importance of holding a mirror up to society’s faults. In other words, the fundamentally important value of unity is often marred by injustice, and Barbata calls attention to it.

Intervention: Wall Street is one example. As a response to the economic crisis of 2008, amidst the Occupy Wall Street movement of 2011, Barbata and the Brooklyn Jumbies invaded the iconic Financial District. Traditionally, the Moko Jumbies ward off evil, misfortune, and disease. The Zancudos, too, ask their beloved saints for blessings, protection, and miracles. What better place to ask for such healing?

Donning men’s business suits, Barbata and the Jumbies walked from Zancutti Park to the New York Stock Exchange. They handed out gold chocolate coins to everyone as a symbolic gesture of sharing

their wealth with the public. Barbata herself wore an oversized suit—sans stilts—to represent women’s significantly smaller presence in the corporate world.

During the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in November 2015, Barbata and the Jumbies revealed the project, *Intervention: Indigo*. Using elements from Mexico, Guatemala, Asia, and West Africa, it was “also a response—just like *Intervention: Wall Street*—to the violence that is continually perpetuated against people of color in this country and all around the world.”

“It is a piece that brings together several layers of interpretation, and several cultures’ value of the color indigo,” Barbata said. “The color indigo symbolizes royalty; it’s a sacred color in many cultures; it’s a color of protection; it’s a color of healing; it is a natural plant dye that is used all over the world. So it also symbolically has the concept of unity.”

Barbata continues, “It is common in West Africa, for example, for cloths of indigo that are dyed repeatedly to be used to wrap newborn babies in order to protect them. In West Africa, the Moko Jumbie is the protector of a village who is there to serve and protect, and the police are here to serve and protect. So it is about reminding ourselves what it is to be of service. I don’t think it’s a coincidence that people in hierarchies or in positions of power are using that color.”

They started in a police precinct in Brooklyn, a wave of indigo Jumbies and musicians on the ground dressed as Oaxacan “blue devils” and wearing police hats.

According to Codrington, they were the only culturally significant group in an otherwise commercial parade, yet they only received approximately two seconds of airtime. However, Barbata and the Jumbies realized their mission, stating that the procession

had its “originating moment” in Brooklyn and evoked that moment throughout the course of the parade.

“One of the most important things is for things to be documented,” Codrington said, “Because a lot of important things are missed or rewritten because it hasn’t been documented by the right people and has been re-documented by others. We always say, ‘you need to tell your own history, or else it can get lost.’” ■

Sometimes, looking at society from an elevated perspective also allows us to see the rough patches within our own communities. While Barbata strives for transcultural integration with various communities, she understands the importance of holding a mirror up to society’s faults.



Celebrating CFAMILY Day outside of Cornell Fine Arts Museum at Rollins College.

FEATURED ARTIST

Bekki Charbonneau

THE ARTS



ARTIST STATEMENT

Last semester, Bekki Charbonneau worked on an independent research project for Art History on a 17th century artist/scientist who specialized in natural history illustrations of insects, studying specifically butterfly etchings. Her love of illustrations of the natural world carry over into her personal art as well. These selected works are from a larger collection of butterfly/faerie illustrations. She is passionate about painting and drawing the portraits of those close to her. The two portraits shown here are a friend from high school and her younger sister. Bekki is a graduating senior, with double majors in Art History and Critical Media & Cultural Studies and minors in English and Sexuality, Women's, & Gender Studies. Bekki will continue her education at the University of Oxford, pursuing a PhD in the History of Science. She plans to become a history/natural history educator.



THE POWER OF FONTS

WRITTEN BY MARY CATHERINE PFLUG

WELCOME TO FONTS 101



LESSON 1: Fonts are designed and sold by humans. Every font you use and see has been created by someone. When you buy fonts, the money you spend is going towards a type designers' livelihood. Fonts are actually software, and when you buy them, you're not actually buying the letters. You're licensing the rights to use the code that makes the letters work in the computer when you type. And these rights come with limitations that many businesses do not know about it.

LESSON 2: Serif vs. Sans Serif fonts.



LESSON 2: Serif vs. Sans Serif fonts. Serifs are the little feet on the letters, like this one. They can come in many shapes and sizes. The most notable example is Times New Roman. Sans serif fonts are simply fonts without serifs, hence the use of the word "Sans". The most famous example is Helvetica.

LESSON 3: Italic vs. Oblique.

Regular
Oblique
Regular
Italic

LESSON 3: Italic vs. Oblique. You are familiar with the term italic; it is in Microsoft Word next to the bold and underline buttons. Italic is the cursive form of letters. When you click the button to italicize text, the computer doesn't simply slant the selected words. Instead, the computer completely replaces the font of the selected text with an entirely different and individually designed font that is the cursive version of the original one. Oblique is the term used for slanted text, which is very different from italic.

THE STORY BEHIND COMIC SANS

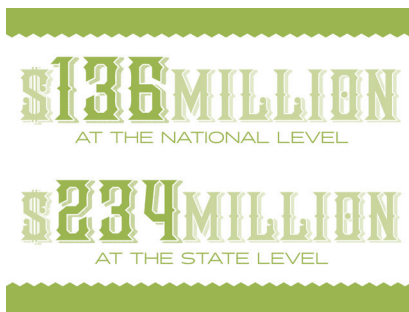
Comic Sans was actually designed for early computers to use for on-screen user instruction manuals, in an attempt to make the computer seem more friendly and human. It wasn't designed by a type designer, but with rudimentary tools by a software developer needing to solve a problem. It's still around today because the developer worked for Microsoft and created it for one of the first Microsoft systems, and it got bundled into the system fonts that are pre-installed on your computer when you buy it. In general, it needs to be said that it is 1) poorly designed 2) should not be used 3) not even for jokes 4) not ever. But, if you like the friendliness it is trying to create, I have an alternative for you: Comic Neue. It's consistent but still friendly, and it comes in a rounded and a square version. It has three weights and an oblique version, and it's downloadable for free.

Comic Sans
Comic Neue



CASE STUDY: FONTS CAN SAVE INK

Fonts can be used to save the government, schools, and people money. A student named Suvir Mirchandani (left) did a test about font ink for a science fair project when he was in middle school and his research ended up inspiring other studies that caused people to believe that the government could save money by changing fonts. He noticed he was getting a lot of handouts in school, so he tested the amount of ink used in different fonts to see if he could recommend a font that would use the least amount of ink. Ink is more expensive than perfume by oz. Imagine this applied to the government; following Mirchandani's logic, with the enormous amount of documents the government prints per year, changing the font to Garamond would save \$136 million per year at the national level and \$234 million at the state level. And this test only uses the four fonts that are standard on computer systems, each printed in 12pt size; imagine the savings if a font was used that was actually designed to reduce ink, not just a randomly selected pre-installed desktop font!



Garamond
Times New Roman
Century Gothic
Comic Sans

However, while this study gained national attention, it was naive. The only reason Garamond saved ink was because its x-height, or height of the lowercase letters, is much smaller than other fonts. Thus, Garamond as a 12pt font is actually 15% smaller than the average font and thus is equivalent to a 10pt font. Any font that is smaller will naturally use less ink and take up fewer pages. Additionally, the government doesn't use inkjet printers like the ones we have at home. Mostly, they use laser printers that use toner, which is half the price of

ink per oz. Also, laser printers are typically not owned by the government but leased from printer companies that charge based on the number of pages rather than toner used (so a page printed with nothing on it costs the same as a full color page). The highest volume of printing done by the government is on printing presses, which have very different economies of scale because the costs are not determined by ink on the page but the complexity of the layout of the page. However, there are special fonts that are designed to maintain a normal x-height while using less ink. Businesses can use them to be more eco friendly. You can use Garamond at home and other situations to save ink and paper.

CAMPAIGN FONTS

Interestingly, some of the fonts used in this year's candidates evoke logos of businesses. Rand Paul's logo uses the same color scheme and font of the old Verizon logo. Naturally, Rand Paul values private businesses so it is fitting that his logo looks corporate. Donald Trump's logo evokes the same feelings as a Tommy Hilfiger label, even though it doesn't use the same font. Accordingly, it appeals to the same people who purchase Tommy Hilfiger: white, middle class conservatives. Finally, Marco Rubio's font is the same as the font of Adidas, a youthful and very hip sports brand. Marco Rubio is a young candidate and no doubt wants to be perceived as hip. In my personal opinion, the use of the map as the dot above the "i" and the color choices make this logo decidedly un-hip.



SPECTRUM

ROLLINS LGBTQ+ ALLIANCE

MAKE FRIENDS, CONVERSATION, AND CHANGE.

EVERYONE WELCOME!

SUPPORT YOUR CAMPUS COMMUNITY AND MAKE
ROLLINS A MORE INCLUSIVE PLACE.

A different discussion/activity topic every week, including:

Media representation Global LGBTQ movements
How to be a changemaker Sex and chocolate

EVERY OTHER MONDAY, 5:15 PM AT WOOLSON HOUSE



*Congratulations to the Rollins Dance Team
on a wonderful year of dance, service, and
community engagement.*



NATIONAL CHAMPIONS!



ROLLINS COLLEGE DEBATE TEAM



KOLTEN ELLIS


#1
IN THE NATION

CONGRATULATIONS

The Rollins College Debate Team won the 2016-17 National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA) Novice National Championship Tournament on March 10-13 in Lafayette, Louisiana. The NDPA is the largest national intercollegiate debate organization in the United States. Each year, more than 200 schools compete in its tournaments. Rollins students Kolten Ellis ('16) ranked as the event's No. 1 speaker and Joshua Brown ('18) ranked as the event's No. 5 speaker.

JOSHUA BROWN

#5
IN THE NATION



THE INDEPENDENT IS A MAGAZINE THAT SHOWCASES THE VOICES OF WRITERS, ARTISTS, AND INTELLECTUALS AT ROLLINS COLLEGE. THIS MAGAZINE SERVES AS A FORUM FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY TO SHARE THEIR RESEARCH, ARTWORK, TRAVEL EXPERIENCES, POLITICAL OPINIONS, AND MUCH MORE. WE STRIVE TO PUBLISH ARTICULATE, AUDACIOUS JOURNALISTIC PIECES THAT WILL BOTH EDUCATE OUR READERS AND MOTIVATE THEM TO FORM THEIR OWN INDEPENDENT WORLD VIEWS.