

# THE PRESS



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# Letter From The Editor

I can imagine sunken, overworked eyes peering at these words. Cramming until the brink of dawn, loading up on caffeine and quietly repeating notes as you step on the bus is temporary.

Yet, I can't quite shake the feeling that this entire experience will be over soon. Whether you're a freshman or a senior, time sneaks up on you when you're not looking.

Glance up, and take a look around you. Do it right now.

You are in this world. You're in the depths of your lifestyle as a 20-something-year-old. ENJOY IT.

Yeah, exams and essays suck, but at least we're all given a chance to show what we're made out of. We're lucky.

You get to have the experience of figuring out the intricacies of the real world. It's hard to figure out where to place our feet, but at least we have the abilities to do so. Take advantage of it.

Everyone is coming at the world from different angles. Yet sometimes, we have a lazy desire to put people in boxes.

Here at The Press, we try to learn what we don't understand and dissolve labels.

As a matter of fact, don't place a label on yourself.

Take the rules and break them all in a fit of creative passion.

Carve your individuality out bit by bit 'cause you don't have to establish a firm sense of who you are and, real talk, do we ever figure it all out?

Figuring this shit out is half the fun, no?

This life...is so so so short. Get your kicks in when you can, kids. Have a great rest of the semester and we'll see ya in January.

-Nirv



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ley.*



# Philosophiæ Naturalis.

## ON THE HISTORICAL INTERSECTION OF SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY.

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By Sir *CHRIS GREENING.*

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Translated into *English* by *ANDREW MOTTE.*

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To which are added,

The Laws of the *MOON's* Motion, according  
to Gravity.

By *JOHN MACHIN* *Astron. Prof. Gresh.* and  
*Secr. R. Soc.*

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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L O N D O N :

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“The classical philosophers had a close connection with the science of their times; some of them, such as Descartes and Leibniz, were leading mathematicians and physicists themselves.”

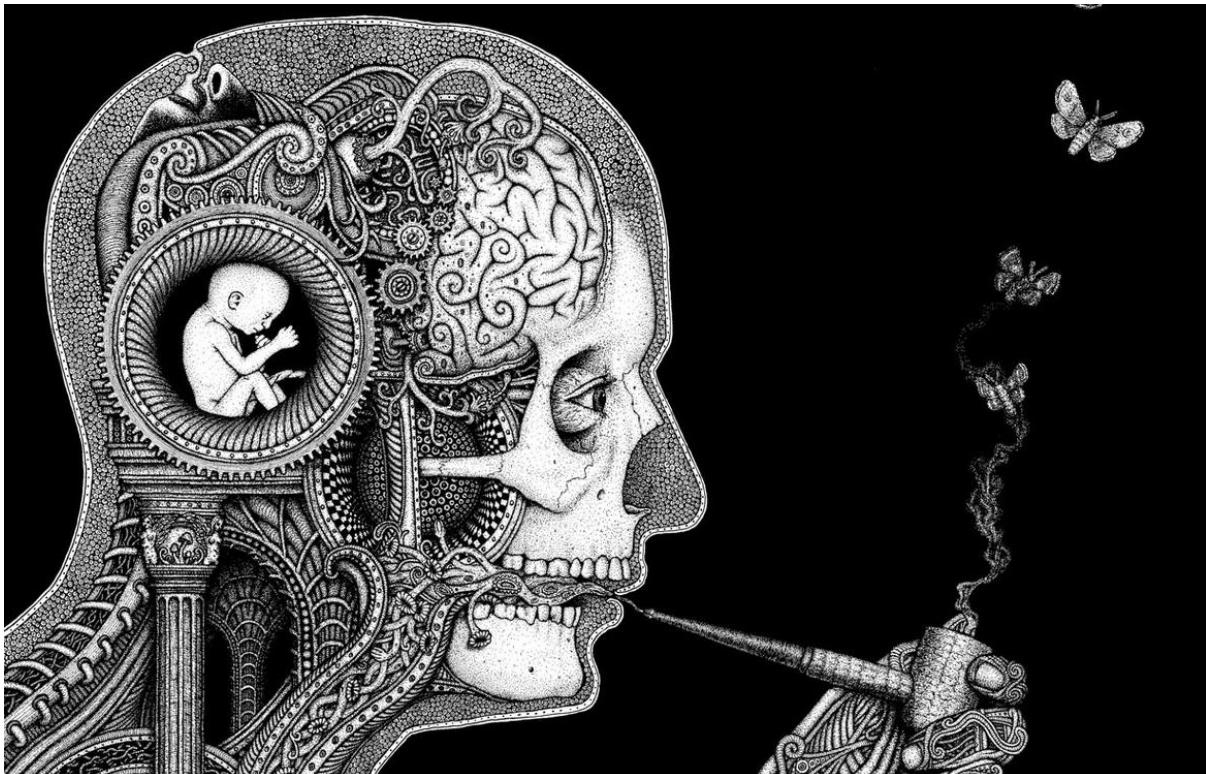
- Hans Reichenbach,  
“The Philosophy of Space and Time”

In the centuries preceding the advent of what is now considered “modern science,” the study of nature and the physical universe was known as “natural philosophy.” The name itself implies an intimate connection between the sciences and philosophy. It begs the question: At what point did the two disciplines diverge?

Whether you’re a scientist studying the fundamental nature of the universe or a philosopher studying the fundamental nature of Man, you might ask yourself: Is the universe deterministic or probabilistic? Do time and space exist independently of the mind and why does time have an apparent unidirectional flow? Can machines think and if so, how do we define intelligence? These are just a couple of drops in an ocean of questions that demonstrate the intersection and symbiosis of science and philosophy. So when and why did philosophy and science grow so seemingly distant from one another in the world of higher education?

Natural philosophy is considered to have begun with the ancient Greek philosopher and scientist Aristotle. One of the defining traits of Aristotelian philosophy and science is its focus on first principles, which are defined by basic, foundational and self-evident propositions or assumptions, such as: “If I go outside, the sky will be blue.” Aristotle’s interests included (as listed on Wikipedia): biology, zoology, psychology, physics, metaphysics, logic, ethics, rhetoric, music, poetry, economics, politics and government. As we can see he was a busy man, and his contributions laid the groundwork for scientists and philosophers alike hundreds of years after his death. Following Aristotle, the study of the natural world fell into this new category of philosophy known as natural philosophy. Many famous scientists and mathematicians that have since been redefined into specific disciplines were considered natural philosophers in their day.

Perhaps the most famous example is the natural philosopher Isaac Newton, who is today referred to as a physicist and a mathematician. One of Newton’s greatest achievements was his publication of the work that outlined his laws of motion, “*Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*,” which is Latin for “Mathematical Principles in Natural Philosophy.” Newton is famously quoted as saying, “Plato is my friend — Aristotle is my friend — but my greatest friend is truth,” as well as, “If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants,” so it is clear the influence philosophy had on his scientific discoveries.



Another one of the giants preceding Newton was René Descartes, a famous philosopher, mathematician and scientist of the 17th century. Descartes is famously quoted as stating, “I think, therefore I am.” His text “Meditations on First Philosophy” (1641) is still a standard in most university philosophy departments. Descartes is also credited as the father of analytical geometry, which bridges the gap between algebra and geometry, and also laid a significant foundation that infinitesimal calculus was built upon by Newton and mathematician/philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in the 17th century.

Clearly, science and philosophy were intimately connected for thousands of years. So at what point did the two split?

Many consider the divergence to have begun in the 19th century, when the word “science” became the standard for studying the natural world. Although it isn’t clear where the word itself came from, it’s clear that the word “scientist” was first coined by a philosopher named William Whewell. This word would go on to replace the standard of “natural philosopher” and at this point, the two began to really go off in distinct directions.

The beginning of this divergence can be traced even further back, however, to the epistemological shift of science that was brought on by Galileo Galilei and his experimental methods in the late 1500s and early 1600s. Galileo’s methods focused on experimentation and mathematical foundation as opposed to Aristotle’s focus on self-evident principles. Galileo also discussed and published thought experiments that indicated the inherent contradictions in Aristotle’s theories; one example is the Aristotelian theory that a heavy object would fall faster than a lighter object (which we now know as false). Galileo’s discreditation of Aristotle’s more philosophical view of science sowed discontent and furthered the divergence of the epistemologies that science and philosophy fall into.

Einsteinian relativity and quantum mechanics are the two pillars that modern physics is built upon. They both have incredible scientific and philosophical implications regarding the very nature of the universe. Aside from physics, artificial intelligence is seemingly right around the corner, and with it comes the question: How do we define intelligence? In biology, Darwin’s theory of evolution provided a profound shift in how we viewed humanity and our place on Earth. These landmarks across all fields of modern

science showcase not only a significant leap in human understanding, but also philosophical shifts that have defined generations.

For thousands of years, it was believed that the Earth was the center of the Universe. With the introduction of astronomy as we know it today and the heliocentric model, everything had to change, and humanity was no longer the center of everything. Fast forward to modern day, and we’re realizing that we’re just a bunch of primates living on a giant rock flying through space around a giant fireball of gas in one of 100 billion galaxies (and those are only the galaxies we know of!). Now look at metaphysics, which is defined as the branch of philosophy that deals with the first principles of things, including abstract concepts such as being, knowing, substance, cause, identity, time and space. When considering time and space through a metaphysical lens, one also has to

consider the implications of space and time as provided by Einsteinian relativity. Imagine the philosophical shift that would have to occur if we were to suddenly discover life on another planet?

**“The need to understand ourselves is not so different from the need to understand the universe and the natural phenomena that constitute the environment we exist in.”**

In the modern realm of higher education and society in general, philosophy and science are oft defined as two distinct and separate entities. The problem with this modern decoupling of the two disciplines is that it teaches students “what” to think when in reality we should be taught “how” to think. Science and mathematics did not appear out of thin air. They are indicative of thousands of years of trial and error; of successes and failures; of hopes and ideas.

The need to understand ourselves is not so different from the need to understand the universe and the natural phenomena that constitute the environment we exist in. Being forced to memorize an arbitrary equation for seemingly no reason squanders the insight and creativity that drives science forward. Without the lens of philosophy and deep introspection, some of our greatest achievements would never have come to fruition. It’s on the foundation of philosophical ideas that science has been allowed to grow and expand to what it has become today. By separating the two into mutually exclusive disciplines, we are dooming science and philosophy to collapse in on themselves due to their inability to sustain their own weights. For philosophy, science provides the context and the empiricism that validates its discoveries. And for science, philosophical ideas are what drive the creativity forward. ■

# Climate Change and the Collective

by Joe Amendola



When we think of the apocalypse, a couple of images come to mind. There are the grand displays of alien motherships, staffed with plunderers from another world invading our own. There are also vivid images of unruly natural disasters that wipe out the totality of humankind, ending all of human history in an instant.

But reality paints a different picture. Earlier this month, the United Nations’ scientific panel released a report on the effects of climate change. To call the findings “ominous” would be an understatement. The report — which was issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — foresees a future in which global temperatures rise 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit above preindustrial levels by 2040. The effects of such a rise would be dire; the report warns of mass famine, natural disasters and ecological decay. This report came as a shock to much of the scientific community, as most experts didn’t expect such extreme consequences until global temperatures rose 3.7 degrees Fahrenheit. If the findings are to be believed, we face an urgent, existential crisis as a planet.

In the future the IPCC report lays out, the end of civilization looks less like the movie “Independence Day” and more like “Children of Men.” There will be no mass invasion, nor will there be an unstoppable asteroid hurtling towards people’s homes and lives. Rather, we face a future in which the planet dies around us, eroding at the margins while we in the west — with our ill-gotten gains hanging by a thread — go on about our day, subsumed in debt, culture war and

cynicism as if everything is normal. But things won’t be. The ecological disaster brought on by climate change will first affect the global south, rendering many places uninhabitable. This will necessitate mass migration to the already unwelcoming West, with all their nascent nationalist governments in ascendency, likely resulting in unspeakable acts of depravity by the powerful against the powerless — victims of a political-economic system unable to solve its contradictions, unwilling martyrs to a rotten cause. This is just one of many humanitarian disasters potentially on the horizon.

The IPCC report did, however, outline potential remedies. They spoke of a need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent by 2030, and completely by 2050; the European Union is already undertaking similar measures, with mediocre results. The report also mentioned — although briefly — that the prevention of ecological catastrophe requires a mass, rapid transformation of the global economy. It is in this admission that the solution to such problems reveals itself: A mass, political movement is needed to solve climate change.

You wouldn’t know this by observing the dominant narratives all around us. Shortly after the IPCC report, CNN, which embarrassingly bills itself as “the most trusted name in news,” tweeted out a list of things people can do to help solve climate change. In the tweet, CNN — which was aggregating some of the more surface-level suggestions in the report — called on individuals to “eat less meat” and “swap your car



or plane ride for a bus or train.” Nowhere in either the tweet or accompanying article did they mention the more macro-efforts to solve the crisis, such as Spain’s negotiations to shut down all their coal mines, or the ambitious “green new deal” proposals by activist groups and insurgent democrats. More radical movements by ecosocialists are also largely ignored. After all, if the authors of the report are indeed serious about the need to “radically restructure” the global economy, starting with the upending of the dominant system in which we live would necessarily be considered.



Instead, CNN, along with numerous other publications, aims to individualize the problem, reducing a dire need for mass action to an issue of personal morality.

There seems to be a pattern with the way the media — and our broader culture — deals with systemic issues. Too often in our media landscape, outlets tend to “microtize the macro,” as the media analysts Adam Johnson and Nima Shirazi note on their podcast “Citations Needed.” It’s a mode of discourse that obfuscates the systemic implications of policy, diluting calls for politics in favor of personal, moral crusades — the kind that prioritizes a superficial sense of goodness over a need to reclaim power. It’s a symptom of a political culture so fatally obsessed with notions of individualism, so resigned to wilting neoliberal economic structures that it can’t help but be limited in its prescriptions for a better world. The problem has pervasive effects all throughout society, but with climate change, it might literally get us all killed.

While calls to recycle and consume less are, of course,

laudable goals in themselves, they do not mean much when just 100 companies are responsible for 71 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. Such efforts in the face of this, as Matt Wilkins of *The Scientific American* notes, are foolhardy and naive.

“Recycling plastic is to saving the Earth what hammering a nail is to halting a skyscraper,” Wilkins said.

Despite the seemingly self-evident socio-economic implications of everyday struggles, like simply finding a place to recycle in the first place, the ideological taste-makers that shape our discourse seem to be intent on missing the point.

For example, if CNN wants people to more readily utilize mass transit, it might behoove them to examine the pitiful condition it currently lies in. American suburbs and smaller cities face a lack of mass transit that drastically hampers the working class’ (as well as the elderly and disabled) ability to move around. This is a macro issue, and CNN missed it completely in their lack of analysis.

Local news stations are among the biggest offenders of skirting systemic implications in favor of feel-good stories. Keeping with the mass-transit theme, a favorite among these outlets is to highlight a working class person — often of color — who braves environmental conditions in order to walk to their low-wage job, which sometimes takes hours. In these segments, there are no broader critiques of the inadequacy of mass transit, or comments on poverty and being dependent on the goodwill of others. Rather, they often end on a grim — although it’s meant to be uplifting — message of “this person





made NO excuses.”

Now, let's imagine an alternate universe in which no one made such excuses. Each and every day, thousands of low-wage Americans make their way down the streets of dilapidated suburbs and cities, walking passed the defunct bus stops that would've once taken them to their destination. Now imagine an alien, distant enough from our own world to not recognize the structures in which we live, but somehow equipped with an Enlightenment understanding of ethics and morality. Gliding along the sprawling mass of our country, examining our social conditions from the comfort of invisibility and flight, what would they think to see this? Would they be overjoyed at the exuberance of the human will? Or horrified at the austerity of a society so affluent, so seemingly gluttonous in its wealth but sparing in that wealth's distribution? Which would it be?

Choose for yourself.

Individualizing systemic horrors doesn't stop at mass transit, however. Lyft celebrated one of their drivers accepting a fare while in labor as a triumph of dedication. Lyft, of course, refuses to provide her adequate benefits, allow her union representation, or to even classify her as an employee, presumably shielding themselves from any responsibility should the driver have had any medical complications while driving her passenger. The macro is turned micro once again.

Amplly funded GoFundMe campaigns for healthcare procedures, rent and college tuition are celebrated as

testaments to the goodwill of strangers rather than an indictment of our inability to provide the most basic social services. Macro is turned to micro.

Systemic matters get subdued; the language of collective struggle gets cast aside in favor of moralizing anecdotes, the kind fit for a people fatally alienated from one another: These are the consequences of micro-tizing the macro. And it needs to stop.

Our reality is not fixed; it is subject to change as much as our moods, consumer habits, obsessions and ever-shortening attention spans are. A different world is well within our grasp — if we want it. We could have a world in which energy sectors are decommodified and brought under public control, no longer beholden to the whims of lobbyists and executives, as Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party has proposed. We could have a world in which essential services such as healthcare, housing and work are ripped from the grasp of landlords, bosses and corporate board members, reclaiming power not by asking for “handouts,” but through clenched fists, as a collective — a whole.

Any mass issue, be it climate change, healthcare, housing or poverty, has a potential remedy located in the realm of politics and mass action. After all, politics, as writer Chris Hooks has noted, is both more simple and serious than it seems: It is a question of who gets what; it is an index of suffering in society; it is the way we distribute pain. It is not a singular recycle bin, or a twee anecdote about a poor man walking 15 miles to work through the snow.

It's about time we start acting like it. ■







WHAT MEMORIES DOES  
THE FALL SEASON BRING  
BACK FOR YOU?

# FALL MEMORIES

PHOTOS BY FRANK GARGANO





“The fall season reminds me of going into my backyard and picking apples from the trees to make apple sauce and pie with. I used to climb the trees to reach the best apples.”

-Margaret Osborne

“It reminds me of when I was a kid, the weird feeling I used to get when I just got off the bus and there was this chill in the air and piles of leaves all over the ground. But as a teen, it was going over to a friend’s house to hangout and mess around.”

-Dalvin Aboagye

“The season reminds me of when my dad and I go to Rockefeller Park and take long walks.”

-Giselle Maronilla

“Running around a pitchdark neighborhood at Halloween parties.”

-Taylor Beglane

“Going pumpkin picking on the North Fork of Long Island and doing yard work around my house.”

-Emma Harris





“I think of apple picking with my family.”

-Shaina Montero

“It’s always the start of football season in my house and with that, comes my father and I throwing around a football. The house is imbued with the smell of cinnamon rolls throughout the entire season.”

-Alex Bakirdan



“My friend used to live in an apartment complex near my home, and we used to go trick or treating around the property, run around by this weird tunnel/bridge thing that would connect a couple of the buildings and lead to the parking lot. I remember the crispy, smokey smell in the Long Island air, and the freezing cold air drying your nose out as you’d breathe it in, only to do the opposite once you’ve stepped into someone’s warm house after the fact.”

-Louis Marrone





# The East's Illusion of Freedom

BY JENI DHODARY



During an overcast summer day in Nepal in 1964, my fifteen-year-old grandmother dismally clenched her fists in silent resistance to her marriage to my grandfather, a man over thirty years her age. Arrested by the norms that bound her to the vermilion on her forehead, she was forced into adulthood before she could enter adolescence. In an intimate confession between us two generations later halfway across the world, she smiled through her melancholy recollection that a year later, she was forced to give up her education to bear a child. My grandfather passed away nine years later, leaving her with a sparse education, the cultural stigma of widowhood, and five children to care for.

She spoke of physical abuse the way we explain annual holiday dinners with our families: an occurrence so entrenched in the perpetuity of tradition that it has been fully normalized in the lives of those who experience it. In our chilly American veranda that day in late August, I experienced through my grandmother the agony of a life starved with sorrow. It was a life that saw more lonely nights than it was equipped for. It was a life

filled with maddening expectations — a life that bore witness to a human's freedom being stripped to bare nakedness until a meager skeletal representation remained.

My grandmother was the casualty of a culture that satiated its patriarchal hedonism through the

oppression of women. It was a culture that constructed edifices with our backbones as its foundation and when our bones began to crack with the pressure, we were blamed for deficiencies we did not have. It took nine years of the Western experience for me to discover that we are not free.

The discovery came with a thorough understanding of freedom. The Western revolutions that necessitated a recognition of civil rights have not yet taken place in many parts of the East. We are so far behind that we have not even formally conceptualized what freedom is, let alone expanded its frame of representation to encompass women. The face of oppression in the West is certainly flawed, but it is kinder than in places like Nepal where, crippled by gender apartheid, our women lead their lives without understanding the euphoria of tasting freedom on the tip of their tongue. I say this not only on behalf of my grandmother, but also myself. It was my privilege that I physically escaped my potential fate and ended up here: in a secure home on the outskirts of New York City with enough of an emotional and intellectual depth to understand that the most profound value in this life is the ability to exercise my freedom. For many, this realization is lost in the translations of time and societal obligations, and it is in these places that we need to direct these ideals.

It was never that Western conceptions were innately evil, but more so that for the majority of political history, the frame of Western representation only contained property-owning white men. With the



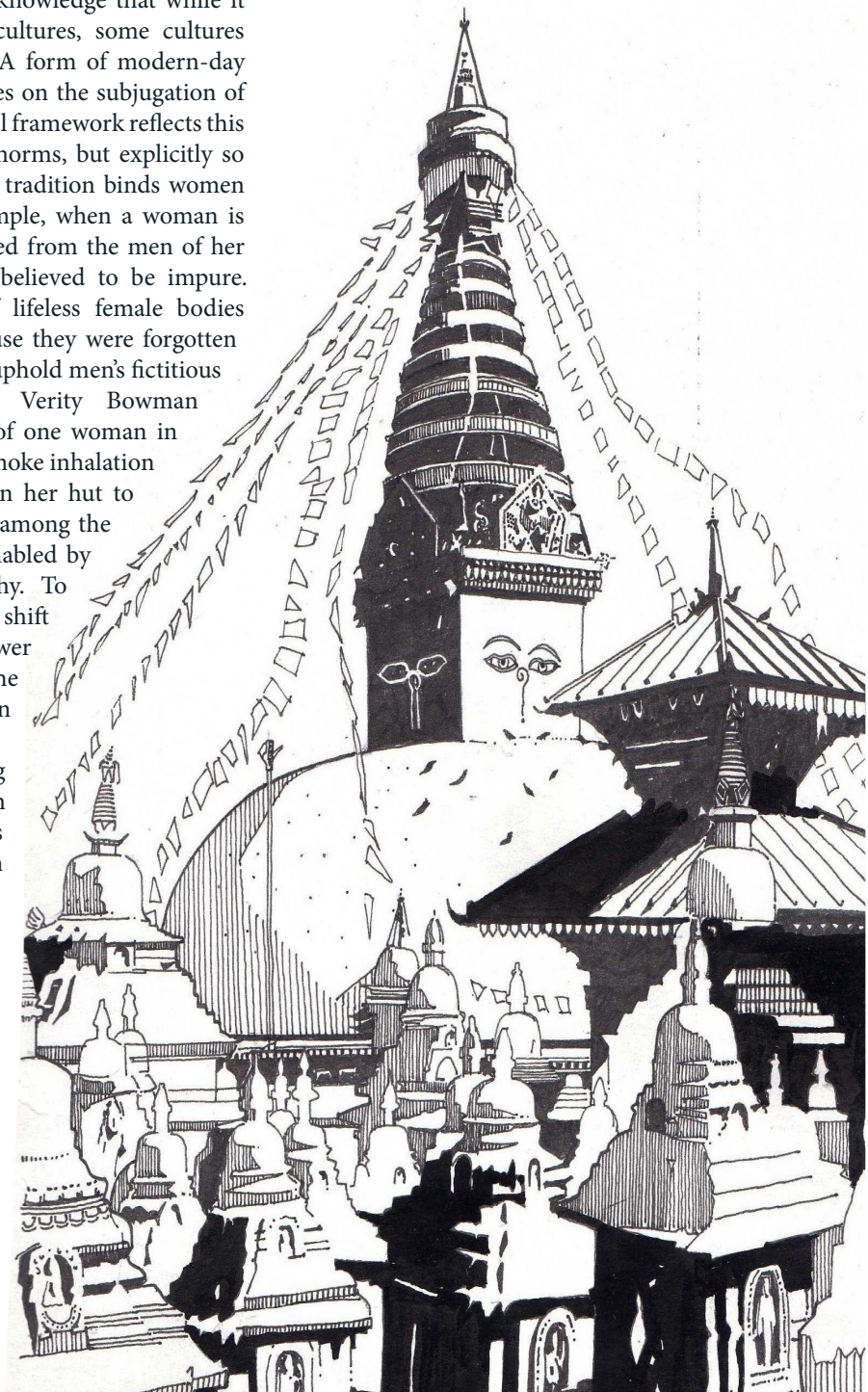
cognizance of civil rights, we are stretching the scope of representation to encompass all identity groups. While many groups still face explicit discrimination in the West, they at least possess a free identity that can never again be revoked. Calls for justice are common and urgent unlike in Nepal, where the physical consequences of oppressive norms are often left unchallenged. The process of cultural revolutions must begin in other parts of the world where they are crucial to the advancement of human rights.

To do this, we must first acknowledge that while it is altruistic to respect all cultures, some cultures are intrinsically oppressive. A form of modern-day slavery, their sustenance relies on the subjugation of an identity. Nepal's patriarchal framework reflects this not only in terms of social norms, but explicitly so in rural communities where tradition binds women to dangerous fates. For example, when a woman is on her period, she is removed from the men of her community because she is believed to be impure. There have been stories of lifeless female bodies found in isolated huts because they were forgotten there in society's attempt to uphold men's fictitious sanctities. The Guardian's Verity Bowman takes us through the story of one woman in particular who died due to smoke inhalation from trying to light a fire in her hut to keep warm. This is just one among the many regressive practices enabled by Nepal's history of patriarchy. To change it requires a radical shift in the societal framing of power dynamics, a shift that is in the process of being achieved in the West.

Even in America, living in a Nepalese-American household presents consequences my American counterparts do not have to face. This manifests in the form of stringent curfews and my duty to constantly rebel as I defend my mother's dignity before the norms my father has internalized. I see before me the reduction of love into domestic obligations. While my father enjoys the privileges enshrined to him by his gender, my mother is the true actor preventing our world from falling apart. If my revolution has

any value, my father will no longer get the credit for my mother's bravery.

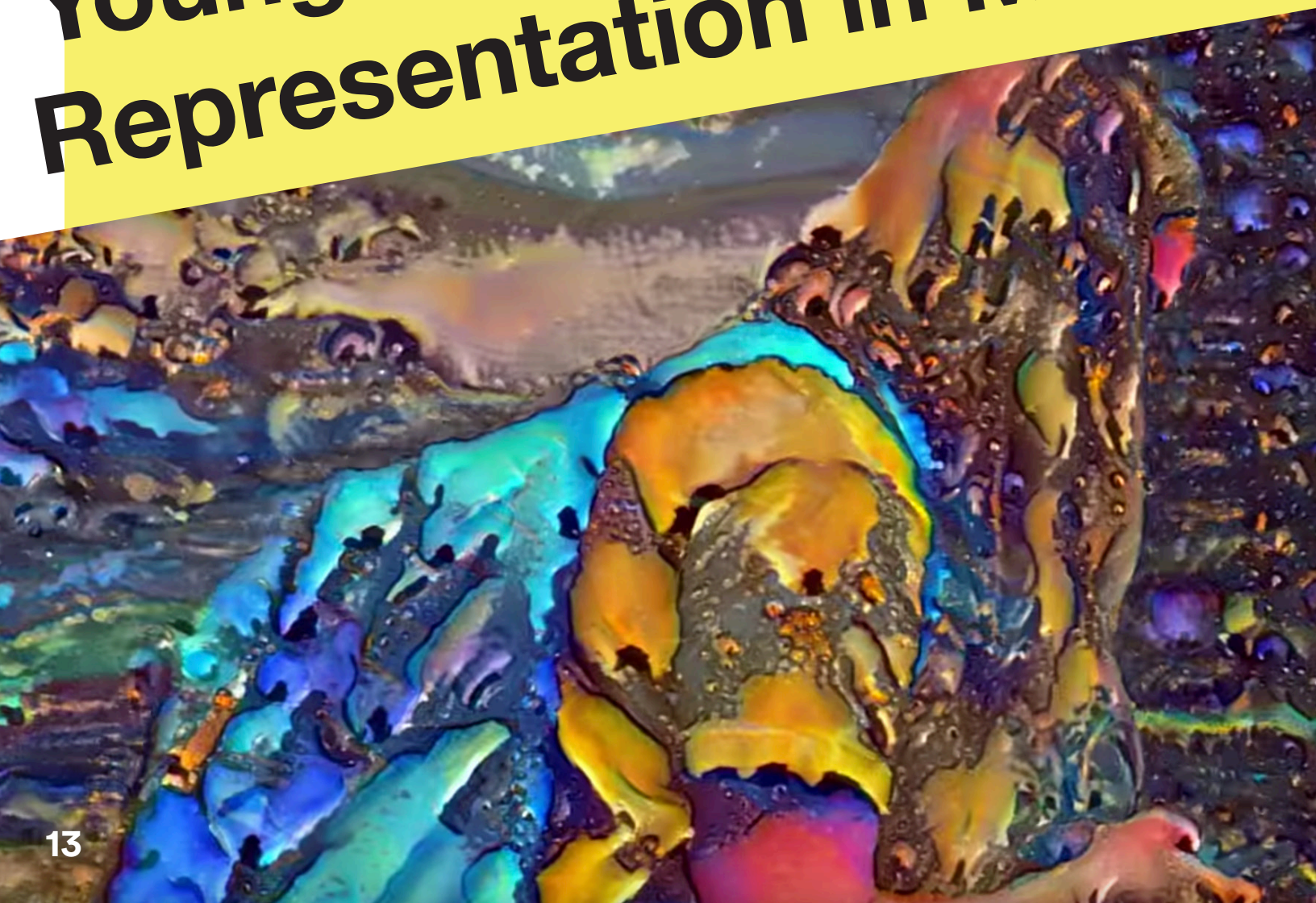
In my every act of defiance, I embody the clenched fists my grandmother feared she would lose in the translations of time. Her power was always contained within. I am choosing to release it through an unapologetic, urgent force, a force that I hope will one day give her justice. ■





# Young Adult Representation in Media

by Louis Marrone



In the fall of 2016, CBS premiered “The Great Indoors.” The sitcom, starring Joel McHale, detailed the life of a Bear Grylls-type who has to work with a group of new millennial hires after the magazine he works for goes fully digital. By any means, the show left little to no impact. But even before it aired, there was something that stuck in the craw of many reporters and critics.

The show’s depiction of its millennial characters fell into a rather typical cycle. They were addicted to technology, overly sensitive and coddled by their families. David Sims from The Atlantic wrote that “The Great Indoors” seems unwilling to paint a cord-cutting generation as anything but a band of entitled fools destined for their comeuppance.” For The Guardian, Brian Moylan wrote, “It’s the worldview of this youth bashing, status quo relishing nostalgia bait which is hard to get behind. Maybe if it was on Trump TV, where the rest of the audience supported its philosophy, it would be more successful.” During a pilot screening/Q&A with the cast and crew, a couple of young reporters practically snapped, voicing their frustrations at creator Mike Gibbons and co-star Stephen Fry.

This is far from the only time that young people have been depicted in such a light. The 2017 “Simpsons” episode “Caper Chase” took jabs at PC culture and protests on college campuses. Comedians such as Bill Maher have consistently made fun of the way that young people are always complaining, always whining. Maybe buzzwords like “SJW” and “snowflake” get tossed around.

Young adult representation in media has always been nuanced. For every “Superbad”, there’s a “13 Reasons Why”. Young people have always had a tough time getting some sort of break in being properly represented. Look at the film adaptation of “Hair”, or literally any eighties teen film. It will almost certainly be the case with millenials depicting gen Z and beyond.

Nevertheless, it should be made clear that there isn’t anything wrong with making fun of young people; after all, they’re just jokes and the current generation could definitely stand to lighten up. But the problem isn’t that they’re offensive, hurtful or even insulting. Rather, the problem is that they’re just old. It’s a tired shtick. How many times can these jokes and depictions be made before they become hackneyed —if they haven’t already?

Apparently I’m not the only one who thought this. Throughout the past couple of years, films and TV shows such as “Love, Simon,” “Big Mouth,” “American Vandal” and, most daringly, “Eighth Grade,” have begun to take a different stance on how they portray young people. The shift in intelligence is almost night and day. They treat the audience with nuance. They make jokes about the current times, but they aren’t constantly berating their young characters. In short, the characters and audience are taken more seriously.

In 2018, social media is a big part in forming teenagers’ identities. One could argue that they live two different lives: one online, and one IRL. I’m not saying that’s a good or bad thing. It’s just how things are. But at the same time, it’s so hard to find media that presents this accurately. The second season of “American Vandal” has an emphasized focus on social media usage amongst teenagers. The season revolves around a group of teenagers who have been blackmailed into committing an assortment of pranks on their high school through a catfish they meet on Instagram. The show’s essence is summed up in one of the seasons closing lines: “We aren’t the worst generation. We’re just the most exposed.” This is a show that understands the correlation between identity and social media. For example, one of the characters, DeMarcus, a black man, constantly switches around how he talks depending on who he’s talking with (which is to say, he speaks with less slang with certain people, and more with others, a practice known as “code switching”). Another example is shown through the show’s depiction of social media and intimacy. When these characters are talking with their catfish, Brooke Wheeler, they confide with a great amount of insecurity. They do feel the toll of their pubescence. But at the same time, there’s nuance. They aren’t angst-ridden sad sacks. They do have moments of pride. They have moments of confusion.

Bo Burnham’s directorial debut, “Eighth Grade” takes its own approach to the topic. The film, which features the day to day hell that eighth grader Kayla faces as she approaches the final week of middle school, shows the way that technology plays a role in the lives of these young people. The film shows the characters on their phones, often ignoring the other person in the room (i.e. a scene in which Kayla and her dad are talking at the dinner table about the last week of school; another scene in which Kayla is trying to mingle with two popular girls.) But the film presents this in a way that doesn’t really draw that much of a judgement. It simply shows you more-or-less the reality, and lets the audience have their own experience. It’s putting a level of trust in the audience to reflect and think. It assumes that the viewer-- presumably a young one-- is capable of having such nuanced and complex thoughts.

So many shows on air nowadays try to force in the technological references in ways that are unrealistic. Whether it’s the film “The Internship” or the incels episode of “Law and Order: SVU”, or



even

this past season of "The Good Wife," the height of their writer's knowledge on the subject extends as far as the word "retweet." "[American Vandal] is good because it doesn't berate teens for the way social media takes up their lives," Shailee Koranne wrote in an op-ed for VICE. "Rather, it carefully investigates how vulnerable young people are nowadays because of social media."

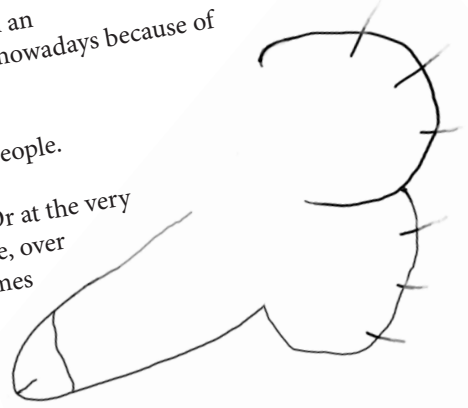
But technology isn't the only place where we see shows failing to represent young people.

Sexuality is something that seems rather absent from young adult entertainment. Or at the very least, it's usually the sugary sweet mush we see from John Green novels or the crude, over-the-top kind seen in American Pie rip-off movies. But that's where "Big Mouth" comes in. The show, co-created by comedian Nick Kroll, displays a group of young teenagers as they navigate the trials and tribulations of puberty. Part social satire and part adult comedy, the show tackles sex in a rather cartoonish manner. Through magical realism, the characters are guided through their changing bodies by means of Hormone Monsters, otherworldly creatures who represents their innermost urges and desires.

What "Big Mouth" understandably lacks in realism (it's a cartoon, after all), it completely makes up for in education and satire. For example, this past season, the show did an episode conveniently titled "The Planned Parenthood Episode." In the episode, a series of sketches takes the reader through an instructional guide to the functions of Planned Parenthood. One segment features his sister choosing which contraception is best for her with a "Bachelorette"-styled reality competition. Another rather somber moment in which main character Andrew's mother gets an abortion following a night out clubbing. Another episode, this one from season one, takes a look at the way young people question their sexuality. In episode three, titled "Am I Gay?", Andrew begins wondering if there is anything wrong with him after he gets an erection during a Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson movie trailer. The episode balances sex jokes (with anthropomorphic Vaginas and a gay musical number between the ghosts of Freddie Mercury, Socrates, and Antonin Scalia), while also incorporating emotional stakes. Andrew thinks he may be gay, and as a result, begins questioning if his gay muse is his best friend Nick.

Sexual development is nothing short of a painfully awkward and scary moment. "Big Mouth" shows the more awkward side, while "Eighth Grade" showed that and also a more brutal side to things. Towards the end of the film, as Kayla is riding home with an older love interest, she is subjected through a rather abrasive unwanted advance in his backseat. It's within the scene that you can feel the raw toxic intimacy. Some may even flashback to similar ordeals in their own lives. This isn't the first time that teenage sexual harassment or abuse has been shown in film. But it's easily one of the most tasteful, empathetic ones. There is a clear understanding of the way that sexuality isn't just about being horny and fucking everything in sight. Adolescent sexuality can be a scary, uncertain, and even traumatic experience. Even with this film, this depiction could have gone so glaringly wrong. It could have been exploitive and cheap; a spiritual sibling to the Lifetime movie-grade garbage that is "13 Reasons Why" -- a show that does literally the opposite of everything that the media mentioned here does; a show that proudly admitted to consulting a child mental health psychiatrist, only to then completely ignore them. Luckily, Bo Burnham is a little more culturally aware.

Through these shows, films-- whatever it may be--, young adult entertainment is seeing a new era. There isn't anything wrong with more simplistic forms of teen entertainment, whether it be CW dramas or teen rom-coms. But there is certainly room for improvement and variety. The way that teenagers are depicted in media is a joke, both literally and figuratively. Now, more than ever, in a time when teenagers and young adults have many things to tackle, whether it's mental health, stress, or political frustration, the least that the largely gen X- and baby boomer-dominated media can do is give the current generation their due, or at the very least, keep making their voices heard. And if not, then maybe it's time for millenials to step it the fuck up. ■



**So, After This  
Summer of “Africa”  
by Weezer,**

**Is Weezer Good  
Again?**

*by Sarah Kimura*





blue album was ok pinkerton  
sucks weezer was never good



# Infiltration, or How to Go Where You're Not Supposed To

BY CONOR ROONEY



“infiltration n.v. going places you're not supposed to go in general; covers urban exploration as well as simply dropping in to conventions uninvited and the like.”

By no means would I call myself an urban explorer, not by any stretch of the definition. There's only been one instance when I dabbled in the hobby, and that was by accident. During a trip to Baltimore in May of 2016, my friend and I were introduced to the Mayfair—a once-elegant Vaudeville-era theatre located in the heart of the city. If the bus from New York hadn't let us out a block away, I'm positive we wouldn't have seen it.

We took a trip to Baltimore for a concert; a favorite band of ours was breaking up and that night's show was one of the last. We were staying with a friend of a friend — we'll call him Rob. Having nothing to do until that night, we asked Rob for suggestions.

“Wanna go inside an abandoned theater?” he asked.

We responded, “Yeahsurewhynot.”

Scaling down the side entrance area of the Mayfair was both an exercise in precision and the future reason for “needing this tetanus shot immediately, Doctor.” The safest way in was through the stage door, located in a 10-foot-deep depression that was once stage-left. Like a playground of unstable landings, terrifyingly sharp edges all concealed with years of overgrowth, it was the poster child for “don't fucking try this.”

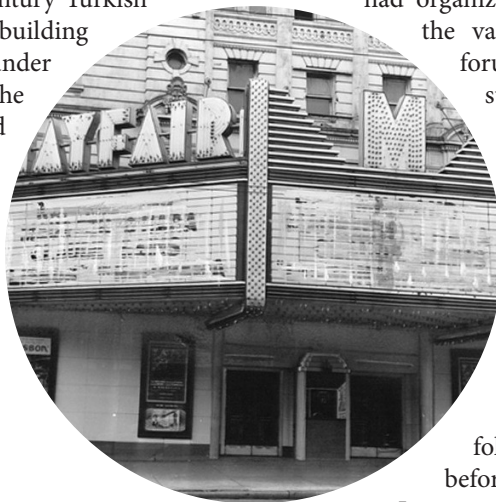
With our half-assed attempt to be stealthy at 5 p.m., we were sitting ducks for law enforcement. Where our best judgement told us to stay out is exactly where an urban explorer thrives and seeks out.

To clearly define the hobby, urban exploration (as described by the infiltration community\*) is “the investigation of manmade structures not designed for public consumption, from mechanical rooms to stormwater drains to rooftops; usually such areas are off-limits.” Practitioners are acutely aware of dangers such as structural, physical and — of course—legal.

The Mayfair had clear entry points and had no doubt seen its share of explorers through the years. The structure had been abandoned for 30 years prior to our visit, but a fire in 1998 destroyed most of the interior. The Mayfair was once one of the most luxurious theatres in the city, and (according to reports) was “painted in rich golds, dramatic reds, and creamy whites all lit by hundreds of lights clustered on crystal chandeliers.” It seated up to 2,000 people, and saw host to those such as jazz legend Billie Holiday and gilded age actor Spencer Tracy. For years it was considered one of Baltimore's best theatres.

When we walked inside, that history had almost been erased. The three-tiered mezzanines had

collapsed into a splintery pile of lumber, the ceiling was incinerated during the fire and the stage curtains were still hanging but in tatters. Some of the blue velvety seats were still aligned in rows, but disappeared underneath the rubble. There was very little indication of its glitzy past. We made our way backstage, through the 19th century Turkish Bathhouse underneath the building (by way of a small opening under the staircase). When inside the grand entrance. Its crusty lead paint concealed the entire floor, while the rest of the structure slowly decayed into itself. Of course, we didn't stay long; a combination of strange noises in the bathhouse and the looming threat of complete structural failure kept our visit brief.



The Mayfair today sits as only a facade, but the feeling of the experience has stayed with me and sparked my interest in the hobby. The feeling of entering an abandoned location and exploring its history on your own is oddly attractive in both its peacefulness and danger. It's completely unsafe in every single way. But it's that sweet-and-sour rush that drives people to pursue the hobby more deliberately. It's another hobby for the adrenaline junkie, just one reliant on our forgotten built environment instead of jumping out of planes or scaling a mountain. "Urban exploration" as a concept is nebulous, and to create communities around it might seem as arbitrary as to create a community around "taking the subway on a Sunday morning," but this is exactly what we have.



The first known urban exploration group was known as the Suicide Club, based out of San Francisco in the late 1970s. While short-lived, they're credited as being one of the first organized urban exploring communities, pulling stunts such as climbing and dining on the Golden Gate Bridge. They disbanded in the early 1980s, but their impact on others was already taking hold. Flash forward to 1996, and 23-year-old Toronto-based Jeff Chapman (aka Ninjalicious) founded infiltration.org and began independently publishing urban exploration magazines, driven by his love of

exploring off-limits and abandoned places. Twenty five issues were published leading up to his death in 2005 (including a how-to book on the topic), but his role in the construction of an online community laid the groundwork for future explorers. At the time of his death, a robust urban exploration community had organized itself around infiltration and the various community-driven online forums that the early aughts helped support. Many of them are still active today and boast thousands of members. Today, the community isn't completely centralized. Sites like YouTube and the internet in general allow for various sects and individuals to operate completely independently of one another. Still, there are some universal rules that one should follow and dangers to be aware of before considering urban exploration.

In an attempt to be as thorough as possible while remaining concise, what follows is a reader's digest version of the rules — the ethics, dangers and potential legal consequences — funneled from various forums across the internet:

#### Ethics:

"Take nothing but photos, leave nothing but footprints" is a mantra repeated throughout various forums and echoed throughout the community. It speaks to the notion that urban explorers should almost be invisible: to leave sites undisturbed and respect the histories that they're walking into.

Don't force your way inside any buildings using tools or by smashing doors or windows — this is breaking and entering. You will almost certainly face legal consequences for this.

All of these locations have histories and people tied to them. Be respectful; remember that you're only visiting.

#### Dangers:

Many of the buildings that you may try to enter are abandoned and, as a direct consequence, in disrepair. The structural integrity of these locations might be



weak and/or compromised. Proceed onto wooden floors with the caution of stepping out onto ice —with the knowledge that it might collapse.

Always err on the side of caution when exploring a new location. If you're doubting the structural integrity of any aspect of a building, do not proceed.

Always bring a flashlight and a facemask. The latter is especially important due to the sheer amount of potential chemicals; mold, lead- and asbestos-related dangers are all present in most old buildings. Asbestos in particular can become airborne very easily. Always utilize quality dust masks when entering a location, and consider using a respirator if the situation seems hazardous enough.

Legal:

It comes down to intent or knowledge of the status of the structure. Clearly displayed signs labelled “No Trespassing” will almost certainly work against your favor in court, but to prove that the trespasser had explicit knowledge that s/he shouldn't be there or of the structures abandonment prior to entry is difficult to prove.

The defense can be made that the trespasser was unaware of the the structure's abandonment status. Again, clearly labeled “No Trespassing” signs eliminate this safety net.

Exploring on federal land such as national parks or military structures is prohibited. Don't do this. ■



# From Gamer to Gainfully Employed

BY JORDAN BOYD

A conventional work day for most people consists of waking up, commuting, clocking in, staying from nine to five, then punching out — and repeating the process the next day. Ryan Borst's experience is a little bit different. He wakes up in the morning, works out at a gym, and from there he gets home to hop onto his computer to stream "Fortnite" for nine hours, from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. every single day. Ryan is living a life that millions of people dream of: — he is being paid to play video games for a living.

Ryan uses the website Twitch, a platform similar to YouTube, to stream. The only difference is that Twitch primarily focuses on livestreams. There you can find him using a different name: 00flour. "00 flour is a type of flour used to make pizza dough," Ryan said. "I like pizza."

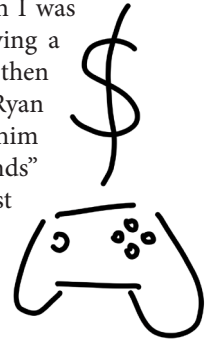
The website gets nearly a billion viewers per month, according to similarweb.com. You might be wondering why anyone would watch someone else play a video game, but Twitch streamers are typically much more interactive with their viewers. It's a totally different experience compared to other forms of media.

Streamers are simultaneously players and entertainers. They build communities around the games they play. If you're a professional streamer who's not very good at video games, you've probably got a good personality that people get attached to. Some viewers like more quiet streamers that they can watch run through a single-player game. There's a wide range of marketable traits and games on Twitch. Full-time streamers have essentially become masters at marketing themselves.

Twitch has two tiers of streamers, affiliates and partners. Affiliates are newcomer streamers that are just building their audience. To become one you need to stream at least seven times in one month, have three consistent viewers and around 50 followers. Once you're accepted into the affiliate program you can begin gaining subscriptions where viewers can give you around \$15 every month. You can also earn money by selling the games you play to your viewers through a link that'll be added to the bottom of your stream.

"I always played video games when I was little," Ryan

said. "But I got really into them when I was in fifth or sixth grade. I started playing a game called 'Runescape' a ton, and then 'Call of Duty' on the Xbox 360." When Ryan turned 16, one of his close friends got him into a game called "League of Legends" that would go on to become the first title Ryan played religiously.



Ryan originally wanted to work in game development, not playing, but creating games. Like many entertainment industries, though, the game development industry can be incredibly harsh due to unstable employment and long hours. Ryan quickly lost passion for it and dropped out of college for good.

"I tried going to community college but didn't like it," Ryan said. "I thought that going away to Florida would help. I went for a semester and was like, 'I'm not going again, I hate school.'" Ryan picked up a full-time job working as an apprentice chef, but on the side decided to pursue streaming with the full intention of playing professionally from the get-go. He stayed in Florida, living in his grandparents' second home.

In July of 2017, a development studio known as Epic Games released "Fortnite," and since then it has become one of the most popular games on the planet. It didn't start off this way though. The game originally launched in July of 2017 to less than critical acclaim. By September, Epic Games had decided to release a free-to-play "Battle Royale" mode that was totally different from what the first version of the game was. In its original state, "Fortnite" was a game that had players building fortresses to stop zombie hordes. But this was sort of a played out genre and "Fortnite" didn't offer anything players hadn't seen before.

If you're unfamiliar, Battle Royale games are a more recent craze in the gaming industry. Up to 100 players are dropped into a map and the last man standing wins. Epic Games capitalized on the Battle Royale craze and the results speak for themselves. You can go almost anywhere and find a prepubescent teen who knows what the game is. Even the game's biggest streamer, "Ninja" A.K.A Richard Blevin, was the first eSports athlete to be featured on the cover of ESPN.





Epic Games hosted the Fortnite Summer Skirmish earlier this year. It was Ryan's first tournament and the first professional "Fortnite" event hosted by the game's developer. Based on Ryan and his team's performance, he personally walked away with \$6,250. Team Rogue placing 20th overall due to points acquired by each individual player on the team.

Rogue is the organization Ryan has a contract with. They're one of the bigger organizations in eSports, with over 600,000 followers on Twitter. The team is co-owned by popular DJ Steve Aoki. "A couple of teams had tryouts," Ryan said. "A lot of the teams would just watch you play instead." Organizers would keep an eye on how players performed in skirmish matches and eventually Ryan was noticed and signed.

"The organization is super easy-going," Ryan said. "There's obviously a salary, a schedule, events, and they've made my life a whole lot easier." Organizations work with players across multiple different games, and each contract is different depending on the person. Some players aren't streamers at all, they're just really good at their select game(s).

"I started streaming 17 months ago," Ryan said. "I became an affiliate like a month after streaming." Today, Ryan is a Twitch partner which is a level above affiliate.

To become a partner, you need to have at least 75 concurrent viewers. Partners need to accumulate a total of 25 hours of streaming within a month, and broadcast at least 12 days out of 30. You're granted all the benefits of an affiliate with a few other additions

like being able to earn monetization off of ads that'll play when viewers click on your stream.

Ryan receives daily donations from his viewers through a digital tip jar, and he receives nearly 100 percent of those profits. Most streamers have tip jars attached to their stream, this is not something through Twitch, rather, the broadcaster's Paypal account is attached to a link below their stream. Stay just a few minutes in Ryan's stream and you'll notice him getting tips ranging from \$1 to \$25. Those add up quickly.

"I don't really remember when people started sticking around. I just kept doing it and noticed it was going really well," Ryan said. Because he had always wanted to play professionally from the get-go, Ryan began networking with other players, joining different chatrooms and servers where he could play with others around his skill level.

"I was never worried about committing to Twitch," Ryan said. "I always knew I'd be able to get to where I wanted to be professionally, and eventually I was noticed by Team Rogue."

Ryan said that even if he wasn't signed to Rogue, his 20,000 followers could keep him afloat through their donations and subscriptions.

"My parents are really proud of me, my sister's husband watches me all the time, my dad watches me, everyone watches — it's really awesome," Ryan said. Some people don't always know what's going on, but Ryan says his dad actually understands "Fortnite" the best out of his entire family.

Streaming video games definitely is not for everyone. Ryan takes no days off and no breaks during his nine-hour streams, outside of going to the bathroom and occasionally eating, meaning he always has to be on his A-game. "You wanna have fun if people are watching you don't wanna be upset saying stupid stuff, nobody wants to see it," Ryan said. "If you don't like the game it's gonna be hard. It happens to a lot of people."

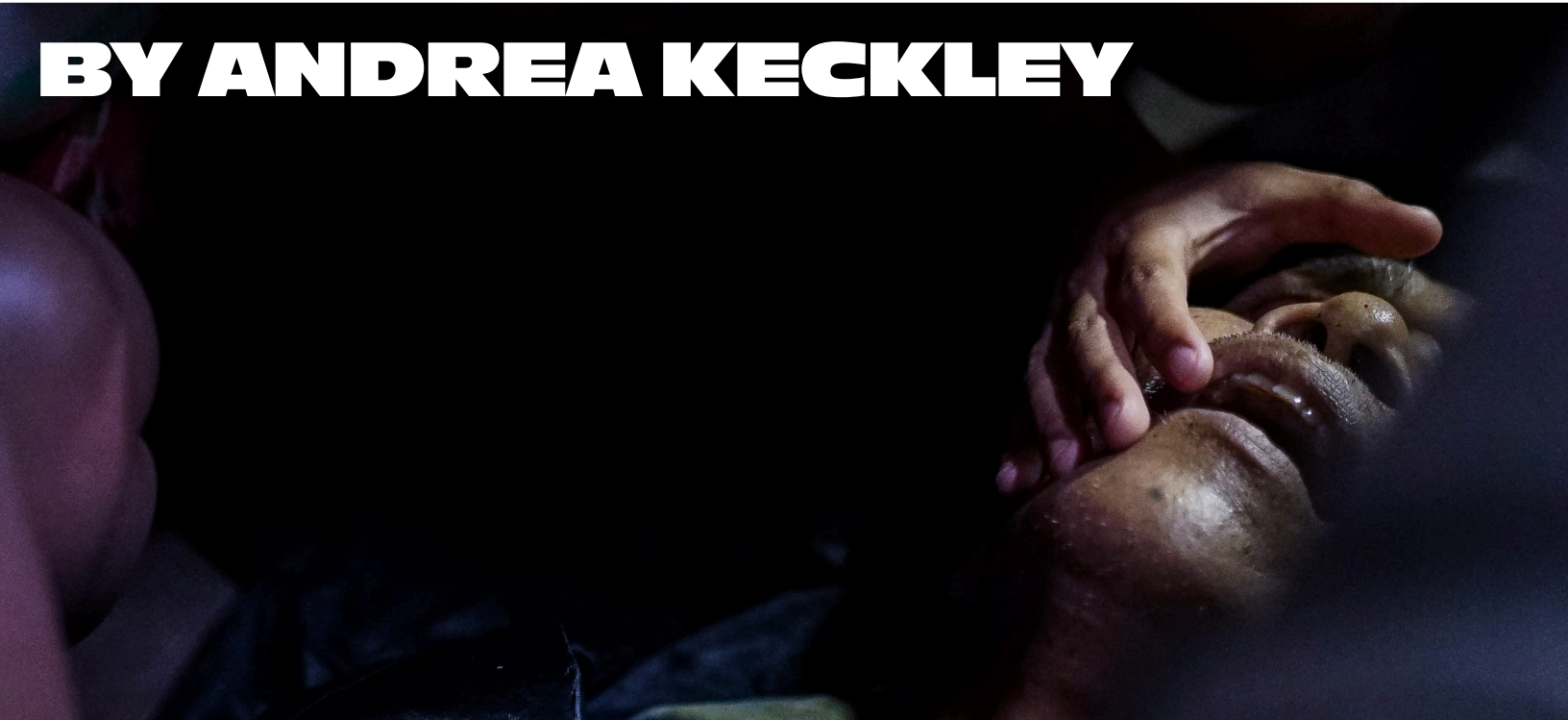
For now, Ryan is living the dream of any young adult. He recognizes that one day he may have to return to the realm of working a nine-to-five day job, but he said he's totally content with that too. Ryan's career is a product of hard work and dedication, showing that almost anyone can do exactly what he's doing with the right mindset, a controller, a webcam and a good internet connection. ■





# **DARK LENS**

**BY ANDREA KECKLEY**





When Professor Nerissa S. Balce was living in Manila, Philippines, it was common for neighbors to warn her about which areas to avoid so as not to find a corpse on the street.

She never saw any in person, nor did she see any photographs of them in the newspapers. But the people there had a Spanish term for them: “desaparecidos,” or “those who were disappeared.”

“To be disappeared means you were picked up by the military,” Balce said. “So you disappear from your family and friends, nobody knows where you are, and then your corpse surfaces later maybe a few days, maybe a week, maybe several weeks later with marks of torture. And if you were a woman, you would have been raped.”

This was the reality many Filipinos lived during the the time of martial law, which was put in place throughout the Philippines from 1972 to 1981 by former President Ferdinand Edralin Marcos, whose government is believed to have killed over 3,000 political opponents and tortured over 10,000. Having grown up during this time, Balce is part of a generation commonly referred to as “martial law babies.”

Balce is now an associate professor and undergraduate director at the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies at Stony Brook University.

“Because I grew up under a dictatorship, I’m very aware of what is happening in the Philippines,” she said.

The country’s current leader is also understood to be responsible for a multitude of killings. Around two years ago, President Rodrigo Duterte began launching his “war on drugs,” targeting alleged drug dealers and users. It has left thousands dead. In September, Duterte admitted that the extrajudicial killings happened under his administration’s drug war, calling them his “only sin.” Two cases have been filed against him in International Criminal Court (ICC.)

With all the conflicting information that exists, it’s unclear how many thousands have died. The Philippine police estimate the number of deaths to be around 4,500. The Human Rights Watch, however, estimates the number of deaths to be more than 12,000. There is also reported to be over 22,000 homicides under investigation.

“The disappeared during the Marcos regime, their photographs were not taken because the newspapers were censored,” Balce said. “Now, fast forward to decades later, what’s interesting now is that in the

regime of Duterte there are all these photographs of people who have been killed under suspicious circumstances.”

This is the topic of a recently launched online photo exhibit, “Dark Lens / Lente ng Karimlan: The Filipino Camera in Duterte’s Republic.” The website was co-curated by Professor Balce, Professor Pia Arboleda of the University of Hawai’i at Manoa, and Francine M. Marquez, founder of the Manila Arts Alliance. The site has many contributors, including photographers, scholars, poets and artists from both the Philippines and North America.

“We wanted to preserve the photographs before they become disappeared, too,” said Balce. “The Marcoses are trying to clean up their reputation. We are nervous that the Duterte administration will try to clean up their reputation as well. And so my co-curators and I wanted to preserve the photographs so that people will know that this is what is happening in the Philippines right now.”

The photos paint a dark image of the deaths happening in the country, with pictures capturing everything from battered corpses surrounded by crime scene equipment to mourning family members.

In one photo taken by Eloisa Lopez, young Filipino children mourn the loss of a deceased person as their body lays in a casket surrounded by flowers. “Hindi ko kayang isulat ang pangalan mo, Halang ang bituka, Halang ang kaluluwa, Sinusunog ka na sa impiyerno,” begins the poem by Irma Lacorte that’s included in the photo’s caption. “I cannot write your name, As your insides are torn, As your soul is sundered, You are already burning in hell.”

“You cannot possibly imagine how many photographs we had to look at,” said Arboleda. “And after like 30 minutes we’d just stop and cry.”

None of the Dark Lens photographers are over 25 years of age. They go into the slums when it’s dark to take pictures. And they must do it quickly. The police come to ward off the media or cover the corpses so that no one can see anything questionable on them, such as marks of torture.

Despite the potential safety risks, those living in the Philippines who contributed to Dark Lens identify themselves on the website, and many have identified themselves elsewhere as well.

“Their names are plastered and their photos are plastered all over the internet,” said Arboleda. “People are out in the streets in the Philippines. They risk their



lives for the truth.”

The fact that these photos of people killed under Duterte’s administration are out in the open is something that contrasts from the Marcos administration.

“In the Philippines right now, because everyone has a cell phone, it’s a bit more difficult to just arrest anyone,” said Arboleda. “But we have seen cases of an ordinary citizen being arrested and accused of dealing drugs.”

One of Dark Lens’ main sponsors is the SUNY Stony Brook’s Center for the Study of Inequalities, Social Justice and Policy. Christopher Sellers is the center’s director. Balce originally reached out to Sellers around August to ask if the center would be interested in sponsoring a talk by a leader in a labor organization from the Philippines, to which he enthusiastically agreed.

At the time, Dark Lens was still in planning. She told Sellers about wanting to put the Dark Lens project on an online archive and asked if the center would be interested in it. Again, he agreed.

“They [the co-curators] wanted to get this out sooner rather than later, because this stuff is happening on the ground,” Sellers said. “So that’s where I think the internet is just a wonderful tool for illuminating injustices around the world, and this was the first effort of our center to pitch in some of that.”

Other sponsors include SUNY Stony Brook’s Teaching, Learning and Technology (TLT) Lab: Paul St. Denis, Amanda Rehm and Gregory Lucci; and the editors at the Center for Art and Thought: Sarita Echavez See, Clare Counihan and mads le.

Part of Balce’s research involves the culture of fascism and authoritarianism.

“Authoritarianism as a worldview, or as an ideology, is about just embracing and taking the word of one person, of one authority,” Balce said. “And that person decides what is real, what is fake, who is the enemy, and who is the hero, who deserves to live and who deserves to die.”

Some have likened the situation in the Philippines to a form of authoritarianism.

“There are some Filipinos who will not criticize him [Duterte] out of fear and then there are also those who are attracted to the power and they want to support the violence of the state,” Balce said.

Their next project is to recover and preserve archives from when the Philippines was under martial law during the time of the Marcos administration in order to help counter attempts to erase history.

Arboleda also grew up during the time of marshal law. She certainly remembers what it was like. She remembers having to be home before curfew, texts she could not study in school and things she could



not say in the classroom.

“Our generation failed the new generation because they just don’t know,” she said. “I don’t know where the gap is.”

Still, there are people like the Dark Lens contributors and many others who are standing up to the administration’s oppression.

“Right now, because of all this, it’s really so bad, some of the high schools...the students there are taking a strong stand against Duterte,” Arboleda said. “So now people are starting to become more critical about what is going on.”

But while the human rights violations happening as part of this “drug war” are being committed by the Duterte administration, the country’s relationship with the outside world is relevant to what is going on there; the Philippines and the U.S. have close ties.

“The Duterte administration would not be as violent as this if it didn’t have the support of some representatives of the U.S. government,” said Balce. “I hope that young Americans will look at Dark Lens and understand that there is an American history to this. There is an American hand holding the gun and shooting at women, children and men in the Philippines.”

The United States and the Philippines have a military relationship. In fact, the Philippine military said that they will increase their joint defense and security activities with U.S. forces next year, according to a report that was published by the Associated Press in September.

Balce says she would ideally like to see the military relationship between the U.S. and Philippines ended until the human rights violations committed by the Duterte Administration are investigated.

“What I would like to happen is that military support for the Duterte administration would be cut,” said Balce. “It’s not going to happen because the United States needs the Philippines as an ally in Asia.”

But as Balce points out, other countries have responded to the human rights violations in the Philippines. For instance, in February, Canada ordered a review of a multimillion dollar deal to sell 16 helicopters to the Philippines over human rights concerns, which prompted Duterte to cancel the deal.

Midterm elections (which will not include the presidency) are also coming up in the Philippines next year.

“I don’t usually vote, and now I’m afraid that if I cast my vote outside of the Philippines that they will create false ballots,” Arboleda said. “But my husband and I have said that we will cast our vote and hope that the system won’t fail us. So if we could garner support for the liberal party candidates then hopefully it will lessen Duterte’s hold. Right now, the Senate and most of the Congress is pro-Duterte so we have to get more of the opposition into the Senate and Congress.”

“I am pessimistic,” Balce said. “But at the same time, because I teach art and politics I want to believe that something good will happen because we have these young photographers trying to record this terrible moment.” ■



# Long Island Gay & Lesbian

## Film

## Festival

By Taylor Beglane  
& Nirvani Williams

The lights die down. A hush falls over the modest crowd seated together in the red cushioned seats and black walls of Theater 2 in Huntington's Cinema Arts Centre. A cartoon drawing of popcorn flowing out of a rainbow bag, the logo of the Long Island Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, flashes across the screen. Then a goofy romcom about a lesbian couple, "Freelancers Anonymous," begins.

Last weekend was the 21st year of the film festival, three days of LGBT-centered screenings and community receptions. Though organizers considered it a success, it lacked one crucial demographic: Almost no one was below 50 years old.

One of the youngest attendees was Nicole Musalo, a

29-year-old coordinator for the LGBT Network for elderly services. Musalo, who is pansexual (attraction to all genders), theorized that the lack of young people at the event was due to poor advertising, saying that she "hadn't seen any advertisements for this festival."

"So I would imagine that people aren't really seeing it as much," she said.

Steve Flynn, the director of the festival, thinks most LGBT groups congregate online rather than rallying together in person. "There's not the same thing of people meeting in a church basement," he said.

Young people may also enjoy more mainstream acceptance now than they did in the past. Without the





need for a specific gay community, fewer people show up to LGBT events, Flynn believes.

“Acceptance is good,” Flynn said. “But when you’re not accepted, what it does bring out is people coming together to right the wrongs, like they did for AIDS, like they did for Pride, like they did for many, many things, and also out of repression comes art. Good art comes out of repression.”

Flynn and other programmers from the festival picked films highlighting different issues such as transphobia, gay-conversion therapy and the historical fight for LGBT rights. Movies included “Transmilitary” and “Mr. Gay Syria,” two documentaries about transgender people in the armed forces, and about gay Syrians trying to enter the international Mr. Gay World pageant.

Tom Calma, a Californian visiting his niece, said more people should see movies like “Transmilitary.” “Especially the straight people who don’t understand what the heck these people are going through. They’re human beings.”

The film festival brings in local entertainment to make the event more interactive with the public. “We really attract almost every LGBT community group on Long Island at some point in their existence,” Flynn added. For this year, five groups participated in the festival.

Receptions were held after every movie in the Center’s Sky Room Cafe. The Long Island Pride Chorus and Long Island Community Fellowship’s Gospel both performed choir songs, and Rusty Rose, a veteran of the 1969 riot at the Stonewall Inn in New York City, told a poem onstage about that fateful June night.

“We donate our time,” Cindy Quart, music director of the Long Island Pride Chorus, said. “When we do an event like this, we really do it because we want to give back to the community.”

Despite Flynn’s push to create a community atmosphere, he noted the shift in the representation

of gay culture on Long Island.

“20 years ago the gay community was different than it is now. Back in 1998 to 2008, there were 12 to 13 gay bars on Long Island,” Flynn said. Now there are only about half.

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Last weekend was the 21st year of the film festival, three days of LGBT-centered screenings and community receptions. ■



# Sotomayor and the Absence of Passion

BY ALOSHA GUSEV

On Wednesday, Oct. 17, Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor arrived at Stony Brook to give a talk regarding her book, “My Beloved World.” The talk was billed as a part of the university’s observation of Hispanic Heritage Month and was mandatory for first-year students. The event was held in the Island Federal Credit Union Arena and had thousands in attendance. It was structured with questions pre-written by students, chosen by the administration, and recited by the President of the University, Samuel Stanley, and was saturated with answers full of empty platitudes about happiness and not following the crowd.

When not speaking in flowery inspirational quotes, Justice Sotomayor seemed to play with the idea of addressing something substantive. Near the very beginning of the talk, for instance, she insisted that those who claim to be entirely self-made are in actuality nothing but braggarts. My eager little heart expected something a bit more substantial about privilege, but she quickly digressed. When she answered a question regarding dealing with rowdy coworkers, and she would refer directly to her Associate Supreme Court Justices by saying “some of those guys really talk trash,” I expected a comment on Brett Kavanaugh, or Clarence Thomas, or Donald Trump — that is, her coworkers who have been accused of some pretty egregious things. Her answer, however, was simply to “let others tell them how stupid they were,” and to “find time later to have a quiet conversation.”

Non-confrontational statements such as these seemed to be Justice Sotomayor’s idea of a meaningful and timely speech. Brett Kavanaugh — whose confirmation just eleven days prior to this event was wrought with allegations concerning his perpetration of three separate sexual assaults, and whose place on the Supreme Court is expected to cause rollbacks of major decisions regarding women’s health — wasn’t outright mentioned once. Nor was Trump, whose presidency has seen the ongoing separation of immigrant children from their parents, given ICE leniency in their tactics, and encouraged police brutality right here on Long Island (among many other reprehensible and illegal actions), and whose sovereignty has the potential to be rocked in this upcoming election (just three weeks away at the time of Sotomayor’s visit).

Justice Sotomayor grew up in the Bronx in the ‘60s and ‘70s. She is the first Latina to sit on the Supreme Court and only the third woman. She seemed perfectly set up to give an impassioned speech to a large group of young voters from her home state about the bleak future of our country and our world. Unfortunately, neither Justice Sotomayor nor the crowd seemed too interested in partaking in this pressing discussion. Many students during the event remained on their phones, talked to friends or even took out their laptops to do work.

But it makes sense, right? At a time when Taylor Swift can cause thousands to register with a single Instagram post and when the “popular” vote doesn’t mean the majority of the voting populace, are we really so surprised that eligible voters are finding it hard to stay interested? What is surprising is that apparently politicians are finding it equally hard. Members of the Supreme Court should retain a modicum of non-partisanship and Sotomayor was scheduled to give a speech regarding her book and her life’s story and she’s entitled to tell that story, but isn’t there an ethical imperative to use her platform to really provoke change?

To be fair, she did end the discussion with a half-hearted appeal to progress: “We adults have royally messed up this world.” She told the crowd that they must vote in the midterms with an important footnote that she doesn’t care who they vote for. Under normal circumstances I would totally agree. Though I may disagree with the politics of hopeful politicians on either side of the aisle, a democracy cannot properly function if the populace stays silent. However, times are tumultuous. Voting for Trump and his posse means voting for the freeze of federal fuel-efficiency regulations. It means voting for the NRA. It means voting for nationalism. It matters who you vote for. Justice Sotomayor’s time in Stony Brook was exactly what you would expect from any inspirational speaker: A safe list of poster-worthy clichés telling me how I should live an honest life and take things in moderation and fight for what I believe in. I just can’t see how it was a good use of anyone’s time. ■







A high-contrast, black and white photograph of Neil Armstrong. He is shown from the chest up, in profile, looking towards the left. He is wearing a dark, collared shirt. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on his face and hair, and deep shadows elsewhere. The background is dark and indistinct.

# Whitey on the Moon 48 Years Later

By Joe Amendola



The USDA released its annual food insecurity report last month and the results are grim. Food insecurity — defined as a family whose access to food is limited by a lack of resources — reached 15 million households in 2017, roughly 12 percent of the population. Although food insecurity decreased slightly from 2016, it still hasn't recovered to pre-recession levels and doesn't appear to be heading in that direction anytime soon. This report comes on the heels of the 22nd anniversary of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, otherwise known as Welfare Reform, which stripped safety net measures such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (ATFDC) from millions of poor people, replacing it with a patchwork of relatively meager tax credits and work requirements. While the numbers are still disputed, the act has nearly doubled extreme poverty in the two decades since it passed with bipartisan support in 1996.

Such appalling statistics seem to be of little consequence to certain segments of our intelligentsia and government. Free market evangelists such as the Heritage Foundation cite access to air conditioning, refrigerators and televisions as proof of the poor's deceptively high comfortability. Politicians like Rep. Jason Chaffetz, a Republican from Utah, think the impoverished should simply stop buying iPhones if they want to better afford their healthcare. In saying this, Chaffetz never seems to ask himself the question, "Why must one make a binary choice between health insurance and a smartphone?" because it would have never crossed his mind in the first place. In the cult of American individualism, institutional factors regarding how policy affects and shapes people's lives are largely discarded depending on the issue; to Chaffetz, people stand on their own, making individual choices for which they should be either individually punished or rewarded.

Such obfuscation of American poverty not only displays ignorance and cruelty, but the betrayal of a basic ambition of government: that policy can be used to help people and provide conditions for them to thrive by means other than bleak,

"bootstrap" austerity measures.

We used to be more ambitious in this country. Lyndon Johnson sought to eradicate poverty completely with his Great Society program. Nineteenth and early 20th century socialist movements led by Eugene V. Debs and Daniel De Leon helped lead to the eradication of child labor and the passage of the eight-hour workday. Early 20th century lifestyle magazines were littered with images of flying cars and space colonization.

Today, we've seem to have fallen short of most of these goals.



Gill Scott Heron, '70s jazz poet and Wayne Gretzky of his trade (i.e the only one that people can remember by name) understood this, even back then. In his 1970 poem, "Whitey on the Moon," Heron provided a wry look at the contrast between grand spectacles of human exceptionalism such as space travel and the bitter realities of everyday life. The poem/song is worth quoting in full, so here it is:

*"A rat done bit my sister Nell  
With whitey on the moon  
Her face and arms began to swell  
And whitey is on the moon  
I can't pay no doctor bills  
But whitey is on the moon  
Ten years from now I'll be payin' still  
With whitey on the moon ya know?  
The man just upped my rent last night  
Cause whitey is on the moon  
No hot water, no toilets, no lights  
But whitey is on the moon  
I wonder why he's upp'in' me?"*

*Cause whitey is on the moon  
Well I was givin' him 50 dollars a week  
And now whitey is on the moon*

*Taxes takin' my check  
The junkies make me a nervous wreck  
The price of food is goin' up and as if all  
that crap wasn't enough a rat done bit my  
sister Nell with whitey on the moon her face  
and arms began to swell with whitey on the  
moon with all that money I made last year  
put whitey on the moon how come I ain't  
got no money here? Hmmm whitey on the  
moon ya know I just about had my fill of  
whitey on the moon  
I think I'll send these bills air mail special to  
whitey on the moon"*

In 2018, we no longer have much interest in the moon. Today, consumer goods such as smartphones — and the apps that populate them — are held up as the pinnacle of human ingenuity and progress. But Heron's poem should show us why such advancements are inadequate.

After all, a refrigerator means little if you can't afford to fill it with food.

Uber means little if its work model is starting to eradicate the very notion of an employee.

Airbnb means little if it's rapidly increasing rent in your neighborhood.

Lyft means little if it's rushing you to your second job.

Technological means of convenience mean little when the generation they mostly benefit expect to do worse than their parents. Apps provide a sense of fleeting distraction, a brief reprieve in the face of an ever-growing rot. This is not adequate, and it certainly isn't progress.

There are ways to remedy this. A bare-minimum commitment to social democracy on the government level is a start. But a meaningful change in how we measure and judge progress needs to arise in the hearts and minds of the people.

Until then, we'll have to settle for Whitey on the moon. ■



One night over the summer, my friends and I decided to get White Castle because it was open at 3 a.m. and we were hungry and bored. The drive-thru line was much longer than anticipated, and as I sat looking out of the backseat window, I imagined myself sprinting out of the car into the road. I imagined running all the way home. After I expressed this to my friends, one of them said, “Please don’t do that.”

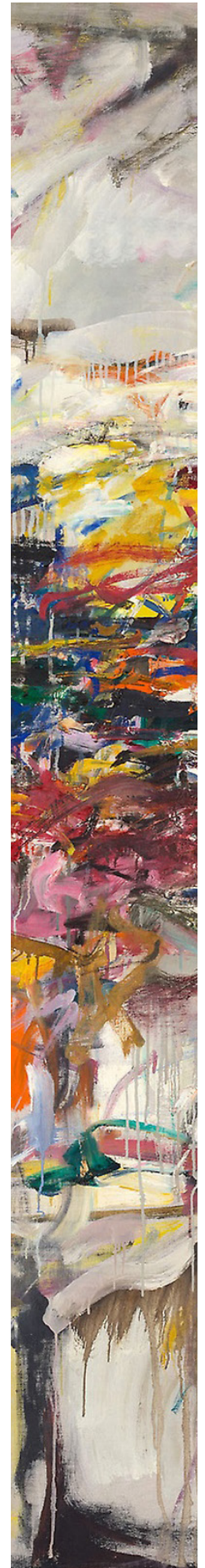
I was feeling something crazy when I bought my plane ticket in July. It was in the middle of a slow work day. Chicago is a city in Illinois, I thought. Chicago is nicknamed the Windy City and Michelle Obama is from there. Chicago is four months away from me. After that day, I forgot about it for a while.

I read this Simone De Beauvoir quote two days before my flight. On a Priority Mail label I swiped from the post office, I scrawled, “Self-knowledge is no guarantee of happiness, but it is on the side of happiness and can supply the courage to fight for it.” I didn’t really know what I was going to do with it, like most things that I do. I smoothed it onto my journal.

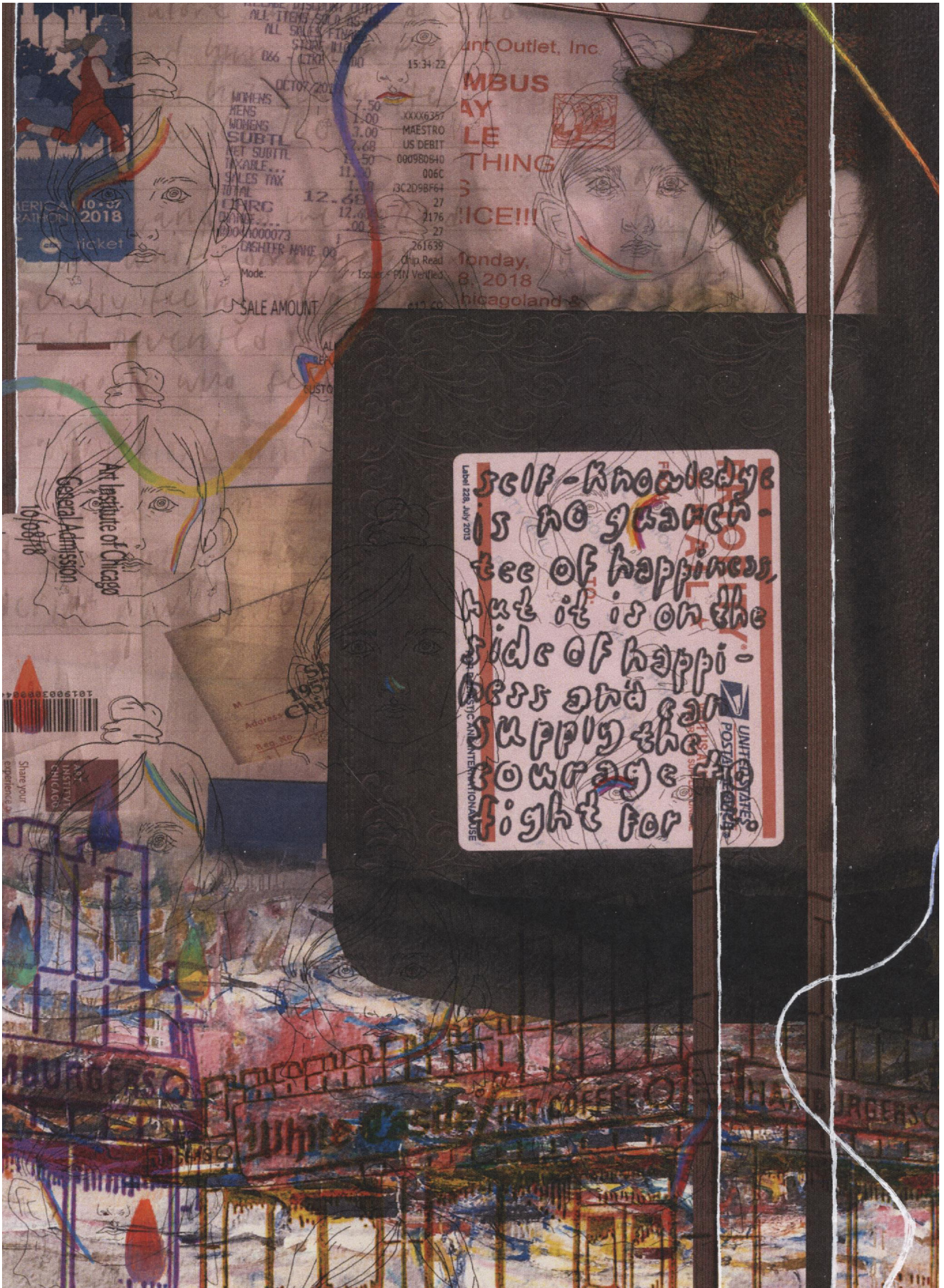
I was only in this new place for a few minutes and I saw a man carry a laughing woman, bridal style, around a street corner and a guy singing enthusiastically while riding his bike, all from my Lyft. It was midnight. Being somewhere else was complete fiction to me until I passed by the neon sign of Wrigley Field.

Practically everyone was asking me why I was going to Chicago and what was there for me, and I didn’t really have an answer. It was just something I was doing. Figuring out a purpose for a lot of things doesn’t really work itself out until you’re already doing it. Like picking a random dish from a menu, or choosing a college, or just life in general. We think there’s some bigger goal we’re working towards in the beginning, but then that thing changes so much as we begin to change. I’ve resigned myself to a life of figuring out that shit later. I only want to promise freedom of choice for a future version of myself.

I really wanted to love being elsewhere, but I couldn’t stop nostalgically thinking of the place I left. Practically every conversation I had with the friend I was staying with on that first day was comparing our cities. When I was downtown in the neighborhood famously known as the Loop, I would sometimes forget that I was elsewhere. I felt like I was just waiting to meet someone for coffee in New York. But I wasn’t exactly feeling homesick or wishing I was somewhere else. I just felt like I was a secret agent in my own life on an unconventional excursion.







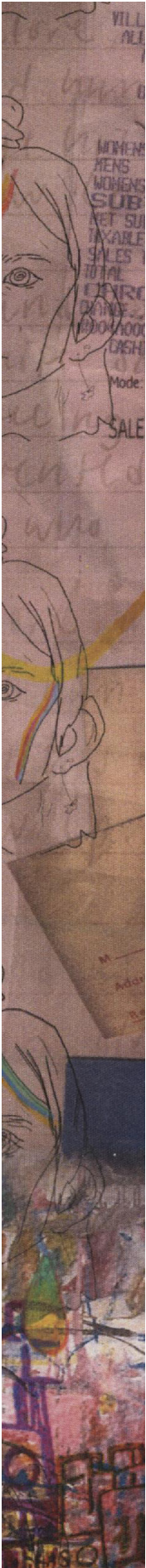
self-knowledge  
is no guarantee  
of happiness,  
but it is on the  
side of happi-  
ness and can  
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fight for

Label 228, July 2013

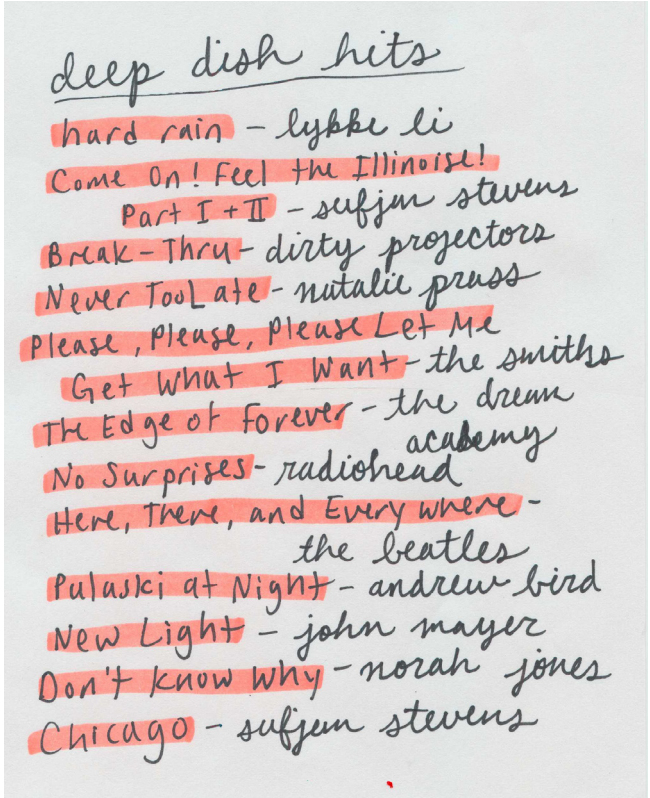
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But then I saw the big reflective bean. I saw my distorted shape walk around it. A woman noticed me taking photos of myself in it and smiled at me even when I felt a little self-conscious for something so touristy. I went to the Art Institute of Chicago and saw the painting “A Sunday on La Grande Jatte” by Georges Seurat, made famous in pop culture canon by “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off.” Cameron, Ferris’ worrisome best friend in the film, stares intently at a child in the center of the pointillist painting, and the look on his face tells us he’s spiraling as the camera alternates on shots that get closer and closer to him and the child in the painting. John Hughes, the director, has said of this scene, “The more he looks at it, there’s nothing there. He fears that the more you look at him, the less you see.” I imagined myself in Cameron’s place as I stood in front of the child. What am I doing here? Am I anxiously looking for meaning where there is none?



I spent my last day wandering the neighborhood I was staying in. I walked very far for a deep dish slice of pizza. When I walked out of the restaurant, I saw the infamous Salt and Pepper Diner from that John Mulaney stand-up bit. The diner was permanently closed. As I made my way back, I poked through every bookstore I passed.

Bookstores are this incredible neutral zone. You know you’ll find one familiar thing in any bookstore you walk into. I lovingly brushed my fingers over Paulo Coelho and Joan Didion and I felt something cozy when I saw copies of *n + 1* and *Believer* magazine. I felt a pang of home when I saw *New Yorker* tote bags.

I left my friend’s apartment for the airport at 3 a.m. as she was sleeping. Her two very sweet and loving cats framed her spot on the couch. She still had her glasses on. I whispered goodbye and climbed into my Lyft once again.

Hot tip: if you want to see more of a city before you board the plane, take a rideshare. We weaved through desolate suburbs and storefronts on our way to O’Hare. I listened to “Chicago” by Sufjan Stevens mostly because of my insufferable need to mark a memory with a song. I cried a little bit when he sang, “If I was crying / in the van with my friend / it was for freedom / from myself / and from the land.”

The truth came to light. I wanted to free myself of my self-imposed pressure to find meaning in making grand decisions. I wanted to stop expecting myself to have changed into a different and shinier me when I came back from Chicago. Books and movies told me I would feel different after I traveled alone, but that’s not true! I only had the pleasure of fading into a city with no agenda, and fading back out into my normal life. The utmost of pleasure in Chicago was a cup of coffee each morning looking out the big windows of a courtyard apartment. It was nothing more.

You can really do anything and be anywhere as long as you have the money.

I really could have just burst out the back seat and ran away from the White Castle. ■



# WUSB's

## top 20 songs of October

- |                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Toro y Moi               | Freelance          |
| Tiny Hazard              | I'm not Scared     |
| Little Dragon            | Lover Chanting     |
| Yung Lean                | Happy Feet         |
| Washed Out               | Don't Wanna        |
| Holy Ghost!              | Anxious            |
| Unknown Mortal Orchestra | Hanoi 6            |
| Connan Mockasin          | Charlotte's Thong  |
| Beach House              | Alien              |
| Thom Yorke               | Suspicious         |
| Public Practice          | Bad Girl(s)        |
| Tom Misch ft. De La Soul | It runs through me |
| Mr Twin Sister           | Buy to Return      |
| Dead Tenants             | Asterisk           |
| Big Bliss                | High Ideal         |
| Daniel Caesar            | Who hurt you?      |
| Kurt Vile                | Bassackwards       |
| Sheek Wes                | Mindfucker         |
| Beirut                   | Gallipoli          |
| Nao ft. GLACK            | If you ever        |





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