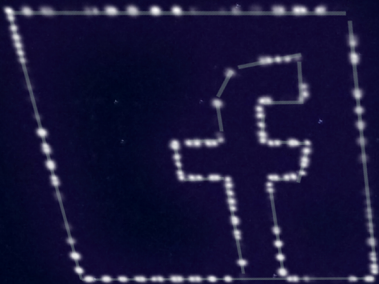




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Letter from the Editor

March is a very special month for me. It's the month when we start brushing off bits of snow and ice off of our shoulders and ease our way into Spring with those light, army jackets (you know who you are). It's my birthday month (and for so many of my friends--shoutout to all you March babies!) It's a time for renewal.

But we're also smack dab in the middle of the semester. And tensions are high.

For those of you who don't know, we're reforming courses in the school of journalism. We're cutting a lot of unnecessary work and filling the curriculum with current/relevant topics and a more modern approach to journalism today. We're all sorting through that. Everyone's busy as usual. Standard collegiate learning happening, you know, all good things.

But the other day, I had to physically stop myself from running around. I'm a type 1 diabetic, which is an autoimmune disease where I basically need to pace myself with the amount of work I've taken on to eat food and take care of myself.

Guys, it's really difficult and stressful.

For those of you who need to just stop and take a break (peruse a magazine, but no pressure), I implore you to do so. When I finally stopped killing myself, I was in the Melville Starbucks by myself and just kinda found myself looking around. I pulled out a book that I borrowed from Joe (our absolutely dope opinions editor) called *In the Dust of this Planet* and gave it a read. It's about the relationship between philosophy and horror. I couldn't put it down; I enjoyed this book so much. I was jolted out of it because I inevitably remembered that I had something else to do.

Lately I've been trying to find time to return to my novels, the very thing that rooted me in writing in the first place, and it's hard, but you have to make time.

Honestly, I've been thumbing through *The Paris Review Interviews Vol. 1* (the edition with interviews from Kurt Vonnegut, Joan Didion, and Truman Capote), *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, and the recent "Paradise" edition of *Gossamer* (spoiler: if you look this zine up, you'll see *Gossamer: For People Who Smoke Weed*).

It's my little slice of happiness. I love learning about new things and HEY NOW that's also the reason why you're here right now. You're in college to learn something different and learn more about yourself.

I hope you guys go back to what makes you happy. Luckily, I'm apart of an org that I truly love and cherish.

Go find yours.

-Nirv



The 2016 presidential election was a nerve wracking time to be a Christian. The very fate of the country seemed to be hanging in the balance, and a choice was presented to the people: choose the party of God, or give the country to the morally corrupt. Dedicated church members called their friends, desperately urging them to vote and making sure they would reach out to their friends too. From the pulpits, pleas made by pastors urged whoever was listening to take responsibility for the country and make the “right choice” in the voting booth. Many evangelical pastors in the past have warned against Christians taking an involved stance in politics — so why is the idea of being a Christian so synonymous with being a conservative? Where did this all come from?

The rise of the religious right as a dominant political force isn’t something that appeared overnight. The early ‘70s were a boon for Christianity. They were seen as a return to the status quo on the heels of the drugs and spiritualism of the 1960s. New churches were being built and old churches were now full and thriving. One such church was Thomas Road Baptist, led by Pastor Jerry Falwell. During this time, many Christian leaders, spearheaded by

Falwell, began urging their congregations to take an active role in politics.

“The idea that religion and politics don’t mix was invented by the Devil to keep Christians from running their own country,” Falwell said from his Thomas Road Baptist pulpit in 1976. “If [there is] any place in the world we need Christianity, it’s in Washington.”

In 1979, Falwell founded the Moral Majority, a political organization focused on electing government officials who supported “Christian values.” The effects of this organization were felt most strongly during the 1980 presidential election. Falwell pushed for every church in America to hold registration drives, urging Christians to vote for his chosen candidates. During his campaign, Ronald Reagan sought the advice of organizations like Moral Majority to appeal to this newfound well of supporters, even appointing the organization’s former executive director, Robert Billings, as an advisor.

After the election, evidence suggested the direct influence of Falwell and his coalition of “the Christian Right” was, at least in part, the cause of his victory. Soon after, the Republican party welcomed its new supporters and adopted policy platforms to cater to them: platforms

such as pro-life, abstinence-only sex-ed and support for prayer in schools. Moral Majority disbanded in 1989, but the mantle of a champion for Christian values in politics has been carried by other institutions such as Christian Coalition and Focus on the Family ever since.

The religious right was founded on the marriage of religious values and political ideals. The religious leaders rallied their troops and looked for political leaders to champion. Both Falwell and Billings have passed away and many other prominent pastors have retired or stepped out of the spotlight. The reins were let go. Slowly, they were picked up again by the other side of the movement. Political figures, like Reagan or Bush, espousing their belief in Christ, dominated the conversations between evangelicals and changed their agendas to court their support.

Throughout the ensuing decades, a cultural exchange in political values happened. Republicans cemented a party platform on anti-abortion and Christians developed an opinion on immigration. Slowly, the Republican platform became the de facto Christian platform, for better or worse.

Today, the narrative brought forth by the church is less brazen. The main focus is outreach,

to spread the word to as many people as possible. Outsiders are welcomed with open arms. "Come as you are," they say, "God accepts all." On the surface, the church appears as it says it is, a welcoming environment for everyone and a place free of any judgment. The church operates under the pretense that it doesn't endorse political views, but it certainly facilitates them.

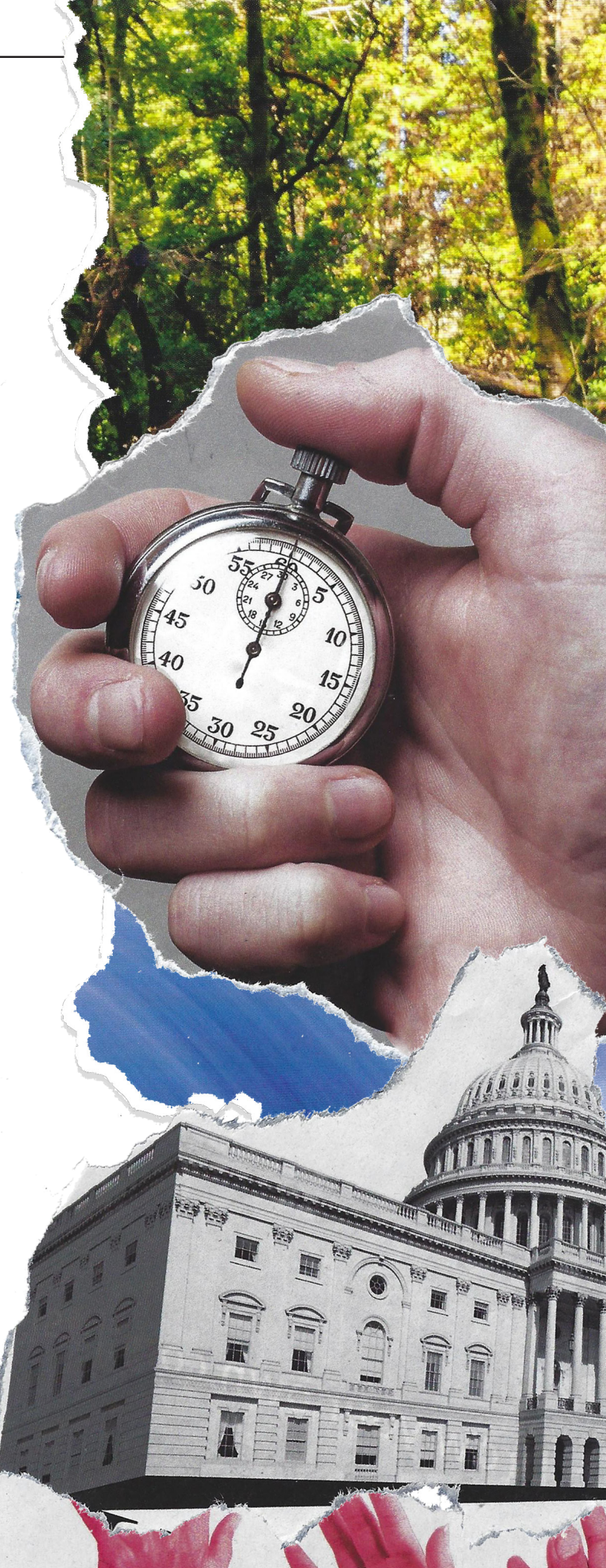
Church happens on Sundays, but its members' lives go on for six more days after that. They go home, read their conservative newspapers, watch their conservative news networks, talk with their conservative friends. On Sunday, it's all brought to the church once again. The pastor makes a joke about immigrants. Everyone laughs. "Don't take it too seriously," they say. "It's just a joke." The pastor calls for a prayer meeting after the message. The topic is for our leaders to make the right choices in their governing. It's a neat trick where nothing is said but everything is understood.

As the Republican party took a heavier hand in guiding the ideas of the religious right, the people's trust in the party grew implicit. They didn't need to think hard about their views. They just needed to trust the party they've been told Christians voted for. So what if this candidate made a few off-color remarks or some issues on their platform aren't perfect? At least they were against abortion. This lack of accountability in political thought made a crack. The teachings of the Bible and platform of "The Party of God" started to split.

Years passed and still this disconnect went unchecked. The rise of the right reached its apex in 2000 with the election of George W. Bush. A proud and open born-again Christian was elected to the highest office in the country. Soon after, the September 11 attacks struck at the heart of the nation. For many, this was the first time they had experienced a tragedy of this scale up close and personal. The country was struck to its core and needed to reexamine its identity. All eyes turned to the man in the Oval Office. It was official; the country needed to go to church. God Bless America. The citizens adopted their national identity into their own and to criticize one was to criticize the other. The mission of the modern right was clear. Too long had the country been overrun by moral outliers. The nation was corrupted and it was time to restore it to a time when it was morally just. Make America Great Again.

The modern church encourages you to come as you are, but the people inside demand that if you want to stay, you need to fit in. So much pressure is emphasized on not making trouble. Those who do are dropped and swept under the rug. Openly gay members now find themselves in a hostile environment. They're still allowed to come, but suddenly their invitation to the after-church luncheon is noticeably absent. Gun control isn't up for debate. If you try to start, all your friends abruptly have someone else they need to talk to. You can call someone out for their racist or homophobic comment but the frustration will be cast on you for making a scene. The behavior is learned quickly. Fit in or get out. Not by design, but rather a symptom of its own shortcomings, the church slowly molds itself into a homogenized cult of personality where everyone can get along, because everyone shares the same beliefs, inside and outside the church.

This problem has no easy solution. Like Falwell did all the way back in the '70s, conservative media spins a narrative of moral depravity in society, insisting the Republican philosophy is the only way to set the country on the right track. It drives a wedge between people at a time when a lack of cooperation is the biggest problem plaguing politics today. But it's hard to fix a problem when no one believes it exists. To many, they're compartmentalized. Everything in church is religion and this is just politics. Yet white evangelicals account for 70 percent of Trump's core base. The causes have not gone away, and it seems this problem will only get worse before it gets better, if it ever does. I can only offer the same warnings given by many others: be cautious. Always challenge the reasons for your own beliefs. Don't accept anything at face value and encourage others to do the same. ■



THE DEATH OF
CHILDISH
GAMBINO
AND THE REBIRTH OF
**DONALD
GLOVER**

BY JULIO TAKU



If you google Childish Gambino or Donald Glover, you are guaranteed to see “Are Childish Gambino and Donald Glover the same person?” in the FAQ section. This hilarious inside joke among fans has begun to seem less like a joke and more of an ideological question in the past few years. Some of his most recent successes have been outside of the music realm: a bachelor’s from NYU in dramatic writing; two Emmys; a successful run in the sketch comedy group *Derrick Comedy*; two Writers Guild awards; two Golden Globes; an NAACP award for the FX show “*Atlanta*,” which he created and stars in; cameos in “*Magic Mike XXL*” and “*Spider-Man: Homecoming*”; roles as Lando Calrissian in “*Solo: A Star Wars Story*”; and an upcoming voice-acting role as Simba in a remake of “*The Lion King*.” All these on-screen appearances and awards are now reflected in his music. As of 2019, you can add Grammy winner to that list of accolades, as Gambino took home two Grammys for “*Redbone*” and “*This is America*.”

This multifacetedness has earned Glover the title of “Renaissance Man” in many publications. He has carved his own path and excelled in all the different avenues he’s chosen, be they acting, writing, production, comedy, singing or songwriting.

Ever since the day I first heard his song “*Bonfire*” from 2011’s “*Camp*,” I itched to see Childish Gambino live. I sat with that album for a whole summer, then spent a whole winter with his 2013 follow-up “*Because the Internet*.” Having listened to this album for over years and praying to attend one of his concerts, I was ready to jump out of my skin. Upon the release of the eternal “*Awaken, My Love!*” and the announcement of his upcoming tour dates, I was ready with my credit card info to purchase a ticket and finally witness his greatness live. This is a retelling of how I went through what I can only describe as a sonic baptism, a visual confirmation and a spiritual transfiguration.

Saturday September 15th, 2018: As I made my way up the stairs of Madison Square Garden for the first time ever, I could feel my anticipation growing. It began to set in that I was about to see my favorite artist, idol and inspiration perform on one of the most revered stages in the world. Passing through the security checkpoint, I looked around and saw people of different ethnicities, genders, ages and identities all wearing Childish Gambino merch. From t-shirts to hats to hoodies to bags, they had it all. I kicked myself for forgetting to bring any cash with me as I strolled past the merch lines. Nevertheless, I counted my blessings and pinched myself to make sure I was truly present.

Finally arriving at the last checkpoint, I was pointed in the direction of my section. I went up three flights of escalators and found the gate to Section 103. Waiting in the stands and taking in the ambience of the arena I felt a sense of resolution. I even asked fellow concertgoers if we were really at a Childish Gambino concert. Opening act Rae Sremmurd finished their set with an energetic performance of “*Black Beatles*”

Childish Gambino performing at Madison Square Garden on September 15th.
Photo courtesy of Greig Noire



before the lights dimmed and the stage went black.

Childish Gambino made his way onto the stage under a cloak of darkness. Then grandiose church organs sustained luscious chords as a single beam of white light shone down on him from above. He sang the line, “As we stand together, promise me that we’ll teach the children to be free.” A thumping kick drum and bassline emerged as towering strobe lights shot down from above the stage. These lights created a halo of light over Gambino, as if heaven itself was shining down upon him. The church organs continued their sustained chords as the background singers performed a four-part harmony that haunted the soul and lifted the spirit all at once.

His athletic frame gyrated, danced, church-stepped and glided across the stage as he performed the as-yet-unreleased song “*Algorhythm*.” His white linen pants gave him the appearance of someone about to be baptised. In a song about rivers and everybody wanting “to get jumped like

Moses,” this was only fitting, and established a theme of rebirth. Ending the song with a call and response with the audience, he made the stadium feel more like a Baptist church.

Before he began this performance, he announced to the audience that this would be “the last Childish Gambino tour ever.” This proclamation was a perfect preface to the kaleidoscope of lights, sound, praise-dances and screams that would comprise the religious experience he told us we were now a part of. In his own words, “this is not a concert, this is church.”

Gambino continued with a performance of the song “*Summertime Magic*” off his “*Summer Pack*” release that also includes “*Feels Like Summer*.” The former sounds like a typical summertime jam, with steel drum percussion and a driving bassline. The latter has a very Marvin Gaye-esque sound with socially conscious lyrics over a cascade of percussion, background vocals and a consistent chord progression played on acoustic guitar. These two songs bear more of



Gambino collaborators Derek Ali, Ludwig Göransson and Riley Mackin accept the Grammy for Record of the Year for "This is America." Photo courtesy of Kevin Winter/Getty Images

a sonic resemblance to "Algorhythm" than the other tracks he performed from "Because the Internet." There was a seeming conflict between what Gambino wanted to perform and what the audience wanted to hear. This contradiction bears resemblance to his departure from "Because the Internet" to "Awaken, My Love!," which caught some fans off guard as they expected a rapping Gambino — not this soul- and funk-infused monolith before them. The apparent schism split Gambino into two different identities as he belted out shrill screams and soaring falsetto riffs, never missing a beat.

Gambino continued his performance with a thumping rendition of "Worldstar" that had all of us fans holding our phones horizontally and chanting "WORLDSTAR! WORLDSTAR!" at the top of our lungs. "Worldstar," a track off "Because the Internet," is written from the perspective of an adolescent infatuated with watching fight compilations and other senseless violence and entertainment on the website Worldstar. Wide-eyed and perspiring as if he'd just run a 4.5 40-yard dash at the NFL combine, Gambino slowed to a two-step as the music and lighting mellowed out before changing to "Late Night in Kauai." It is only fitting that the intensity of "Worldstar" be followed by a song that is the sonic equivalent of coming down from a high, a euphoric and barebone instrumental accompanied by Glover's half-sung, half-rapped vocals.

The transition from "Kauai" to "Stand Tall" signaled the transformation from Childish Gambino to Donald Glover.

"Because the Internet" is an experimental shot in the dark with no clear reference point, while "Awaken, My Love!" is a callback to an established and illustrious sonic soundscape of funk and soul. If Glover's discography was drawn on a pair of dice, these two albums exist on opposite sides

of the die. His soaring falsetto sent chills down my spine as the background singers accented every vocal run. I felt the thundering bassline of "Boogieman" through the floor as Glover sang about police relations on a beat so infectious that the message might go right over your head. "Have Some Love" was a truly religious experience as we all joined in, clapping to the beat and singing the chorus with him:

*"Have a word for your brother
Have some time for one another
Really love one another
It's so hard to find"*

Glover used the breakdown portions of the song to do James Brown-style slides and footwork, dancing as if he'd caught the Holy Ghost. The cacophonous "Riot" broke out right after. Glover flipped vocal tones with the dexterity of an Olympic gymnast across a mat. His performance of "Terrified" was a standout due to his vocal prowess and outstanding set design: Giant screens on either side of the stage showed Glover and what looked to be his wife or child's mother submerged underwater in an artfully choreographed routine. "Feels Like Summer" saw a moving image of Los Angeles aflame with burning palm trees and familiar L.A. road signs.

Next, he performed another unreleased song that has been dubbed "Spirits" by his fans. It has to be witnessed in real time to be experienced and appreciated properly. Closing the official set with crowd-pleaser "This Is America," Glover brought dancers out onto the stage that were featured in the video and helped close out the concert.

Or so we thought...

After going backstage, the stage lights shut off and the stadium lights turned back on. There was one thing left on most of our minds: what about

"Redbone?" Glover goaded and teased us through SNL-style black-and-white backstage cameras until we cheered loud enough for him to return to the stage for an encore that included "Sober," "3005," "IV. Sweatpants" and — you guessed it — the one and only "Redbone."

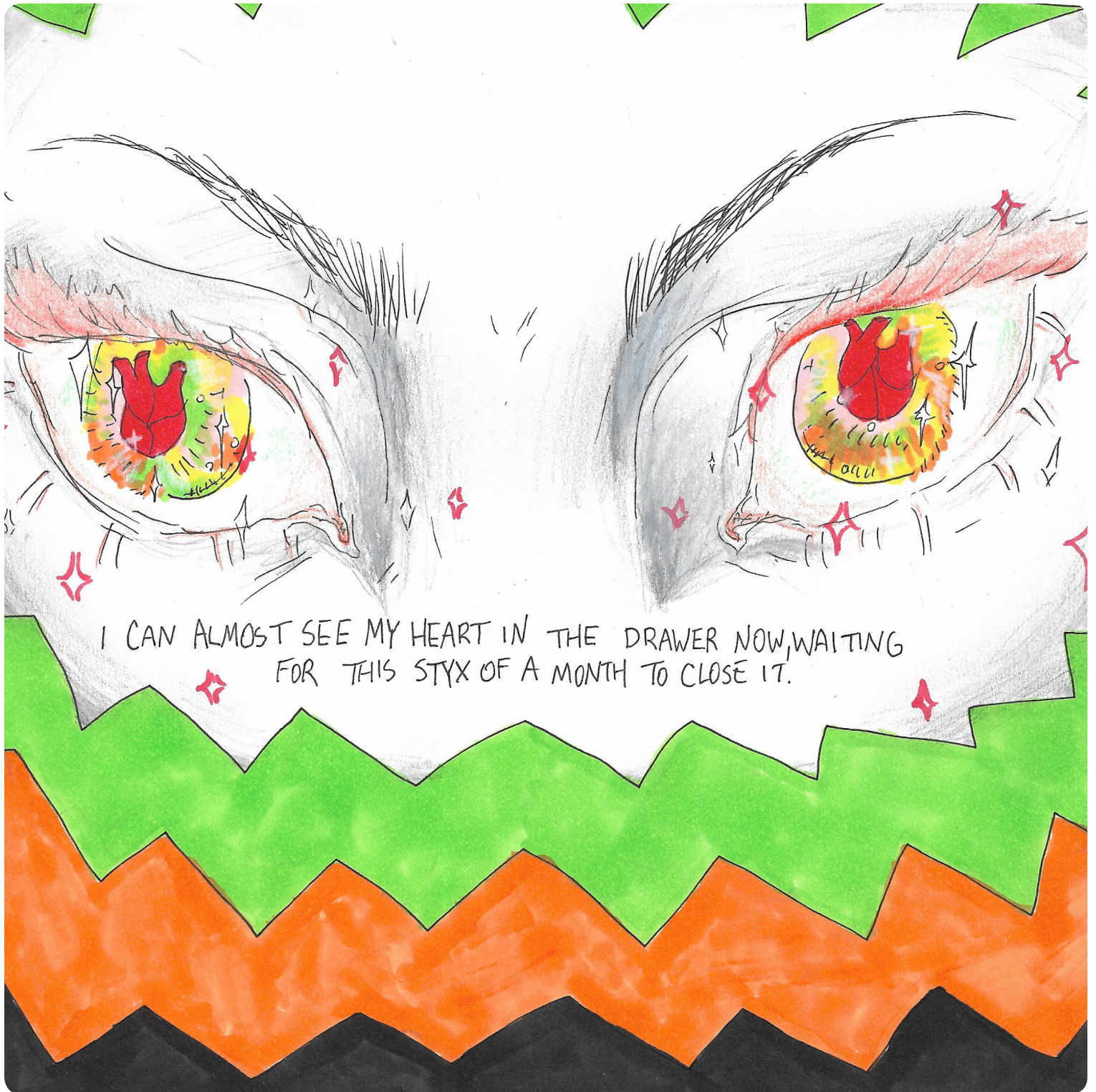
To me, "Awaken, My Love!" marked another notch in Glover's ever-expanding belt of talents. The man has a creative appetite that few possess. That appetite might be for naught if he wasn't successful in each of his endeavors, but he knocks it out of the park every time.

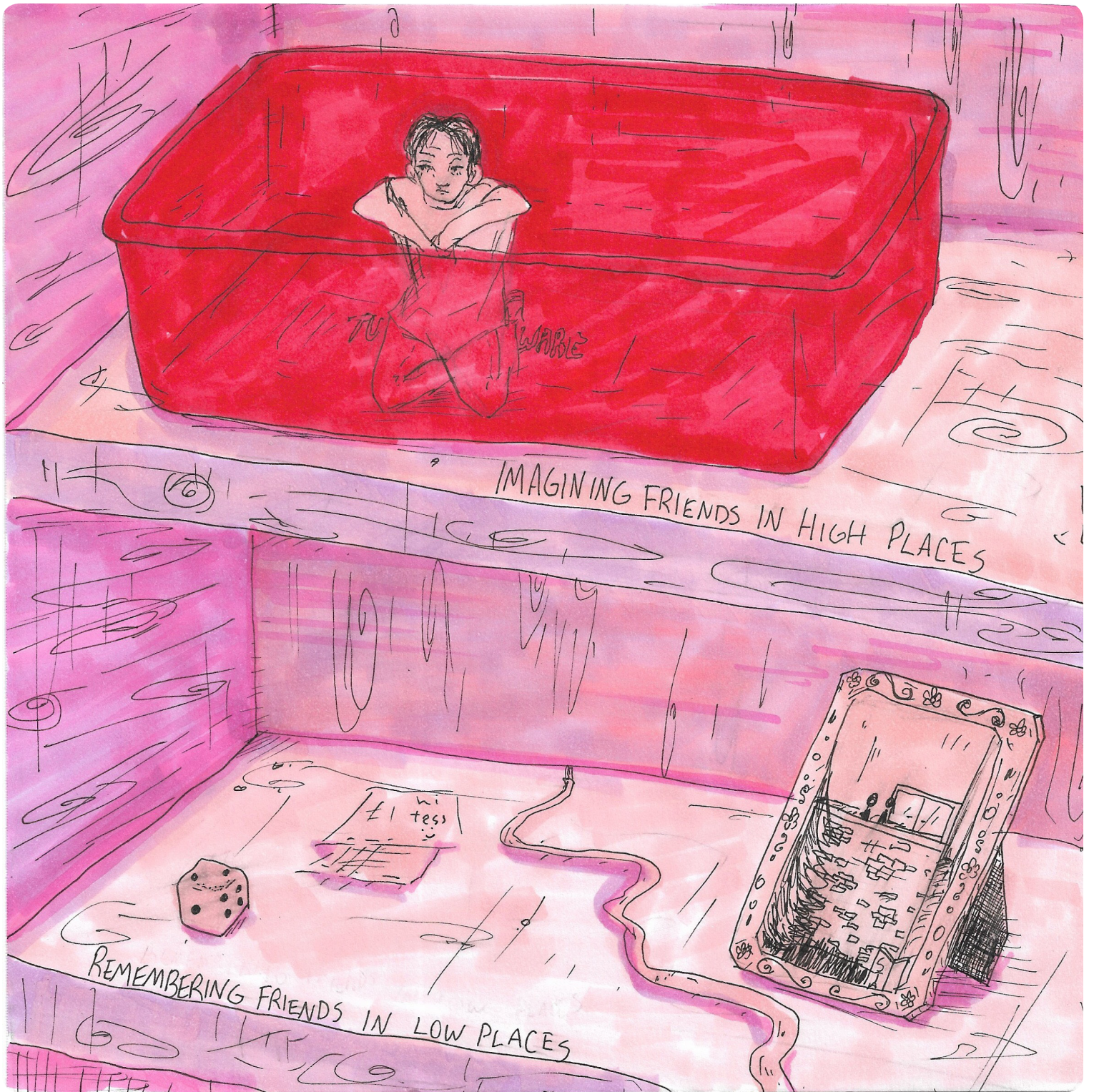
Leaving Madison Square Garden, I was still floating from the energy and recounting that blissful, out-of-body experience. At some point during a concert, you realize you're in the same building as your favorite artist and are watching them perform songs YOU love. I'd say that feeling is priceless, but I have an account balance that reflects exactly what it cost me. It was worth every penny.

Donald Glover's journey to stardom starts from his Derrick Comedy days on YouTube to writing for "30 Rock" and "Community." Couple this with an astronomical rise to A-list stardom producing his own show, "Atlanta," and lead roles in major movie franchises, and his story is beyond uncanny. It is unprecedented. Once a self-proclaimed outsider, Gambino has successfully leapfrogged and hop-scotched through different avenues of success and climbed the echelons of Hollywood in a way that few have or can hope to accomplish. "Mr. Talk-About-His-Dick-A Lot" wrote "Redbone" and "This is America." Let that marinate in your brain, like the opening notes of "Me and Your Mama." A religious experience it truly was, and as far as its finality — I sure hope Donald Glover is ready to produce more timeless music to inspire and impress. Stay woke. ■

Septembers

BY TESS BERGMAN













SEPTEMBERS ARE STRANGE, ALWAYS.

BOTH SHOCKING AND OLD, LIKE A FUNERAL RITE; IT'S EMBALMING, IN ITS OWN CHEAP WAY, BEING FERRIED THROUGH COLD VASELINE.

Double Take:

A Review of the Jonas Brothers' "Sucker"

BY DEANNA ALBOHN

After teasing a reunion for a few months, the Jonas Brothers have reunited under the name JONAS and released their first single since 2013. However, the highly anticipated song fell short.

Don't get me wrong. I'm just as excited for the Jonas Brothers reunion as anybody else. All I'm saying is that they can never live up to or recreate what they once were. Reuniting after a six-year hiatus is no small feat, but will the hype overshadow the fact that no new song will ever be able to top "Burnin' Up"?

Everyone always wants good childhood things to make a comeback, but they never quite live up to the expectations. This has happened time and time again, more recently seen in sequels and remakes of some iconic movies. For example, Disney's upcoming *Aladdin* and *Frozen 2*.

Listening to "Sucker" for the first time was interesting. Once I got past the feeling of "OH MY GOD THE JONAS BROTHERS ARE BACK," I was able to really listen to the song. Sucker is a fun song that I would probably not switch if it came on shuffle or the radio, but it's missing the emo-ness that really spoke to me as a nine-year-old. It's just not the song I was expecting from three grown-up Jonas Brothers.

While I was watching the music video I kept thinking about this tweet:

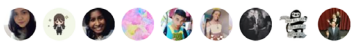


niki ang
@nicolaang

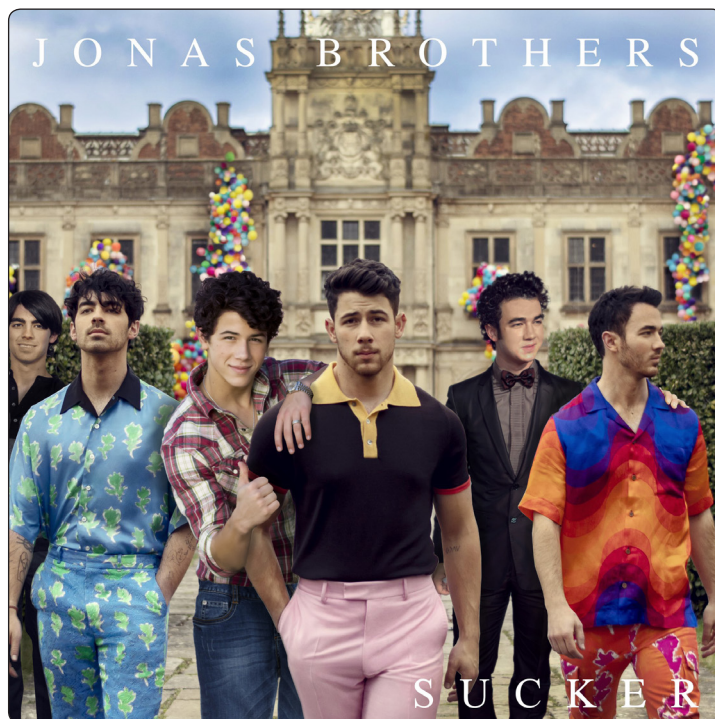
the Jonas brothers are BACK and they've had SEX

4:58 PM - 1 Mar 2019

69,042 Retweets 378,891 Likes



588 69K 379K



Realistically, they probably came back because they needed to pay for all their weddings and knew that they could capitalize big time on this. Which is why this reunion doesn't feel genuine. They chose a time where they're already receiving a decent amount of attention to announce something as big as the end of a hiatus. As long as people are talking about them, who cares about the music, right? Is Joe still in DNCE? Whatever happened to Nick Jonas & The Administration? What does Kevin even do?

After that ill-fated day in October 2013 when Kevin said, "We feel like it's time that the Jonas Brothers comes to an end," and the rumors of tension within the group, it seems hard to believe that they suddenly decided to put differences aside to continue working together again.

When I got my first iPod there was a solid week in my life where I listened to nothing but "Lovebug" on repeat and danced like a fool in my living room. The "NOW I'M-" and guitar breakdown has been the default music in my head for probably about a decade now. I don't think any song will ever make me feel the way I did the first time I heard "Lovebug."

Let's talk about L.A.-fucking-Baby. That song went so hard for no reason. They really did that for us. They'll never be able to recreate that, only chasing the iconicness of that song. Producing

songs that could just never be. Sorry, I really love "L.A. Baby."

The most unfair part of the reunion is that they left Frankie "The Bonus" Jonas out AGAIN. How do you leave the fourth brother out of a band called the Jonas Brothers not once, but two separate times?

Maybe I am being overly critical and pessimistic about the future or whatever, but there's no doubt that the Jonas Brothers will make some good songs in this reunion. The Jonas Brothers can do anything. They broke the stereotype of boy bands performing synchronized dance routines and all wearing matching outfits. They paved the way for later bands like One Direction. And in the spirit of reunions, One Direction, it's your turn. ■

Little Peeper's Forest School teaches preschoolers about the environment

BY MARGARET OSBORNE



Bundled up to protect from the cold weather, six screaming preschool children ran outside to look for sticks to build a tower.

"I found something!" a young girl's voice cried out from a wooded area. She held a plastic fork in her mittened hand.

"Oh, that's litter," her teacher responded. "We don't want to leave that, do we?"

Little Peeper's Forest School is a half-day preschool held entirely outside. It's the only program of its kind in Suffolk County. Each day, the children learn something new based on the environment around them. The kids learn to pick up trash they see, to take sticks only off the ground and to respect the world they live in.

In the past two decades, forest schools, or outdoor schools focused on nature-based learning, have gained popularity as a response

to stricter school curricula. The concept is based off of ideas from European philosophers and educators. In Scandinavia, "friluftsliv," or open-air living, was popularized in the 1850s by playwright Henrik Ibsen, who used the term to "describe the value of spending time in remote locations for spiritual and physical well-being," according to BBC. This idea of open-air living has since gained popularity and now permeates the lifestyle in Scandinavia, including in schools. This idea is used in forest schools across the world.

Peter Walsh and Amanda Johnson both work for Seatuck Environmental Association, based in Islip, New York. Seatuck aims to promote "the conservation of Long Island's wildlife and environment," according to their website.

Fifteen years ago, Walsh and Johnson started to notice that children weren't spending as much

time outside as they used to and wondered what they could do to help. They decided to devise an after-school program for kids to play in nature. Five years ago, they started Little Peepers, a division of Seatuck, and a preschool program for children ages three to five. Walsh serves as the education director and Johnson is one of the lead teachers.

"Such an important part of living in this world is being comfortable in nature and enjoying it," Johnson said. "Our program really encourages children to do that more. And not only the children, but the parents also."

Students learn their colors by looking at the trees and leaves. They learn about weather, read books, do crafts and learn about environmental stewardship. Recently, they've been monitoring a dead raccoon they found off one of the trails and watching it decompose.



As a parent of a child in Little Peepers, Noelle Lewandowski said she has seen an immense improvement in her son Ellis' social skills.

"He was very shy," she said. "He comes home and tells me the coolest things, and he'll tell everyone about it. He used to never speak to anyone. He wouldn't even look at you."

If Lewandowski had brought him to a more traditional preschool program, she thinks he wouldn't have made such vast improvements.

"His confidence has just boosted," she said. "To me, it's 100 percent from this school."

Studies have shown that increased time in nature can boost both physical and mental health.

According to an article in Parks & Recreation, "Having trees outside classroom windows can improve attention and test scores. Curricula that integrate the environment in meaningful ways also do this to an even greater degree, especially among students from low socioeconomic and

minority backgrounds." The article also cited a study from NC State University, which found that children who "go outside during class are more likely to have pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors."

Johnson has been teaching for 25 years. Before helping start Little Peepers, she worked in more traditional classrooms. She said she has seen the children at Little Peepers change and grow more within a school year than she has in other schools.

"The kids are helping each other," she said. "They really care for not only their friends, but the animals they see every day and the land that they're on. They really develop that at a young age."

Walsh said he hopes that Long Islanders will recognize the importance of nature. When the time comes for a vote on policy, he wants residents to understand why the issues matter. By educating kids early, Walsh and Johnson can help them grow up to be well-informed adults.

"We're hoping to change a generation," Johnson said, and laughed. ■



All photos courtesy of Little Peepers' Forest School.

ASTROLOGE
KIAM MCCOY
DIA RGM





THE SOCIAL MEDIA TRIBES

The fluorescent lights of Frey Hall glistened off the silver rings that adorned all 10 fingers of K’la Rivers’ hands. After taking her seat, she fished a tied, black bundle from her bag, rested it on the table top and spritzed the bundle and the air around her with fragrant, homemade Florida Water - for good vibrations and positivity. Unwrapping the bundle, a deck of holographic tarot cards, a rose quartz crystal and amethyst crystal sat in the centre of the black cloth. K’la was preparing herself to be receptive for the energy reading of the day.

K’la, 21, is among a growing community of astrologers benefiting from the social media age, and calls herself a tarot and astrology practitioner. History does seem to repeat itself as the saying goes. Something indicative of this phenomenon is the resurgence of astrology in pop culture, especially among millennials.

“We wanna understand and know that life isn’t just following what someone else says,” K’la said. “Astrology acts as your own indicator and makes you a god of your own faith...it’s just giving yourself power to create the life that you want to live.”

She also posits that this moment for astrology is accompanied by an age of rebellion and cultural shifts, where the younger generation begins breaking away from the norms of older ones. Take our current political climate, where we see gun reform conversations from high school students or the creation of new, “radical” genres of music spearheaded by rappers like Ski Mask the Slump God. This was also a marker of the last big moment astrology had in the 1960s and 1970s with Hippie culture, also known as the “Age of Aquarius”. We are seeing a rebirth of this age according to K’la.

"I think people in general are becoming dissatisfied with the strict cultural and religious frameworks in our current society, especially the ones that seek to deny people of any form of individuality, hope, or pleasure," Madison Louise (@stellaviatore), 22, a tarot reader and amateur astrologer said. "Younger generations especially find themselves stifled in these settings and astrology gives them a means to explore themselves more deeply without societal restrictions and religious framework."

Social media, especially Twitter and Instagram, have been an important tool for millennial astrologers to get their message out and offer readings and advice to a wide and varied audience.

"It used to be that you could talk about astrology and absolutely no one would know what you were talking about," Madison said. "People called you crazy and obsessed with nonsense. Now people are sharing astrology memes on Facebook and saying the reason their ex was so terrible was because he was a Leo...It really makes me laugh."

The format of social media makes it a good place to facilitate growing interest in astrology. Most platforms are free, making them readily accessible to users who may use astrology for guidance. Memes and threads are made for sharing, allowing information to spread easily and globally. As Madison said, users are given a chance to follow astrologers who may intrigue them, get a feel for who they are and if their beliefs align, then followers could pay for readings through cash apps like paypal. Social media is also prime for building communities with like interests, which eliminates the negative feelings that come from discussing your interests around people who find them unappealing.

"I think astrology wouldn't be as upcoming as it is without the role of social media," Liberty Harvey (@TheAstroShell), 20, an astrologer from the UK said. "It's fantastic because it's such a safe, interactive space that can be used to educate others on the topic."

An astrology page on Instagram, @notallgeminis, posts memes about the 12 zodiac signs along with the occasional playlist to commemorate the monthly shift in signs. The page, run by LA-based Courtney Perkins, has amassed a following of 399k. On Twitter, @DJLoveLight has 10.3k followers and posts weekly horoscope threads for each sign along with quirky threads about common characteristics. Most social media astrologers also seem to offer tarot, astrology and or natal chart readings.

K'la has been reading tarot professionally for about a year and like many astrologers, has found a stream of income in this astrology moment. Through her Twitter account @Bananakinss, she offers tarot readings and astrological guidance at a cost.

"As I started studying my natal chart [a map of the planets' alignment at your birth], I realized that [tarot and astrology] is my purpose," she said in response to why she began offering readings. "Helping people become in tune with their spirituality has made

my life abundant." Her services are a welcome supplement to her on-campus job in the face of the costs of daily life.

Horoscopes, a personal forecast based on your zodiac sign, have been featured in newspapers since the 20th century contrary to their lack of popularity back then. Today, online publications and magazines have recorded an increase in traffic to their horoscope pages over the years. The Cut notes that horoscope posts saw a 150 percent increase between 2016 and 2017. Why is everyone suddenly searching the stars?

★ ★ ★

"In this day and age where a lot of things happen on a daily basis which [can be] absurd and unfathomable, people seek hope," Liberty said. "I think astrology can offer this hope by literally implementing the idea of karma and that...things will work out just how they are supposed to and we must trust in divine timing that, in the end, everything will be put in order, even if it doesn't currently seem in order today."

Astrologers point out that while the social media age is a great opportunity for their businesses and for people seeking something beyond themselves to believe in, it also invites pressure from corporations and other entrepreneurial pursuits.

"It is hardly fair for companies to swoop in and take those clients by offering zodiac themed makeup palettes, candles, and soaps," Madison said, "especially when there are already small businesses run by astrologers that offer those things." Etsy, an e-commerce website best known for its stock of handmade goods, features several astrologers who sell readings, printed, personalized birth chart analysis as well as zodiac themed knick-knacks. However, the quaintness of Etsy can't always compete with the industrial production and marketing machines of corporations.

In 2018, makeup company ColourPop created a line of eyeshadows and lip products in collaboration with makeup artist Kathleen Lights, called Zodiac. Zodiac Perfume produces a scent inspired by each sign and retails for \$30-\$125.

Some astrologers warn of companies selling fake gemstones such as crystals which are reported to have healing properties. They claim that not only does this hurt their businesses, it could have adverse effects for the customers.

"[With fake gems] you don't know what the rock is made up of and you're praying on them with certain intentions and they're not getting heard." K'la said.

Although astrology isn't considered a science, it is heavily influenced by empirical and social sciences such as astronomy and psychology. The former also went through a period where people questioned its legitimacy. Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, famously combined astrology and several branches of psychology to create astropsychology. There might not be direct scientific evidence that your zodiac sign will tell you why you're such a flirt or what your future job will be, but that isn't necessarily its purpose to begin with.

"Astrology offered me a new perspective, a spark of hope, and an online community of people going through the same thing when I desperately needed it," Madison, said. For her, studying astrology and engaging with that community helped her overcome her struggles with depression.

Throughout the astrology community, it is understood that it isn't for everyone and dissent will always come. However, for them, it is enough that astrology brings healing and therapy in its own way. ■

"WE WANNA UNDERSTAND AND KNOW THAT LIFE ISN'T JUST FOLLOWING WHAT SOMEONE ELSE SAYS," K'LA SAID. "ASTROLOGY ACTS AS YOUR OWN INDICATOR AND MAKES YOU A GOD OF YOUR OWN FAITH..."



AMERICAN

EARTHQUAKES



BY

JOSEPH

AMENDOLA



If there's one thing today's older generations love, (besides posting Confederate flag minion memes to Facebook) it's lazily pathologizing young people. This isn't new, of course. Despite slight modifications, complaints about "the youth" have remained consistent since the '60s: Kids are narcissistic, entitled, overly sensitive, strangely consumed with technology and the opinions of others, and lacking in motivation. As always, stereotypes, aside from being incomplete and often wrong, are painfully, crushingly, fucking boring — procedurally generated broadsides that both illuminate and prove nothing.

But I guess we shouldn't be surprised.

Thankfully the tepid, superficial non-analysis of younger generations isn't entirely lost on our wilting intellectual class. CUNY political theorist Corey Robin recognized this blindspot in our punditry, and in a blog post from July 2017, called on writers and journalists to write a definitive account of the millennial/Gen Z generations. In the post, Robin recalls the excellent "The American Earthquake," a rigorous journalistic account of life during the Great Depression. In the book, journalist Edmund Wilson set out across the country interviewing Americans of all races and classes on their experiences during the 1930s financial crisis and its grim aftermath. Robin, summing up a Washington Post article on economic precarity, noted what he found to be telling about the attitudes of bourgeois media towards millennial saving habits:

"Second, that the Post thinks millennials earning \$40,000 a year have tons of extra disposal income to sock away for their futures seems risible. Given rents and job precarity and student loans that have to be paid off, it seems totally rational to me that a young person in today's economy would want to be assured that they'll have money for food and rent come next month," said Robin. "Better to keep it in the bank than tie it up in a long-term index fund or whatever. Having the money near at hand seems perfectly understandable."

In his conclusion, Robin defines the Millennial Earthquake in much the same way the Earthquake of the 1930s was defined: by the economic precarity resulting from a financial crisis and a long downturn in capitalist institutions. Fair enough, none of that is untrue, so to speak, and Robin is certainly one of the most thoughtful intellectuals writing today. But just as many a listicle ultimately proves incomplete, so does the redefining of the American Earthquake as one of simple economic relations. There is something else at play here. So what is it?

The current political economy of the United States is grotesque and unjust, particularly for young people. Millennials are worse off than their parents despite higher educational attainment and aptitude, while drowning in

INUREMENT TO CRISES.

student loan debt and multiple jobs. These sources of hardship, of course, break down along racial and gendered lines, garnishing the indexes of domination in society with an additional layer of injustice. From this point of view, the conception of the Millennial Earthquake as one of simple economic conditions seems to hold water.

But what about the other ruptures?

The condition of being born between 1982-2000 is the condition of being raised in an era of endless, shadowy war, perpetuated by an imperial power that no longer feels even the most superficial need to justify its genocidal incursions.

It is the condition of living through mass shooting after mass shooting, often carried out by those whose generational makeup is consistent with ours. No meaningful remedy ever arises from such massacres, which are framed as "tragedies" but are so often concrete results of legislative neglect. The same can be said for our water crises, extreme poverty metrics and austerity-induced tower-fires across the Atlantic; the preventable is clutched and molded into the fatalistic by those whose only identifiable function is the middle-management of our expectations. Perhaps this is the Millennial Earthquake.

Or maybe there is no "one" American/Millennial Earthquake. In 2019, as it stands now, our most salient characteristic seems to be our inurement to crises; the semi-regular tremors that seem to shake the fabric of our institutions to the core but leave them intact, somehow, with plates remaining stagnant along the fault lines of our systems' contradictions.

In fact, our momentary shocks that end up producing nothing but ideological inertia seems to be the most telling aspect of all. The preservation of an existing way of doing things, in the face of what seems to be a rebuke of its merits, results in the spiritual whiplash of those who are privy to it. While the vision of the 21st century American Earthquake as a Wilsonian tale of economic strife is insufficient for our current condition, such failure to change existing ways at least seems to mirror the dark resilience of certain economic institutions, particularly our own.

The late economist Hyman Minsky recognized this, and inadvertently provided what is perhaps the

best intellectual framework for understanding our current Earthquake.

In his landmark account of the inherent instability of financial systems under capitalism, Minsky broke with normal Marxist prophecies wherein one grand, spectacular crisis would bring the entire system crashing down. Instead, Minsky levied the astute observation that, with every bailout, with every stitch that rendered a wounded system whole again, the very foundations of that system were therein reinforced and justified. This has come to be known as "The Minsky Moment" among academics.

Mike Beggs, in a Jacobin profile of the influential, yet under-cited economist, described it in the following:

"Every time the Federal Reserve protects a financial instrument, it legitimizes the use of this instrument to finance activity. This means that not only does Federal Reserve action abort an incipient crisis, but it sets the stage for a resumption in the process of increasing indebtedness — and makes possible the introduction of new instruments."

Thus, the 21st century American earthquake is the extension of the Minsky moment to all corners of life: Every time a high school responds to the newest mass shooting by arming security guards and teachers, it legitimizes the self-imposed inertia put in place by our lobbyist-beholden legislature, burrowing us all deeper down a rabbit hole of routine mass-violence. Everytime a neoliberal think-tank responds to the newest apocalyptic climate change report with yet another call for a weak cap-and-trade program, it legitimizes the notion that there really is no alternative to market half-measures, even in the face of the end of a habitable planet.

You could thus break the two American Earthquakes down along Minskian and Wilsonian lines. Our current Minskian earthquake differs from Wilson's Great Depression in several subtle, yet stark ways.

IN 2019, AS IT STANDS NOW, OUR MOST SALIENT CHARACTERISTIC SEEMS TO BE OUR

When Edmund Wilson was writing in the 1930s, he did so during the drafting and implementation of the New Deal, a political program rife with exclusionary measures that nonetheless birthed something new in the ashes of the old; the New Deal was at least a response to an Earthquake. All we're left with now is, well, nothing — more earned-income tax credits, more corporate subsidies, more unenforceable background checks and cap-and-trade programs, more borders and more walls. The past is dying and the future cannot be born: The American Earthquake.

In observing all of this, maybe it is not so surprising that older generations love to bash the young. As anthropologist David Graeber noted in a Baffler piece on the failed utopias of yesteryear, chief among the dying pathologies of the American imagination is the belief in future progress of any kind. Every source of resentment one has toward the young could be seen as the inevitable result of the older's failure. In every condescending article about a Gen Z child addicted to iPhone games, the baby boomer sees in them the failure of their own generation: "We were promised flying cars and high-speed cross continental travel, and all we're stuck with are these fucking apps," they think. In every piece about some supposedly novel sense of narcissism or entitlement among millennials, the olds see a mirror unto themselves: a generation raised to believe they were different and transgressive, but retreated into conformity and a shallow individualism around the time of the first Volcker shocks. What a baby boomer or Gen X-er feels toward the young is not resentment, per se, but fear. Fear that nothing ever changes, fear that every earthquake neither forces nor produces something new.

Maybe we've been living through the earthquake longer than we'd all like to admit. ■



Photo courtesy of Margaret Bourke-White—Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images

What Big Girls Can Wear

by Carine Green

Our bodies. For some, the body is a vessel that allows us to perform many different activities and functions. For others, it can be a cage. As for me, I've always seen the body as a form of torture. I always saw my body as punishment from God. Or at least I used to. Part of this mentality came from society and social interactions with my family, friends and even strangers. The other part of this came from the world of fashion. This is an experience familiar to the millions of women who, similarly, face the oppressive nature and dynamic of the fashion industry.

In 2013, Abercrombie didn't sell XL and XXL sizes for women, and the CEO's (Mike Jeffries) reasoning behind it was that he didn't want people that he didn't think were sexy to wear his clothes. In an interview with Business Insider, the interviewer states "He doesn't want larger people shopping in his store, he wants thin and beautiful people". Although he received a lot of backlash from this, his statement accurately reflects the opinions and actions of the fashion industry. Big-name designers often refuse to make clothes for larger women because they don't see them as beautiful. In fact, society, in general, makes bigger women feel as though being skinny is the key to being beautiful. They commodify and glorify eating disorders, being unnaturally skinny, and they ostracize and penalize you for the way you are. Although there has been a lot of conversation about this topic, not enough was being done. It wasn't until many celebrities began unpacking the topic of size and sharing their personal experiences of discrimination that people actually started paying attention.

Many celebrities like Gabourey Sidibe, Leslie Jones, Melissa McCarthy, Octavia Spencer, and Beyonce have faced discrimination because of their size. Even renowned plus-sized model Ashley Graham spoke about the struggle of being rejected because of her size. These women represent some of the biggest names of our time. They represent actresses, singers, comedians, models and above all role models for the younger generation. Yet these women can't even find a designer who will make them a dress to go out in or walk the red carpet! In fact, it wasn't until Christian Siriano began dressing plus-sized models and putting out a plus-sized collection with Layne Bryant — a women's clothing store chain focusing on plus-sized women — that pressure was placed on many big clothing companies and the fashion industry, in general, to make clothes for plus-sized women. But even this wasn't enough!



Danielle Brooks. Photos courtesy of Lane Bryant



When big-name companies began making clothes for plus-sized women it was apparent they did so only to prevent the backlash of not being inclusive. Looking at the many pieces they have for plus-sized women, one can only feel disgusted and disappointed. In that order! Melissa McCarthy once said that “when you go above a size 12 you don’t lose your love of fashion” and truer words could not have been spoken. Making clothes for bigger people doesn’t mean throwing together fabric and creating a dress, because honestly for that same quality one could go to Bed Bath & Beyond, pick up one of the fanciest sheets, throw it over their body and accessorize it with a belt. I think it’s high time we call out companies like Zara, Hollister, Macy’s, J.C. Penney, American Eagle, Lulus, GAP, and many more who either don’t have the option of plus sizes or only sell shapeless, loose-fitting, silhouette-less garments.

Believe it or not, this is just as much discrimination as it would be for a makeup company that doesn’t sell shades everyone can wear for example in 2018 Tarte Cosmetics faced a lot of backlash for only including four shades for medium to darker people while supply eleven shades for lighter skinned people. The premise that both instances include a company refusing to adequately represent all people on the basis of their identity makes these cases inherently the same. A common theme is that companies alienate women sizes 14 and up, and in this lifetime one of the most stressful things is finding something extremely cute when shopping then realizing it’s not available in your size. This may exist because of the social construction of a wall between women of smaller sizes and women of larger sizes created by the fashion industry. It is my contention that beauty is endless. There is no one way to be beautiful and no one should be treated as if they aren’t. So many big names as well the fashion industry have a long way to go because a small step isn’t enough. We all demand more and more until the wall has completely collapsed. Sorry about it! ■



the creodes of your habits

exploring your brain
with psychedelics

by caroline
klewinowski

LSD is making an unexpected come back in modern science. Psychedelics have long been in America's subconscious since its rise in Western counterculture. Starting in the 50s, when it wasn't illegal, the federal government was supporting research examining the uses of substances like LSD or "magic" mushrooms. In the midst of the 60s, the counterculture was seen as abusing it and stories about people jumping to their deaths after taking psychedelics spread like wildfire.

Since then, psychedelics have been making a comeback. Joe Rogan, a popular podcaster and comedian, goes on at length about the uses of psychedelics with countless guests on his show The Joe Rogan Experience. In an episode, he interviewed journalist Michael Pollan, who talked about clinical uses of classical psychedelics such as LSD, magic mushrooms and DMT.

Pollan's latest book "How to Change Your Mind" discusses the rise and fall of LSD in the '60s. He also writes about previous research done to treat addiction, depression and other mental illnesses, but also the more recent studies about how psychedelics affect the human brain. Preliminary trials using psychedelics have

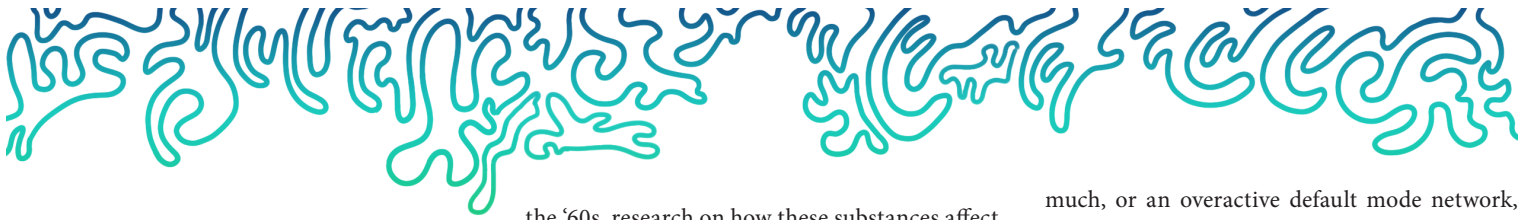
shown promising results for existential crises, addiction, depression and more about how our brains simply just work.

Alternatively, a study conducted by the Pew Research Center revealed that Americans believe addiction is becoming a problem in their communities. This has been especially clear with the opioid crisis in America in recent years. Another study done by the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, showed rising rates of depression are high among young adults between the ages of nineteen to thirty-two that frequently use social media. Although too young for psychedelic treatment according to researchers, this problem will persist as they age, and social media is here to stay.

Two research trials, one conducted by John Hopkins University and another by New York University, are often used to exemplify the potential of psilocybin, the active psychedelic in magic mushrooms. These two studies recorded its effects on terminally ill cancer patients to help cope with imminent death. They were told to confront every fear, "open every door" and face every monster before they were administered either a placebo or a psilocybin pill. With two licensed therapists in a meticulously composed

room, researchers took account of set and setting affecting the outcome of the patients' experiences. In the two trials conducted, around 80 percent of cancer patients showed statistical improvement with depression and anxiety. These trials were small, however, and more research would need to be conducted.

Memoirist and journalist Tao Lin used psychedelics to self-medicate his drug addictions. In his book "Trip," Lin wrote about his consistent uses of amphetamines, benzodiazepines, opiates and MDMA. Lin eventually "became accustomed to not being in a social situation unless also on a drug. Soon, [Lin] didn't want to do anything, even solitary activities, unless [he] was on at least one drug or, increasingly, two." Lin began his recovery from his drug dependencies with a seminal psychedelic trip. "Psilocybin removed me from the creodes of my habits and provoked me into long-term change." A small 2015 proof-of-concept pilot study at the University of New Mexico seems to confirm Lin's personal experience: alcoholics that received psilocybin with cognitive behavioral therapy showed a strong correlation between the strength of their trip and their alcohol consumption afterward as four people out of the ten subject to the research



reduced heavy drinking days by 100%.

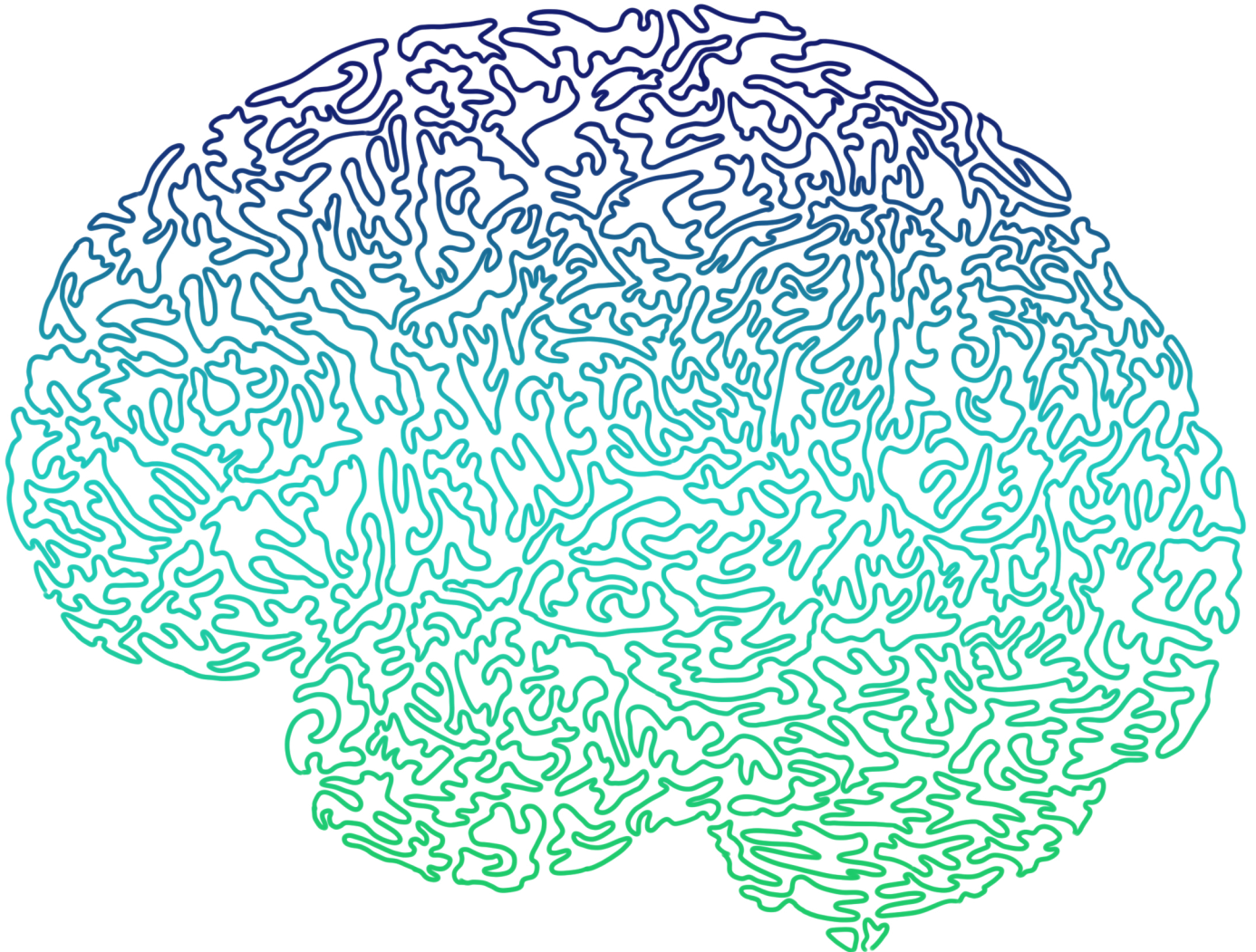
It's also important to note that some Native American cultures have long used psychedelics like ayahuasca, peyote and psilocybin as a type of treatment before the westernization of their societies. Bill Wilson, founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, even tried to implement the use of LSD in the program after a personal experience that helped him quit drinking. LSD is a Schedule 1 drug and should be addictive as per that categorization, but a typical experiment used to test the addictive qualities in a drug is a self-administering test with rodents. If an animal or rodent continues to pick a drug over a food source, it's usually classified as addictive. Most animals don't choose to ingest a psychedelic again once they've had it before.

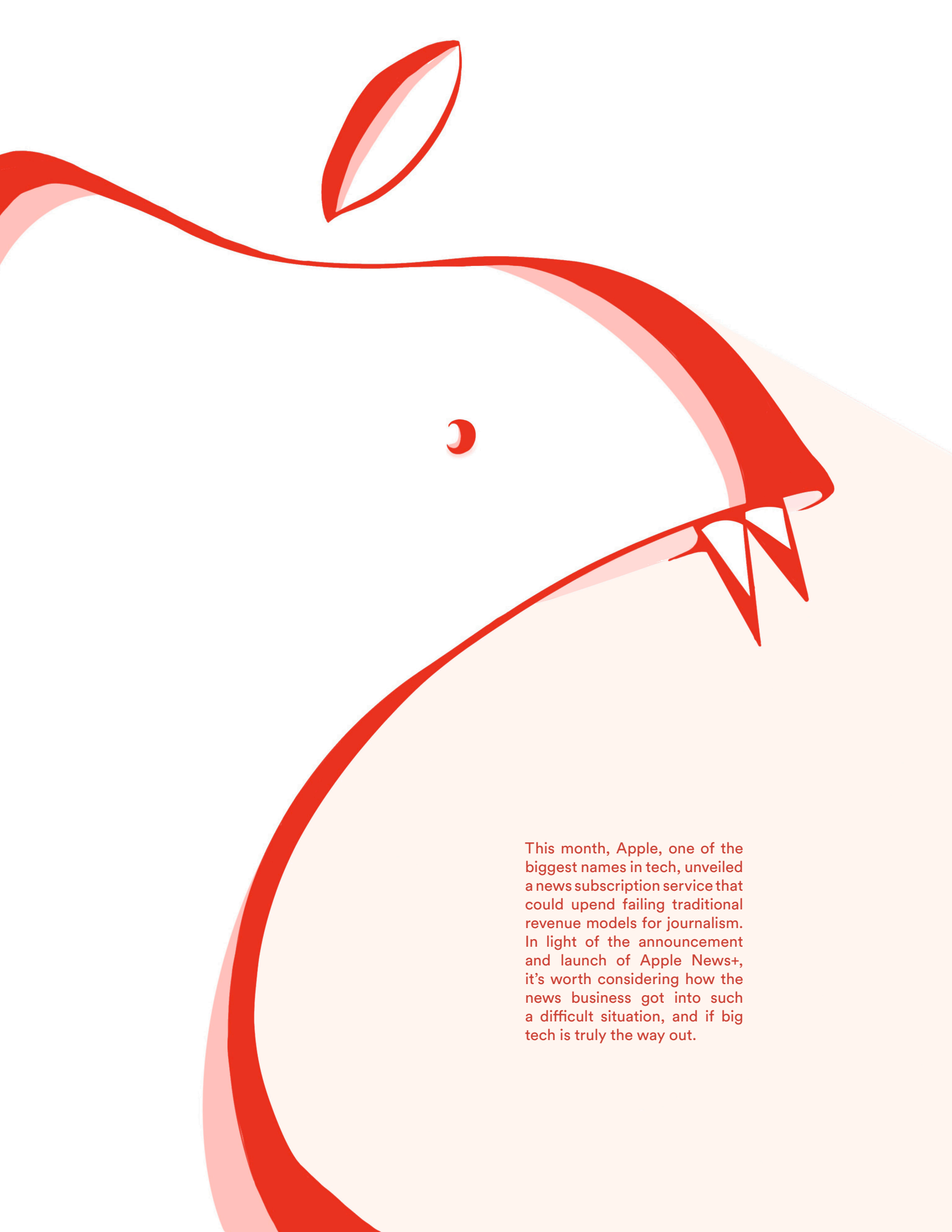
Since the criminalization of psychedelics in

the '60s, research on how these substances affect the brain have also halted. Only until recently has clinical research started to explore the benefits, limitations and effects with modern brain imaging to help explain how psychedelics result in profound changes in behavior. Pollan interviewed Robin Carhartt-Harris, a British neuropsychopharmacology researcher, who explained that psilocybin reduced activity in the default brain network, a structure responsible for "the ego." The ego manages, and orchestrates the different parts of our brain to work together. The default brain network gets its name from the fact that it becomes active when a mind wanders, reflects, daydreams or is on "default." Carhartt-Harris suggests based on his research that "low entropy" psychological disorders categorized by "rigid thinking," a mind that wanders too

much, or an overactive default mode network, could result in depression, anxiety or addiction. Psychedelics like LSD can relieve symptoms of "low entropy" psychological disorders by quieting the default mode network and creating new thought patterns.

Clinical uses of psychedelics have yet to be fully explored. Research has been approved for succeeding phases of experimental trials by the FDA and has proven to show hopeful signs. But adverse effects of psychedelics are unpredictable, including flashbacks and psychosis. These drugs certainly shouldn't be used by younger people, but only by middle-aged people whose minds can be safely subjected to something as disruptive as psychedelics. ■





This month, Apple, one of the biggest names in tech, unveiled a news subscription service that could upend failing traditional revenue models for journalism. In light of the announcement and launch of Apple News+, it's worth considering how the news business got into such a difficult situation, and if big tech is truly the way out.

Apple News+ and Profitable Journalism in the Digital Age

BY JOSH JOSEPH

“Imagine, if you will, sitting down to your morning coffee and turning on your home computer to read the day’s newspaper. Well, it’s not as far-fetched as it may seem.” In 1981, a local San Francisco news station began a report on the first digital newspapers with those words. “This is an experiment,” said David Cole of the San Francisco Examiner, sitting by a computer terminal as he read and retyped that day’s paper onto a monitor. Back then, reading the news on a digital screen was a novelty reserved for wealthy hobbyists like Richard Halloran, who appeared in the report. Below his name, a caption boldly proclaimed: “Owns Home Computer.”

Over the last three decades, Halloran’s once-privileged title has become laughably commonplace. As computers and the concept of the internet became staples of our culture, free information permeated the world wide web. For the first time, blogs and individuals were able to compete with the world’s most established newspapers for readership. Images, and later video content, brought more richness and variety to the online reading experience. Computer hardware and software were commodified, but the data that made them useful remained free.

Today, the accessibility of that data has been compounded by the disintegration of the personal computer as we knew it. With ultra-portable smartphones and tablets, news has become inescapable. Using a computer used to be an active decision, and a laborious one at that. Now, we no longer seek information out — it comes to us, through an alert, a tweet, or a text.

The biggest problem with the freedom of information online is that journalism is decidedly not free to make. For many consumers, it may seem counterintuitive to pay for news. After all, it’s just text, photos and videos — information floating in the ether of the internet. At the dawn of the digital age, media companies themselves didn’t even think to charge for their online editions. But it costs money to hire journalists, editors, photographers and producers. Consistently putting out engaging and useful content is expensive, especially while competing with thousands of other outlets for eyeballs.

Advertising, once the largest single source of revenue in the news business, has been steadily shrinking. The value proposition of an online ad simply isn’t as worthwhile as it was in print. A decision to buy a product or pay for a service is far more direct on the internet than it was when readers couldn’t instantly make purchases from anywhere and at any time.

In the last decade, online news outlets have begun putting up paywalls — barriers that prevent readers from viewing any content until they sign up for a subscription. They began as a scheme to get around ad-blockers, web extensions that allowed readers to hide pesky ads, but cut off all ad revenue as a result. Today, many paywalls are “hard,” meaning they force readers to pay before they can see any content, even if they don’t have ad-blockers on. The paywall is a concept that flies in the face of the internet’s communal nature, but one that companies as large as Condé Nast and The New York Times found necessary as ad revenues shrank.

In the contradiction that is digital media, big tech saw an opportunity. As an unavoidable middleman in an increasingly digital world, the modern tech firm became increasingly involved in the distribution of journalism online.

Facebook and Google, the companies behind two of the most visited sites on the web, now dominate online advertising. They have effectively inserted themselves between content publishers and consumers, distributing ads through their own platforms and taking 70 percent of revenues. This is the situation that analysts blamed for a series of sweeping media layoffs from companies once thought to be the future of media — BuzzFeed, HuffPost and Vice among them. Facebook and Google also control two hugely popular news aggregators, places where users can explore and find news from a variety of sources at once. Google’s search and Facebook’s news feed are both algorithmically designed to keep users off publishers’ sites and on their own, siphoning off even more potential ad revenue.

In light of these recent catastrophic developments, Apple, a relative newcomer to the digital media industry, has been promising a solution. Last year, they purchased Texture, a magazine service founded by Condé Nast, News Corp and Time, among other media giants. Texture provided its users with access to a plethora of magazine content for a flat subscription rate. Now under Apple’s control, Texture is merging with Apple News, the free news aggregator that comes pre-installed on nearly all devices the company ships. Apple News+, the repackaged service released in late March, charges users a similar flat subscription rate for what has been dubbed a “Netflix for news,” featuring content from magazines and select newspapers. Just days before its announcement, Eddy Cue, Apple’s senior vice president of services, was courting major news

organizations in the hopes of expanding the service’s content base at launch. However, negotiations hit a snag with some outlets.

That snag is Apple’s proposed revenue model: they want to keep half of what subscribers pay and divvy up the other half among outlets according to viewership. When the proposal leaked, analysts and commentators were outraged. It seemed that the company’s promise to protect good journalism was just a facade, masking yet another media cash grab by a big tech firm. The Verge’s Casey Newton called the deal “a potent symbol of the concentration of power among a handful of tech companies, along with the total inattention to marketplace competition by regulators.” Daring Fireball’s John Gruber wrote that “given the margins in the news industry today,” Apple’s model would be “insane.”

Barbara Selvin, a professor at Stony Brook University’s School of Journalism, teaches a course on the constantly evolving news business. She said that “it would be better for the country, not to mention the news business, if [Apple was] more generous and more equitable in considering other stakeholders.” Her real worry is not for established outlets that already have a successful subscription base, but for smaller news organizations, for whom joining Apple’s service is “a no-win situation.”

With the participation of a few key players, including The Wall Street Journal and The Los Angeles Times, Apple News+ launched on March 25. Will it be the end-all, be-all model for digital news? Selvin certainly doesn’t think so. “I think there’s still a lot of room for creativity and for new models to come forward,” she said. “I was just reading an interesting piece yesterday about the idea of edition-based news products that have kind of a finite quality to them. It’s a news product that has a beginning and an end, so you’re not just endlessly scrolling through something like you do with an aggregator like Apple News.”

Ultimately, the service may be just one more encroachment by a greedy tech firm on the media industry. News organizations large and small are about to face a true test: how to respond to such a gross imposition on their profits. To avoid becoming victims of predatory technology companies, they will have to incentivize direct investment. Persuading the public to pay for journalism will not be easy, but with enough ingenuity and creativity, viewers may find real value in the content they consume. ■

Migrant Minors and Long Island

BY ANDREA KECKLEY

Migrant minors sleep in a holding cell at Customs and Border Protection processing facility in Brownsville, Texas. Photo courtesy of Eric Gay/AP



How immigration is handled at the southern United States border can impact every corner of the country. Long Island was recently reminded of this.

The number of unaccompanied minors who entered the country illegally coming to Long Island fell from 1,800 in fiscal year 2017 to 830 in fiscal year 2018, according to a report by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). That's a 54 percent drop.

This shift comes as unaccompanied minors are spending more time in government shelters under the Trump administration's immigration policies.

One of those government shelters is the Syosset-based nonprofit, MercyFirst. When these minors are apprehended at the southern border, they are brought into federal custody. They are then sent to shelters like MercyFirst, which houses them and helps them find sponsors (often the child's relatives) in the U.S. with whom they can live.

Suffolk and Nassau are both among the top 10 U.S. counties where apprehended unaccompanied migrant children are placed to live with sponsors, according to the ORR. MercyFirst is the only place on Long Island that houses unaccompanied migrant children.

MercyFirst, which has a contract with the ORR, has seen for itself what sorts of obstacles can lengthen the resettlement process.

For instance, Gerard McCaffery, president and CEO of MercyFirst, estimates that about 95 percent of the children who come to the organization end up being sent to family members outside of Long Island. MercyFirst has taken in children whose families are as far away as Hawaii, McCaffery says.

"You would think the federal government, Office of Refugee Resettlement, would send kids to us who had family on Long Island," McCaffery says. "But that's not the case. So planning is not their forte when it comes to this stuff."

"Pretty much what the feds do is they look to see where there are open beds because kids have been discharged and how many kids they have and they say, 'MercyFirst, eight kids, you eight go to MercyFirst,'" McCaffery says. "It doesn't matter where they might end up."

"Part of it has to do with the shelter system," Dr. Nancy Hiemstra, an assistant professor at Stony Brook University, said. "It's just so maxed out and so stressed... so it doesn't really have anything to do with a smart geographic logic, it just has to do with where there is space for people."

The process of settling minors in with relatives was also slowed down when the federal government started requiring the shelters to do more extensive background checks before they could release a child to live with sponsors, which also lengthened the process.

Before the requirements were passed, MercyFirst would have to take steps to make sure that the people agreeing to house a child were who they said they were. This process can involve measures like taking fingerprints or visiting the homes of the people offering to take the child in.

In the springtime, the federal government started requiring places like MercyFirst to do background checks on anyone who lived in the same house or building of the family member.

"You can imagine there were a lot of people who were just like, 'I have nothing to do with this kid, I'm not getting fingerprinted, you're not going to do a background check on me,'" McCaffery said. "Most Americans would feel that way, nevermind somebody from another country who's a little suspicious about what your motives are."

When that happened, the average time kids spent at MercyFirst of four to six weeks turned

into three months, McCaffery said.

“Everyone just kind of melted back into the shadows again and it just made for extensive delays that were totally unnecessary,” McCaffery said.

The federal government has since pulled back on those requirements.

Immigration has been a large part of the current political conversation. Political attitudes towards immigration are rather mixed on Long Island, a place that varies both politically and demographically.

“It’s a huge mix,” says Hiemstra. “Long Island is one of the most segregated places in the country. I think support or not in immigrants really often goes by those racial lines.”

MercyFirst has received a lot of support and positivity from people, McCaffery says.

“I would say there’s a lot of mixed feelings on Long Island about this whole issue about immigration,” McCaffery says. “I think overall we’ve gotten a lot of support from people who understand what we’re trying to do and why.”

MercyFirst has been taking in unaccompanied migrant children as part of their START with Hope program since 2014.

“[The ORR is] very supportive of the work we do,” McCaffery says. “They came through with some additional money this year so that we can expand the health services we provide to kids, and do it better and more consistently.”

Many of these unaccompanied minors from Central America are fleeing issues like gang violence and drugs, according to MercyFirst’s website. McCaffery says he’s learned a lot more about why people come to the southern border of the U.S.

“You can’t ignore humanitarian crises in your neighbor’s country,” McCaffery said.

“For what these kids have been through and still to see them with the level of optimism and resilience is just pretty remarkable,” McCaffery said. “They want to fit in, they want to succeed, they want to get a good job, they want to have a family, they want to do what we all want to do.” ■



Photo courtesy of John Moore/Getty Images



Photo courtesy of Vice News

BUMPS

HOW TV NETWORKS FROM THE 1980S TO THE 2000S SHOWED THE CREATIVE POTENTIAL OF ON-AIR PROMOTIONS

BY LOUIS MARRONE

Being a younger kid between the late '90s and throughout most of the first decade of the 2000s, one of the things that's stuck with me the most is the television. Yeah, the shows were great, but what I'm talking about in this case is what came between the shows and the commercials. What I'm talking about are the on-air promotions. The very thing that tells you what your watching. Sometimes they're referred to as "bumpers" or "bumps". You may recognize them as the text that comes on screen before the commercials with a voice over that says "COMING UP NEXT..."

From their inception during the middle part of the 20th century, networks paid a decent amount of attention to the way that they presented themselves to the audience. The bumpers were seen as a way to get people in the mood for the entertainment they were about to watch. In a vague sense, they were like micro versions of a warm-up act at a live comedy event. This is something that would be kicked into overdrive in the 1980s, when networks such as Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network began crafting their promos to be more than just a promotional tool. They were used to create a persona around the network itself — to some extent, they even created a mini universe.

One of the best examples would arise in 2004, when Cartoon Network came out with their "CN City" campaign. The concept was simple. Various characters from the networks past and present, rendered in 2D, would interact with one another in the backdrop of a CGI metropolis. These promos ranged from short and sweet to extended and humorous. Even beforehand, going

back as far as 1999, Cartoon Network utilized programming blocks like Cartoon Cartoon Fridays to create a sense of fictional comradery amongst the cast of characters that they housed. Longer promotions also took form. A segment called "Toon Dating" featured Daphne from 'Scooby-Doo' and Johnny Bravo engaging in a "The Dating Game" parody. Another short would feature the "Scooby-Doo" gang in an eerie 'Blair Witch' parody.

Near identical methods have been used by Nickelodeon. For example, in 2002, the channel premiered the "Nicktoons Summer Beach House," a programming block where various Nickelodeon characters interacted with one another in a live action Beach House in Encino, California.

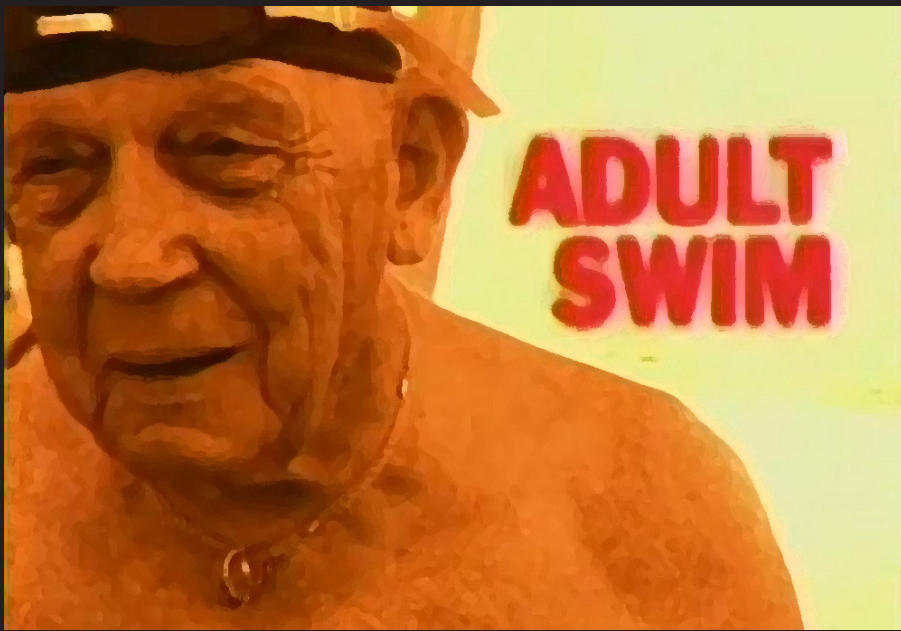
Sometimes you didn't even need to have characters or skits. Sometimes the more abstract, conceptual approach works, too. One of the places that did this best was Adult Swim. Recently, I came across a compilation of their old promotions that aired in 2002 and 2006. Though they change greatly in that four-year period, the general vibe is still there. For example, during the first two years of the programming block (2001-'03), the promos consisted of live action stock footage of senior citizens swimming in an indoor public pool. Over this, an off-screen lifeguard would yell out what shows were coming up next, as well as yell corrections at the elderly inhabitants. As time went on, they began to focus more heavily on using still imaging with obscure or alternative music layered over it, primarily from artists like Flying Lotus or the late Japanese producer, Nujabes.

The role of these strange on-air promotions are best explained in a 2015 FADER article by Matthew Trammel, in which Adult Swim Head of Program Development Walter Newman explains:

"The bumpers are the voice of the network, like your TV's talking to you," Walter explains. "We're not pandering, like, 'This is what young dudes like! Here's the hot chick! Here's the cool car!' We're just talking to them." For example, when a dusting of snow rendered Atlanta traffic immobile this past February, a bumper offered this first-hand account from the network's ATL headquarters: "Some of us got stuck in traffic, had a 13-hour drive that ended in gridlock, left our car on the side of the highway, and immediately peed in the snow, capping the night off by writing Prince's symbol in piss." Cue the cut to the yellow-trailed snow."

But the commercials for these channels shouldn't be left out, as they did similar tactics as well. For example, in 2000, Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network did a cross-promotion in which Edd from "Ed, Edd, n' Eddy" and Johnny Bravo infiltrate Nickelodeon to promote Cartoon Cartoon Fridays. The promo, written and produced by then Creative Director Steve Patrick, stylistically works in a similar method to the ways that their ads do.

Even aside from just entertaining, they served as a purpose to help promote smaller artists. Jason DeMarco is the Creative Director and Vice President of On-Air Content at Adult Swim. He's also the Co-Creator and Co-Head Writer for



Toonami, the anime centric block that airs on Cartoon Network/Adult Swim. In a 2017 Pitchfork interview, DeMarco says:

"It was a way to go to an independent label that normally wouldn't get this kind of exposure and money and offer them that in exchange for us being able to use their catalog on our air. Between that and me buying original music from people like Flying Lotus and Clams Casino, we developed our on-air feel."

For a while, DeMarco's twitter bio even exclaimed "Send me your music here and when I have time, I will listen." And that sentiment still remains to this day.

However in 2019, a lot of this seems to have dissipated. Not just from Adult Swim, or Cartoon Network or Nickelodeon, but from networks in general. In a time where corporate advertising seems to be getting more and more sterile, this is to be expected. Since the 1970's, corporate advertising has gotten progressively more and more standard and squeaky clean. The era of something like the famous "Whassaaaap?!" Budweiser ad has been swapped with montage footage of ripped bros partying and sipping tallboys in slow-mo while something like Rev-Theory plays in the background. The creative spark of something like the famous Snowman-kid Campbell's soup commercial have been swapped out in favor of disingenuous, pandering PSA's from companies like Gillette and IBM. Why is this the case? Who knows. Some could argue it's a matter of priorities and focus-group marketing morphing with the changing times. Others could argue that corporations have simply opted to choose a safer route to minimise any controversy. The safer and more algorithmically crafted, the better chance of someone being subconsciously hooked on said product.

Nevertheless, as a direct result of this dissipation of creativity, we get more standardized and more generic aesthetics amongst visual media. Things like this still live on the internet, and even then, you can find most of these aforementioned promos on sites like YouTube, but the creative potential is being squandered in real time. There used to be effort put into engaging with the audience and showing that the company itself gives a shit about those watching, and is willing to go the extra mile.

It's things like this that have also gotten lost with a lot of the current wave of more standardized programming. Even going back to the music-- how often do you watch a commercial where the music playing is the same pop tune or classic rock song that you've heard to death a thousand times over and under? At least with brands like Adult Swim-- even to this day-- they still try to maintain a certain artistic flair while also doing something to help the culture.

Eccentric television promos are something that helped you get in the mood for a show. They allowed you to get that ready-set-go feeling. They also helped you ease into the weirder programming. But they also created an interesting window into alternative art. They gave you something to look at. They maybe even helped turn you on to some new music. Maybe they even helped push someone's creative ambition up a notch. It's a shame that we don't really see as much of this anymore. It's a shame that eccentricity and creativity have been overshadowed by statistics and focus group testing. Hopefully networks are able to get back to their roots someday. ■



TORO Y MOI'S

OUTER PEACE

Being a freelance musician is a conundrum. You don't work for anyone, you make your own hours and you have a direct line to your audience.

But are you really that free? Yes, you have more agency than those signed to a coercive record label, but you aren't really in control of your work. Not having a record executive riding your back comes with the lightness of your creations. With a direct line to your audience through music streaming services, your work becomes transitory, zipping over people's heads because of algorithms and the endless sea of audio files. You have to really stand out to turn heads.

In an interview with NPR about his new album, *Outer Peace*, indie-electronic musician Toro y Moi said, "Technology is allowing people to become creative at home and become almost like entrepreneurs just from their desks, I felt like that's who I really wanted to connect with on this album."

On the new LP, Toro tackles this theme of musical entrepreneurship with a poised, realistic sense. Specifically, on the aptly named song "Freelance," Toro sings these lyrics in a listless manner:

*"Nothing's ever worse than work unnoticed
Freelance now, yeah, I guess you earned it"*

In this changing music industry, music sales don't bring in the same kind of revenue. And with increased accessibility to become a musician, a lot of work goes unnoticed. On the song "Freelance," with a bit of hope, Toro says:

*"I can't hear you, maybe you could change your tone
People tend to listen when they see your soul"*

This a double entendre, changing your tone means changing your musical style so people notice you, and we can only hope that people listen when they see genuine soul. That's not always true.

Toro y Moi has spoken on his shifting music identity a lot, and in many ways, one could gather that he's going through a drawn-out existential crisis. This is illustrative of the existential challenges of being a freelance artist. He is signed to a label called Carpark Records, which is a fairly liberal, independent label, and he also releases under his own label, Company Records. Each of his six

ARTISTIC INDEPENDENCE,
CAPITALISM
AND THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

BY TUHIN CHAKRABARTI

studio albums have a different sound. On *Outer Peace*, he challenged himself by trying to do something “forwardly pop,” and attempting to “do something fresh with it,” he told NPR. On “Who I Am” off of the LP, he expresses his struggles with musical identity. The playful, autotune soaked chorus states:

*“Add an accent to your sound
Now I don’t know who I am”*

Toro is talking about himself in the third person, expressing his struggle with finding a solid musical identity. The song itself is a bit of a departure from Toro’s usual style. Its strict adherence to a pop sound and structure illustrates this “accented sound.” How can you be yourself, staying true to an authentic and honest release formula, in a contorted music industry, where the goal of high album sales has been struck out by high streaming numbers? A piece about the changing music industry in *The Guardian* says that albums have “effectively become another piece of merchandise, like a concert T-shirt or a tour poster,” and that “bands don’t sell their music anymore: they sell themselves.” To be interesting in an ever-expanding sea of work, you must keep it fresh, present a new and exciting image, and transcend the algorithms so your music makes it to the top.

This kind of dynamic isn’t new, as musicians have always had to make it to the top percentiles to really be heard and make significant sums, it’s just exaggerated by the internet/technology saturating the music industry. One could argue that the industry will always be like this in a capitalist market economy. Competition drives the product, right? Well, Toro y Moi has more to say about this relationship between capitalism and musicianship. In “Ordinary Pleasure,” the second song on the LP, he plays on the “sex sells” quip that is so closely associated with capitalistic advertising and marketing. He says:

*“Does sex even sell anymore?
I feel like I’ve seen it all
Or maybe I’m just old
Or maybe I’m just bored”*


What Toro y Moi is bored of is the “culture industry.” In the 1940s, sociologists Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer identified a systematic, mechanized production of culture in America. In this late-capitalistic, post-war world, they saw culture as something sold to Americans in homogenized forms. They argued that whoever’s economic position in society was the highest, had a monopoly on the culture industry. In the U.S., the birth of radio created an explosion of new customers across the country with demands for what they wanted to hear and a few radio stations existed to satisfy their needs. This made a monopoly of standardized forms, complexes, and organization necessary in media distribution. The same can be said for Hollywood at the time as Europe gained an interest in American cinema. Since the standardized forms for music, talk radio and cinema

were tightly wound around the consumer’s needs, it created a self-perpetuating cycle between the customer and the media industry. In Adorno’s words, it is “a cycle of manipulation and retroactive need, unifying the system ever more tightly.” Examples of this need fulfillment cycle are visible in pop music and the film trends of Hollywood. All media industries reflect our cultural identity as well as shape them. How else do you explain nationwide trends? Adorno goes on to say that after the radio, everyone was “democratically and equally made into a listener, in order to be exposed, in authoritarian fashion, to the same programs put out by different stations.” Since the system is a tight circle, where our needs are fulfilled and cemented in homogeneity, Adorno says: “No mechanism of reply has been developed, and private transmissions are condemned to unfreedom. They confine themselves to the apocryphal sphere of ‘amateurs,’ who, in any case, are organized from above.” This means that our media consumption is so strongly organized by the corporate methodology that we have no individual autonomy when it comes to working for the industry, because it is solely for profit. Film, television and music industries write themselves off as art forms and now self-identify as businesses.

This explains the concept of the pop star, the concept of the movie star, and the concept of the rock star. Every notion of a “star” has a rigid mold, a concept attached to it. Even cultures that started as sub-cultures, that were so subterranean before the culture industry sniffed them out, now have an idealized form that industries take advantage of. When one thinks of a typical rapper, they picture gold chains, grills, an aggressive demeanor, usually black. When one thinks of a punk rocker, they think of torn clothing, messiness, sweat, a cigarette in mouth, and a general bohemian attitude. Spontaneity is discouraged in the culture industry. There are only pre-formed specializations that people will buy. This arid modern industry is the backdrop for Toro y Moi’s self-aware album.

Songs like “Freelance,” “Ordinary Pleasure,” and “Who I am” lyrically depict Toro’s struggles with the standardized music industry. He discusses how music is “always the same as always,” and how our interactions with the culture industry and its standardization is a “game that we play, where ‘no one’s safe.’” Sonically, the album is satirical. As he mentioned in interviews, he wanted to deliver a forwardly pop sound, which he did well. The album is bouncy and dancey, drawing inspirations from the simple grooves of Daft Punk. But lyrically, he’s trying to show us that the concept of identity in a somewhat dystopian musical landscape is not easy to cultivate. Yes, freelancing is something everyone can do, but as Adorno said, the “private transmissions,” or the amateur artist in modern terms, is rejected as banal for their amateurship when faced with the towering culture industry. It leaves a lot of independent artists confused when they get signed to labels, as they’re expected to fit a mold

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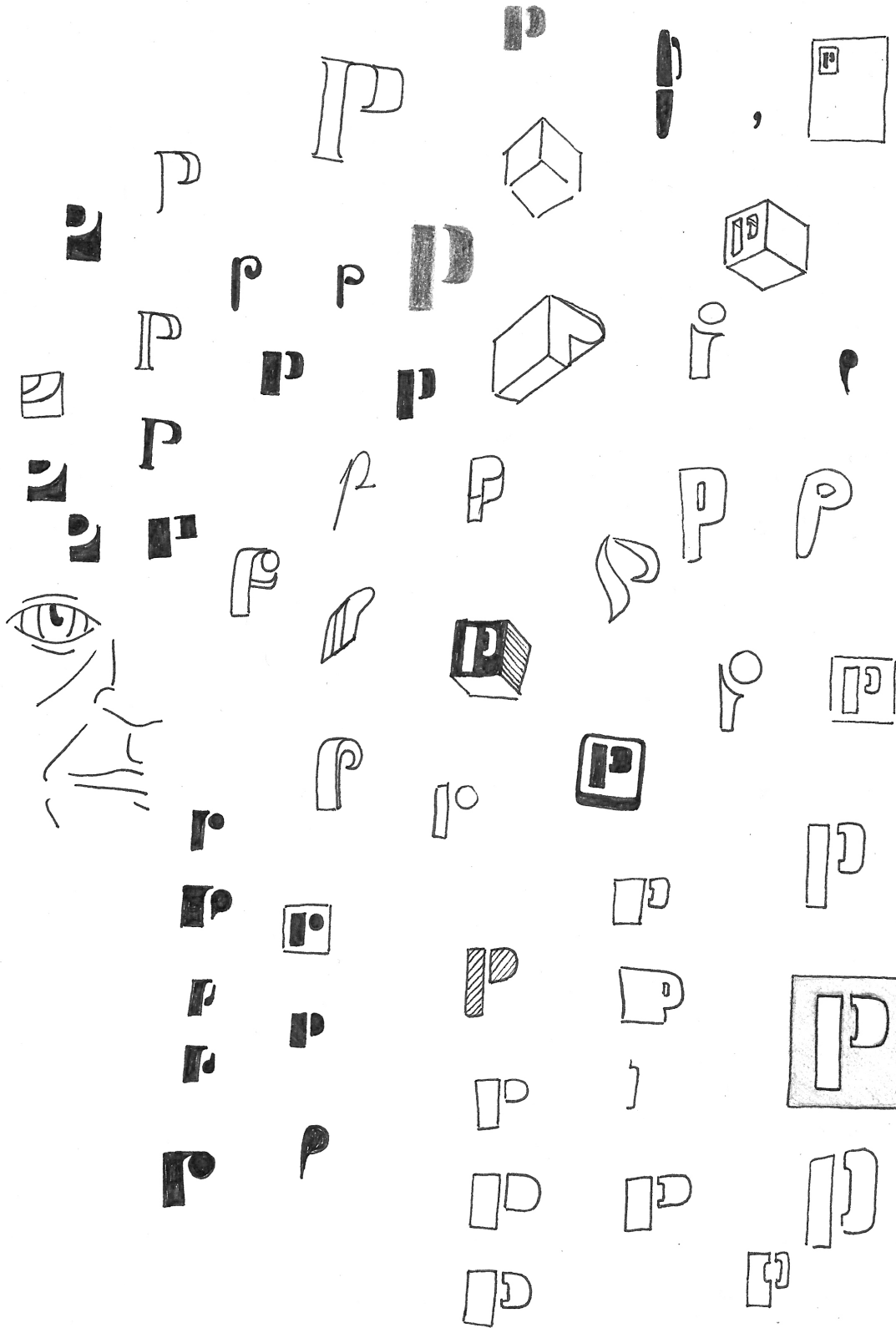
YOU HAVE TO FIND A
MIDDLE POINT WHERE
YOU'RE MAKING WHAT
YOU WANT TO MAKE,
AND MAKING WHAT
OTHERS WANT TO
HEAR.

that compartmentalizes their colorful individuality. It's a different landscape on the internet these days, but the work is the same. Spontaneity and independence are still discouraged and there's a formula for each music industry. Musical subcultures are defined by their niche audiences, and a niche audience doesn't mean you're going to make a lot of money.

In an interview with Complex News, Toro says that outer peace is best defined by the song "Who I Am," and as you can guess by the title, it has to do with identity. On this album, he is elucidating the vast and complex struggles of being a self-aware, young artist of the 21st century. His thesis, explained sonically and lyrically, is that the standardized nature of industries that represent the arts is tiring for the freelance artist. For the artist who is tied to his patrons directly, having to fit a mold and become an idealized cultural form is something to get used to. Many of us are tired of this model of industry. Many are fed up with having to turn themselves into a commodity for the labor market, and this is what musicians, independent or not, have to do to the max. Millennials and their successors are often called "the burnout generation" because of this. Having to constantly sell yourself is tiring. It adds an unwanted, cumbersome, new dimension to being an artist. It can strip away your authenticity. You have to find a middle point where you're making what you want to make, and making what others want to hear. Artistic independence is a nightmare as much as it is a dream. It's hard to know what to be for an audience expecting something performed. ■

Redesigning The Press

BY JOSH JOSEPH



Last fall, I was given the amazing opportunity to become the graphics editor for this magazine. Since then, I've been testing some new ideas for layouts and designs. With this issue, I think I've finally hit upon a consistent, flexible design that works across the entire magazine. I'm hoping that with this refresh, The Press can match the readability and style of any other magazine.

You might notice the new section footers and page numbers, or the squiggly lines between columns, or the slightly more manageable font size. These smaller changes add up to make an issue that's friendlier on the eyes and packs a ton of words into just 34 pages.

With the redesign, we're introducing our new logo, which, as you can see, was the result of endless brainstorming when I probably should have been doing something else. For a magazine that never had a true logo, the task of creating one, and distilling "The Press" into a single image, was a bit of a challenge. With time and further issues, I hope it'll come to symbolically represent what we do.

Of course, the experimentation isn't quite over. There's still a lot more to try, and a lot more room to grow. Original art is more present in this issue than any I've seen this school year, and I can't wait to see even more of it in the future. But I think that this issue lays a structural foundation for next year's volume, and hopefully beyond.

If you see anything you like about the visuals in this issue, please let us know. If you have suggestions for improvements, our door's always open.

I can't thank our wonderful team of editors enough for their support, suggestions and collaboration. I also want to thank you for reading along and being a great audience for what we work hard to create. I hope you enjoy this issue and everything it has to offer. ■

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The Press is located on the third floor of the SAC and is always looking for artists, writers, graphic designers, critics, photographers and creatives!

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