

Connecticut College

Digital Commons @ Connecticut College

2019-2020

Student Newspapers

11-19-2019

The College Voice, Vol. 43, no 5 [November 19, 2019]

Connecticut College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/ccnews_2019_2020

Recommended Citation

Connecticut College, "The College Voice, Vol. 43, no 5 [November 19, 2019]" (2019). *2019-2020*. 3.
https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/ccnews_2019_2020/3

This Newspaper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Newspapers at Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2019-2020 by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. For more information, please contact bpancier@conncoll.edu.
The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1977



Big Time Tommy: Creator of "Camp Conn" Music Video

JIMMY CORK
STAFF WRITER

Photo courtesy of Tommy Awender via YouTube

Hot off his production of the music video for the Connecticut College anthem "Camp Conn" by sophomore rapper Daniel Irizarry, aka Cryptic, I sat down with sophomore film major Tommy Awender to discuss his process behind making the video.

The "Camp Conn" music video has been out on YouTube for just over a week now. You directed and edited it.

Correct.

How are you feeling about the whole process, reflecting on it now?

First thing I would say about it is that it took forever.

When did you start working on it?

I DMed [Cryptic] last year when he released "No Kodacks," and I was like, "Yo would you want me to make a music video for you? Here's some of my stuff if you want to check it out." And he was already working on that music video and I didn't really talk to him after that. Then this fall, maybe late August/early September, he DMed me and said "Do you want to make a video for 'Camp Conn'" and I was like "Yeah, yeah, I'm down." I didn't really know how it was going to go. I think it's one of my better projects. I just wasn't expecting the video to turn out like that to be honest. I'm not really sure why.

Were you not expecting it to be as challenging as it was?

I wasn't expecting it to take as long as it did. When I originally

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

IN THIS ISSUE

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2019

NEWS

Shae Albertson illuminates the founding and mission of the new nonpartisan club Women in Politics on page 5.

NEWS

Hannah Noyes discusses the tragedy of the Keystone Pipeline leak in North Dakota on page 7.

OPINIONS

Sara Abbazia walks us through seniors' individual projects featured at the All-College Symposium on page 9.

ARTS

Eli Christopher critiques the newly released film *Harriet* in comparison to other films on page 11.

Why Connecticut College is Better than Harvard

At 5 am on a frigid Saturday morning, three other students from the German Club and I called an Uber to take us to the train station for our trip to Cambridge, Massachusetts. We wanted to catch the day's first panel discussion at the German-American Conference at Harvard University, held Nov. 1-3 at the sparkling Harvard Kennedy School. Once we found the building and checked in, I helped myself to a crimson pin featuring the crest of the conference, which combines the German and American flags. After meeting up with Professor Machtans and Professor Atherton, both associate professors of the German Studies department at Conn, we filed into a corner of the first floor sectioned off with curtains to listen to a panel on "Fighting the Climate Crisis" (featuring Luisa Neubauer, the 23-year-old head of Fridays for Future school strikes in Germany), and then another on Brexit (facilitated by a political correspondent of France for a German newspaper). After the second talk ended and we stood up to leave, one of my friends commented, "It was interesting, but I didn't learn anything new." Hearing adults lecture us about protesting and engaging in politics was unhelpful advice.

Harvard Kennedy School was overwhelmed with masses of young adults clad in black business attire, almost all of them conversing in German. I was reminded of the hyphenated title of the conference: German-American, with "German" coming first. I wondered just how many of its smiling participants also identified themselves in that way.

Just days later, I presented a talk on my own hyphenated German-American identity at Connecticut College's inaugural All-College Symposium on Nov. 7. As a scholar in CISLA, I'm writing an Honors Thesis on transnational identity as depicted in written and spoken narratives — specifically, how the memoir written by my grandfather about his immigration to the U.S. and the stories told by my parents have influenced my identity today. I gave a ten-minute talk that day like all of the seniors who are part of Centers and Pathways who presented their barrier-breaking projects to faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

The German-American Conference is organized by Harvard Kennedy School's graduate students, yet comprised of expert panel discussions and key-note speeches during three days. The All-College Symposium is organized by Assistant Dean of the College for Connections Libby Friedman, yet focuses entirely on students' research during an all-day event. Our projects are fulfilling Conn's Connections curriculum of synthesizing multiple viewpoints and coming up with breakthrough ideas to make an impact and inspire others, according to the Connecticut College website. The German-American Conference at Harvard exuded prestige and importance, and was targeted at young professionals. However, why did I feel uninspired?

It was only during the last lecture of the conference when we all felt the inspiration and thrill that comes after connecting seemingly scattered dots. In a lecture hall hidden on the second floor, a human rights activist and researcher from the University of Kassel and an associate professor of history from Indiana University spoke about "Colonial Legacies in the US and Germany." We listened, captivated. After the conference, it turned out that I learned the most from activists my age and university professors than politicians and CEOs who have to plan out the politics of every vague statement they make.

I'm not in a position to say what Harvard is really like, since I'm not a student there. But after attending the conference, I was reminded that it's the people, not the institution, which impacts the world. That which is said and by whom, instead of where.

Why travel two hours when one can find a great symposium at Conn? In this issue of *The College Voice*, Arts Editor Sara Abbazia comments further on the All-College Symposium. On the topic of intersectionality, Staff Writer Eli Chistopher comments on the legacy of American movies about enslavement in his review of the recently released film *Harriet*, while Contributing Writer Maggie McCutcheon advertises Conn's new Race and Ethnicity Concentration offered under the English major.

I'm grateful that Connecticut College is not a tourist trap where an image holds more value than revolutionary ideas. Just as resident rapper Cryptic aptly says it in his recent music video, "I feel like Conn need an anthem." This place is that special. •

— Sophia

THE COLLEGE VOICE

The views and opinions expressed in *The College Voice* are strictly those of student authors, and not of Connecticut College. All content and editorial decisions remain in the hands of the students; neither the College's administration nor its faculty exercise control over the content.

SOPHIA ANGELE-KUEHN '20

JOZETTE MOSES '21

Co-Editors-in-Chief

EDITORIAL BOARD

MILES HAMBERG '20

AMANDA SANDERS '22

News Editors

WILL CANELLAKIS '22

CAMERYN LESKO-JELLEY '22

Opinions Editors

SARA ABBAZIA '20

ELIZABETH BERRY '21

Arts Editors

MANAGING STAFF

GRACE AMATO '21

Managing Editor

JOSEPH WILLEN '22

Sports Editor

SOHAN MEWADA '22

Business Manager

SHAE ALBERTSON '21

Marketing Coordinator

LEELAH KLAUBER '22

Layout Designer

EMILY CHUN '21

ALEXIS HOWARD '22

Layout Team

CONTACT US

cic@thecollegevoice.org

270 Mohegan Avenue

New London, CT 06320

thecollegevoice.org

The College Voice on Facebook

@thecollegevoice on Twitter

The 45th School Shooting

WILL CANELLAKIS
OPINIONS EDITOR

A 16-year-old student arrived at his high school last Thursday, pulled out a handgun, and shot five students — killing two.

Grace Anne Muehlberger, 15, and Dominic Blackwell, 14, died at the hospital, authorities said. Of the other victims of the attack, the three teenagers are expected to survive.

According to authorities, the alleged shooter, Nathaniel Berhow, retrieved a .45-caliber pistol from his backpack in the quad of Saugus High School in Santa Clarita, California. After shooting five of his fellow students, Berhow turned the gun on himself. Once recovered, the gun was empty — the accused had shot every bullet from the semi-automatic handgun. He died at the hospital Friday.

In attempts to identify the motive behind the killings, authorities seem to be at a loss. In an interview with CNN's "New Day" morning show, Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva noted, "There's nothing really that stands out (with the suspect). He wasn't a loner. Wasn't socially awkward. Was involved in student activities. Student athlete. This is kind of out of the blue, shocking pretty much everyone who knew him."

Authorities have also been searching for a connection between Berhow and the victims to no avail. It seems that Berhow shot his fellow classmates indiscriminately and without apparent motive.

What are the implications of this?

In this past year alone, there have been 45 school shootings. Students from all around the country have pulled guns from their bags and shot their fellow classmates. While the archetypal shooter is one who was bullied, excluded, and socially ostracized, Berhow is the antithesis of this. He was an active member of the Saugus community and was well liked by his peers. Why did he decide to shoot five of them?

In America, gun use is protected under the Second Amendment. While gun control policies have been levied in response to these numerous shootings, obtaining a gun is still fairly easy.

As such, the real question isn't, "Why did Berhow commit the killings," rather, "What can we do, as Americans, to prevent future school shootings?"

In the last couple months, Walmart, known for its heavy gun sales, has decided to limit the selling of guns and ammunition. While still selling some, the store has decided to cut-back the selling of military-grade weapons. The store has also banned the open carry of guns while on its premises.

In theory, this should mitigate the pervasiveness of semi-automatic and automatic weapons; yet, Walmart is one store. Obtaining a semi-automatic is as easy as going to the next one.

What can you do?

It's simple: vote. Call your local representatives, your mayor, your senator. Pressure those in power to advocate for stricter gun control policies. The right to vote is a fundamental American right — do not squander it. Your voice carries power. Use it.

Now is not the time to sit on our hands and send "thoughts and prayers" to the victims' families. Now is the time to stand up and proclaim, "I've had enough." Now is the time to act.

Berhow was an active member of the campus community and he still decided violence was the answer. There is no archetypal shooter, there is no reason to this madness, we must put a stop to it. You have that power. Use it. •

Sports Spotlight

By EMILY CHUN

Featured Team: Men's Basketball

11/16 vs. Anna Maria W, 74-73

11/17 vs. Ramapo L, 74-55

Upcoming Events:

Nov. 20 vs. Roger Williams

Nov. 23 @ Clark University

Nov. 26 vs. CCNY

Coaching Staff:

Tim Sweeney, Head Coach

David Runcie, Assistant Coach

Corey Begly, Assistant Coach

Featured Team: Women's Basketball

11/16 @ Regis (Mass.) W, 77-58

11/17 @ Dean College W, 68-55

Upcoming Events:

Nov. 21 @ Roger Williams

Nov. 26 vs. FDU-Florham

Dec. 1 vs. Eastern Conn. St.

Coaching Staff:

Jackie Smith, Head Coach

Alyssa Reaves, Assistant Coach

Featured Team: Men's and Women's Squash

11/16 @ Amherst L, 9-0

Upcoming Events:

Nov. 23 @ Vassar

Nov. 23 vs. Haverford (at Poughkeepsie, NY)

Nov. 24 vs. Dickinson (at New Haven, CT)

Coaching Staff:

Michael MacDonald,

Head Coach

Featured Team: Men's Soccer

11/16 NCAA First Round vs. Catholic W, 2-1

11/17 NCAA Second Round vs. Johns Hopkins (at Catholic) W, 1-0

Coaching Staff:

Reuben Burk, Head Coach

Peter Carli, Assistant Coach



Photo courtesy of Mo White, Director of Athletics

High Crimes and Misdemeanors in the White House

MAX WHISNANT
STAFF WRITER

An article written in *The Guardian* asked, "Where is the steel?" Nearly 8,700 miles away from the White House, a young Prime Minister comforted her country, and by extension, the world, as it grappled with the Christchurch shooting. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern became an international symbol of courage overnight as she stood unwavering in the face of immense grief. She showed steel and courage. As the United States enters rarefied air with a newly opened impeachment inquiry, some individuals within our country's borders want to show the world what we're made of.

What Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi actually said was, "Mr. President, you have come into my wheelhouse." She might as well have replaced that with a quick "welcome to hell" when she announced a formal impeachment inquiry into the President of the United States and his accused pressuring of Ukraine to dig up dirt on Joe Biden and his son Hunter. President Trump may not realize it, but Nancy Pelosi and her Democrats have changed the game for the next 12 months.

Only two presidents in our nation's long history have reached the tipping point of "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors." Neither was removed from office, and few believe that that won't change this time. It is a one-sided issue, and yet, the President is out of his depth and he's floundering. On a daily basis, he rails against the inquiry. Gone are the days where Trump's Twitter could reorient the news cycle. He no longer controls the narrative.

The way it works is like this: Each of the six committees in the House of Representatives will continue separate investigations into the President. Their strongest cases will then be sent to the House Judiciary Committee. If the findings are found to be significant, then the entire House votes on whether or not to impeach the President. If they get the necessary 218 votes, the President is impeached and the articles of

impeachment move to the Senate where he is put on trial. Two-thirds of the Senate must vote to convict for him to be removed from office. Speaker Pelosi would not have moved forward with the proceedings without the 218 votes, but she and other Democrats know that removing the President is near impossible.

There are some Democrats in the Speaker's cohort who are more dead-set on seeing the President impeached than others. That being said, House Judiciary Committee chairman Jerry Nadler has taken a backseat to the more moderate Adam Schiff who chairs the House Intelligence Committee. Schiff's methodical approach lends more legitimacy to the inquiry than Nadler's more persistent and aggressive style.



Nancy Pelosi. Photo courtesy of NY Daily News

Speaker Pelosi believes that the path to our country's restoration lies not in Democrats retaking the White House or the Senate, or keeping the House of Representatives. We are past all that now, she says. It is, instead, a moral responsibility to impeach the President. In an interview with the Texas Tribune CEO Evan Smith, she said, "People say you have to take a political risk doing that. That doesn't matter."

Unfortunately, given the political climate, impeachment is a highly partisan issue. Democrats will build their case against the President and Republicans will resist. That much seems as inevitable as anything. According to a recent Gallup poll, only 6% of Republicans nationally think

the President should be impeached. In a recent House vote on the rules of impeachment, 194 of the 197 House Republicans voted "no." The three outliers did not vote. Former GOP member Justin Amash, who is now an independent, voted with Democrats. Nate Silver's *FiveThirtyEight* polling website released an article covering what it describes as the plethora of anti-Trump Republicans, saying, "you just have to know where to look." Those who appear anti-Trump include members of the media like Fox's Shepard Smith who recently resigned, members of Congress like Will Hurd (R-TX), conservative institutions like the Cato Institute, and even former cabinet members like former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. So, maybe Democrats stand a better

chance of removing the President than many of the pundits think.

A willingness to break from one's party is all it takes, says Republican consultant Mike Murphy. He wrote that if given the chance to vote anonymously, up to 30 Republican senators would vote to remove the President. The number is impossible to prove, but he makes an interesting argument that some political commentators think should be adopted: an anonymous vote. A 1999 *Harvard Crimson* article regarding the impeachment inquiry into Bill Clinton acknowledges that anonymous votes

are hardly unprecedented, even in the United States. Murphy wants the GOP to take a stand, writing, "It is a time for clarity, no matter the cost."

If the President is impeached, which is likely, he will almost certainly remain in office, but with a cloud over his head. As impeachment hearings begin, witnesses will testify to the best of their knowledge and Congress will hopefully perform their Constitutional duty with that information. The 2020 election will come and the American people will speak. But much of this is too early in the process to predict what will happen during elections. All we know now is that President Trump's time in office, however long that may be, will never be the same. •

Nonpartisan Club Illuminates Female Political Participation

SHAE ALBERTSON
MARKETING COORDINATOR

Leading up to the 2018 mid-term elections, women mobilized at unprecedented levels for representation in the United States Congress and at state and local governing levels. Women's political leadership has historically been limited. Nancy Pelosi achieved a milestone for women in American politics, now the highest-ranking elected woman in United States history serving as Democratic Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

Xia Morrison '21 and Nicole Caputo '21 saw a call for female leadership and political participation at Connecticut College. They initiated the club Women in Politics this semester. The duo had a partnership over two large projects for an International Humanitarian Law class at the end of their sophomore year that ultimately inspired their collaboration. "We ran the idea one day of running the Women in Politics Club and [Morrison]'s been at the front of all of this ... I'm just so happy to be along for the ride," Caputo said. Both women are extremely passionate about politics, the political progress, and activism, Caputo emphasized.

Having great female role models who "knew what they were doing when it came to women's rights and women's issues," Morrison approached Nicole Caputo about initiating the club on campus. They thought, "we should really do this, a lot of people will find it helpful." The two women were partners "for a particularly grueling mid-term," as Morrison recalled, and as both government students and women, found that the responsibility was theirs. Their advisor, Dr. Suttmon-Lea, has largely supported their creation of the club.

"We are both planning on attending law school, so deeply passionate about the crucial role that women play," Caputo stated. The pair ultimately saw in the creation of the club an existing double standard that women face when they attain higher roles and face resistance. As a space for the Conn community to celebrate advances, but also the multitude of change that is required, Caputo explained that when women have political responsibilities, "they are highly responsive to constituents concerns" and the result is the ability to "empower women but encourage them to participate."

After attending both Connecticut College Democrats Club and the Connecticut College Republicans and Conservatives Club, Morrison stated that she saw the need for a space where women specifically could convene and "to highlight that even though there are more women in politics than ever before in American history, we are still not there with full participation." The representation "needs to be acknowledged and put at the forefront of what we're looking at with laws, policies, and change," said Morrison.

After describing her experience as a congressional intern on the Hill, Morrison explained that the way in which members of her office conceptualized any legislative change profoundly inspired her. When encountering women's issues,

the approach was ultimately different because "any issue is a woman's issue, so you have to be a little more specific when you talk about it."

Across the board, the club has a membership of mostly first-years and sophomores. On the executive board, there are three juniors and two first-years. Morrison was elated when first-years and sophomores ran for the executive board and consistently attended meetings, establishing the club's "longevity to benefit future class years," stated Morrison. "Once Xia and I graduate, they will 100% continue on and continue to grow the club and engage with the community," Caputo added.

Across the political spectrum, the club is a non-partisan group. Morrison stated, "We were very up front with the fact that we wanted it to be a space for anyone who identifies any kind of way, as long as they support the mission to increase women's engagement in politics and civic engagement." Creating a club that specifically affiliated with one party or another would mean turning individuals away, and Morrison did not want that. While Morrison recalled that "Conn's campus is ideologically skewed to the left," she stated that the group has facilitated important dialogue in which everyone who comes to Women in Politics meetings is respectful and ready to hear what everyone has to say.

As their first event, Women in Politics — cosponsored with Greent Dot and the Office of Sexual Violence and Advocacy — held a film screening of the Anita Hill documentary *Anita* at the Womxn's Center.

The club also engaged in a CNN Democratic Debate watch party, in which there was a "good turnout," Morrison recalled. "We were interested in talking about how many women were on the stage... what their platform is, how they are different from one another, women and media," particularly as the media "treat us as monolithic, when that is entirely not true." Caputo explained that since there are no women running for the Republican party as of yet, the group has focused on democratic candidates for the 2020 presidential election. She stated that as soon as other women decide to announce their intent to run, they will focus on them as well.

The club has also held discussions on the treatment of women who have been scandalized, such as Katie Hill. Morrison explained that their conversation was centralized in "how her gender



Image courtesy of BBC News

might play into what people are criticizing her for and how we conceptualize that as women supporting women." Even if someone could have done something wrong, they still might not be treated fairly, Morrison asserted.

With 13 members on the roster, and nearly 30 members who have shown interest, Morrison explained that smaller groups who have attended meetings consistently bring different friends each time, or have had attendees that come to talk about a subject that particularly interested them.

Throughout the rest of the semester, the club is working on highlighting service events and establishing a presence in the New London community. For instance, Morrison stated that the club is hoping to work with the League of Women Voters of Connecticut in the area. While the club has reviewed the Democratic Debates, it will have screenings of the Republican Debates later in the year, as well.

The club will be partnering with CC Dems on Nov. 20 to watch the next Democratic Debate in partnership with REAL staff at the Walk-In Coffee Closet. After evaluating the attendance at both the CC Dems and Women in Politics watch parties following the last debate, Caputo explained that "both had a great turnout separately, and we thought it would be awesome to join forces and put on a great event." Caputo stated that there has been criticism following the debates regarding a lack of attention to women's health issues, and anticipates this being a part of the debate in which an open and productive discussion would follow amongst the club after.

The group has made strong connections in just its first two months as an active club on campus. For women interested in civic engagement and women's representation in politics, the club meets weekly at 7pm in Blaustein 209. "In a time when politics are so incredibly polarized, we cannot stress enough how much we welcome anyone who has a dedication to women's equal representation in government ... this is not a homogenous organization," Caputo concluded. •

New Race and Ethnicity Concentration in English Dept.

MAGGIE McCUTCHEON
CONTRIBUTOR

The Race and Ethnicity Concentration in the English department was introduced at Connecticut College in 2010 by former English professors Simon Hay and Courtney Baker. At the time the concentration was implemented, it was impossible to complete because the classes required were not offered at a high enough frequency, or at all: The required courses relied heavily on those offered by the Center for the Critical Study of Race and Ethnicity (CCRSE), while those from the English department were never offered due to miscommunication. As a result, in the first seven years since the concentration was offered, not a single student was able to concentrate on race and ethnicity through the English department.

I interviewed Jeff Strabone, an associate professor of English who offers classes on "African Novels" and "Race, Nation and Empires", as well as Hubert Cook, an assistant professor of English who specializes in, among other things, "African American and Caribbean Literature and Culture" and "Affect Studies", according to the Connecticut College website. I also spoke with Julie Rivkin, Chair of the English department, as well as a third professor specializing in American and contemporary literature. Professor Strabone and Professor Cook were both part of the subcommittee tasked with revising the concentration and renaming it Race, Power, and Difference. Although Professor Rivkin was not a part of this subcommittee, she was a part of approving the revisions alongside the rest of the English department. The concentration was recently approved as of Wednesday, Nov. 6.

When Professor Strabone arrived at Conn in 2012, not one student had enrolled in the concentration. In the fall of 2012, the concentration was revised by Professor Baker and Professor Strabone in an attempt to make it easier to complete. In the seven years since this revision process, only one student has completed the concentration. Professor Strabone pointed to the quick turnover of faculty members in the English department as an explanation for the large gap in time between the founding of the concentration and the ongoing revision to make it accessible to students.


I asked the professors if students would have been more interested in the concentration if it would have been revised sooner. There were varying

answers. It was not confirmed that there was a lack of interest among professors and students, but it is inferred, due to the inactivity surrounding the concentration. Professor Rivkin hopes that the faculty engagement and excitement surrounding the revised concentration will bolster student engagement as well, and attract students from outside departments. "We want students to know the English department offers a rich set of courses that take on critical race theory [and] that this is a place to study issues of race, power, and difference," explained Rivkin.

Professor Strabone agrees: "The English department's Race, Power, [and] Difference concentration coalesces faculty research interests in race, gender, queer theory, age studies, disability studies, empire, and other areas of power and difference for use on literary texts. For the concentration, students take courses that foreground race in literature all the while considering how forms of difference and power cut across or reinforce ideas of race." Professor Cook emphasized the importance of the skills embedded in the concentration and concepts discussed in the required classes, which will give students the ability to analyze and address the interactions concerning race and gender in their lives. He explained, "My hope for the concentration is that it distills methodologies that allow students to think about how race, power, and difference intersect, collide, derail and reinforce one another and to think about how that practice might help students think through things that happen in their daily lives."

Professor Rivkin described the evolution of the English department at Conn. Many institutions are moving away from English literature to explore literature in all contexts across the globe. This global study has inspired another concentration called World Literature, which was created by Assistant English Professor Marie Ostby who specializes in world literature, postcolonial literature, Middle Eastern studies, and gender studies. On Thursday, Nov. 14, an English department celebration was held in Coffee Grounds to unveil the two newly created and revised concentrations to students. Posters will be made to advertise the concentrations and inspire students to learn about these very important issues and concepts through their study of English. •

Honors Thesis? Independent Study? Major Project? We can help.

Librarians  research. Make an appointment for research help today.

<https://tinyurl.com/y9rpn9om>

INFORMATION SERVICES

The Inevitability of Pipeline Leaks

HANNAH NOYES
CONTRIBUTOR

Often times, when an important issue needs to be discussed and someone says “no one is talking about it,” Indigenous communities are, but no one is listening. For example, on Oct. 29 the Keystone Pipeline leaked 383,000 gallons of crude oil near the town of Edinburg, North Dakota. This spill is one of the largest to occur in the state, with the total amount of leaked oil amounting to that of half of an Olympic-size swimming pool. A mere two weeks after the leak occurred, the pipeline returned to service. The company in question, TC Energy (formerly known as TransCanada), said in a statement that the up-and-running pipeline will operate at “reduced pressure with a gradual increase in the volume of crude oil moving through the system.” This particular pipeline is designed to carry around 23 million gallons daily and is part of a system that is working to include the proposed “Keystone XL” pipeline that would transport oil from western Canada to terminals on the Gulf Coast). This spill did not take place along the controversial XL pipeline addition (which is still seeking approval), but on the already existing portion in North Dakota. Although Karl Rockeman, director of the state Department of Environmental Quality, stated that the spill had been contained and no water was affected, it still coated an estimated half-acre of wetland and does not take away from the frequency or severity of oil spills. This is the second major incident for the pipeline system in the last two years, accompanied by 407,000 gallons leaked in 2017, and 16,000 gallons leaked in both 2011 and 2016, according to *The New York Times*. The pipeline’s quick return to operation is concerning as the extent of damage and the official cause still remains unknown.

This pipeline has been the subject of many environmental protests. Its existence and further construction pose a threat to many animals and their habitats, the drinking water of nearby communities, and the sacred lands of Native American tribes. It could accelerate the release of greenhouse gases because more pipelines allow more crude oil to be extracted at faster rates, according to National Geographic. Recall the protests near the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in 2016 that were met with rubber bullets and tear gas from police in riot gear, resulting in hundreds arrested as well as injured. Native Americans have been at the forefront of this resistance, fighting to protect their land and voice warnings in regards to the inevitable spills that would take (and have taken) place alongside the continued construction, use, and expansion of the Keystone Pipeline.

As stated by Catherine Collentine, the associate director of the environmental organization Sierra Club in an interview with *The New York Times*, “it’s not a question of whether a pipeline will spill, but when”. The Keystone pipeline began official operations in 2010 and carries crude oil from Alberta, Canada to Texas. The XL extension is currently inching its way towards approval as members of Native American tribes work to prevent its construction. While former President Obama rejected the initial proposal in 2008, President Trump gave it the green light shortly after assuming the presidency.

Native American tribes filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration in 2018 in an attempt to invalidate the Keystone XL pipeline permit. Members of the Fort Belknap Indian Community of Montana and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe of South Dakota claim that there was no effort to study how the 1,200-mile pipeline project through their territories would affect their unique water system and sacred lands. According to court documents, “the proposed Pipeline will cross the ancestral lands, sacred sites, and historic sites of the tribes of Fort Belknap.” What’s more, there has been no analysis of the potential impact of spills on tribal citizens or their cultural sites, which is a violation of the National Environmental Policy Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act. The lawsuit pointed to the three previously mentioned instances of leaks in the pipeline system to highlight the dangers posed by contamination from a rupture or spill. Such voices of concern were ignored when the Nebraska Supreme Court approved the XL pipeline plan in August of 2019. Thankfully, as per *The New York Times*, their ruling is not the final word as a federal lawsuit is still at work in Montana in an attempt to prevent construction.

News of the recent spill circulated on social media, including various posts with “... and no one’s talking about it” tacked onto the end. Often times, when “no one is talking about it” Native American and Indigenous groups are, but no one is listening. The systematic expulsion of Indigenous communities from their lands is a historical process that continues today. This process functions by prioritizing the agendas of companies such as TC Energy at the expense of Indigenous voices and integral environmental systems on Native ancestral lands. Indigenous narratives are continually silenced in the name of allegedly essential infrastructure and development projects that only stand to serve the few and further marginalize the other. To protect Indigenous rights is to protect the environment; giving Indigenous people their land back is positive climate action. •

Study Abroad Profile

MORGAN MACCIONE
CONTRIBUTOR

Joanna Rucker '21 is an economics major and finance minor, as well as a scholar in the Goodwin-Niering Center for the Environment. This

semester she is studying abroad in Lima, Peru through the Study Away Teach Away (SATA) Program offered through Conn.

Can you tell me a bit about the program you are enrolled in?

So, I am in the SATA (Study Away Teach Away) program in Lima, which consists of ten Conn students and one Conn professor. I have two classes with the Conn professor, Professor Cruz-Saco, who is originally from Lima. SATA has a discipline of focus for this semester, which is economics, so I take two economics classes with Professor Cruz-Saco. I take classes at Universidad del Pacifico (UP), where there are about 150 international exchange students. UP has like 5,000 students total and is very business- and econ-focused. Each international exchange student is assigned a “buddy” who helps to guide the new students and organize cool stuff to do — like Latin dance lessons, a food tour, and a tour of Lima. My buddy was nice, but I only really saw her the first few weeks because she lives really far away.

How have you adjusted to life in Peru?

At first... it was a lot. It was scary and I didn’t know the people or the city, so it was hard to get around. Also, not being able to speak Spanish was a huge barrier. It is also weird living with a host family and having to adjust to a completely new culture. Now, I feel like I have adjusted. I think I might get “reverse culture shock” when I go back to the US.

How is it living with a host family?

It is a good experience, overall. My host parents speak only Spanish, so I am forced to practice [laughs]. But it has helped my language skills and encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone more than if I lived with the other exchange or abroad students. Oh! And my host mom makes me home-cooked meals!

Tell me about the food!

Peruvian dishes usually have meat — so it is hard to navigate as a vegetarian. My host family makes me Peruvian food, but with meat substitutes, which is great. And there are so many different restaurants in Lima. I wish I could try them all, but I don’t have time... or money. Trying the fruit here has been one of my favorite things, like granadilla, chirimoya, [and] lúcuma.

What is a typical day like? Is it similar to Conn at all?

My days are very different. Classes are three hours long here and only meet once a week!

It’s very different from Conn. There is a lot of time between when classes meet, so I feel like I forget things in the meantime, you know? The work is a lot more challenging than I was expecting. UP is a really good school — the average score on the first exam in my finance class was a 50%! It is normal and almost expected

Study Abroad Profile: Joanna Rucker '21 in Peru

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

that people will fail classes, which is totally different from Conn. And it is frustrating that my grades here count at Conn, because the other international students that are studying at UP just take their courses here as pass/fail for their home university. Anyway... when I am not in classes or doing work for my classes, I explore the city with my Peruvian man [laughs]. And on the weekends, I travel. It is nice being able to experience Peru, outside of Lima, while I am studying here.

Are you involved in extracurriculars at UP?

Yes! I joined — and compete for — the rock climbing team, which has allowed me to meet a lot of Peruvian students. My classes consist of mostly international students, so rock climbing gives me the opportunity to meet local people. And three times a week I take the bus alone just to go to yoga at a house in Lima. I like to stay active and these are good opportunities to get me out and keep me from just watching Netflix in my room.

What advice would you give to people preparing to go away?

If you are going to a country that doesn't speak English, then start learning the freaking language before going! I definitely wish I had taken Spanish classes before coming here. I think I would feel more comfortable. And less isolated. I have trouble keeping up when my Peruvian friends (or acquaintances) are having conversations in Spanish. They

will start to laugh and I'm not sure if I should laugh with them or not... I would tell people to do their best to not just hang out with other American students. I do end up speaking English when I am in class with other Americans and international students, which is unfortunate. You can learn so much about language and culture when you make friends with people from the area you are studying in.

Do you think that those "uncomfortable" situations are helping with your Spanish skills, though?

Yes, for sure. I still get nervous to speak Spanish, but I am getting much better at understanding Spanish compared to when I first got here. I have learned a lot more vocab, mostly in rock climbing and yoga practice. And my pronunciation is getting better, too... but it isn't quite perfect yet.

Is there anything you wish you had known prior to going away? Is there any way you could have been better prepared?

It goes by way quicker than you think. People say this, but I didn't really believe it. It's true! Like, before I left, I was very nervous about being away for four months, but it has gone by so fast. Also, like trying to figure out how to get a debit card without international fees. It is better to go to the ATM and take out a lot of cash — just a big chunk — than to use your card. It is something that I didn't consider and I wish I had known. It is a small way to help save money. Money goes quick. I am always eating out and traveling while I am here — oh my god — and Uber-ing. •

Anchors Away! Conn Coll Sailor Studies Abroad in Beijing

SARA ABBAZIA
ARTS EDITOR

Charlotte Williams '21 is a psychology major and CISLA scholar. She is also a member of Conn's sailing team. This semester, she is studying abroad in

Beijing under a language-intensive program.

What's been the best part about studying abroad?

I see the experience in two domains: personal growth and academic/learning growth. The best part of studying abroad in relation to my own life has been stepping out of my comfort zone. I've been trying not to say no to new experiences and as a result, have created lots of memories such as eating an animal stomach and dancing in a park in public. It's definitely given me confidence. In the realm of academics, it's been extremely rewarding to be improving my Chinese. I feel better about conversing with strangers, and my vocabulary is much more sophisticated!

How have your classes been?

I am studying at Associated Colleges in China, which is a language intensive program run by Hamilton College. The main component is a language pledge that requires us to only use Chinese at all times. Therefore, classes are taught in Chinese and the only subject is Chinese language. Class is 4 hours a day, each day equaling about a week of typical college language content. It was a huge shock at first. But our teachers are incredibly supportive and help us by understanding our strengths and weaknesses. So it's really the ideal environment for intensive language study.

What's one thing that's surprised or shocked you about your experience?

One of the biggest shocks has been the weather. I was under the impression that Beijing's smog problem was grave and I would be spending

a semester with grey skies, but it turns out that Beijing has lots of blue-sky days. These days are numbered now due to people beginning to use their heating systems that are coal-powered, but in general, apparently fall has the most clean air and comfortable temperatures! Another thing that shocked me is how college students live on my campus! Because the school has about 16,000 people, people live in dorms with up to eight people in bunk beds. Showers are communal and they have to travel outside and down the street to the showers. So a lot of students can be seen carrying their caddies and wearing pajamas. It's just a different lifestyle.

How is your abroad experience different from and/or similar to your time at Conn?

I'd describe my experience as very different from my life at Conn. At Conn, I have taken for granted the opportunity to easily participate in extracurriculars and lead a balanced life of studying and doing extracurriculars. Here, I've had a hard time striking a balance simply due to the workload. It's extremely tiring but looking back and seeing how I've improved is rewarding.

What's one thing you wish you had known before going abroad? What advice do you have for students wanting to study abroad?

Going abroad is undoubtedly an opportunity that if given the chance, I'd say you should jump on it. That being said, it's important to remember [that] it's an experience that is going to be uniquely yours. It might not always be fantastic and picture-perfect, but it's all in the package of going abroad. I have found myself trying to constantly remind myself that comparing my own experience to someone else's is not a good way to evaluate my experience. That's important to know and practice when going abroad in my opinion. •

Walking Through the Symposium with an Intersectional Lens

SARA ABBAZIA
ARTS EDITOR

On Thursday, Nov. 7, Connecticut College held its first All-College Symposium to celebrate the work the

senior class has done, either through a Center or an Integrative Pathway. From 9 am to 4 pm, students congregated in various academic buildings to share how they have put their liberal arts education into action. Amidst the photographers, cupcake displays, and Connections flyers, it was pretty easy to get caught up in the excitement of the day and forget about the individual presentations. Rather than focusing on the symposium holistically, I want to highlight a few presentations that our classmates have accomplished so as to honor the work they have done. As part of my Feminist Theory class, I visited four of my classmates' presentations to see how intersectionality comes into play within the liberal arts.

Em LaLiberte, a member of the Social Justice and Sustainability pathway, presented "Creation as Catharsis: An Exploration of Zines." As described on LaLiberte's poster, a zine is a "small-circulation self-published work ... usually reproduced via photocopier." When I asked LaLiberte about the history of zines, they told me that zines have been used for centuries (as far back as slavery) to spread information among marginalized communities. Zines are a great way to publish information without needing to conform to the desires of a publisher, and their concise, easy-to-read format makes them accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds. LaLiberte provided some of their own zines, which covered topics such as LGBTQIA terminology and sex workers. As LaLiberte states on their poster, "the zine format is an easy, accessible way to share information, ideas, and art, as well as flex creative muscles!"

I also learned a lot about the opioid epidemic from Emma Guntheinz, who is a Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy scholar. Her presentation, entitled, "Opioid Dependence in Pregnant Women: A Neurological, Socioeconomic, and Policy-Based Approach," explored how particular programs can better support pregnant women who are addicted to opioids. She noted that sex as a biological variable directly impacts how a person reacts to Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). However, most research on OUD focuses almost entirely on male bodies, which is problematic because female bodies tend to react differently to opioids than male bodies. In general, women with OUD tend to relapse more frequently because they experience more intense withdrawal symptoms. Additionally, there is a lack of gender-specific care at treatment facilities, as only 19 states have funded treatment programs specifically for women. Guntheinz's Holleran project focuses on the ways that legislation and facilities can improve pregnant women's access to treatment in these kinds of facilities.

Tyla Alexander, a member of the Bodies and Embodiment pathway, explored race and gender in "The Politics of Black Women's Fashion." Using her background in Sociology, Gender and Women's Studies, and Africana Studies, Alexander examined how black women's bodies are policed and the ways these women can empower themselves through fashion. Alexander presented a fashion diary that documented various looks inspired by African and African-American culture. She noted the way that these brightly colored outfits and natural hair styles made her feel more confident, as they embraced "the royalty and power of black women." Towards the end of the presentation, Tyla presented a poem entitled "Sometimes I Forget." The work talked about the importance of self-love for black women, as many societal forces work to limit their empowerment. Ultimately, Tyla's project demonstrated how fashion allows black women to reclaim authority over their own bodies.

The last member of my Feminist Theory course who presented was Tessa Reagan. Reagan is also part of the Bodies and Embodiment pathway, and



Photo courtesy of the Connecticut College Website

her presentation was titled "Control, Resistance, and Womxn's Bodies." Reagan's project focused on various artistic endeavors that represented themes of body image and self-surveillance. She used these ideas to create an empowerment curriculum at Camp Rim Rock, an all-girls summer camp in West Virginia. Her campers completed a total of three art projects: one focused on body image expectations (as demonstrated by strict dress codes, for example), another focused on the impact of media on body image, and the final project illuminated positive female role models. Reagan will present her research at the American Camp Association in San Francisco to report on why these activities are vital for young girls' development.

There were many more presentations that I visited throughout the day that I believe deserve to be mentioned here. Marissa Domantay's project on Intersectionality deeply affected me, especially after I read through the creative writing pieces featured in her project. Specifically, Nifemi Olugbemiga's heart-wrenchingly beautiful poetry on being a black woman on campus made me rethink every instance that a black or brown person has been featured for the college's benefit, whether through an advertisement or as a selected speaker. Sophia Angele-Kuehn, Co-Editor-in-Chief of *The College Voice*, told the wondrous story of how she was inspired to write a memoir for her CISLA SIP. After finding her grandfather's book in Shain Library one day about his life growing up half-Jewish in Nazi Germany, she learned that there was so much more to her heritage than she had previously known about.

So many more projects and presentations from the symposium demonstrated how our education here at Conn can help us achieve long-lasting change. Although sometimes you may feel that your work here is futile, these presentations are a reminder that what we learn and accomplish here will help us in the long run. Whenever you start to feel like a walking advertisement for the College, remember that you are so much more than an Instagram post, website background, or a clip in a promotional video. Your intellectual work matters, and should be valued regardless of whether it can bring in more donors or applicants. •

Big Time Tommy: Creator of "Camp Conn" Music Video

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

talked to [Cryptic], we had originally planned to have it out by early or mid-October. So it really took from late August/early September to when it was released last week [on Nov. 1].

So what were some of the things that led to it taking as long as it did?

There were delays in when we could shoot. Some of the scenes we shot were done through the liberty of other people. For example, the scenes where it looked like a party. That was made happen by other people so, shout out to them. Shout out to Danny [Aschale '20] for making that happen. It just took a while to coordinate all the shots, kinda figure out what we're really doing. And it also just took forever to edit. Obviously, there's a lot of effects, color grading, quick cutting. It just took me a while to make it what it is. I probably could have released it three weeks ago. It just wasn't where I wanted it to be.

So you mentioned the party sections of the video — was it challenging to find a place where you could shoot the video?

Yeah, and it wasn't even just that, it was also difficult to actually shoot it. I was nervous shooting it for many reasons, one being I didn't want to ruin my equipment. It was also just difficult to shoot in the space we were in. It was really tight. There were a lot of people there.

Was the task of choosing locations and getting people to be in the video all on you?

That was all [Cryptic]. If you would assign roles in credits, I was the director, editor, cinematographer, that kind of stuff. He put together all the shoots, he was the one who talked to people. I didn't do any of that. We did collaborate on where we would shoot and the kind of style we were going for.

Were you only using your gear?

Yeah.

So you have a fair amount at your disposal.

I mean I guess. I used a Canon 5D Mark IV. I used a 24-70 F2.8 lens. I used a 50mm 1.8. I used a DJI Ronin S [(a gimbal stabilizer)] with some accessories like an external monitor and a handlebar. So, when you were making this video, was there kind of a conscious effort to really make THE Connecticut College video? As in a video that someone with no outside knowledge of Connecticut College could watch and gain an impression of what the school is like?

That's kind of a complicated question. I would say that initially that was not the goal. I'm not going to put words in [Cryptic]'s mouth but my understanding of it was that he was trying to make a song about Conn for students to listen to and enjoy and just kind of feel that school spirit. But I think once we started to realize that this video could be pretty special, it kind of became about really making it as good as possible for a larger audience. We did have a couple discussions in terms of what light does this paint the school [in]. Is this going to be good for the school? Is it unique about Connecticut College? The way we responded to that was to say that it is unique about Conn. There are things about the song that are uniquely Con-

necticut College. Obviously, the video has Connecticut College in it. It's not really just about Conn though. I think it shows a little bit more, that students that go here can produce something like that. **Have you gotten any reactions to the video, on either the positive or negative front, that have impacted you in any way?**

Well, I'm going to be honest, I haven't heard any negative feedback. Nobody's told me they didn't like it. In terms of impact, I wasn't expecting the video to receive the amount of praise that it got. I knew it was going to be one of my better works once I realized it actually could be pretty good, but I wasn't really expecting the level of praise. People that I don't really talk to that often, talking to me about it, saying how much they liked it.

Do you think there are future Cryptic collaborations in the works?

Yeah, we've talked about it a little bit. I don't really have too much to add on to that. I think there might be.

Anything else you want to touch on?

I am thinking about submitting the video to some film festivals. I'm not really sure which ones yet. Just kind of an idea right now.

You can find the "Camp Conn" music video on YouTube under the channel "Thomas Awender". •



Tommy Awender. Photo courtesy of Long Ta

An Attempt at Honoring Harriet Tubman's Bravery

ELI CHRISTOPHER
STAFF WRITER

In 1993, Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* was released in theaters.

Almost immediately, it was hailed for being both a cinematic achievement as well as bringing a new, deeply harrowing and profound artistic perspective to the Holocaust that had never been seen before, particularly by mainstream audiences. In 1998, Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful* was released in America, and received its fair share of praise, but also an onslaught of criticism for its, shall we say, "cavalier" attitude about its subject matter. Simply put, *Life is Beautiful* would still have received a lot of criticism, but not nearly as much had *Schindler's List* not been released a few years beforehand.

Life is Beautiful is the first movie that 2019's *Harriet* reminded me of. Admittedly, this is not an entirely fair comparison. I think *Harriet* is underwhelming, but not insultingly bad like *Life is Beautiful*. However, they both had the misfortune of being made after far superior films with similar topics. Steve McQueen's *12 Years a Slave* (2013) is not only one of the decade's best movies, but also the closest thing to *Schindler's List* since 1993. Both its achievements as a movie, as well as its revolutionary representation of the subject matter in such a personal, brutal manner makes it nearly insurmountable for any film about slavery that comes after. Post *12 Years a Slave*, movies like *Harriet* don't cut it anymore.

Let's start with what actually works.

To *Harriet's* credit, the main thing that works about the movie is, well, Harriet. Cynthia Erivo turns in a strong performance as the titular character. And unlike with Roberto Benigni, hearing the terms "Cynthia Erivo" and "Oscar" in the same sentence doesn't make me want to break everything in my home. I found that her performance was very well done, and never for a moment did I doubt her motivations, or even her unique "visions." Yes, Harriet Tubman did in fact have visions, and I thought the way the film portrayed them was fine. The movie is assisted by the fact that its basic subject matter is inherently compelling. The escape/journey sequences are well-paced and enthralling, and obviously make for incredibly sympathetic character moments. The technical components of the film were decent enough. The production and costume design were convincing, and the cinematography was pretty good, too. One sequence in particular where Harriet first reaches freedom (don't worry about spoilers, this is at the end of the first act) was not only moving, but also shared some nice iconogra-



Image courtesy of Focus Features

phy with *The Sound of Music* (1965).

However, as I stated earlier, there was quite a bit that could have been improved, so let's head into what didn't work for me.

As stated, Erivo is the best thing about this movie, and the further the plot strays from Harriet, the further the film as a whole strays from being watchable. Actors like Vondie Curtis Hall and Leslie Odom Jr. turn in pretty good performances (as I'm sure *Hamilton* fans aren't surprised with), but Janelle Monáe comes across as fairly one-note for most of her scenes. Movies like *Hidden Figures* (2016) and *Moonlight* (2016) prove that she can do much better. The rest of the supporting cast isn't much better. In fact, at some moments, I found the villains laughable.

Look, I'm the last guy to come to if you're looking for astute insight on a film's racial politics or it's ethnic representation, so when even I pick up on something, you know that it must be pretty blatant. The film for the most part does a good job of not delving into Hollywood tropes of white-saviorism, but there is one brief scene near the end of the film that made me roll my eyes.

The script also suffers from being both a bit of a cookie-cutter biopic, as well as having some problems with the "show, don't tell" rule. Near the end of the film, there's a pretty on-the-nose monologue from Harriet to one of the villains about how slavery is evil. I don't know how many people that are pro-slavery are going to watch a movie about Harriet Tubman, but after watching almost two hours with enough visible material to show anyone with a brain that slavery is the worst thing in

American History, I don't think this ham-fisted, redundant monologue is going to be the thing that sways them.

The second movie that *Harriet* reminded me of was 2013's *Unbroken*. *Unbroken* details the life of Veteran Louis Zamperini. In short, Zamperini's life is extraordinary and could fit several movies within it. The movie attempted to depict his life as an Olympian by highlighting his time in the military, being lost at sea, and being a POW in a Japanese prison camp.

In comparison, Harriet Tubman's life is incredibly captivating and ridiculously eventful. By the time the end of the film rolls around, the movie starts writing about the rest of her life on screen, which made me wonder: "Why do I not get to see any of this cool stuff?" To elaborate, the film's final moments allude to Tubman's future as a spy, and it comes across as almost dismissive. There's an entire other movie in that premise that we never get to see.

Harriet is not a bad film. It's a mixed bag with good intentions that more than anything left me a little disappointed. Harriet Tubman is one of America's most pivotal, and frankly bad-ass, figures. I can't help but feel her story deserves more than what we got. This movie tragically seems doomed to play in the background of eighth grade history class so the substitute teacher doesn't have to do anything. Hopefully in ten years we get an HBO or Netflix mini-series giving her story the time and detail it needs. Maybe something like *The Crown*, with an older Harriet, played by Viola Davis, recounting her younger self, played by Lupita Nyong'o. But c'mon, we could only be so lucky. •

After Watching "After", am I Doing College Wrong?

ELIZABETH BERRY
ARTS EDITOR

Disclaimer: Contains Spoilers

On a particularly dull Thursday evening, my friend and I watched yet another romantic drama on Netflix. For some reason we thought *After* (2019) directed by Jenny Gage would be different, but yet again we set our expectations too high.

After was originally posted to *Wattpad*, an online platform for writers to post their work, in 2013 by Anna Todd as fanfiction. The story follows college freshmen Tessa Young who becomes consumed in a wild romance with a fictional Harry Styles (Hardin Scott in the film), who is essentially an e-boy. Todd has published three more novels since the first novel: *After We Collided*, *After We Fell*, *After Ever Happy*, and *Before*.

After blew up on *Wattpad* and the story eventually became a *New York Times* Best Seller. The movie was a hit in the box office and a sequel is already in the works. But don't be fooled by the \$69.5 billion the movie made at the worldwide box office — *After* is just another cringey drama that uses college stereotypes as characters and fills in potholes with poor acting and more clichés. After all (haha get it?), the Tomatometer on *Rotten Tomatoes* gave the film a 17% rating. If that isn't a sign of a wasted night, I don't know what is.

In the film adaptation, Josephine Langford plays Tessa Young and Hero Fiennes Tiffin plays Hardin Scott. Fun fact: Tiffin played 11-year-old Tom Riddle in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (he peaked as young Lord Voldermoert). While some viewers praise Langford's portrayal of Tessa, this isn't enough to warrant wasting an hour and forty-six minutes of your life. While I can relate to being a naive first-year, embarrassed by your mom who you have to convince not to report your roommate's illegal hobbies, Langford's acting and Tessa's character bring nothing new to the romantic drama genre. After all (help, I can't stop!), the innocent-studious-girl turned-bad-girl saving the hot, emo-boy with various tattoos of various "deep" meanings trope becomes old. The film is basically a long strand of clichés strung together like a gold, crystal flower necklace you bought from Forever 21 for \$7.50 (you know which one I am talking about).

Tessa arrives at some random university as an economics major who spends hours cramming in the library while her roommate Steph (Khadijha Red Thunder) attends parties and vapes with her girlfriend, Tristan (Pia Mia). Although Steph and Tristan's relationship break the heteronormative status quo of the film, the rest of the relationships in the movie are straight.

Upon returning from the shower one morning, Tessa finds Hardin lying on her bed reading her copy of *The Great Gatsby*. Instead of screaming like a normal human being, Tessa suavely kicks Hardin out and informs him that *The Great Gatsby* is not a dream, but a lie. Oh, I did I mention that Tessa loves to read? You probably already guessed that. This conversation is actually the one moment in the film that I give the writers some credit for because it serves as foreshadowing. We later find out that there is a lie brewing between the two protagonists, but we will come back to that later.

Naturally, Steph convinces Tessa to come to a typical college party with

drinking games and couples making out on kitchen counters. Tessa sports a conservative red lace dress that pins her as a pure 18-year-old. After this party, Hardin begins to woo Tessa, bringing her to his favorite spot on a dock by a lake (a normal human being would be skeptical of going to an isolated place with a boy they do not know). They go skinny dipping (as one does) and eventually kiss, which is unfortunate since Tessa has a boyfriend back home named Noah (Dyland Arnold). Tessa's two worlds begin to collide and she ultimately chooses bad boy Hardin over good boy Noah, but this decision was made five seconds into the movie.

As the film continues, we begin to learn more about Hardin and why he has such a hard soul (more puns). He does not get along with his father Chancellor Ken Scott (Peter Gallagher), but we already saw these daddy issues five scenes ago. Tessa and Hardin attend the Chancellor's wedding to Landon's mother, Karen (Jennifer Beals). Landon (Shane Paul McGhie), who Tessa befriended in

her first ever college class, warns Tessa about the darker demons Hardin deals with. He is also the black friend that the film cast to bring more diversity to this very white, very privileged, very status-quo story.

Tessa, of course, wants to save Hardin. She moves in with him to a very nice apartment, which he happens to be house sitting for a professor. Need I remind you that this is a very unrealistic portrayal of college dorm life. Tessa now wears eyeliner, baggy concert t-shirts, and reads classic novels because she is thinking of majoring in English instead of econ (basically, she is a VSCO girl).

At this point, things start to get crazy. Warning: spoilers ahead (but also, were you going to watch the movie anyway?). We find out that at the first party, Hardin made a bet with his friends that he could make Tessa fall in love with him and then be able to turn off his feelings with

a snap of his fingers. I will admit that I did not see this coming, but then again I was angry that Todd stole a huge plot point of one of my favorite romantic comedies *She's All That* (2013). Hardin, of course, ends up falling in love with Tessa and cannot turn off his feelings as fast as he originally thought. After finding out about the bet, Tessa returns home to the arms of her mother Carol Young (Selma Blair) who warned her of the perils of falling for the bad boy.

After finals, Tessa's English professor hands her Hardin's final paper which the professor explains was written more for Tessa than for her. Tessa reads this very short, very cliché, very B-worthy essay, and then goes to Hardin's spot by the lake. Tessa finds herself back in the vicinity of Hardin because how else was this movie going to end.

This is my long-winded way of saying that *After* is not worth your time. It is just another *The Kissing Booth* (2018), which was also a *Wattpad* story. *After* depicts the college-experience in such a stereotypical way that paints college girls as more focused on sad boy Chad or Blake than on their econ homework. I am not denying that students change, experiment, and go to parties while at college, but instead of explaining this arc in a new way, *After* falls victim to the typical college trope of love-stories and raves. If, however, you want to laugh away the constant stress that is the real college experience, watch *After* and analyze it like your liberal arts education depends on it. •



Photo courtesy of Voltage Pictures