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# THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1977

## Out of Context: Controversy Around Grande's New Single "7 Rings"

GRACE AMATO  
ARTS EDITOR

Ariana Grande's latest single "7 Rings" ranked her alongside pop stars Britney Spears and Mariah Carey as the only female artists to have multiple No. 1 songs on the Hot 100 from the same album, along with other accomplishments. Among the accomplishments and success, though, came controversy. Soon after Grande released her new single, Princess Nokia -- a Latina rapper gaining popularity -- posted a video on her Instagram story implying that Grande had stolen her lyrics and flow as she played "7 Rings." Nokia wrote, "Does that sound familiar to you?" She goes on to say "Ain't that the little song I made about brown women and their hair? Hmm... sounds about white." Her accusation is loaded -- not only does she imply that Ariana Grande's new song copied her song "Mine," off her 2017 album "1992 Deluxe," but also implies that Grande's use of the lyrics around buying hair appropriates the experience of Black and Brown women in America.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## Relocation of Career Services

JACEE COX  
NEWS EDITOR



Vinal Cottage. Image courtesy of author

The College is currently preparing to begin construction on the relocation of the Office of Career and Professional Development to the first floor of Fanning. According to Vice President for Finance and Administration Rich Madonna, the project is in the planning phase at the moment, but "the project itself has been a priority and it's listed in the Strategic Plan" as taking "steps to relocate career office to central campus."

Several years ago, a 20 million gift was given to the College with money allocated for the Office of Career and Professional Development. The school is "trying to work within a 2 million budget on the career aspect," Madonna claims.

Career services are currently housed in Vinal Cottage, across Mohegan Avenue. There is an additional satellite location in Main Street West, which is in the upper level of the Plex outside of the Harris Atrium. This space is primarily used for drop-in hours.

Persephone Hall, who has served for two-and-a-half years as the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## Breaking: Members of the Ultimate Team Charged as a Result of Hazing

SAADYA CHEVAN  
MANAGING EDITOR

Last Friday, around 40 members of the temporarily suspended ultimate frisbee team were charged by Senior Associate Dean of Student Life Sarah Cardwell with various failure to act with regards to hazing, paraphernalia and underage drinking-related offenses according to multiple students interviewed by the *Voice*. The charges were issued as a result of a hazing-investigation begun by employees of the Student Life Division into the team last December. These students will face disciplinary hearings through the Dean's Grievance process, the process through which all hazing related incidents are adjudicated, in the coming weeks. Hazing-related offenses can result in penalties for students as severe as expulsion or disciplinary probation level II. A member of the team in their first year who was granted amnesty by administrators in exchange for cooperation in the investigation told the *Voice*: "Never at any point did I experience hazing or see it happen.... Any team event was totally optional, there were no consequences if you didn't show up to things." In an email Cardwell did not confirm or deny the charges' existence stating that the Division "does not comment on matters of student conduct due to privacy requirements." This is a developing story, and *The College Voice* will provide updates on its website [thecollegevoice.org](http://thecollegevoice.org) as we learn more. •

Max Amar-Olkus and Jozette Moses contributed reporting to this article.

### IN THIS ISSUE

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2019

#### NEWS

Sam Crockford investigates the viral outrage that occurred after a Housefellow's firing on page 5.

#### OPINIONS

Cameryn Lesko-Jelley begins her Senior Spotlight series by interviewing the minds behind 360 Storytelling on page 9.

#### OPINIONS

Amanda Sanders asks you to reconsider buying Apple AirPods on page 8.

#### ARTS

Fiona Hull breaks down the 2019 Oscar Nominees on page 15.

## From the Editor

In November 2018, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced proposed rule changes specifying how educational institutions that receive federal funding must address claims of gender-based violence, harassment and discrimination in line with Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972. For colleges, the proposed changes will govern how institutions adjudicate student disciplinary cases involving sexual harassment, assault and relationship abuse. Ms. DeVos is right to assert that there are problems with the current system, but her proposed revisions to Title IX regulations will create additional, unnecessary barriers for students seeking to report legitimate allegations of sexual misconduct.

The Obama-era guidelines for Title IX compliance came under fire from some legal scholars during their rollout, and the DeVos guidelines do make some needed improvements. For example, under the proposed DeVos guidelines, schools must now hold a live hearing before issuing judgments on sexual assault cases. Currently, many schools—especially those that use an investigator-only model—dispense with these hearings. Under this model, a case investigator also serves as the adjudicator. While the investigator-only model may be cost efficient for schools, it can prevent involved parties from contesting the evidence and any bias that the investigator may have demonstrated. The new regulations would require that the person who investigates the facts be different from the person who ultimately decides the case.

It is troublingly that the DeVos proposal in its current form guarantees those accused of sexual misconduct the right to cross-examine their accuser. Although her guidelines prohibit personal confrontations between involved parties, this requirement could discourage survivors of sexual assault from sharing their stories. The Department of Education should study and determine other, less potentially traumatizing and intrusive means by which the accused can adequately defend him or herself.

DeVos's rule changes would also rescind the requirement that schools respond to allegations of sexual misconduct that occur outside of their educational programs or activities. This mandate is problematic precisely because many students don't live in school dorms, and many alleged sexual assaults happen in off campus residences. Similarly, the new regulations soften institutional liability by specifying that schools be in violation of Title IX only if they have actual knowledge of sexual-misconduct allegations and are deliberately indifferent to them.

We at the *Voice* are concerned with many of these proposed Title IX changes—and the potential for the spread of misinformation about policy as the Department of Education finalizes its Title IX policy. *Vox* reports that some schools are already changing their policies in anticipation of the implementation of Department of Education rules. We applaud Connecticut College for providing public forums specifically focused on addressing and understanding the DeVos guidelines. Open lines of communication between the Conn administration and students are essential to discerning how policy changes impact our campus population. To that end, this issue of the *Voice* offers articles that grapple with the personal testimony of sexual assault survivors and that comment on the merits of Title IX guidelines. We urge members of our community with opinions about these proposed rules to submit a public comment at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) expressing their views on the proposal. The public comment period is open through Jan. 28, but this deadline has been extended to a yet-to-be-announced date.

-Dana

## 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.

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## Community Bulletin

### 39th House District candidates to face off in two debates

Candidates vying to represent the 39th House District, contained entirely within New London, will face off on Feb. 20 in the auditorium of the New London Science & Technical High School. The candidates are two Board of Education members — Jason Catala, who petitioned his way onto the ballot, and Mirna Martinez, nominated by the Green Party — as well as Republican Kat Goulart and Democrat Anthony Nolan, a city councilor.

### Lamont names Connecticut's new economic development team

Gov. Ned Lamont announced on Friday a new team of business executives that will oversee Connecticut's efforts to attract and retain businesses, including a partner with the investment bank Goldman Sachs. Lamont on Friday also named former PepsiCo Chairman and CEO Indra Nooyi and former Webster Bank chief executive Jim Smith as the new co-chairs of the existing, nonprofit Connecticut Economic Resource Center.

### Thames River Heritage Park Gets \$30K Boost To Expand

The Thames River Heritage Park Foundation (a collection of 17 sites along that include the Lyman Allyn Museum and the Submarine Force Museum), has received a grant to help expand and enhance the services the park provides. The grant will help the park use the water taxi to better connect partner sites together into a unique visitor experience.

## Sports Spotlight

BY PRICE DAY

### Men's Results

Ice Hockey loses 0-5 to Williams, wins 4-0, 2-1 vs. Tufts

Basketball wins 88-77 vs. Hunter, lose to Mitchell 85-73

Squash wins vs. Hamilton 7-2, Northeastern 7-2, lose to Colby 0-9

### Women's Results

Ice Hockey wins vs. Colby 1-0, lose to Colby 0-1, UMass Boston 0-3

Basketball wins vs. Bates 73-52

Swimming 2nd/4 vs. Wesleyan, Fairfield & Coast Guard

### Upcoming Events

February 8th, Men's & Women's Track and Field @ Boston University, Men's Basketball vs. Bowdoin, Women's @ Bowdoin, Men's Ice Hockey vs. Hamilton, Women's @ Bowdoin

February 9th, Men's Squash vs. Lehigh, Men's Basketball vs. Colby, Women's @ Colby, Men's Ice Hockey vs. Amherst, Women's @ Bowdoin

## Staff Recs

Media and journalism recommendations from the staff of *The College Voice*

Dana Gallagher:

"ICE Failed to Hold Detention Center Contractors Accountable, Report Finds," *NPR*. The Department of Homeland Security inspector general has found 14,000 deficiencies at facilities where migrants in the country illegally are held but issued only two fines.

"The New Authoritarians Are Waging War on Women," *The Atlantic*. Peter Beinart argues that that authoritarian nationalism is rising across the globe. Some countries facing authoritarian nationalism are mired in recession; others are booming. But besides their hostility to liberal democracy, the right-wing autocrats taking power across the world share one big thing, which often goes unrecognized in the U.S.: They all want to subordinate women.

Saadya Chevan:

"Hampshire College to admit 77 students already accepted for fall class, but won't admit any more in 2019 or spring 2020," *The Republican* (Springfield, MA). Hampshire College announced last Friday that its Board of Trustees decided to only admit the 77 students who have already committed to attending the school this year. The day prior to this announcement, writer Jon Krakauer, an alum of the school, published an opinion article in *The New York Times* imploring the school's board and administration to keep the school open. Earlier this year Hampshire announced that it was seeking a "strategic partner" due concerns about its ability to continue operating. Hampshire is well known for its students' self-designed courses of study and policy of having faculty issue written student evaluations instead of grades for courses.

Grace Amato:

"The Book Of Spirits" Jia Tolentino. *The New Yorker*. A Jamaican native, author Marlon James reveals the motivations and inspiration behind his new novel, being hailed as an African Game of Thrones. Tolentino describes stories from James's adolescence including his struggle with homosexuality in Jamaica and his fascination with fantasy and Greek mythology. His newest novel contributes to the Afrofuturism movement as a way to "reclaim all the stuff [he] likes— court intrigue, monsters, magic" for the black community.

Max Amar-Olkus:

"Roger Stone Case: Judge Considers Gagging Order," *BBC*. Ex-Trump campaign adviser Roger Stone has been charged with seven counts by special council Robert Mueller, including lying to Congress and witness tampering. Judge Amy Berman Jackson says she is considering a gag order on both Stone and the prosecution, going on to say the case was "a criminal proceeding and not a public relations campaign."

## Relocation of Career Center

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Hale Family Director of Career and Professional Development and has been on the project committee throughout this relocation process, notes that one of the benefits of career services moving onto the main campus is that students often complain about having to cross the street just to have a brief meeting or ask a single question. Hall is “excited we won’t have to worry about dual locations.” Additionally, Main Street West belongs to the Academic Resource Center (ARC), and each time career uses the space, it must be borrowed from and coordinated with the ARC. Once career services are all consolidated in Fanning, the ARC will continue to use the Main Street West space for their own purposes.

In regards to the current location of career resources, Hall states that “safety is always a concern,” particularly in reference to Mohegan Avenue. “I’ve seen students run across [the road] before... during the day,” Hall recalls. Hall wants the relocation onto campus will provide both a safer and more desirable space for students to use career services and their resources.

Hall is excited about the project; “I just love the idea that the college has said the Office of Career and Professional Development is important.” Hall also is “praying” for students to use the career services more as a result of the relocation to Fanning and the proximity of the building to the path of student traffic. “I want [the new location] to be a place where students just try and come through if they have a question... to be that place where students see us and think ‘oh yeah, I want to go in there,’” says Hall. Hall is “hopeful and confident that this new location will increase student traffic.” After the construction is complete, Hall also hopes admission tours will be adjusted to show perspective students the new space and the resources available on campus.

Included in this construction is the reopening of the east entrance of Fanning, which faces gatehouse and Mohegan Avenue, and is visible to people driving up onto campus via the main entrance. Hall hopes this shows that “we,” the college, “care about your journey.”

One of the most important features of this renovation is the addition of an elevator to Fanning. This project will work with a similar timeline to the rest of the first floor renovations in Fanning, but will be funded separately. Including an elevator is part of the College’s forward-focused efforts to increase accessibility in buildings. Says Madonna, “if you’re doing this amount of work, you need to think about what should you be doing now that you’re going to do it a couple of years, and what would the cost be to do it down the road?” The elevator, according to Madonna, has been a discussed concept for Fanning for several years. As it stands, there are dean and president offices located on the second floor, and classrooms and faculty offices on the third and fourth floors of Fanning. “It’s a highly used space that’s just not accessible,” Madonna notes. Madonna continues, “I’ve seen students try to go up and down the stairs after injuring themselves, trying to get to classes on the third and fourth floor, and it’s a challenge.” This elevator will go up all four floors and will not require mechanicals that go

through the roof, according to the project’s architect, Bruce Becker.

Though there are visibility and accessibility benefits noted by Madonna and Hall regarding moving career services to Fanning, this will technically be a downsize. Hall estimates that “we’ll probably be cutting our square footage at least in half, maybe even more.” There are seven staff members who work for the Office of Career and Professional Development. These seven staff members will each have an office of their own, though these offices may be smaller than the ones currently used in Vinal Cottage.

Current plans for the renovation of the first floor of Fanning include conference rooms, lecture classrooms, space for drop-ins, open work and lounging spaces, a concept similar to those found in the Walter Commons. There will also be “interview booths where students will be able to work with a career advisor or students will be able to work with an alum,” Hall claims. Students will also have space and resources for conducting skype or virtual interviews and discussions. There are also plans for the inclusion of both a gender-neutral bathroom and a lactation room.

Limited work will be done on the interior of the Registrar’s Office because the money allocated for the career project is restricted to the purposes of the Office of Career and Professional Development. However, the Registrar will benefit from any improvements in utilities on the first floor.

Demolition is planned to happen in March when students are on spring break. Construction on the project will continue through the remainder of the semester, while retaining access to the rest of the functions on other floors in Fanning, until around July. The end date for the project is August 17, by which career services hopes to be moved in and begin preparing for the arrival of students.

CISLA and Study Away offices relocated to the Walter Commons last year, which has opened up the majority of space on the first floor of Fanning for usage. As for the current functions of the first floor of Fanning, the office of the Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion has been temporarily moved to Unity House until the new “cultural center” is constructed, which, according to Madonna, is being considered for placement in Smith and Burdick.

Accounting is moving to Nichols house, where Campus Safety was previously housed. Madonna claims this move “puts accounting close to human resources” which is advantageous because “there’s a lot of paperwork that is passed between them.” Campus Safety will be relocating to Facilities, where they had been located several years ago. Campus Safety will maintain their spaces in Cro and the Gatehouse as well.

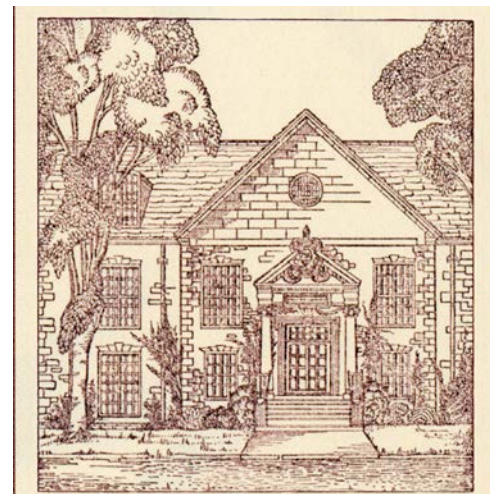
Currently, the College is unsure or not disclosing what the plans are for the soon to be vacant Vinal Cottage. Some speculate this space may be used for student housing or perhaps faculty offices however nothing has been finalized nor published. Though unsure at the moment of how Vinal will be utilized, Hall notes that the College seeks to ensure that “all the spaces are being used as effectively as possible” on campus. •

# \$500

## Prize for Undergraduate Library Research

The Connecticut College Prize for Undergraduate Library Research is a \$500 cash award established in 2016 offered annually to recognize excellence in undergraduate research projects.

APPLICATIONS DUE 2/25/2019 - <http://conncoll.libguides.com/LibPrize>



# Housefellow's Firing Forces Student To Transfer; Students, Alumni Express Outrage

SAM CROCKFORD  
CONTRIBUTOR

At the beginning of this semester, the REAL office--led by Assistant Dean of Residential Education and Living Sara Rothenberger--made the decision to fire the Housefellow of Hamilton for not having reported alleged instances of honor code violations. Sean Soucy '20 depended on income from his Housefellow position to attend Connecticut College, and following his firing he was left with no equivalent financial option. Soucy, who dozens of students current and former students described in interviews and online comments as a highly-respected and beloved community member and Housefellow, was forced to leave the College and transfer to the University of Maine.

Soucy did not go through any College conduct processes, and his leaving the College is a financial matter and not an explicit expulsion. But Josh Simensky '20, who started an online petition in hopes of pressuring the College to reinstate Soucy, said "the decision to fire Sean was not equitable, because being fired from a position that someone needs to stay in school may as well be an expulsion, while firing someone from the same position who has more funds is a slap on the wrist."

Word of Soucy's situation spread through College social media circles in mid-January with the Simensky petition, which grew quickly to over 1800 signatures in just a few days. The Connecticut College website lists the school's population as 1865 students.

Sara Rothenberger's decision to fire Soucy, a decision that became a de facto expulsion, was described in the Simensky petition as based on Soucy not reporting underage drinking at certain events. According to multiple students interviewed and online petitioners who posted comments, the allegations are something many at Connecticut College would also be guilty of. Avatar Simpson '20, a Floor Governor, wrote online: "It was an unfair situation that, if applied across all of REAL staff, would result in all the house fellows and

floor governors getting fired."

Yoldas Yildiz '18, the former SGA Vice President of 2017-2018, commented on the petition, raising the question of possible burdensome responsibilities placed on student workers. He wrote that the REAL office "needs to stop treating its students and workers like pawn pieces and start seeing them as actual human beings with complicated lives that don't just do their bidding and still live a student lifestyle."

Reactions citing issues of fairness and socioeconomic equity were accompanied by the real shocker: Soucy, who was elected by the student body to serve as SGA Chair of Residential Affairs, was in his second year of working on student housing staff, and was elected last semester to serve as a junior representative on the school's Honor Council, appears to be widely considered not only a "model student," but a highly-valued community member specifically valued for his actions in the residential community.

Hatim Siddique '22, in an online petition comment, described Soucy as "someone who has been instrumental in making sure that a lot of my fellow first years settle down at Conn easily, by putting our needs ahead of his and always being there for us regardless of time, place, etc. for me personally, as an international student, Sean has helped me and other international [students] so much in adjusting and feeling at home, he represents everything a model college student could be."

Ken Colombe '20, who has served with Soucy on SGA, described Soucy in an online petition comment as "the epitome of a Connecticut College Camel...the school preaches the importance of a well rounded individual. Sean Soucy is that person and inspires others to do the same." Katie Lliel '22 said that Soucy provided her with a positive impression of Conn as a prospective student. She met Sean on an overnight, saying "he was one of the reasons I chose Conn." Casey Keenan '22, a resident of Hamilton, described his former housefellow as "a clear leader on campus. Anytime I struggled with the transition [to College]

he was there to help me."

Others have raised concerns that Rothenberger's actions could cause a public relations disaster for the College, possibly deterring prospective students from applying or matriculating. Elizabeth Magnan '20 commented on the petition: "This event risks the College's good reputation of camel pride, trust, and fairness, in the name of underage drinking; perhaps an illegal thing to do, but nevertheless commonplace at every single university across the country. Knowing such information, as someone looking to attend, is enough to deter anyone, including those who don't consume alcohol, from going or even applying."

Parents have also expressed frustration. In another comment, Lynn Haber wrote: "He did not deserve to get fired and if nothing is done to change this, I will no longer be recommending Connecticut College to friends with prospective students and I will no longer continue to share positive information about the college administration as I did last spring when I volunteered to make welcome calls to parents of new Conn College students."

On multiple occasions, College administrators have acknowledged Soucy's influential role in the community and have used Soucy to promote the College. According to multiple first-years, Soucy spoke at an event at last fall's orientation. Recently, Sean was featured on a College promotional instagram called "ConnChronicles" which advertises the school by choosing students each week to share their experiences.

An update on the change.org page shows an email response from Dean Rothenberger responded to the petition saying "thank you for your perspective" in a cursory email. Other students who emailed administrators reported receiving identical responses. The Voice reached out to Dean Rothenberger on Sunday for further comments, but she was out of office at the time of publication. •

*Alex Klavens contributed reporting to this article.*

## The Truth Behind GMOs

SARAH PFENNIG  
CONTRIBUTOR

People who know the least about science have the strongest opinions about it, according to recent results from public surveys in the US, France, and Germany published in *The Guardian*. While this article was specific to GMOs, it is emblematic of a growing, misinformed distrust towards science among the public. My goal for this column is to help you, the reader, regain this trust as well as provide the tools and knowledge to make more informed decisions in your life. Also, I would use this opportunity to provide updates on what the latest innovations in science mean for humanity.

In this article, I will address the controversy over GMOs through examining both the truths and myths to inform you in the best way possible. First, what is a GMO? GMOs are Genetically Modified Organisms, which include bacteria, mammals, fish, insects and plants, whose DNA has been artificially altered in a laboratory by either inserting, removing, or modifying genes. This technique has been used to promote herbicide tolerance, confer insect and virus resistance, alter fat content, and enrich vitamin concentrations. The most commonly engineered foods include livestock, soybeans, cotton, canola, and maize/corn. Future applications of GMO technology would be to produce vaccines from plants, make food mature faster, engineer algae to produce biofuel, grow human organs for transplant recipients, and find plant alternatives to use in tissue replacement or surgery. So why are so many people against them?

Much of the controversy

with GMOs revolves around the idea that genetically manipulating food like this has never been done before. Therefore, how can the effects of GMOs on human health and the environment in the long term be fully understood? People should have a right to know which foods they eat are genetically modified. This is the main objective of the Non-GMO Project, and these concerns are valid. The Non-GMO project cites an article published in *Environmental Science Europe* claiming that there is “no scientific consensus on GMO safety.” Anti-GMO advocates worry genetically modified foods might provoke allergies, or altered genes could transfer to human cells when ingested. However, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest these risks can be caused by consuming GMOs. Most scientists agree GMO crops pose no greater risk to our health than traditional food. For instance, a literature review article published in *Critical Reviews in Biotechnology* covering a decade of GMO safety research has indicated GMO crops do not pose significant hazards to humans. Furthermore, the article points out the media has distorted the scientific critique of the papers cited in these reviews, and these misinterpretations have been used politically and in anti-GMO campaigns. This could be one of the reasons for the growing popularity of the Non-GMO Project. But this campaign argues these studies may be biased, “performed by biotechnology companies and their associates.”

Nevertheless, some people argue that GMOs can negatively impact the environment and farmers. In support, The National Farmers Union of Canada states, “Over the past decade, corporate and gov-

ernment managers have spent millions trying to convince farmers and other citizens of the benefits of genetically modified (GM) crops. But this huge public relations effort has failed to obscure the truth: GM crops do not deliver the promised benefits; they create numerous problems, costs, and risks; and ... consumers and foreign customers alike do not want these crops. It would be too generous even to call GM crops a solution in search of a problem: These crops have failed to provide significant solutions, and their use is creating problems – agronomic, environmental, economic, social, and (potentially) human health problems.”

Many of the previous concerns are valid. Companies like Monsanto design crops to make farmers dependent on their services and products, which often are very expensive. Today, it is extremely hard for certain farmers to grow non-GMO products because most seeds sold on the market are genetically modified. For example, certain companies engineer crops to be infertile, requiring farmers to rebuy the seeds every year. They also sue farmers through complicated litigation loopholes if they try to leave the GMO industry. However, many farmers also see increased profits from the use of these products. Consequently, according to the Non-GMO project, there are conflicting results as to whether GMOs benefit or hurt farmers.

The environment has been impacted by the use of GMO crops. The Non-GMO Project argues they increase pesticide use due to the emergence of herbicide-resistant weeds, claiming pesticide use has increased by about 7% since their introduction in the market. Further, the insecticides engineered into these

plants target beneficial organisms like butterflies, pest predators, and bees, and also can negatively impact biodiversity needed to support a healthy ecosystem. Also, the Non-GMO Project claims these crops require the same if not more energy to grow and maintain, which goes against claims saying GMOs reduce energy consumption. Scientists argue the previous arguments are all valid, but these problems arise with conventional crops as well; this indicates the environmental impacts should be blamed on modern agriculture practices as a whole rather than just GMOs and hopefully urge us to reexamine how we grow our food.

While the Non-GMO Project does have considerable arguments surrounding impacts on the environment and farmers, conflicting findings exist. Claiming GMOs are bad for your health is misleading and false. Unfortunately, monopolies like Monsanto can take advantage of farmers and the farming industry as a whole and disregard their own environmental impacts. GMOs have the power to do more good than harm. When trying to support a growing population, especially in the face of climate change, engineering food to have higher yields, shorter growth times, better nutritional content, and expanded growing climates might be the best way to accommodate these societal and environmental changes. I acknowledge not everyone will agree with me, which is okay because not all scientists agree with each other. Science and critique go hand in hand, and I hope after reading my article you walk away with a newfound understanding of GMOs. •

## Climate Change and the Precarity of Coral Reefs

PHILLIP KUHEL  
STAFF WRITER

My dream is to study abroad in Queensland. My dream is to go to the Great Barrier Reef. My goal is to take part in saving the Great Barrier Reef. My dreams, however, are constrained by time. Time that I thought was infinite and had all my life to explore and enjoy. Even if I'll be able to see it within the next year when I study abroad, I probably won't be able to see it for much longer or have my kids see it. The United Nations recently released an alert stating that the world's coral reefs could die off as quickly as 2040 due to the results of climate change-- one of those being ocean acidification.

The ocean absorbs about a quarter of the carbon dioxide we release into the atmosphere every year, so as atmospheric carbon dioxide levels increase, so do the levels in the ocean. When carbon dioxide is absorbed by the ocean, chemical reactions occur that subsequently reduce the pH levels of the ocean. This reduction in pH directly affects coral reefs. When the carbon dioxide reacts in the water, it creates carbonic acid which then can dissociate (break down) into a bicarbonate ion and a hydrogen ion. This increase in hydrogen ions is what

increases the acidity of the ocean. The causes of both the increased temperatures and increased ocean acidification put stress on the coral reef system and disrupt a very important symbiotic relationship between the coral itself and what's living inside it.

Within the coral exists an algae called zooxanthellae, which lives within the tissues of the coral. The zooxanthellae provide essential nutrients to the coral itself via photosynthesis. As a result,

Barrier Reef has been bleached due to the warming waters in the ocean. In addition to being an essential system for all life below the sea, reefs generate billions of dollars from tourism to these majestic wonders of the world. Furthermore, coral reefs also provide structural safety to nearby communities by protecting them from waves and erosion.

People often talk about how climate change does not concern people until the issue directly affects their way of life.

I do believe that. Even though I never doubted the legitimacy of climate change or its effects, having this realization about an area many miles away from my home and thinking that one day it won't exist, scares me. Continuing to educate people on the seriousness of climate change and

encouraging them to understand the impact of changing environmental conditions will ensure better policy in the future. Motivate your friends to change certain habits to lower the emissions of carbon dioxide and ultimately save the planet from unsustainable levels of carbon dioxide emissions. My dream is not only to see the Great Barrier Reef but to see it live long past my lifetime and to ensure the security and longevity of one the Earth's most beautiful natural gifts. •

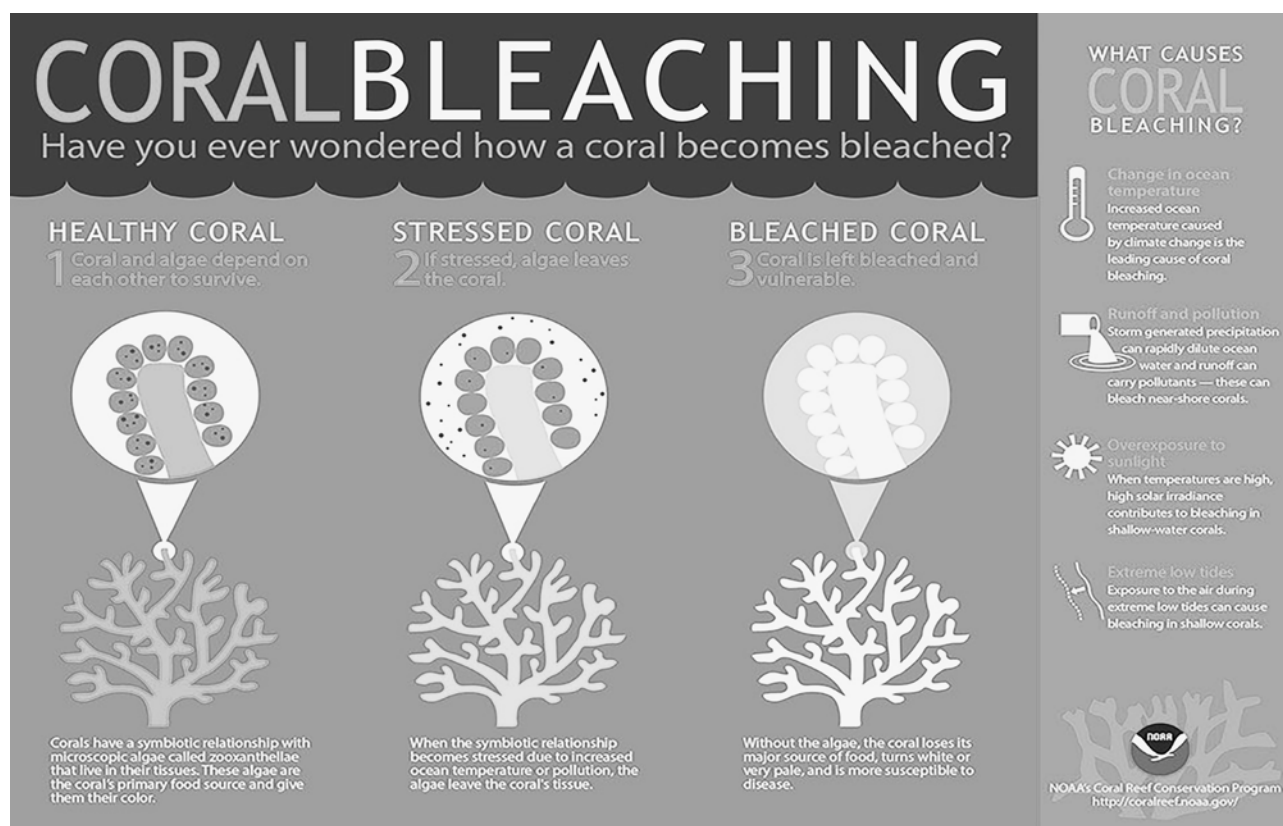


Image courtesy of NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program

the coral provides both carbon dioxide and ammonium to the algae for photosynthesis and allows both species to coexist happily. However, if temperatures begin to rise within the ocean, a stress response from the algae could cause it to leave the coral its living in. With 90% of the coral's energy source gone, the coral becomes very weak and susceptible to likely death. According to *The New York Times*, already two-thirds of the Great



## Airpods: A Bad Investment

AMANDA SANDERS  
STAFF WRITER

If you were, like me, scrolling mindlessly through Instagram over winter break, you most likely saw the endless memes about Apple's airpods. Airpods, which launched in 2016, are not offered with the purchase of an iPhone, like Apple's original earbuds. Instead, you have to shell out \$159 separately for the arguably scammy Airpods. When Airpods first came out, Apple removed the headphone jack from the iPhone, possibly in the hopes that people would spend the extra money to purchase Airpods as the old earbuds could no longer be used in updated iPhone. Surprisingly, now the craze for Airpods is real-- and overhyped. While the memes themselves are usually worth tagging your Airpod-owning friends in (my personal favorites came from @grapejuiceboys) some memes have involved the destroying of or losing of Airpods. Why spend upwards of \$150 for a meme? If you think that this isn't a big deal because Airpods are easily fixable, guess what; they're not. Due to the lack of repairability the Airpods received a 0/10 on the iFixit's scale, calling the Airpods a "repair nightmare."

Aesthetically, they aren't that attractive. They have been compared to sticking cigarettes in your ears, Q-tips, and electric toothbrush heads. Airpods are also one size fits all, just like Apple's wired earbuds, and they don't come with adjustable ear tips. "When I go on a run, I feel like when I get sweaty they also get sweaty, and I worry that they'll slip out," says Joanna Rucker '21. If the wired earbuds from Apple don't fit in your ears, it's most likely that AirPods won't either. This increases the likelihood that the pods will fall out and be lost or broken.

While wireless headphones are definitely the future of portable listening devices, they should be more affordable. They're easy to lose and expensive to replace. While Airpods are simple to track on Find My iPhone when out of the case, once they are in the case you can't track them. "I'm very disorganized, so that's definitely the worst part," said Elizabeth Zaccaro '22. If you are someone who loses things often, Airpods are definitely not for you. Many students swear that the recoil provided from the wires on their earbuds has saved their phones time and time again from a potentially shattering fall on a sidewalk. Without the handy little wire, your phone's screen could crack.

Airpods also use Bluetooth, which many people dislike for good reasons. The frequency range is limited, the sounds are occasionally distorted, connecting can be difficult and audio can pause or stop mid-stream. They occasionally disconnect, so whatever you're playing could suddenly play out loud wherever you are.

The most recent Apple update, iOS 12, included a new feature called Live Listen. Live Listen makes it easier for people to hear conversations in noisier areas. It is meant to help the hearing impaired by allowing individuals to place their iPhone close to a person they're having trouble hearing. However, recently the internet discovered that Live Listen can also be used to overhear conversations occurring in spaces an individual may not be invited into. People can leave their phones in one room and stay nearby to listen to the room's conversations through their Airpods. Apple has been very vocal about wanting to protect the privacy of its customers, so why would it add this feature?

Airpods are easy to lose. They use unreliable Bluetooth, and they're unable to be fixed when broken. The fact that they enable people to eavesdrop through the Live Listening feature is a breach of privacy, and honestly, the Airpod memes aren't even that funny. I would still pick my free earbuds over \$159 Airpods. The quality of this product isn't worth the money. If you're going to buy an Apple product, it shouldn't be this one. •

## Steal This Country

MAX WHISNANT  
STAFF WRITER

Over the winter holiday, I saw *Mary Poppins Returns*. Though not as charming and original as the prequel, the same underlying message rings true. Adults tend to close off their minds as they grow older. Children, on the other hand, lack the cynicism that too often comes with adulthood. It is a power that cannot be underestimated or ignored. "You've forgotten what it's like. To be a child." One of the final lines in the movie is a perfect representation of the movie's central message: it is OK to believe in something.

Often, children focus this power into figures like Santa, the Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy, and Mary Poppins among others. This helps direct their minds to something less abstract. It is something the Banks children do to escape into Mary Poppins' world of brightly colored flowers and singing animals. In both Mary Poppins movies, the adults lose their sense of the fantastical. But the children always believe. They are the physical manifestation of a childlike naïveté through which, to quote Emily Blunt's Mary Poppins, "everything is possible, even the impossible." So, let Santa be real. At least, let he and what other spirits of our childhoods represent be real.

Look at the Parkland students. Forced to grow up too soon, they get it. Unable to wait and sail through childhood. They threw themselves behind as worthy a cause as any and grounded their message. They see their youth as the way forward and I find it hard to argue with them. Many even took a gap year in between high school and college to tour the country as activists because they knew how important their work still is.

A few weeks ago, Louis C.K. attempted a hostile return to comedy, performing a set where he ridiculed the Parkland students and what they stand for. Much could be written about why he does or why he doesn't deserve a chance at redemption, but that is a different argument. I understand how those untouched by scandal within in his profession feel emboldened to push the limits of what is acceptable to say and that they sometimes cross that line. Louis C.K. is no exception.

Especially on Twitter, we are accustomed to vitriolic hostility. No one can escape it. The backlash and minimal support for C.K. was no different. The Left thoroughly castigated him while the Right cited the First Amendment in defense of his comedy routine. Some of those who refused to weigh into the debate are the targets of C.K.'s attempted return to comedy. Cameron Kasky and Ryan Deitsch, two prominent faces of the March for Our Lives organization, expressed their displeasure but nothing more. Some responded with a little more fire but no less measured. Either way, true to form, the Parkland students stayed on message by refusing to give an inch to those that spit in their faces. They know that to give people like C.K. a larger platform is to denigrate the very soul of what they are trying to accomplish.

This is how the Parkland students separate themselves and elevate their effectiveness and how they remain relevant. Some people who are much older than the students have thinner skins than the Parkland students. Instead of caving to derision, they stand defiant. This gives me hope. Students younger than myself knowing that activism matters because it addresses issues that affect all of us.

Our social and political climate has made it near impossible to plead ignorance. It can be overwhelming and it can make every fiber of your being scream to break free, but we all hear what is happening. The stakes are too high. We have leaders afraid of their own shadows and simply calling their offices is now insufficient. This stuff matters too much for apathy to be an option. Whoever you are, wherever you come from, whatever cause you may fight for, it does not matter. Take to the streets and march. Go to the polls and vote. If you're waiting for permission to care, stop waiting. Enough is enough. It's time we take back our country, one step at a time. •

## Senior Spotlight: The Story Behind 360 Storytelling

CAMERYN LESKO-JELLEY  
STAFF WRITER

Connecticut College seniors Annabelle Allen, Rose Montera, and Summer Wrobel are unlike many people I have encountered here at Conn. All three of them have a strong, unwavering sense of self, and their connection to one another overrides all superficialities. With them, I sensed a genuine friendship. The care they had for one another, and the warm energy that all three of them exude, make being in their presence a special experience.

Annabelle has a radiating presence with a smile that lights up the whole room. Rose describes Annabelle as completely liberated, “living such a free and genuine life, with the ability to just let go.” Summer notes that Annabelle’s attentiveness and appreciation to the little, or often unnoticed things in life, has really rubbed off on her and inspired her to see the beautiful in the ordinary. As Summer goes on to explain, Annabelle can interpret “something as simple as eating a good sandwich or sitting down to drink a cup of coffee” to be a special, breathtaking experience.

Rose’s presence is reassuring, grounding, powerful, authentic, and refreshing. Annabelle claims that she is “addicted to Rose,” as Rose is “so funny, personable, well-spoken, sweet, and loyal that her energy is just addictive.” Summer claims that she is “blown away by Rose’s ability to tackle everything with grace and calmness, and her ability to be such a giving person.” Summer goes on to say that Rose is the most “crafty, artistic person I know as she has the patience to make things like book marks, and she is also one of the most entrepreneurial people I know, deciding to run the Humphrey’s Instagram page and create thrifty camel (Conn’s clothing swap Instagram page).

Summer’s presence is peaceful, euphoric and overall very kind-hearted. Annabelle and

Rose describe her as “one of the most beautiful humans both inside and out, she is thoughtful, genuine, sweet, kind, offers herself openly and gives you full attention when you speak.” She is also described as “brilliant,” a “go-getter,” “hard-working,” “driven” and “nothing but

and open mic nights at Coffee Grounds. With 360 storytelling, Annabelle, Rose and Summer strove to create a platform similar to TEDx and the WEI but that held events more frequently (instead of annually), and use their home as an intimate safe space for the common good of the

Connecticut College community.

However, although these clubs and organizations at Conn inspired many aspects of 360 storytelling, what ultimately led the trio to make this club was common interest housing. If it weren’t for common interest housing, 360 storytelling would have never been conceived and created. The trio claims that in a sense “common interest housing forced us to do it, we are big advocates of common interest housing, because it pushed us to pursue the creation of this club to the fullest.”

The club is run in a very collaborative sense among the

three, as they come up with themes together, create the posters together, share the Instagram and emails, and all have a desire to make 360 storytelling the best it can be. But, Annabelle emphasizes that “we really just provide the space, and everyone else is the event.”

The adviser of 360 storytelling is none other than Professor Blanche Boyd. Nonetheless, Summer and Rose credit Blanche Boyd as not only their adviser, but their life inspiration. Rose states that in Blanche Boyd’s narrative nonfiction class she “really learned how you perform a story.” Summer also highly regards Blanche Boyd’s narrative nonfiction class and is currently doing a senior thesis with Boyd. Summer asserts that in narrative nonfiction she “learned how to write about her own story without being embarrassed, and how you can really make a piece of art out of writing.”

Aside from 360 Storytelling, Annabelle,



From Left; Montera, Wrobel, Allen  
Image courtesy of 360 Storytelling

inspiring to live with.”

All three of them have many similar interests ranging from movies to music to reading and writing to arts and crafts to dancing (especially mini dance breaks in their home). They all have a deep passion for seltzer, and most importantly a love for the art of storytelling.

Rose and Summer met during orientation freshman year. After Rose met Annabelle sophomore year, she felt like the three would be deeply compatible as roommates and proposed the idea of living together in the 360 apartments. Because 360 apartments were common interest housing, after much deliberation, the trio came up with storytelling to infuse all of their interests. The creation of 360 storytelling draws reference from *The Moth* but was also deeply inspired by many of the other clubs and student organizations at Conn, in particular TEDx, The Women’s Empowerment Initiative,

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## Senior Spotlight: The Story Behind 360 Storytelling

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Summer and Rose are all extremely involved in a variety of other clubs and organizations at Conn and hold many other leadership positions. They all have leadership positions in the TEDx club, with Summer and Rose serving as co-presidents and Annabelle leading set design. Summer became involved in TEDx because of her “love for ted talks and curiosity to see what goes behind the planning TEDx events.” Rose recalls watching a ted talk called “the danger of a single story” repeatedly in different classes, and liking this singular ted talk so much that she decided to go the TEDx conference her freshman year at Conn. She remembers going to the conference and finding that “listening to all the talks by the different presenters was such a wonderful and relaxing experience that genuinely made her Saturday.” Like Summer, Annabelle decided to get involved with set design after taking an interest in behind the scenes work and appreciating the art of designing a set from raw materials.

Summer, Rose, and Annabelle’s involvement and leadership positions in these clubs seem to be a result of being able to recognize the things that make them happiest and the things they feel are most important, regardless of what anyone else thinks. Summer recalls during her four years at Conn she learned to stop seeking the validation of others to do things that she wanted to do for herself, and to not care about what others might think of what she was doing. As Annabelle puts it, we are “metamorphosing and changing every-day,” and her morals have developed, along with many of her interests changing since freshman year. Rose remembers the first half of her college career being consumed with meeting people and going out—living the “social butterfly” life—but during her upperclassmen years at Conn, she has learned to embrace her more introverted side. She

has fostered her newfound sense of vulnerability, which was really brought out during her time living with Annabelle and Summer.

Like most, Annabelle, Summer and Rose have faced a number of challenges that they have had to maneuver and overcome during their college years. For Summer, finding the confidence to go after what she wanted and believing in herself was a challenging process. “I had to learn that it’s okay to fail a lot, failure and rejection can be terrifying but the most beautiful things can come out of rejection.” She goes on to state that “going after what you believe in is so important, because you can always find a way to do what you want to do.” Annabelle’s biggest challenge during her years at Conn was deciding not to continue playing a varsity sport, which had been one of her biggest passions for most of her life. She notes how it “was extremely difficult to say goodbye” to this sport, but at the end of the day she had to just do her, even if this meant having the challenge of rediscovering her sense of self. For Rose, figuring out what she wanted to do with her life has been a consistent challenge throughout her years in college. “Having to declare your major sophomore year and every adult starting to ask you what you want to do with your life is the start of this pressure,” states Rose. She goes on to say that “I have always had hobbies and things that I love, and have felt I could be happy in many professions.” She has ultimately learned how to feel secure in all the advantages and privileges she has obtained from school and just do the most with what she has been given.

As for what they plan to do after college, it is apparent that just as these three women have brought so much to Conn, they will surely bring so much to the even greater world. Summer plans to live in Jordan, at least for a year after she graduates. As an English major and Arabic minor she hopes to improve her Arabic while living in Jordan,

and ultimately get an MFA and make a career out of creative writing. Annabelle will graduate with a degree in Sociology, and plans to spend some time traveling on a budget, and possibly living in Spain for some time, to improve her Spanish, working as an au pair, or in a movie theater. She also hopes to become a writer, but in the time being she plans to read more and practice her writing. Rose will graduate with a degree in Art-History and Museum Studies and has cultivated a four-step plan to fame. “First I am going to be a dog-walker, then a babysitter, a waitress, and lastly a star,” claims Rose. She is very fond of the idea of moving to Rome after graduation and thinks she may be well suited for physical labor conservation work, where she would work digging up and preserving important cultural heritage findings. She is also considering the idea of being an English teacher and fantasizes about being a writer for *SNL*.

With the end of college being only a few months away, Annabelle, Summer and Rose have had the opportunity to really consider how drastically different their lives will be at the end of this semester. Annabelle is sincerely looking forward to “seeing more, traveling more, doing more,” but also acknowledges that it is a time of “total uncertainty” which she finds either “stressful or exciting,” but she’s just taking it a day at a time. Summer is also looking forward to all the unexpected that lies ahead and is appreciating the fact that it’s the first time in a while where she doesn’t really know where she will be or what she’ll be doing next fall, next year, etc. Rose is living in an in between state of stress and excitement, as she is not looking forward to things not being so convenient when she graduates. She states “currently my friends are in my house and on campus, the mail room is right there, and the world is simple and small.” Making to time to catch up with her friends that may be all over the globe,

and having to do grown up things like taxes can all be very stressful thoughts, but she is ready to “play grown up for real” and do whatever she pleases with her own completely unique life.

With this semester being Annabelle, Summer and Rose’s last, they are planning a 360 storytelling event every month, making the most of their time here. The next event will be held on Feb 15 with the theme of “Heartburn,” and students can apply to speak by emailing 360stories1@gmail.com or DM’ing them on Instagram @360\_story\_telling.

Although their time is concluding here at Conn, they are open to the discussion of having 360 storytelling remain active at Conn, with the possibility of it growing into a club. “We are happy to pass along the Instagram to passionate students who would grow 360 storytelling into a club, while remaining its intimacy,” states Summer. Rose, Summer and Annabelle also hope to take 360 storytelling into the “real world” as it is such a portable activity since organizer only needs a stool and some lights to get things going. Annabelle states that “storytelling can really fill a void.” Especially during this era consumed by technology, storytelling provides humans a way to connect to one another using one of the most ancient forms of communicating.

It certainly is not a stretch to say that Annabelle, Summer, and Rose are not only model students, but model human beings. They are perfect representations of how to live your own life to the fullest and most sincere capacity. Connecticut College is privileged to have these three women as students and future alumni, as they will unquestionably bring so much to the world. As Annabelle claims, sometimes all you need in life is to sit back, take a breath and listen,” because you never know whose story you’ll hear next. •

## Silent Survivors

WILL CANELLAKIS  
STAFF WRITER

*Note from the Editors: The following article captures the perspective of interviewed sexual assault survivors on the support and resources available to them at Conn.*

“Lauren—The night it happened, I went out with friends. We went to parties at the Winches and Ridges. I met a Coast Guard Academy student who, unbeknown to me, came to Conn for one purpose: to screw. He talked me up, I was pretty drunk at that point, so I agreed to leave with him. We walked far— so far in fact that I got scared. I said I wanted to go back, but he got aggressive. He attacked. He bruised my legs, my hip, my shoulder. I remember crying. I remember that he pushed my face away as he raped me because he didn’t want to see me cry. I remember thinking: “I’m not a person anymore.”

“Janet”— It feels weird, almost like a reverse dream where I can’t see what’s happening, but I feel everything. I see it from a bird’s-eye view. I guess my brain’s just detaching itself, but I can’t see my own rape through my own eyes anymore. It’s weird. I wasn’t attacked at Conn though, I want to make that clear. But it’s shaped my perception of boys here. I don’t trust any of them. I put myself in that position though. I am to blame because I put myself there and then I stayed quiet after. I basically gave him the green light because the same guy raped me twice. I’m not that girl though. I won’t be labeled. I won’t be branded a victim. I’m stronger than that. Well, I have to be stronger than that.

Connecticut College provides on-staff therapists, rape prevention initiatives, a blue light system, and a culture intolerant of aggression (sexual or otherwise), yet the College isn’t doing enough to prevent assault or to address the stigma women feel around reporting it. In fact, another survivor of rape at Connecticut College ultimately chose not to have her story included in this article because of the intense trauma she experienced, and the anxiety surrounding the stigma of being a survivor of rape. One survivor of campus assault with whom I spoke noted, “I don’t think this is a bad school, but the services provided here mostly help people after-the-fact.” And Janet added, “I went to a therapist here, they’re good, but I feel like a patient. I feel alienated because they don’t know me. It’s their job to listen to my problems, but... I don’t know... I don’t feel like I can talk to them.” Additionally, Lauren doesn’t know what resources are available to her. She says, “I honestly have no real idea what the programs are here.”

When I asked her about Green Dot, the Connecticut College program dedicated to sexual prevention, she said “I have no idea what Green Dot is or how it could help me.” The students’ lack of knowledge surrounding advocacy programs seems symptomatic of the overarching truth that there’s an uneasy silence around rape at Connecticut College.

In the past year alone, five instances of voyeurism were reported. The college sent out emails and hosted a forum to discuss its ongoing investigation into these incidents, but has otherwise taken a relatively inactive stance toward preventing these violations— the perpetrators have still not been identified. While it’s comforting to see these women feel supported enough to report the voyeurism, it’s truly shocking that none of the sexual assault survivors I spoke with are willing to report the far more serious crime they endured. It seems that, while the school talks about the *repugnance* of peeping Toms, the lack of discussion surrounding the visceral truth of rape on campus creates a silent culture where rapists are never held accountable, and predators roam free.

Campus assaults are pervasive throughout America. No matter where you go, no matter the school, no matter whether, like Connecticut College, the university strives to address this problem and cultivate a safe space, assault still occurs. Rape is a national issue, yet Connecticut College is failing to protect its students. One student advisor suggested that the college should “advertise its programs more” and “educate its students more thoroughly during orientation.” The advisor even described specific ways the college can improve, such as posting flyers that list the names and numbers of the college’s support systems in highly trafficked locations. However, as a survivor of assault herself, she added, “Be self-aware! Only you will always have your back.” Further implicit in her statement— don’t trust drunk boys [or girls], don’t go off alone, and protect yourself. Don’t put yourself in risky situations.

While Connecticut College has programs and services for victims of sexual assault, it’s interesting to note that when I asked to interview college administrators for this article, they never responded. It’s interesting that, despite emailing the Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion John F. McKnight Jr. and the Associate Dean of Equity and Compliance Ebony Manning, they remained silent. Why are these administrators refusing to discuss the questions posed by their own student survivors? Connecticut College must step up and act. Students should be safe— not only that, but they should be supported in reporting rape and be aware of the available services on campus as well as how to receive them. In Lauren’s words, “I have panic attacks when I close my eyes, and I have nightmares when I finally fall asleep.” •

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## CCRCC Comments on Proposed Changes to Title IX

*Note from the Editors: Views expressed in this article are that of the club, not necessarily that of any individual associated with the College*

If someone commits sexual assault, the full wrath of the criminal justice system should be levied. Instead, colleges have put their own reputation over community safety. Panels of college employees forming ‘tribunals’ are complicit in the transferring of assaulters to new institutions and workplaces.

We must have detectives present at the scene once the crime has been reported. Just as the case with any felony, those most experienced in evidence collection and chain of custody, must investigate this thoroughly from beginning to end. Different from the current tribunal system, this crucial use of detectives would prevent the accused from evading apprehension or evading conviction on a technicality. Campus safety, Title IX coordinators, and tribunal administrators are less experienced than police, victims’ advocates, and real judges. These employees are less experienced and more inconsistent in punishments; their actions contribute to the reinvention of common law, in order to satisfy their employers.

There is a concern of victims not being able to overcome the barrier to pursue proper action in the courts; however, schools exacerbate the hurdle. Rather than work with state victim advocates and state attorneys, schools do not educate students on the criminal justice process and resources. Further, some claim that survivors of sexual assault

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## CCRCC Comments on Proposed Changes to Title IX

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is not under oath and can freely lie to the investigation or tribunal as well as being free to roam around the campus or vicinity. The accused is not removed from society when found in violation; and there is no criminal record or registry of offenders.

Removing tribunals altogether would be difficult under our current law. The recently revised Title IX regulations by the Department of Education are an alternative. In part, they require for cross examination of the accused. This bend toward due process of law is more truthful. In a congressional hearing on March 20, 2017, former FBI Director, James Comey said, “[...cross examination is] the crucible out of which you get truth. It is the single best way to elucidate the truth.” The Supreme Court in *California v. Green* 1970, also recognized, “Confrontation: (1) insures that the witness will give his statements under oath—thus impressing him with the seriousness of the matter and guarding against the lie by the possibility of a penalty for perjury; (2) forces the witness to submit to cross-examination, *the greatest legal engine ever invented for the discovery of truth*; (3) permits the jury that is to decide the defendant’s fate to observe the demeanor of the witness in making his statement, thus aiding the jury in assessing his credibility.”

The following are other missing components from many tribunals that would increase truth finding: jury trial, discovery, separation of prosecution from judge, presence of experienced, impartial, and legally educated judges, rules of evidence, confronting one’s accuser(s), double jeopardy, subpoena/cross-examine witnesses under oath or affirmation, appeals, attorney representation, and the privilege to remain silent. All of these components have been established in the courts of Connecticut and United States to get to the truth, rather than a panel of college employees, who have a powerful incentive to arrive at biased conclusions that is most convenient for their employer, not victims.

Colleges must educate truth, states must prosecute it, and juries must decide it. •

## Out Of Context: Controversy Around Grande’s New Single “7 Rings”

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The response to this accusation has been mixed. While some listeners agree that “7 Rings” sounds very similar to Princess Nokia’s song, others are adamant that Ariana Grande did not appropriate these lyrics or musical style, since “Princess Nokia did not invent the trap beat,” says Daniel Angel Varela ‘22. “Ariana just found herself in a place where music can’t be truly original when a music style limits an artist to the constraints of beats and rhythm.” To Varela, the new beat is what “made [him] tune in” to Grande’s new song in the first place. On the other hand, Giselle Barahona ‘21 says she went through a “whole process of emotions” once she found out about the controversy through Princess Nokia’s Instagram story. To Barahona, the songs sound the “exact same” when it comes to comparing the chorus, rhythm and bass. Since Ariana Grande is a mainstream pop artist with R&B influences, her new single sounds “forced and intentional to [fit into] the hip hop lifestyle,” which is becoming more mainstream, says Barahona.

The accusation of “stealing” a beat or flow has been a recent phenomenon in the music community, especially when a white artist uses one from a non-white, usually Black or Latinx artist. Artists of color and their families have become hypersensitive to this since there is a history of white-washing genres to make them more popular and mainstream, with no credit to the communities of musical origin. For example, in 2013, there were accusations that Robin Thicke, a white pop artist, and Pharrell Williams, a Black pop artist, stole Black R&B artist Marvin Gaye’s 1977 song “Got to Give it Up.” In this case, the attorneys only used a stripped-down instrumental version of the song to determine whether it was copied or not. In my opinion, these two songs overall are a lot more similar than Ariana Grande and Princess Nokia’s. First, Grande remixes the melody of Julie Andrews’ “My Favorite Things” before the bass comes in to mark the chorus. The chorus, on the other hand, sounds very similar to Princess Nokia’s flow in “Mine.”

Just copying or stealing music, though, is different than the full accusation against Grande. Lyrics and themes, too, play a role in whether Grande appropriated trap music and Black and Brown culture through “7 Rings.” In “Mine,” Princess Nokia raps about the experience of Black and Brown

women’s hair in the United States. The song begins with a sarcastic series of questions like “Is that a wig?” and “Is that a weave? I’m confused” --lyrics meant to replicate the inappropriate questions that women of color are asked daily from their white peers. The main verse of the song then repeats “It’s mine. I bought it.” As Barahona said, “The whole point of the song was to create this solidarity and empowerment of the community. It’s called ‘Mine.’ It’s [women of color] taking back what’s theirs.” Grande, on the other hand, takes the idea of buying hair out of context. After the remix of “My Favorite Things” where she changes the lyrics to be about a supposed shopping spree at Tiffany & Co., Grande then says “You like my hair? Gee, thanks. Just bought it.” Grande is notorious for having extensions to rock her signature long, high ponytail. The chorus then repeats, “I want it, I got it.” Grande strips the idea of buying hair out of its context and does not “respect [the black and Brown] community... ripping off their issues and making it so trivial.” Instead of it being a way for women of color to express and empower themselves, it becomes a sign of materialism and extreme wealth, the overarching theme of “7 Rings.”

It is extremely complicated to pinpoint whether a song copied another and requires complex knowledge of musicology, especially since musical changes are always evolving and borrowing from others. Additionally, it’s only possible to copyright a melody under US copyright law so copying any sort of harmonic progressions or flow is completely legal. This can be seen in the late 70s with hip hop, disco and pop rock. There is a similarity between the beats of “Rapper’s Delight” by The Sugarhill Gang from 1979, “Good Times” by Chic from 1979 and “Another One Bites the Dust” by Queen from 1980. In the end though, the controversy comes down to the appropriation of Black and Latinx cultures through taking their issues, like hair, out of context. Even though Grande may buy her own hair, white people are not ridiculed or subjected to aggressive questioning around their hair the way that women of color are.

In the end, no matter the facts around whether Ariana Grande is guilty of stealing music from other artists or not, we need to remember scholar George Lipsitz’s cautionary words: “Intercultural dialogue does not automatically lead to intercultural cooperation, especially when participants in the dialogue speak from positions of highly unequal access to power, opportunity, and life chances.” •

## Aquaman: Good Directing Can't Save A Bad Script

EMIR KULLUK  
BUSINESS MANAGER

Even though *Aquaman* has surpassed the 1 billion dollar mark in the global box office and is hailed as one of the best DC movies ever made, it still falls flat when it comes to the makings of a good movie. The script, the jokes and some of the music choices are poor. What makes this situation worse is that the director, James Wan, is aware of all of this. As the director of some blockbuster movies such as *Furious 7* and *SAW*, Wan knows what he is doing, and one of the things he is trying to do in *Aquaman* is cover up for the lackluster script by utilizing impressive camera-work and cinematography. This leaves the viewer disappointed with the movie. The scenes are well composed and nice to look at; however, the content of the movie is hard to endure.

The relationship between Arthur (Aquaman) and Mera, the princess of one of the underwater kingdoms, highlights flaws in the movie's storyline. Right from the beginning of the movie, it is apparent that these two characters are going to have a romantic relationship in the end. However, the film executes the buildup to the relationship so poorly that viewers have no reaction when the couple finally get together. For example, there are several scenes within the movie where the two characters simply look at each other with slow music playing in the background, instead of... speaking? Another issue with *Aquaman* besides its script and portrayal of character relationships is Wan's misplaced creativity. There are some scenes where the camera moves in a way that is unique. However, these scenes do not feel natural. Instead, they reveal that they were shot in a studio, with green-screens and doubles. It is this realization that results in the audience being disconnected and uninvested in the story.

Do not get the title wrong. *Aquaman* is not a bad movie. In fact, I did have a good time watching it. Compared to the super serious and dark iterations of the DC Cinematic Universe, such as *Batman v Superman* and *Man of Steel*, *Aquaman* is a breath of fresh air that embraces the weird, scale-esque, fish-like gold and green costume and a superhero who is, as Batman puts it, able to "talk to

fish."

*Aquaman* does not shy from its comic book roots, which makes the movie even better; it is a movie that knows where it comes from. Whether it is the funky yet cool-looking costumes, the surfer bro personality of Jason Momoa that is embodied within Aquaman, or the idea of sea life waging an all-out war against

each other, the movie fully embraces these concepts and creates a whole new underwater universe.

With this new world, the color palette is mind-blowing as well. The bright blue of the ocean, the luminescent plants and cities underwater, the bright greens of the coastal cities of Italy and the mesmerizing Sahara desert all captivate the audience and are a nice shift from the dark and gloomy worlds of previous DC movies.

Another big plus for *Aquaman* is the acting, with Jason Momoa giving a particularly good performance. Even though the script he is given is not great to work with, he still keeps up his energetic yet cool and relatable personality, which makes him more relatable in comparison to his comic book counterpart. It would not be a surprise if DC changed the appearance of Aquaman to make him resemble the real-life actor Momoa a bit more. Besides Momoa, the relationship arc between Aquaman's parents is a nice overarching story for the whole movie. His parents are the first characters to be introduced and their story starts with the birth of Arthur and ends with his coming of age moment. It is a nice symbol for Arthur leaving his past behind, in peace, to focus on what lies ahead. Overall, *Aquaman* is a much more complete package compared to DC's other offerings.

In fact, *Aquaman* seems to be so rewarding that Warner Bros. has expressed the potential to continue the DC Cinematic Universe after all, even though *Justice League*, their latest release, was a disaster. This seems to be good news for fans of DC but one should recognize that *Aquaman* is far from perfect. If

DC wants to compete with the juggernaut that is Marvel, it has to realize that it needs to take its time with its characters and provide the time and funds needed to craft stories that would attract the masses.

In short, if you want to have a good time, have something attractive to watch and see James Wan's take on a superhero film, definitely see *Aquaman*. However, if you are looking for a good story that has rewatchability, is heartfelt and universal, you are asking too much of *Aquaman*. •

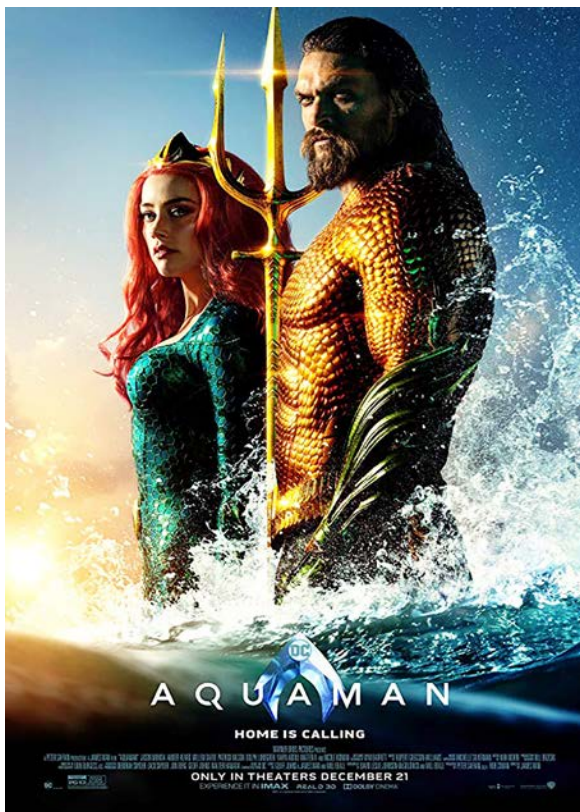


Image Courtesy of Warner Brother Studios

## Bumblebee: Something New After the Bayhem

EMIR KULLUK  
BUSINESS MANAGER

It has been 12 years since Michael Bay decided to make a toy line a global phenomenon. Ever since its debut, every *Transformers* movie has garnered attention on a scale very few franchises ever achieved. However, this attention has not been positive through and through, as many critics openly panned Bay's movies more and more with every iteration, calling them bland movies that objectify women and fetishize explosions. After the last film, *Transformers: The Last Knight* received harsh criticisms, Bay

decided to leave the mantle of director and bring an end to Bayhem, a phrase coined by *Transformers* actor Shia LaBeouf.

The departure of Bay didn't bring the end of *Transformers*, however, as a new movie in the franchise provides producers with tantalizing financial benefits. Paramount decided to bring in Travis Knight, a successful director behind well-received films such as *Kubo* and the *Two Strings*, and started working on a solo movie for the character *Bumblebee*, one of the most known characters within the *Transformers* universe, right after Optimus Prime. After all these efforts, we have *Bumblebee* before us. How is *Bumblebee*? It is one of the best *Trans-*

formers movies that could be made. Considering the fact that the only source for *Transformers* is a toy line and a TV show created to sell that toyline, *Bumblebee* does more than bring these characters to life, but it manages to deepen their backstory and give them more life.

The story of *Bumblebee* is not new or revolutionary in any way; in fact, director Travis Knight has stated that he was inspired by *The Iron Giant* while making *Bumblebee*. The story begins in Cybertron, as the war between the Autobots and the Decepticons has exhausted the planet, causing Optimus

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## Book Review: *Beartown*

ELIZABETH BERRY  
STAFF WRITER

I am one of those readers who judge a book, not by the cover, but by the image on its spine. So, when I passed the 'B' section of my local library and fell upon Fredrik Backman's books--two of which I had read before-- I was pleasantly surprised to see a new edition to the shelf: *Beartown*. As a bonus, the spine featured a beautiful illustration of light and dark blues with specks of white - the perfect image of a winter break read.

As a disclaimer, I am NOT a sportsperson. Nonetheless, I was drawn to *Beartown*, which tells the story of a high school hockey team in Beartown (presumably somewhere in the mountainous countryside of Sweden, where Backman is from) and how one player takes advantage of an innocent girl. This story surprised me. I was amazed at how many relevant topics Backman was able to tactfully cram into one book. *Beartown* is "an incredible story about how one instance [sexual assault] can affect an entire community," according to Hanna Bobrowicz '20, another fan of the novel. The novel is told in third-person omniscient, and narrative focus constantly shifts between each character. However, "The reader does not need the character's inner thoughts to understand their motives or their feelings; Backman gives us all the insights we need by these revealing moments of action," reveals Lizzie Schwartz, Northeastern University '21.

At the forefront of the novel is Kevin Erdhal, hockey star of the Beartown junior team destined to skate his way to the NHL. Kevin is the central character of the novel. However, I connected more with his best friend on the sidelines, Benji. Kevin and Benji's friendship goes much deeper than hockey as they understand each others' mannerisms and deepest insecurities before the other knows it for himself. Despite their friendship, Kevin and Benji are divided by their socioeconomic class: Kevin comes from a privileged family while Benji lives in a tiny house on the fringes of the Hollow (the slums of Beartown). I can confidently say that Benji is my favorite literary character, perhaps ever, for his complexity. He hides his homosexuality from those closest to him and grapples with his father's suicide, an addiction to alcohol and drugs, and a tendency to act out in violent measures. Benji is also constantly sleeping which begs the question of whether he suffers from narcolepsy or depression. Despite his secrets, Benji is the moral compass of *Beartown* and does not put up with the unethi-

cal drama that ensues.

I learned a lot about how a club hockey team works from the novel. A club is composed of coaches (David, Lars, and Sune), a president, and a General Manager (GM). The GM of Beartown Hockey is Peter Andersson, who made it to NHL despite coming from a small, rural town. Despite his success story, Peter and his wife Kira have a complicated past, which makes their love that much stronger. In fact, Kira calls Peter every day to make sure he took the right car to work, knowing he did, just to make sure he is still breathing (a reflex since the passing of their first born son). Again, actions trump words. Similar to their parents Peter and Kira, Maya and Leo share the typical sibling friction, but Leo is there for Maya when she needs him most, especially when she is raped.

In the beginning, I found myself rooting for Kevin and Maya's relationship -- Backman romantically describes how Kevin's eyes drifted towards Maya's in the hallway at school and her heart began to flutter. Suddenly romanticism turns to realism in a later scene where Kevin brings Maya to his room and pins down her wrists on his bed, penetrating her despite her persistent screams. Schwartz says, "following Maya's rape, the reader doesn't only feel badly for Maya and her family. I had sympathy for Amat, for Kevin's mom, and most amazingly, I felt badly for Kevin. That is how I know Backman did an amazing job at writing about rape." Maya is the victim, but Kevin's environment - growing up with parents who did not show their love for him, experiencing immense pressures, and constantly being told to 'win' - perhaps influenced this outcome. Rape is a heinous crime, but Backman paints how complicated the trail to this crime can be, explaining why a rape victim does not always come forward right away and how one's environment can shape one's personhood in the future.

Ana, Maya's friend and the female version of Benji, is not there for her best friend when she needs her the most (something which haunts her throughout the novel). Instead the only witness of Maya's rape is Amat: the new hockey recruit. Wicked fast (pardon the Boston jargon), Amat is on his way to being the next star hockey player and gets time on the ice during the semi-final game. But like Benji, he has his secrets, too. He lives with his single mother in a small apartment in the Hollows, is bullied at school, faces discrimination because of his Middle Eastern descent, and dedicates each morning to hockey drills. Despite this, he is deeply in love with hockey. And Maya.

When Maya reveals the truth to her parents and Beartown, the reader learns why so many rape survivors do not follow Maya's brave footsteps. Maya tells Ana that if she doesn't come forward, then Kevin only hurt her, but if she comes forward to the police then it will hurt her friends and family and the town as a whole. Footnote, Beartown's economy is not so great and if they were to win the final, a hockey academy would be built in Beartown, which would bring jobs and income back into the market. Ultimately, Maya shares her story because she realizes that if she does not come forward, Kevin may go on to hurt other girls.

Hockey players, parents, girls, and authority members reject Maya's claim and treat her and her family like selfish lepers trying to take fame and glory away from Kevin. Maya becomes a target at school and in town: dirty words are written on her locker and a brick is thrown through her window. She is no longer the confident Maya at the beginning of the novel. She is stronger.

Maya and the reader finally achieve justice at the end of the novel when Amat bravely comes forward -- after too long if you ask me, but his efforts to secure a safe career and home for this mother are resting on his adolescent shoulders -- and tells the club the truth about what happened. Kira -- a working mom and a remarkable lawyer -- is still left unsatisfied as her lawsuit against Kevin does not make it to court. Kevin and other players go to Hed, the other nearby hockey town, where it is implied they start up a new team. His future will be the same as it was before: no time in jail, no punishment. Maya takes that into her own hands. I won't spoil what she does (you will have to read *Beartown* to find out) but I will say this: never have I felt more impressed and empowered by a female character in my reading career.

The story ends with a flash forward to where the characters will be in the future. Maya becomes a famous guitarist and singer. Kevin marries and, ironically, takes his wife to one of Maya's concerts. Benji and Amat's future is vague, but I like to believe they take their passion for hockey and friendship into the world to make it a better place. Despite what hockey did to Beartown and what it did to Maya, it is not a bad sport. A central question in the novel is where does hockey end and the rest of the world begin. Is it possible for hockey to exist outside of the world and for players to reap no consequences for their actions off the ice? I hope to find an answer in the sequel, *Us Against You*. •

## 2019 Oscar Nominations

FIONA HULL  
CONTRIBUTOR

The 91st Academy Awards nominations have hit the presses and with the announcement comes the mixed reaction of praise and fiery backlash. To start, out of the ten possible nominations for Best Picture the Academy chose only eight, much to the chagrin of critics. Surprisingly, but deservedly, Netflix's *Roma* made the cut, as well as Marvel's *Black Panther*. Yet the Academy seemed to waste important slots on extremely mediocre films. *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *Green Book*, and *Vice* all fell short of box-office and public appeal expectations. Still, the Academy insists on the inclusion of the much-criticized biopic and two run-of-the-mill original screenplays.

I was surprised to see the Freddie Mercury film among the squadron of Best Picture nominees due to its pushback from the queer community for the film's apparent straight-washing and failure to accurately portray Mercury's fatal battle with AIDS. Even Rami Malek (Freddie Mercury) confessed to the film's shortcomings, so it seems like a bold choice for the Academy to include it over other obvious choices like Barry Jenkins's *If Beale Street Could Talk*, a major snub in the Oscar community. Further, *Green Book* and *Vice* both did not live up to their expected hype but remain on the shortlist for Best Picture. *Green Book* tried to portray a racially relevant historical narrative but was unsurprisingly inaccurate.

The Academy persists in recognizing films that consistently get mediocre reviews and repeatedly keep in circulation Academy regulars like Chris McKay. This year the Academy failed to recognize popular and moving films like Bo Burnham's raw coming-of-age story *Eighth Grade* and Boots Riley's witty critique of capitalism, *Sorry to Bother You*. I was willing to concede *Vice* to Best Picture, a crack at the Cheney and Bush administration, and with its star-studded cast (Sam Rockwell, Christian Bale), it was an obvious pick for the Academy despite its rocky writing. But the Academy also tacked the film on the list for Best Original Screenplay, which seems absurd. *Vice* was consistently criticized for its sloppy screen-writing, and even an amateur moviegoer could sense McKay's desperation with ill-timed jokes and messy plot. *Vice* was carried by its cast not its writing. Therefore, it should not be on the list for Best Original

Screenplay, a much-coveted list for directors and writers.

*A Star is Born* got the expected major nods, getting on the list for Best Picture and Best Adapted Screenplay with Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper both receiving nominations for acting performance. Some backlash has been heard about Cooper not receiving a nod for his debut as director, and I agree to an extent. Best Director seems like a hodge-podge group of men this year and that is because, well, it is. McKay made the short list for *Vice*, which is an undeserved nomination for a movie that fell short after his major success *The Big Short*. But worse, the Academy has come under heavy criticism for not nominating any women in the Best Director category, and undoubtedly women showed up directing movies this year with Marielle Heller's *Can You Ever Forgive Me* and Chloe Zhao's *The Rider*. Yet, the Academy has refused to recognize diverse artists across gender lines.

Finally, moving into Visual Effects, the category I am most heated about. *Paddington 2* (which has 100% on Rotten Tomatoes mind you) did not make the final list for Best Visual Effects which is beyond shocking and the outcry has been heard from the masses. Further, the Academy included *Avengers Infinity War* but not critically acclaimed *Black Panther* for this category. *Black Panther* deserves the nod equally, if not more so. Both Best Actor and Best Actress and Supporting respectively were fairly predictable and well-deserved. A nod should be given to Yalitza Aparicio for making the ranks, a much deserved performance in *Roma* placed this indigenous actress among the star-studded ranks. But honestly, Ethan Hawke (*First Reformed*) outperformed Viggo Mortensen (*Green Book*) and should be nominated accordingly. Musically, many think *A Star is Born*'s original song "Shallow" will take the win, and I have to say I agree. It has mass appeal and, well, it's objectively a great song; after all, who knew Bradley Cooper had pipes?

The winners will be announced when the broadcast hits the airwaves on February 24, and although the Academy cannot seem to stay away from nominating problematic movies, it also added a diverse pool to Best Picture, and attempted to expand its pool. But I say it's not enough. What's popular in movies today is changing, and the Academy is failing or at least too slow to recognize this change. Despite this, I still will definitely be tuning in to hopefully see Lady Gaga belt "Shallow" live and see Lin Manuel Miranda swing wildly from a light post! •

### Relevant Nominations

Best Picture:	Best Actor in a Leading Role:	Best Actress in a Leading Role:	Best Director:	Best Visual Effects:	Best Adapted Screenplay:	Best Original Screenplay:
"Black Panther"	Christian Bale-	Yalitza Aparicio-	Spike Lee-	"Avengers: Infinity War"	"The Ballad of Buster Scruggs"	"The Favourite"
"BlacKkKlansman"	"Vice"	"Roma"	"BlacKkKlansmen"	"Christopher Robin"	"BlacKkKlansman"	"First Reformed"
"Bohemian Rhapsody"	Bradley Cooper-	Glenn Close-	Pawel Pawlikowski-	"First Man"	"Can You Ever Forgive Me?"	"Green Book"
"The Favourite"	"A Star is Born"	"The Wife"	"Cold War"	"Ready Player One"	"If Beale Street Could Talk"	"Roma"
"Green Book"	Willem Dafoe-	Olivia Colman-	Yorgos Lanthimos-	"Solo: A Star Wars Story"	"A Star is Born"	"Vice"
"Roma"	"At Eternity's Gate"	"The Favourite"	"The Favourite"			
"A Star Is Born"	Rami Malek-	Emma Stone-	Alfonso Cuaron-			
"Vice"	"Bohemian Rhapsody"	"The Favourite"	"Roma"			
	Viggo Mortensen-	Lady Gaga- "A Star is Born"	Adam McKay-			
	"Green Book"		"Vice"			



## Review: *Bumblebee*

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Prime (voiced by the legendary Peter Cullen) to initiate an escape plan. It is because of this plan that Bumblebee gets sent to Earth, and after a brief confrontation, he goes into a dormant state, unable to remember anything. The story then shifts to the perspective of Charlie Watson, a teenager shaken by the passing of her father and trying to move on with her life. It is where these two characters meet that the story turns into one of self-exploration and family.

If you are expecting to walk into *Bumblebee* and see everything explode, the military deploy everything it has onto aliens, *Bumblebee* is not the film for you. *Bumblebee* successfully shrinks the scope of the story down, as there are much fewer antagonists and side characters. Every character's motivation is explained and their arcs make sense, unlike most of the characters within Bay's *Transformers* films.

The score of *Bumblebee* is much more at the forefront this time. The 80s songs are meant to highlight the period as well as the mental state of Charlie, while the dramatic, orchestral pieces are meant to highlight the importance of an irreversible event. Even Hailee Steinfeld, the actress playing Charlie Watson, has a special song for the film, which seems to be a nice gesture.

Besides the score, the color scheme is much more unique and purposeful in *Bumblebee*. Compared to the high-contrast, orange and blue, harsh, sharp colors of Bayhem, *Bumblebee* opts for a softer, more diffused, almost pastel color palette. The movie presents itself as a warmer, more genuine film. Bumblebee is noticeable with his yellow chassis, a trademark that increases the comedy when he is left alone in Charlie's home composed of light greens and light browns.

The camerawork and editing of *Bumblebee* are much more clear as well. One is able to comprehend who is fighting whom, where are they fighting, and where are they in relation to everything else in the setting. The cuts are less harsh, the camera is fluid and follows the action. There are some long takes within the movie to take in every moving part of the Autobots and Decepticons in their full glory. The designers have made the Autobots and Decepticons in a way in which what they transform into is clear during their robot form.

One element that stands out is the characteristics of the Decepticons and how they contrast Bumblebee's. Shatter and Dropkick, unlike in the previous movies, have clear and distinct personalities. They are willing to betray, joke and even taunt. In comparison to them, Bumblebee is friendly, willing to sacrifice and joke. Although John Cena and Hailee Steinfeld do a good job with their roles as well, Bumblebee steals the spotlight in every scene he is in.

Overall, if you like *Transformers* as a concept, but have not enjoyed Michael Bay's interpretation of them, *Bumblebee* will be a breath of fresh air for you. If you are looking for a good time and a modern re-interpretation of *The Iron Giant* arc, *Bumblebee* is a good time. •

## *black odyssey*: A Review

ELYCE AFRIFA  
CONTRIBUTOR

At the end of last semester, my FYS Professor Nina Papanthanasopoulou asked our class if we wanted to see a play called *black odyssey*. I was excited because I am a huge theater lover and enjoyed the parts of my FYS that dealt more with Greek plays rather than epics like *The Iliad*. However, at the beginning of this semester I almost forgot about the trip, and when I got the email reminder from the professor I realized there was a small problem: I had rehearsals for the spring musical the same day and time of the play. I knew that going on the trip would mean seeing a possibly good show with my FYS classmates; however, getting back to Conn very late and missing rehearsal reigned supreme in my mind. After seeing the performance I am glad I didn't let the cons of going stop me.

I didn't know what to expect when I went to see the show, but assumed *black odyssey* was a play with an African American cast telling Homer's *Odyssey* in a modern way, similar to a previous play I saw by The Classical Theatre of Harlem's rendition of *Antigone* at the Marcus Garvey theater in Harlem. My assumptions were correct, but *black odyssey* exceeded all of my high expectations. This play had more modern costumes with hints of African print incorporated into it. It was set just after 9/11 and then fast forwarded to the present. There were also a lot of references to *The Odyssey* and Greek myths. For example, Poseidon, god of the sea, went in disguise in the play and used the last name "Flood." That earned a few giggles from the audience. Halfway through the play, I realized the infamous suitors in *The Odyssey* weren't in *black odyssey*. Instead towards the end, Poseidon goes in disguise again and his last name becomes Suitor because he sells suits. I also found this pretty funny. Finally, there was a scene when "Nela" or the Penelope character spoke to Athena in disguise. Athena was keeping her hopes up by saying that Ulysses (Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey*) was still alive, yet Nela remained doubtful and said to Athena, "You have been weaving this story." At this moment in the play I was transported back to reading *The Odyssey* when Penelope weaves a death shroud for her presumed dead husband Ulysses

yet keeps unweaving it, because she promised her suitors that when she finished it she would remarry. Penelope had been stalling in *The Odyssey*. In the *black odyssey* the playwright, Marcus Gardley, used the word "weaving" in this instance to show how Athena had been doing the same thing -- stalling for Ulysses to come back. It was the little references like these that made me appreciate the script so much. Finding them were like finding little nuggets of gold, and it made me want to meet Gardley and learn about how he came up with them.

Gadley's reinterpretation of Ulysses was apparent both in thematic content and costume design. One particular detail that struck me was *black odyssey's* choice not to portray Poseidon's cyclops son Poly-

phemus as a monster but instead a man with an eye patch. In other words, in *black odyssey* he was an innocent civilian in war-torn Afghanistan, while in the epic he appears to be

more of a villain. This change in appearance influenced how

the audience perceived Ulysses in *black odyssey*. In *The Odyssey* the audience roots for Ulysses to poke out Polyphemus' eye, but in *black odyssey* it almost villainizes Ulysses. The actor who plays Ulysses' son also plays Polyphemus. When the audience sees Ulysses shooting at his "son," they understand that his son, just like Polyphemus, who has an eyepatch and wears typical Arab clothing, can be judged based on appearance and die just because of how he looks.

Overall, I loved how *black odyssey* combined African-American history with Homer's original. One striking image was when Ulysses is traveling through time and his final destination is the time of slavery. During this scene and time period, Ulysses is being bound with chains. His son on the other side of him -- representing the present time -- is being handcuffed by a police officer. The detainment of Ulysses' son, a black man, at the hands of the police just because of his appearance shows the continual legacy of racial brutality since the days of slavery. Ulysses in fact goes back in time often in *black odyssey*, an element that I liked, in order to find his lineage and understand his history--especially as it relates to African-American history. All-in-all, it is commendable that a piece of Greek text was used to make a statement about the African-American experience in America in an intelligent and not so blatant way. •



Image Courtesy of Author