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CHATGPT AND THE DEATH OF EDUCATION

How OpenAI's chatbot can change the way we learn.

BY MARBELLA MARLO '24

How did the media impact public perception during the Cold War?

In less than 20 seconds, Chat GPT was able to give me four ledes to my history essay: propaganda, news coverage, popular culture, and fear and anxiety, as well as thorough, 2-3 sentence explanations for each.

I then inputted, *Can you give me some sources?* And in return, the algorithm returned five legitimate, scholarly reviewed sources with plausible content.

Launched last November, ChatGPT has transformed the traditional search engine. It broke one million users within one week of its launch and had over thirteen million users in January 2023. The service stands for Generative Pre-trained Transformer, and according to Harvard Professor of Computer Science Boaz Barak, "is not as comprehensive and up-to-date as Google, but it can respond to questions by integrating knowledge from several different sources into one coherent answer." ChatGPT can answer myriad questions, from debugging code, predicting the weather, and even writing love poetry. However, ChatGPT is not a substitute for the human mind.

When the first search engines—JumpStation, the World Wide Web, and Gopher—were released to the public in the early 90s, their usage, most commonly on college campuses, was restricted to accessing and distributing online information. Despite these search engines' relative mystery and inaccessibility for anyone without licenses or predetermined hyperlinks, they inaugurated a waterfall of information circulation that dictates much of academia today. Indices died and resurrected into websites. Research no longer required librarian guidance. Hours spent in the library looking for materials evaporated into seconds of typing a few words into Google.

Queue ChatGPT, once again, igniting a research revolution. Though still in its infancy, the search engine has already surpassed benchmarks few companies can boast. Yet like the above mentioned technologies, which have since led to groundbreaking resources such as Google and its satellite-academic aid Google Scholar, ChatGPT's inherent immediacy will further empower humanity to understand the world faster, deeper, and with alarmingly believable metrics.

Chief Scientist at MosaicML and incoming Assistant Professor of Computer Science at Harvard Jonathan Frankle noted his reservations with the algorithm's impact on education. "I'm 100% sure that it's affecting the academic integrity at Harvard and other campuses," he said. "And I'm 100%

sure that it's only going to become more of a problem."

In spite of his certainty of the service's correlation to cheating, Frankle does not fear ChatGPT's holistic impact on education. Admitting that ChatGPT will require "us to change how we assess learning," he relates the automated chatbot to the impact of a calculator, insofar that assignments and exams will need to be able to assess a students' knowledge without the use of these tools.

Many of Frankle's colleagues agree. Krzysztof Gajos, Computer Science professor and leader of the Intelligent Interactive Systems Group at Harvard, explained that due to the project based nature of his curriculum, "students learn and demonstrate their learning by making and explaining complex decisions." He mentions that he does "not feel like the large language models (including ChatGPT) impact [his] teaching in any way." In order to cover written parts of assignments, Gajos endorsed using policies instilled by arXiv, an online archive that includes scientific papers in most STEM fields. Current arXiv policies include requiring authors to report any use of "sophisticated tools, such as instruments and software," and preventing authors from listing AI language tools as an author in their resources.

In a recent interview with the *Harvard Gazette*, cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker explains that not only is ChatGPT's output "easy to unmask because it mashes up quotations and references that don't exist," but also that large language models like ChatGPT "might deepen our appreciation of what human understanding does consist of when we contrast it with systems that superficially seem to duplicate it."

The appearance of ChatGPT in the academic sphere arguably represents the inev-

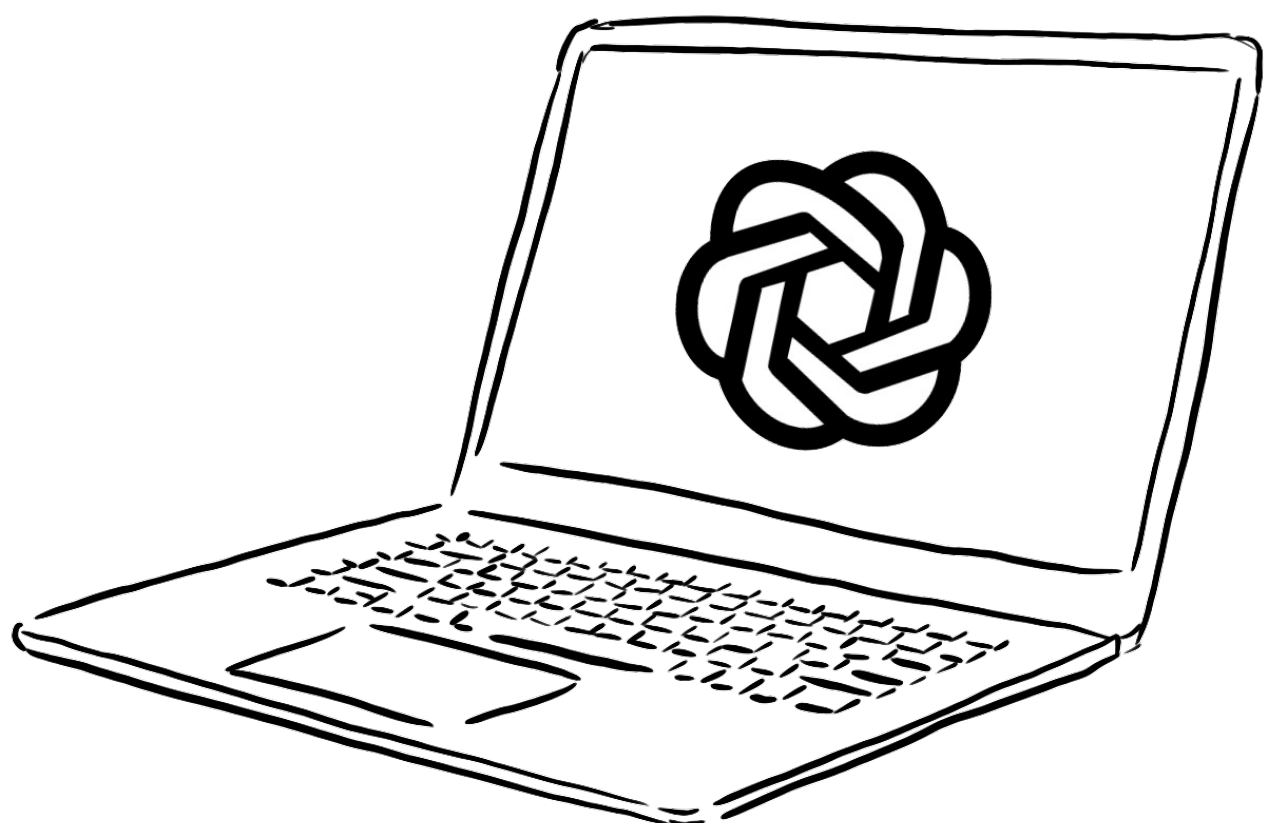
itable trajectory of human invention towards something that produces a more accessible and accurate understanding of the world. Just as the internet and calculators allowed us to instantaneously communicate, exchange, and manipulate data, ChatGPT will further accelerate our access to information.

Over time, this rapid technological advancement has and will continue to distinguish human cognitive ability from that of a computer. Descartes argued that reason alone could determine knowledge, and that the very act of thinking proves human existence. Yet ChatGPT proves that even the most advanced technology struggles to answer the most basic questions, ergo ruling it out as an independent thinker. Pinker, in his interview with the *Gazette*, explained his pleasant surprise when he asked a simple question to the chatbot: does being alive at 9am and 5pm mean being alive at noon? This yielded an incoherent response, "unspecified." Pinker argued that this proved the technology's fallibility.

Only time will tell how ChatGPT will impact society on an academic, social, and political level. Yet this is not the first time technology has proved its arguably super-human abilities—calculating and compiling endless hordes of information. This will also not be the last. The question then becomes how to properly adjust our lives to technology, and utilize it in a way that improves, rather than delegitimizes, the lives of the common good.

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GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26



WHERE ANONYMITY BREEDS CONTENT

Almost one year on, Sidechat has produced some of the best content on campus.

BY ALEXANDRA FRIEDLANDER '25

Last March, I was given a single Insomnia cookie in exchange for downloading yet another app that was attempting to launch in front of Harvard's Science Center. Almost one year later, and what seemed like just another tech startup has produced some of the funniest and most controversial content on campus.

Sidechat, an app that allows students to post anonymously within a school's network, has enabled students to express grievances and share out of pocket content that they would likely not otherwise share if their names were attached. One must simply enter their school email when creating their profile and they will be directed to a private network containing school-specific content.

Sidechat was first launched at private universities like Harvard, Brown, Tufts, and Princeton and has since spread to universities across the nation. Since the app launched, additional networks have been made available for anyone to join. Users can receive content ranging from sex advice to Taylor Swift fan groups. Sidechat takes the best features from Reddit and Yik-Yak, combining community based threads with anonymity. One additional feature built into Sidechat's structure, however, is that users' posts are tracked and stored on the back end of the app. Therefore, programmers are able to hold users accountable and can monitor what is shared on their platform (<https://www.sidechat.lol/terms-of-service>).

The trending conversations on Sidechat are dependent on the time of year and what is happening on campus. Currently, first-years are expressing their stress and excitement surrounding the blocking process. Other Harvard specific topics, like final clubs, student politics, and the eternally controversial HUDS food, remain hot topics throughout the year. Sidechat serves as more than just a social app. Students provide reactions to school wide emails and events and

which courses to take, serving as an uncensored replacement to the infamous "Q Guide."

With over one thousand upvotes, the most popular Harvard Sidechat post includes an image of a student unknowingly smoking next to Dean Khurana during Yardfest, with the caption: "when u realize ur smoking next to dean khurana"

Sidechat is also used to poke fun at Harvard's housing mania, which serves as a

shared experience among most students on campus. In this post, with over 700 upvotes, a student is poking fun at Harvard's seemingly last minute overflow housing distribution, comparing it to a DIY project.

Because all students on the main channel attend Harvard, they have all most likely experienced imposter syndrome or some sort of insecurity trying to keep up with their peers. The post below exposes a shared experience that may not have been expressed had anonymity not been maintained.

These particular examples demonstrate the importance of Sidechat's anonymity in wildly different ways. The first image demonstrates the increase in visibility of *fun*—people would typically be pretty shy to attach their name to obvious smoking imagery, let alone in Harvard Yard. Second, regarding the overflow housing, the theme of Harvard criticism is particularly rampant, with students' problems seemingly amplified tenfold (or perhaps just made more visible and realized). Finally, a student demonstrates that perfect grades are not necessarily the status-quo, with the intent on normalizing imperfections that Harvard students so desperately avoid.



when u realize ur smoking next to dean khurana

↑
1.0K
↓



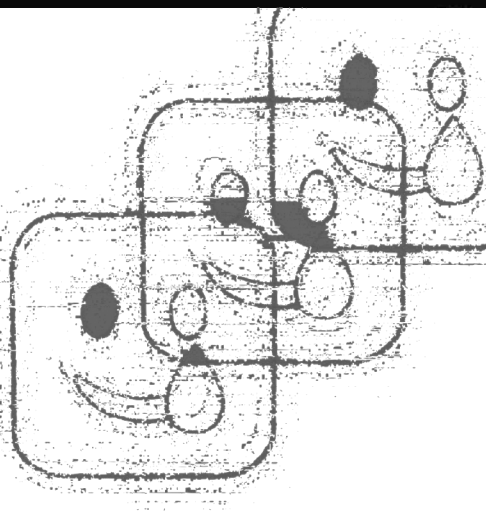
upvote if u have gotten a B+ or lower in a class before (trying to prove a point)

↑
635
↓



Harvard building new overflow housing

↑
787
↓



ALEXANDRA FRIEDLANDER '25
(AFRIEDLANDER@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) IS
DELETING SIDECHAT AFTER
WRITING THIS ARTICLE.

GRAPHIC BY CANDACE
GARDNER '25

"THE NARRATIVE CAN SET YOU FREE"

Darren Walker, accompanied by Henry Louis Gates Jr and Douglas Elmendorf, take the IOP stage.

BY LAYLA CHAARAOUI '26

"Social justice is the notion that every person deserves to live with dignity," Darren Walker proclaimed to the packed audience attending the JFK Jr. Forum at the Institute of Politics. On February 21st, 2023, Walker, alongside Douglas Elmendorf and Henry Louis Gates Jr, joined the Harvard Kennedy School and the Hutchins Center for African American Research for a conversation entitled "Philanthropy and Social Justice."

The discussion was centered around the life and journey of Walker, who currently serves as president of the Ford Foundation, an organization dedicated to investing in global issues and bringing about social change. Gates—current professor, filmmaker, and director of the Hutchins Center—presented questions to Walker. Elmendorf, the Dean of Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, moderated the event.

Walker began by explaining his background, framing his life's journey as a complete circle. In 1965, Walker was enrolled in the first class of Head Start, a program which serves disadvantaged children and families through access to early childhood education, health, and childcare services. "The actual piloting work of Head Start was a Ford Foundation grant," said Walker. Impacted by philanthropic efforts at such a formative age, Walker has dedicated his life's work to the service of others.

Walker transformed the Ford Foundation's mission to add additional focus on inequality and social justice. Walker said, "The way in which inequality takes hold in a society through policy that continues to marginalize. Our mission was in part to strengthen democracy... Inequality asphyxiates hope [and] hope is the oxygen of democracy."

Walker also proposed his own definition of philanthropy, citing leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., Carnegie, and Rockefeller as those who shaped his perception of the cause. "[You must] interrogate your complicity in the very thing you profess to solve. It just for

me had a profound impact on how I thought about the work of philanthropy and the work of an institution like Ford. What are you gonna use this privilege for?" Walker asked. "It is looking at society through the lens of systemic [and] structural privilege that advantages the already advantaged, and disadvantages the already disadvantaged."

Walker's definition of philanthropy and his approach toward social change as a means to pay attention to what is uncomfortable also stems from his pro-capitalist beliefs.

Walker called out the systems that were built upon racist, predetermined outcomes and denounced common hypocrisies in modern philanthropy. "Why is anyone surprised that our prisons are black, brown, and poor white people? Why is our housing so segregated? Why would an educational system have such inequity?"

"To me, philanthropy's role is to interrogate and engage in our own complicity. The Ford Foundation cannot be one of the largest investors in the reform of our criminal justice system and have endowment that invests in private prisons," Walker explained. In philanthropy, I would love to say that that contradiction does not exist but that would not be truthful. That contradiction has existed, and there are similar contradictions."

This particular forum took three years to put together due to the interruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Elmendorf. Elmendorf was excited to get the event back on the calendar, as he feels its topic directly aligns with the philosophy of the Kennedy School: "Professor Gates proposed this [forum] three and a half years ago. Darren Walker had just finished a book about a new approach to philanthropy. The Kennedy School's mission is to advance public interest and serve broad public services. Civil society philanthropy is an important element of that, so this was a topic that was right at the heart of the Kennedy School's work."

Students in attendance were intrigued by various points and explanations Walker made throughout the conversation. "Something that I thought was really interesting was he said that the best way to give back to different communities was not partnering with elite institutions. Even though most people believe that those institutions have the most power... the Ford Foundation has been making more efforts to partner with more grassroots and community-based organizations that are actually working on the ground," stated Tsion Debebe '26.

Debebe also found interest in Walker's claims regarding social justice research, and how the sufficient research that has been done is ignored by companies, meaning philanthropy



needs to be more involved. "[He said that] the reason that it is not being put into action is because a lot of companies are not investing into those issues."

Others were surprised at some of Walker's opinions. Walker is a self-declared capitalist and believes capitalism should be an inclusive form. "He embraced the thought process of Carnegie and [other] titans of industry that some could argue had too much wealth... [It was surprising that] as someone who was in charge of doing so much work to give back to others, he was so willing to embrace the thought process of titans of industry," said Jonathan Haileleselasse '26.

Audience questions at the end of the forum included topics such as philanthropy for children's causes, further investment toward equality for those with disabilities, and the responsibility of wealthy institutions. Walker was also asked to give advice to a student seeking a career in philanthropy and service, to which he responded "Do the work that allows you to have connections with something you are passionate about."

Gates' and Walker's discussion explored what philanthropy truly is, and its intersection with social justice. Walker's takes diverge from what seems to be the predominant take in modern philanthropic practices, as do his beliefs surrounding capitalism and how we can use privilege to effect change in a profound way. "We need to interrogate our own engagement in these issues and that makes us really uncomfortable," Walker said. "One of the great things about privilege is that privilege and wealth insulate you from being uncomfortable. It's the whole idea of privilege."

LAYLA CHAARAOUI '26 (LAYLACHAARAOUI@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITES NEWS FOR THE *INDEPENDENT*.



LOOTER SCOOTER

Thirteen motor scooters are stolen over four days on Harvard's open campus.

BY RYAN GOLEMME '23

Motor scooters remain a constant presence at Harvard, most often used by athletes who want to travel between the athletic facilities—located across the river—and the rest of campus. Despite occasional jokes about errant sidewalk riders and certain classes that seem to attract higher quantities of scooter users, they have become a mainstay in the backs of lecture halls, house hallways, and even on bike racks.

However, a recent spate of scooter thefts has plagued Harvard, leaving scooter owners of all types out to dry. According to the Harvard University Police logs, thirteen electric motor scooters were reported stolen between February 6th and 9th. Of those, five were stolen on February 8th, and six more were stolen on February 9th. The total value of all the reported stolen scooters was \$7,569. The most expensive scooter stolen was valued at \$1,350. All but one of the scooters were reported as “unattended and unsecured.” While petty thefts are not uncommon in a city like Cambridge, no other motor scooter thefts had occurred since the start of the semester until the sudden four-day spike.

Nine of the thirteen scooters were stolen from the Science Center, and all but one occurred between 3 and 6 PM. Even though many of Harvard's academic buildings in the yard do not have card swipe, the Science Center, which lies between major roads, frequently has non-students and guests walking through. By hosting some of Harvard's largest lecture classes and study spaces, the Science Center invites numerous students and strangers to pass through each day. The Fogg Museum was the next closest with two; Sever Hall and the Peabody Terrace each had one.

The spike also raised suspicions that the thefts were coordinated. An hour after a sixth scooter was stolen on February 9th, HUPD patrols issued trespass warnings to two groups of people near the Science Center and Thayer Hall that match identified suspects. The two groups found at the Science Center had no active warrants and were given a verbal warning, but one individual in the Thayer group had a scooter with them that matched the characteristics of one of the recent stolen scooters. After confirming that they also had no active warrants, the police apprehended the scooter and gave the group a warning. No arrests were made on either patrol.

No additional scooter thefts were reported until February 13th, where two scooters were stolen from Pfoho House and Annenberg Hall. No scooters have been reported as stolen at the time of this article's publication.

The report notes that many student scooters were “unfastened and unsecured,” implying some onus on the students who left them without any protection. However, the dedicated racks at the Science Center front en-

trance hold only eight scooters, leaving students to bring them inside the building, which is less secure by comparison. While the scooters are the property and responsibility of Harvard students, the Science Center also has a Securitas team on duty in the Science Center that failed to catch nine thefts in four days. In the days since the thefts, the most marked change is a handwritten taped note telling students not to leave them parked against Cabot Library.

Harvard's policies try to maintain a public, walkable university environment, but this comes with the challenges of living in the middle of a large city. Outside visitors are mostly free to walk into the Yard-centered academic buildings during the daytime, and while many of them host public events throughout, this comes with the tradeoff of enabling strangers to enter and potentially steal unsecured items. Harvard's administration warns first-years about keeping their windows locked at night to deter thefts that often occur in the Yard, and Houses also have nominal warnings about not letting strangers in through open doors. Similar guidance for the University's classroom settings is not as stringent.

Other semi-public areas of campus have made security changes in response to similar challenges. The Smith Campus Center installed more card swipe scan points for the inner Student Commons area this spring semester. By comparison, the most noticeable effort in the Yard was the temporary checkpoint restrictions placed in the Fall of 2021 as a result of COVID, but that only applied starting at 5:00 PM and did not include areas like the Science Center. The restrictions were lifted that Octo-

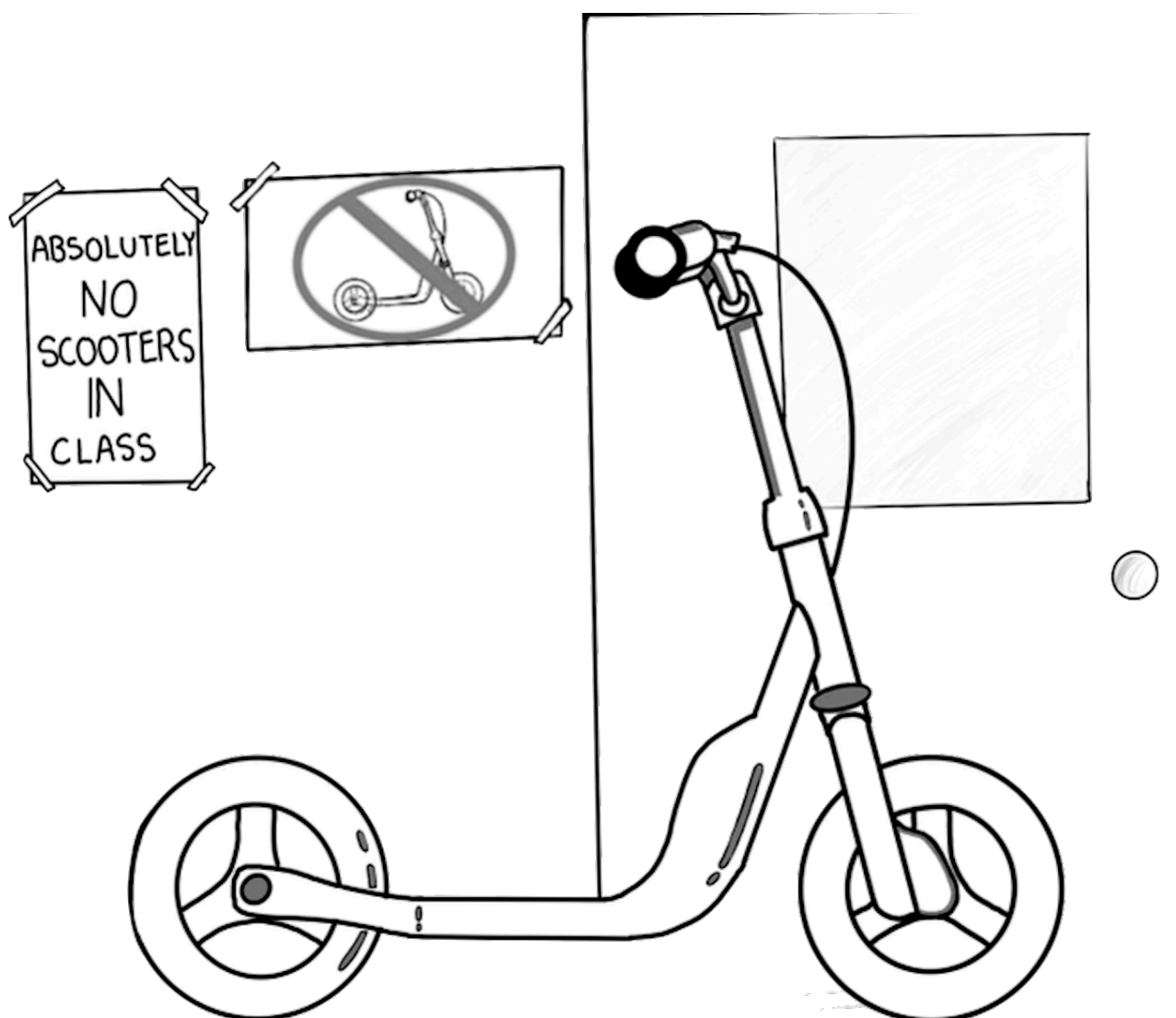
ber, though not without many criticisms from students about the inconveniences.

Police patrols in the Yard resulted in at least one scooter getting returned, but the active presence of police on campus has resulted in occasional flare ups from faculty and students. An HUPD substation that opened at Mather House in 2005 closed down in 2022 after years of complaints about some students and house staff feeling intimidated by its presence, as well as less relative use. Increased patrols in key areas of the Yard would have to contend with the already fraught relationship between the HUPD and some students and groups, and it is unclear if the HUPD wants to risk that over motor scooters.

Motor scooter thefts have not occurred to the extent of the four-day spike, but the ease with which they happened poses a reminder for both motorist students and Harvard as a whole about the risks of the University's centralized location in Cambridge. Whether that comes through adding more scooter racks, increasing direct security or police presence in the Yard or other reforms, scooter-bound students have another thing to keep their eye on in the meantime besides their speed.

RYAN GOLEMME '23 (RYANGO-
LEMM@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU),
WHO HASN'T TOUCHED ANY KIND OF
SCOOTER SINCE FIFTH GRADE AND
ENJOYS MAGIC, WRITES NEWS FOR
THE INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY ISABEL EDDY '24



HARVARD DECLARES DIVERSITY, BUT TO WHAT EXTENT?

Harvard tries to prioritize diversity in its students but not its faculty.

BY LAYLA CHAARAOUI '26

Harvard claims diversity is essential to maximize learning and will go as far as taking issues to the Supreme Court, such as the 2021 Affirmative Action case, to ensure it has a diverse student body. The current annual report of Harvard's Faculty Demographics suggests this philosophy only applies to diversifying the student body, as 73% of the faculty at Harvard University are white, and 12% of faculty are Black. But, according to Harvard's Admissions Statistics for the Class of 2026, 15.2% of admitted students fell under the demographic grouping of African-American within a total of 59.4% of students coming from a minority background. Why is there such a large gap?

According to Harvard University's Office for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, Harvard's aims to "fully embrace" students from different backgrounds and races. If this were the case, however, how come the Black student population at Harvard lacks representation in its faculty? If Harvard wants to truly create diversity amongst its campus, then they cannot stop at just admissions statistics. Harvard needs to hire more Black faculty to ensure that Black students feel included within the classroom. What goes on inside the campus is just as important as the numbers that the public sees.

Black students at Harvard could benefit in a number of ways if there were an increase in Black faculty. They could network, meet mentors to guide them down their career path, talk to professors with experiences similar to their own, and feel more understood within the classroom and campus setting. Student to faculty relationships are just as important as student to student relationships are.

However, many Black undergraduates feel disconnected from their teachers and the classes they teach. "As students, we want to be taught by someone that gets us, that understands our various identities within a diaspora, and someone that is aware of how many external factors make their way into our lives and our classrooms," Said Chaelon Simpson '26, the Inclusivity Chair of the Harvard First-Year Black Table (FBT). "Not having enough faculty of color, specifically Black faculty, can hinder that."

Alex Fernand '26, member of the Association of Black Harvard Women, as well as the Greener Scott Scholars, shared Simpson's sentiment. "I think it's important

to see yourself in high positions, especially in predominantly-white elite spaces such as Harvard. Most of my teachers are white or white-passing, so not seeing myself reflecting in those who teach me, it can be hard to internalize those lessons the same way I'm sure having Black educators would," she said.

But, after only a semester at Harvard, Simpson has grown accustomed to non-Black professors and the lack of Black representation in Harvard's professors. "For me, it has been unusual to have a Black professor unless I'm taking an [African and African-American Studies] Department class, which even then having a Black professor is not guaranteed," he said. Out of nearly 1,500 faculty members at Harvard, only 78 faculty members are Black.

In addition to benefiting black stu-

"AS STUDENTS, WE WANT TO BE TAUGHT BY SOMEONE THAT GETS US, THAT UNDERSTANDS OUR VARIOUS IDENTITIES WITHIN A DIASPORA, AND SOMEONE THAT IS AWARE OF HOW MANY EXTERNAL FACTORS MAKE THEIR WAY INTO OUR LIVES AND OUR CLASSROOMS"

— CHAELON SIMPSON '26

dents' professional experiences at Harvard, an increase in the number of black professors will also provide a safer space for Black students in classrooms, as well as a place where *all* Harvard students can properly learn of Black history and injustices. "Black teachers matter because they can disrupt harmful rhetoric and exclusionary practices [and] are needed to support Black students who are racially targeted and criminalized for their political resistance," exclaims Waterloo Professor Olufunke Oba, in an article for Today's Parent.

Educators Na'im Madyun et al. writing for Educational Foundations, further echo these claims. "The experiences that shaped our respective journeys as African-American scholars currently teaching at predominantly White institutions can advantage all students, and especially White students, by equipping them with a more sophisticated ability to understand realities across cultures."

Yet Harvard has made progress in recent years. Harvard University's Faculty Demographics Over Time show that from 2013-2023, all ladder faculty of color has risen from 20% to 27%. However, this progression mostly accounts for an increase in Asian faculty, while other minority hirings have

had a slower rise. If Harvard wants to truly make strides toward a more diverse faculty, all groups should be better represented, such as Black faculty.

Alongside this slow progression, there are currently clubs on campus that Black students can join and feel a sense of belonging, such as First-Year Black Table. "FBT means so much to me. As a first-year Black student, going to events on campus and not feeling represented in the general student population can oftentimes feel troubling, so having an organization that prides itself on maximizing the experience for Black students provides reassurance and confidence to the first-year student body," Simpson said.

Simpson additionally recommends that Harvard should create a multicultural center on campus for students. "A lot of Black students have been wanting a physical safe space to go to and celebrate their culture. I think that we should take a page from Columbia [University] and have that space for Black students to go and just be themselves, not having to worry about code switching, presentation of themselves, or any other miniscule detail that plagues the minds of Black students

daily."

Fernand suggests implementing a Black house could also have benefits, as she has seen its success on other campuses. "Other institutions have a Black house and I think especially as we separate into upperclassmen dorms, keeping a solidified Black freshman class will be hard because spaces like Annenberg won't be present. So, having something like a Black house for Black students across all years to create a safe community amongst each other would be amazing."

These suggestions are important, but Harvard should not just stop here. Improving the experience of Black students on campus ranges from its student opportunities to the professors that are hired. Harvard is making strides toward diversity on its campus, but to truly achieve a balance, more work needs to be done to ensure its faculty represents its students, too.

LAYLA CHAARAOUI '26 (LAY-LACHAARAOUI@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) RECOMMENDS VISITING THE HARVARD ART MUSEUM'S DIGITAL ARCHIVE OR HAVING OPEN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT WHAT WORK THERE IS TO BE DONE TO CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH.

A BROAD, ABROAD: VOLUME II

BY LULU PATTERSON '24

So this week is all about celebrations, right? Well my loyal fans, one thing you can celebrate is me finding a husband. Not in Spain though. This affair took place one weekend in France.

Upon arrival to the beautiful French Alps, I was greeted by our 2 foot wide bunk beds; and you guessed it, they were not long enough for my legs to extend. But the bunk beds, for their unbeatable location in town, were perfect for our stay. After picking up my skis, boots, poles, 2 helmets, and my friend's snowboard, I trudged back to our room—looking more American than ever. Within a few hours my friend and I hit the slopes; or rather, the slopes hit us; it seems there is very little snow in Europe right now, and it is a good thing I brought my *sunny california demeanor* because to be honest, I ran over many, many rocks.

After a leisurely, cheesy, wine and laugh-filled lunch, and a *grueling* hour on the slopes, we decided our taxing day had earned us an Apres-ski session. After putting our loud, rude American reputations to good use, we packed ourselves into a bus and made it to the bar we read about online. At the bar, we discovered something that doesn't change when you leave the states: finance bros. We promptly made bets on which company they all worked at, what university they all attended, and of course, what frat they were in. A guy next to us said, *You know how I know they're American? Because only Americans wear those stupid sweater vests.* I looked down at my vest, unsure if crossing my arms made it better or worse. I was more embarrassed by the guy wearing a felt jacket embroidered with the words "Beverly Hills Sushi Club" on it but, I will no longer be wearing vests in Europe.



And as it turns out, my *almost* love story did begin the old fashioned way, at a bar. I can't quite remember how the conversation started but I heard his American accent and I panicked, desperate not to leak my mutual Americanism. So, naturally, I proceeded to speak with a British accent for the rest of the night. I really didn't think it through, though, because words like "Neuroscience" don't exactly roll off the tongue easily in *British*. Plus, my roundabout story about how I was from London, but study at Harvard, but was now abroad in Spain didn't exactly help my case, nor did my specific local knowledge about California that I blamed on relatives. By the end of our night I had my friend tapping my shoulder, "Loouuulouuu!" Though impressed that she followed my British lead without instruction, she eventually confessed to wanting to leave out of fear of being caught.

The next day we *trekked* up the longest, steepest, hottest, 20 minute "walk" that google maps has ever lied about to get to the ski lift. At lunch time we agreed that we needed to make more friends and remember that being embarrassed was necessary. What's the worst that could happen? We were never going to see anyone in this town again. So by the time apres, and then dinner, came around, we were ready to rock and roll.

At the same bar as the night before, someone grabbed my hand as I made my way to the counter. I looked over: nothing. I looked up: nothing. I looked down: a 5'8" man was asking to buy me a drink. Instinctually, I laughed. But before I could answer, my friend jumped in, "YES YES you can buy her a drink." I walked towards him and tested his humor, elevating my hand through the crowd for a french greeting. He kissed my hand and I laughed; he passed the humor test.

He proceeded to ask if I had heard of him. *Why?* I asked *Why would I have heard of him?* He replied, *Well, I'm the best dancer in the alps, haven't you heard?* His friend jumped in. *No, I'm the best dancer in the alps, he's okay too.* Now they'd both passed the humor test. Unfortunately, tragedy struck! They were Americans—my international love dreams once again, crushed. However, the night did remind me how funny people are when you can understand their jokes! I'm mostly used to jajaja instead of hahaha, but I'm still working on my Spanish and French slang. Abroad has already changed me.

We hung out with the Americans all night, but sadly, my friend made me promise not to speak in a British accent. Take this as a warning: the French Alps did have some of the most inappropriately aggressive men I've ever experienced. When I told my short dancing king what had happened, he continued to move me and my friend away from the culprit, announcing I was his girlfriend. After laughing the first time, I eventually bought into the bit, bending my knees to rest a head on his shoulder. Sometimes, *sometimes*, men can be okay.



Around 5am, after being in an indoor-smoking-only nightclub, (probably my first and last time at one of those), we meandered home, grimacing at our plans to ski by 9am. As we left the nightclub, my short dancing king asked for my phone number. I told him he could have it, but only if he proposed to me while we skied. *Deal*, he said. Mind you, we had not even kissed. We had just spent a hilarious night together. Plus, of course I wanted to be proposed to if I could. It was a bold ask, but again, he passed the humor check.

As the persistent women we are, by the time 9am rolled around, we were already on the slopes. By 2pm, I received a FaceTime. *No way*, I laughed, showing my friend. I picked up for a minute, but the spotty service and the fact that I couldn't stop laughing made me give up quickly. *Okay, where are you? I bought a ring in town*, his text read. The poor guy proceeded to chase us around the mountain to try to catch us before we had to catch our bus. Sadly, he didn't get to us in time. So he didn't get his kiss. but I have now been invited to ski in Vermont or a drink in New York, both paired with a proposal. Too bad for him, it doesn't snow enough in Vermont to ski and I hate New York. So I guess this one did go how I had hoped...boy meets girl at bar, boy falls in love with girl, girl breaks his heart.

My greatest life lessons from this weekend: ask for a proposal, say yes more often, find the best dancer in town, and remember that you can sleep on Sundays. Moving forward, I promise some of my columns will pass the Bechdel test. Maybe... Probably... Hopefully.

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WRITES FORUM FOR THE *INDEPENDENT*.

CELEBRATIONS



MAKING A HARVARD MODEL

Harvard Students Walk in New York Fashion Week.

BY KYA BROOKS '25

“I think New York Fashion Week—it’s like the pinnacle of the modeling industry,” said Payton Thompson ’25, in disbelief as she reflected on walking in New York Fashion Week.

I understand her awe. When models set their sights on working with internationally-renowned brands, there is often a sense that all promising roads lead to New York City.

At age twelve, I signed with Develop Model Management, based in Omaha, Nebraska. It is the premier modeling agency in the region and it places models with top agencies throughout the world. As a teenager, I walked the runways of Omaha Fashion Week for thirteen seasons, but always looked to New York as the next step up.

People would not usually associate Harvard students with modeling or being fashion-minded. I was surprised to find Harvard students modeling at the highest levels of the fashion industry. Semi-annually, a handful of Harvard models quietly jet off to New York Fashion Week during the weekends, wearing the most powerful fashion labels and most in-vogue designers on the runway.

Most Harvard models have never met. I set out to discover who makes up the Harvard modeling community.



Onyx Ewa '24

“I did this really fun thing for Louis Vuitton. It was their new uniform collection for all of their stores. So, Virgil Abloh designed a bunch of uniforms before he died, and that was really cool because it was a video shoot. And we were standing on these platforms, and the platforms spin around,” Ewa said. “Getting on and off in heels that didn’t fit me was terrifying, but that was a lot of fun.”

In 2019, Ewa was named Student Advocate of the Year by the national nonprofit GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network). When Morphe Cosmetics partnered with GLSEN for its 2020 pride campaign, Ewa was the model. In 2021, they modeled in trade shows, signing with New York Model and Talent Management. For the 2022 Ugg Pride Campaign photoshoot, Ewa—a former gymnast—did acrobatic tricks across a playground, sporting a colorful faux fur coat and fluffy slides.

Harvard student can be turbulent. Ewa was overwhelmed one month with modeling jobs, constantly summoned to New York. “They would email me Monday night and be like: ‘you need to be in the city tomorrow at 9am.’ So I would have to miss class or whatever, so that was kind of stressful to manage,” Ewa recalled. They added, “Then other times it’s like I don’t even hear from my agent for six months.”

Ewa hopes to have “some sort of robust modeling career after college.” They love the runway but worry they are not tall enough. They also adore “highly-stylized editorial shoots” like those in *Vogue*.

At Harvard, Ewa has explored fashion through courses like “Threads: Histories and Theories of Clothing and Fashion” and “The Ego in Things: Fashion As a Moral Laboratory.” During the latter, Gucci creative director Alessandro Michele addressed students via Zoom from a “beautiful, tufted cobalt blue couch in his immaculately decorated apartment” in Rome.

Ewa is involved in the student Perry Fashion Show and fashion publications such as *FIG Magazine* and *The Lavender Room*. They wrote a fashion column for *The Crimson* called “All Black Everything.” They now publish a fashion column called “The Renaissance” for *Indigo Magazine*, where they wrote a historical research piece on “indigo dyeing and adornment as a mode of self-fashioning and finding agency on slave plantations.” Still, Ewa noted that “Harvard is not a school that prioritizes fashion,” and the fashion community “feels really disjointed.”

“There’s not a centralized fashion community, and I would love to see something like that,” Ewa said, adding that “everyone kind of finds their own niche, but there’s no place where everyone comes together.” Boston does little to help. “I wish Boston had more of a fashion and modeling scene, but we do not live in a fashionable city,” Ewa explained.



Payton Thompson '25

“Every year I would go online, watch the fashion week shows that were live-streamed, and I’d be like ‘one day, that’s going to be me on that runway’ every year. And yeah, here we are,” Thompson said, laughing.

As a toddler, Thompson modeled in catalog

print photoshoots for clothing brands like Gymbo-ree and Fred Meyer, but her ballet career later took precedence. From age ten onward, she modeled for dance photographers and dance companies. Before Harvard, she took a gap year to dance professionally with Ballet West. In 2022, she discovered an application to model in New York Fashion Week. “I saw this application, and I was like ‘this is my time,’” Thompson explained.

Corii Burns, an up-and-coming designer based in Paris, picked Thompson for her Mental Health Collection. “Her designs were insanely cool, and it felt so high fashion couture, but at the same we were showing off clothes for a good cause,” Thompson gushed.

It was a “whirlwind” experience. “I literally was in New York for like 36 hours. I flew to New York on Saturday morning, had fittings, rehearsals, everything Saturday afternoon and evening. Sunday, I was at fashion week for the actual show from 10am to 10pm practically, and then I flew back to school Monday morning at 6am, so I could make it in time for my Econ class,” Thompson said.

She considers modeling an art form. “We have this kind of stigma at Harvard like: ‘Oh, we support the arts! Go arts!’ But when it really comes down to it, I’m like: ‘Do we, though?’” Thompson said. She added: “If you said ‘oh, I’m a model,’ I don’t know if that would be as respected as saying ‘oh, I’m a varsity athlete.’”

“But I think that when people really understand what you do, or when I said I was going to New York Fashion Week, then it was like ‘wow, that’s amazing.’ So I think it goes both ways,” Thompson stated.

At Harvard, most students know of her professional ballet career but not her modeling. “That’s really my brand. Everyone is like ‘oh, Payton the dancer!’” she noted. Thompson is involved in the student fashion show Eleganza, but describes it as “more like a dance community over a modeling community.”

“I know there are other models at Harvard, but I just don’t know them because I don’t think there’s a common ground where we all connect. Like a club or whatever,” Thompson said. She thinks modeling is more individualistic because “the industry can sometimes be very exclusive in the sense that you’re all competing against each other.” (continued on next page)



Despite this, Thompson experienced “a very accepting, loving community” at New York Fashion Week. “My designer was hyping us up left and right. She was literally the sweetest,” she commented. At the afterparty, she said: “They had some singers come, and it was super fun just for all the models. It was like a little mosh pit. It was cute.”

The “one element of toxicity” Thompson experienced was a random audience member who posted an Instagram story with laughing emojis of her walking, making fun of her “for no particular reason.” Another model told her and messaged the audience member to scold them. “My fellow models were so quick to jump in and stand up for me,” Thompson said.



Dakota Degenhardt '26

“One of the designers I got to model for was actually a Ukrainian designer, and she had some really gorgeous dresses that I got to wear. And the opening dress was actually a symbol of the Ukrainian flag, so that was really beautiful to start off the show,” Degenhardt stated.

In 2022, Degenhardt began competing in beauty pageants as a bucket list item. She won Teen Miss Florida Earth, which launched her modeling career. She participated in Miami Swim Week, and her pageant director told her about a New York Fashion Week casting. Multiple designers selected her.

Of New York Fashion Week, Degenhardt said: “It’s definitely something worth seeing. It’s such a beautiful production. There’s so many amazing shows that go on all throughout the week, a lot of them with really beautiful and touching stories.”

As a first-year, Degenhardt is searching for outlets in the Harvard fashion community. She is involved in the Perry Fashion Show. It seeks to create a space where “marginalized groups can escape the confines of hyper-visibility and invisibility, and enter a world of radical love, empathy, and sustainability.”

At Harvard, “no one really knows” about Degenhardt’s modeling career. She knew of one other Harvard model. “People are like: ‘Oh, wow, that’s amazing.’ And there’s other people like: ‘Why are you wasting your time?’” Degenhardt explained about modeling. She added, “Overall, I’ve gotten a lot of support from my community and my community at Harvard.”

“Modeling is something I’m really passionate about, and I’m really trying to get into it and make my career,” Degenhardt asserted.



Holly Fischer '25

In 2020, Fischer turned heads at London Fashion Week, making her debut as an unknown sixteen-year-old model by opening for the high-profile JW Anderson fashion show in front of numerous celebrities. “What an incredible opportunity to be able to open the JW Anderson show today as my first show!” she raved.

When Fischer learned of her coveted slot the day before the show, she could not believe it and was “so beyond grateful.” She was a rising British tennis star, which demanded so much time that she completed high school online. After going to a model casting in London with countless other girls, she never expected a callback.

Fischer was profiled by British *Vogue* after the show. Soon after, she walked in Paris for the global luxury house LOEWE. Though she had to wake up at 5am to prepare, it was an “amazing experience.”

Since her debut, Fischer has “had the best time” walking in Paris, London, and New York Fashion Week. She has done photoshoots with major fashion magazines, modeled for *Vogue*, and worked extensively with global fashion houses like Dior. She is signed with The Society Management. At Harvard, Fischer carefully balances her schoolwork with modeling and playing varsity tennis.

Aoki Lee Simmons '23

In 2022, Simmons greeted New York Fashion Week in a hot pink pantsuit with a coiffed updo, walking for designer Sergio Hudson. She marveled that she was the youngest model in his lineup, “surrounded by women I have grown up watching on the runway, feeling completely out of my depth” but said the “clothes pulled something out of me I didn’t know I had.” She was thankful to Hudson for “trusting me to do them justice.”

In another unforgettable fashion week experience, Simmons walked outdoors for Tommy Hilfiger through pouring rain and winds. She overcame the occupational hazard, saying “I could never express my gratitude enough” for the opportunity.

Simmons modeled as a child for fashion label Baby Phat. She debuted as an adult model while a full-time Harvard student, walking for designers like Pyer Moss and Kim Shui. She has worked with

major brands like retail company Revolve, shot with *Vogue*, and signed with Nomad Management.

On social media, Simmons relates her triumphs and struggles as she balances modeling with studying. Trekking from Harvard to New York Fashion Week is no easy feat, despite the excitement.

“You think Boston and New York are really close, but they’re not,” Simmons said. She explained: “Casting is last minute. You’ll get a show. You’ll get put on option. You’ll get canceled. The worst thing is when I miss class because I’m on option, and then I get taken off option. I don’t, you know, make the final cut. I’m like ‘guys, I missed Latin and HUM.’”

Simmons races against time to seize modeling opportunities in New York when they become available.

“I do everything that I can, but sometimes they’ll be like: ‘Oh, there’s a casting at 2pm.’ I’m like: ‘It’s 1:30pm. What am I going to do? Teleport?’ So that sucks, and I think that’s what makes it—for me, I don’t know about everyone else—really hard going to college somewhere else,” Simmons admitted.

Simmons hopes to model full-time after graduation. She would love to walk in London, Paris, and Milan Fashion Week. People sometimes ask why she, as a Harvard-educated woman, would choose modeling as a career. Perhaps this stems from biases favoring practical careers over creative ones. There is also the notion that a woman valuing appearance puts her intellect into question.

“I would like to change the idea that you can’t be smart and pretty, or you can’t be smart and enjoy your looks. Or enjoy a creative beauty or fashion-based career,” Simmons declared, adding: “I really don’t want this to be a question that we’re asking women in ten years.”



KYA BROOKS '25 (KYABROOKS@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WOULD LOVE TO TAKE PART IN A MODEL MOSH PIT.

FINDING COSMIC RELIEF

Why Harvard students should watch Hasty Pudding Theatricals' 174th Show.

BY ADEDOYIN ADEBAYO '26

You may have heard of Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane*, arguably one of the greatest films in American history. But have you ever heard of his equally talented, yet often overlooked brother Worse N. Welles? Look no further than Hasty Pudding Theatricals' (HPT) 174th production, *Cosmic Relief* to learn what happens when the ultra patriotic FBI agent, Lauren Order takes over the set of what Welles calls a "cult classic, pinot noir, pierogi western, psychosexual children's[sci-fi] movie set on a moon of Saturn," to fake the moon landing and defeat the communists.

The HPT website defines itself as the oldest American theatrical organization, performing original comedy musicals in New York City, Cambridge, and Bermuda since 1844. Famous for its self proclaimed "long tradition of daring social and political commentary, never shying away from controversial current topics," *Cosmic Relief* was no exception. Pudding writers Maureen Clare '23 and Matthew Cole '24 upheld this reputation by crafting a story filled with dark humor and explicitly politically inspired content. This bold style of writing, along with the production's captivating stage elements, costumes, and dancing makes *Cosmic Relief* a must-see for Harvard students.

The musical opens with the illumination of a shadow puppet through the Pudding's red curtains which have a drawing of a personified moon with a rocket in its eye. The shadow is of a dog in a spacesuit—one of the puppies lost in NASA's failed Apollo mission. Stage lights pan over to one of Farkas Hall's balconies, drawing attention to a human-sized puppy with a bright pink ribbon on its head and bright red moon boots. Lassie, short for Lassie Ninorbette, is the helpless space puppy that waits for the rescue of FBI agent, Lauren Order, and NASA scientist, Noah Credited, Ph.D.

Characters like Lassie and Order help *Cosmic Relief* parody the Space Race and Red Scare of 1960s America. After Order is unable to produce a successful moon landing to aid the United States in outdoing the USSR, she is reassigned to monitor the activities of known communist director Worse N. Welles. Order's character, as a representative of the FBI, remains suspicious of any political ideology that threatens her vision of American greatness.

Order's political views, like many Harvard students, have been molded by her family environment. However, unlike many audience members, Order's family included J. Edgar Hoover and Richard Nixon. HPT's transformation of taboo subjects of family conflict, war, and ideology, into humor allows audience members to relate to the story.

Young Order feels unloved when her mother misses important moments in her life for political gatherings, ultimately leading to her betrayal of her mother and search for a new family in the FBI. She is so loyal to her new family that she recounts U.S. interference in Argentina and Brazil as "family vacations" and proclaims

that "Nixon never lies." She is even willing to fake the moon landing to guarantee the U.S.'s triumph over the Soviets in the Space Race.

Every character is written to reflect the historical period of the musical and has a personality that enables viewers to see reflections of themselves. If you have an ear for word play you will join the rest of the audience in laughing as each character is introduced.

One of the first actors Order meets when she pretends to be a movie producer is head extra **Justin D'Backcrowned**. Despite his acting skills he remains sequestered to the background of every set he has been on. His own insecurity prevents him from reaching his long term goal of becoming a renowned actor; and alternatively focuses his time on serving his girlfriend, Shirley. Many students can appeal to Justin's character development of ultimately realizing his own potential from insecure beginnings.

Lead actress **Shirley Uverdovme**, aspires to follow her role model, Doris Day, in becoming a Hollywood star. Shirley resembles career driven young women who, in the face of gender discrimination and unequal pay, dream of becoming

like their mentors. Shirley's costume is definitely eye-catching: her sequin covered gold and red dress makes it clear that she aims to gain the love and attention of the audience.

Cosmic Relief's youngest character is a little boy named **Mannie Ventrallywillfall**, who wears a curly, red wig reminiscent of little orphan Annie's. Despite being an orphan, Mannie maintains a permanent smile. Of course, in true Pudding fashion, Mannie's character also delivers the most cynical lines of the musical, including a solo about the inevitable implosion of the sun and the climate crisis. Despite what his positive demeanor may convey, he has his own personal turmoil related to the dissolution of his family upon the death of his parents.

Next is teen hearthrob and movie star **Theodore Mee** who hails from England and makes up for his airheaded nature with friendliness and creativity. Between acts he goes from not understanding how to count to unexpectedly taking charge in devising a plan to protect his fellow cast members from being detained by the federal government. Theodore also reminds us of how our personal objectives can easily shift, allowing us to discover the path we want to take in life.

Other characters include friendship loving hippie **Aunty Establishment** and the Queen of the 41st moon of Saturn, **Esther Terrestrial**. Even as the country is consumed with paranoia and the Cold War, the characters of *Cosmic Relief* are able to realize the importance of family, friendship, and authenticity.

I had the pleasure of watching HPT perform in the evening on Saturday, February 18th in Farkas Hall. If you are interested in seeing *Cosmic Relief* I suggest attending with a friend who will understand the historical references that many of the jokes center on. Additionally, it helps to be familiar with the pop culture references our generation grew up with. Even without this you should be able to enjoy the Pudding's latest hit.

P.S. Stay after the show for a special treat from the Hasty Pudding band.

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SATIRE FROM ARROW STREET: DABABY, THE 2024 GOP PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE.

DaBaby offers a new politics well-suited to unite the Republican party across both faction and generation.

BY CHUCK STONE

Earlier this week, former governor Nikki Haley (R-SC) announced that she will seek the 2024 Republican nomination for president. Her path will not be easy however, as many other curious Republican Adams take their bite at the nomination's shiny apple.

And I am comforted by the fact that others will throw their hats into the ring. The 2016 Republican debates made for some of the funniest television ever. Also, more candidates means more options, and this is a Pareto improvement—like when Chipotle added Garlic Guajillo Steak to its menu. Perhaps most importantly, more candidates means the Republican electorate will be increasingly split, making it difficult for any one candidate to receive the necessary majority to secure the nomination. This would lead to what us experts call a “brokered convention,” whereby the delegates at the convention are free to nominate anyone (even someone previously not on the ballot). And I think that this may offer the Republican party the chance to nominate a once-in-a-generation presidential candidate: Jonathan Lyndale Kirk.

You may know Mr. Kirk by his rapper name, DaBaby, or from hit songs “BOP,” “TOES,” “Baby Sitter,” and “NASTY.” And for those closer to him (like myself), Mr. Kirk is known to be an extremely personable individual and compassionate leader—two crucial traits for any would-be president. For example, his entourage of tour dancers has a lowest-in-industry turnover rate—a stark contrast to the Trump admin’s highest advisor turnover rate in presidential history. Because culture

is established from the top-down, DaBaby would be able to successfully navigate the executive office’s bureaucracy in an especially efficient way.

I know it sounds crazy. Call it “Ludacris.” But like the New York Jets eventually winning the Super Bowl, *it’s going to happen*. And I didn’t come up with this idea. It was actually foretold by DaBaby himself—just listen to “BOP” backwards at 0.7x speed. Here He prophesies the play-by-play of exactly this brokered GOP convention scenario, which I will paraphrase for you now:

After the first ballot of the convention, there is no clear majority. While the Trump delegates may form a plurality, the non-Trump delegates sum together to form a majority, and they do so to pass a resolution that Trump cannot be the nominee.

The second ballot is a complete mess. Ron DeSantis, Nikki Haley, and Mike Pence all try to build delegate coalitions. Josh Hawley and Jim Jordan enter the race (they weren’t previously running because of Trump) in an attempt to win over the Trump delegates. Again, no one has a majority—chaos on the convention floor.

The third ballot is where things get really crazy, although it is a bit difficult to discern over DaBaby’s “I flew past the whip with that blunt in my mouth / watch the swervin’, that whip had a cop in it (Woo, okay).” DeSantis and Haley form a ticket, but are still unable to obtain a majority. Jim Jordan drops out. Some delegates go for Hawley,

while others protest the vote.

Hawley, gaining momentum, then gives a speech about the left’s assault on masculinity. Paul Ryan, in an attempt to reunite the splintered factions of the party, offers a moving rebuttal about the history of conservatism in America. It absolutely backfires. The Trump wing is pissed as hell. Even some DeSantis delegates consider flipping to Hawley.

Sensing the changing sentiment on the convention floor, the anti-Trump-turned-anti-Hawley delegates understand they have one final opportunity to put forth a viable candidate:

DaBaby.

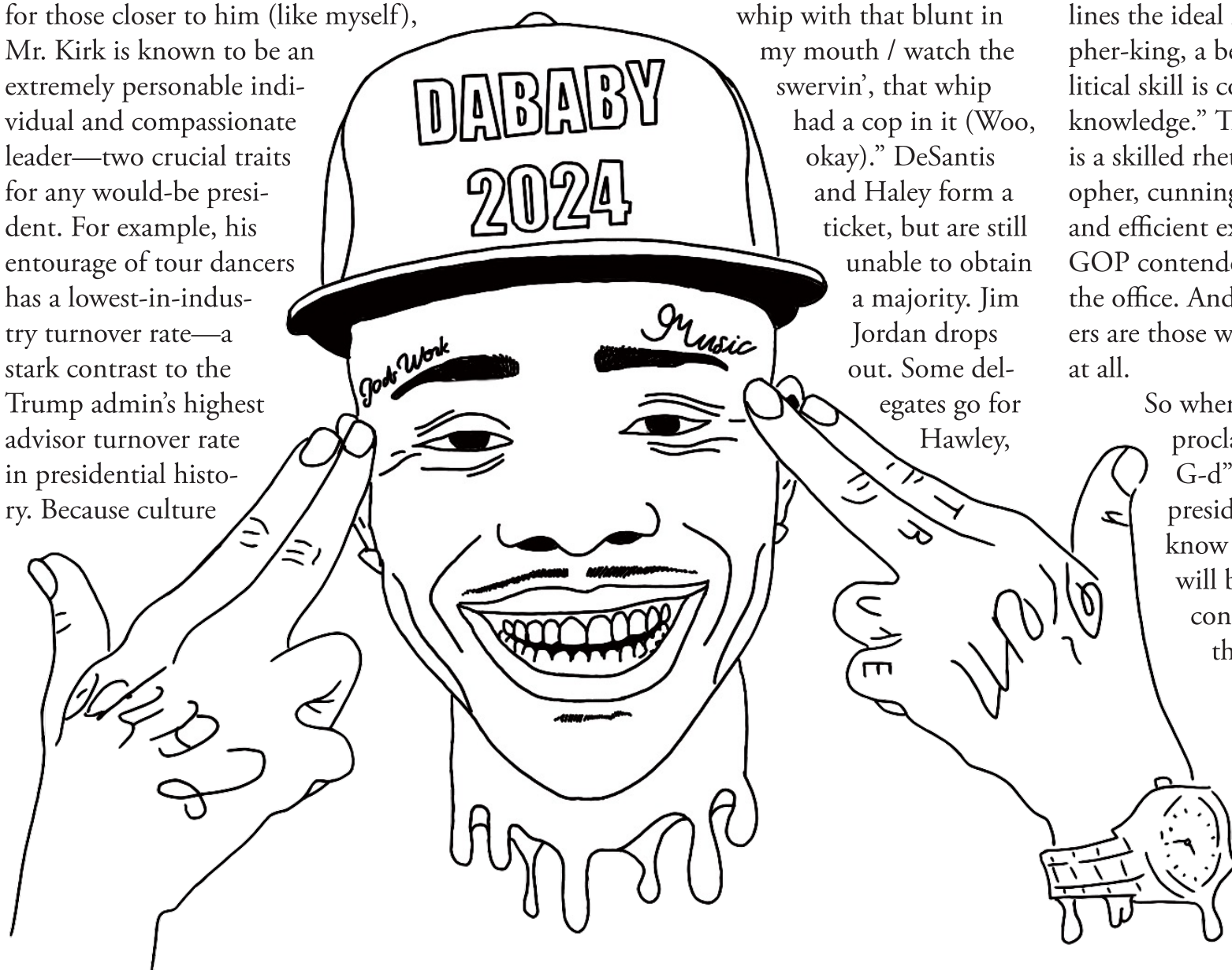
And it’s a genius move. We all know DaBaby is a seasoned veteran in the culture war, having been canceled by the left for a not-very-PC rant during his 2021 Rolling Loud performance in Miami. And unlike Trump—who merely bragged about hypothetically shooting someone on fifth avenue—DaBaby has real world experience with guns, having shot someone in a North Carolina (key swing state) Walmart. DaBaby also has no public opinion on economic policy matters, so he can easily toe the party line of tax cuts and deregulation.

In *The Republic* (375 BC), Plato outlines the ideal leader of any polis: a philosopher-king, a benevolent dictator whose “political skill is combined with philosophical knowledge.” There is no doubt that DaBaby is a skilled rhetorician, modern-day philosopher, cunning practitioner of real-politik, and efficient executive. And unlike the other GOP contenders, DaBaby does not want the office. And we know that the best leaders are those who do not want to be leaders at all.

So when Jonathan Lyndale Kirk proclaims the words “so help me G-d” and assumes the office of the presidency on January 20th, 2025, know that the Kirk administration will be an incredibly stable and consequential presidency for these otherwise tumultuous times.

CHUCK STONE WRITES
SATIRE FOR THE IN-
DEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY REEVE
SYKES '26



POINT/COUNTERPOINT :
INDY SPORTSBOOK:
BETTING ON THE
FAVORITE

BY DECLAN BUCKLEY '24 AND
MCGAVOCK COOPER '24

Cooper: If you're like us, and have little to no *real* gambling insight, betting on your favorite team can even the odds—figuratively speaking. There are many strategic advantages to consistently doing so, as fervent supporters that watch every game simply know more than the neutrals. When you've seen hundreds of Brady games, you know that an early interception at home against the Bills is not cause for serious concern, or that a 2nd quarter three-and-out in Miami spells doom. Familiarity with a team and its roster gives you an edge exclusive to the die-hards.

In addition to a better sense of any one outcome, consistently betting on the same team utilizes the law of large numbers, spreading the risk across an entire season as opposed to a single game. But that strategy is only profitable with at least somewhat successful teams, or at least teams who consistently outperform the expected spread—do not bet on the Bears' entire season. While betting on your favorite team can give you a 6th sense of outcome, and a winning season can be very profitable, the true benefit of riding with your team is an emotional one.

It's depressing—even cowardly—to doubt your team and miss out on profiting from their success. Americans love to identify with their teams. As seen by the constant use of the collective pronoun “we”, when a roster of millionaires discuss a sport usually untouched since highschool, it is human nature to want to be a part of something. A beloved team, a “we,” means much more to the average human than even their own political party. By betting, people literally invest in their team, deepening the bond to an illogical yet inspiring (i.e. American) level. With skin in the game, “we” can enjoy the tangible sweetness of victory or share the burden of the agony of defeat.

Keep in mind this is *terrible* advice if your only aim is to make money. But if you're like us, Vegas knows more than you about every team—except maybe the team that you've watched your entire life. The rewards of betting on your team, while hopefully also financial, are the feelings of loyalty and unity: reasons why people support teams in the first place. Unless you're a career gambler who knows something that Vegas and the *Indy Sportsbook* don't, you will be happier winning and losing with your squad, *together*, than with those random, ever-fickle, Eastern European basketball leagues.

Buckley: Betting on your own team to win is a natural temptation as a sports fan. You're already rooting for a specific outcome, so why not attach some money to it? However, therein lies the problem. Gambling on games you are already invested in is an emotionally redundant task that only opens you up to more heartbreak. Your team's performance will always be the determining factor in how you feel about the game, so risking money to feel marginally more happy with a win is just not worth it. Do not let an already-devastating playoff exit cost you your late-night Jefe's runs as well.

In addition to the pointlessness of it, betting on the teams you love can cloud your judgment. As we've said many times in this column, we're not that good at this. However, our general sports knowledge and intuition at least leaves us with a fighting chance each week. That can all go away when we've convinced ourselves that Mac

SPORTS | 14 Jones can hang with

Josh Allen for four quarters. We watch our own teams enough to think we know them better than anyone, only to find out that we should have been paying attention to the other team too.

If you take this advice into account but still cannot watch a game without betting on it, there is one truly radical option: betting *against* your team. Many people may call this heresy, but the argument here is sound. View this strategy as a kind of emotional hedge. If your team wins, you will have gotten the result you wanted and likely will not care as much about your bet. If they lose, you now have a financial windfall to help cushion the blow. If this seems a little too cold and calculating, let this serve as a reminder that gambling always is.

The highs and lows of sports fandom are undoubtedly some of the purest emotions one can experience. The highs and lows of sports gambling are not. The best types of wagering are done in the name of enjoyment or financial gain, and betting on your favorite team is conducive to neither of these. Your interest in the game is firmly established, and any bet you place will inevitably be skewed by hometown bias. Of course, following this rule is not a guarantee you will actually make money elsewhere, but it's a good place to start.

DECLAN BUCKLEY '24 (DECLANBUCKLEY@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND MCGAVOCK COOPER '24 (MCGAVOCKCOOPER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR CATASTROPHIC LOSSES FROM BETTING ON THE BEARS.

INDEPENDENT
THOUGHTS: VOL I
*Indy staff members' recommendations —
and criticisms — of the week.*

Suits (TV Series 2011-2019)— If you're a part of the holy trinity of pre-professional tracks, whether it be finance, law, or corporate law (for the indecisive), and you still suffer from the imposter syndrome that comes with uncertainty of deciding if joining the herd is actually your life calling, riddle me this. Start watching *Suits*. *Suits*, the USA Network TV series that began airing in 2011, literally provides something for everyone. Gabriel Macht plays Harvey Specter, the star of the series, and is one of New York City's best lawyers. Most definitely a sight for sore eyes, Macht both acts as a role model for aspiring law (or finance) bros, and as a source of eye candy . The supporting actor, Mike Ross (played by Patrick Adams), can appeal to those who might lack the charisma or charm than that of Specter Supporters. Mike is brilliant, but his naivete often puts him into trouble. For those who may feel like they have yet to grow into themselves, or perhaps have been often relegated to the second place position, Louis Litt (played by actor Rick Hoffman), will surely be of interest. And finally, Meghan, (previously Markel) Duchess of Sussex; playing the intelligent and attractive paralegal Rachel Zane, can inspire us to break through the glass ceiling (both in the corporate world, and into the British monarchy.) All in all, *Suits* is home for all of us; not only exposing what the rest of our lives will look like, but also glamorizing what otherwise would appear as another mundane life trajectory.

Lizzo (feat. SZA): Special— SZA has done it again, this time on the 2022 Lizzo song “Special.” The remix, released on February 9th, 2023, takes “Special” to the next level. Lizzo and SZA's voices complement each other perfectly; neither outshines the other, and both's verses are

equally as uplifting and, well, *special*. A self-love and acceptance anthem (a theme seen within lots of Lizzo's music), the song motivates listeners to not listen to what doubters may say about them, and to continue being the best version of themselves that they can be. SZA's voice fits perfectly within the beat of the song, especially towards the end when the two come together belting high-notes and ad-libs. All 2:55 are worth the listen, especially for those who enjoyed previous hits of the two, such as “Good Days” from SZA, and “Good As Hell” by Lizzo. Considering the success of the remix, another collaboration between the two would not be surprising, and should be something to look forward to.

The Alpinist (Documentary 2021)— Life in Cambridge can feel extremely grim, particularly during these winter months. When the sun sets before 5:00 and the weather can be best described as “gray,” it is easy for one to feel a bit trapped. *The Alpinist* provides the perfect escape. Centered around Canadian climber Marc-André Leclerc, the documentary is an exhibition of seemingly impossible feats. Leclerc climbs some of the biggest mountains in the world “free solo”—meaning alone and untethered—at extraordinary speeds. After watching him scale peak after peak, your own mountain of p-sets and essays will feel a little less daunting. While taking risks this large may seem like an insane expression of hubris, the reality is far from the case. Leclerc's genuine love for what he does is extremely evident, and he is as mild-mannered as they come. Both his outlook on life and his tender relationship with fellow climber Brette Harrington make Leclerc an easy protagonist to root for. You'll be cheering him on every time he literally reaches new heights, as well as anxiously awaiting for him to safely get back down.

Wet Leg— This hot new band won two Grammys and two BRIT Awards this past music awards season, but, in the opinion of the Arts Editor of the *Independent*, they are more of a hot mess. One listen to their hit single “Chaise Longue,” and I have concluded that it is hardly even music. It is, perhaps, music for people who don't like music. It is weirdly sexually charged in a weirdly innocent way, but the song doesn't feel fun or even cheeky, nor does it make you identify with this innocently sexual narrator. It is almost entirely spoken, with uninteresting backing music, and excessively repetitive. The second verse takes some dialogue from *Mean Girls* (2004), with a spoken “Is your muffin buttered?” Intriguing and cool if you know the reference, but it takes you nowhere. Worse than their music is their presence on stage. In their acceptance speech for the Brit Award for Best Group, they began by quoting a famous speech for the same award by the Arctic Monkeys in 2014, but without any hint of Alex Turner's swagger or any real conviction at all. It's hard to discern whether they are mocking Alex Turner or paying very due respect to the band (who were also up for the same award this year). A very difficult watch for Arctic Monkeys fans and Wet Leg fans alike. Also, who has a chaise lounge in their dressing room?

Independent Thoughts is the inaugural culture and lifestyle column, reflected by opinions of those in the *Independent*. Please contact (editorinchief@college.harvard.edu) if you wish to submit any content.

CHEERS

BY REBECCA ACKERMAN '25

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

Across

- 1 Island birthplace of
Pythagoras
- 6 Former UN leader U ____
- 7 Bash
- 8 Actor Quinn
- 9 Rubbish

Down

- 1 Mar. Honoree
- 2 Win by ____
- 3 ____ Gras
- 4 Available
- 5 “Funny Girl” composer

COVER ART + LAYOUT BY PIPER TINGLEAF '24

OPINIONS OF FORUM PIECES BELONG ONLY TO
THE WRITER AND DO NOT REFLECT THE VALUES
OF THE **INDEPENDENT**.

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TO NO ONE
BUT
OURSELVES~~



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NPE — *Muller*