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Inside: Rainforests, Renewal, and Reimagining

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The Indy is gearing up for November.

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As Harvard College's weekly undergraduate newsmagazine, the Harvard Independent provides in-depth, critical coverage of issues and events of interest to the Harvard College community. The Independent has no political affiliation, instead offering diverse commentary on news, arts, sports, and student life.

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INDY FORUM

Wealthy, Erotic, and Dangerous

The Orientalist at Harvard

By MICHAEL KIELSTRA

I'm currently in a class on the history of the modern Middle East, and one of the first things we covered was Orientalism. This is the way in which Western cultures and historians portrayed the Middle Eastern region as Not Like Us: decadent, brutal, profoundly erotic, and enticingly mysterious. Before the Twentieth Century, many famous historians of the Middle East hadn't actually ever been there, preferring instead to read translated documents and books by other people who hadn't actually ever been there. These days, of course, we believe this to be bad history. New textbooks are written and new articles published explaining how Middle Eastern peoples are Fundamentally Like Us, their history analyzable with the exact same methods and subject to the exact same caveats as that of the Holy Roman Empire or the Ancient Greeks. Defining "progress" in history is very difficult, since one generation's progressive ideals are the backward bigotry of the next, but, if there is one unequivocally good thing in historiography, the end of Orientalism is it. We have made that mistake, we have moved on, and we shall never again believe that another group of humans is so mysterious, so completely and totally Other, that we should treat them with detachment, fear, and awe, rather than considering them as we would consider ourselves.

Isn't it pretty to think so.

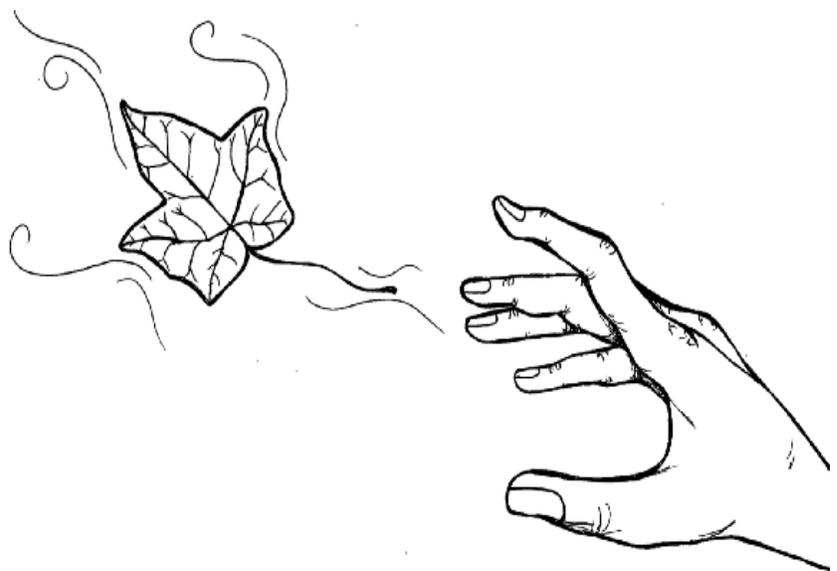
Ever since being accepted to Harvard, and especially since I actually arrived on campus for my first year, I have been looking for a way to describe the attitude that people tend to hold towards Harvard students. This attitude often manifests in subtle ways: perhaps all your parents' friends start congratulating you on being so smart, or, at the other extreme, assume you must have bought or cheated your way in and ask how. Perhaps your high school makes much of you in their newsletter. Perhaps

you remember that, when you looked at the campus of your safety school, there weren't anywhere near the same number of tourists there, and then you notice Harvard's signs asking tourists please to not photograph the students at their dorm room windows, and realize that if there are signs about it someone must have been doing it. Perhaps, on returning home for Christmas, you try and fail to find someone with whom to have a normal conversation about college life without naming the college in question. You are no longer "Paul and Julia's kid". You are "Paul and Julia's kid, who goes to Harvard."

For a while, the best way I had to explain this was to say that Harvard students were "aspirational items." Everyone wanted one, in the same way that everyone wants a Lamborghini. However, this never quite got to the root of some of the more puzzling aspects of the way the Ivy League is treated in popular culture. It's not only different,

it's strange and dangerous: witness the gleeful way the media report on Ivy League scandals, from Yale's "No means yes, yes means anal" chant to the current admissions bribery fracas, or the way in which Ivy League schools are always the first targets for alt-right YouTubers looking to rant about political correctness. There's nothing that makes Yale's fraternities any more intrinsically dangerous than those at state schools, but they make headline news because they're behaving badly at Yale specifically. Gated and barred, endlessly fascinating, and with juicy exposés from those who lived to tell the tale welcomed by the popular press, the Ivy League is America's new Orient.

Of course the comparison is not exact. It was understood by Europeans, during the Middle Ages, that Middle Eastern



Natalie Sicher '21

INDY FORUM

Wealthy, Erotic, and Dangerous, continued.

people kept to themselves in their despotic empires and tended not to come to Europe. Meanwhile, Harvard and company are regularly and frequently hailed as educating the future leaders of the country. However, even here, the same fundamental exoticism is on display. The Orient (and I use the word to refer to the conception in peoples' minds, not the geographical location) is always a land of wealth, rich with exotic foods, heady wines, gold and gemstones, multi-billion-dollar endowments, and return offers from Bain and McKinsey. We do not see the Ivy League as the only path to the top – for one thing, that would go against America's other great fantasy, the underdog story – but we do see it as a guaranteed way there, in the same way that you could do very well for yourself in Middle Ages Britain selling sheep, but, if you really wanted the big money, you got into spices.

Most of us would probably assume that Orientalism is, a priori, a bad thing, which leads inexorably to the question of whom Ivyism hurts. First of all, it hurts the students. No-one comes back from the Orient with a boring story. Everyone who goes ends up saving some Shah's daughter from a rattlesnake, or something like that. Dull Oriental tales simply don't sell. During the Middle Ages, many travel writers made up huge chunks of narrative, knowing that they were expected to deliver thrills and chills. Similarly, no-one is supposed to come back from Harvard without a killer transcript, three summers of prestigious internships, and a full ride to medical school. Mental health issues, overcommitment, struggling with a homework problem or getting a C+: these things are too close to home and can therefore have no place in the wholly exotic world of the Ivy League. You're at Harvard, so get over it, you snowflake. How can you be depressed with all the wonders of the Orient at your disposal?

Prospective applicants are also seriously harmed. Everyone believes themselves to

be "ordinary"; indeed, many people define "ordinary" as "similar to me". The Ivy League, though, is not ordinary. Ordinary people don't go to the Orient. Great explorers, brave traders, and wise statesmen go. I recently gave application advice to a student at my high school; he was intelligent, dedicated, and interesting, but refused to apply to Harvard because he assumed he wasn't smart enough to be in with a chance. Those who do apply are only those who had someone to tell them that they were special, that they could potentially be "Ivy material". Not everyone is told that, and Ivy League classes lose out on applicants who might well otherwise have contributed greatly.

Finally, Ivyism deals a serious blow to rejected applicants. Many state schools or private colleges provide excellent educations. However, they don't have the Oriental cachet of the Ivy League. This tells the students at these institutions the most devastating thing anyone can tell any student: that they are ordinary, that they do not excel, that they are, at best, average, a solid B+. Students are devastated every year by failing to get into an Ivy League school, and find it hard to take refuge in the fact that their safeties would provide an education that was almost as good, or in some cases just as good or better, as what they would have got had they succeeded. The Orient is not just another continent with its own pros and cons. It is the Orient: to go there would be the experience of a lifetime, and to miss out condemns you to a standard humdrum Western existence.

Sadly, changing Orientalist attitudes is difficult and takes time. Most fundamentally, what we need are new historians, new high school college counselors and admissions officers, who are unafraid to see Ivy League schools as an alternative to, and not a wholly and utterly superior version of, non-Ivies. This will have to be done at the school and community level. The colleges won't help, because they thrive on a reputation for exclusivity. In an age where even an application nets Harvard \$75 in cold hard

cash, the lure of the Orient becomes a useful tool. The individual students may lose out, but overall the application pools keep expanding, as ever more of the group of people who think they are capable of a trip to Terra Incognita decide to actually apply for one. If there is a revolution to be had, it must be slow, it must be quiet, and it will not come from on high.

This, finally, leaves us with a plan. We at Harvard are already acutely aware that, for all its glory, it's just a university, with all the attendant aches and pains. We should let people know about them, and we should do so from a viewpoint of making Harvard sound real as well as one of trying to force change. More crucially, we should be careful of the way our Ivyism affects the decisions we make in the areas over which we do have power. Hollywood is famous for using Ivy League educations as a shorthand for genius characters; some startups refuse to hire anyone who isn't from an Ivy or Stanford. This is a classic Orientalist attitude, focusing on the exoticism rather than looking at the person beneath. The good news is that we've already had many conversations about how to deal with exactly this sort of thing. We know what to do with racist hiring practices, or sexist writing, or Orientalist movies. Ivyist culture shouldn't necessitate too much of a big step.

Michael Kielstra '22 (pmkielstra@college.harvard.edu) has never been to Yale or the Middle East, but considers himself an expert on how those two places are basically identical.

INDY FORUM

Women in the Work Place

The Time for Change is Now

By AMELIA TARRANT

Last week saw the publishing of the annual results from the Women in the Workplace study; co-launched by LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company in 2015, this study is the largest of its kind on the treatment of women in corporate America. The study has been extremely comprehensive from the outset, with close to 600 companies and over a quarter of a million people having participated through workshops and surveys to date. As a consequence, the study has become a leader in its field, shaping the way that companies are advised to achieve gender parity in their workforce, as well as helping to influence diversity initiatives that can be implemented at all levels of professionalism.

With the 2019 results from the Women in the Workplace study having four years of data behind it, clear patterns and trends have emerged that help in shaping initial recommendations. The study exposes the fallacy of the 'glass ceiling', a theory that has shaped diversity and gender initiatives for the last couple of decades. Previous thinking was that the lack of women seen in superior leadership positions had been due to an invisible barrier acting between mid-level and senior leadership, preventing women from accessing the highest of positions due to gender

inequalities and biases throughout the hiring and promotion process. However, the study proves that this is in fact not the case - it is not a problem of a 'glass ceiling', but instead the issue lies with the 'broken rung' that exists in the early stages of the promotion process. Evidence suggests that women are failing to be hired or promoted to a managerial role at alarmingly greater rates than men. Therefore, fewer women are not able to progress to higher, senior leadership positions as they are failing to pass the first hurdle that is presented in the career ladder of corporate America.

The issue is shown clearly in the numbers; for every 100 men that are hired or promoted to the managerial level, only 72 women women are hired or promoted. This is compared to the less significant difference in figures for the C-suite hiring and promotion, where for every 100 men 144 women are hired and 90 women are promoted. This 'broken rung' at the managerial level constitutes the biggest barrier to women when progressing to senior leadership positions; as shown by the C-suite data, no other entry or promotion points see such disparity in genders. Whilst the study is not able to provide direct reasons for this disparity, they are able to identify that this issue is largely unseen in the workplace. The fallacy of the 'glass ceiling' prevails culturally, with both HR leaders and males misidentifying the main challenges women face as issues with sponsorship and lack of female qualifications respectively, instead of identifying lack of promotion to first-level managerial roles as the main barrier exposed to women. It is this lack of understanding that helps in contributing to gender disparity, and only once studies highlight the inadequate change in the equality of the corporate world over the last few decades will impactful change be achieved.

The study includes multiple recommendations for how gender inequality in senior leadership positions can be fixed, and all are focused on fixing the first 'broken rung' of the employment pipeline. These range from setting realistic, manageable goals for the number of women in first-level management positions to setting clear evaluation criteria for promotion and hiring processes. Perhaps the most significant of these recommendations, however, is the implementation of unconscious bias training among current employees who are involved in the hiring process. Whilst many companies currently have unconscious bias training programs for those involved in senior level hiring, it is often not extended down towards first-time managerial hiring processes, which is

where it is often needed most. By tackling the root cause of the problem, companies will be able to increase the efficacy of their employment pipeline, and bring about impactful, meaningful change in the shortest amount of time.

The implications of these kinds of studies are not simply confined to the corporate world, but have extensive consequences for other institutions such as Harvard. Harvard finds itself as a world leader of education, and thus by extension influences the nature of the corporate world. Change can start at Harvard. Change must start at Harvard. Only once gender parity has been seriously implicated throughout all levels of education will the corporate world see lasting and meaningful change in its functioning. Whilst the process of individuals graduating through schools into the corporate world takes time (meaning that the transitioning of cultures will never be immediate) there are ways that Harvard can help to accelerate this process. Initiatives such as Women in Business and the Women of Harvard Athletics are a step in the right direction, but most important is the modeling of the right behaviour towards gender parity by Harvard's most senior leaders. It is these senior leaders that are in positions of power to change gender bias on Harvard's campus, and therefore it is of paramount importance that these leaders endorse and increase implementation of the initiatives that are currently mostly student-led. Endorsement of these enterprises will help empower the community of Harvard's campus on issues of gender equality, standing them in good stead for when they enter the corporate world.

Ultimately, the most important takeaway from the Women in the Workplace study is the need to convert commitment into action; whilst the number of corporations, establishments and institutions in support of gender parity is increasing, it is clear that we remain a long way off from the goal of completely reducing gender bias in the workplace. Never has the time been better to turn words into action; the 'broken rung' has been identified, the strategies have been recommended, and now all that is needed is implementation. It is time for education, business and world leaders to step up and realise that the world is changing gear, and women are in the driver's seat.

Mimi Tarrant '21 (ameliatarrant@college.harvard.edu) is excited to see the corporate world change before her very eyes.



Natalie Sicher '21

INDY FORUM

A True Crimson Madness

Panem et Circenses for Students

By ANA LUIZA NICOLAE

It's 7:00 pm on a Friday night, and Lavietes pavilion shines like a beacon of hope signaling the end of the week. It is now time to come back to life. After a tidal wave of midterms has swept consciences clear of enjoyment, crossing the Charles breathes levity in our cramped brains. The soothing effect of the river might just pass unnoticed though. There is a cloud of chatter that surrounds every group headed for the games. First symptom of release: gossip relieves stress.

Walking past Blodgett, into Lavietes, the DHA shirts and Crimson Basketball start popping out. Though the athletes aren't formally obliged to identify themselves, it's easy to know who's in. If it makes it any easier, those who generally lurk around the door in look for seats might indicate who's not. As for any show, seats are important. Those who proceed to the periphery, rather than bolting for a team, must not sit too far away from the student body. Harvard sticks together after all. Of course, there is the other side of the gym, but only real supporters know the secret to winning the sitting situation: the shirts get thrown in our direction.

Of course there are the myriad of adorable kids, each sporting a basketball jersey. But they're already well rewarded for their zeal: they always get the best screen time on the Jumbotron and they always get private audiences with our players. So we deserve the shirts. They gift a most precious token of revival after the complete self-estrangement of the week: identification. I was there, I am Crimson. I saw our athletes perform, what were you doing?

They serve the purpose of integrating the student to the community much better than the actual praise and banter afforded the athletes of old. Why should we talk about Chris Ledlum's epic dunk? There's a tacit

understanding that we both saw it, so long as we're wearing... the shirts.

It's not why we came however. We came for the trek, and chatter with our friends, and a show! Our Harvard Men's Basketball team, decked like angels and demons, are about to show off in the old tradition of power and skill in accuracy. Everyone knows what to expect. Every player knows what they have to show for. If not for the welcome committee handing us yellow coupons, we might've even forgotten about the shirts.

All now seated, correct places and all, the dunk contest approaches. The static is palpable. We expect extraordinary feats. With every missed attempt, as we're guessing how the player is scheming to impress us, we cannot help but raise the bar to the level of excellence we wish we had committed to during the week. Second symptom of release: catharsis. At last the sectionalism pays off. Mason and Chris as standing in the middle of the athletes, ears attuned to the closest (or loudest) yells for scores. They are the ultimate vindicators of the democratic pulse of the dunk contest. The night's MC, Chelsea Vuong '21, is wonderfully backed in the endeavour of live reporting these numbers and those of the star-studded judge board, including Celtics' Jaylen Brown and Tacko Fall. She receives the computation of the scores directly from the heavily-manned desk of analysts beyond. This is a heady operation.

Next comes the 3-point contest. Disappointing at times, what matters for our fill of skill still happens: buzzer-shots, 3-point streaks, cool shoulder shrugs. Blame any disappointment on the timer. But here, we must be reminded of how the real frenzy starts. The lights go down, Harvard cheerleaders and dancers line up. When introducing the civilian contestants in the professional basketball interlude, Vuong emphasizes the

tennis player, the runner, the football player. A variegated lot. Emerging from a tunnel of pom-poms, each hero graces the audience with a gift. A foretaste of the Crimson madness.

As the students line up for their trial at the game of 21, the sacrilegious carts are rolled in...

The subversion is potent. Our beloved and respected athletes rob us fans from vicariously experiencing the glamour of being a basket-baller through those selected athletes in the spotlight. They are instructed to start throwing around shirts from their carts and no one looks at the contest any longer. They substitute in our destitute wills the encouragement of peers for the firm clasp around a soft shirt. Thankful we are, reaching over one another to receive the gracious gifts. The screams have never been louder, some players take their time, enjoying a most perfect sense of showmanship. They know what to expect.

Hopefully, they will also have learned not to expect too much from the exhausted audience after the great exhilaration. The longest part of the event, the intra-team scrimmage, collects but a few cheers. After everything has ended, all students promptly get up to leave, as the cute kiddoes line up for an autograph signing. Bleachers mostly empty, there is an immense mass of people by the back end of the gymnasium. It is not traffic to exit the gym. It's time to redeem the yellow vouchers.

Third symptom of release: renewed fervor for agglomeration. And we are ready to start another week.

Ana Luiza Nicolae '22 (analuiza_nicolae@college.harvard.edu) writes forum for the Indy.

INDY SPORTS

Men's Water Polo Dominates

Exceeding Expectations with a Perfect 18-0 Start to the Season

By ELIZABETH GUMMER

The Harvard Men's water polo team has exceeded expectations thus far, taking the win in all 18 of their games this season. Known to excel, last season the Crimson had an eight game winning streak mid-season, and have only improved since. Starting off the year ranked 11th in the nation, the team has risen in the rankings and now sits at 9th. Looking towards conference championships, the team has put themselves in a fantastic position to succeed.

Kicking off the season with the Bruno Classic, Men's WoPo took on Cal Lutheran and McKendree at home to start their winning streak. Continuing his scoring trend from the past season, junior Dennis Blayshov started the game off quickly with a goal in the first minute. Scoring another five points for the team along the course of the game, Blayshov led the team to a 16-7 win over Cal Lutheran. In their match against McKendree later that day, top scorer of the game sophomore Alex Tsotadze secured four goals to bring the team to a 20-8 win.

On the road for the first off campus games of the season, the Crimson travelled to Princeton, New Jersey, for a triple play weekend in the Princeton Invite. First off was UC San Diego, ranked 9th in the NCAA. The two teams haven't met since the fall of 2016, where Harvard had beat the team 12-10. Again the Crimson had a tight game, but managed to pull together a 12-11 win over the visiting West Coast team. Playing both Navy and Fordham the next day, the team secured their next two wins. Again Blayshov and Tsotadze came through for their teammates, scoring four points a piece in the morning match against Navy to close out with a score of 17-10. With another clean sweep in the afternoon of 11-8, Harvard took down Fordham with notable efforts from junior Jackson Enright who scored three goals over the four quarters.

Packing four games into the next weekend away, Harvard faced off against Johns Hopkins, George Washington, Mercyhurst, and Salem at the Bucknell invite. Captain

Charlie Owens started out the first quarter with two goals to bring the team to a 6-0 lead over Johns Hopkins in their first game of the weekend. Ultimately, the team finished out the match with a 16-5 win. In the George Washington matchup later that day, both senior Bennie Seybold and first-year Gabe Putnam pulled through with hat-tricks to hold a consistent lead over the D.C. team and bring the Crimson to a 13-8 win.

In day two of the Bucknell invite, the Crimson saw similar success. Cruising to a win against Mercyhurst with an 18-5 win, the team was led by top scorer Blayshov but saw incredible contribution from many members across the team. Securing the game even within the first half, the Crimson led 14-1 when the halftime buzzer went. Moving to their last game of the weekend, the Harvard men showed that they meant business. Again showing incredible team effort, scoring was distributed amongst 12 of the Crimson team members to contribute to a 23-4 win over Salem.

Back on the road again, Harvard slammed three more wins against Princeton, St. Francis, and Iona. Both Blayshov and Owens delivered hat-tricks in their first game against Princeton, aiding the team in a 12-9 victory on Saturday. Heading due North for their Sunday matches, Harvard secured wins 11 and 12 of the season. The morning match against St. Francis was tight in score, with Harvard taking the win by two in a 17-15 game. Blayshov and Tsotadze were back at it again with five goals a piece with back-to-back goals from Blayshov twice in both the first and third period. Further domination was prevalent in the game against Iona: huge efforts from sophomore goalie Noah Hodge brought the team to a 19-9 win to close out the weekend.

The following weekend was spent at Brown and MIT, adding to Harvard's impressive winning streak. The Crimson held off Brown with a 12-5 win, with Harvard only allowing one goal past their defence in

the second half of the game. Showing both incredible offensive and defensive line-ups, Harvard took an 18-7 lead over MIT back in Cambridge on Sunday.

Last weekend was Harvard's turn to host, conquering four teams over the course of two days. Saturday brought triumphs over George Washington and Pomona-Pitzer. The game against GW was tighter than their last. The win was aided by Blayshov and Owens, scoring four points each, as well as a last second goal from junior Bruno Snow to secure the win of 14-13. Blayshov proved himself to be an absolute asset for their second game of the day against Pomona-Pitzer, scoring the winning goal in sudden-death overtime after two full overtime periods for a 17-16 win.

In the teams last games against Bucknell and LaSalle, Harvard lost no stream and closed the weekend with an 18-0 streak. Goalie Hodge exhibited incredible agility, tallying 22 saves over the four quarters in the opening game against Bucknell. Though the Crimson scored no goals to Bucknell's three in the first quarter, the game closed out with a Crimson win, with a final score of 9-8 after goals were scored by seven different Crimson players. In the second game of the day, the Crimson only allowed four goals from LaSalle to enter the net. The game closed out with a 19-4 win from Harvard WoPo to seal this successful weekend.

Crossing the country to Santa Clara for their next quadruple-game weekend, Harvard will take on California Baptist, Santa Clara, San Jose St., and Chapman. Following their away games, the Crimson will be home for the next two weekends. This will be the last chance to catch the men in a home game at Blodgett, where Harvard looks to continue their series of success.

Elizabeth Gummer '21 (elizabethgummer@college.harvard.edu) writes sports for the Indy.

INDY NEWS

Is a Renovated Houghton a Renewed Houghton?

Discussing the Harvard Library System with Students at Harvard College

By GRAHAM WALTER

Surrounded by Henry Moore, cherry blossoms, and Lamont Cafe, Houghton Library is one example of where Harvard can improve the accessibility of resources to its students and visitors. Houghton Library, or the primary repository for Harvard's rare books, offers an abundance of interesting and historically important documents underutilized by the Harvard population. Part of the reason for this is that the space feels empty and inaccessible. For a building decorated with a pretty courtyard and excellent location, donors and University staff are interested in investing in the library to allow the Harvard community to better use the prime real estate.

Outside of incentive programs, Houghton is increasing its accessibility by modernizing its own facilities to serve several purposes. In particular, the library is seen by the student population as more of a museum than a library. For many students, the only time spent within the library is with class trips that Lauren Church '21 describes as "more like a field trip location than a study location." Few undergraduates would choose the reading room in Houghton for a casual Tuesday afternoon grind-session, so the optimization is something that Houghton needs.

Harvard Library system has begun an incentive programs to see the 22 Harvard Libraries on campus see increased attendance and recognition on campus. The unique experience in Houghton Library in particular is intellectually stimulating

and eye-opening for students without prior exposure to historical collections. Unfortunately, attendance is low for both students and visitors. For students, there are a number of new ways by which Houghton is reinventing itself. First and foremost, Houghton is improving its physical accessibility with its overall aesthetic. With a computerized image on the Houghton Library website, the plan is to take away the shrubs that seemingly barricade the main entrance. The renovations would create a plaza met by gradual inclines. The combination eases pedestrian mobility in front of the building and requires much less effort on the part of persons with disabilities to enter. Further, an inviting source of natural light will flood the library lobby that will feature works from around the museum.



Andrew Haimovici '21

INDY NEWS

Houghton Renewal, continued.

In terms of accessibility, Houghton has been neglected by Harvard. The current renovations not only alleviate antediluvian methods of accommodating persons with disabilities, but make available teaching facilities and a more welcoming environment with larger galleries and better physical access to its spaces and holdings. Overall, the space is more conducive to the Harvard community and represents a larger vision for the libraries at Harvard.

Donors and faculty alike recognize the importance of the humanities and how this museum is tangible evidence. The push of money into the libraries demonstrates the supportive nature of the arts, something that is rare in society today. Harvard is unique in that we can take philanthropists such as Peter and Susan Solomon to work with Librarians to create an atmosphere advanced enough to offer off historical works to all of Harvard.

The renovation efforts of Houghton Library pose an interesting question for students not just at Harvard but around the country as well: for students, what is the role of the library on campus? While some spaces, such as Houghton Library, have almost taken a museum-like culture, others, such as Lamont, serve almost entirely as a workspace. As such, as libraries on campus branch into culture centers and work-stations, the questions regarding the purpose of libraries on campus and where, if at all, the traditional library concept fits in.

To investigate this, the Indy spoke with several students about their current perspective on the general library system, as well as in what direction Harvard administration should take its library system.

Indy: How do you currently use the various Harvard libraries: Houghton, Lamont, Cabot, etc.? Do you use any of them in the same way you may have used a public library growing up?

A: I think I'm one of the few people that really prefers Lamont. I usually end up work-

ing on the first floor because it's so quiet and I actually do like being surrounded by books. Once in awhile I'll pull one out in the nook around me and read it as a break, but I think I'm pretty alone in that. Most people I see use it as a space to work alone or do group work in the cafeteria and basement. I've never actually gone to Houghton and Cabot feels like a smaller equivalent of Smith Campus Center. So no- I have never gone to a library here purely for the sake of checking out a book for personal reading.

Indy: What does the ideal library look like for you?

A: Honestly, I love the purpose Lamont serves right now, but the culture and toxicity that pervades Lamont is frustrating. It feels like a truly academic setting, and I think as a Junior, I can appreciate that much more. When first starting out at Harvard, just like every other freshman, I spent a lot of desperate late nights in Lamont. Now, working amidst the books with the cafe just nearby, computers on every floor, it's just the right mix.

Indy: Houghton Library clearly has much to offer to both students on campus and scholars around the world, and with the accessibility renovations and teaching spaces, it should likely attract more folks. What would an updated Houghton Library mean for you in particular?

A: I still struggle in figuring out whether there really is a place for me there. I know it's a sanctuary of sorts for professors and grad students, but I honestly still feel a little intimidated about just walking in there. Until they popularize and really advertise that students are welcome there to explore and work, I'm still waiting to see how I as a student fit into the renovated space.

Understanding the role of libraries on Harvard's campus is a challenging one, made

further complicated by the introduction of the Smith Campus Center. With so many students using Cabot and Lamont so heavily as work spaces, the Smith Center may perhaps have eased the current burden. Instead, however, Lamont remains as popular as ever, indicating that there is something in particular about Lamont, and libraries in general. As mentioned in the responses, however, Houghton has a particularly special, if not somewhat intimidating, place among students. Whereas Lamont has turned primarily into a workplace, Houghton still holds its center in its rare collection, and as renovations increase access to the space, perhaps Houghton will further carve out its unique place on campus.

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INDY ARTS

Voices of the Rainforest

Film in anthroacoustemolgy shows at the Harvard Art Museum, documenting the Bosavi people's inherent connection to the sounds of nature

By MARISSA GARCIA

The screen was unanimated, but the hall was absorbed in the soundscape of a rainforest in Papua New Guinea, home to the Bosavi people. On this evening of October 21, 2019, the Harvard Art Museums' Menschel Hall became a cathedral for the chorus of insects and birds, bats and frogs during a screening of *Voices of the Rainforest: A Day in the Life*.

As the soundscape became more layered with pulses and wingbeats, croaks and calls, the image of a dim night gradually emerged upon the screen; in the dark shade of early morning, the landscape was simple—a dark land mass, a few trees, a misty sky, a full moon. This static photograph of a simple landscape, not relenting to videography, was an unexpected first moment of a film, but the decision was stately. The unmoving image, the desensitization to visuals, encouraged the audience instead to focus their attentions to the moving sound.

This distinct method of storytelling persisted as the film continued to comprise of a series of still images, depicting the forest canopy, only showcasing photographs of the organisms whose vocalizations were bellowing throughout the Hall several minutes into the film.

These soundscapes originally premiered, devoid of the cinematography, in 2017. The announcer of the Harvard Art Museums shared that, several years ago, she once asked for the insight of producer Steven Feld in her grapples with defining “cinema verite,” which has been loosely defined as observational cinema. In this style of film, the filmmaker refuses to intervene in the scene of interest, committing to exclusively being an observer. Feld offered his own nuance to the definition, by evoking

the words of Jean Rouch: the camera is what provokes a kind of truth. It is clear that this philosophy is applied to Feld's undertaking of this film—though the scenes may seem to be generally observational, Feld masterfully uses the camera to capture the Bosavi people's intricate connections to the elements of the rainforest—such as, in one instance, with water.

Once the film transitions from photography to videography, the audience watches a woman walked through the rainforest, following along the route of the water until she eventually sits atop a rock centered within a stream. The soundscape coupled to these cinematic moments enhanced the motif of water—with its running trills, the music emulated the meandering nature of water.



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INDY ARTS

Voices of the Rainforest, continued.

During these scenes, an image was transparently superimposed upon the screen, a drawing of a river with fish swimming throughout: what director Feld referred to as a song map. Feld had played this water-celebratory melody to children living a few villages away, asking them to draw whatever it had conjured in their imagination. In Western musical culture, it is a common exercise in musical pedagogy to ask students to write, draw, or depict what they are visually perceiving from what they are hearing—for example, a grandiose classical symphony inspiring children to draw a languid scene of nature, perhaps an ocean. Though this serves as an excellent educational exercise, typically these drawings are done without this being the composer's intended artistry. Exceptionally, in the case of the Bosavi people, the music cannot be disentangled from the nature it lauds. The song map truly depicted the essence of the song, which was sung to celebrate water—the children were able to recreate this without any pre-given information. In putting together his composition, the producer considered not including film and recordings of the water to be a great injustice. And so, Feld proceeded to give a diverse portrayal of water, perspectives from streams to falls to rain—each of which, despite their differences in habitat, chime into the song with unique sound signatures.

Amongst the film's most powerful of images was when a man was crafting a flute by hand, shaving bamboo along its periphery and cultivating it from a root to an instrument. Overlaying this imagery is a recording of the flute, closely resembling the songs of the birds—seemingly suggesting that the music of the Bosavi people is simply inseparable from the music of the rainforest, having coevolved. The man, however, is wearing a polo imprinted with the Lacoste logo. This is an inescapable juxtaposition between the natural way of life of the Bosavi people to the fabricated and financier-led ways of showcasing elitism through clothing—the Bosavi people are so remote that they are able to escape this pretension. Feld strives to produce a follow-up

film to *Voices in the Rainforest* which further addresses this remoteness, particularly as it collides with tensions regarding logging.

This phenomenon of remoteness is intensified when a woman speaks to the camera at the end of the film—poignant, as this is the first time the spoken word is incorporated. She reflects upon the initial moment when her father had been the first of the Bosavi people to welcome Feld to their community. When the children of the village were frightened by Feld's presence, Feld removed his shoes. Upon seeing the pink soles of his feet, the children began to laugh, signifying their trust. Feld's lack of rugged feet confirmed that he was benign; his feet had not traveled elsewhere, and his bare feet grounded him—quite literally—to their rainforest.

The woman goes on to emphasize the importance of music in the tradition of the Bosavi people. It's limiting to merely define music as a practice—theirs is not constrained by the form of sheet music or by the purpose of performance, exclusively. Music, for the Bosavi, is the message of the birds.

Whether it be for a change in weather or the interruption of a foreigner, birds are the message carriers, the harbingers. The Bosavi people after all feel they are always being watched over by the birds, which is why the film often employs overhead, birds-eye view cinematography—the true “cinema verite.” Noting this significance, the woman recalls, with gravitas, “Then the missionaries came with the first radio.” And although the radio was similar to the birds in its news delivery, ultimately its battery was used up and the radio died. The Bosavi people crave to be reconnected to general society through the construction of a cell phone tower. Whenever a member of the Bosavi people is ailed with sickness, the community brings the ill person an open runway, in hopes that a plane comes by. Sometimes they don't. There was not a plane that came by to offer medical help when this woman's father—the one who initially welcomed Feld into the community—was on the brink of his death.

This film serves as an ode to the diverse voices of the rainforest, how the intricate cadences of the animals balance the elaborate melodies of the Bosavi. By taking us through the day of a Bosavi, the film at its foundation uses temporality as a storytelling tactic. And yet, in the same way that the film uses temporality to capture how the Bosavi's music has evolved with nature's daily rhythms, temporality is also what leaves the Bosavi vulnerable. If help is needed, whether it be accessing medical aid or resisting the pressures of logging, the gift of time may be limited. Feld's forthcoming sequel to this film will serve as a necessary continuation of this conversation.

Marissa Garcia '21 (marissagarcia@college.harvard.edu) appreciates the musicality of nature and is passionate about recording the sounds of water in all of the parts of the world where she gets to travel.

the independent

A CLICK IN THE DARK

A V A S A L Z M A N



AT LAST ODYSSEUS CLIMBED ABOARD HIMSELF AND DOWN HE LAY, ALL QUIET, AS CREWMEN SAT TO THE OARLOCKS, EACH IN LINE.



THEY SLIPPED THE CABLE FREE OF THE DRILLED STONE POST



AND AS SOON AS THEY SWUNG BACK AND THE BLADES TOSSED UP THE SPRAY AN IRRESISTIBLE SLEEP FELL DEEPLY ON HIS EYES.



AND THE SHIP LIKE A FOUR-HORSE TEAM CAREERING DOWN THE PLAIN... NOT EVEN A DARTING HAWK, THE QUICKEST THING ON WINGS, COULD KEEP HER PACE...

BEARING A MAN

EQUIPPED WITH THE GODS' OWN WISDOM

ONE WHO HAD SUFFERED TWENTY YEARS OF TORMENT, SICK AT HEART

AND THEN, THAT HOUR THE STAR ROSE UP



BUT NOW HE SLEPT IN PEACE THE MEMORY OF HIS STRUGGLES LAID TO REST.



IITHACA, AT LAST.

TEXT FROM ROBERT FAGLES' TRANSLATION OF HOMER'S ODYSSEY

A Click in the Dark

By AVA SALZMAN