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JEWISH QUEER YOUTH: WHO ARE THEY AND WHAT IS THEIR ENDGAME?

BENJAMIN GOTTESMAN,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I first heard of JQY when I started college. The drama with the Pride Alliance had already been brewing for quite some time and JQY, or Jewish Queer Youth, was the mystery organization that was purportedly supporting the banned club. JQY became a more relevant organization as the lawsuit manifested itself, offering to sponsor clubs during the freeze this past Autumn. Clinical Director and Founder of JQY Mordechai Levovitz and Executive Director Rachel Fried graciously agreed to sit down with me two months ago to discuss the history, theology, and mission of the organization.

The JQY website describes a “nonprofit organization supporting and empowering LGBTQ youth in the Jewish community... with a special focus on teens and young adults from Orthodox, Chasidic, and Sephardic communities.” Interestingly, they never claim to be a Jewish institution despite their name. When prompted, Fried explained that, in her mind, JQY was not a Jewish organization at all. What makes them Jewish is the “cultural competency” to deal with the challenges facing queer youth from religious homes. In Levovitz’s words, JQY “focuses on these communities because of the risk associated with LGBT youth from these homes,” not because of any theological underpinnings or objectives. Their staff is equipped to understand Judaism



and its sensitivities and offer support to those in need.

This stance, or lack thereof, is surprising to some. “People ask me all the time what we think of the *pasuk*,” quipped Levovitz, referring to the Biblical prohibitions against homosexual cohabitation which is the primary driver of the tension in the Queer Jewish community. Levovitz is quick to remind inquirers that he, in fact, is not a Rabbi. JQY is an organization dedicated to community building and support, not theological doctrine; its staff and clientele have a diverse array of opinions on just about everything. When describing his staff’s personal approach to the intersection of religion and sexuality, Levovitz remarked that “you’ll find some are much more right-wing than you could have possibly thought, and some are much more left-wing.” But that’s not the point. “It’s just not our area of expertise,” ex-

plained Fried, to which Levovitz added, “go ask a Rabbi. Why would you ask a social worker?”

While they may not be experts on *halakha*, both Fried and Levovitz intimately understand the challenges their clientele face. Levovitz describes his experience as a queer child in an Orthodox world not yet equipped to handle the LGBT population as “lonely” and replete with bullying. When he came to YU he asked himself the following basic question: “why aren’t the adults helping?” He took it upon himself to create a “more formal resource” to provide support for a community that, until that time, had struggled in silence. Fried, who spent over a decade in YU institutions, described her youth as “super involved in the YU community and super-closeted,” an ironic assessment of being invested in the maintenance of a society that did not support her. Levovitz’s fledgling support group

was the only organization of its kind and so she started attending meetings. Since then JQY has expanded into what it is today.

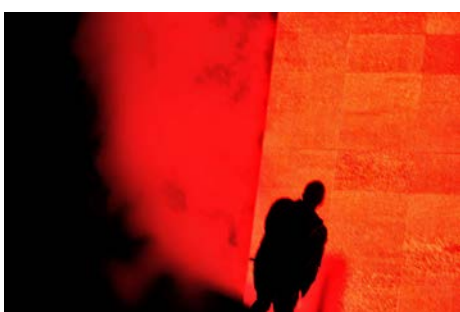
As the interview drew to a close, I asked Levovitz how he addressed the ostensibly obvious conflict between Queerness and Orthodoxy. His answer was as simple as it was striking: “When you’re dealing with a person, who exists, with all our contradictions... what are you gonna do? Not exist? We are here with all our contradictions. Just by being here, we are entitled to self-worth and love... Does that involve conflict? Sure, but honestly... it involves conflict for everyone. I mean the word *Yisrael* literally means to struggle with God.”

JQY is not trying to, in Levovitz’s words, “reinvent the wheel.” Orthodoxy is defined by internal, confounding struggle. The plight of Queer Jews, he explains, is par for the course of centuries of spiritual grappling.

Levovitz and Fried are supporting the Pride Alliance because they believe that YU students deserve to build a community of their own. “Pride is just self-esteem. It’s a feeling of self-worth,” Levovitz explains. He attests that nearly every queer person who has grown up Orthodox has had a moment

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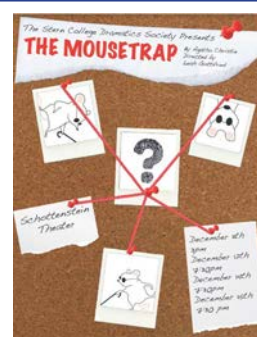
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KANYE WEST SCARES ME



EDITORIAL

BY AARON SHAYKEVICH,
MANAGING EDITOR

The past couple of months have been eye-opening. Kanye West, a public figure with millions of “fans,” has launched a parade of antisemitism. On October 8, 2022, West began showing the world his antisemitic side, sharing on Twitter that he would “go death con 3 on the Jewish people.” While the meaning of this tweet is not entirely clear, the message was: West had an issue with Jewish people. Many were concerned with West’s statement, and thankfully, many businesses pulled out of deals with West over this. What followed was West taking a hiatus from social media (via being temporarily banned) and public appearances.

That was supposed to be the end of the story. West said rude, threatening comments and public perception of him would degrade until he was just another rich billionaire (or now millionaire) without the same fanbase he used to have. This did not happen. On December 1, 2022, West went on Alex Jones’s show (who is another story altogether) and shared his love of “both” Jews and Nazis. Afterward, West shared on Twitter a picture of a Jewish star with a swastika in it.

When Twitter took down West’s account (for the second time now), I went to Elon Musk’s Twitter page to see what his commenters were saying about the situation. Appallingly, many were focused on how banning West was another form of free speech suppression and how Musk was going back on his word when acquiring Twitter. While I am not going to argue the free speech claim, I am not nearly knowledgeable enough to, I will argue that it is not the most important conversation to be had right now. What is more significant to discuss is why Kanye West is saying these things and what can be done.

One must keep in mind that Kanye West has been diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, important context for any critique of his actions... That is why the first time West shared his wishes to go “death con 3” on the Jews, I hoped his next step would be to seek out treatment, so an outburst like that didn’t happen again. But by keeping this antisemitism going and not stopping himself and getting help, this is not just an outburst of a mentally ill man. He is an antisemite. His problematic statements are his own, and he is directly to blame.

West’s claim that he loves everyone, Jews and Nazis alike,

is extremely problematic. West does realize that both can’t be true. No one who “loves” Jews would think it’s right to put a Jewish star and swastika in the same photo. The way I see it, there are two reasons he is claiming this. First, West likely has a lack of understanding of what the Holocaust really was. This may be unintentional, or he may be purposefully ignoring the truth. Either way, he hasn’t internalized that real people died. Secondly, his statement is likely bait for attention from Jewish people. Two months ago, he mentioned going “death con 3” on Jewish people, and when he realized threatening Jews was not going to fly, he’s instead trying to hurt us by grouping us with the Nazis.

Kanye West, in my opinion, is trying to stir the pot. I don’t know why, and I don’t care why. When we have to sit there and hear that our communities are “loved” by Kanye the same way he loves despicable murderers, I can’t stand it. I don’t know if what West had said, and likely will say, will ultimately lead to violence against Jews. I hope West’s influence is smaller than I think it is. But at the end of the day, his words mean something, and they hurt and scare me. Kanye, you can keep this “love” you claim to have for Jews. We don’t want it.

remarks, is the purpose of Pride. It isn’t about sexual preference, partners, or desire. Levovitz calls such an assessment “ridiculous” and finds it rather inappropriate, saying that just discussing it makes him “uncomfortable.” Pride reminds him “that I share a narrative with other people... we’re creating a sense of self-worth.”

Levovitz and Fried are genuine.

They are not interested in changing points of religious policy or thought. They simply recognize their own experienced pain and have committed themselves to ensure our children don’t go through the same. That is something I can respect.

where they felt that their existence could cause pain to loved ones and jeopardize their standing in the community. “What is there to counter that?”, he asks, “we need something to counter this worthlessness, shame, and anger-turned-inwards.” This, he



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IF I WERE GAY I WOULD NEVER JOIN KOL YISRAEL AREVIM

OPINIONS

BY ANONYMOUS

Recently, we saw our administration's cowardice on full display with the announcement of the Kol Yisrael Arevim club. The club is a fraudulent attempt at compromise and the student body, both LGBTQ and not, knows it. While I first thought that YU had lost the lawsuit and was forced by law into sanctioning such an initiative, I was surprised to learn this club was actually initiated by administration and rebbeim.

The phrase "*kol yisrael arevim*," means that all of Israel are responsible for each other. However, the very next line in the Gemara clarifies that we collectively stumble when we have the ability to protest sin, yet fail to do so. After witnessing YU's grand stumble, the only question is whether a second Kol Yisrael Arevim club should be formed to protest the school's first Kol Yisrael Arevim club.

The actual YU Pride Alliance is correct in stating, "the YU sham is not a club as it was not formed by students, is not led by students, and does not have members." While YU's silent majority rejects the Pride Alliance, the new club is hypocritical and more damaging than the original Pride Alliance ever was. While this recent virtue signal is only a symbolic flop, it is unfortunate that the administration twisted a statement of *Chazal* to fit their agenda, not unlike how the Reform movement perverted *Tikkun Olam* into a social justice slogan.

Through YU's attempt to appease courts and donors, they have opened a Pandora's box of problems. As YU themselves suggested in a since retracted statement, a student might identify as a Jew for Jesus, a *michalel Shabbos*, or as an anti-*tefillin* student; seemingly, Kol Yisrael Arevim would be the perfect hangout spot to "fix" these issues. Students would eat a few school-sponsored pizzas and then what? Mandated re-education courses? Forced prayer under

school-approved supervision? YU stated in their email to the students that they "remain eager to support and facilitate their religious growth." How is this being done? Obviously, such responses sound unreasonable and draconian, but the YU administration set itself upon a slippery slope when they agreed to compromise on this issue. Even though the club may be halachically approved, I fear that Rebbeim were painted a false picture of the scope and nature of LGBTQ activism.

What we have witnessed from this debacle is that Jewish values are not threatened by media groups and petitions. They are under attack when our own leaders, both students and Rabbis, refuse to voice support for Jewish values which have bound our families together for milenia.

While I respect our Rebbeim's *halachic* decisions, this latest *psak* (ruling) reflects a semantic compromise, a public pacification that does not take into account that 1700 signees have pledged alle-

giance to an *issur chayav skilah* (a transgression liable to death by stoning). It is known that if the *Maccabim*, which is ironically our school mascot, had asked a Rav if they should fight against the Greeks, he would have told them it was halachically problematic. By the same token, just because something has been halachically permitted does not mean we should subscribe to that ideology. We are not Crusading Christians who burn heretics at the stake, but we are also not postmodern Biblical revisionists. As a true middle path, the Torah rejects certain behaviors, while beckoning us to channel those material desires toward spiritual pursuits. This tension allows us to reveal a deeper Godly connection than we could have ever realized without the struggle. While some people's struggles are certainly far more challenging than others, we need not unbridle our animal within nor pretend it does not exist. Rather, we all have the opportunity to direct our energy wholeheartedly toward increasing acts of goodness and kindness, as a little light dispels much darkness.

WHY BROOKDALE MUST HAVE A THIRTEENTH FLOOR

BY EMILY GOLDBERG,
LAYOUT EDITOR

One afternoon, after what seemed to be an endless wait to get a spot in the Brookdale elevator, I was finally able to jam into the cramped space and ride up to my room on the sixteenth floor. As I was standing in my tiny area, staring at the numbers on the elevator screen, I noticed that floor number thirteen was skipped; we instantly went from floor twelve to fourteen. This subtle detail is more prominently noticed when students choose to take the long trek up the stairs to their rooms. Quite often, I notice that my peers are wryly amused when they reach floor twelve, knowing that floor thirteen does not exist and they have fewer stairs to climb in order to reach their destinations. Is this really a feature of Brookdale Residence that should put smiles on peoples' faces? I happen to think that this attribute should be questioned rather than celebrated.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines superstition as "a widely held but irrational belief in supernatural influences, especially as leading to good or bad luck, or a practice based on such a belief" and can even be known to have a "pagan or idolatrous character." Superstitions are common throughout Western culture - people take deliberate measures to avoid any actions they believe will cause them harm and purposely perform acts they think will cause them otherworldly benefit. Some common examples of actions that may bring bad luck include opening an umbrella indoors, breaking a mirror, seeing a black cat, and walking under a ladder, regardless of how arbitrary or innocuous such activities may be. Along these lines, the number thirteen has long been considered an unlucky number by many within the West. This specific superstition is also associated with Friday the Thirteenth, a day on which unlucky

occurrences seem to commonly transpire. The reason for the deliberate absence of a thirteenth floor within most buildings in New York City is precisely because tenants are concerned that residing on the floor will result in bad luck.

Naturally, the Torah firmly condemns the belief in such superstitions and magical forces and notes that placing one's faith in these mystical tricks rather than in God might be an act of *Avodah Zarah* (idolatry). The Torah states that "you shall not act on the basis of omens or lucky hours" (*Leviticus*, 19:26). *Rashi* quotes a *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* that states that this refers to "one who says: 'this or that day is auspicious for beginning a work, this or that hour is inauspicious for starting on a journey'" (*Rashi, Leviticus* 19:26, quotes *Sanhedrin* 66a). The Stone Chumash, in its commentary, elaborates, explaining that one

"should not base their decisions on superstitions, such as the belief that black cats crossing your path or that walking under a ladder will cause bad luck" (*The Stone Chumash, Rashi, Leviticus*, 19:26). Similarly, the belief that the number thirteen will bring bad luck into one's life goes completely against this *pasuk*. One should not believe that an "unlucky" number can control the occurrences in one's life, but rather should have faith that God is in total control of the entire universe and all that occurs within its realms.

The Torah warns people "Do not turn to ghosts and do not inquire the familiar spirits, to be defiled by them: I am HaShem your God" (*Vayikra*, 19:31). The addition of the words "I am HaShem your God" emphasizes that when one turns to magical spirits or "ghosts" as a means of controlling what occurs in one's life, one is es-

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essentially denying and discarding HaShem as the one true God and Ruler over the world (*Vayikra*, 19:31). In addition, the Torah heavily condemns acts of black magic and states “you shall not tolerate a sorceress” (*Shemos*, 22:17). The Sages note that black magic practices, “weaken the Divine power from above, as it is stated [in a pasuk]: there is no one but [God]” (*Sanhedrin*, 67b). To simplify, even if the black magic practices seem to have worked, the outcome must be a result of divine providence from God and not sorcery. God is the sole Being that is capable of regulating the incidents within our lives, and certainly, simple actions such as breaking a mirror,

knocking on wood, or living on the thirteenth floor of a building have no impact on us. By believing that mystical forces, black magic, sorcery, or superstitions have an actual effect on one’s life, one is essentially denying the foundational belief of Jewish theology that God is the King and sole Ruler over the world, as well as the only Being capable of complete control over the universe.

The fact that Brookdale Residence Hall does not have a thirteenth floor is disturbing and goes against these Torah values our university claims to hold dear. Yeshiva University asserts itself as the leading religious institution in America, and Torah is a prominent part of the ideology and founding merit on which the institution

was established. Although the fact that Brookdale does not have a thirteenth floor may be a seemingly minute detail to some, this feature contradicts the core teachings on which the institution relies. It is ironic that many of the elevators in Stern College contain depictions of the five Torah values on their exteriors but forget to include them on their interiors by deliberately eliminating a button for the thirteenth floor. Action should be taken in

order to ensure that the ethics and morals of the Torah remain constant throughout all aspects of Yeshiva University and the environment within which the students are living every day. Moreover, Yeshiva University should do everything within its power to renumber the floors of its buildings so as to avoid this superstitious practice, and all the more so, to demonstrate its opposition to the belief in such superstitions.



WOMAN, LIFE, FREEDOM: AN INTERVIEW WITH MY MOTHER

BY ILANA AHDOUT

For the past two months, protests following the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini have swept the Islamic Republic of Iran. Amini, who was arrested for wearing her headscarf improperly, was beaten to death by the Iranian morality police. Iranian officials claim she died of multiple organ failure caused by cerebral hypoxia.

While the protests were initially focused on women’s rights and the state’s hijab mandate, they quickly evolved into calls to overthrow the religious Shiite leaders who have been running the country since the 1979 Revolution.

Having witnessed the Shiite takeover during the Iranian Revolution, my mother remembers a time before these strict religious laws and their vicious enforcers were a reality; a time before Iran was the fundamentalist Islamic Republic it is today.

According to my mother, Ronit Ahdout, Iran could have been “another state of America.” She describes it as “advanced” and “westernized” and offering ample opportunities for women to succeed. There was no state-mandated dress code; women were allowed to choose whether or not to cover their hair.

All that changed when Ayatollah Khomeini took over in 1979.

Suddenly, my mother, doubly at risk for being both Jewish and a woman, became second-class. Worse, she was treated as subhuman. As a young adult navigating her new oppressive reality, she felt stifled.

She could no longer experience traditional rites of passage for a teenage girl: learning to apply makeup, dressing up in bright colors, wearing heels, etc. These were all against the law and she knew the severe punishments that awaited her if she chose to disobey.

Stories swirled about morality police forcing any woman seen wearing makeup to wipe it off with a cloth soaked in acid. Common knowledge was that to be seen with your hair uncovered was to guarantee your arrest, which likely meant you would never be heard from again.

Once, when my mother was walking in the streets with her two-year-old nephew, he accidentally tugged down her scarf and the morality police immediately descended on her. She was terrified. “I thought this was it for me,” she told me. “I was sure my life was over.” Luckily, a friend saw her on the street and bribed the police officer before she could be arrested.

Unfortunately, for Mahsa Amin and countless women like her, no friends passed by. No bribes were made. They fell to the



hands of a corrupt regime, never to return.

Eventually, circumstances in Iran became too much for my mother and her family to bear. They feared for their lives. With the help of a member of the once vibrant community of her hometown, Tehran, my mother obtained a fake passport and fled the country with her mother and sister. Her father later joined them, as well. None of them have since returned to their birth land.

On that fateful flight out in 1986, the sense of relief was palpable. My mother, then 22, felt bittersweet as she watched the women around her tear off their headscarves and apply nail polish. On the one hand, she was overjoyed to see these women finally obtain their freedom. On the other, her heart broke for the

pain they had all endured, forced to live under an oppressive regime and denied the right to choose how they dressed.

Now, 36 years later, the women of Iran are still denied this basic right. They’re still facing dire consequences for disobedience, exemplified by the tragic story of Mahsa Amini and others like her, whose stories we may never know.

For those that protest this injustice, the response of the Iranian morality police over the past two months has been lethal. Iran Human Rights, a Norway-based group, estimates that at least 451 people have been killed by security forces so far. With authorities firing live ammunition

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tion and tear gas to disperse demonstrations and snuff out the voices protesting their rule, that number will only continue to rise.

At first, my mother didn't think this current round of protests would amount to much. Her pessimism was not unfounded: anti-govern-

ment riots and protests have happened numerous times in Iran. None have been successful.

But none of the other protests have gone on this long. None have engaged such a large, passionate following of young and old, rich and poor, men and women. None have picked up mass media attention, spurring protests

all around the world.

Now, as my mother watches her fellow Iranian women burning their headscarves and cutting their hair in public to the chants of "Woman, life, freedom," she is much more optimistic. "Maybe this time, we'll get it right," she said. "When they do, I'll be eager to visit."

Witnessing what is being called Iran's biggest anti-government protest in decades has made my mother proud. "As grateful as I am that I left Iran, I almost wish I was still there so I could join the women in protest. To join them in the fight against the evil and oppressive regime that forced me out of my home," she told me. "I'm rooting for my fellow Iranian women as they take up the

cause."

But the battle is far from over. In my mother's words, "Far more blood will be shed before anything changes. But we must keep pushing. The regime is not afraid to harm and kill. We must show them that we are equally unafraid, and we must not back down."

THE OBLIGATION TO FIGHT ANTISEMITISM

BY DANIELLA WEISS,
STAFF WRITER

For generations, antisemitism has relentlessly followed the Jews wherever they have gone. But for a while, at least in the United States, things have been relatively calm—there have, of course, still been many hateful acts towards the Jews, but, overall, we have not had to fear for our safety as we have in the past. Recently, however, antisemitism has been on the rise; hate crimes against Jews are more frequent now than they have been for a long time. It is up to us to stand up against it. As we begin Kislev, the month of Chanukah, it is incumbent upon us to take a lesson from the *Maccabim* (Hasmoneans) in their fight against the Greeks.

As the *Al HaNisim* liturgy recalls, the *Maccabim* were the few and weak against the many and strong. However, despite the odds, they stood up for the truth and fought

for their freedom when the Jewish people were being degraded, belittled, and threatened. In modern times, while the number of attacks continues to rise, the amount of people who speak out against them must rise as well. There are times in life to be silent and times to speak out. This is the time to speak out. Whether it's voting for candidates that are receptive to Jewish concerns or protesting anti-Israel legislation in government, staying silent is not an option. Even joining pro-Israel clubs in college is a great way to show support for the Jewish people and taking a stand against antisemitism.

If we, as Jews, don't stand up for ourselves, who will? How can we expect others to stand up for us? In *Pirkei Avos* 1:14, a rhetorical question is posed, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me?" Our Sages emphasize this point later on, when they assert, "in a place where there is no leader, strive to

be a leader (2:6)."

When no one else steps up to the plate, we need to be that leader! R' Shimon Bar Yochai tells us that "Halacha Hi B'Yadu'a She'Eisav Soneh L'Yaakov", it is a fact that Esav hates Jacob (Sifrei Bamidbar 69:2). There's no logical reason for it. Rabbi Menachem Ziemba HY"D observed that people try to analyze historical reasons for antisemitism. Nations persecuted Jews because they were too capitalist, socialist, ambitious, dependent, zealously religious, or assimilationist and progressive. When the Jews are hated for one reason in a country, they're hated for the opposite in another. Clearly, there is no rational explanation for the hate against Jews.

With the rise in attacks, we cannot remain silent.. The Chofetz Chaim remarked that if you see someone drowning and you don't know how to swim, you don't need to jump in to save them. However,



if you witness a drowning every day, you have an obligation to learn how to swim. We are seeing antisemitism continue to rise every day. We have an obligation to learn how to swim. It is time to stand up to antisemitism and not stand idle over the spilled blood of our brethren (Vayikra 19:16). Enough is enough.

TENSIONS OF TORAH TOURS

BY RAMI LEVIN

"No irresponsibly hitting hot-button issues," the document read. Dov Pfeiffer (YC '24) and I had just gotten our respective Torah Tours assignments, which included a list of community-specific rules. This particular rule was for Pfeiffer's assigned community in the Midwest, which appeared exceptionally wary of firebrands.

After Yom Tov was over, I texted Pfeiffer to ask how many "hot-button issues were hit", despite the document's caution. "All of them," he said, and explained how at every meal, his hosts would ask him about controversies plaguing Yeshiva University. "I managed to get into YU controversies you've probably never even heard of", Pfeiffer added. He laughed, I laughed, and we mostly forgot

about it. It was a minor rule and Pfeiffer wasn't the one to bring up the topics, anyway.

unenforceable.

There is an old saying: rules are



But it *was* a rule. Someone in charge felt it was important not to discuss "hot-button" issues, created a rule prohibiting them, and ultimately, it failed because it was

meant to be broken. On Torah Tours, it seems, that some rules are hardly relevant at all. Sometimes, like in Dov's case, it's harmless. Other times, however, it

is downright dangerous.

Official Torah Tour by-laws require all participants to abstain from drinking anything alcoholic over the two days of *Chag*. It's an understandable rule, with certain notable abuses previously occurring. It also just wasn't followed.

I've talked to several Torah Tours participants about this. Some admitted to having a *l'chaim* at *kiddush*. Others mentioned meals where alcohol was generously served. And in at least one circumstance, there was a case of underage drink-

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ing.

The anti-alcohol rule was violated, but there will be no repercussions, backlash, or punishment for the students, community members, or Yeshiva University leadership. No one is interested in making a fuss.

Students, myself included, are unwilling to “snitch” on each other. Community members either are unaware or indifferent. And the YU leadership wants to maintain the pristine image of Torah Tours participants as righteous, chaste,

and pure-hearted volunteers who are there to sing and dance (and promote YU as a college option). Chas v’shalom, God forbid, that news should come out that should tarnish the reputation.

YU is willing to accept Torah Tours participants drinking—quite a lot of drinking, really. Until somebody becomes seriously ill, and it is a matter of when, not if, students can keep drinking all Yom Tov long.

In hindsight, this should have been obvious from the beginning. The Torah Tours orientation, despite strict warnings against alcohol,

fell short of addressing an issue I’m sure everyone faced: what happens when (*not* “if”) a host offers alcohol? For me, it was at every meal. My hosts would repeatedly offer me alcohol to make Kiddush on. I internally panicked, trying to quickly recall what the official Torah Tours policy was on Kiddush drinking. I couldn’t remember—because there isn’t one. It was an issue that was entirely glossed over, in favor of just threats against drinking in general.

I cannot imagine this was ignorance. It’s impossible for the Torah Tours leadership to have simply forgotten a scenario like this. Was

there a deliberate policy decision to not have any guidance for students who have hosts offering alcohol? Suggesting so feels like a conspiracy theory, and suggesting not feels like a sharp accusation of gross negligence.

YU can continue to parade Torah Tours as an ideal of modern orthodoxy, an example of the Core Torah Value™ of Chesed, and the paradigm of religious human volunteering. But for students like me, there is no amount of marketing that can wash away the tensions of Torah Tours.

NARRATIVES AND THE YU NEWSPAPERS

BY DOV PFEIFFER,
STAFF WRITER

The Broadway musical *Hadestown* opens by explicitly describing itself as being a retelling. Hermes, who serves as narrator in the play, states, “see, someone’s got to tell the tale, whether or not it turns out well, maybe it will turn out this time, on the road to Hell, on the railroad line.” Orpheus, a main character of the play, spends much of the play seeking the right story to tell. Among many other themes, one of the ideas *Hadestown* explores is the value and purpose of storytelling.

Recently, I’ve been thinking a lot about peculiar sorts of narratives: structures through which we can comprehend history in all its forms and stories through which we construct our values. These sorts of narratives have broad applications. Robert Cover, in his article “Nomos and Narrative” argues that, “no set of legal institutions or prescriptions exists apart from the narratives that locate it and give it meaning.” Essentially, normative meaning comes from the complex interplay of the letter of the law, our stories and values that surround them, and the resulting balancing act played between the many different ways people conceptualize these ideals and the need to maintain a unified legal system.

In her piece, “The Feminist Challenge to Halkha,” Tikva Frymer-Kensky builds upon a similar concept from a different essay of Covers, “Violence and the Word.” Frymer-Kensky discusses the foundational narratives of various Jewish denominations, and how they

animate or impede their Judaism. Frymer-Kensky describes the standard Orthodox Judaism foundation narrative, very roughly, that God chose us at Sinai, giving us the Torah, which is unchanging and eternal, as well as an Oral Torah which was codified in the Talmud. Rabbis have continued to study and codify these laws so in every generation, Jews can know God’s will and bring the blessings associated with compliance. She notes, both explicitly and by association with other denominational narratives, the internal strength and coherence of this narrative.

Especially interesting to me is the constructive power of viewing radically different ideas in tandem. In my experience, seeing divergent perspectives descending on the same topic enables understanding of a vibrant, polysemous world that neither view in isolation could open. Especially in cases of deep disagreement, such a construction requires some potential for dialogue between the sides. If neither side can see itself in the other’s story or if basic details are blurred in the service of one’s point, potential for dialogue and resolution become endangered. When stock phrasing replaces thoughtful, novel formulations, we lose out on the possibility for renewed reconciliation.

I have found the YU newspapers to be a place where students often explore new and different approaches to various aspects of the Jewish community, often taking strongly divergent positions. With writers at a stage of life too young to have a full a priori approach to important topics, but at a point in their lives where it becomes necessary to find their voices on these issues, novel approaches, expressions of exploration, and creativity



abound.

Personally, I don’t feel this divergence to be a bad thing; if anything, I think it is a credit to our community that we can foster individuals able to explore themselves while retaining part of our community. However, one side effect is that with so many students having unique, powerful, unexpected, and often clashing visions on many issues, conflict is frequently created. It is important that an alternate view is not seen as dangerous, necessitating the removal of the offending article from sight, but to honestly engage with others’ perspectives, attempting to learn from and engage with those who think differently.

Similarly, given the value of exposure to alternate, often unconventional narratives, it becomes especially important for the editing staff to ensure they carve writers’ unpolished gems in a manner that allows the writer’s unique perspective to dazzle instead of superimposing their own image over the writer’s canvas. Indeed, this has always been my experience with my past editors, whom I feel compelled to take this opportunity

to thank for their role in helping me express my voice. Further, I strongly encourage any YU student with a voice and the confidence to broadcast it to share their narrative with the world, playing a role in this great symphony I feel so fortunate to be a part of.

LOCAL POLITICS

BY ELIYAHU SOLOMON,
STAFF WRITER

I cannot remember who I voted for during this year's midterm elections. Just a few weeks ago, I filled out my choices for California Governor, Senator, my district's Representative, and Los Angeles Mayor - which was a particularly contentious race this cycle. Once I got passed the first two pages, I was met with a large list of candidates for judges, sheriffs, education boards, comptrollers, and a whole slew of local positions I cannot say I knew too much about. I did my best to fill them out, but as soon as I finished and dropped off my ballot I had already forgotten who I chose to represent me in government.

I can imagine many Americans across the country had similar experiences. We filled out our ballots, many of which contained races that were non-competitive, and then, if we were still interested at this point, went to CNN, Fox, or wherever we get our news to watch the returns from Arizona, Georgia, and Pennsylvania.

This should not be the case. Races in battleground states, while they do affect the balance of power in Congress, have far less of an impact on our daily lives than elections that occur in our own cities or districts. National politics dominate the news cycles, the conversations we have at our dinner tables, and the voting patterns across the country, while local politics remains an afterthought. The average turnout for mayoral elections is under 30% in most major US cities, with particularly low turnout for both young and non-wealthy voters, causing an imbalance in representation. When it comes to local government meetings, this disparity is even worse, leading to large sections of the population, namely poorer, younger, and minority citizens, being underrepresented at the local level.

While this disparity affects every aspect of local politics, it has had particularly heavy consequences in zoning and development. Zoning codes in the United States vary by city but typically are a complex record of decades-old rules and regulations. Most US cities have zoning codes that only allow for single-family homes, meaning no commercial, mixed-use, or "missing middle" housing can be built. This causes a phenomenon known as "sprawl," where large residen-

tial neighborhoods consist solely of detached single-family homes, and limited public or commercial spaces, causing its residents to rely solely on cars for transportation. When a city relies almost entirely on cars, traffic goes up, more money gets spent on infrastructure for roads (which, unlike other types of infrastructure, does not return much of the investment), and other dangers that come with car dependency are prevalent. In the United States, nearly 67% of space is reserved for single-family development, stifling the growth of many neighborhoods while simultaneously contributing to rising housing costs.

More minority, poor, and youth votes would not just help us reach greater democratic participation, but it would lead to more balanced zoning codes. While older and richer Americans do not benefit from increased traffic or car dependency, they have the resources to offset some of the downsides that come with it, and their priorities are distinct from those less fortunate. For less wealthy people, living in car-dependent communities usually means taking underfunded public transportation, or shelling out hundreds of dollars a month for car payments, insurance, gas, and repairs. Even more so, when the only option to live in a specific neighborhood is by owning or renting a single-family home, there is a tendency for neighborhoods to become segregated, with the more wealthy Americans living in the area with more development than those on the other side of town.

Zoning is a city-wide process that requires the input of citizens. When one group is overrepresented or underrepresented, it leads to inequitable outcomes in which the loudest voices have the final say, regardless of the majority's desire. No city best exemplifies this than Austin, Texas.

Austin is the typical car-dependent

American city. Most of its map is zoned exclusively for single-family homes, resulting in high traffic congestion and an increase in housing costs for one of the more highly-sought after cities. In an attempt to fix this problem, the city council proposed a restructuring of the zoning and development code, CodeNEXT, that would allow for higher-density housing in certain areas of Austin.

Over the next decade, the citizens of Austin fought amongst themselves regarding this new development code. Those opposed to development, colloquially known as "NIMBYs," were worried about the change to the character of the neighborhood while those in favor of the code saw its benefits in terms of lower housing costs, increased "walkability" of Austin's neighborhoods, and a greater sense of community that comes with increased housing density. In the end, those opposed to CodeNEXT won, largely in part to the many organizations that formed in the wake of the announcement of the code. Community Not Commodity was one of the groups that formed in opposition to the code and provided resources to aid those in fighting against the development. On the pro-development side, however, no such group formed, and the primary voice in favor of CodeNEXT was the Austin mayor who was unable to drum up enough support.

Local politics is very much an active game where those who organize, vote, and are generally active reap the rewards. An issue like zoning is not one that would come up regularly in a news segment, and it is unlikely

that anyone would have strong opinions on the topic as they do for more contentious issues. Yet zoning is just one of the many issues of local politics that affect our day-to-day lives. Other issues such as taxes, local infrastructure, city safety, business regulations, and even budget allocation are all issues that we interact with on a daily basis. These decisions are not made in Washington DC, but in city hall, where the people who make the decision are elected by only a fraction of the population. To build a more equitable city, there must be high levels of political participation, something which just does not exist in local politics.

To this end, there is always the question of how we get more people active in this process. One potential solution, and one that many US cities have already made significant strides in, is to promote easier voting. Whether this is done by mail-in or drop-off voting, increasing voting periods to a week instead of one day, or opening more polling places to ease line wait times, increasing access to the ballot would certainly increase voter turnout. Additionally, an increase in the volume of local news sources would help provide context to many people who have their attention focused on national politics.

While the flashiness and the stature of local politics do not match those on the national level, local politics are far more consequential and more directly determine the way you live your everyday life. The most important decisions in your daily life are being made regularly. You should probably know by whom.



DOES YU NEED DUAL CITIZENSHIP?

FEATURES

BY RACHELI JIAN,
LAYOUT EDITOR

What if YU, with all its values, academics, and community, could transport itself to Israel?

Since Yeshiva University, the flagship Modern Orthodox institution in the Diaspora, was founded, it has been situated in New York. Yet, in our generation, *aliyah* to Israel is increasing immensely. According to The Jewish Agency, the highest percentage of people making *aliyah* this year are aged 18-35 and are mostly college students and young families. There are dozens of students who have dropped out of Yeshiva University, to make *aliyah*.

What if they didn't have to?

With the Torat Tziyon Pilot Program, which launched this fall, YU is taking a step for the Jewish Americans who want a future in Israel.

This semester, twelve students, including myself, from Stern College and Sy Syms, are studying at the YU Israel campus in Jerusalem. The classes are in-person with nine world-renowned Israeli-American professors. The men have morning and night *seder* in the Gruss *Beit Midrash*, alongside the Gruss *kollel* and the *Roshei Yeshiva*.

One of the innovations of this new program is introducing a model of learning for the women that more closely resembles the men's morning *seder* structure. One student, Dina Zulberg, SCW '24, commented on the alternative structure, "Morning *seder*, which [the women] have three times a week from 9:00-12:00 pm with Rabbanit Shani Taragin,

is the first time since seminary that I truly feel my learning advancing beyond my own limitations. This program is the perfect opportunity to be in Israel, learn in Israel, and to be able to have a warm and caring community during my experience"

Yali Miller Proctor, SCW '23, similarly remarked that "there's something unique and special about starting our day with [Jewish] learning instead of with anatomy or chemistry."

Another student, Anya Roberts, SCW '23, highlighted the new perspective she gained while on the program, "Growing up, I always loved and had a deep appreciation for Israel, but being on this semester abroad with the Torat Tziyon Pilot Program really opened my eyes to the possibilities of one day building my future here. Torat Tziyon has changed my life in many ways, and I can say confidently that I will be leaving this program differently than I originally came in. I love the leadership opportunities this program encourages, the incredible teachers we have the unique opportunity to learn from, the trips we take exploring the land and what it has to offer, and last but certainly not least, the friends that became family. I am forever grateful to Yeshiva University for giving me this opportunity that I will always remember and treasure."

Students also remarked on the perks of living in Israel. Zulberg observed that "Torat Tziyon to me is a program that should have existed since the creation of YU. It's the perfect chance to be able to experience life independently in Israel, whilst having the support of a community and teachers to help you through that transition." YU Israel also facilitates opportu-



nities to experience what is being taught through the land itself. Proctor highlighted that, "At every opportunity, we visit different sites related to our course material. When we learned about *shmittah*, we visited a *shmittah* farm and met the farmers. When we learned about the Jews crossing the Jordan River, we went to the river and crossed it ourselves. When we learned about Menachem Begin in our History of Zionism course, we went to the Begin Museum and took a private tour of the area. On the *yahrzeit* of Rabbi Sacks zt"l, we attended President Herzog's residence in order to commemorate it with Rabbi Sack's closest family and friends. When Yom Kippur was approaching, we took a tour of *Machon Hamikdash* (The Temple Institute) in the old city, to better understand the *Seder Ha'avodah* (the Kohen Gadol's ritual on Yom Kippur. It is simply impossible to accomplish this level of learning when studying in NYC."

Sarah Zaionz, Sy Syms '24 explained, "Torat Tziyon has given me the incredible opportunity to spend time in Israel as a college student. They have taken us on amazing trips and *shabbatonim* to many locations such as Yerucham, Efrat and Tzfat, which exposed us to

different types of communities. I have been taking *ulpan* classes which have really helped me integrate into Israeli society. We are so fortunate to have the unique opportunity to learn Torah and about Israel in the land itself, truly connecting us to our history. I highly recommend this program for all YU students, as it perfectly aligns with the core YU values."

It's not just the students who are being impacted; the Professors, Rabbeim and educators around Israel have felt the unique effects of YU Israel. Professor Gil Troy said, "I have never taught YU students before, and I have been very impressed by their idealism, by their values, by their vision, and by their smarts. There seems to be a great sense of community among them and I am honored to be a part of this great new adventure in Zionism and in learning."

Overall, there is a need for YU to make a home in Israel. Not just college students but the Jewish people have realized how integral Israel is to our lives. YU having a place for undergraduates in Israel accomplishes what it stands for as a Jewish University aiming to educate and serve the new generation of Jewish leaders.

CLUB PROFILE: HEALTH EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS SOCIETY

BY RU BENHAMOU,
FEATURES EDITOR

Each month, the YU Observer aims to highlight one club available to the YU undergraduate community. For the November 2022 edition, the YU Observer is highlighting the Health Education for Students Society.

Club Name: Health Education for Students Society

Head: Sophie Frankenthal

Relevant Campus(es): Beren

What is your club's mission statement?:

Health Education for Students Society (HESS) aims to educate students about sexual and reproductive health and well-being, both physically and mentally.

Why is this club important?:

HESS is important because it offers its students education on women's reproductive health as well as their physical and emotional health regarding intimacy and relationships. HESS provides a safe and open environment for women to learn about their bodies and how to conduct a healthy lifestyle mentally and physically. As a recent poll revealed, many

students in Stern College are unfamiliar with women's health, and so this club's mission can help produce a new generation of students that lead safe and healthy lives.

SEE CLUB PROFILE,
PAGE 9

FACULTY PROFILE: DR. EMIL PRODAN

BY RAQUEL LEIFER,
FEATURES EDITOR

Each month, the YU Observer aims to highlight a YU faculty member. For the November 2022 edition, the YU Observer is highlighting Dr. Emil Prodan, PhD.

RL: Please introduce yourself.

EP: Hi! I was born in Romania, and after receiving a BS and MS in mathematical physics, I moved to the US and finished my PhD in theoretical and computational physics at Rice University. I was fortunate enough to hold two postdoctoral positions under the mentorship of two Nobel Laureates winners, one at the University of California Santa Barbara and one at Princeton University. After that, I joined the Physics Department of Yeshiva University. These days, together with many other enthusiasts, I am developing what I call Mathematical Engineering, where abstract mathematics is used to design new materials and incredible machines.

RL: How long have you worked at YU?

EP: This year, I am celebrating fifteen years of work at YU.

RL: What do you like most about working at YU?

EP: Particularly this year, I am absolutely thrilled by the response of the students to the department's new engineering courses, such as Solid Object Design and 3D Manufacturing.

RL: Do you have any advice

for students interested in a career in your field?

EP: The abstract is not invented, but it is discovered. You can see it in our real world once you become aware of it. The abstract concepts help us organize our thoughts, communicate huge amounts of information, and build complex arguments leading to conclusions that are often highly consequential for our world and the well-being of our society. The abstract thought helps us to escape and see beyond the obvious. My advice is very simple: embrace the abstract thought to fully appreciate our physical world and, at the same time, become and stay competitive in today's job market.

RL: What made you passionate about your field?

EP: Whenever I read a new mathematics book, it feels to me, literally, like walking in and discovering a new world, which is simply beautiful in itself. My interest, however, is equally in this beauty and in its potential to solve difficult problems in the real world. My art is to reveal these beautiful mathematical worlds in the dynamics of intelligently designed materials and systems. I can often see this beauty hidden in natural materials or in systems that have dynamics. From here, I can advise the experimental scientists on what to measure and how to organize their data for everybody to see these beautiful abstract worlds of mathematics.

RL: Is there anything interesting you are currently working on?

EP: Currently, I am a principal

investigator on two research grants supported by the National Science Foundation, supporting projects on using Operator Algebras, K-Theory, and Non-Commutative Geometry to classify and identify new dynamical features in aperiodic materials and meta-materials (i.e., with building blocks organized in irregular patterns), as well as in hyperbolic and fractal synthetic materials. These new materials were predicted to be the engines behind new generations of sensors and compute machines.

RL: What makes your field special?

EP: I've been fortunate to work and exchange ideas with some of the greatest minds in pure mathematics and theoretical physics and also with some of the best engineering research groups in the world. The research model I developed and Yeshiva University is unique in that it bridges those two scientific worlds that seem so far apart. The established feedback loop between pure mathematics and engineering has been highly beneficial to both: seeing what is possible pushes the engineer to develop their technologies further and, in the other direction, becoming aware and understanding some of today's practical challenges prompts the mathematicians to sharpen or develop new methods of analysis.

RL: If you could bring in any guest lecturer, alive or deceased, who would it be, and why?

EP: It would definitely be the Fields medalist Alain Connes, the inventor of Non-Commutative Geometry. Through his mathematics, he understands what space and time

is, better than anybody else on this planet. Moreover, his mathematics enables us to do topology and geometry on abstract objects, such as the discrete empirical observations coming from a materials lab or from a long medical study.

RL: What is one thing you want students to know about you?

EP: I am developing a metamaterials lab to study the dynamics of intelligently designed meta-materials. This lab aims to demonstrate the mathematical principles that can transform something as ordinary as a 3D-printed plastic structure into something extraordinary that reacts or performs a function in response to a stimulus. Students passionate about design, materials, and mathematics are welcome to get involved.

RL: Is there a particular book you would recommend that everyone read?

EP: To get a quick glimpse of how Non-Commutative Geometry was used to design unique computer algorithms that eventually enabled long sought-accurate computations for disordered materials, I will point to my book *A Computational Non-Commutative Geometry Program for Disordered Topological Insulators*, which appeared in the Springer-Briefs in Mathematical Physics series.

CLUB PROFILE
FROM PAGE 8

What inspired you to get involved in/start the club?:

"I became involved in HESS as a junior because it so perfectly addresses my personal passion for women's health, education, and advocacy. Coming from a background that often stigmatized and silenced any discussion of reproductive wellness and other female-related issues, I became inspired by the club's mission to provide access to education and resources in a religiously sensitive environment. I

also hope to become a gynecologist one day, so this club was right up my alley :)" - Sophie Frankenthal.

What are some things your club has done in the past?:

Our yearly staple events include "What to expect at the gynecologist?" and Period-Products Drive, which were both very popular last year. Regarding the Period-Products Drive, we were very successful and collected over 1,000 products in just two weeks!

What are some plans you have for this semester/future semesters?:

Our events include Advice from a Pelvic Floor Therapist, the Annual Period-Products Drive, and an Event-Series dedicated to discuss-

ing infertility from many perspectives (personal/psychological, religious, and medical), as well as so much more!

What is your advice to someone looking to get involved on campus?:

Look out for upcoming events and attend them with your friends! There is also a group chat for the club, which anyone and everyone can join: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/BFTocNKtQnC24aDcdt-bUFO>

Anything else to say about your club:

HESS provides amazing opportunities, events, and resources for its students, so stay tuned!

Are you a YU undergraduate club head interested in seeing your club featured in a future edition? Email us at theyuobserver@gmail.com with your club name and the names of the club heads!

CRISPR: THE EXCITING REVOLUTION IN MEDICINE

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

BY ADIN BLUMOFÉ

In 2020, the Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded to Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier for their 1987 invention of the gene-editing tool CRISPR, which allows scientists to change specific nucleotides in DNA. Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR) revolutionarily provided the ability to edit mutated genetic code directly. Thirty-five years from initial conception, the possibilities this technology provides are finally beginning to be fully utilized.

Typically, the immune system, which comprises over a dozen types of cells, works in a complex, multilayered defense to destroy potential foreign or domestic threats to the human body. When a cell stops regulating its growth properly, reproduction becomes cancerous, sucking up resources and spreading rapidly. Usually, cancer cells are quickly destroyed by the immune system. However, sometimes the cancerous cells fly under the

radar of the immune system or are simply capable of over-powering the body's defenses. If left untreated, metastasizing cancer will have derelict effects on the human body. Until this point, medical interventions have been primarily focused around chemotherapy and radiation, approaches that have serious weaknesses, such as the possibility that these non-targeted treatments will induce future cancers.

Using CRISPR technology, Antoni Ribas's team at the University of California, Los Angeles, is creating a new weapon for the doctors' toolbox by developing specific cancer-targeting T-cells. They edited sixteen patients' T-Cells using CRISPR, reworking them to address each patient's exact type of cancer. The idea is that designer T-Cells will better detect and destroy tumors, which have thus far been successfully hiding from the body's defense system. The treatment counterintuitively requires infusing a few gene-edited T-cells, while killing off much of the unadulterated antibodies, so that, after many cycles of reproduction, most of the body's remaining T-cells will be of the altered

form. By saturating the blood with the 'new' T-cells, the immune cells can diffuse into hard surface tumors, which are harder to penetrate. Once inside the tumor, the T-cells can tear apart the cancer from the inside out.

According to Scientific American, "One month after treatment, five of the participants experienced stable disease, meaning that their tumours had not grown. Only two people experienced side effects that were likely due to the activity of the edited T-cells." The results from the trial serve as a promising proof of concept. Now that it has been established that the method is functional, CRISPR can be expanded to different types of cancers across the human body. Not only is this process more effective in tackling the cancer, but there is also the benefit of not having to worry about inducing secondary cancers from the treatment, as CRISPR does not involve radiation.

With all the exciting news, it is

important to temper expectations. In the coming years, one should not expect to see cancer cures in CVS pharmacies. Producing these CRISPR therapies "requires a tremendously complicated manufacturing process," as it practically necessitates making a new medicine for each patient. The necessary high-degree of specificity means the treatment will always be exorbitantly expensive compared to the generalized, current alternatives. Additionally, insurance companies are far wavier of funding cutting-edge techniques due to potential doubts of efficacy and the sticker shock they carry. Despite all the short-term caveats, one thing is for sure—CRISPR, in time, will fundamentally alter the human condition.



OUR SHARK CRISIS AND HOW IT MUST BE AVOIDED

BY BELLA RUDOY

Although people think of sharks as fierce, ferocious predators, people pose more of a threat to sharks than the other way around. Mankind has been rapidly killing sharks for their meat and collagenous limbs for centuries to produce makeup, cleansers, and moisturizers. For example, squalene oil is a known moisturizer and is derived from a shark's liver. It is one of the many products that have contributed to the rapid increase in killing sharks that could soon lead to their extinction.

It is not just beauty products that pose a threat. Sharks, such as oceanic whitetips and porbeagles, are often caught accidentally by fisheries, causing exponential growth in this vital species' extinction rate. Other threats to the shark species include shark finning, overfishing, pollution, habitat degradation, and nets. Up to 100 million sharks and rays are caught each year around the world. Since many fisheries lack catch limits, sharks are caught much faster than they can repro-

duce, exacerbating the problem even more. Additionally, the increased need for pet food (which is processed with shark meat and cartilage) and fishmeal to feed farm animals has worried scientists about the possibility of sharks becoming extinct.

Sharks are classified as apex predators, animals that ensure the diversity of marine species and the protection of marine habitats, a process vital to our oceans' health and balance. Apex predators occupy the highest trophic positions in food webs and serve important roles in ecological and evolutionary processes which shape and reshape the traits of prey and how they interact with each other in the ecosystem. Without apex predators, prey numbers would skyrocket, and slow, weak, and dying animals would rise in population resulting in the decline of a species' population health. Moreover, apex predators keep numbers of smaller predators under control which allows the population of smaller prey to stay at a sustainable level. When apex predators begin to decline

rapidly, population cycles for other animals in the ecosystem explode. Additionally, plant life is affected as forests become stunted and rivers flood.

These potentially devastating outcomes are widely ignored. Since many shark species take between thirteen and thirty years to reach sexual maturity, sharks are particularly vulnerable to population depletion as they are killed prior to reproducing. In fact, scientists have predicted that some shark species have declined by 99% in the past thirty years. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources Red List, at least a quarter of ray and shark species have now been classified as threatened. The number of shark and ray species threatened will likely increase since only 50% of known species have been assessed.

As the shark crisis will likely become exacerbated in the future, what can we do to help sharks and our ecosystem as a whole? For starters, we can

donate to organizations, such as the WWF, working hard to stop illegal fisheries from overfishing. We can also resolve not to buy makeup products or medicines with shark extracts. Finding a solution to this problem will take time and effort. That being said, spreading awareness today about the issues that will arise if sharks become extinct and the steps to combat this calamity is the only way sharks will continue to roam our oceans for centuries to come.



NOVEL DEVICE PROVIDES POSSIBLE SOLUTION FOR TETRAPLEGICS WITH DIFFICULTY SPEAKING

BY YOSEF SCHER,
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
EDITOR

Communication is challenging for people with tetraplegia, a condition that causes individuals to be paralyzed from the neck down. Even paralyzed individuals that can communicate can only do so with minimal movements, such as eye gestures or attempts at mouthing words. However, with the new implant technology developed by a team of researchers at the California Institute of Technology, communication has become accessible for the tetraplegia community.

While a significant amount of research has been done regarding paralyzed people moving objects, until recently, there has been little in the realm of communication and speech. Using a brain-machine interface, Sarah Wandelt, a lead researcher on this project, enabled paralyzed people to reconstruct speech by having them think of what they wanted to say. Brain-machine interfaces “acquire brain signals, ana-

lyze them, and translate them into commands that are relayed to output devices that carry out desired actions” and work in tandem with electrodes implanted in a person’s head to help them perform an action. When Wandelt had paralyzed people try to speak, “neural signals associated with words [were] detected by electrodes implanted in the brain. The signals [were] then translated into text, which can be made audible by computer programs that generate speech.”

In order for the brain-machine interface to work properly, it needed to be trained to recognize specific “brain patterns produced when certain words were spoken internally” by the tetraplegic participant. While some people would assume that training a brain-machine interface to recognize internal speech patterns would take a significant amount of time, the device that Wandelt created only needed to be trained for fifteen minutes. After training the brain-machine interface, participants sat in a chair with a screen in front of them. Next, a word appeared on the screen, and the participants were instructed to say the word internally, i.e., think

about the word on the screen. Astonishingly, Wandelt’s brain-machine interface algorithms were “able to predict words with an accuracy up to 91 percent,” far surpassing any current brain-interface machines that provide people with tetraplegia with similar abilities.

Wandelt hopes that after enhancing her device, she will be able to extend this new form of communication to patients who do not have tetraplegia but suffer from other diseases, including brain injuries and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Leigh Hochberg, a leading scholar in the usage of neurotechnology to help people with paralysis, felt that Wandelt’s findings provided significant results that could lead to an advancement in effectively helping people with tetraplegia gain their ability to speak. After hearing her speak at the Society of Neuroscience annual meeting, Hochberg commented that Wandelt’s approach is “really exciting, and reinforces the power of bringing together fundamental neuroscience, neuroengineering and machine learning approaches for the restoration of communica-



tion and mobility.”

Although this new device is revolutionary in its field, Wandelt feels that many improvements still need to be made, including making it faster and more accurate. Additionally, this device needs further research and development for people with more severe speech disorders. That being said, Wandelt and Hochberg believe that it is still “early days for this technology,” and they are hopeful that with a little more time, people with tetraplegia will not have to worry about not having the ability to speak clearly and effectively.

THE GENOTOXICITY OF CHEMOTHERAPY

BY RISA HARRIS

Chemotherapy is a technique used by healthcare providers to fight cancer. Although it is common knowledge that this treatment has various negative side effects, the genotoxic risks of chemotherapy are less widely known. Chemotherapy may cause mutations in cells other than the already cancerous ones, making it important to identify alternative cancer-fighting methods.

Cancer is the by-product of certain cells growing at an uncontrollable rate. Normally, human cells grow and multiply to form new cells in a process known as mitosis. When cells grow old or become damaged, they die or commit apoptosis, allowing new cells to take their place. During mitosis, some cells accumulate damage, which is normally remedied at various checkpoints in the cell cycle. However, sometimes these checkpoints do not perform properly, allowing these damaged

cells to multiply. These damaged cells turn into tumors which can become cancerous. These malignant tumors spread into nearby tissues and can travel to distant places in the body to form new tumors. Cancer cells divide at a high rate, grow in the absence of stimulus, and evade the immune system, which normally eliminates damaged cells. They can even instruct blood vessels to grow towards the tumors which provides them with a supply of oxygen and nutrients.

One integral development in the fight against cancer has been chemotherapy, which uses chemicals and cytotoxic agents to kill cells with a high turnover rate. One specific type of chemotherapeutic drug is Chlorambucil, which is an alkylating agent. This class of chemotherapy drugs prevents cells from making more copies of itself by damaging its DNA. When a cell attempts to copy its DNA, Chlorambucil sticks to one of the two strands of dou-

ble-sided DNA and prevents them from separating. The cell cannot divide properly, which can lead to cell death if it is not repaired. “Normal” cells have mechanisms in place to repair this damage, but cancer cells absorb a very high concentration of alkylating agents since they multiply at such a rapid rate, leaving them with less time to repair the damage. This method is, therefore, effective at killing cancer cells.

Chemotherapy is designed to be genotoxic to cancer cells, meaning that it causes damage to the DNA in cells. However, chemotherapy is also genotoxic to “normal” cells. This is the reason cancer patients can experience various side effects ranging from nausea and hair loss to the development of secondary cancer. Tragically, it is possible that the medium used to fight one’s cancer can actually cause the development of a new cancer a few years down the line. Chemotherapeutics

are unfortunately not yet specific enough to distinguish between a cancer cell and other cells that enter the cell cycle more frequently, and therefore they can cause significant unintended damage. The genotoxicity posed by chemotherapy is a major concern because it induces DNA damage and instability in the patient’s genome. Chemotherapy-related genetic instability is presumed to cause secondary tumors, especially acute myeloid leukemia or myelodysplasia, affecting 2-15% of patients receiving chemotherapy.

Researchers at Rouen University Hospital conducted a study on mice that were exposed to genotoxic chemotherapies to determine if the exposure would increase the risk of developing tumors. 208 mice were exposed

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to either genotoxic chemotherapy or non-genotoxic chemotherapy. The researchers used various genotoxicity assays, which are tests done to assess the possibility of mutations that could occur through the use of this drug. After examining the results, the researchers saw that exposure to topoisomerase inhibitors (a common genotoxic chemotherapeutic) had drastically increased the risk of tumor development in the mice, while the non-genotoxic chemotherapy (docetaxel, a mitotic spindle poison) had little to no impact on the development of tumors. This strongly supports the contribution of genotoxic chemotherapeutic drugs towards MPC (Mesangiogenic progenitor cell, present in bone marrow) development.

Another genotoxic risk that chemotherapy can induce is infertility. Spermatozoa, or male sex cells, are highly vulnerable to oxidative stress which can induce damage to the sperm DNA, RNA transcripts, and telomeres. This could contribute to, and even cause, male infertility as well as childhood cancers in children fathered by men with defective

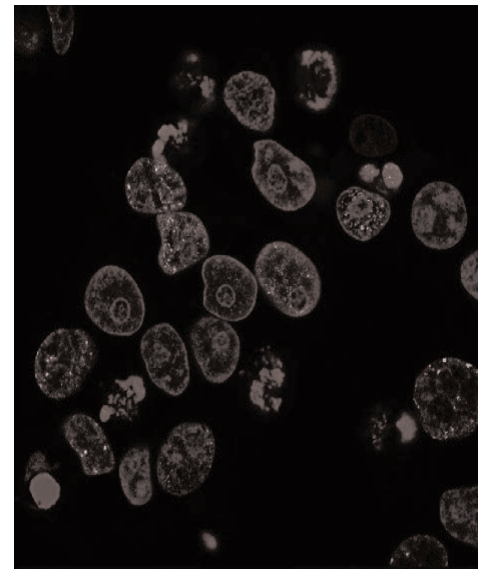
sperm cells. Morris conducted an experiment to test the DNA damage on men who had received chemotherapy, using Comet and Chromatin structure assays (SCSA). This genotoxic assay can detect if a sperm sample has a high degree of DNA damage, such as fragmentation in the sperm chromosome. They discovered that these patients had actually accrued increased and persistent DNA damage in sperm, which rendered some men infertile or as suffering from other fertility issues.

Thankfully, scientists have been able to develop alternative chemical compounds which have an antitumor effect while limiting the harmful genotoxic effects. A study conducted in 2017 found that *Pilosocereus gounelli*, an extract taken from a cactus, has possible chemopreventive effects against cyclophosphamide induced DNA damage from chemotherapy. The researchers performed micronucleus tests to assess the genotoxic damage. A micronucleus test screens for any chemicals that could cause spindle formation and micronuclei, or clumps of chromatin which is formed in the event that chromosomes fragment due to DNA damage. The detection of these clumps

indicate that there was significant DNA damage. Then, the cyclophosphamide drug was administered while the *P. gounelli* stem extract was administered to counteract the cyclophosphamide genotoxicity. It was found that *P. gounelli* plays an integral role in inhibiting the cyclophosphamide-induced genotoxic damage.

An additional study found that Curcumin, the active compound from the plant *Curcuma longa* L., has anticancer activities and can protect normal cells from chemotherapy-induced damages. Curcumin could initiate cells' DNA repair pathways and repair the potentially-cancerous damage. An additional method theorized to limit the genotoxic effects of chemotherapy would be to use anti-telomere (telomerase inhibitors) molecules when administering chemotherapy. The level of chromosome instability caused by chemotherapy is very high, and therefore scientists have proposed to use the telomere functional parameters as a marker of chemotherapy sensitivity and toxicity, therefore, using anti-telomerase molecules could increase its sensitivity to chemotherapy.

The genotoxic risks that chemotherapy treatment can induce are significant and can even be fatal. There are studies that have developed alternative solutions that are less genotoxic, but there is still a long way to go. Chemotherapy, for now, is a trade-off where healthcare providers must weigh the risks and benefits of treatment by these means. The goal is to kill the highest percentage of cancerous cells while saving the highest percentage of "normal" ones. Hopefully, in the future, this tradeoff will become less risky.



BUFFALO SNOW CRISIS

BY ROCHEL LEAH ITZKOWITZ

Buffalo, New York, accumulated over six feet of snow in a recent storm. The historic storm had an unprecedented buildup of snowfall, with an average of six inches an hour of accumulation for twenty-four hours. Estimates for the total snowfall reached seventy inches, forcing Governor Kathy Hochul to declare a state emergency for many parts of Western New York. When winds began shifting on the Sunday morning after the storm, the heavy snow moved away from Buffalo, affecting the nearby Cleveland and Dunkirk, New York areas. Buffalo is still under a strict weather advisory.

The reason behind the intense storm in Western New York is lake-effect snow. According to Kenmore Development, this weather phenomenon "happens when the transfer of heat and moisture from the warm waters of the Great Lakes to the cold winter air creates a shallow layer of atmospheric instability,

causing air to rise quickly." The heat and moisture from the lake create a disproportionate amount of clouds. When the moisture finishes condensing, it turns into snow and produces a heavy accumulation.

Multiple conditions hint at an upcoming lake-effect snowstorm. First, there must be a significant temperature disparity between the lake and the air. For the warm air to elevate enough for ice crystal development, the rising barometer must be followed by a falling barometer. Also, fetch, the term for the span the wind moves over a body of water, is a crucial factor in predicting a lake-effect storm. If the fetch is a long distance, more heat and moisture can be obtained from the water.

Lake-effect snow peaks during early winter. According to the direction of the wind, certain areas surrounding the Great Lakes will be adversely affected. Additional snowfall is generated when Canada's cold air travels to the warm

Great Lakes. The instability creates more bands of snow disbanded onto locations surrounding the lakes. As we move further into the winter, there is a smaller chance of lake-effect snow occurring. The lakes tend to freeze completely, preventing heat and moisture from mixing.

Weather forecasters predict that the majority of the United States will be cooler than usual this coming winter. Specifically, New York City's winter seasonal forecast begins with two months of cold and wintry weather patterns. The other half of the winter will have more unpredictable patterns and may even have a warmer finish. NYC Metro Weather records that snowfall is predicted to be above the annual average of 28.9 inches.

We can expect much less snowfall for the Yeshiva University community, whose distance from the Great Lakes is far greater



than Buffalo's. It will nevertheless be a cold start to this winter, warranting proper outerwear and preparations.

METHODS OF VALUATION

BY ELI LEVI,
BUSINESS EDITOR

Investment bankers are, in many respects, glorified advisors. Their advice is primarily based on the way they value different companies, but how do you value a company? One valuation method is known as intrinsic valuation, which values the future cash flows of the company. In almost all circumstances, this is correlated with how much a company should be worth. The tough part is figuring out how much the company will produce in the future and how much those future dollars are worth today. After all, as everyone in finance knows, a sum of money now is worth more than the same sum of money in the future. To accurately predict cash flows and the value of future dollars, investment bankers must learn to effectively use what is known as a DCF (Discounted Cash Flow Analysis) model, where they make assumptions about the growth rates of the company's cash flows, project those cash flows into the distant future, and then discount those future cash flows back to their present value. In other words, a company's monetary

generation potential determines how investment bankers view its value in the present time.

The other method of valuing a company is through relative valuation. Two examples of this would be public company comparisons or market comparisons. Neither value the company itself, but instead value it based on what other companies in the same sector are worth. A common figure to compare is the price to earnings per share (p/e). Earnings per share is the net income of the company divided by the number of outstanding shares of said company, and the p/e ratio is the price of the stock divided by the earnings per share. The p/e ratio is useful to investors because it allows investors to compare apples to apples. The price of the stock means nothing alone. For example, if the stock price was \$1,000, but there were only one hundred shares outstanding (giving the company a value of \$100,000) compared to a company with a stock price of \$1 but with \$1,000,000



worth of shares outstanding (giving the company a value of \$1,000,000), the second company is worth 10x more even though its stock price is 100x less. The p/e ratio allows investors to compare companies relative to their net income.

There are two ways to think about how to value a company: intrinsic and relative. Intrinsic value evaluates a company based on what it will produce

in the future, whereas relative valuation examines the company based on what it is worth to other similar companies. Valuation is an art, not a science. When evaluating a company, there is no one way to ensure accuracy.

WHAT THE TUB IS GOING ON AT TWITTER?

BY EZRA EMERSON

Picture this: The new CEO of your company walks into the headquarters mini-fridge in tow. You would probably feel uncomfortable. Well, this is what Elon Musk did. He walked straight into Twitter HQ with nothing but a kitchen sink. Fittingly, he tweeted in tandem, "Let that sink in!" In my mind, this was a sign of crazy things to come and, as predicted, craziness ensued. Next thing you know,

Twitter's previous CEO and CFO are both fired. Then, out of nowhere, he axed about half of Twitter's 7,500 employees. Twitter Blue, an \$8-a-month package that makes any random schmo seem "popular", comes and goes in the amount of time it takes for Thanos to snap half the world out of existence. Finally, Musk reinstated some key and controversial figures' Twitter accounts such as Donald Trump, Andrew Tate, and Ye, among others.

These moves have had some unfortunate consequences. Take for example Eli Lilly and Company, a pharmaceutical brand known for its innovation in insulin. Twitter Blue enabled a fake account to pose as them and offer free insulin. The tweet went viral and, although it was ultimately taken down, Eli Lilly still felt the need to issue an apology.

So where do we go from here? How do we keep Twitter from going down the drain? Frankly, I

am not sure we need to do anything. As of the writing of this article, even though more than half of its employees were fired, there is no sign that Twitter is slowing down. The tweeters still tweet, the remaining employees are still working, and all seems to be going well. That is, at least, until the sink starts clogging.

ARTS & CULTURE

BY JONAH JAMES,
STAFF WRITER

In *Parshas Vayeishev*, Yosef is described as both a dreamer and interpreter of dreams. He dreams of his elevation above his family and he explains to Pharaoh's butler and baker their respective fortune and demise.

In *Torah Or*, the Alter Rebbe reveals our unique spiritual

WE WERE LIKE DREAMERS

potential that is only accessible via dreams, in which our imagination can unify opposing ideas. Indeed, our exile is likened to an era of sleep, in which we are "like dreamers (*Tehillim* 126:1)." However, it is specifically in this disorder that we tap into more sublime, Godly levels, losing our ability to control our narrative.

On the one hand, exile allows us to pursue our materialistic desires with the same passion we pursue our spiritual life. We can develop a profound love and awe for Hash-

em during davening, but immediately afterwards, chase after worldly affairs without having Hashem in mind.

This contradiction reflects a spiritual coarseness, in which we mistakenly convince ourselves that our material and spiritual lives have been fused. In the language of *Chassidus*, this is a withdrawal of consciousness. Like a fetus, our Godly awareness is "curled up" (*Zohar Tosefta Beshalach*, page 50 and *Etz Chaim Shar HaKlalim*,

Chapter 2) during exile, and we know only our metabolic functions or desire for love. We do not access our higher cognitive faculties.

On the other hand, this undeveloped Godly awareness, caused by the entanglements of exile, contains the deepest expression of Infinity within. When we are awake, we compartmentalize God to the limits

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THE MOUSETRAP: EXCITEMENT BUILDS AD SCDS'S ANNUAL FALL PLAY APPROACHES!

BY SARA GOLBBERGER

Two weeks away from the opening show, the cast and crew of this year's Stern College Dramatics Society play are hard at work on their hilarious and riveting production of Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*. As the world's longest-running play, there have been over 28,000 performances of *The Mousetrap* since its first showing in 1952. It has just been announced that for the first time ever, *The Mousetrap* will finally be coming to Broadway! Lucky for you, you do not have to wait until then to see this famous play; SCDS is bringing *The Mousetrap* to Washington Heights this December!

Funny, a little dark, and edge-of-your-seat suspenseful, here is a taste of what is in store for you in SCDS's production of *The Mousetrap*. It is the grand opening of Monkswell Manor guest house, and a blizzard has hit, trapping the new owners and five quirky guests inside. When a policeman arrives on skis, the country getaway suddenly becomes the center of a murder investigation. Everyone has a secret, but one is greater than them all... *The Mousetrap* will leave you wondering "who-dunnit?" with twists and turns you could never have imagined.

The show is now celebrating its seventieth anniversary, which makes you wonder how it is possible that the story's true murderer still remains a mystery for future audiences. The answer is that after every performance the audience is asked to "preserve the tradition of *The Mousetrap* by keeping the secret locked in their hearts." When you attend SCDS's upcoming showing, you too will be asked to preserve this famous theater secret.

As I am the assistant stage manager of the play, I know a lot about the backstage side of working on the show. Although you may have heard many times before that there is so much more involved in backstage work than the glimpses the audience catches through the curtains, it does not come close to encapsulating the enormity of this project. In my position, I help our incredible stage manager, Tzivia Major, coordinate rehearsals and

manage the backstage teams, among other odds and ends that come up (and they *always* come up). Hair, sound, lights, and set are just a handful of teams that we oversee to produce a dazzling and captivating experience for the audience. At my high school, I was always involved in our annual play as a member of the cast, choir, or crew, but when I joined SCDS, I was blown away by the high level of professionalism and dedication. Being that I am focused primarily on the management of the play, I took this article as an opportunity to speak to the cast about what it has been like for them working in front of the curtain.

Eliana Diamond (Mr. Paravacini): "It's so incredible being part of such a talented production team! The whole crew is so dedicated and cares so deeply for the success of the show. It's been so much fun to rehearse with and learn from the other actors."

Tehila Bitton, (Mollie Ralston): "Working with the amazing cast and crew on *The Mousetrap* has been incredible. To tap into Mollie's past, and focus on getting those events to show in both her actions in the present and her hopes for the future has been a welcome challenge. We have learned so much from our characters, from our amazing director Leah, and from each other. Perhaps the best part of this whole experience has been the collective bond we have formed as a cast; everyone is so encouraging and supportive. In rehearsal, we rely on and work off of each other, because your lines and reactions come out completely differently based on who is standing across from you on stage, and how they interact with your character. It has been an absolute privilege to be a part of the team and I am so excited to see this show come to life."

Gillian Herszage, (Giles Ralston) SCDS Vice President: "One of the best parts of SCDS is getting to work with my friends on stage. The friendships that have come out of creating this production are truly amazing. In rehearsing for the play, Leah works with each of us on our characters individually. This is my first time playing a man, so she and I have been

working on understanding who Giles is, how he thinks, walks, talks, and feels in every scene."

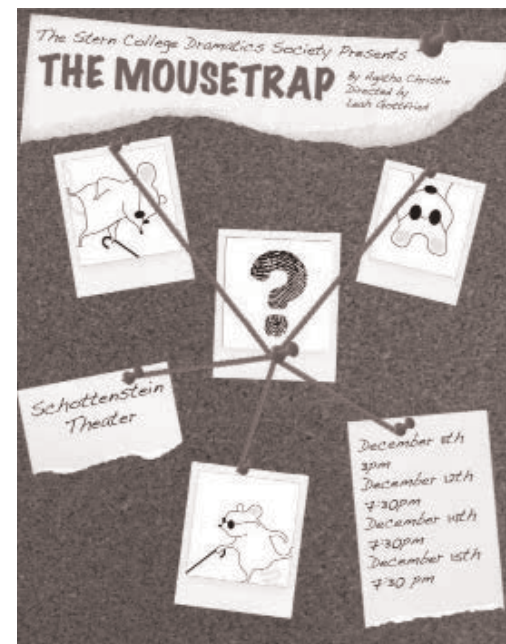
Nancy Alexander (Major Metcalf): "It's been really cool and exciting working with Leah. She's such a pro! I've done plays before but I've never had a director that really viewed theatre as an art form the way that she does. She treats all of us with so much respect and really empowers us to own these characters. She's given me the confidence to make strong choices about my role and to bring all of my skill sets to this production"

Our director Leah Gottfried is an award-winning director, writer, producer and actor, and founder of the production company Dignity Entertainment. You may recognize her as the writer, director, and star of the hit web series "Soon By You." She is also a Stern graduate and was an SCDS member during her own time on campus! As she describes it:

"Being in the SCDS shows when I was in Stern was a huge highlight for me, definitely one of the best parts of my college experience. It's incredibly thrilling for me to be able to return now to direct the show and work with students who are just as passionate about theatre arts as I was. I'm blown away by the talent and passion of the actors and the professionalism and dedication of the crew. They are all in it with their full hearts."

This is high praise coming from Leah, and the cast and crew members certainly take her accolades to heart. Leah also grants us a unique and empowering perspective on what it's like as a woman working in the arts:

"As an observant woman in the arts, I feel particularly passionate about the importance of telling our own stories. My vision for my own career is to tell authentic stories about powerful and complex Jewish women. I'm finding that my observance doesn't hinder me in the ways many had assumed it would; it's actually been an aspect of myself that sets me apart and really drives my work, particularly



as a writer and director of film. I always encourage any young artists who are unsure if the arts is a viable career that it very much is and that the world needs to hear their stories."

Now that you have a taste of what goes on before you enter the theater doors, join Mr. Paravacini, Giles, Mollie, and the entire cast and crew of *The Mousetrap* on show night. Come enjoy the Stern College Dramatics Society production of *The Mousetrap*, and see why this classic play has been running for over 70 years.

Buy tickets here: <https://scds.ticketleap.com/the-mousetrap/>

Show dates: December 11th at 3pm, December 12th, 14th, and 15th at 7:30pm

Location: Schottenstein Theater, Wilf Campus (560 W 185th Street New York, 10033)

***Bussing to and from Beren Campus will be available for each show.

Price:

- Student - \$5
- General Admission - \$15
- YU Alumni - \$12
- Sponsorship - \$35

If you are an SCDS alum or a YU staff member, please email sterndramatics@gmail.com for a discount code.

GLASS ONION REVIEW

BY ANDREW WARREN,
STAFF WRITER

In my twenty-one years of life, I have discussed thousands of movies. I believe only two are universally loved. One is “Shawshank Redemption,” and the other is “Knives Out.” The 2019 mystery film is acclaimed for its unique storytelling, its sharp but not overt social commentary, and its cast, specifically Daniel Craig’s Benoit Blanc.

It’s no surprise that studios immediately bid on the franchise rights, with Netflix winning at an astonishing \$469 million bid. That was only enough to buy them two sequels. The first sequel, “Glass Onion,” is getting a limited theatrical release with a streaming release planned for late December.

“Glass Onion” tells the story of billionaire Miles Braun (Edward Norton), who invites five friends to his private island for a murder mystery party. His friends include Claire (Kathryn Hahn), who is a governor, Lionel (Leslie Odom Jr.), a scientist who works for Braun, Birdy Jay (Kate Hudson), a model on the verge of cancellation, Duke (Dave Bautista), a Twitch live streamer, and Andi (Janelle Monae), who isn’t exactly friends with Braun at the moment.

The group refers to themselves as the Disruptors, as they are

all successful in their respective fields by “disrupting” their industries.

To Braun’s surprise, one more guest arrives at this party, Detective Benoit Blanc. Braun did not invite him. Who did? And why?

That is the setup and all I’m willing to share. This movie has a lot of surprises that the advertising did a really great job of hiding. Trust me, it does not play out as you would expect.

Let me put your mind at ease right now. The movie is good, but not great. There is a lot that worked for me in this movie and few things that did not. Overall, it was a fun night at the theater, even if I did not leave blown away.

For starters, the cast is not fully utilized. This is surprising, as there are fewer characters in this film than the last, which normally means more screen time per character, adding dimension to the story.

Instead, most of the characters are two-dimensional. The actors do a fine job, but there is not much variety demanded from them.

In the very first scene, each of the characters gets a puzzle box from Braun that they collectively solve over a humorous conference call. This scene serves as an introduction to the different personality types. Each person has their own trait, and then, for the rest of the movie, they just play that trait. There are no

layers.

For example, Hudson plays a ditzzy, hedonistic airhead and that is all she is. Bautista is a loudmouth, macho guy, and that is all he is. Odom Jr. and Hahn have even less to play with, which is bizarre because they are spectacular actors. Why hire Kathryn Hahn if you’re not going to use her?

There are a few exceptions. Edward Norton makes for a funny, deluded tech billionaire. His performance is especially timely as an Elon Musk parody. Janelle Monae has the Ana De Armas (who played Marta in the original) role in the movie and she does an amazing job bringing the heart to the movie.

Daniel Craig is still amazing in this role. He gets even more to do in this movie than he did in the last. In the first film, he was merely a supporting character in an ensemble movie, but in “Glass Onion” he’s the protagonist. The audience gets to see some of Blanc’s personal life. For the majority of the movie, he’s not even solving a case but rather trying to socialize among the one-percent, which is much different than his scenes in the original. There’s no such thing as too much Benoit Blanc and in that regard this movie surpasses the original.

It is hard to criticize the story without spoiling the film. What I will say is that so much takes place before the crime, but very little takes place afterward, leaving the story somewhat lopsided. The final

sequence is wildly unbelievable, in a bad way. So much effort and skillful editing goes into a setup with an awkwardly quick resolution.

It sounds like I hated the movie, but I did enjoy watching it. The dialogue is witty and loaded with foreshadowing. It takes a clever man to write good idiot humor, and Bautista is hysterical while delivering it. The movie is beautifully shot, with each scene framed with intention. Throughout the film, there were numerous instances where the actors were positioned to look directly at the camera as opposed to looking at another actor. Normally when this happens, it is in service of breaking the fourth wall, but in this case it draws the audience in.

When Braun discusses his theories of disruption, I felt like he was talking to me. When the boat arrived at the harbor and the friends were surprised to see Andi, I felt like I was the one being accused. The technique is subtle but very effective.

“Glass Onion” is a well-made, engaging, and entertaining film. Its story has weaknesses that are nearly made up for by the way the story is told. If you are a fan of the first *Knives Out*, the movie *Wrath of Man*, or the novel “The Valley of Fear”, then you will like “Glass Onion,” too.

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of order, in which paradoxes cannot exist. But in the chaos of dreams, we access raw Godliness. This lack of definition allows us to explore areas of consciousness too difficult to experience while awake (Rebbe Rashab *Maamar Osray lagefen*, 1917).

During exile, this raw Godliness appears as confusion. We do not know how to process these rarefied levels, as the verse says, “I clothe the Heavens with blackness” (*Yeshaya* 50:3). But in the disorder shines a higher level of Godliness, a level that does not normally belong there.

It is only our intellect which fails

to synthesize conflicting ideas. This is why during exile, prophecy was given to children and fools (*Bava Basra* 12b) who have more room in their minds for transcendent communication (as explained by Rabbi Yossi Paltiel).

In *Yemos HaMoshiach* (the Days of the Messiah), our need for dreams will disappear because we will access the Godliness that was previously obscured. For example, in exile we refer to *Yud-Kay-Vav-Kay* (the Tetragrammaton) as *Adnai* (My Master), even though *Adnai* reflects a lower level of Hashem. *Adnai* is Hashem as the Master of the world, while *Yud-Kay-Vav-Kay* expresses Hashem as the only existence. But *Moshiach* is the integration of chaos and order, and thus we will pronounce *Yud-Kay-Vav-Kay* as it written.

From this, we can understand why “we were like dreamers.” As we enter the days of *Moshiach*, we



will wake from our slumber and realize the benefit of our dreams, namely, the Godliness we unknowingly accessed. The Alter Rebbe explains that Yosef was on a higher level than Moshe in a certain sense, as he not only found abstruse Godly levels via dreams, but also clarified others’ messages from God.

May we learn from the “new Torah that will go forth from Me” (*Yeshaya* 51:4) with the full revelation of *Moshiach*, whose bodily existence is in this world (*Shabbos Vayeira* 5752), and whose prophecy has already been reinstated (*Shabbos Shoftim* 5751).

Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies at Yeshiva University

Class Schedule for Spring 2023

MONDAY

2:50 p.m.
Richard Hidary
Midrash in
Historical Context

4:50 p.m.
Ephraim Kanarfogel
The Interface
Between Sefarad
& Ashkenaz in the
High Middle Ages

6:50 p.m.
Ephraim Kanarfogel
History of Medieval
Ashkenazic Piyyut
(Liturgical Poetry)

TUESDAY

2:50 p.m.
Jonathan Dauber
Introduction to
Hasidic Thought

4:50 p.m.
Ari Mermelstein
Introduction to
Biblical Studies

Jeffrey Gurock
American Jewish History:
1881–1967

6:50 p.m.
Mordechai Cohen
Human & Divine Love
in Song of Songs

WEDNESDAY

10:00 a.m.
Josh Zimmerman
(in partnership with
Vilnius University)
Phenomenon of East
European Jewish History:
Poland and Lithuania

2:50 p.m.
Jess Olson
Jews in Modern Europe,
Social & Intellectual
History: 1760–1900

Tamra Wright
Survey of Modern
& Contemporary
Jewish Philosophy

4:50 p.m.
David Berger
The Jewish-Christian
Debate in the Middle Ages

6:50 p.m.
Naomi Grunhaus
Radak and his
Exegetical Methods

Josh Zimmerman
Varieties of Jewish
Nationalism

THURSDAY

2:50 p.m.
Jonathan Dauber
Messianism in Kabbalah
& Hasidut

4:50 p.m.
Daniel Rynhold
Philosophy of Maimonides

Steven Fine
Samaritans & Jews:
From the Bible to
Modern Israel

6:50 p.m.
Ronnie Perelis
Jewish Culture in
Medieval Spain

Please check our website for any updates at www.yu.edu/revel/courses.

For information please contact Rona Steinerman, Revel Program Director, at steinerm@yu.edu



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