

Scepter

The Students' Voice

Kingsborough Community College

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The City University of New York

Social Media and Dependency

The Addictive Effects of
Social Platforms

3

Acknowledging Aaron

Aaron Jean Francois and the
Haitian Migrant Crisis

5

The French Dispatch Review

Another Classic by Wes Anderson

7

Hail Herd Immunity

The Mindset of Many Anti-Vaxxers Doing More Harm Than Good

By Andre Rickman

As the pandemic rages on, there are still many who act reckless. Granted, I'm not into fear mongering. However, as human beings, we should act in the interest of humankind, not ourselves. The basis of this article is to shed light on the mindset of an anti-vaxxer. Through examination of this mindset, maybe misconceptions and myths can be quashed.

The best way to understand this phenomenon is to define what an anti-vaxxer is. According to Aaron Kondolas's article "What is an anti-vaxxer", an "Anti-vaxxer" is someone who disagrees with the use of vaccines. For example, some view vaccines as an infringement on their human rights. Kondolas writes, "Whatever the person's reasons may be, they disagree with vaccination usage. This mentality isn't new.

Surprisingly, this movement dates back to the 18th century."

Some of the most common arguments anti-vaxxers have is vaccines have the chance of causing autism in children. They even go as far as postulating that vaccines can alter DNA. This ideology originates from Andrew Wakefield in 1998. According to Mayo Health, "a small study by A. Wakefield was conducted, which suggested a link between vaccinations and autism spectrum disorder...the study underwent further inspection and has since been retracted, and the provider's medical license was taken away due to falsified information." Personally, when I read this quote, I immediately thought "So those twenty years of speech and occupational therapy and making sure people don't call me a 'retard' was all because of a freaking jab

are you kidding me!" Statements like this show how uneducated some people are about disabilities and immunizations. It's baffling to say the least. As a person on the spectrum, that sounds ableist and very damaging to many individuals on the spectrum as well.

Another common argument many anti-vaxxers use is that natural immunity is better than vaccine immunity. Nevertheless, vaccines are still encouraged for fighting this pandemic. CDC doctor Rochelle Walenski states "If you have had COVID-19 before, please still get vaccinated." She continues, "This study shows you are twice as likely to get infected again if you are unvaccinated." The anti-vaxxers who believe that they don't need to get vaccinated also believe that they will be protected by herd immunity. Herd immunity is a term used to describe when

a large community becomes immune to disease, limiting the chance of spread. Yet, according to Walenski, those who are unvaccinated are twice as likely to get reinfected.

Despite this philosophy, there are some anti-vaxxers who have changed their minds. Take it from former anti-vaxxer Heather Simpson. Simpson garnered over 100,000 followers due to her anti-vax rhetoric. In a Just Human Productions podcast named "EPIDEMIC with Dr.Celine Gounder", Simpson says "As an anti-vaxxer in the past, I was just living in fear. And now that I'm not living in fear, it's just so freeing." Everybody is entitled to their opinions. Though, before making a choice, they should properly educate themselves first. Ignorance and misconceptions shouldn't influence such choices.





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The Facebook Failure

Why Big Tech Monopolies Must End

By Najma Chavez

Facebook and its subsidiaries, Instagram and Whatsapp all went offline on Monday, October 4th. The resulting chaos caused the denizens of the internet to speculate on the cause of the disturbance. Two days later, on October 6th, the popular Amazon-owned video live streaming service Twitch, experienced a breach in its source code and user payout information. Some cybersecurity experts are calling the breach the biggest leak they've ever seen - "an entire company's most valuable data cleaned out in one fell swoop".

Big tech monopolies have ungodly amounts of influence in modern society, thanks to a lack of regulations. It's no secret to anyone that Facebook and Amazon are the titans of the technology industry. What may not be as common knowledge, however, is just how fraught their internal operations are, their routine violations of their employees' rights and the general public's trust.

Facebook has a sordid history of edging out its rival companies and influencing the reach of independent news outlets through their vast amounts of wealth. Essentially, any press coverage that paints Facebook or its subsidiaries in a negative light can easily be suppressed if desired. Competitors like Snapchat, Tiktok and the ad-free social network platform MeWe, have had their content wiped away or marked as spam on Facebook's platform. The tech giant has ownership and control of its users' personal information; that utter control allows for the manipulation of our thoughts, votes and purchase decisions. Even with all that power and money though, the cracks have still shone through. Internal reports have cited frantic desperation surrounding the company. Other younger, more attractive platforms have edged Facebook closer and closer towards irrelevance, hence their rabid desire to stave off any competition.

Amazon too has its skeletons in the closet. Numerous details of repression, mistreatment and downright abuse have been laid out by various employees and in particular, warehouse workers. The \$1.7 billion dollar industry has also been accused of illegally maintaining monopoly power by using contract provisions to prevent third-party



sellers on its site from offering their products for lower prices on other platforms. The company has been documented neglecting the welfare of their workers, prioritizing profit over everything.

The consolidation of power under a select few tech giants only serves to weaken the free market economy. Companies like Amazon and Facebook are able to charge whatever they please for their services once their competitors are gone. Additionally, monopolies stifle new competition and crush innovation by decreasing the entry of new companies into a market.

No one platform should be in control of such a vast communication channel, as it increases the potential for total infrastructural collapse of the interweb. Given Amazon's ever-expanding reach, and Facebook's stranglehold on the world's three most popular mobile applications; if another DNS crash were to happen, or worse, a network breach more severe than what happened with Twitch were to occur, the fallout would be disastrous.

Student Poetry

By Maggy Pasho



Hey, you heard the news?
I didn't sleep well last night
I saw his body lay in the place of my ancestors
In the dark abyss behind my lids
Smoothness gone
With contacts on
I stared at the whiteness in front of me
I shed tears
But they were for you
She always said my priorities were wrong
Guess that was true
You must be devastated though
You lost a friend
And a great teacher too

JOIN ODYSSEY

Odyssey, Kingsborough's yearbook, is looking for graphic designers and photographers. If you are a Kingsborough student and are interested in photography and/or graphic design,

Please Email us odyssey@kbcc.cuny.edu.

Acknowledging Aaron

Aaron Jean Francois and the Haitian Migrant Crisis

By Andre Rickman

The streets of Mill Basin are the stomping ground for Aaron Jean Francois, a Haitian immigrant and Brooklyn College student. Eighteen-year-old Aaron traverses Brooklyn daily. The streets, like him, are busy and full of life. In high school, Aaron was voted most outgoing for his humanitarian focused work. He was raised by his father, Michael Jean Francois, a retired correction officer. Aaron's heritage connects him with the Haitian migrant crisis.

Haitian migrants fleeing to the United States isn't a new idea. According to cfr.org, "corruption, poverty, and violence have long spurred migration, and for most Haitians at the U.S.-Mexico border, their arrival is the culmination of a years-long journey." Migrants come in search of a better life. Instead, they are met with whips, a stark contrast to the freedom and respect they came in search for.

One of the biggest conversations we had centered

around the idea of privilege and education. Students with autism spectrum disorder, known as ASD, face certain disadvantages within the education system. With ASD, a group of developmental disabilities, challenges arise with behavior, communication, and social activity. "As someone who is on the spectrum, I would need more time on exams," Aaron said. "I was overly sensitive to sound."

Along with his ASD, Aaron also grapples with his identity as a black immigrant. The world isn't welcoming to people like Aaron. His family has taught him many lessons on how to survive in a world. "One of the lessons I was taught is to not trust everyone you don't know. This can be applied to the U.S. infiltration of Haiti and the whipping of migrants at the border." Aaron is referring to the U.S. occupation and infiltration of Haiti after the 1915 assassination of President Vilbrun Guillaume Sam.

In the article "Biden calls Haitian Migrant crisis 'an



United States Border Patrol agent grabbing a Haitian migrant

Aaron Jean Francois pictured below



embarrassment', by Andrea Castillo and Cindy Carcamo, Haitian activist Marlene Bastien writes, "It's U.S. foreign policies vis-à-vis Haiti that prioritize dictators, autocrats and corrupt leaders —some of them singlehandedly picked by the U.S. and ignoring the plight of the Haitian people." This quote expands not just racism, but authoritarian leaders abusing and hurting their own people for profit. Though the idea of politicians hurting their people is familiar, I am glad to see some people are bringing awareness to it.

Aarons appreciates Haitian food. Though he wasn't born there, Aaron is connected to his country through food. "I feel like I'm just as a Haitian as anyone else, due to my father showing me basic Haitian customs with foods like Joumou soup." In the past, Aaron sometimes felt inadequate because he wasn't physically born in Haiti. However, this is alleviated with his cultural connections through food.

For Aaron, being an immigrant is not the only baggage he had to carry. "Yes, I feel like I must carry the burden of being a 3rd generation immigrant whose Haitian, queer, and autistic. When it comes to certain subjects, I find comfort confiding in my friends, especially about my queer identity." LGBTQ2+ issues are a hard topic to discuss, especially in Aaron's family. In many Caribbean households, LGBTQ2+ issues are regarded with disdain. "For some family members it's much easier to

digest my disability than queerness. Due to the homophobia of both sides of the family, I must water down my queer identity for them." Aaron continued saying, "My friend's acceptance and empathy for both parts of me compared to my parents are well needed at a time like this." Aaron's friend Francine can attest to this. She stated, "I've known Aaron, for almost five years, and he really showed me what privileges I have as a white cis woman, and made me open a book to a struggle I can never understand, but educate myself on".

Speaking to Aaron has left a big effect on me. He mustered up the simplest yet effective response to all my questions, yet they stirred me deeply. When asked about his impact on the world, this is how Aaron replied, "I feel I left an impact because I proved to someone like you an autistic person can be famous and not mask anymore", Aaron said tearfully. Society rarely gets champions that possess an intersectional mindset when it comes to ignored issues.

"With all the knowledge I know about the Haitian migrant crisis, I feel like society can now have these uncomfortable conversations," Aaron remarked. Eventually, the world is going to get better. With this pandemic, international issues are now being put at the forefront now more than ever. Hopefully, despite this pandemic, our society can examine the plights of international people as well.

JOB RESOURCES VIA *CAREER BUZZ*

CAREER COACH

A free online tool for Kingsborough students and alumni. This site will help you find out about careers and the education required to get there. Not sure of where to start and want to find out how your interests relate to the world of work? You can take an online assessment that comprises of 6, 30 or 60 questions. Once you find potential careers that relate to your interests, you can look for target jobs in your area. Career Coach will give you the relevant data on wages, employment and training. It also provides a resume builder to help you get

started with your resume. To learn more, please visit: <http://kingsborough.emsicc.com/>

BIG INTERVIEW

Do you normally get nervous about interviews? Well, Big Interview is a virtual interview training software that will help to ease those fears by preparing you for all of those tough questions. This proven system offers hands on practice with mock interviews tailored to your specific industry, job and experience level. Big Interview provides customized training to meet your individual needs with anticipated interview questions. It can prepare you for that elevator pitch, so that you are confident and ready for your next interview. [https://](https://kbcc-cuny.biginterview.com/)

kbcc-cuny.biginterview.com/ (School email must be used to register)

CAREER WAVE

Career Wave is a free online career tool for Kingsborough students and alumni to search for jobs. There are numerous resources, and services available on this site for our students such as: resume review, online job/internship postings, service-learning opportunities and updates on events from the Center for Career Development and Experiential Learning. Many employers use this site to post open full-time, part-time, internship and volunteer opportunities. There are three (3) steps that you must complete in order to get the most from this site. Register for an account. Once your account is

approved, you will be able to complete your profile. Upload your resume to be reviewed by an advisor. Once your resume has been approved by an advisor, start searching for jobs. To learn more and create an account, please visit <https://kbcc-csm.symplicity.com/students>



Microsoft Word Basics

How the Word Application Can be Useful

By Maggy Pasho



From the wheel to Microsoft Word, mankind has always been looking for ways to make tasks more efficient through the utilization of tools. Computers, like the very one this essay is being written on, is the greatest toolbox one could possibly have. Now, computers don't have wheels to lug around whatever is deemed necessary, but they do hold useful applications, such as Microsoft Word.

According to Microsoft support, you can "create documents from scratch" as well as add anything you like, such as "text, images, art, and videos" on the Word application. This means that the world is your oyster, you can take a white screen full of nothing and turn it

into something.

For students that can be an essay, notetaking, and even making a planner from scratch. Mvorganizing.org mentions "converting a list to a table" as a useful feature, one that could be used for notetaking and creating planners.

Let's say your professor is a fast talker; that causes you to jot down your notes haphazardly, which leaves you with scrambled words and messy topics. The table feature can help organize your notes. For planners, you can use the convert tool to divide your assignments by class and due dates.

Another feature Word has, that Microsoft support was glad to point out, is Microsoft editor. Even now, as letters on a keyboard are

being pressed, Microsoft offers suggestions to make the writing in this essay more concise and grammatically correct.

And all that has been mentioned so far, can be saved into OneDrive (a virtual documents holder), so your important documents can be easily accessed, secure, and organized. What more can be asked?

CUNY students are fortunate enough to be provided this useful service for free. A tool such as this, which makes completing necessary tasks more manageable, should be utilized to its fullest potential. So, go on your computer and get to work on Microsoft Word. There's a reason why Word is capitalized but the wheel isn't.

Social Media and Dependency

The Addictive Effects of Social Platforms

By Celeste Mckenzie

For anybody who doesn't use social media, October 4th, 2021 was just a regular day. However, users of Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, Whatsapp, Oculus, and Mapillary were left twiddling their thumbs. These applications, all acquisitions of Facebook Inc, experienced a system-wide outage on the 4th. Compared to a potentially catastrophic event like a city-wide power outage, the Facebook Inc. service interruption seems minor. After all, it's just social media, right? For some the outage served as a minor inconvenience. Contrastingly, addicted users suffered something akin to withdrawal during the six hour outage.

Social media is a convenient way to stay in touch. Businesses use these platforms to effectively market to large audiences. People separated by thousands of miles are able to form friendships through the ease of such applications. With excessive usage, however, social media consumption can transform into something malignant. When social media becomes addictive and all-consuming to its users, it's no longer a fun pastime, it's a dependency. In a Digital Marketing by Gary Henderson, it is reported that there are over 3.96 billion users of social media globally. More specifically, American users spend 2 hours and 3 minutes daily on

social media.

Those who feel anxious when they are not on social media, use social media so excessively that it affects activities and relationships, or are unable to abstain from social platforms may be suffering from a social media addiction. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, going outside and socializing are not convenient activities. However, disconnect for a while. From the comfort of your own home, read a book, exercise, do some yoga, meditate. Social media by itself is not malignant. It's okay to scroll through those posts on Facebook, just make sure it's not the only thing your life revolves around.



JOIN SCEPTER, BE PART OF OUR TEAM!

Scepter is always recruiting new team members to contribute to monthly editions of the paper. If you are a Kingsborough student and are interested in writing, photography, layout design, or copy editing. You can email your opinion or letter to the editor to: scepter@kbcc.cuny.edu



ENTERTAINMENT

How Far is Too Far?

Should Streaming Platforms Play a Role in Limiting Potentially Harmful Content?

By Najma Chavez

Where should the line be drawn in terms of artistic freedom? Comedian Dave Chapelle's October 5th Netflix special, "The Closer", brings this question to the forefront. Controversy around Chapelle's special, and its content, has been rampant. Critics pointed their attention towards Chapelle's commentary regarding LGBTQ+ social issues, particularly the comedian's comments surrounding transgender individuals. The question of whether controversial material should be censored is an enduring one. No matter what side of the argument you're on, one should understand the escalating presence of censorship in our collective entertainment.

Previously, media couldn't air without the now defunct Motion Picture Production Code (a.k.a "Hays Code") seal of approval. In the earliest years of the code, members of the Roman Catholic Church created The National Legion of Decency. The legion was responsible for identifying offensive content for Catholic audiences in motion pictures. Members were asked to only patronize motion pictures which didn't "offend decency and Christian morality". During the thirty-four years of Hays Code regulations, movies had little to no first amendment rights.

There will always be instances where someone is going to be offended. People are entitled to their feelings. No one is denying the public the right to be offended. However, offensive content



shouldn't be censored or silenced because of public uproar.

Within the last decade, there has been a boom in streaming platforms. Consumers have seen an increase in both the number of streaming platforms, and platform exclusive content. This begs another question, do streaming platforms have the responsibility of removing content deemed "harmful"? Does removal of this content equate to unjust censorship, or removal for the sake of protection? Some would say yes, others would say no. Nevertheless, there's little doubt that somebody's always going to push the envelope, especially in a craft as subjective, scathing and freeform as comedy.

Within reason, they should be free to do so. The harder question to ask is, how should one define "reason"?

Overall, "The Closer" was neither innovative nor unwatchable. At times, Chapelle made insightful, witty quips on race relations. At other times, he used humorless cheap shots. There is value in allowing exposure to various works of art, even if they're controversial. A healthy society should foster an assortment of opinions and viewpoints. In doing so, the depth and breadth of the human experience can be properly explored. At the very least, we should allow people to experience, while respecting human boundaries.

For the 2022 Spring Term, students have until January 14, 2022 to upload proof of vaccination into CUNYfirst.

To meet the upload deadline, students must receive the vaccines by these dates:

Moderna: first dose by December 17

Pfizer: first dose by December 24

Johnson & Johnson: single dose by January 14

Poisons, Pesticides, and Parenthood

Fever Dream Movie Review

By Celeste Mckenzie

Like a bizarre haze one experiences during illness, *Fever Dream* leaves viewers with a strange sense of bewilderment upon completion. Director and screenwriter Claudia Llosa brings Samanta Schweblin's thrilling novel to film. *Fever Dream* saw its worldwide Netflix debut on October 13th, 2021. The film takes a deep dive into death, pollution, family, and sacrifice, with an eerie sense of anticipation and uncertainty.

Fever Dream is set in the Argentinian countryside, and depicts the stories of two mothers and their attempts to protect their children. The film mainly focuses on one mother, Amanda, and we see the stories of others through her eyes. The first shot shows Amanda, played by María Valverde Rodríguez, lying immobile on the detritus. She is being dragged by a boy named David. Overlaid among the sounds of crunching leaves, cicadas, shaky breaths, and the squelching of worms is a conversation between David and Amanda. This dialogue is a crucial device

for the movie. Through David's urging in this dialogue, Amanda is forced to recount the past. In doing so, viewers come to understand how exactly Amanda ended up motionless on the forest floor. This is a brilliant way to start the film. The scene entices viewers while leaving them wondering how such events transpired. Doing so not only piques the audience's curiosity, but leaves them wanting more.

The performances of Dolores Fonzi and Emilio Vodanovich should be acknowledged as well. Playing the roles of Carola and David respectively, the two evoke feelings of unease successfully in viewers. David, although just a child, gives a menacing performance in the few scenes he's in. Fonzi's bewitching beauty, coupled with the eerie behavior of her character, demands full attention at times.

The cinematography, sound design, and performances were all successfully executed. Many book-to-film adaptations fall short. They either confuse the original message, cast the wrong actors, or just miss the mark completely. *Fever Dream* is not one of these films. Its brilliance lies in subtle details that viewers

might not catch on their first watch. Viewers are forced to be attentive, as opposed to just staring at the screen. With meticulous analysis, and rewatching, viewers can appreciate the film even more. For anybody looking for an eerie thriller, *Fever Dream* might be a match. It evokes feelings of unease successfully in viewers. David, although just a child, gives a menacing performance in the few scenes he's in. Fonzi's bewitching beauty, coupled with the eerie behavior of her character, demands full attention at times.

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The French Dispatch Review

Another Classic by Wes Anderson

By Ketevan Shavdia

Film lovers and Timothee Chalamet fans alike were eagerly awaiting Wes Anderson's *The French Dispatch*. After its debut at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival, the film has been described as "a love letter to journalism". If you've ever watched one of Anderson's movies, you'll know that his combination of exceptional cinematography and pleasant color symphonies make the movie and its characters unforgettable. Have you ever read a book that was so immersive that you felt like you were in it? Anderson, who is most recognized for his visual aesthetic, makes his films feel just like those books. *The French Dispatch*, presented like a newspaper, tributing its editor and remembering its best articles published. What makes *The French Dispatch*, and its director, so exceptional is the attention to detail and room for interpretation. Despite being a film heavily populated by minute details, it still leaves you with the feeling that there is still much more to interpret.



THE FRENCH
DISPATCH
OF LIBERTY, KANSAS EVENING SUN

Pictured from left to right: Timothee Chalamet, Wes Anderson, and Lyna Khoudri at 2021 Cannes Film Festival on July 13th, 2021. Credit: Just Jared

The Return of Women's Basketball

An Interview with Coach Brendan Bain

The return of women's basketball is upon us. With that comes the excitement that only basketball can bring. This season, especially for Coach Brendan Bain, was difficult because of the pandemic. Coach Bain was limited in recruiting athletes to the program. This led to a much smaller roster than previously expected. When interviewing Coach Bain, he mentioned that he only had six players on the team at the moment. That small of a roster makes vital five on five scrimmages impossible to run. In turn, player development is affected as well. Due to the small roster and COVID protocols, Coach Bain has focused on what he calls "skill development". This kind of training focuses more on the in-game skills like shooting, passing, and dribbling by running drills instead of focusing more on scrimmages.

The team is also likely to be missing star player Tiffany Bogle. Bogle was named last year's CUNYAC rookie of the year. Due to Tiffany opting out of taking the vaccine, similar to Kyrie Irving's situation on the Brooklyn Nets, the team will be notably affected. Just like the situation on the Nets, unless mayor elect Eric Adams changes the COVID vaccine mandate, Coach Bain will miss its star player. However, there are two talented returning members, Diamond Sorrel and Keyanna Elrington, who will be relied upon to be the dynamic duo that will propel the team to victory. The duo can be compared to Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown or LeBron and Anthony Davis. Even with all these obstacles Coach Bain is still aiming to "make some magic" and get back to the CUNY finals and advance past the first round of the regional



tournament. By setting these goals, Coach Bain is showing trust in his managerial skills and players which should set up for an exciting season. Personally, I believe in Coach Bain's ability and the team's talent so I fully expect us to do great this season. Go wave!

KCC Career Buzz Internships

Spring 2022 Science Externship Sustainable Food & Farming Program

Earthjustice is seeking a talented current undergraduate student with the ability to identify, evaluate, and synthesize scientific and technical information relevant to the food system. A remote and unpaid internship must be available a minimum of 12-15 hours per week.

Last day to apply: December 26, 2021

New York Amsterdam Virtual Spring Internship

Intern positions are available in their Editorial and Digital departments. Amsterdam News interns must be located in the New York City-area and have a passion for writing about the Black community. Internships are for-credit and will last 13 weeks (10-20hrs/week).

Last day to apply: December 30, 2021

Action Beverage Corp | Internship offerings

You will have the opportunity to participate in one of the chosen internships: Data Entry Intern & Web Design Intern. The location is Brooklyn, NY. \$20 per hour.

Last day to apply: January 8, 2021

Brennan Center for Justice | Spring 2022

Undergraduate Internship in NY Seeking interns to provide administrative and clerical support to staff in our New York office in our Democracy, Justice, Liberty & National Security, and Human Resources Programs/Departments. \$15.00 per hour.

Last day to apply: January 14, 2021

AHRC NYC | CUNY KCC The Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program

Are you a student that is encouraging, a positive role model, and interested in working with the intellectually disabled? All KCC areas of study are accepted for this internship opportunity as a Mentor. As a Mentor, the position is part-time with a flexible schedule as you earn \$15 per hour.

Applications accepted on a rolling basis

