

# Foreward

First of all, hi there! I really appreciate that you are here reading this journal. I have been with this journal since its conception and a lot has changed. The moment our founder, Justin, proposed the idea of an honors journal I was on board. I had never thought that I would be writing the forward, a year later. He had always wanted to do something multi-media, and through trial and error, I think we have landed on something this semester that properly harnesses the multi-media aspect of Untold. This semester also fulfills my dreams for the journal—to properly anthologize and represent what the Honors Program at UVU is doing each year. Sharing and preserving this program’s interdisciplinary interests, their fun projects, and at the heart of it their art and passion, is one of the things that has kept me going through the ups and downs of starting a journal.

I want to personally thank Kim Soto, who was the amazing Web Design consultant from UVU. She helped us turn our concept into art, and into a reality. She took the time to train the staff so that in future volumes we will have something as beautiful as this. I also want to thank my amazing student staff and our faculty advisor. We went through some really testing times this semester, and I could not be more proud of the work we have edited, compiled, and developed. Jake, our amazing art editor, was responsible for the creation of the new logo. Daniel carefully edited and found the images for our submissions essays, and worked with Jake on outreach. Rachel and Feyan both got difficult to edit pieces and have turned them into something beautiful. Zac and Kacie worked on our amazing fiction. Dr. Brendan McCarthy put in the time to make sure we did not explode and taught me a lot about being a leader. Even our Honors Interim Director, Leslie, put her support and time behind this volume. I can see the progress my staff made this semester, and I am thankful for them putting that work in to share this piece of art with you all.

You will notice as you ‘walk’ through the journal that it is divided into wings, similar to a museum. One of my amazing editors, Kacie, shared this idea, and I immediately latched on to it. Our faculty advisor, Brendan McCarthy said that it felt apt because anything a human creates is art. The theming of an art exhibit was a new and nuanced way to categorize our pieces, and I hope it heightens your ability to enjoy the presentation of the works of the Honors Students in the Spring 2023 volume of Untold.

Amanda Hemmert  
Untold Editor-in-Chief

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# The Circle of Life

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A Child's Heart  
How to Live Forever  
Grandpa's Journal  
Ouroboros  
Pine Tree  
The Idea  
Rememberance

## **A Child's Heart**

**Alec Kocherhans**

The doctor started off the check-up like he was doing a sales pitch, almost like he was trying to convince us to buy a new car. But we weren't in the business for a car.

He was selling us a heart for our newest son.

Donny was born 20 days before we spoke to this specialist. This one being a specialist of the heart. There were specialists for all sorts of organs, because there were many organs for sale. I recalled how my sister replaced her poisoned liver with a synthetic one, eliminating any need to check up on her drinking habit, which had only gotten worse in the months following surgery. Luckily for her, her new organ would last longer than she would. My friend Joseph replaced his right eye after a particularly devastating car crash where he had rear-ended a truck. With how much each car was damaged it was a miracle he didn't have any more serious injuries. Despite the costs of a new car looming over him, the medical professionals at the Martillo County Hospital convinced him that if he could see, he could get a job. And if he got a job, he could pay for a new car.

The sales doctor prepared charts, X-rays, and statistical diagrams for me and Lillian to pour through. The papers were pinned to beige tackboards with brass pins, easily removable if we wanted to take a closer look at any of them. The sheets of paper never did much to convince me that replacement surgery on our son's deformed heart would be necessary. No, they told me things I already knew.

Our first son Ryan had an elective heart transplant when he was born three years earlier, and we were still reeling from the costs—the thought of another purchase was nearly too much to

bear. I had poured over documents like these for days and days in the weeks following his birth. Lillian, my wife, had expressed her feelings on the matter then, and it's hardly likely that she would have changed now.

“The best hope for the future, Devan.” she had said, as she sat in the passenger seat while we were driving back from yet another regular, unnecessary checkup for Ryan. “That’s what we have to give him, the real synthetic thing. How can we pass an opportunity like this up? We can’t leave him with a real heart, they’re too fragile.” She looked out the window away from me. I knew what she was talking about. Her father had passed away only months before Ryan’s birth from a heart attack, leaving her and her sister Jessie grieving. He was avidly against any modification’s or “gobbledygooksurgeries.” She wasn’t wrong, his heart was fragile.

She had turned back to me, tears burning in her eyes. “Jessie called me while we were both at the office, new transplant hearts just aren’t doing it anymore. We need something better. If we find out one day that he’s dead from a heart attack in his twenties it won't be my fault, it will be yours.” And with that, the conversation was over. Who could argue against the words of a grieving daughter? Perhaps a replacement really could have saved him.

Lillian’s words still echoed in my head from all those years ago. I had done as she wanted. It put us in the hole, but Ryan would never have heart trouble in his natural life. This time around I wasn’t so certain I wanted to be so accommodating considering our finances. I was set on doing a heart transplant with a real heart, nothing more. Lillian’s grief wasn’t going to convince me two times in a row. The only thing that almost swayed me wasn’t Lillian at all. It was the doctor, specifically his eyes, gleaming at me. The doctor’s eyes, and his smile.

The doctor wore a white lab coat, a simple, uninspired black undershirt, and blue latex gloves, despite the fact that he was not performing any surgeries today that I knew of. He held a clipboard filled with our son's information. He never looked at the board though. He was too preoccupied with me, his eyes following me as I stood up from my blue-cushioned hospital folding chair to inspect the chart from a closer distance. I unpinned a document describing different payment plans, one for installment payments, and one describing the likelihood for donations from people unfortunate to pass away in car accidents, or who had recently acquired a synthetic organ and had passed away.

"It's a real miracle, getting such a good deal," he said. "We can only hope one pops up! I'd be happy to put it to good use." He looked at me with a full grin, obviously captivated by the prospect of another organ to sell landing in his office. He seemed so cheery for a topic this depressing.

"What a waste," I thought. "Spending as much money as you would on a new car on an organ that only ends up benefiting you for a few weeks. It's tragic. Unnecessary really." Luckily, Ryan's heart would last a long time. At least any father could hope so. I shook the thought of the doctor prying my son's heart out of his chest after a fatal accident. His imagined smile would be stained into my thoughts for hours.

It's only after pinning the documents back on the board that I turned and realized that there was a reason the doctor's eyes were so captivating. They weren't real. Two synthetic eyes were gazing at me. They were laced with microscopic wires, sending signals from the light they gathered down tubes and into the brain. From my seat they looked regular, a hint of blue from normal eyes. But up close they were strange. Wrong even. The blue shaded irises were

dazzlingly pure. They looked almost *too* clean, *too* smooth, almost as if pure acrylic paint was plastered on to eliminate any variability in color.

His eyes stayed peeled open as I returned to my chair and read yet another pamphlet handed to me. I only felt fear when I looked at the doctor, and I would be lying if I said it didn't sway me. I couldn't feel his enthusiasm; that couldn't be passed through something so synthetic, could it?

After leaving the room to discuss our options with Lillian, I saw her eyes too. They were real. Even after looking away at an X-ray and looking back at me they were still there. Her brown, imperfect irises, dimly glowing despite the news we had endured over the last few days. But, despite her eyes and their splendor, they didn't shine on me. Their gaze, their splendor, shone somewhere else, somewhere past me, back into the doctor's office. She longed to be there, to bring Ryan there, to make him whole. It's there that I think the idea was cemented. She had a focus that, though I tried, I couldn't shake. And she would hold onto it despite everything. Despite me.

We walked to the car, through the sliding glass doors of the hospital. I noticed that Lillian was still carrying some papers. We had been given pamphlets and papers on previous visits, all of which were at home. Whatever she was holding God only knew.

"Probably just something she forgot to grab the first time," I thought. "Or just something else."

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As we were driving back through our neighborhood, Lillian stared out her passenger window away from me. We hardly talked while in the car anymore, usually because she would

sit in the back seat with Ryan, trying to get him to talk or interact. He always required some extra care, even on short trips across town. I would elect to sit back with him instead of driving, but that usually resulted in Ryan crying ceaselessly. He wanted his mother, not me. It must have felt awful, having that responsibility. Perhaps if I had talked to her more...

But there was no talking, no crying even. Donny was still in the hospital, and he would stay there until we decided what to do next.

Outside Lilian's window, I could imagine she was looking at the neighborhood children, as she did frequently. Our neighborhood was generally full of rich families. All their children had robotic pieces. Some only chose to replace the eyes because their child had been born blind. Or they would replace a pancreas because their child was born with diabetes. However, many replacements, like we had done with Ryan, were elective, only preventing a future possibility for a disease. And who could really blame them? Who wouldn't give their child a way out from heart disease? Or Blindness, or diabetes?

While pulling into the driveway of our home, our next-door neighbor Marvin got up from his poppy garden surrounding his front porch and walked toward us.

"Devan!" he said. He had a way of elongating odd syllables in order to sound more friendly, though it only made him sound drunk, even when he wasn't. "I hope the checkup went well. Finally getting that heart?" He looked at me expectantly. Lilian didn't bother with him like I did. As soon as I parked, she went inside without a word.

"Actually no, at least not yet." I said, "There are a lot of things that go into a decision like this, especially when finances are so tight you know?"

He looked at me, still in his expectant way, almost as if he didn't hear me. "I sure hope you do, Devan. What an engineering marvel! I couldn't sleep at night if *my* kids didn't have hearts. Real strong hearts, that's what they need." He quickly looked down the street, almost as if he was expecting someone to be watching him from down there. He looked back at me and gave an insidious smile. "*She* wants a heart, doesn't she?" The question caught me off guard. I hardly knew why it was his business what we chose to do with our child.

"Marvin, that's really not your concern, it's my kid."

"But it's her kid too!" he sneered back. "I'd trust her more than you. I've never seen you walk around with that oaf of a child you have right now; I've only seen her with him. He can hardly walk around the neighborhood without falling to the ground in some sort of fit. What do you know about children?" Stunned, I looked down. Ryan, who was just over three, had some kind of intellectual disability. We didn't really know what was wrong with him, but he never spoke. He never made eye contact either. He was difficult to deal with. Particularly for my wife. After our investment for his heart, she had high expectations. I was glad to have a child at all. She had to be around him more, on our drives and whatnot, so maybe she did know more about him...

"What do you know about it!" I snapped. "You're not the child's father, I am; and I know Ryan! He's perfect!" My face felt like it was being flushed with something warm. I hadn't yelled like this in ages. "Stay out of our family business, it's not yours to meddle in."

Marvin leaned further over the hedge, staring straight into my eyes. "She talked to me yesterday, about your kids. You were at work, and she talked to me." He smiled. "She's a brilliant woman, she knows what's best for her kids. Whatever happens, I'd say let it happen."



“What?” I asked, perplexed. “What did she say?” He started walking away, despite my insistence. “What did she say!”.

He turned back toward me, and grinned. “She wants what is best for her *new* son. That oaf of yours is really dragging you down. I’d agree with her quickly, if I were you.” And with that he strode back to his garden of poppies, leaving me more puzzled than ever.

“Curse your dang poppies” I said, but he had already gone.

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Dazed, I stepped through the front door of the house. Lilian never talked to Marvin, did she? Not that he knew of at least. And what had he said about Ryan? That he was dragging us down?

“Fool, that’s all he is, a fool,” I said to myself.

Stepping into the living room, I noticed that Sarah was still here with Ryan. She sat cross-legged on the brown futon, with her signature pigtails whipping around as she tried to make Ryan laugh. Her face was absolutely covered in freckles. Something about them mixed with the hair made her seem like an authentic cowgirl, though we lived in the suburbs and the nearest patch of good green land was miles away.

Ryan was sitting on the floor in front of her, laughing uncontrollably, not looking at her, but smiling, nonetheless. His blue eyes were only visible for a moment when he looked behind him while he wiggled back and forth on the ground. This was more interaction than he normally would have with me and Lilian, but this was typical for Sarah. She had mastered taking care of

him. When he screamed, she would let him go, when he would pull on her hair, she wouldn't make a fuss. Sarah looked up at me, only just noticing that I'd entered the room.

“Mister Evenston! I got Ryan to look at me today, he looked at my eyes!” She had jumped up from the couch in an instant, pigtails whirling around once again as she bounded toward me. She was nearly 18, and she was taking childcare classes in her online high school. My son was a perfect opportunity for her to “practice her capabilities” and “develop patience” as she said. Really, I think she just liked raiding the pantry whenever she wanted, and who could blame her. She lived in a shady neighborhood and had reached out to a few months prior. Since then, she had come over almost every day for at least a few hours while Lilian was at the office, sometimes even when we didn't need her.

“He looked into my eyes! He might have even said something! I don't know what, but it sounded like some sort of baby word.” She looked back toward him, grinning almost obnoxiously.

“Now maybe this is what me and my wife need,” I thought. “Some real joy in this kid. In our kids. Doctor's visits never leave me as happy as how Sarah looked. Wasn't that the goal of all this?”

*“Whatever happens, I'd say let it happen”* Marvin's words echoed to me. What was he even talking about?

“Mister Evanston?” Sarah said, confused. I didn't realize she had still been talking. She had the tendency to ramble, oftentimes without an audience. Ryan was sometimes the audience, but he hardly gave feedback about when to shut her mouth.

“Oh, sorry,” I said, “It's been a long day, with the hospital visit and all. What was it that you said?”

She gave a short hop and continued, obviously excited. “Ryan looked at my eyes! Oh, and your wife came in a little bit ago. She didn't seem like she was in the best mood, so I didn't bother her. I heard her moving some things around in the kitchen, and then I think she went upstairs? You might want to go check on her.”

“I'll go do that.” I said, still distracted. Since Lillian had gathered something from the kitchen, it was safe to assume she was Grabbing food. Beelining towards the bedroom with snacks and sweets never spelled good for the rest of my day. Another bad mood, nothing to be done about that, for the moment anyway.

I thanked Sarah, she gave Ryan one last goodbye wave, and she headed out the door. She had been such a blessing. Through the last few weeks especially, with hospital visits, not to forget Donny's actual birth, she was a life saver. Lillian had taken everything harder than I had. She had given birth to the kid after all. I had only been watching as Donny came into the world, and I watched while Donny was whisked away to be tested for every known disease under the sun. It only took a few minutes for the doctors to come back and inform us that the lining of Donny's heart was abnormally thin. For now, they said, it won't cause any problems, but in a year or so the chances of a tear would increase dramatically.

I heard a whimper from behind me. I spun around to see Ryan still sitting in front of the futon.

“Maybe I'm going crazy, I forgot you were here.” I said as I picked him up. He still didn't look at me. I didn't think that Sarah was lying about his eye contact, but I've never seen

him look into my eyes. Something about him didn't have that basic instinct the rest of us did. A bit odd, but I still loved him.

*"She wants what is best for her new son. That oaf of yours is really dragging you down."*

I walked down the hallway and carried Ryan to his room. Both walls were covered in framed photos that Lilian had taken and printed in the first year of Ryan's life. One from when we went to the bowling alley for the first time as a family, one from a boat ride in Lake Superior, even one taken a few minutes after his birth, eyes closed. She had stopped taking photos around a year back, back when his odd behavior became more noticeable. I didn't see the big deal. He was just a kid. He'll probably grow out of it.

*"She's a brilliant woman, she knows what's best for her kids."* Marvin's echoed once again.

I looked down at Ryan. He was looking up at the light streaming through the hallway door. Probably not the best thing to stare at, but it was a start. I shook my head and went over to his bright green crib and placed him in it. It had rocket ships and stars stitched into the fabric. "Spacey, just like you kid!" I spoke, trying to lighten my mood. I handed him a bright green rattle, and immediately he made all sorts of giggles and pops. That would keep him entertained for now, it usually did.

"See you, space cadet." I said, leaving him in his room.

I walked to the bottom of the stairs that led up to mine and Lillian's bedroom. I could hear that the T.V. had been turned on. Often, she would watch the new medical dramas where specialized surgeons would perform elective surgeries on countless individuals. What was intriguing about it was that it would follow the lives of some of these people, showing how rich

they were, how healthy they were, how popular they were. I was convinced these people were being sponsored to live these ways purely for the sake of the show. It was convincing though, and Lillian ate it up.

“Even at home we can’t swap topics. Why have peace of mind for even a moment when you could be thinking about surgeries and doctors instead?” I said to myself.

I couldn’t handle a conversation right now, not when she was blasting that nonsense. She would want to talk, but that would have to wait, at least for now. She was in no place for a real conversation. Better no resolution than a shouting match. I walked over to the living room, still cluttered with various plastic toys. I’d pick those up later, after I cleared my head. It was still only midafternoon, so I decided to take a walk and clear my head. Maybe when I got back Lillian would be in a better mental state. Locking the door behind me, I headed down the driveway into the pleasant springtime neighborhood.

END OF PART ONE.

## How To Live Forever

Carly Stucki

*Cats have nine lives, Pac-Man has three lives, and radioactive isotopes have half-lives. How many lives does something else--conceptual or actual--have, and why?*

*You only live once.* These words echoed through my head as I willingly strapped myself to a stranger before jumping out of a cherry-red propellor plane over the glowing Moab desert. Not telling my dad before doing this was intentional. He hates when I do things he perceives as too risky. I remember laughing as he scolded me, calling me thoughtless. The same kind of thoughtlessness he accused me of then no longer makes me laugh. You only live once. I whispered this as a prayer in my seven-year-old's ear as he challenged himself to yet another ski-jump far beyond his skill level. The truth is, as a mother, you don't only live once. You relive life again and again.

One new life taught me to read again through the lips of a freckled boy stumbling over and chopping words. In another, I struggled to bike with the wobbly legs of a determined four-year-old. Another life brought me tears of laughter while a wild toddler was repeatedly "too slow" for a low-five. Most recently, I've learned I get to live it all again while sinking into the stillness and melting into the deep blue eyes of a new baby. Elizabeth Stone famously stated, "Making the decision to have a child- it is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body." What is a beating heart but a sign of life? What is a mother but someone with many hearts more precious to her than the one she holds in her own chest? Some people only live once. A mother decides to live forever.

# A Grandfather's Journal

Tana Haag

*Cats have nine lives, Pac-Man has three lives, and radioactive isotopes have half-lives. How many lives does something else--conceptual or actual--have, and why?*

The pages are well-loved and well-covered in tape and ink, teardrops and charcoal marks. The handwriting reminds me of my own father: neat, yet quickly written, and all capitalized, of course. The maroon leather cover turns open with a date etched in the top left corner. July 23rd, 1965. I flip through the pages and land on another date. November 4th, 1966. As I lift the journal, a photograph falls out, reminding me that this book has lived other lives before it ever reached my hands. The faces look back at me, faces that I've never met, but still know. Faces that died before I lived, but are memorialized in moments and bound within two worn and tattered pages.

This book has lived before and these stories have too. They weren't brought to life on the dusty shelves in my grandmother's closet. This journal lived a life of strife and camaraderie, sometimes living as the only friend my grandfather had during the dark days he spent in Japan. I am reminded again that while my grandpa's life may have been subject to the ticking clock of cancer treatments and earthly attrition. This journal relives the past. This journal relives the heartache and pain, happiness and compassion encompassed in stories of war, education, and young love.

These stories lived through the eyes of my grandfather, 16 years old, and they've lived through the mouths that have re-told them time and time again. My grandma's weary mind brings them back to life on the days that she can remember. My uncles sit around the dining table laughing as they recount their childhood experiences. The grandfather I never met comes to life in this book, and countless lives will be lived within these pages.

## Ourobous Sydney Holt



### Artist Statement

Ouroboros is an ancient symbol depicted as a dragon or serpent eating its own tail. It's used as an emblem of infinity, oneness, renewal, and rebirth. Some of ouroboros' earliest uses are in ancient Egypt. More notably to the west, ouroboros figures prominently in alchemy and Gnosticism.

Ouroboros is also one of the titles of the woman—Alice “Azrael” Love—in the illustration. She's a character in a sci-fi/horror novel I'm currently writing. The pose, with most of the face obscured except for an angry eye, was inspired by Alexandre Cabanel's *Fallen Angel*, both for its interesting and evocative composition as well as for the thematic similarities between Alice and Lucifer. Additionally, the focus on the hands and eye was done as a nod to the lines *What immortal hand or eye//dare frame thy fearful symmetry?* from William Blake's *The Tyger*.



## **Pine Tree**

**Megan Frisby**

*Cats have nine lives, Pac-Man has three lives, and radioactive isotopes have half-lives. How many lives does something else--conceptual or actual--have, and why?*

When you think of a pine tree, standing tall in a forest wearing a brilliant green coat on its strong woody shoulders, you might not think of what it once was or is yet to be. It is argued that cats have nine lives, or that humans have only one, but pine trees have 5.

In its first life, a pine tree exists as a seed, small, and obsolete. As it falls from the branches of its mother, or is carried by critters to the place where it is given a new birth. As the dawns turn to dusk, the seed lays resting, existing. Until, a spark of a new life, a piece of its living spirit, breaks out from the inside, and the seed exists as something new.

In its second life, the pine tree will grow from a single sprout to the wide-branched, green-cloaked, sweet-smelling, companion we know. The tree, grown and old, can shade lemonade drinkers on a hot summer's day, or serve as a noble home for a friendly squirrel family. As much as pine trees are useful in their permanence, they are also sought out by celebrators, eggnog drinkers, and Santa-Clause believers.

In its third life, a pine tree stands bearing bright strings of lights in a musty room warmed by a brick fireplace. The tree stands proudly as a symbol of peace, love, and hope. From the star on its head to the gifts below its skirts, the tree is looked on with great admiration. Despite all its glory, the tree is losing an eternal fight without its roots penetrating deep into the rich soil of its birthplace.

As the calendar ages, the tree no longer wears the star, the tinsel, or the lights. Its green cloak gone, the pine tree is now pieces of a once massive skeleton stacked beside a flame ablaze, where a chatty family holds marshmallows on sticks above the fiery crown. A pine tree is consumed by flame and laughter in its fourth life, lighting and warming brisk dark nights below endless blankets of stars.

In its fifth and final life, the tree is no longer confined by the laws of mortality and the workings of society. The tree is at last living free as smoke, going where the wind takes it. From its bird's-eye view, the tree can see the forest floor where it grew from seed, where its roots still lay, the roof under which it bore the lights, and the flames from which it ascended until the wind whisks the last threads of its life away.

## **The Idea**

**Mckennah Nelson**

*Cats have nine lives, Pac-Man has three lives, and radioactive isotopes have half-lives. How many lives does something else--conceptual or actual--have, and why?*

Most people and objects will only get one life before they inevitably fade and die or decay, with a lucky few being able to have more than one life. However, there is one thing that seems to escape the grasp of death. The seemingly undying idea. An idea can live hundreds of thousands of lives, seeming to stretch on forever with each mind it enters and each evolution it takes on. Mark Twain said “There is no such thing as a new idea.”, which holds true to the nature of ideas.

A person can have an idea and do nothing with it, letting it wither away, but eventually that same idea will come to the mind of another person miles or even years away—bringing the idea to life again. The “death” of an idea is rarely permanent, since someone, somewhere will eventually stumble upon it again and bring it new life. Two people can have the same idea at the same time and take it in two different directions—morphing and forming the idea into new versions of itself—changing its very existence, bringing it to a new state of being, or another life.

An idea will never truly die. It will continue on, remaining dormant before finding a mind to occupy or taking its components and shaping them into a new existence. For ideas to truly die, the minds that they might occupy would have to die first. It is only with the death of thought that ideas will truly die. The formation of an idea is often represented with a lightbulb flickering to life, a fitting metaphor for an idea. Like a light bulb, ideas will light up, then as they are forgotten be switched off, only to inevitably be switched on again.

## Remembrance Benjamin Hood



Visit the full video on Youtube!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQKRhXhIQbQ&t=47s>

### **Artist Statement**

This cemetery scene is based on concept art from *Coco*, a 2017 animated film produced by Pixar. I recreated this scene as an assignment for a game development class in my bachelor's degree work. The assignment was to choose from an environment we liked from a film or game and recreate it. Having loved the film, and greatly appreciated the traditions of Día de los Muertos I chose *Coco*, for both the story and the design. The culture and practice of the holiday are beautiful, and I felt the film did its justice by showing the sad aspects of the holiday without allowing it to drive the narrative. Cemeteries are normally seen as a negative area, of sadness and misery. However, what Día de los Muertos and *Coco* portray is the love and positive emotions that go into the holiday and how important it is to keep those whom we love in our hearts even when they have passed on. Because of this, I wanted to make my scene full of life and energy, not a stale and depressive atmosphere. I wanted the audience to be able to look at it and see the beauty in life and in death."

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# Topics Not to Bring Up at Thanksgiving

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Disinformation: A Modern Problem

Machiavelli and Violence

Soldier and the Piano

Cancelled

Mr. Sorenson

Awakened

# **Disinformation: A Modern Problem**

**Andrew Kenney**

In academia, almost all of the scholars are trying to make sense of the “fake news” phenomena that has ravaged the internet. They are trying to define something that took off so quickly that they are still not sure exactly what it is. Even to this day, six years after the first real incidents of “fake news” started cropping up in the United States (the 2016 US election), experts are still scrambling to give it a proper definition and function. Yet simply defining “fake news” does not capture the scope of a government-backed disinformation campaign actively seeking to bend a population to their will. The United Nations needs to stop ignoring this problem and make disinformation punishable by more than just a simple fine.

Throughout this article, I will explore what is currently being focused on by scholars. After identifying what these scholars missed, I will give a definitive definition of the various terms that appear in the works of these scholars. Following the exploration and proper definitions of false information, I will show why we should be focusing on combating disinformation (rather than defining it) by providing various examples of modern disinformation. Finally, I will explore a possible solution to the problem. My hope is that I can convey a sense of urgency about the underlying problem with merely defining and simply talking about disinformation.

## **Defining False Information**

Even though I just criticized most scholars for focusing on defining disinformation, it’s still worth talking about because this is where the conversation begins. To start, many scholars question why false information doesn’t lose its momentum not long after it begins. Toma and Scripcariu tackle this by suggesting that there are five different definitions that misinformation

can fall into: ‘recurrent occurrences,’ ‘scapegoat offensives,’ ‘pseudoscientific gaze,’ ‘combo strikes,’ and ‘humorous hijacks.’<sup>1</sup>

I would like to add a sixth definition called “absurd scams,” which is an idea that is so out of left field that it unironically is more believable. I will refer back to this in a moment. Toma and Scripcariu define the five examples as misinformation, but I think a few of these could definitely be defined as disinformation as well; scapegoat offensives, pseudoscientific gaze, and humorous hijacks could all be taken to the extremes and end up as disinformation. Baptista and Gradim build on what Toma and Scripcariu said, saying that many scholars reject these definitions, that they are “unstable’...[and] ‘absurd’ [in] meaning.”<sup>2</sup> They then propose their own definition of disinformation, stating that it is “...intentionally designed to mislead and/or manipulate a specific or imagined public.”<sup>3</sup> In most of the definitions that these scholars provide, it is implied that a foreign party—whether a person, state, or company—from a position of power—usually a political rival—disseminates false information to deteriorate an opposing viewpoint, often with physical consequences. I think it’s safe to say that every scholar agrees that disinformation is bad; however, my concern is still “What should we do about it?”

I mentioned “absurd scams” as an addendum to Toma and Scripcariu’s five misinformation ecosystems a little earlier. The concept of “absurd scams” is based on Miller’s article, in which he briefly describes a few attempts by the Russians to frame the Ukrainian Government in a bad light: the supposed crucifixion of a child by the Ukrainian Government,

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<sup>1</sup> Gabriel-Alexandru Toma and Adina-Gabriela Scripcariu, “Misinformation Ecosystems: A Typology of Fake News,” *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology & Sociology* 11, no. 2 (December 1, 2020): 65, <https://doaj.org/article/41fe44cccf5241f08f0a0791200fcaad>.

<sup>2</sup> João Pedro Baptista and Anabela Gradim, “A Working Definition of Fake News,” *Encyclopedia* 2, no. 1 (March 1, 2022): 632, <https://doi:10.3390/encyclopedia2010043>.

<sup>3</sup> Baptista and Gradim, “A Working Definition,” 632.

ISIS training camps set up and approved by the Ukrainian government, and the printing of Hitler's face on their currency.<sup>4</sup> To be perfectly clear, the aforementioned examples are *fake*; they have been debunked by StopFake.org—a non-profit organization dedicated to exposing disinformation spread by Kremlin media outlets.<sup>5</sup> These are examples of absurd scams because they are *way* out of left field, and yet, there are those who believed them—hook, line, and sinker. Bockett proves why disinformation is so effective through soft balancing, yet he seems to have shouted into a void; not one of the recent articles I've read has mentioned his paper.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps this is because soft balancing is a term associated with traditional warfare and hasn't quite made its way to online interactions yet. Regardless, disinformation is a problem that hasn't been addressed properly, and most scholars have yet to suggest any effective countermeasures against it.

### **Disinformation, Misinformation, and Fake News: An Examination of Discrepancies in Definitions**

In order to understand why we shouldn't be focusing on defining false information anymore, I decided to analyze how these terms showed up in previous academic articles. There are three different terms that appear in various contexts: "fake news," disinformation, and misinformation. These three terms, although having separate meanings, are used in a way that makes it confusing for the reader to understand. In hindsight, I can see that these terms are indeed different—and for the most part, used properly; however, before I had come up with my

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<sup>4</sup> Nash Miller, "Adaptive Russian Information Warfare in Ukraine," *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 282 (April 12, 2022): 5, <https://doi:10.3929/ethz-b-000541999>.

<sup>5</sup> Miller, "Adaptive Russian Information Warfare," 4.

<sup>6</sup> Daryl Bockett, "Virtual Theory: Integrating Cybersecurity into International Relations Theory," *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Global Studies* 12, no. 4 (October 1, 2017): 20-21, <https://doi:10.18848/2324-755X/CGP/v12i04/15-30>.

definition, that was not obvious to me. For example, in Aswad's article, "misinformation" is never seen without "disinformation," and the only exception to that is in the footnotes, but it's easy to overlook because the footnotes take up the *entire* page.<sup>7</sup> A second example is that of Toma and Scripcariu's *Misinformation Ecosystems: A Typology of Fake News*, in which they use misinformation as a synonym for "fake news," as well as occasionally throwing disinformation into the mix.<sup>8</sup> Again, prior to coming up with my definition, this confused me quite a bit. These are only a few examples of confusing terminology. There are many more examples, but that would warrant an entirely different paper.

Having examined various discrepancies of disinformation, misinformation, and "fake news," I will set forth my definitions of the various terms in a way that is not confusing, vague, or misleading. Beginning with "fake news" of the modern era, this can be defined as a popular term coined by the media; it represents false information on an online platform. To further cement this definition, Baptista and Gradim's article *A Working Definition of Fake News* agrees with my definition, where they describe "fake news" as "a type of online disinformation."<sup>9</sup> They do define "fake news" as disinformation—which is fine; however, I would still argue that "fake news" is coined by popular media as a means to scare people. If any more explanation is needed, then suffice it to say that the definition that I provided will be enough for this article.

Following "fake news" is misinformation, which can be defined as false information that was unintentionally produced. In other words, somebody got their facts wrong. While this isn't nearly as destructive as disinformation, misinformation can have a harmful impact. A prime example of misinformation is a story I heard from one of my high school English teachers on

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<sup>7</sup> Evelyn Mary Aswad, "In a World of 'Fake News,' What's a Social Media Platform to Do?" *Utah Law Review* 2020, no. 4 (January 1, 2020): 1001, <https://doi.org/10.26054/0D-TGXD-4V9T>.

<sup>8</sup> Toma and Scripcariu, "Misinformation Ecosystems," 65.

<sup>9</sup> Baptista and Gradim, "A Working Definition," 640.



November 21, 2022. In this story, my teacher had a neighbor who happened to be on the sex offenders list. Once the rest of the neighborhood found out, they were determined to root out this dangerous person from their peaceful, sex offender-less community. At first, my teacher was a part of that group. After doing some digging, however, he found out that this person on the sex offenders list was only there because he had sex with his wife before they were married. After learning this, my teacher did his best to spread the truth—the truth that this person was not a criminal to be afraid of. His efforts were in vain, as the family moved away not long after. This story goes to show that getting facts wrong can have serious consequences. It can ruin reputations, upset relationships, or, as we saw in this story, displace people. Misinformation, however, is only the lesser of the two evils.

Finally, we have disinformation, which can be defined as false information that is intentionally and deliberately disseminated to alter the opinion/viewpoint of a certain demographic. There are many examples of this—the most recent of which is right on our home turf in Orem. According to the Daily Herald, an email was sent from the South West Orem Neighborhood Association announcing that “Alpine School District Announces Orem School Closures!”<sup>10</sup> There was also an article published on KSL (and later removed) labeling eight schools for closure and demolition in Orem.<sup>11</sup> Needless to say, these false articles are local examples of disinformation, and undoubtedly affected the results of 2022’s mid-term elections in Orem, Utah. These definitions go to show that although these terms can be used collaboratively, one should be careful how they employ them—lest they confuse their audience.

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<sup>10</sup> Ashtyn Asay, “Alpine School District Responds to Allegations of School Closures,” *Daily Herald*, October 20, 2022, <https://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/2022/oct/20/asd-responds-to-allegations-of-school-closures/>.

<sup>11</sup> KSL NewsRadio Staff, “Letter from the newsroom: We pulled an inaccurate article,” *KSL NewsRadio*, October 20, 2022, <https://kslnewsradio.com/1977505/letter-from-the-newsroom-we-pulled-an-inaccurate-article/>.

## Russia and Disinformation

One does not simply bring up disinformation without mentioning Russia. In every article about “fake news,” disinformation, or misinformation that I’ve read, Russia is brought up at least once. In Toma and Scripcariu’s article, they bring up a Russian social media game from 2017—known simply as the “Blue Whale”—in which the game *appeared* to be threatening a huge population, but the reality was that the impact was small and rather insignificant.<sup>12</sup>

Although the article mentions that this occurred in Romania, this instance should not be casually thrown aside; it shows how much Russian influence affects everyone.<sup>13</sup> Moving to more modern times and the current issue of Russia and Ukraine, Miller describes how Russia lies to the Russophones in Ukraine, creating fictitious stories to persuade them to abandon the “fascist” government and return to Russia.<sup>14</sup> These efforts have been so effective, that the Donbass and Crimea regions of Ukraine “...came to support... separation from Ukraine or outright annexation by Russia.”<sup>15</sup> Bockett confirms what Miller says, saying that this strategy—which he coins as “soft balancing”—has been “...much more effective...than traditional military...strategies.”<sup>16</sup> This strategy is so effective, it caused Dawson and Innes to write an entire article on how the Russians handled their disinformation campaign, exploring the various methods of how the Internet Research Agency (IRA) influenced the various countries of the world.<sup>17</sup> They gain notoriety on Twitter (and therefore, influence) through a combination of these three methods:

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<sup>12</sup> Toma and Scripcariu, “Misinformation Ecosystems,” 75-76.

<sup>13</sup> Toma and Scripcariu, “Misinformation Ecosystems,” 75.

<sup>14</sup> Miller, “Adaptive Russian Information Warfare,” 3.

<sup>15</sup> Miller, “Adaptive Russian Information Warfare,” 3.

<sup>16</sup> Bockett, “Virtual Theory,” 20-21.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Dawson and Martin Innes, “How Russia’s Internet Research Agency Built Its Disinformation Campaign,” *Political Quarterly* 90, no. 2 (June 1, 2019): 245–256, <https://doi:10.1111/1467-923X.12690>.

buying followers, follower fishing, and narrative switching.<sup>18</sup> All of this goes to show that the Russians have perfected the art of manipulation through false information—and not just propaganda in their home country.

### **Disinformation as Warfare**

At the turn of the millennium, as the internet exploded in popularity, and the world became more interconnected, the ability to spy on, steal from, and attack other countries was becoming easier than ever. As Eun and Aßmann state, “cyber operations alone...have the potential to [become] international armed conflict.”<sup>19</sup> They also argue that information, specifically online information, will become a fifth platform off of which to wage war.<sup>20</sup> Although the focus of their article is on digital weapons that have kinetic consequences, their argument can also be applied to disinformation as well. Bockett elaborates on this through his concept of soft balancing—decreasing a rival’s power versus increasing one’s own power.<sup>21</sup> Miller shows soft balancing in the Russo-Ukrainian War of 2022, in which Russia floods Ukrainian media with blatantly false information, and Ukraine fights back with memes—a sort of front-line defense for those on social media, piloted by the North Atlantic Fellas Organization, or NAFO.<sup>22</sup> The examples above are only a few examples of how disinformation has been weaponized, and the list is only growing.

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<sup>18</sup> Dawson and Innes, “How Russia’s Internet Research Agency,” 247-249.

<sup>19</sup> Yong-Soo Eun and Judith Sita Aßmann, “Cyberwar: Taking Stock of Security and Warfare in the Digital Age,” *International Studies Perspectives* 17, no. 3 (January 1, 2016): 344, [https://doi: 10.1111/insp.12073](https://doi.org/10.1111/insp.12073).

<sup>20</sup> Eun and Aßmann, “Cyberwar,” 357.

<sup>21</sup> Bockett, “Virtual Theory,” 20-21.

<sup>22</sup> Miller, “Adaptive Russian Information Warfare,” 3-4.

## A Modern Conflict

Now that the dangers of disinformation have been revealed, I can continue on by showing how disinformation is affecting the world today. The first instances of disinformation that I can find were a result of the Euromaidan Revolution in 2014—a revolution in Ukraine caused by the refusal to join the EU. Prior to the Euromaidan, a Russian sympathizer occupied the president's chair, and the Russians spread their thoughts and ideas through various news channels—primarily social media.<sup>23</sup> During and after the Euromaidan, Russian media outlets labeled the revolutionists as “fascists’ and ‘brutal Russophobic thugs.’”<sup>24</sup> The worst part? Those in the Donbass and Crimea regions believed this—hook, line, and sinker.<sup>25</sup> In case it wasn't obvious, these accusations are false; they were spread by the Russians in an attempt to bring Ukraine back under Russian control. Fast forward to 2016, the Russians have taken an interest in US politics.<sup>26</sup> According to *Time* magazine, the Russians hacked into the Clinton campaign network, stole emails and passwords, and used it to produce negative news against Clinton, and that was only a small slice of what they did.<sup>27</sup> According to Bauer and Hohenberg, the *Denver Guardian*—a false media outlet based on the *Guardian*—spread false information about Hillary Clinton that attracted hundreds of thousands of views, and undoubtedly altered the results of the election.<sup>28</sup> In 2017, Russia decided to pull the strings in a second country—France. Had they

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<sup>23</sup> Miller, “Adaptive Russian Information Warfare,” 3.

<sup>24</sup> Miller, “Adaptive Russian Information Warfare,” 3.

<sup>25</sup> Miller, “Adaptive Russian Information Warfare,” 3.

<sup>26</sup> Bockett, “Virtual Theory,” 18-19.

<sup>27</sup> Abigail Abrams, “Here’s What We Know So Far About Russia’s 2016 Meddling,” *Time*, April 18, 2019, <https://time.com/5565991/russia-influence-2016-election/>.

<sup>28</sup> Paul C. Bauer and Bernhard Clemm von Hohenberg, “Believing and Sharing Information by Fake Sources: An Experiment,” *Political Communication* 38, no. 6 (December 1, 2021): 649, <https://doi:10.1080/10584609.2020.1840462>.

succeeded, Marin Le Pen—the candidate that the Russians backed—would have removed France from the EU, likely creating political unrest throughout Europe.<sup>29</sup> All of this goes to show that Russia is actively affecting global politics through disinformation, and, as far as I am aware, nobody has done anything about it.

These disinformation campaigns are not isolated to the past. They continue on today, right under the nose of the worst war seen in decades—the Russo-Ukrainian War. In the weeks leading up to the invasion of Ukraine, the Russians began saying the Ukrainian military was about to attack the Donetsk and Luhansk regions—both of which are inside Ukraine’s borders.<sup>30</sup> A few days before the invasion, they created a video of the supposed shelling of a civilian town, in which the “citizen” lost a leg.<sup>31</sup> As the war started, videos of the alleged “Ghost of Kyiv” were created by the Russians to spread false hope among Ukrainian supporters.<sup>32</sup> Once again, disinformation is not a thing of the past. Disinformation is a vital tool in the Russian arsenal, and they are using it very liberally.

That’s not to say that Ukrainians aren’t fighting back. Ever since the Euromaidan, StopFake has been debunking Russian disinformation non-stop.<sup>33</sup> In fact, they are still debunking disinformation to this day. They are not the only ones combatting the disinformation onslaught, however. An online community known as the North Atlantic Fellas Organization, or NAFO, has banded together to debunk the Russian disinformation on the front lines, so to speak. NAFO is known for creating memes that involve the popular Shiba Inu dog. This has gotten so large that

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<sup>29</sup> Bockett, “Virtual Theory,” 19.

<sup>30</sup> Miller, “Adaptive Russian Information Warfare,” 3.

<sup>31</sup> Miller, “Adaptive Russian Information Warfare,” 3.

<sup>32</sup> Miller, “Adaptive Russian Information Warfare,” 5.

<sup>33</sup> Miller, “Adaptive Russian Information Warfare,” 4.

Adam Taylor, a reporter for *The Washington Post*, wrote an entire article on NAFO.<sup>34</sup> Spreading memes about Russian disinformation, however, won't stop it from happening.

### **An Idea to Proactively Counter Disinformation**

Although Russian disinformation is being constantly debunked, simply debunking disinformation isn't enough. Something needs to be done that will prevent disinformation from affecting a population again. Unfortunately, there is no framework to go off of—simply because this form of disinformation is much newer and harder to identify. The closest thing I can find to a possible framework is the United Nation's Atrocity Crimes—more specifically, the page on Crimes Against Humanity. Using these guidelines, I would argue that disinformation—especially when it is backed by the government—would fall under the persecution category, fulfilling the physical element of the crime.

Am I bending the definition of “persecution” to fit my needs? I don't think so. Seeing as persecution is defined as hostility due to race, political or religious beliefs, I think Russian disinformation fits this definition rather well, if not perfectly. The physical element isn't the only thing that needs to be considered, however. According to the UN, there needs to be a contextual and mental element considered in tandem with the physical element. The contextual element is defined as “...[a] part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population.”<sup>35</sup> The Russian disinformation campaign is indeed a part of a greater whole; in case you weren't aware, that greater whole is the war that's been going on for almost a year now. Finally, the mental element requires that the attacker must have knowledge of the attack. I would argue that Putin is very aware of this, especially because he has a branch of his government

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<sup>34</sup> Adam Taylor, “With NAFO, Ukraine Turns the Trolls on Russia,” *The Washington Post*, September 1, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/01/nafo-ukraine-russia/>.

<sup>35</sup> “Crimes Against Humanity,” United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/crimes-against-humanity.shtml>.

dedicated to doing just that—the Internet Research Agency, or IRA.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, with all three categories’ requirements met, I would argue that Vladimir Putin is indeed a war criminal and should be dealt with accordingly.

There are those that would see my solution as censorship—after all, I am arguing that disinformation should be, well, censored. These people have good reasons, too. After all, censorship laws are generally created to identify and eliminate those that are against a certain political regime. A prime example of this is an instance that occurred in Singapore in 2019. Although it was well-intentioned, a law banning “fake news” was used “...for the purpose of silencing a regime critic, rather than for the reasons originally cited...”<sup>37</sup> As a counterpoint to the censorship law abuse, I would argue that censorship laws must be handled by an international court, a separate entity that (ideally) would have no biases and could examine the potential offenders with a clean slate. Finally, to quote Aswad once more, this does indeed involve “...an enumerated public interest objective...” seeing as there are lives on the line.<sup>38</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Information—which was once thought to be useful only when it was tangible—has now been weaponized on a level never seen before. Information has become the fifth platform off of which to wage war (if it wasn’t already). Disinformation—which is deliberately disseminated false information—has been used to sway the opinions of those who would otherwise be an enemy, as seen with Russia and Ukraine. While StopFake and NAFO are helping fight this disinformation, they can’t do everything on their own. This is why I have argued so heavily for laws against international disinformation. Something needs to be done, and not just a slap on the

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<sup>36</sup> Dawson and Innes, “How Russia’s Internet Research Agency,” 245.

<sup>37</sup> Aswad, “In a World,” 1019-1020.

<sup>38</sup> Aswad, “In a World,” 1014.

wrist. The time to stop defining disinformation is long past us—that was way back in February of 2022. We need to start combating disinformation and curb this problem as soon as possible—not just for the benefit of Ukraine, but for the entire world.



# Machiavelli and Violence

Jonathan Peterson

Niccolò Machiavelli is among the most well-known, and deeply controversial, figures in the realm of political science. At a time when the people of Europe largely believed in and enforced the idea that the ruler of an area was appointed by God to their place, Machiavelli rejected this notion in his understanding of politics. People in Europe were particularly incensed by Machiavelli's book *The Prince*, which was initially addressed to the new ruler of the Italian city-state of Florence, Lorenzo de Medici.<sup>1</sup> In the book, Machiavelli discusses how a political leader can come to and maintain power, as well as how the leader may expand their sphere of influence. Among the most important, and most discussed, elements of the book is the subject of violence. According to Machiavelli, violence is one of the many tools that a political leader can use to gain and maintain political power, and it has many benefits as it pertains to maintaining power.

Machiavelli is not the only political scientist to discuss the benefits of using violence and force to maintain political power, however; violence is perhaps one of the most discussed subjects in political science. Violence is, ultimately, deeply rooted within the political system. From the use of a military for self-defense or offensive attacks against an opposing state, or the use of police to enforce the laws of the state, violence is one of the most prominent manifestations of politics in the lives of a country's citizens. Particularly at a time such as surrounding the "Black Lives Matter" protests in the United States, when the role of violence in the propagation of the state is in question, it is important to examine why this use of violence

exists in the first place. As perhaps one of the more cynical writers when addressing violence, Machiavelli is an interesting subject to study, particularly in comparison with other thinkers. Ultimately, when discussing violence, the views found within Machiavelli's *The Prince* are similar to those of others who wrote on the subject after him.

The views of violence within Machiavelli's *The Prince* are similar to the views of Thomas Hobbes, of a force that is necessary, and has the potential to be positive for the citizens of a state. Hobbes is, in many ways, one of the foundations of modern political philosophy, and the social contract theory he laid out is the basis for most mainstream political philosophy today. Hobbes espoused that in order to have a functioning society, individuals would consent to suspending some of their personal freedoms and be ruled by another person, who would dictate the laws of a state and use force to enforce them. By doing so, the aim is that individuals respect the freedoms of those around them, and every individual can live a life of peace. Speaking of Hobbes, Dustin Ells Howes, Professor of Political Science at Louisiana State University who focuses on violence in his research, notes in a 2003 presentation for the American Political Science Association that "His primary task is to convince us that in ceding to the sovereign our ability to do violence, we are more apt to flourish (and just plain survive) than if we each retain the right to destroy one another."<sup>2</sup> In other words, our right to certain violent actions must be volunteered in order to maintain a functional society.

Central to this philosophy of violence, held by both Machiavelli and Hobbes, is the notion that the sovereign will be able to enforce laws through violence. Again from Howes, "...when Hobbes speaks of violence, it is not just the destruction of bodies but the destruction of bodies as a means to some end."<sup>3</sup> According to Hobbes, then, the violence of the state must have purpose. When looking at the methods of violence previously mentioned, this much is evident. A

military may protect a state from foreign threats, or else expand the state's territory through conquest, or even expand the state's power and sphere of influence by enforcing hegemony. In all three of these cases, the state uses force, like Howes notes, as a means to an end, that means being to ensure the preservation of the state, or the expansion of the state's power.

State use of force is also apparent in the use of a police force. The United States, as noted in previous decisions by the United States Supreme Court, has no obligation to protect its citizens.<sup>4</sup> This example demonstrates how no state is actually obligated to protect its citizens, but rather the use of force, generally by the police force of a state, is done primarily to enforce the laws of the state. This being said, Hobbes's theory of the social contract enforces the idea that laws exist in order to protect the freedom and wellbeing of the citizens, so ultimately police violence, when properly used, indirectly protects the citizens of the state.

Hobbes' view of violence is the same view of violence shown by Machiavelli in *The Prince*. As Machiavelli notes in *The Prince*, violence "...can be described as used well (if it is permissible to say "well" about something evil) when they are done ... for reasons of self-preservation, and when such acts ... are converted into the greatest benefits possible for one's subjects."<sup>5</sup> Here Machiavelli states the same thing about violence that Hobbes believed, in different terms. While Machiavelli does not use the same framing of the social contract, he claims the same things about violence; that violence is a benefit to society when used either to propagate the state or to benefit the citizens. Machiavelli, like Hobbes, argues that state violence must be intentional. In many ways, these two functions of violence fit well into the two broad categories of state organizations that use force. The military, more so than the police, is intended to preserve the state from potential outside threats. The police, more so than the military, are intended to benefit the citizens. Interestingly, while Machiavelli is regarded with distaste due to

the way in which he approached the use of state violence, Hobbes – who argued many of the same things regarding state violence – is not. Instead, Hobbes is viewed favorably in many ways, and spoken of as the foundation on which much of modern political science is based. Regardless of the ways in which the two are seen to a modern audience, it is clear that Hobbes and Machiavelli are very similar in their interpretation and view of state violence and force. However, Hobbes is not the only more contemporary political philosopher with whom Machiavelli shares views of violence.

The views of violence within Machiavelli's *The Prince* are similar to the views of the German sociologist Max Weber, that the state finds the foundation of its power in physical violence and force. Weber asserted the theory that the state has a monopoly on legitimate violence.<sup>6</sup> In its most basic form, this theory asserts that the state is the only entity which can enact violence legally and legitimately within its borders. Max Weber, in his lecture entitled "Politics as Vocation," notes that "...the modern state can be defined sociologically only by the specific means that is peculiar to it: namely, physical violence."<sup>7</sup> According to Weber, then, state violence is inherent to the existence of the state. It is by no other metric that one can define the state, because within violence the state holds its power. Weber asserts that the primary reason that one obeys the laws of the state is because of the threat of violence that the state holds over its citizens; one will obey traffic laws because to do otherwise risks encountering the police – and thus risks having the state's violence enacted upon them. Therefore, the state's power rests in its ability to enforce violence on its citizens. This is remarkably similar to the way in which Machiavelli viewed not just state power, but power as a whole. Leanne ten Brinke, an assistant professor at the University of Denver, and Dacher Keltner, professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkley, note in a 2022 paper that, for Machiavelli, "power is found in

force ... and strategic violence.”<sup>8</sup> This is, ultimately, a repetition of the claim made by Weber. Like Weber, Machiavelli sees the state as holding its power through its use of violence. Without this violence, the state would have no way to perpetuate itself or enforce its rule. In addition, the less the state is able to maintain a monopoly on violence, the less the citizens will accept its rule, and the weaker the state becomes. Therefore, the power that the state holds in Weber’s view, and the power the prince holds in Machiavelli’s, is based largely on their capacity for, and ability to use well, violence.

A view in which the state is the only enactor of violence, as one might interpret Weber as arguing is limited, and it is not the view held by Machiavelli. States where private citizens are allowed to use force in defense of themselves, others, or their private property could be argued, under this definition, to be non-state actors using legitimate and legal violence, thus invalidating the theory of the state monopoly on violence. Weber took a more encompassing approach to his understanding of the state monopoly on violence, however, which addresses this critique. Luis Vila-Henninger, a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Louvain in Belgium, notes that in Weber’s view of the state monopoly on violence, “The state ... allows non-state actors to use violence legitimately, but the legitimacy of said violence is given – or taken away – by the state...”<sup>9</sup> According to Weber, then, a state may permit private citizens to use force for a variety of reasons, but ultimately the state has a monopoly on violence which is determined by the state’s ability to determine what violence is permitted, and what violence is prohibited. The state may ultimately allow one individual to use violence but prohibit another’s use, depending on how each aids or hinders the goals of the state itself. In comparison, Machiavelli notes in *The Prince* that “there has never been a case ... when a new prince has disarmed his subjects; on the contrary, when he has found them disarmed he has always armed them, for when they are armed,

those arms become yours...”<sup>10</sup> This view connects very clearly to Weber’s. Machiavelli argues that when one arms their subjects, thus permitting them to use violence, this violence will be enacted on the state’s behalf.

Machiavelli does not necessarily have the same view as Weber regarding the state’s ability to relinquish permission to use violence. As Machiavelli later states in *The Prince*, “... when you disarm them, you begin to offend them...”<sup>11</sup> Therefore, to some extent, the ability of the state to take away permission to enact violence. In order for the state to survive, it must be in such a position that disarming the people will not cause great harm to the legitimacy of the state. In comparison, Weber views the state’s ability to determine what is and what is not legitimate violence as an absolute, and part of the power the state holds over its citizens. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that Weber frequently discussed the state as an institution already embedded in the social fabric, and more rigid. In comparison, Machiavelli’s advice here relates to the formulation of a new state, or being a new ruler, when the memory of previous states still weighs heavily on the minds of the people, and they are thus more likely to reject the authority of the state. Ultimately, however, Machiavelli and Weber’s views of state violence align quite closely, with both viewing the state as needing to have a monopoly on legitimate violence in order to function, and without which monopoly the state would not survive. This is seen both in the way the two thinkers view violence as the purest manifestation of the state’s power, as well as the way in which the state has the ability to allow citizens to arm themselves, while the state determines which violence by non-state actors is legitimate, and which is not. However, according to Machiavelli, the violence of the state is not just physical, but also takes a symbolic role in the lives of its citizens.

The views of violence within Machiavelli's *The Prince* are similar to the views of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, in that the state uses symbolic violence to enforce and justify its existence in the minds of its citizens. Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence takes a different approach to its understanding of violence. While violence is often thought of as something bodily, that does physical harm, Bourdieu argues that violence can also be more metaphysical. Symbolic violence is the notion that, in the existence of a power difference, those with lesser power will accept the domination of those with more power, so that "the most intolerable conditions of existence" are accepted and even protected by those of the lower class.<sup>12</sup> As an effect, such systems of inequality and domination remain in place, ingrained in the fabric of society to the extent that they feel not only justified but necessary. In the context of the era of Europe in which Machiavelli wrote, as the feudal system slowly ended, it is clear how this might apply to Machiavelli's work. The kings and princes of Europe, who claimed the divine right to rule, embedded this hierarchy so deeply that the assertion Machiavelli made, that power (and, as discussed previously, violence) was what justified their rule, Machiavelli was rejected outright. Ultimately, however, the monarchical system that engulfed Europe was arbitrary, and thus this rejection showcases the aspect of symbolic violence within it. As noted in the International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences, "Symbolic violence functions via three components acting simultaneously: ignorance of the arbitrariness of domination; recognition of this domination as legitimate; internalization of domination by the dominated."<sup>13</sup> This showcases the three aspects of symbolic violence that Machiavelli must recognize in order to fairly argue that he and Bourdieu agree on how the state uses violence. First, the people must see the state's power over them as requisite; it must be embedded into their understanding of how government operates. Second, the citizens cannot view it as fraudulent; they must believe in the authority of

the state. Last, the citizens must accept the state, and see their subjugation as an aspect of those above them being superior, rather than due to circumstance.

Machiavelli and Bourdieu agree on the matter of how the state enforces the legitimacy of its violence. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli notes that “... people are by nature fickle, and it is easy to persuade them of something, but difficult to keep them persuaded about it. And therefore, it is necessary to arrange things so that when they are no longer believed, they can be compelled to believe by force.”<sup>14</sup> This fulfils the second aspect of symbolic violence. According to Machiavelli, the sovereign must maintain the citizens’ belief in the state, and the citizens must view it as legitimate. This is done through the force that, as discussed previously, Machiavelli asserts was the foundation of the state’s power. Later on in this book, Machiavelli also states that “... fear is maintained by a dread of punishment which never abandons you.”<sup>15</sup> This meets the first and third requirements to claim symbolic violence. In such a scenario where the state holds the threat of physical violence over its people, the domination cannot be arbitrary, at least initially. And yet with time the ever-looming threat of punishment would subside, and domination become more arbitrary. In addition, the threat of punishment moves citizens to internalize the domination, and accept that the reason that the sovereign rules over them is not due to the arbitrary social status into which they were born, but somehow because the ruler is superior to them, and meant to be in this place. Thus they recognize the legitimacy of the domination through belief in the power of the sovereign to do violence, reject its arbitrariness out of fear of the violence, and ultimately internalize the domination through fear of and justification for the power of force the sovereign has.

Despite being written 500 years ago, the views Machiavelli espouses in *The Prince* are remarkably similar to many of those held by more contemporary thinkers. Like Thomas Hobbes,



Machiavelli views force as a necessity that can be used to benefit both sovereign and citizens (which is perhaps antithetical to the view that the sovereign must threaten their citizens with force). Like Max Weber, Machiavelli views the state as needing to show its power through force and physical violence. And like Pierre Bourdieu, Machiavelli views the state and the sovereign as needing to enact and create symbolic violence within society, to force the subjects to internalize and recognize the legitimacy of the sovereign's rule. Machiavelli's work includes many lessons that are still useful to this day about how the state operates. Revealing how violence underpins every way in which the state operates is a radical view to hold, even today. It is a small wonder, then, that the term "Machiavellian" holds so many negative connotations of a person without altruism, who rules by fear and force. Yet as Machiavelli himself notes, fear and force are simply the way in which the state operates.

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<sup>1</sup>Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. and trans. Wayne A. Rebhorn, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 2020), 3.

<sup>2</sup>Dustin Ells Howes. “The Challenge of Violence for Political Theory.” *Conference Papers -- American Political Science Association*, (2003): 16, doi:apsa\_proceeding\_1260.PDF.

<sup>3</sup>Howes “Challenge of Violence,” 10.

<sup>4</sup>See *DeShaney v. Winnebago County Department of Social Services*, 489 U.S. 189 (1989).

<sup>5</sup>Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 30

<sup>6</sup>Luis Vila-Henninger, “The Popular Basis of the State’s Monopoly on Legitimate Violence: How American Voters Use Political Values to (de)Legitimate Gun Rights,” *Sociological Inquiry* 91, no. 2 (May 1, 2021): 367–97,

<sup>7</sup>Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, ed. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004), 33.

<sup>8</sup>Leanne ten Brinke and Dacher Keltner, “Theories of Power: Perceived Strategies for Gaining and Maintaining Power,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 122, no. 1 (2022): 53, accessed December 5, 2022. doi:10.1037/pspi0000345.

<sup>9</sup> Vila-Henninger, “The Popular Basis,” 369.

<sup>10</sup>Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 66.

<sup>11</sup>Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 66.

<sup>12</sup>Katie Smith, “Pierre Bourdieu – Challenging Symbolic Violence and the Naturalisation of Power Relations,” e-International Relations, E-IR Publications Ltd., December 22, 2007, <https://www.e-ir.info/2007/12/22/pierre-bourdieu-%E2%80%93-challenging-symbolic-violence-and-the-naturalisation-of-power-relations/>.

<sup>13</sup>Gisèle Sapiro, “Bourdieu, Pierre (1930-2002),” in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (Second Edition), 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.61167-4>.

<sup>14</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 19.

<sup>15</sup> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 53.

## The Soldier and the Piano

Tenna Russel



*Prompt: T. Mitchell entitled his 2005 book *What Do Pictures Want?* Briefly but richly describe a picture (a painting, drawing, etching, graffiti, photography, print, etc. would suffice), and then explore what it wants. You must include a high-quality image at the beginning of your essay.*

A photograph that evokes great emotions is one of a soldier standing in a forest clearing. The soldier is in his military-issued beige uniform – thick, black boots plant him on a muddy forest floor. Tree carcasses and debris litter the ground at his feet; in the distance, tall, gray trees stand barren of leaves. The photo is taken from behind the soldier – a large assault rifle dangles from his shoulder. His posture is hunched over; his arms hang loose in front of him. He stands before an abandoned piano. Its redwood frame is scratched and muddied. The stark white keys look up at him, contrasting the gloomy background. The soldier is playing the keys, creating a melody I could hear in my own head. It is a sad melody, full of desperation and loneliness.

This photograph wants silence; it seeks stillness. This is not a photo that shouts at its viewers to be analyzed and understood. It is not loud or upbeat or exciting by any means. When I first viewed this image, I felt the fuzzy feeling in my ears when everything went quiet and I was completely focused. I couldn't look away for minutes, and even when I broke my gaze, I Couldn't help myself from glancing back. The photograph wanted me to listen, not just look. It Wanted me to listen to the soft melody of the piano, drifting through the silence of the trees, the silence of my ears. It wanted me to listen carefully, because patient listening is where I can learn the most. I not only saw, but heard the raw emotions of loneliness, desperation, and quiet hope. A small gift of musical pleasure during a looming war. This photograph showed me the power of using not only my eyes, but my ears to evaluate a situation presented before me. If I were to limit myself to only what I saw in that photo, I would miss out on the deeper emotions and truths being shown.

## Cancelled Anna Pitcher



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## **Mr. Sorenson**

**Benjamin Oakes**

We had always been suspicious of Mr. Sorenson.

I'll try to give myself credit. It was only natural for me to feel so much fear. Everyone around me spoke about him in whispers, and I only caught fragments of what and who he was. For a few months I was petrified even thinking about him. Until I saw his eyes. There was a kindness there, as though I was looking at someone who understood me and knew everything about me and still cared. Every time I would see him, hear him, it was like brushing against a mirror that only showed beauty.

I feel lost sometimes. Alone. But when I was with him, when I saw him, I felt like someone else could feel what I felt and still live beautifully.

I never got to talk to him, really. I want to say I was afraid of the awkwardness, but honestly I was afraid of being understood. Afraid of knowing where life was supposed to take me. I just knew that he had the answers for me and would have cared enough to tell me if I had asked.

I watched his house burn.

Flames kindled from inside his normal, beautiful home, grass cowering from the heat of the orange flames. His dark door crumpled as the white brick erupted, and before long, the entire structure lay, beautifully broken, quivering under the gallons of water chugged into its remains.

I felt like someone had ripped the future out of me, worried that I had permanently lost the destiny I had been fearfully, fitfully seeking. That the only person who seemed to know me was gone forever.

No one was killed in the incident, but I never saw him again. I never got to hear his explanations, his kindness, never got to understand why, really, he seemed to impact me so much. It was a phantom pain, hurting in a place I didn't even know I had.

I know who burned the house.

I'm still stunned they would do that. Stunned that somehow a human life, the only human life I had ever truly connected to, was cheap enough to try and drown in gasoline and fire.

Everyone burned his house.

They had been complaining about him for months, tense about his statements of belief, his smiles, his differences. He was a threat to us, they would scream, a threat to our America and our religion and our way of life and our joy and our children and our future and our past. He was an enemy, not because of what he did, but on the grounds of what he was.

He was political. That wasn't even his focus. I never heard about some political outburst; he just was. And that was too much.

I needed him. In such a real, piercing way, he cared about me. And he was gone. I immediately assumed it was his politics that made him so likable. If that was the only thing they were willing to attack him over, it had to be his political "tribe" that made him who he was.

I hate the word "tribal". It's barbaric, my first impression being disparate, violent war camps. But it best describes what we were. I couldn't tell you what our political party believed. It was just our "tribe", our animal, our hivemind that pulsed with time and screamed at differences. It was in our fingerprints, practically, seeping into everything I knew, and even though I hadn't done anything yet, it looked at me, furiously, after Mr. Sorenson left. I guess I was the last thing to take care of.

I could only blame myself for that. The world was poised to be tribal, to rip apart families and smother anything that could threaten us. It was far safer. The fact that there was ever a different approach was infinitely strange to me. So forgive me when I say that I started to worry I was going to get us all killed, that whatever was unique and wonderful about Mr. Sorenson was actually dangerous.

For the first time I felt lonely feeling alone, knowing that my future was out there, burned away before I could ever touch it. And maybe that it was better that way.

I stared at reflections. I didn't look the same as Mr. Sorenson—there was something alive in him that was painfully lacking in my eyes. I ached for some kind of spark, some kind of intensity that could scare and stupefy me into being something better. I just saw ashes.

The Sorenson house had a visitor, eventually. I had convinced myself that it was Mr. Sorenson, back to impart something before he disappeared. Running, desperate, I got too close before I realized it was just a stranger. His eyes were different somehow. Before I could leave he gripped my arm.

"You, boy. What happened here?"

"The house burned down." I was on the verge of tears, afraid of hearing something I needed to, afraid that he was like Mr. Sorenson and afraid that maybe he wasn't. I couldn't decide what to tell him, couldn't decide whether to ask for guidance or pity. "I saw my neighborhood do it."

"Everyone here? You're sure?"

"Yes sir."

He smiled.



That scared me a little bit. It was such a foreign reaction to my pain that I couldn't speak. His gaze, his laugh, was so cold that it seemed like false intensity.

Then he drove away.

I often reflect on that moment. I'm so scared that I caused what happened next, that all of it came back to me. I think that's still the tribe in me, boring holes in the back of my mind. I hope. It still haunts me.

He came back soon, that stranger. I hadn't figured that it was on the news, that Mr. Sorenson had a life or friends somewhere else. That was foolish of me. Even when that sunk in, it was so, so clear that these were not those people. I didn't feel that spark again. From everything I could gather, these people shared his politics but none of his humanity.

The arguments were loud; angry. I couldn't make out why. I think it was at this point, back of a crowd, that I realized what the difference was. These people had never met Mr. Sorenson. They didn't know his first name. They had to ask me for the address. If they had known him, why would they be here? Why would they have taken weapons and torches and vitriol if they wanted to make sure he was ok? How could anyone, knowing him, come to burn us?

My town didn't respond well. They wanted to burn them instead. That wasn't out of fear or indignation, either. Just a chance to finally make a statement.

It was a tense handful of days. There was a raid on weapons, napalm, dolls. The kids were so scared. That's the worst memory for me: a handful of toddlers hiding in the alley by the grocery store, crying. The radio claimed tensions were escalating beyond safe bounds. They knew because the same thing happened last month in Illinois. Dozens were killed. Eight of them were children.

I remember when the first gunshot sounded. The afternoon was quiet, leaves red and green, grass beginning to fade. A car turned the corner, and a bullet clipped the tire. Then it was an outrage, dozens, hundreds of bullets, ripping into doors and flesh and trees and people and objects and kids and adults and me. I got hit in the leg, unsuccessfully hiding in a backstreet. I was lucky.

The conflict lasted for less than an hour, houses caught up in flames, bodies in the street. It could have been worse, they told me. I can't imagine how.

The hospital was cold. That first night was the worst one, listening to people wail in the agony of loss. So many people had died. I couldn't tell you the number, just that it staggered me.

The radio didn't condemn us. I should've been relieved by that, but it felt hollow. I knew what we did. The radio knew what we did. It had to. How could it see us as victims? The human toll of it all was horrifying, but we would have done the same thing. We said we would. We threatened Mr. Sorenson and lashed out at those visitors. Visitors who had already burned their local rivals. And then the radio blared out one last thing.

“They will pay for this.”

It wasn't said with sympathy or passion, just empty screams. Angry screams. Screams that intertwined with the screams of the injured until I couldn't tell which was which.

As I fitfully slept that night, I wondered if anyone was safe at all.

The world hadn't been at war for 10 years.

And I had never been more scared in my life.

## Awakened Halie Johnson



*Prompt: T. Mitchell entitled his 2005 book *What Do Pictures Want?* Briefly but richly describe a picture (a painting, drawing, etching, graffiti, photography, print, etc. would suffice), and then explore what it wants. You must include a high-quality image at the beginning of your essay.*

The paint creases in a way that can only remind one of bed sheets. Scrunched up and swirled into a mess of white. Faint hues of contrasting blue and red mix with the white adding depth and shape. Dreamlike chaos draws the viewer's eyes around in circles, eventually coming to rest at the center. The focus is on a man sitting in the middle, his face turned towards the sky illuminated on the left side. He looks as if something is pulling on him, weighing him down. He's painted in shades of gray and dark blue, giving the impression that he should contrast and stand out amidst the white background. But instead, the bright atmosphere pulls firmly at his edges, holding him in place. It feels as if the white background is surrounding him, swallowing him.

There is a fogginess to the painting *Awakened Early In the Morning* by Korean painter Hwang Jae-Hyung. The painting wants us to be drawn into that fog, and for us to draw it in with our breaths. Breathing it in and letting it rest underneath our skin. Reminding us of the morning haze we feel before the reality of life creeps back up on us. It warms us, calms us, and allows us to connect to the picture, opening the gate for further communication. The piece wants to draw us in so it can tell us its story. If speaking through the man in the painting it would speak in a gentle but downtrodden voice. Telling us about a life well lived and regrets we learn to accept. Its speech and stories would break us from that warm morning haze. Bringing us back to reality even if only for a moment before drawing us back in to repeat the process. It's a cycle much like what we experience every day. The want of this painting is to push and pull us through this cycle just as life does.

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# The Stories We Tell

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mosquito bite

How the Underdog Narrative Shapes Daily Life

Múspell

Amazigh Girl

Minutes

Nauvoo

Gothic Minecraft Cathedral

The Wants of Starry Night

## **Mosquito Bite**

**Sydney Holt**

You're like a mosquito bite  
You're all I can think about, and not in a good way  
Itchy and raised and red to the point I'm ready to carve you out of my skin no matter what  
But I've had mosquito bites before  
And I know on some level that t will stop itching  
Stop hurting  
And leave nothing behind  
I just have to sit on my hands and wait  
But I still scratch and scratch and scratch until I'm bleeding  
And instead of plain skin I'm left with a scar  
And the worst part is that you weren't even the one to make me bleed

## How the Underdog Narrative Shapes Daily Life

Mark Forsyth

When faced with any form of rivalry or competition, people often place the competitors into one of two roles: that of the underdog, or that of the favorite. This tradition has existed for a long time, stretching back to the classic biblical story of David and Goliath, as described in the book of Samuel. According to their simplest definitions, the words underdog and favorite imply people whom others expect to fail or succeed, respectively.<sup>1</sup> By nature, this narrative exists only in competitive situations since collaboration does not foster an inherent sense of winning or losing. Although commonly associated with only two-party competitions, the underdog narrative can also apply to other types of performance with more than one competitor.

This paper will explore three primary types of underdog narratives, based on who creates the narrative and who receives it. These ideas fit into three positions in a two-by-two matrix, with the aforementioned roles as axes. First, the concept of externally imposed, internalized narratives describes predictions of low performance given to one by another person. These externally imposed predictions then affect one's performance in a variety of ways, depending on various factors. In a different spot on the matrix, this paper covers the idea of externally imposed narratives which point outwards and which make predictions about the performance of a third party. These fall under the category of externally imposed, externalized narratives. The final concept, internally imposed, internalized narratives, shows the framing of one's own past experiences within the narrative arc of the underdog hero, which framing then affects one's

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<sup>1</sup>Samir Nurmohamed, "The Underdog Effect: When Low Expectations Increase Performance," *Academy of Management Journal* 63, no. 4 (August 2020): 1106, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2017.0181>

future performance. The first two narratives will use the simple definitions of underdog and favorite denoted above. The final narrative will focus less on predictions of future performance and more on the reframing of past experiences within a specific story. This paper does not advocate for the underdog narrative; in fact, it gently explores the removal of the entire competitive underdog-favorite dichotomy itself, in favor of more collaborative structures. However, understanding these narratives and how they affect daily life can empower people to take more control of their circumstances by deliberately employing or avoiding these stories as they see fit.

### **Externally Imposed and Internalized**

Despite what common convention implies, telling people that they will underperform can sometimes boost their performance level above the status quo, making it a reasonable option in some scenarios. Nurmohamed conducted a series of multi-source studies within the workplace, many of which pointed towards a “positive relationship between underdog expectations and performance.”<sup>2</sup> This may seem backwards, since people often look to strategies such as positive reinforcement to bolster behavior, not negative forecasting. How might society change if it shifted to focus on underdog narratives as a tool for bolstering performance? It might increase productivity; then again, it could also cause unforeseen negative side effects, such as the deterioration of trust or self-esteem. Although this research does not conclusively advocate for or against this type of underdog narrative, it still identifies an important niche within the current understanding of human behavior.

### **Deciding Factors**

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<sup>2</sup>Nurmohamed, “The Underdog Effect,” 1114.



### ***Observer Credibility***

Because it often precludes healthy relationships, the externally imposed underdog narrative requires caution. Adding nuance to his positive observations about this narrative, Nurmohamed conducted a fourth study which showed “support for perceived credibility of observers as a key contingency of the effect of underdog expectations on performance, as underdog expectations increase performance when credibility is low, but not when it is high.”<sup>3</sup> Since credibility alters the effect that the underdog narrative has on performance, one could advocate for the deliberate fostering of mistrust and low credibility in order to maximize performance impact. However, many different moral viewpoints could agree in deeming a concerted destruction of trust entirely unethical. Exploring more utilitarian alternatives, one might argue that observers should purposefully assign everyone an underdog/favorite narrative based on how much trust already exists beforehand. However, measuring credibility in real-life interpersonal relationships seems quite error prone. The mere assignment of narratives might change the relationships even further, either exacerbating the gaps in credibility or closing them, leading back into the same ethical dilemma as before. Given these potential pitfalls, any leader attempting to boost performance through underdog narratives must exercise caution and foresight before jumping into any specific course of administrative action.

Because spite can reduce the consistency of success, one should avoid using it as a motivator. Baumeister posited that although the desire to prove others wrong can boost underdog motivation in some contexts, it diminishes focus.<sup>4</sup> This oscillation between the role of primary asset and that of primary liability implies great instability. If the desire to prove others wrong

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<sup>3</sup>Nurmohamed, “The Underdog Effect,” 1126.

<sup>4</sup>Roy F. Baumeister, “Choking Under Pressure: Self-consciousness and Paradoxical Effects of Incentives on Skillful Performance,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 46, no. 3, (1984): 610, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.46.3.610>.

cannot guarantee victory with any degree of credibility, then why use it? If spite as a motivator had other significant intrinsic benefits, it could justify itself. However, it does not appear to have any such redeeming qualities. Many people would deem spite an undesirable emotion, since it rarely improves the mood or leads to more effective relationships. Although effective in some places, the desire to prove others wrong yields enough uncertainty and downsides that people should choose other motivators when given the choice.

### ***Mindset***

In many areas of life, people should try to foster a promotion focus, defined as the pursuit of growth and improvement.<sup>5</sup> This mindset is valuable because it bolsters performance and fosters resilience. Researching organizations in Shanghai, China, Xue et al. noted, “[under] the positive moderating effect of promotion focus, underdog expectations improve employee work engagement by adopting an approach of proving others wrong.”<sup>6</sup> Although spite in and of itself holds little reliability, one could argue that most every individual unavoidably feels it at one point or another. Having a mindset which can consistently make it beneficial could offset some of spite’s inherent volatility. Exploring other factors, one might posit that a growth-seeking promotion focus inspires persistence. Having a promotion focus could encourage the interpretation of setbacks as stimulating challenges, thereby increasing motivation. To maximize performance and gracefully handle spite, people should adopt a promotion focus.

While maintaining a promotion focus, people should steer away from developing a prevention focus, in which people aim primarily to avoid negative outcomes, because such a

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<sup>5</sup>J. Xue, M. Zhu, Y Guo, and D. Kong, “The Double-Edged Sword of Underdog Expectations in Organizations in Shanghai, China: The Mediating Role of Feedback-Avoiding Behaviors and Proving Others Wrong and the Moderating Role of Regulatory Focus,” *Psychology Research & Behavior Management* 15: (August 2022): 2206, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uvu.edu/10.2147/PRBM.S368632>.

<sup>6</sup>J. Xue et al. “The Double Edged Sword of Underdog Expectations,”2206.

focus can undermine motivation and commitment.<sup>7</sup> According to the results of the same Shanghai study, “[under] the positive moderating effect of prevention focus, underdog expectations reduce employee work engagement by adopting an avoidance path of employee feedback-avoiding behaviors.”<sup>8</sup> Although tempting, avoiding feedback usually just holds people back from improving or moving forward, which makes it an undesirable choice in the long term. People may try to avoid negative feedback simply by avoiding mistakes, which sounds good on paper, but in practice that type of mindset may hamper performance. If someone exclusively focuses on preventing negative outcomes, they might interpret an externally imposed underdog narrative as a sign of failure, because they could not perform well enough to avoid warranting the prediction. At this point, they have already, in their view, failed, and so they would transfer their efforts towards causes they deemed less futile. However, this attitude prevents them from searching for solutions, asking for advice, and making real progress. By contrast, adopting a promotion focus while avoiding a prevention focus would improve performance and enhance behavior within underdog narratives.

## **Why**

To understand more, one might focus on why externally imposed narratives can ever have a positive effect at all, not simply on when they can. As discussed earlier, the underdog’s desire to prove others wrong can take credit for a large proportion of the positive outcomes (as well as many of the negative ones). Additionally, the favorite can sometimes underperform due to high pressure, leading to a victory by the underdog. The existence of both of these reasons calls into question the efficacy of traditional leadership structures and even competition itself. For example, a leadership system based on emotional connection might produce better overall results

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<sup>7</sup>J Xue et al. “The Double Edged Sword of Underdog Expectations,”2206.

<sup>8</sup>J Xue et al. “The Double Edged Sword of Underdog Expectations,”2205.

than one which relies on intimidation and strict obedience. A collaborative work environment might also foster better relationships and a more sustainable work culture than the classic competitive model. At the same time, both of these things might have unforeseen drawbacks. This paper will briefly touch on both topics; they certainly deserve more consideration and future research.

Despite the possibility that fear-based leadership can bolster the effects of the underdog narrative through spite, workplace environments should switch to more humane, collaborative structures. One of the studies described earlier showed an “indirect effect of underdog expectations on performance via the desire to prove others wrong.”<sup>9</sup> The motivational power of spite in this context makes sense, because in many leadership structures, followers perceive the leader as a tyrant whom all must please, but none can approach. As such, negative feelings towards the individual(s) in power would make spite an easy and natural emotion. The prevalence of something does not in and of itself justify its continued practice, however; the normalcy of fear-based leadership does not exempt it from scrutiny. Although this leadership structure fosters short-term efficiency, it often precludes healthy, collaborative environments, which can improve long-term well-being much more than simple success would. To properly balance employee success and wellbeing, organizations should replace fear-based leadership structures with supportive, collaborative alternatives.

Given the instability of both underdog and favorite narratives, one might question the validity of competition itself, the overarching narrative which creates this juxtaposition. Deviating from his main argument, Nurmohamed noted that underdogs sometimes win simply because pressure causes favorites to underperform and even “quit when they are performing

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<sup>9</sup>Nurmohamed, “The Underdog Effect,” 1120.

poorly.”<sup>10</sup> If either narrative produced consistently positive results, one could argue for its superiority; however, both narratives have inconsistent track records, so perhaps avoiding the competition-based dichotomy entirely would produce the most reliable outcomes. Granted, competition tends to worm its way into almost every performance-focused environment, so one might instead focus on succeeding within such an environment instead of trying to alter it. When given the choice, however, leaders should build collaborative environments that don’t produce unreliable underdog/favorite dichotomies.

### **Externally Imposed and Externalized**

Up until now, this paper has primarily focused on the internal performance effects of externally imposed underdog narratives. This section will analyze the effects of these narratives when directed at a third party. Specifically, it will examine underdog/favorite narratives when applied to electoral candidates and how that affects voting. To explore the psychology of voting, this section will analyze a study done in India. The Indian government has many multi-phase elections which happen “in phases and span many days, sometimes even weeks and months.”<sup>11</sup> This has caused some amount of controversy around the practice of exit polling, since releasing the results of an exit poll might influence the outcome of an election.<sup>12</sup> In response, the Indian government “decided to issue a blanket ban on publishing the results of . . . exit polls, until the conclusion of all phases of an ongoing election.”<sup>13</sup> Exit polling refers to the surveying of voters as they leave the voting booth, to understand voter’s choices. It often provides more reliable data

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<sup>10</sup>Nurmohamed, “The Underdog Effect,” 1107.

<sup>11</sup>Somdeep Chatterjee and Jai Kamal, “Voting for the Underdog or Jumping on the Bandwagon? Evidence from India’s Exit Poll Ban,” *Public Choice* 188, (September 2021): 432, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uvu.edu/10.1007/s11127-020-00837-y>.

<sup>12</sup>Chatterjee and Kamal, “Voting for the Underdog,” 432.

<sup>13</sup>Chatterjee and Kamal, “Voting for the Underdog,” 432.

than pre-election polling, which can overestimate voter turnout, since many eligible voters don't actually vote on election day.<sup>14</sup> This section will explore how natural human emotions can affect voting.

The tendency to vote for the candidate perceived as the underdog could imply an overreliance on emotion in the electoral process. After the Indian government banned exit polling, "the vote shares of frontrunners increased and the vote shares of fringe candidates . . . declined." which suggests "underdog voting by Indian voters."<sup>15</sup> Assuming a strictly logical voting framework based on candidates' opinions and policies, one would not generally expect such a shift in outcome. By contraposition, one can loosely posit that this shift implies that emotions or other factors affect voters' decisions more so than society expects. For example, voters may subconsciously feel a sense of pity for the underdog candidate, or perhaps they relate to the underdog candidate and vote empathetically. Although entirely understandable and likely subconscious, these non-logical factors may not align with the voter's best interests. Because of this, society should devote more effort to researching and addressing these biases on a larger community level.

### **Why**

The act of expressive voting reveals an unproductive lack of pragmatism in the way that many people approach elections. Listing off different potential explanations for underdog voting, Chatterjee and Kamal posited that "people may decide to vote for an underdog for purely expressive reasons."<sup>16</sup> This may imply voting for the underdog, regardless of said candidate's identity, as a form of protest vote, to show some sort of poetic defiance against the

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<sup>14</sup>Chatterjee and Kamal, "Voting for the Underdog," 432.

<sup>15</sup>Chatterjee and Kamal, "Voting for the Underdog," 432.

<sup>16</sup>Chatterjee and Kamal, "Voting for the Underdog," 437.

frontrunner(s). Alternatively, it could signify voting for a highly desirable candidate with little chance of winning rather than voting for a realistic but less desirable frontrunner candidate.

Although different in execution, both ideas show a romanticization of the political process at the cost of utilitarian benefits. To shape society in a meaningful way, voters should treat elections less as a poetic expression and more as a decisive construction plan for the world that they will live in.

By contrast, pragmatically choosing the “lesser evil”<sup>17</sup> allows voters to enact positive change much more reliably. To further expand their list of explanations, Chatterjee and Kamal attributed some amount of underdog voting to pragmatically “preventing an undesirable outcome when the preferred choice is unlikely to win.”<sup>18</sup> To understand the externally imposed, externalized underdog narrative, imagine a scenario with three candidates: A, B, and C. A would perform incredibly in office, but they only have 3% of the vote. C would wreak unimaginable havoc, and yet they command 49% of the vote. Finally, candidate B would make a reasonable (if mediocre) legislator, but they have amassed 48% of the vote. If a voter chooses candidate A, to send a powerful, symbolic message of their uncompromising patriotism, they may well end up with candidate C and find themselves in a much worse scenario than before. Instead, that voter should choose candidate B, because that can help prevent a negative outcome and have the largest positive impact possible.

### **Internally Imposed and Internalized**

For this last main section, this paper will examine the self-imposed underdog narrative. Instead of simply referring to the prediction of future outcomes, most often the dichotomy of winning or losing, this definition describes the framing of one’s own past experiences within the

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<sup>17</sup>Chatterjee and Kamal, “Voting for the Underdog,” 437.

<sup>18</sup>Chatterjee and Kamal, “Voting for the Underdog,” 436.

narrative arc of the underdog hero. This section will look at how this self-imposed underdog narrative can affect performance, relative to the self-imposed favorite narrative. To apply this more directly to the human experience, this will specifically focus on how the underdog narrative can help to offset the performance imbalances produced by discrimination.

## **Discrimination**

To understand how the internally imposed underdog narrative fits into the context of discrimination, one must first understand discrimination's negative impact on performance. This negative relationship between discrimination and performance partially mirrors the negative relationship between externally imposed underdog narratives and performance, showing that the way in which people treat one another affects life in noticeable ways. According to a variety of scholars, dealing with discrimination can worsen mental health,<sup>19</sup> raise blood pressure,<sup>20</sup> and cause a myriad of other problems. As it specifically applies to performance, however, "wrongful discrimination in the form of prejudice undermines efficacy."<sup>21</sup> Going solely off of intuition, many people in privileged positions might underestimate the impact of discrimination and wonder why victims go to such lengths to advocate against it. But given that discrimination can wreak havoc in almost every area of life, it certainly deserves attention. Extrapolating further, the narratives that people tell each other, and those they tell themselves, affect everyday experiences in unforeseen ways. As such, society needs to pay closer attention to both kinds of narratives,

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<sup>19</sup>Vickie M. Mays and Susan D. Cochran, "Mental Health Correlates of Perceived Discrimination Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adults in the United States," *American Journal of Public Health* 91, no. 11 (October 2011): 1874, <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.91.11.1869>.

<sup>20</sup>Mood Beatty et al. "Lifetime Racial/Ethnic Discrimination and Ambulatory Blood Pressure: The Moderating Effect of Age." *Health Psychology* 35, no. 4, (2016): 333, <https://doi.org/10.1037/hea0000270>.

<sup>21</sup>Samir Nurmohamed, Timothy G. Kundro, Christopher G. Myers, "Against The Odds: Developing Underdog Versus Favorite Narratives to Offset Prior Experiences of Discrimination," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decisions Processes* 167 (November 2021): 206, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2021.04.008>



because however inconsequential they may seem, they could affect everything from daily life to quantifiable job performance. Delving more specifically into achievement, the negative effect of discrimination on performance raises another question: do any of the underdog or favorite narratives described help to balance out this performance decrease?

As it turns out, the self-imposed underdog narrative, in which an individual seeks to reinterpret their own past challenges within the contextual narrative arc of the underdog hero, can increase performance and partially offset the negative effects of discrimination. Especially in situations of discrimination, people might benefit from framing their obstacles within the underdog narrative rather than that of the favorite. To address the gripping negative effects of discrimination on success, Nurmohamed et al. said “underdog narratives are more effective than favorite narratives in combating the effects of prior experiences of discrimination on performance via performance efficacy.”<sup>22</sup> Although one should hesitate to inflict external underdog narratives upon others, as discussed earlier, an internal underdog narrative seems to work better. This could happen because the internal narrative reframes the past, in order to make peace with it, whereas the external narrative places an expectation on the future, which no one can truly know for certain. In addition, the interpretation of an external narrative can vary greatly from person to person, given the inherent disconnect between the creator of the narrative and the receiver. To foster more reliable and ethical outcomes, one should honestly consider using internally imposed underdog narratives, but one should exercise caution with externally imposed narratives.

## Conclusion

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<sup>22</sup> Nurmohamed, Kundro, and Myers, “Against the Odds,” 212.

Depending on a variety of factors, underdog narratives can produce a vast array of different outcomes. From each of these different outcomes, one can learn general ideas about human interaction as a whole, and one can tackle many ethical questions about the most effective way to build relationships and boost performance. In this way, the many different outcomes of the underdog narrative serve as a type of guide to the social and emotional experiences of humanity. This paper examines the underdog narrative's intersections in two areas: the creator of the narrative, and the target of the narrative. Externally imposed, internalized underdog narratives prove the most volatile out of all three of the intersections examined. The effects that the underdog narrative and discrimination both have on performance show that individual actions affect people more than one might think. Based on this, one might employ extra caution with this kind of underdog narrative, along with any other externally imposed narrative. The externally imposed narratives which point outward, such as those directed at political candidates, reveal many interesting ideas about the periodic irrationality of human emotion, and provide cautionary tales of how subconscious emotional viewpoints can cause people to vote against their own best interests. Finally, internally imposed, internalized underdog narratives seem to show the most generally positive results, possibly because they focus more on reframing the past than on trying to predict and alter future events. Since so many different underdog/favorite models have negative side-effects, such as spite or instability, society might benefit from exploring more collaborative models and employing gentler, more emotionally intelligent leadership systems. To craft the most effective and humane outcomes, one should examine the lessons taught by each facet of the age-old underdog narrative and use those ideas to work within the current societal systems, or in some cases to rethink those systems entirely.



## AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT OF

Alec Lowe for the degree of Honors Baccalaureate of Commercial Music in Music presented on April 5, 2022.

Title: Múspell: An Album & Analysis Informed by Old Norse Sources

Chair: Ross Hagen, Ph.D.

As a response to the homogenization of cultures due to factors stemming from colonialism, there has been a large movement of peoples around the world taking steps to reclaim aspects of their cultures that were once lost. Neo-Pagans in Scandinavia, also referred to as Nordic Animists, are one such group. This creative project identifies and recreates the path many Nordic Animist musical artists use to create music that is rooted in historical Old-Norse sources, while also relying on modern-day instruments and recording techniques. Another musical genre influenced by Nordic Paganism, known as Black Metal, was popular with counter-culture movements around the world in the 1990s and is still performed by many groups today. This project fuses Nordic Animist music and Black Metal, with explanations of musical decisions in its supplementary paper. Also discussed is the appropriation of this culture by alt-right hate groups, and the steps taken by myself and other Nordic Animist musical artists to reclaim this culture from them.

Keywords: animism, Norse, black metal, cultural reclamation, neo-pagan

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MÚSPELL: AN ALBUM & ANALYSIS INFORMED BY OLD NORSE SOURCES

By

ALEC LOWE

A PROJECT

Submitted to Utah Valley University Honors Program

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Honors Baccalaureate of Commercial Music in Music

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MÚSPELL: AN ALBUM & ANALYSIS INFORMED BY OLD NORSE SOURCES

By

ALEC LOWE

Undergraduate Honors Project  
presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for earning the distinction of

Honors Program Graduate

Utah Valley University, Orem, Utah

May 2020

Approved by:

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Kate McPherson, Ph.D., Honors Program Director

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Ross Hagen, Ph.D., Music

I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of the Utah Valley University Honors Program. My signature below authorizes release of my project to any reader upon request.

A handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is written in a cursive style and includes the name "Alec Lowe". To the right of the signature is a simple line drawing of a drum with two drumsticks.

Alec Lowe, Author

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# FOUNDATIONAL RESEARCH

When writing historically informed music from before the invention of modern notation or sound recordings, there are very few ways to ensure you have an accurate end product. Even among composers who devote their lives to studying and performing Old Nordic music, like Einar Selvik of Wardruna and Maria Franz from Heilung, much of the composition must be approximated. As this genre has evolved over the past few decades, it became clear to many die-hard composers that the importance of authenticity within this genre is eclipsed by the importance of the general effect on a listener. Even the most academic and authentic performers rely on electronic elements, sequenced synthesizers, and modern-day instruments to augment the moods they're portraying. While many who find their way into this genre can become disheartened to learn this, the fact is, it's *because of* our lack of knowledge regarding music within Old Nordic cultures that we're granted a license for an abundance of artistic freedom.

While many who write this music aim for sounds that invoke primal responses from their listeners, many also aim to soothe and calm their listeners, using ambient, ethereal soundscapes. I wrote *Múspell* because I was enthralled by this genre from the moment I heard it. After only months of exposure to this music, I set myself on a path to enhance elements of Old Nordic music with aspects gleaned from Norwegian black metal from the 1990s (which was also inspired by Viking Age culture).

During the Viking Age, music notation was in its pre-infancy within the Catholic Church and reserved for liturgical music. It would be around 1,000 years before the first recordings were ever made on Edison's wax cylinders. It's impossible to know what medieval music truly sounded like. We do know, however, that they were incredibly skilled poets. Sophie Draheim, author of *Draugaskáld: Volume I*, a book of modern Nordic poetry, has a degree in Scandinavian literature studies from University College London. She said in a podcast interview with Old Norse scholar Dr. Matthias Nordvig,

*"I sat down to write [dróttkvætt meter poetry for the first time], and the rules were set out in front of me... I wanted to cry in about 5 or 10 minutes and rip up the paper in front of me, which I'm sure was quite a familiar feeling to skalds back in the day... It's very frustrating, even if you've studied it your whole life."*

Because Nordic peoples were incredibly skilled poets, and because the arts were an important aspect of their culture, we can deduce that they almost certainly would have been skilled songwriters. Many reconstructionists find that certain passages and stanzas work so well with music that they must have been performed that way originally. Most notably, the poem *Drømde mik en drøm i nat*, a 14th-century secular Danish tune found in the *Codex Runicus* was written alongside an early form of music notation. Other composers, like myself, look for ways to shoehorn stanzas that may have not been intended to be sung into a standard 4/4 musical meter.

The final motivation for my writing this album is socio-political. It's no secret that Old Norse symbology and aesthetics have been appropriated by the alt-right and neo-nazis. Viking symbols and objects were carried, worn, and tattooed at the white-supremacist protests in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017, and again at the raid on the United States capitol building on January 6, 2021. The last whites-only church in the United States is a church that practices Nordic neo-paganism. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has placed several Old Norse runes and (formerly) sacred symbols on their hate symbols watchlist. Several of the most famous surviving Norwegian black metal artists, most notably Varg Vikernes, are avid and highly active alt-right nazi sympathizers.

Because of the association between Nordic culture and hate groups we've witnessed an emergence of many politically moderate, anti-hate groups and individuals standing up for their cultural heritage. Groups such as the Asatru Community (TAC) and Asatru UK (AUK) are attempting to reclaim these symbols from those who seek to use them for hate and fear. Many neo-pagan artists use their worldwide platform for good. Heilung, for example, opens every concert with a crowd call and response:

*"Remember that we all are brothers. All people...descend from the one great being that was always there before people lived and named it before the first seed sprouted."*

It's also worth noting that when Heilung played their October 2021 show at Red Rocks Amphitheater in Morrison, Colorado, they recognized the site was important to the local Native American tribes of the area and they performed a cleansing ceremony to open the concert alongside local Native American leaders. They purposefully inspire these kinds of interactions

with other cultures and hope it will help in stopping the association between their beliefs and hate groups that stole their sacred symbols.

My goal with this album is similar. I hope to be another tally mark on the side of cultural reclamation and anti-hate in this modern battle for freedom and equality. I purposefully used and highlighted traditional percussion instruments from around the world to help showcase how this culture can easily and beautifully coexist with others. While I was initially devastated to learn of this seemingly inseparable association with hate mere months into making this album, it ended up being a motivating factor for me to finish and release it.

## A NOTE ON THROAT SINGING & VOCAL TECHNIQUES

Most who listen to Old Nordic reconstructionist music quickly notice the atypical vocal styles. Historically, we only have one singular account describing Viking Age singing, which is an account by an Islamic traveler from Córdoba, Spain, named Ibrâhîm ibn Ya`qûb al-Tartushi. In the Islamic manuscript, *Monument of Places and History of God's Bondsmen*, we read his encounter with the Danes in modern-day Hedeby, Denmark. Besides many other incredibly interesting descriptions, we read his description of their vocal music. As translated by Noel Braucher:

*“I never heard more hideous songs than the songs of the Sleswicks [Danes in Hedeby]; it is growling that emerges from their throats, similar to the barking of dogs but much more bestial than that.”*

Most interpret this account as an exact description of Tuvan throat singing, as practiced by the Mongols. Specifically, many speculate that it must have been a Tuvan singing technique called *dag kargyraa*. This technique is particularly low and guttural. It produces overtones down to an octave lower than the fundamental pitch that is being sung, in a similar way to harsh “growl” vocals displayed in some modern-day metal vocals. Archaeologically we know that in the 10th century, Vikings would have been in contact with a majority of the Eurasian cultures of the world, including the Mongols via the Silk Road, so this is a plausible and widely accepted

interpretation. Even if that isn't the case, it would be equally easy to imagine them developing this vocal technique independently and cultivating it in their own way.

Throat singing is featured on all 4 songs, while "Múspell" and "Månens Barn" also feature a more powerful low growling, which is a more forceful vocal technique similar to throat singing. This technique can be heard on most death metal and metalcore albums from the past few decades.

## INSTRUMENTATION

### TAGELHARPA

I used a tagelharpa (horsehair harp) on 2 of the 4 songs, while it is most prominently featured in the track, "Geiri." A tagelharpa is a Baltic instrument that has been found dated a few hundred years after the Viking Age. This is assumed to be a drone instrument that was played with a bow. I own a 3 string version, and it is thought to have been tuned to the equivalent (in modern equal temperament tuning) of scale degrees 1 (root), 5, and 1 (an octave higher). When bowed, this produces a drone that is neither major nor minor, which allows the performer plenty of liberty with their performance.

When a finger is placed on a string, the vibrating length of the string is changed and a new note is produced. This works exactly like modern-day string instruments, but without the need of a fretboard. When fingering only one string at a time, you are always left with at least one root and one fifth, when not touching the middle string. This keeps the sound full, despite any melodic variance added by the player.

I combined my tagelharpa performances with a unison hurdy-gurdy and cello section to augment its fundamental pitches and timbre. I found that the tagelharpa produces beautiful overtones, unlike any instrument I've ever heard in person. The grittiness and lack of overtone control give it the same characteristics of a heavily distorted electric guitar. Distortion, by definition, is simply the addition of overtones to an audio sample. I used my tagelharpa compositionally the same way I'd use a distorted guitar. On the track "Geiri," you'll notice once the guitar comes in, just how well it blends with the tagelharpa because of their sonic similarities.

## DRUMS & PERCUSSION

While no archeological evidence of any drums exists from the Viking Age (skins and wood decay over time), it is unthinkable to most anthropologists that Scandinavia would have been the single place on earth where drums didn't exist. Drums are almost always assumed to have existed in cultures that have no evidence of them, simply because of their ease, abundance, and because of the human inclination to create rhythm and pulse.

I used several modern floor toms ranging in size from 14"-18" in diameter. I used bass drums between 20"-22" and mounted toms between 10"-18." Four of my mounted toms have goatskin drum heads that I sized and installed myself for this album. The rest use synthetic mylar heads with towels on top to give them a similar timbre to calfskin. Each drum is used in all 4 songs. A full drum set is featured only in the closing moments of the opening track, "Múspell."

As a lifelong percussionist, the drumming on this album was very important to me and therefore was all performed by me. From a young age, I've studied drum set, orchestral, and marching percussion. In my college studies as a music composition major, I made a point to learn as many traditional percussion instruments as I could. These instruments are from all around the world: Ghana, Guinea, Cuba, Brazil, Morocco, Egypt, Turkey, Ireland, and India. I fell in love with all of these traditions, and I like to use their instruments on as many recordings as I can.

I used them on this album firstly to demonstrate regions of the world that the Vikings had likely explored, and secondly, as stated earlier, I wanted to combat hateful white-supremacist mindsets that the Vikings had a "pure" culture that was uninfluenced from non-white cultures. Due to the latter reasoning, I made sure to feature several of these instruments, and I never buried any of these instruments in the mixing stage of production.

## GUITARS & SYNTHESIZERS

I used a modern 7-string electric guitar in drop tunings and a 5-string electric bass guitar to invoke the brutality present in Norwegian black metal. Like many artists in this genre, I placed

higher importance on the mood my music portrays rather than the pure authenticity of the music. Therefore, synthesized drones are used in every single song.

## SONG-BY-SONG BREAKDOWN

### MÚSPELL

This song is named after Múspellheim, the first world created in the Old Nordic creation myth. I used this as the title for the album as well, seeing as it's my first album associated with this project. The lyrics are taken from Section 4 of the *Gylfaginning* (*The Deception of Gylfi*), titled "Frá Niflheimi ok Múspelli." *Gylfaginning* is a 13th-century manuscript written by the medieval Icelandic historian, Snorri Sturluson. The lyrics I used are as follows:

*"Hvat var upphaf? Eða hversu hófst? Eða hvat var áðr?  
Fyrst var þó sá heimr í suðrhálfu, er Múspell heitir.  
Sá er Surtr nefndr, er þar sitr á landsenda til landvarnar.  
Hann hefir loganda sverð, ok í enda veraldar  
mun hann fara ok herja ok sigra öll goðin  
ok brenna allan heim með eldi"*

Translated, they read:

*"What was the beginning? Or how did it begin? Or what was before it?  
First was the world in the southern region, which was named Múspell.  
He who sits there at the land's-end, to defend the land, is called Surtr;  
he brandishes a flaming sword, and at the end of the world  
he shall go forth, and overcome all the gods,  
and burn all the world with fire."*

The song begins with an ambient drone and hard-panned whispers at different volumes to create a schizophrenic feeling. This is an effect used in the Nordic mythology-based video game series *Hellblade*, whose music (composed by Heilung) is what brought me into the genre in the first place. An alto flute is added to invoke primal feelings from an ancient time. An acoustic guitar in F# minor open tuning is added to brighten the mood. We then hear a male vocal choir begin asking about an ancient time before worlds existed, and different drums and percussion instruments are slowly layered, most notably north Indian tabla drums.

This continues to build until the climax of the opening section, where loose strings are rattled across the fretboard of a cello to sound like an awakening monster. Guitars make a bombastic entrance and the harsh lyrics abruptly answer the questions from the beginning by introducing the first realm, the fire-world of Múspellheim.

The beat continues as before with the omission of all ethereal elements, and the addition of chains and anvils. The fire-giant Surtr, who lives in Múspellheim and who will eventually be the catalyst for the events surrounding Ragnarök, is introduced and explained in a harsh verse, before a return to the opening chant. A flute serenade reminds us of the beginning of the song and leads us into the outro of the song. We hear intense guitar and drum features, which is where the drum set comes in. I overlaid the verse describing Surtr and the chants that introduce Múspellheim on top of each other as the instruments quickly descend into chaos. The drum set begins playing blast beats, which is a type of fast drum beat prevalent in black metal. It plays this along with several other percussion instruments that build in intensity and brutality before the last note is hit. The note is left unstable and detunes before silence takes us into the next song, “Himinjöldyr.”

## HIMINJÓDYR

This song, directly translated, means “Heaven’s rim.” It starts out with Irish rhythm bones playing a fast upbeat rhythm. I used this as a parallel to Heilung’s Maria Franz, who uses a similar rhythmic tapping of human bones in “Krigsgaldr.” A drone enters along with some big drums. I tried to mimic the drone used in “If I Had a Heart,” by Fever Ray, which is the theme song for the History Channel’s “Vikings” TV series. While it isn’t the most historically accurate representation of the Viking Age, I wanted to pay homage to it for sparking an interest in Viking culture inside me, and millions of others. Spoken poetry, a trope I’ve seen in almost every album within this genre, seemed obligatory. During the intro, I’m reciting stanza 5 from the *Völuspá* (*Prophecy of the Seeress*):

*“Sól varp sunnan, sinni mána,  
hendi inni hægri um himinjöldyr;  
sól þat ne vissi hvar hon sali átti,  
máni þat ne vissi hvat hann megins átti,  
stjörnur þat ne vissu hvar þær staði áttu.”*

As translated by Henry Bellows:

*“The sun, the sister of the moon, from the south  
Her right hand cast over heaven's rim;  
No knowledge she had where her home should be,  
The moon knew not what might was his,  
The stars knew not where their stations were.”*

A drum feature follows the verse, where several types of west African and Afro-Brazilian shakers are used. 3 separate Caxixi can be heard playing a 2 over 3 polyrhythm. Accents within that rhythm can be heard from the Djembe Kessings, also known as Ksink Ksink. I used 2 different sized tambourines to imitate an ancient Egyptian Sistrum, in the same way Lou Harrison wrote for Sistrum in compositions such as “Canticle No. 3.”

After the drum feature, the main mood of the song is established by the multiple and simultaneous timbres of a Celtic harp, piano, and clean guitar. The transition between a Dm<sup>9</sup> and a Dm<sup>9#5</sup> chord creates a melancholy feeling with a spark of hope. The lyrics then enter.

The verses from this song are taken from an unnamed poem recited by Icelandic warrior and skald Þórir Jökull Steinfinnsson before he was executed in 1238. It is as follows (bold indicates lines used in the chorus as well):

*“Upp skal á kjöl klífa, köld er sjávar drífa.  
Kostaðu hug að herða, **hér skaltu lífið verða.**  
Skafl beygjattu skalli, þótt skúr á þig falli.  
Ást hafðir þú meyja, **eitt sinn skal hver deyja.**”*

As translated by Einar Kvaran:

*“Climb on the keel, the sea spray is cold.  
Try to keep your courage up, **here you will lose your life.**  
Don't make a [frown], even though the shower rains upon you.  
You had the love of maidens, **each must die at some time.**”*

Also featured in the verses is a Navajo Flute, also referred to as a Courting Flute or a Native Flute. I called in a good friend who has been featured playing Native Flute on several recordings



including for a Navajo Nation cultural documentary. I did this because of the profound feeling I felt witnessing the appreciation Heilung had for Native American culture.

The chorus features a war cry from the same lyrics. As such, I added a call and response between myself and a group imitating warriors on their way to battle. Background vocals can be heard and are performed by long-time friend and ambient black metal artist and Celtic harpist, Sarita Ford, who will be featured on the last 2 songs.

The song repeats itself in *ABCBC* form before coming to an extended meditative outro based on the *A* section intro. We can hear the Irish rhythm bones return, and instruments begin dropping out. As it strips down further and further, we end up with just the bones that take us into the next song, “Geiri.”

## GEIRI

Geiri is an Old Norse term for “spear” seen in *Hávamál* (*Words of Hávi*). *Hávamál* is an anonymous Icelandic manuscript preserved within the Codex Regius. This Eddaic poem, written in Old Nordic ljóðaháttur meter, relays a monologue recited by Hávi (the High-One), who refers to himself as Óðni (Odin) to a presumed person or group of persons that were hospitable to him. This is the main source of Nordic philosophy today and contains wisdom that’s practical, spiritual, and esoteric.

This manuscript is also where we learn a lot about the suffering of Odin, and his eventual gift of immortality and wisdom. In stanzas 138-141 we learn Odin hung himself from a tree for 9 days and 9 nights. After a brief lapse into death, he is awoken with renewed wisdom and knowledge, including the discovery of sacred runes that help give him his mystical powers. Looking at stanzas 138 to 141, we can see a direct A to B cause and effect. As translated to English by Henry Bellows (Bold indicates the stanzas I used in “Geiri”):

*“ I ween that I hung on the windy tree, hung there for nights full nine;  
**With the spear I was wounded, and offered I was, to Othin,** myself to myself,  
on the tree that none may ever know what root beneath it runs...  
Then began I to thrive, and wisdom to get, I grew and well I was;  
Each word led me on to another word, each deed to another deed.”*

Here is the short excerpt of repeated lyrics from the song “Geiri” in the original Old Norse:

*“Geiri undaður  
og gefinn Óðni.”*

The song begins on African Claves that were custom-made for me by a close friend. Large drums are added, followed by percussion instruments. A Nigerian Udu and Egyptian Riq are featured throughout the song, providing subdivisions and rhythmic interest. The listener is intentionally left feeling disoriented as to where the downbeat of the song is throughout the introduction. This is a common technique used in many types of metal music and math rock that I’ve yet to see used in this genre, so I thought it may be an enjoyable result. The entrance of the tagelharpa solidifies the pulse of the music, and the beat is fortified by the addition of even larger bass drums that enforce the rhythm while omitting beat 1 of each measure.

The verse contains no lyrics, simply vowel sounds harmonizing with each other. They are sung by the previously mentioned Sarita Ford and resemble vocal styles and harmonies seen on Heilung’s *Norupo*, which itself was influenced by vocal harmonies seen in Bulgarian vocal music.

The chorus features similar harmonies with underlying throat singing styles we’ve heard in previous songs. After the first chorus, we hear a complication in the rhythm, as the exact rhythm that has been playing since the beginning is doubled in tempo by the higher-pitched drums, while it remains at normal tempo in the lower-pitched drums. This adds intensity and helps the song feel like it has more forward momentum.

The crux of the song comes with the explosive entrance of the electric guitar and bass guitar. The omission of beat 1 and resolution on beat 2 is one of my favorite compositional techniques for all types of music, and instead of a drum fill, I decided to lead that resolution with a guitar harmonic sweep. The section progresses to an incredibly dissonant minor 2nd (E against F) and is held that way for 8 measures, before resolving again, on beat 2. Again, that resolution is led in with a guitar harmonic sweep.

After the guitar feature is over, we are led into a more rhythmically simple section where the verse vocal harmonies and the chorus vocal lyrics are stacked on top of each other. This leads us to the outro, which builds similar to the intro, but the beat has been flipped when referenced to the African clave pattern. This is done, again to disorient the listener. As those instruments fade out, we are led into the final song of the album, “Månens Barn.”

## MÅNENS BARN

Of all the songs on the album, this one is the “odd one out.” I began this song in a songwriting class roughly one week after discovering this genre of music. I knew nothing of the culture or language, nor did I ever anticipate releasing it. It hadn't even occurred to me to make more songs like it for an EP at that point. It was an assignment with a tight due date, and I treated it exactly like that. Sarita Ford is again featured singing in all of the verses, and I'm featured singing harsh vocals throughout.

The lyrics for this one have less history than the rest, but they are equally interesting. Before knowing anything about the intricacies of Scandinavian medieval history, I had just done a couple of minutes researching Heilung and found out they used old texts for their lyrics. That prompted my Google search: “traditional Scandinavian folk lyrics,” or something similar. I came across a Swedish vocalist by the name of Maxida Mäarak who sings pop and hip-hop versions of traditional Sámi folk tunes, from a style known as Joik. Not knowing anything about Sámi culture, and not understanding the term “traditional” doesn't mean “ancient,” I figured that I had what I needed and I got to work. I took a line, or a fragment of a line from several of her songs, and translated them. I took the bits of the phrases I liked, compiled them, and reorganized them into my own. I listened to how she pronounced words and imitated it as close as I could for an American with no Swedish experience.

They turned out like this:

*“Ingenting är för evigt, allting har ett avslut.  
Vindarna vänder, vi lever på lånad tid.  
Tid brinn som en fackla, vi är månens barn.  
**Gå igenom norrskenet.”***

Translated into English:

*“Nothing is forever, everything has an ending.  
The winds are turning, we live on borrowed time.  
Time burns like a torch, we are children of the moon.  
**Walk to the northern lights.”***

Then I took a couple of tropes from Heilung and other Nordic Ambience artists: war horns, which are featured all across the genre, and arrow impacts as heard in Heilung's

“Svarand.” I borrowed a colleague’s baritone guitar to create the dirtiest and darkest guitar tones I could. I recorded a few tinkling metals and chains and added a synthesized drone. The drums used are an Argentinian Bombo Legüero, and an Irish Bodhran recorded 8 times each. Due to the fact that I wrote this song in a songwriting class for pop-music artists, the form is very straightforward: Intro-Verse-Chorus-Verse-Chorus-Bridge-Chorus-Outro.

Despite any sense of history or authenticity being thrown out the window on this one, I included it because I believe it showcases an important step on my personal journey toward becoming a more informed and responsible student of a history and a culture that is still alive today.

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## Amazigh Girl Sydney Holt



### Artist Statement

The Amazigh people (also known as Berber, Imazighen) are the indigenous people of the Maghreb region of North Africa. They occupied what is today Morocco, Algeria, and Libya, as well as the sub-Saharan regions of Mali, Sudan, and Mauritania. The Amazigh have many different languages and dialects which are still spoken today, despite Muslim and French conquest in these regions.

During my time there, I was fortunate enough to experience Amazigh culture for myself. One of the most striking things about their culture that inspired my art was their attention to detail in ornamentation. To the Amazigh people intricate clothing, jewelry, tattoos, and henna art are the norm. Their attention to detail exhibits a beauty that I couldn't believe wasn't more widely celebrated in the Western world. My hope is that more people will learn about indigenous peoples such as the Amazigh and work to preserve the culture and traditions of indigenous people.

## **Minutes**

**Hailee Phillips**

Time can be the most deceptive unit of measurement. It is most frequently miscalculated or misjudged and before you know it you have none left. Days drag by but weeks and years are gone in the blink of an eye. The new unit of measurement that I am inventing or explaining is the Plank Minute.

This unit of measurement is unique because it is only applicable when a person is exercising or doing something physically demanding. Most people know when you are doing a one-minute plank, that minute stretches into eternity. The seconds drag by. You feel as though you have been holding a plank for at least 45 seconds but you look down and it has only been 10. This new unit of measurement is derived from the pain and suffering from athletes or home exercises a like. It is used only in the most serious athletic situations. Some areas in which this may be applicable could be wall-sitting, sprinting, or carrying heavy objects. This is key because otherwise time is normal.

Some equivalents to this measurement are eternity, forever, or neverending. The pain that these three time equivalents cause are perfect for this new unit of measurement. The tortuous nature of such a time period is what makes this measurement so unique. This is why this minute of planking is dreaded by all people. This unit of measurement, though literally fictional, is quiterreal to many who have experienced it which is why measuring time is so deceptive.

## Nauvoo

### Benjamin Oakes

There's a picture hanging in the Stake Center in Houston, the one by the mission office. It's a picture of Joseph Smith looking back at Nauvoo, bustling, quiet, still. Looking back at the temple. His last look. His last look before marching as a lamb before the slaughter into eternity. It wasn't the most beautiful painting I had ever seen, but it was filled with so much passion, so much stillness, so much emotion that I felt as though the painter had really been there. Watching a man say goodbye.

His face was stoic, but there was a yearning there. Had he said enough? There was so much that had been left undone, unheard, unfortunate. Could they survive the winter? And that temple...

That temple. Still unfinished, but so, so beautiful. There was so much he wanted to show them. A whole world that they were only just beginning to understand.

From his face you could tell that he knew it would be his last time with these friends; these friends that he had led across the country, across the world, over spiritual deserts and into toil and trouble and from frying pan to fire. Friends who had left everything to follow him and make this place so perfect.

The story isn't new, and it wasn't new to me, but on that troubled day, on that last day before I left Houston to go back home, it sunk into my heart deeper than before. I felt so understood,



centuries apart, as I saw a man who had changed the world stand in a way that I was standing, cry in a way that I was crying, and be willing to face the future, no matter how dark and final it seemed.

Today was the end of my mission.

The Stake Center hummed with sorrow and joy. Hours passed fitfully as I waited, my heart breaking, with a handful of others who felt the same kind of tragedy sinking into their souls. I couldn't eat. I could barely choke out my horror at saying goodbye. Every hope for the future, even the ones that caught me by the throat and showed me something I hadn't even imagined before, paled before the might of a goodbye.

A last look over the shoulder. A last look at a temple, a sky full of cotton clouds like I had never seen, a moon brighter than I had dreamed, surrounded by people who stood by me until this part of my life ended.

When I sat in that airplane, it was all I could do to keep from falling apart. My friends had gone to the front of the plane, but my ticket placed me in the back. I looked out the window with longing. Was there any way it was a dream? That I'd wake up tomorrow and be me again, out teaching, out at 6:30, out with a friend in a new area, sharing something, laughing, hooking Persona 5 music up to my beautiful white RAV4? Was there any way I could keep from saying goodbye?

A man sat down next to me. He was coming to Utah too, training to be a pilot. In my heart I knew that I had to make my last act something meaningful. I had to tell him. He had to know. He had to see what I had seen and feel what I had felt and I opened my mouth and we just talked. And we talked, and he opened up, and I saw him. And I told it all, and when I told what Joseph had seen at the beginning, when I told him with all of my heartfelt conviction that it was all true, that there was a God and a book and a man who had sacrificed his very life, looking on with a glance at his friends, saying goodbye to everything he had ever known, ever felt, and leaping into eternity because he loved them, I realized that I had lived a part of that story. I had given everything I had for what I knew. It had irrevocably changed me. And with one last assignment, one last missionary breath, I told the story that pierced my heart a thousand times over in two, beautiful years.

He took the book. And then it was all over.

By the end of the day, my Nauvoo was gone. My badge was gone. All I had was memories. But I knew from the bottom of my soul that I had done everything I could. That my last glance, my last look at my Nauvoo was one of love. As I took off that badge, as I said goodbye to everything I knew, I got the quiet assurance of a well done thou good and faithful. Just like Joseph. And for today, and forever, it's enough to say goodbye.

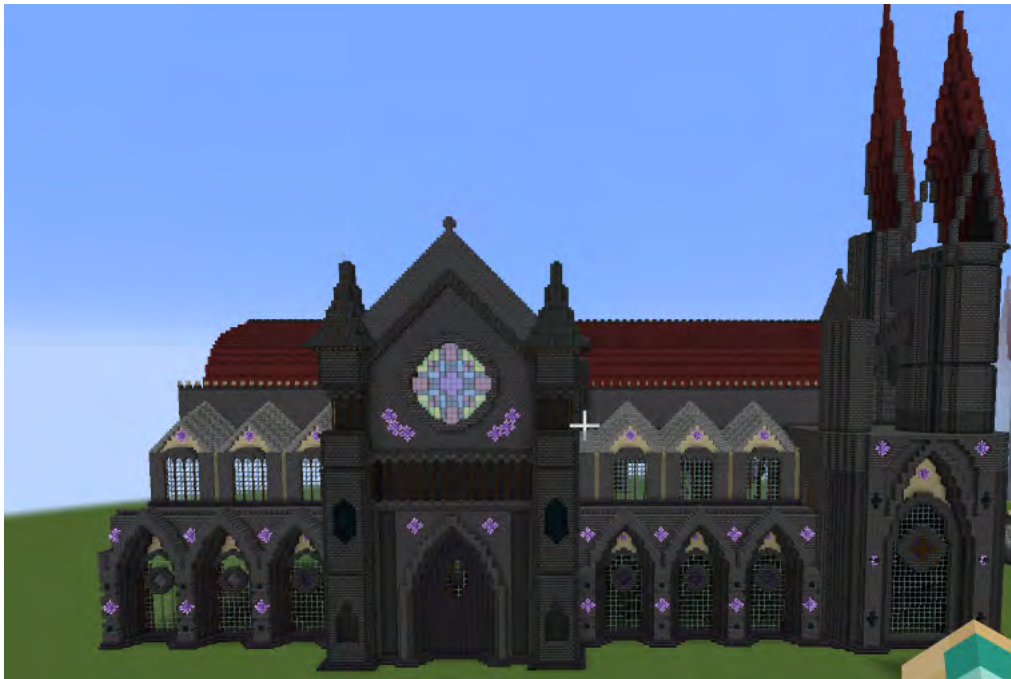
# Gothic Minecraft Cathedral

Cassandra Beddes



## Artist Statement

I started building this cathedral right after spring 2022 when I was crashing from my first year of college and a week of finals. I found that Minecraft was a good way to deal with the stress of college and loneliness after my family moved to Washington. It originally started as a project to learn how to make a Gothic arch. I had circles and triangles down well by that point and of course, squares weren't much of a problem, so I set my sights on something bigger. A week of food and Minecraft later, I decided I wanted to make something I could be proud of, something I could build that didn't take up physical space, so I decided to build a cathedral. This cathedral has been my way of coping with the stress of college and helped me in maintaining my relationship with my brother after my family moved away.



## The Wants of Starry Night

CharLee Lisonbee



*Prompt: T. Mitchell entitled his 2005 book What Do Pictures Want? Briefly but richly describe a picture (a painting, drawing, etching, graffiti, photography, print, etc. would suffice), and then explore what it wants. You must include a high-quality image at the beginning of your essay.*

Starry Night is by far one of the most well-known paintings to ever be created. Vincent Van Gogh thought of the piece as a failure when he completed it in 1889. That hasn't stopped it from capturing the imaginations of not just thousands, but millions of people across the globe, becoming an icon.

This painting to me showcases swirling stars dancing in a dark-blue ocean sky with waves of clouds splashing around the moon and stars. This dance in Van Gogh's sky is a lullaby to a humble town on the ground—soothing it to sleep. A calm shadow engulfs the town like a soft blanket. While the view is magnificent, it is slightly covered up by a tree covered in darkness like The black smoke of the fire. However, through the darkness, the night sky brings glimmers of light that brighten the shadows of the scene.

This painting wants us to see light in the darkness. Like in our lives, when darkness seems to pull us down, we can look to the peace, beauty, and brilliance of the faithful lights. While dim and swirling, they are there to quietly whisper comfort. Most of the time, we human beings tend to see the negatives of our life. It's very easy to see the dark, view the lows, and be blinded by our personal obstacles. Seeing the light in our lives can take time, it may be hard, but once we find that light it brightens up everything. The smallest light will light up the darkest room. To keep that light in view takes effort and constant practice. If we falter, we may lose sight of it, and the darkness will engulf us.

The question for us now is: will we focus on the lights or the darkness of our own Starry Night? Will we make our lives confused or an amazing midnight masterpiece.

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# Culmination

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Digital Design Portfolio

Event Portfolio

Epigenetics: An Increasingly Important Field of Genetics

**Andrya White**

Student ID: 10898955



## Salsa: Selling Rythm to the World

I designed an editorial article featuring a title and secondary spread. Salsa dance is one of my passions, and I chose to highlight the artform in my piece.

**Andrya White**

ART 1410 Typography I

Spring 2021

Editorial Design

Jonathan Bybee







# Salsa

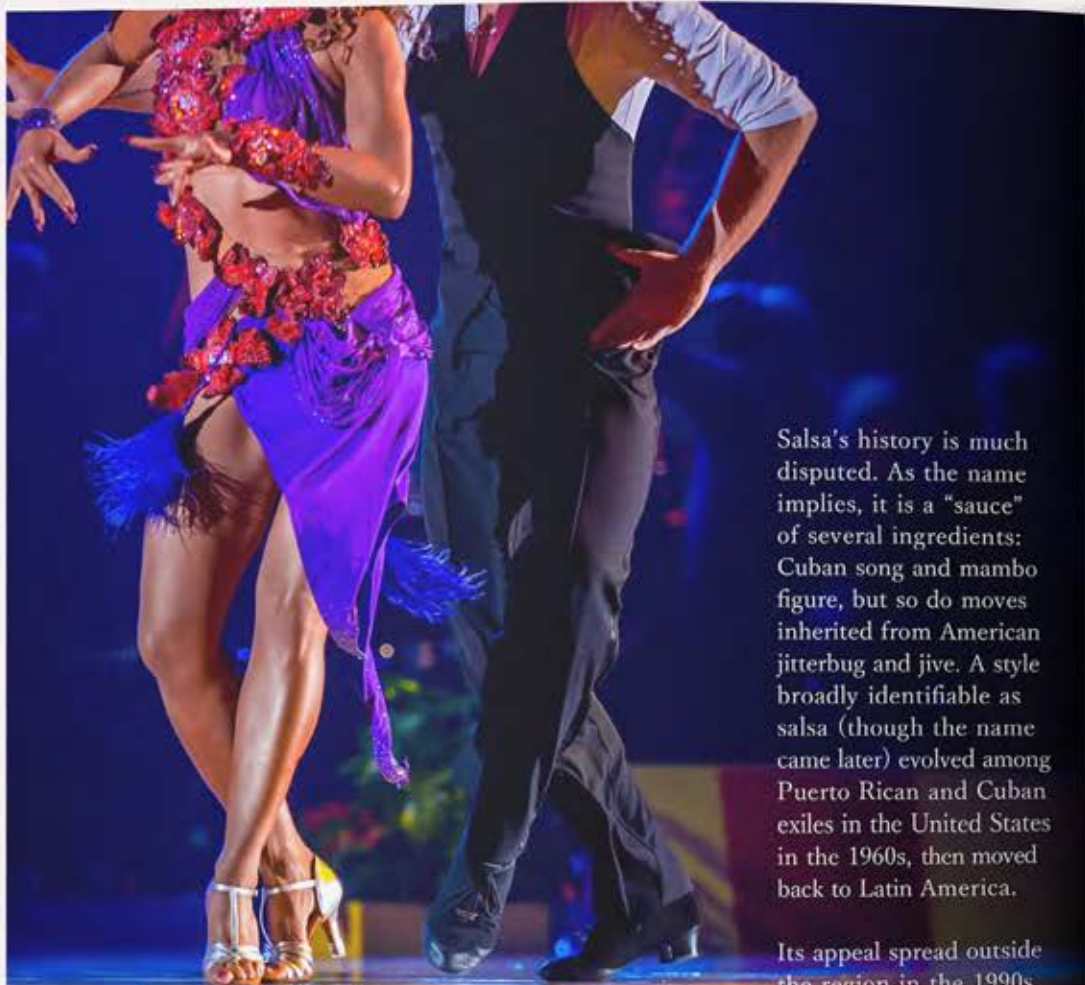
Selling Rythm to the World

When asked to mention exports to Europe or the United States from Latin America and the Caribbean, many people might mention coffee, bananas or, less happily, cocaine. Now add to that list a hugely successful cultural export: salsa has become the biggest

international dance craze since the advent of rock-n-roll in the 1950s, and dwarfs even the popularity of tango during the 1920s. It has spawned a new niche for the tourist industry, as stiff-hipped northerners fly south to learn to loosen up.

Salsa has also helped to fuel a revival of interest in tango. But whilst tango, with its slow, strenuous movements and melancholy music, remains a





Salsa's history is much disputed. As the name implies, it is a "sauce" of several ingredients: Cuban song and mambo figure, but so do moves inherited from American jitterbug and jive. A style broadly identifiable as salsa (though the name came later) evolved among Puerto Rican and Cuban exiles in the United States in the 1960s, then moved back to Latin America.

Its appeal spread outside the region in the 1990s, for reasons that are not hard to divine. A fast, intimate couple dance, it allows much contact between partners, generating sexual frisson. Salsa music is intricately textured, offering rich melodies and virtuoso musicianship at a time when its main European consumers, the over-30s, see mainstream pop

minority interest, salsa's worldwide appeal shows no sign of weakening. Almost every city in now has a cluster of clubs offering classes at all levels, with Britain, Germany and Scandinavia especially well-served. Salsa is also a passion in Japan, and is taking hold in India and China.

**"Competing with the pros gives me a rush of adrenaline, but spinning with a novice at social events still makes me lose myself in the dance. Salsa in every form at any level is movement with total freedom of expression."**

-Adam G. Sevani

music as bland. Cuba, with its hunger for tourist dollars, has been quick to see salsa's earning potential. "Lady Salsa", a musical featuring spectacular dance routines dramatizing a government-sanctioned potted history of Cuba, has toured the world since 2000. British, European and Japanese tour operators now offer salsa holidays in Havana, including two hours of dance tuition daily with professional dancers and nightly visits to clubs. It is also easy to arrange private lessons in a cramped apartment; though technically illegal, these will earn the instructor a month's white-collar salary in two or three hours.

Colombia and Venezuela share an elegantly restrained style, with much back-stepping, smaller hand-movements and little

soon as they can walk. On weekends the clubs hold contests where dancers as young as six don glittering tuxedos, or high heels and lippgloss, to compete in frenetic dance routines.

The Dominican Republic is an anomaly. It has produced several top bands but salsa is barely danced except by tourists. The locals prefer merengue, at car washes equipped with bars. At weekends the forecourt is filled with tables and a live band. Salsa may come, but for now if you want to spend Saturday night at the car wash you'll need to dance merengue. ♡





## Comb

This project involved modifying the letterforms in a word to enhance its meaning without adding any other design elements. I chose to create the shape of a comb out of the letter 'm.'

The typeface I used is called SF New Republic



## Andrya White

ART 1410 Typography I

Spring 2021

Expressive Type

Jonathan Bybee



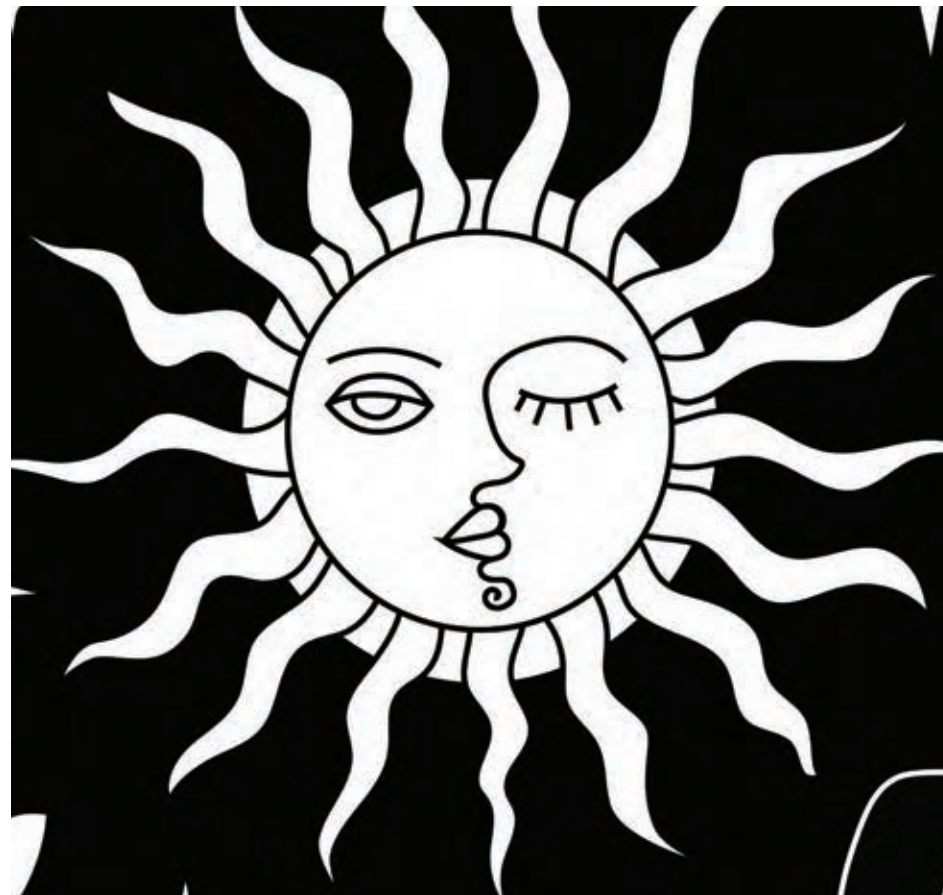




### Expand Your Perspective

This project involved creating a poster design that represented myself as a person. I chose to do a black and white illustration depicting myself surrounded by whimsical objects. I strive to live with a creative mind that is always open to the magic within everything around me. This was the inspiration and goal behind the composition of this piece.

**The design was also chosen as the cover art for the Fall 2022 edition of *Sophia*; UVU's undergraduate philosophy journal.**



**Andrya White**

ART 1420 Graphic Design I

Fall 2021

Me Poster

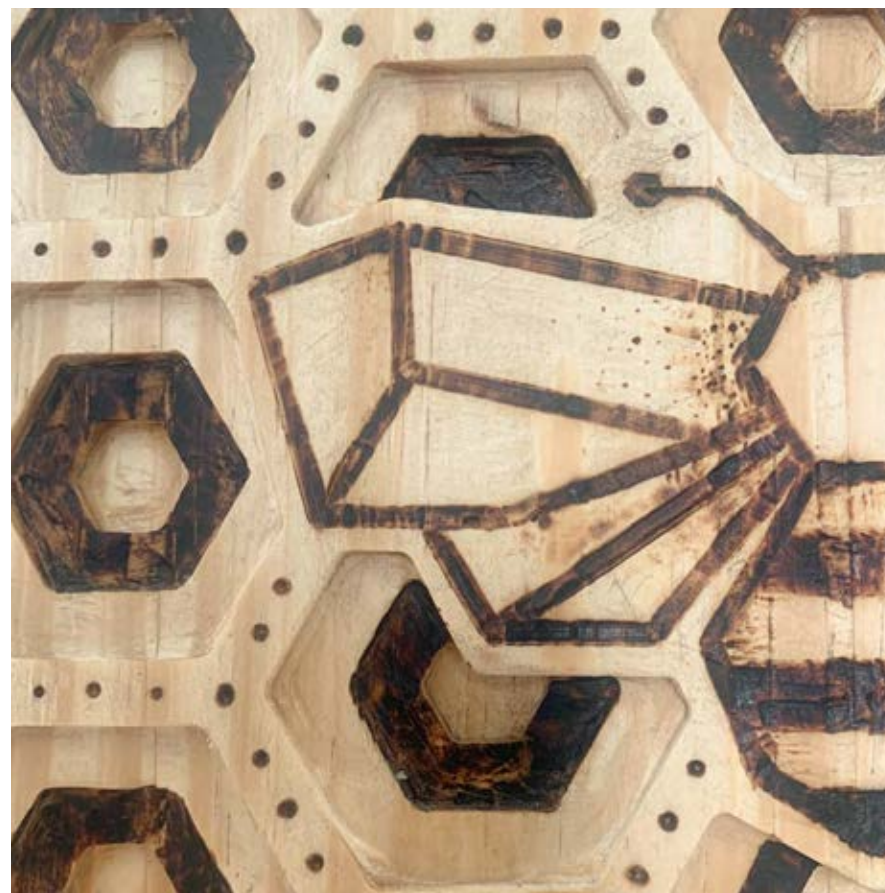
Steve Fisher





### The Bee Board

I created this cutting board while on exchange at a school in Miami. The only requirements for the project were to make a piece of art out of a 2x4 wood plank. I made the base of the board by hand, and created the honeycomb design digitally. This project involved using SVG files and applying 3D digital designs to physical material. I engraved the cutting board using a wood router, then burned the surface of the wood by hand using a soldering iron.



### Andrya White

ART 1130 3D Design

Fall 2021

Wood Project

Angel Marin



## Velour Battle of the Bands

This series of posters was created to highlight Velour's biannual battle of the bands. Velour is a music venue in Provo, and I reached out to the owner of the space for collaboration on this project. Velour has a reputation for its eclectic interior and antique-shop atmosphere. These photos, shot in the venue itself, consist of some of the many items that inhabit the space. The backgrounds of each image feature the wood floors of the audience space, the rugs that lie on the stage, and the red velvet curtains that hang on the walls. I really wanted these posters to feel true to the venue's personality. The photos were staged by me, and shot with the help of a friend who owned the equipment. All editing and typography was done by me.

**This poster series won a GDUSA American Graphic Design Award, and was published in the December 2022 issue of the GDUSA magazine.**

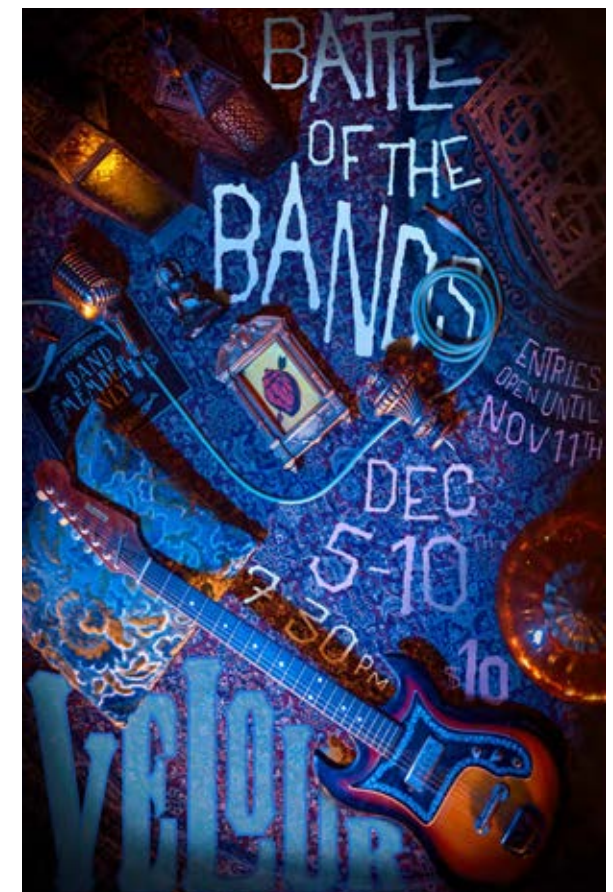
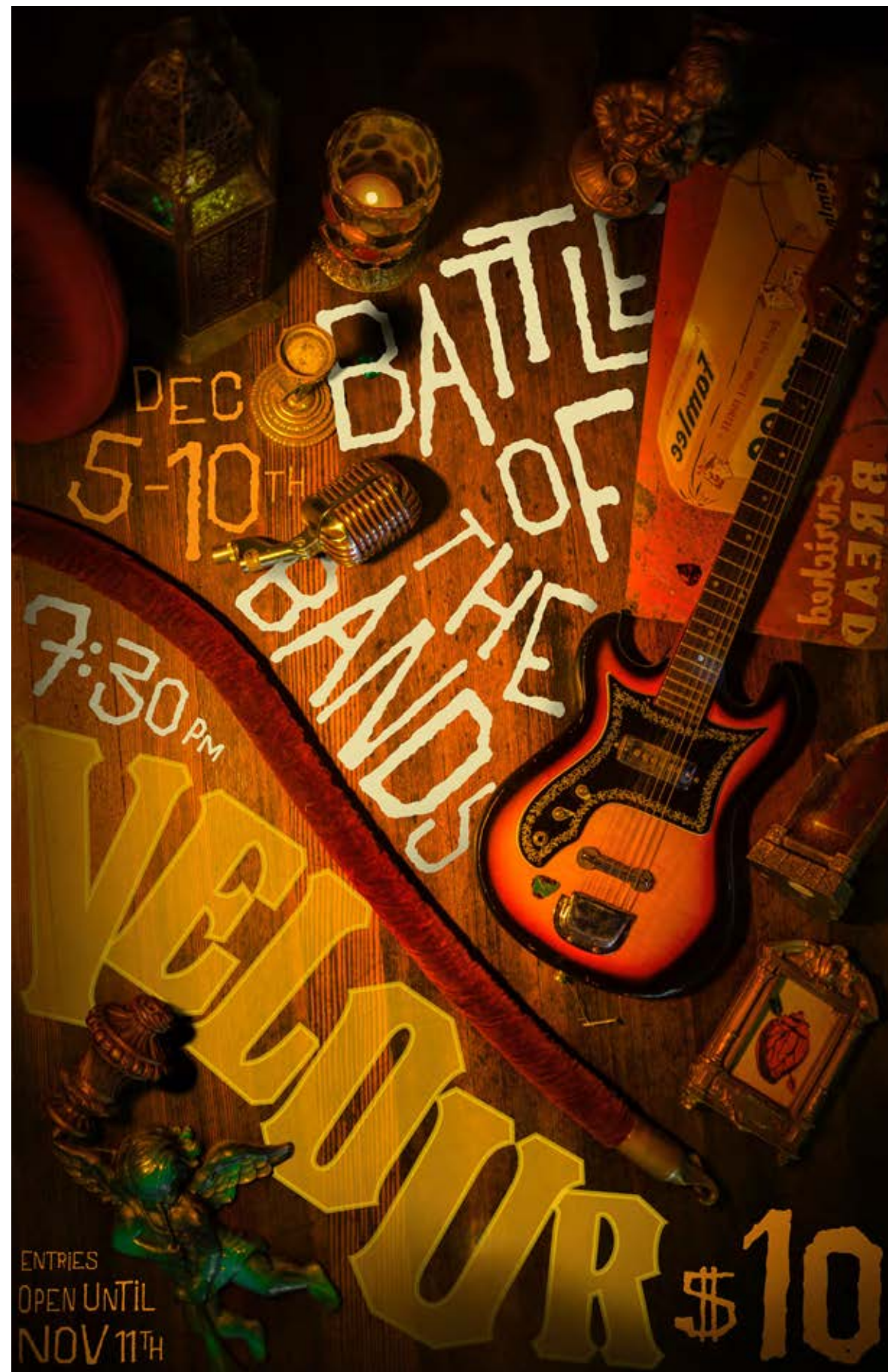
## Andrya White

ART 2400 Production Design

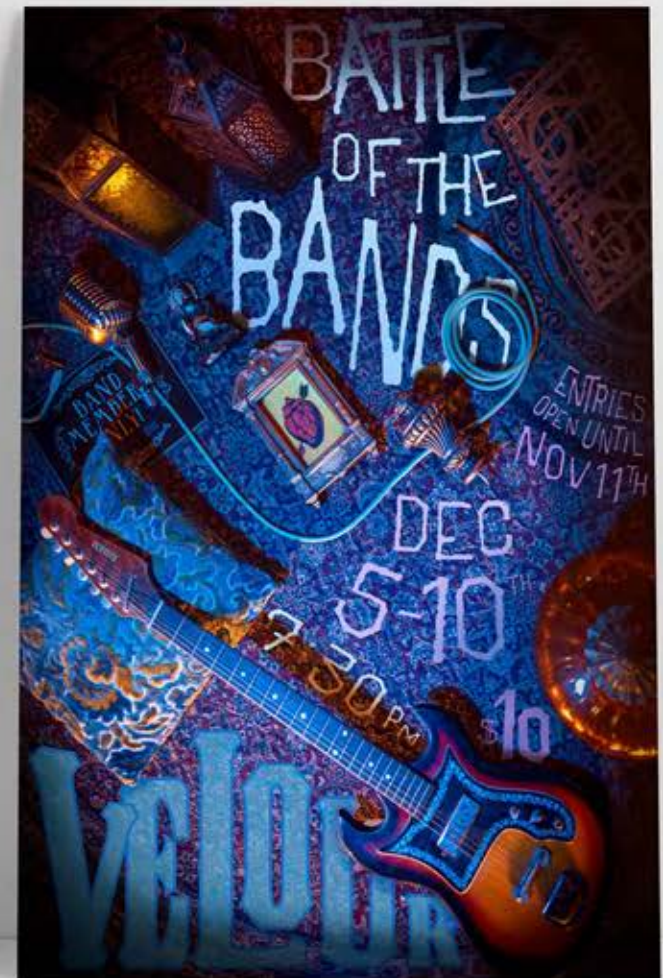
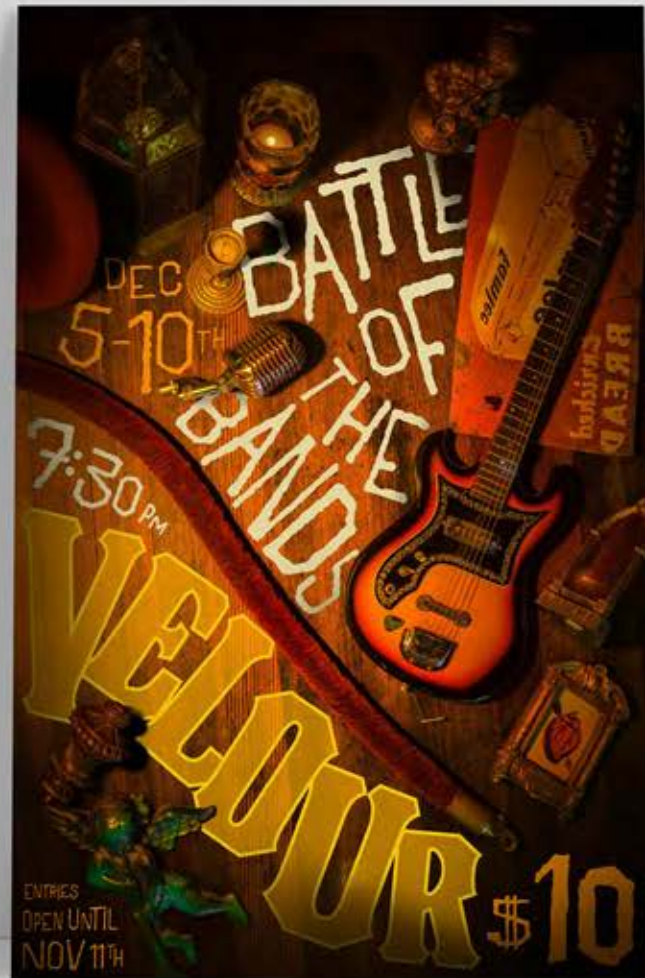
Fall 2022

Event Posters

Gareth Fry



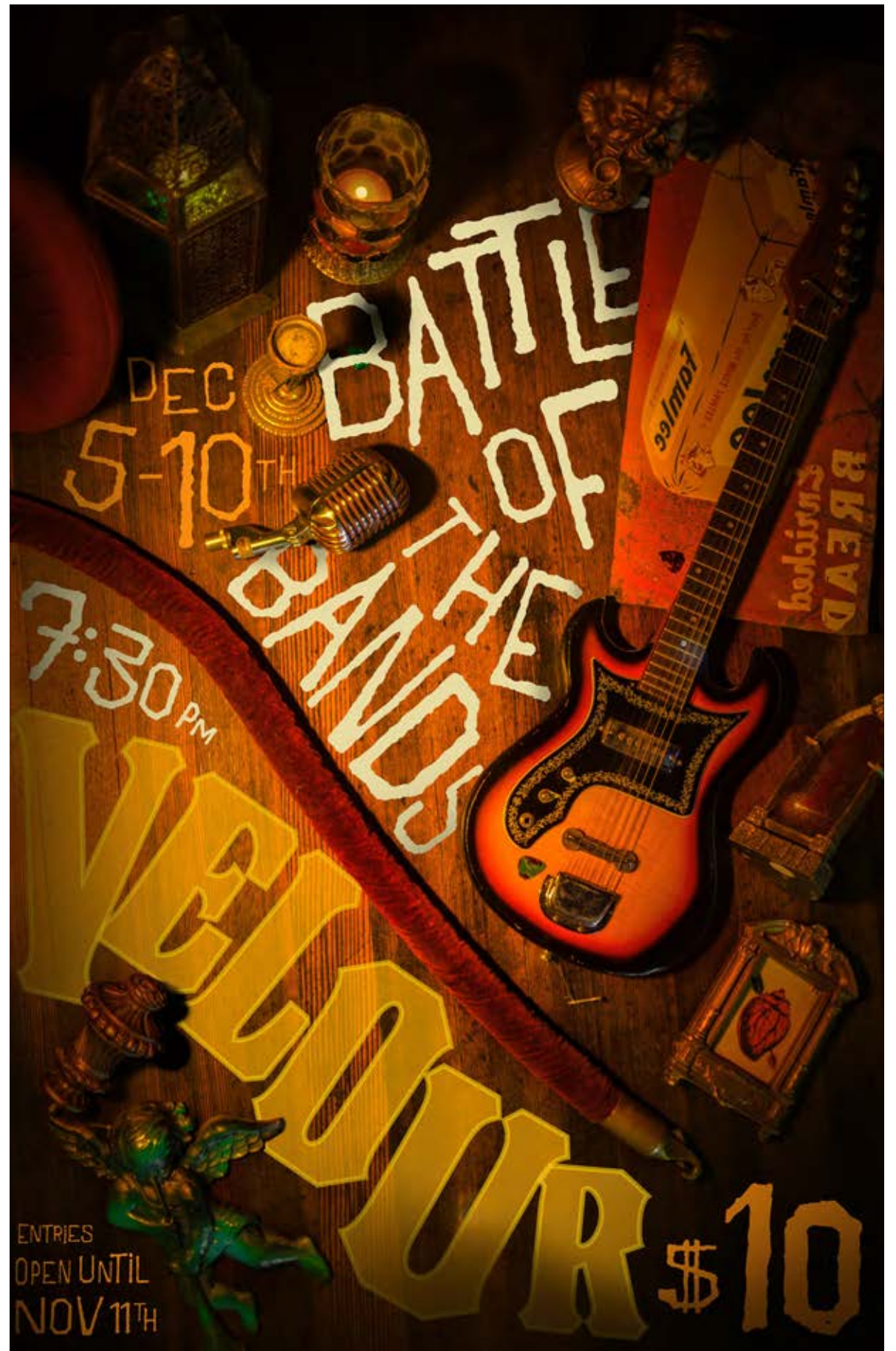




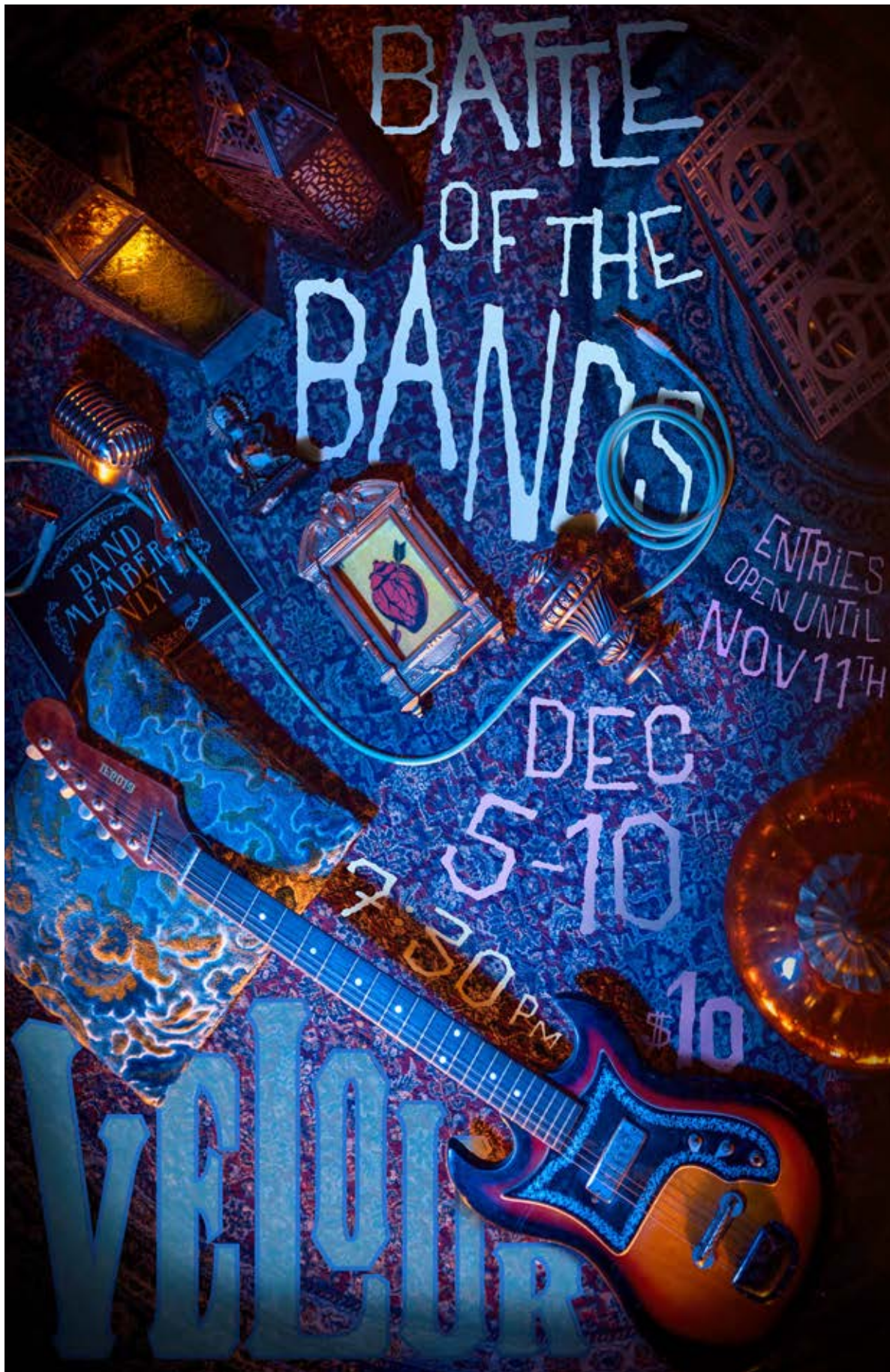














**VELOUR**  
DEC 5-10<sup>TH</sup> \$10  
7:30 PM  
BATTLE OF THE BANDS  
ENTRIES OPEN UNTIL NOV 11<sup>TH</sup>  
BURIED CABLES  
TELEPHONE

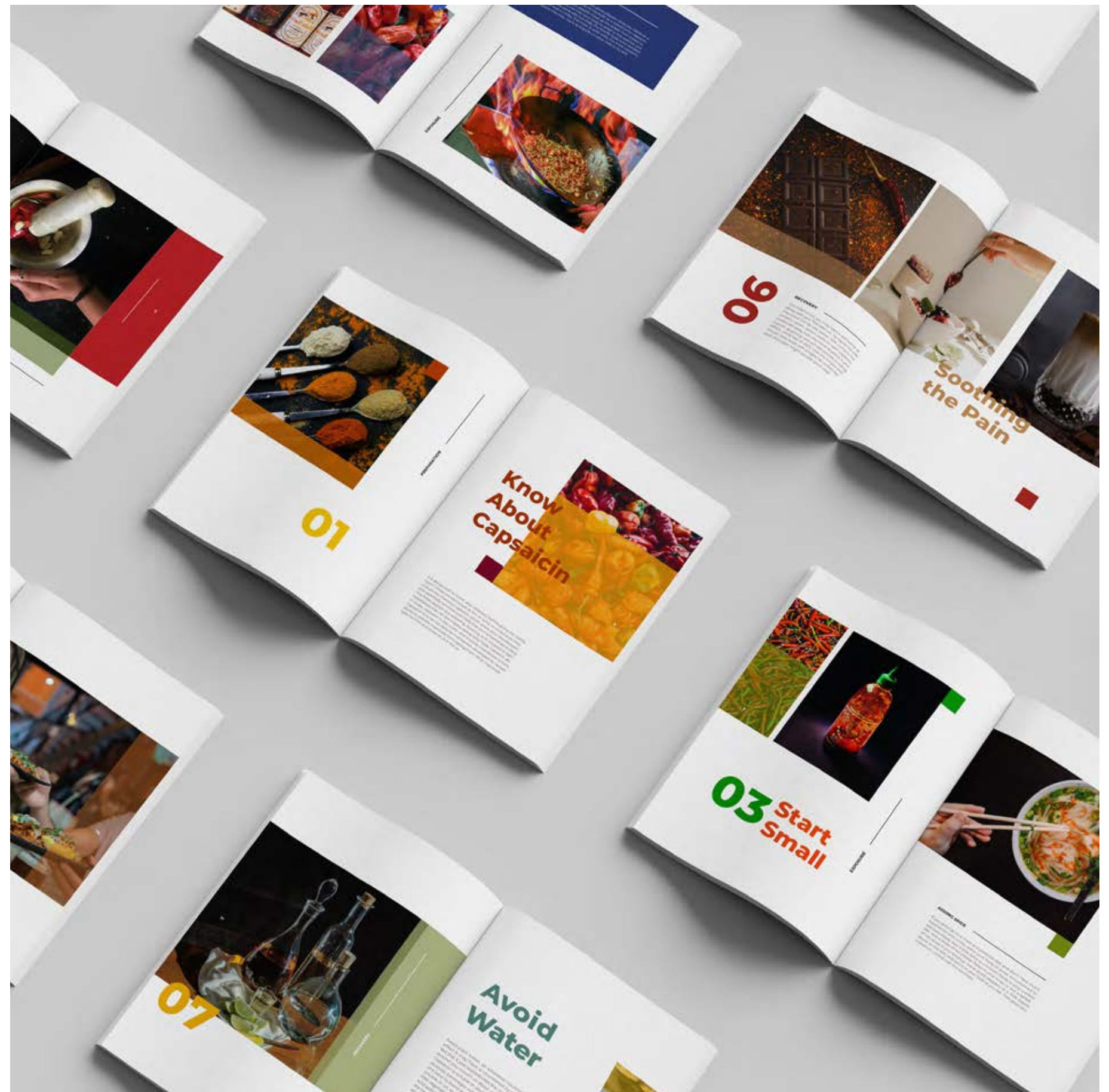
DEC 5-10<sup>TH</sup> \$10  
7:30 PM  
BATTLE OF THE BANDS  
VELOUR  
ENTRIES OPEN UNTIL NOV 11<sup>TH</sup>

BATTLE OF THE BANDS  
ENTRIES OPEN UNTIL NOV 11<sup>TH</sup>  
DEC 5-10 \$10  
7:30 PM  
VELOUR



## Embrace the Pain

This 20 page booklet explains the necessary steps to enjoying spicy food. I used a minimalist layout, and used repeating shapes to tie each spread together. The color palette of each spread was inspired by the images featured.



## Andrya White

ART 2400 Production Design

Fall 2022

Process Booklet

Gareth Fry





## Planted Earth

This project consisted of creating several new black and white logos for Planted Earth, an existing shop in Orem that sells plants and antiques. I have included the wordmark and lettermark that I created for the shop. The current logo features typography in the Art Nouveau style, which inspired the execution of these two logos.



planted  
EARTH

## Andrya White

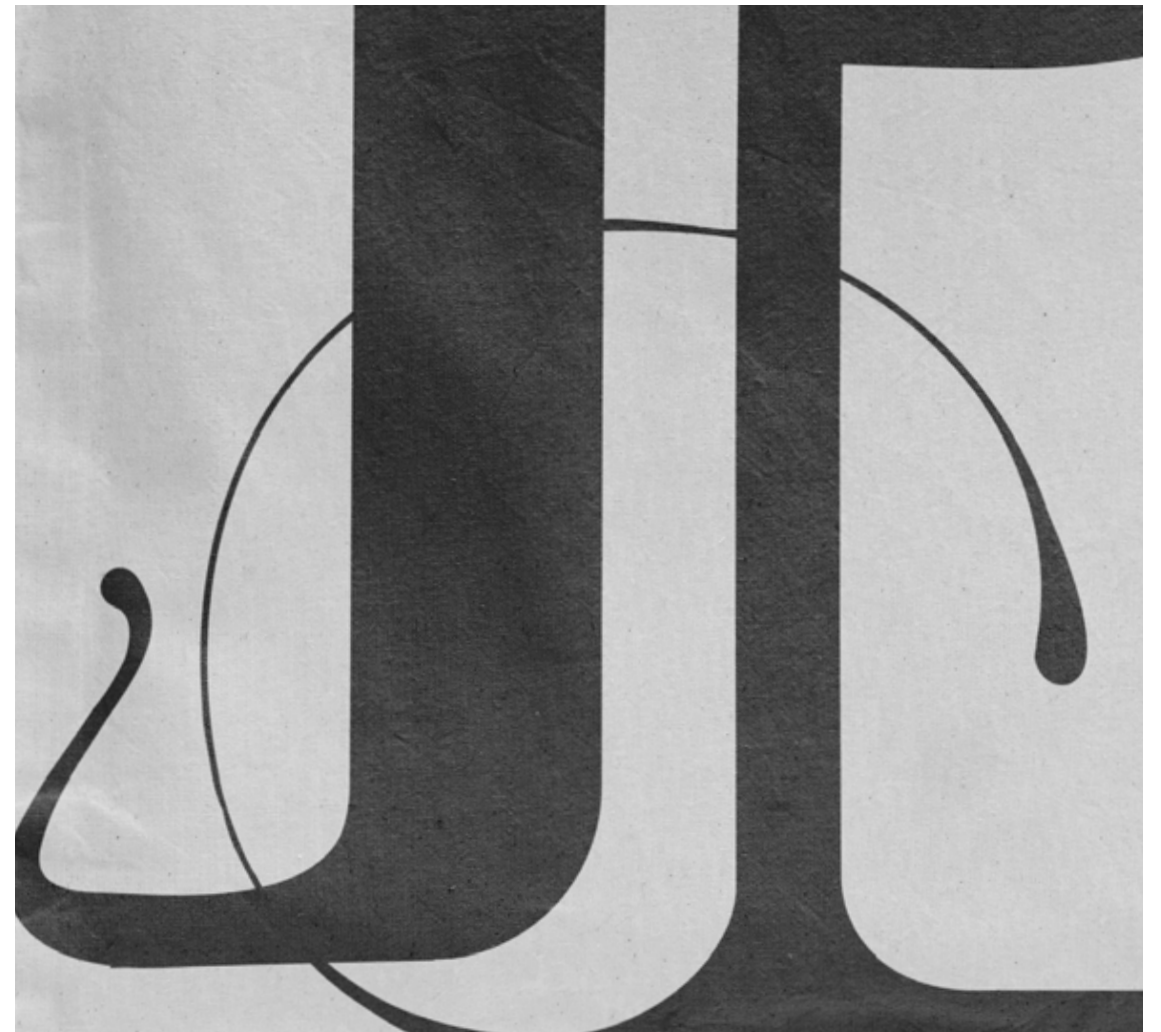
ART 2430 Branding I

Fall 2022

Rebrand

Justin Woods





**Project Title**

Madelyn's is a hypothetical shop that sells home decor and houseplants.

<https://vimeo.com/804934037>



**Andrya White**

ART 2440 Motion Graphics I

Fall 2022

Animated Logo

Adam Rallison





## **Viñas del Mar - Logo**

Viñas del Mar is an upscale Mexican restaurant located on the coast of Tulum, Mexico. The ambiance of the restaurant aims to provide the best experience and food to the customer. With an emphasis on seafood and authentic Mexican flavors, Viñas del Mar stands on par with Michelin rated restaurants around the world.



## **Andrya White**

ART 2430 Branding I

Fall 2022

Restaurant Brand

Justin Woods





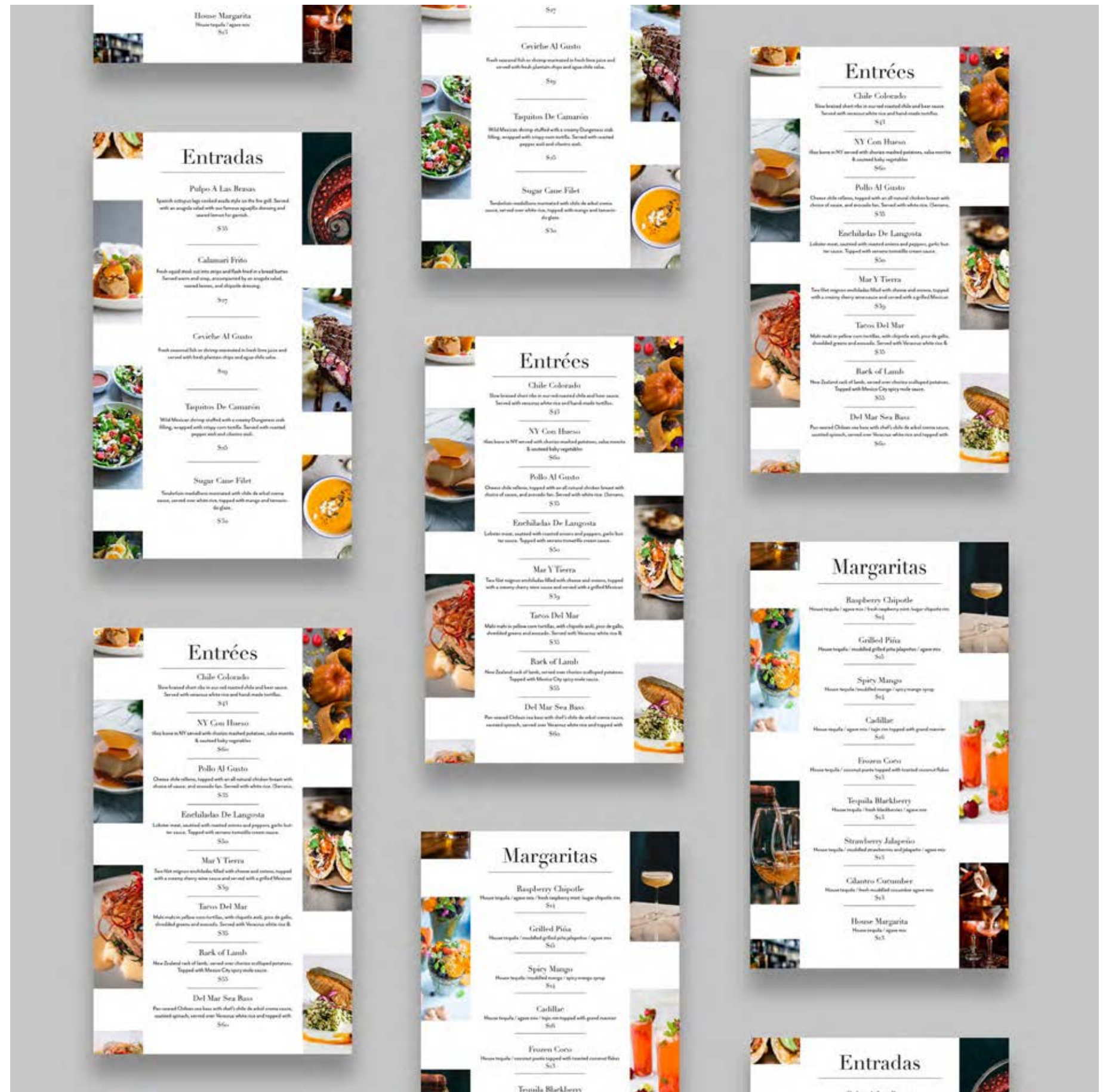






**Viñas del Mar - Menu**

The menu features a gold embossed leather cover, and three inner pages consisting of appetizers, entrees, and signature margaritas.



**Andrya White**

ART 2430 Branding I

Fall 2022

Restaurant Brand

Justin Woods







**Viñas del Mar - Private Label**

The restaurant also produces its own tequila and mezcal, available for purchase in house or online.



**Andrya White**

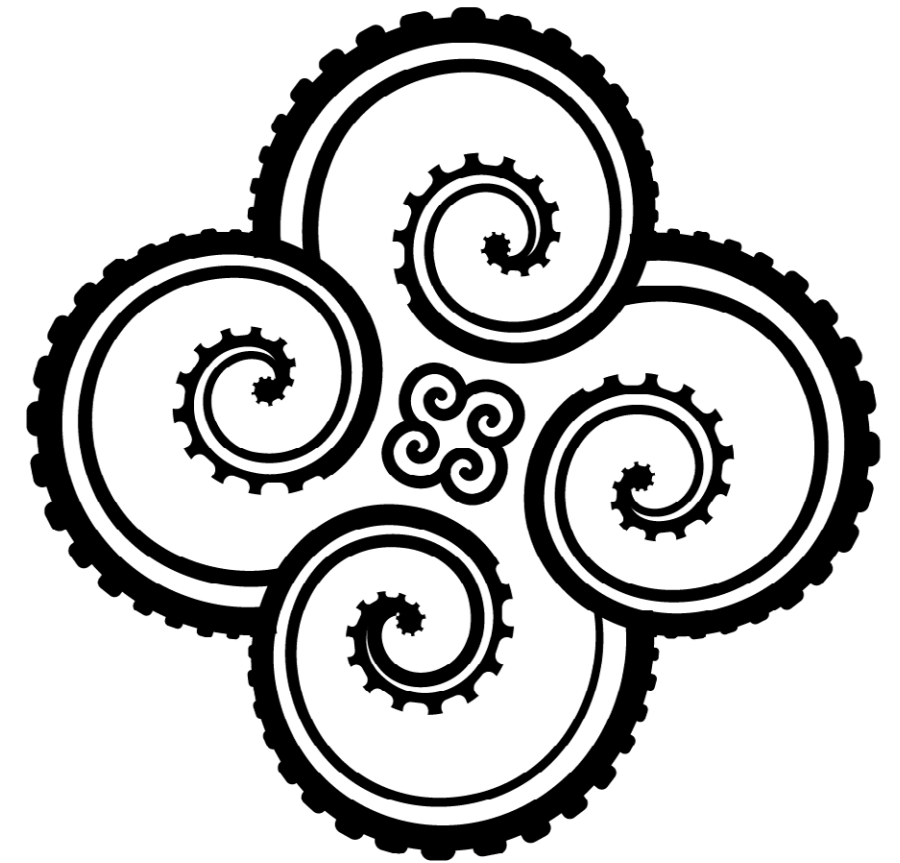
ART 2430 Branding I

Fall 2022

Restaurant Brand

Justin Woods







## Viñas del Mar Website

This is the website for my restaurant and brand, Viñas del Mar. On this site one could buy the private label spirits, browse the menu, find contact information, and more.



## Andrya White

ART 2400 Production Design

Fall 2022

Web Page

Gareth Fry



## Spirits

Expertly created by our own team, our house Mezcal and Tequila are sure to make a statement in any liquor collection. Created in collaboration with local artisans, the flavors of Mexico shine through in this blend of distilled agave spirits. Whether mixed into margaritas, sipped on the rocks, or taken as shots with a wedge of fresh lime, these spirits are sure to create an indulgent and luxurious experience.

## Our Story

All of our dishes are inspired by the authentic flavors of the Mexican coast. Our head chef was born and raised in our home city of Tulum, and brings his passion in the kitchen working in a specialty specializing in fish dishes.

With more than 12 years of experience we are proud to say that we have served thousands of guests and won numerous awards. Now conveniently reserved for a Michelin Review, we hope to attract guests from all over the world to indulge in the flavors of the Mexican coast.

## Menu

**Pulpo A La Brasa**  
Spanish octopus legs cooked a la brasa style on the fire grill. Served with an arugula salad with our famous agave dressing and served lemon for garnish.  
\$35

**Enchiladas de Langosta**  
Two enchiladas stuffed with cheese, white sauce, and fresh Mexican lobster meat harvested only from the sea. Smothered in creamy tomato sauce and served with rice.  
\$30

**Calamar Frito**  
Fresh squid steak cut into strips and flash fried in a bread batter. Served warm and crisp, accompanied by an arugula salad, served lemon, and agave dressing.  
\$27

[See More](#)

### Find Us

### Make a Reservation

Guests must be 21 years of age or older to make a reservation.

Reservations are subject to availability.

[Reserve](#)



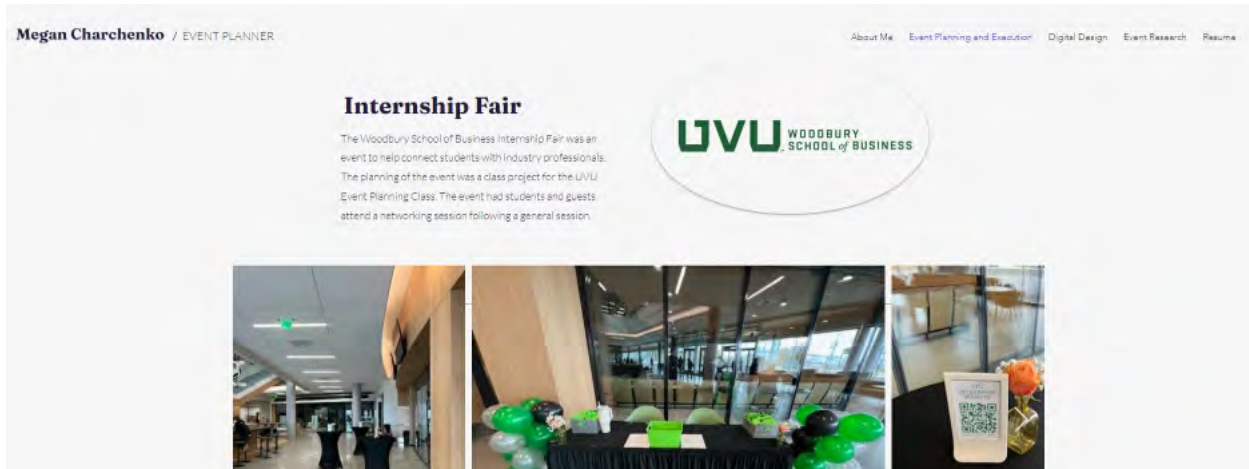
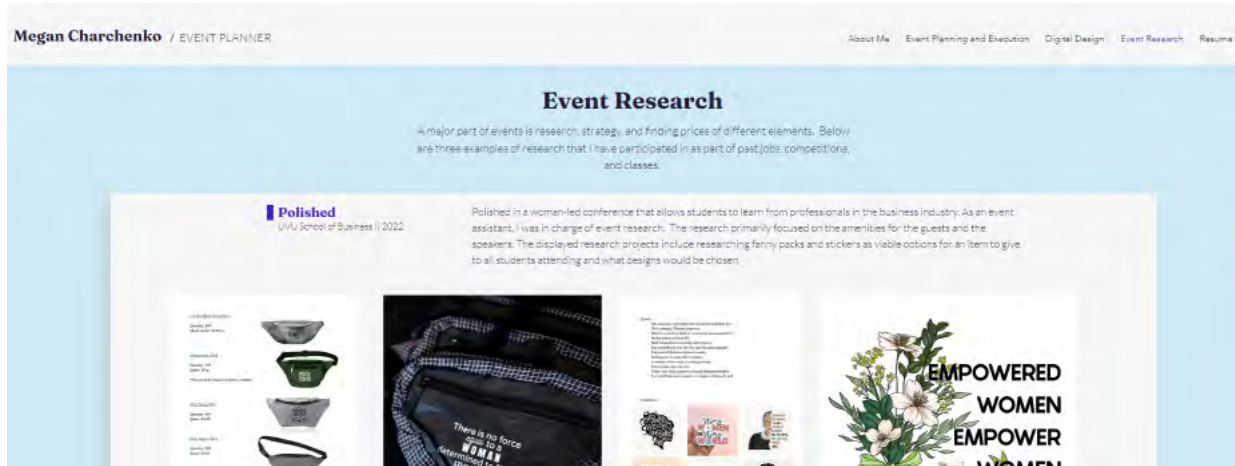
(646) 156-8453





# Online Event Portfolio

## Megan Charchenko



### Artist Statement

I created the website as a portfolio showcasing my experience in events. The website highlights three main skills I was able to develop as a student in the event management program: event execution, digital design, and event research. On the website, I showcase a few events and projects that I have participated in in recent years as examples of my growth and skill. <https://10843281.wixsite.com/megan-charchenko>



## What is Epigenetics?

Epigenetics is how **the environment influences the expression of your DNA**. It explores how the expression of your DNA can be affected by certain **biological molecules or chemicals** without changing the nucleotide sequence. It is being used to study Cancer, Neurological illnesses, and cell specialization.

**Did you know?** An individual's epigenome is changed by stress, trauma, diet, lifestyle and experiences. These changes are reversible.

## Which Biological molecules and chemicals are important in DNA Methylation ?

- 1) RNA and DNA** – DNA is the molecule that is modified with structural changes that make the DNA accessible. RNA can also contribute genes by triggering certain pathways in the cell.
- 2) Histone and Nucleosomes** – Histones are proteins that combine in groups of 8 to form nucleosomes that wrap around DNA.
- 3) Methyl Groups, Acetyl groups, Phosphor groups, and Ubiquitin groups.** These are different chemicals that attach to DNA or histone tails to change the expression of genes.

## How can your epigenome be modified?

- 1) DNA methylation** – usually associated with gene repression
- 2) Histone modification** – post-translational modifications to the histone tails (as seen in Fig. 1) or the histone proteins, can either repress or activate genes.
- 3) Chromatin interactions** – can activate or repress genes that are on another chromatin.
- 4) RNA interaction** – RNA can interact with DNA to cause it to not be expressed, degraded or cause different post-translational modification on DNA or histones.

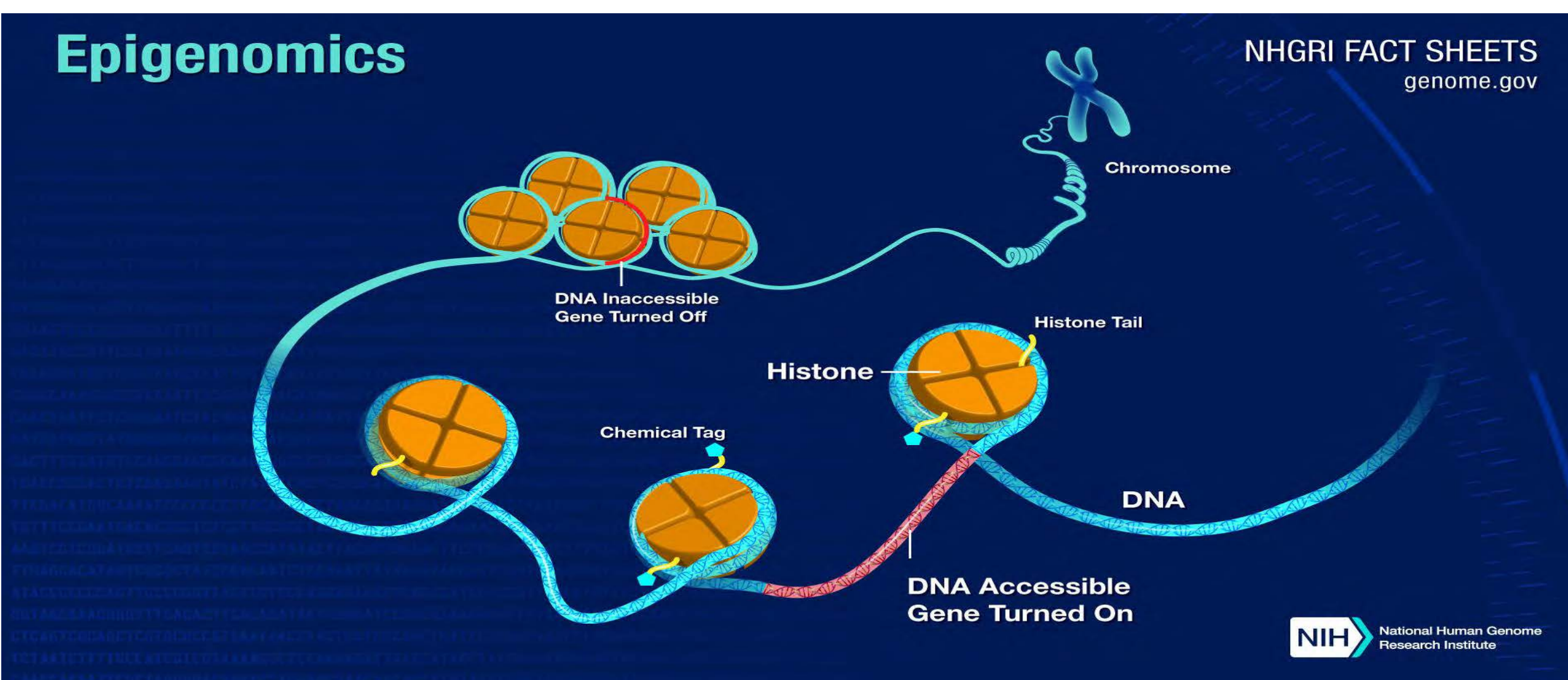


Figure 1 above sourced from *Epigenomics Fact Sheet*. (2016). Genome.gov. <https://www.genome.gov/about-genomics/fact-sheets/Epigenomics-Fact-Sheet>

## What have we learned from epigenetics?

- ❖ There are studies that have shown that there is a link between early-life environment and later development of **cardiovascular disease** (Sun et al.,2013).
- ❖ Low blood sugar up to four hours after eating a meal has been found to cause permanent changes in histone modification and modify gene expression that is important in **type 2 diabetes** (Sun et al. 2013).
- ❖ DNA methylation of the regulatory elements for the genes RELIN and GAD1 has been associated with **schizophrenia** in adult patients (Roth et al. 2009).

## How do we collect epigenomic data?

- 1) Extraction and purification of DNA
- 2) Tagged with identifiers as seen in Fig. 2
- 3) Sequenced with highly sensitive tools
- 4) Output in a data format

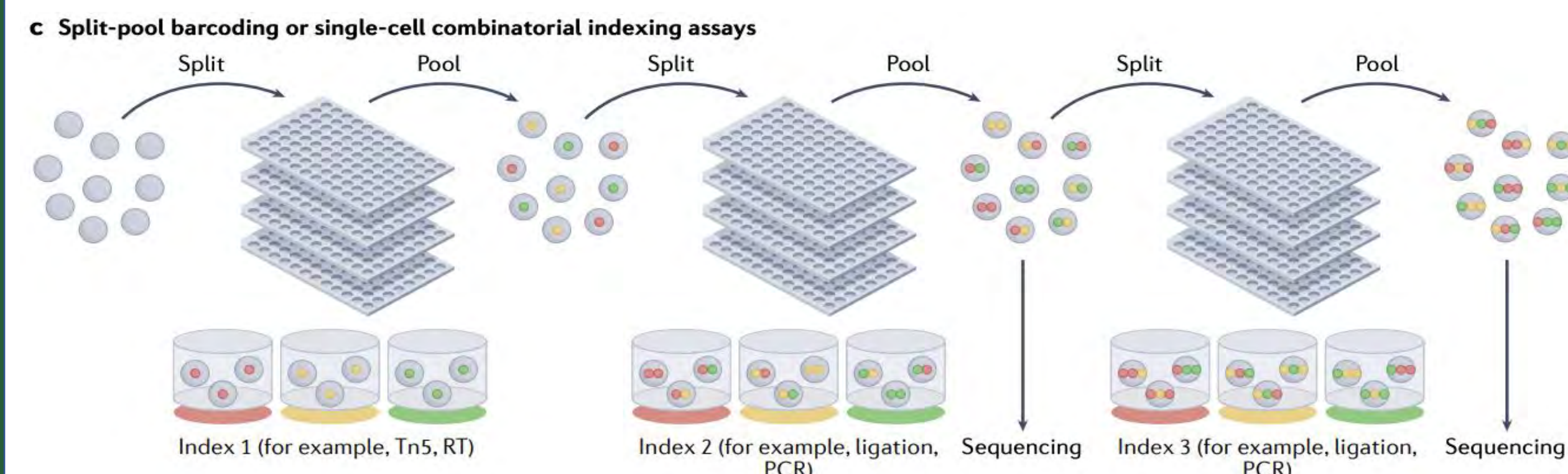


Figure 2 below is sourced from Preissl, S., Gaulton, K. J., & Ren, B. (2022). Characterizing cis-regulatory elements using single-cell epigenomics

## How do visualize single cell-data?

- ❖ **Fig. 3** Shows the clusters of different cells that emerge from analyzing the data from single-cell sequencing

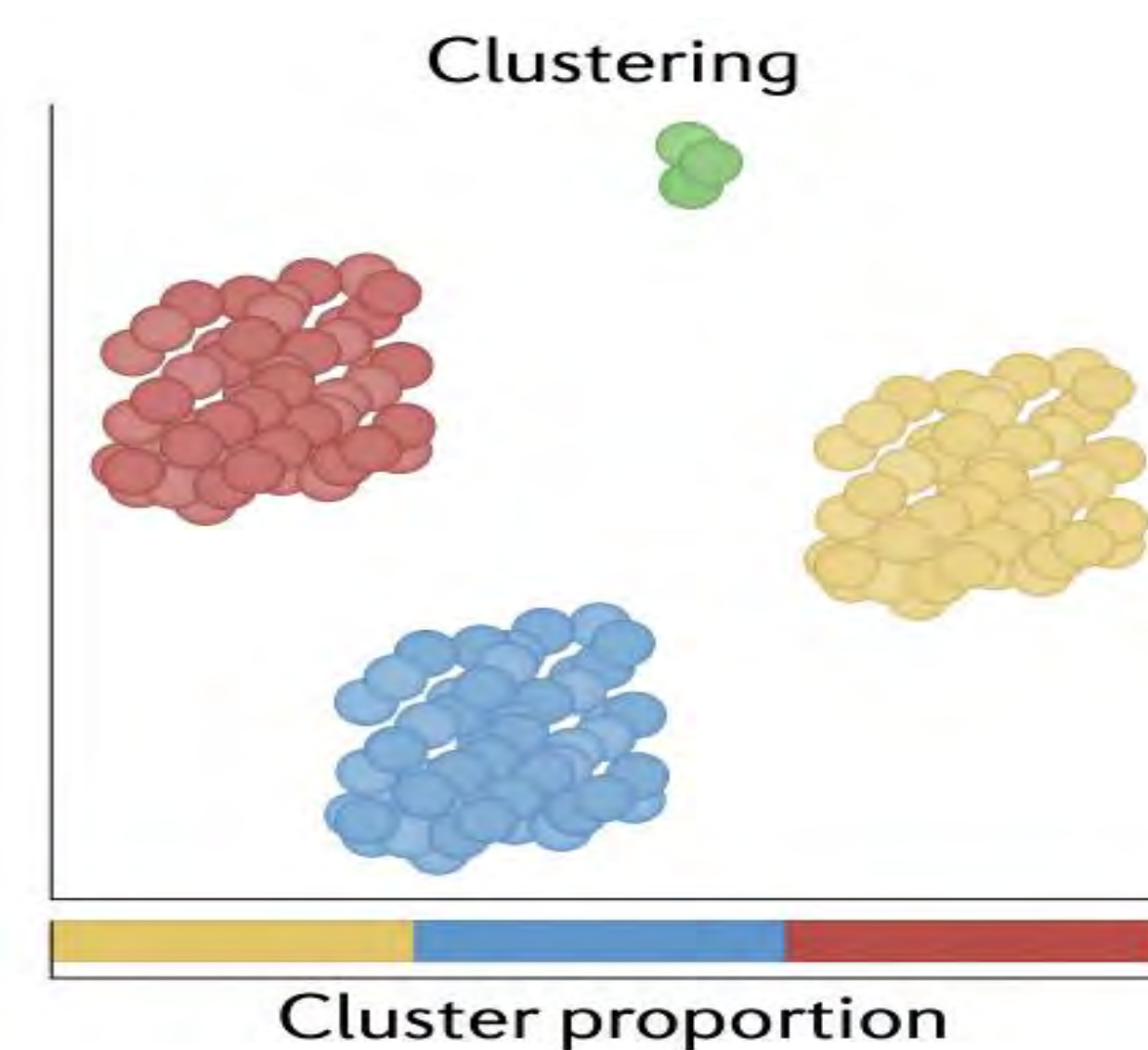


Figure 3 to the right Sourced from Preissl, S., Gaulton, K. J., & Ren, B. (2022). Characterizing cis-regulatory elements using single-cell epigenomics

## How do we visualize different epigenetic modifications?

- ❖ Line 1 shows the regulatory elements as they relate genes.(Fig.4)
- ❖ Peaks in Lines 2-7, and 9 indication presence of the element. (Fig.4)

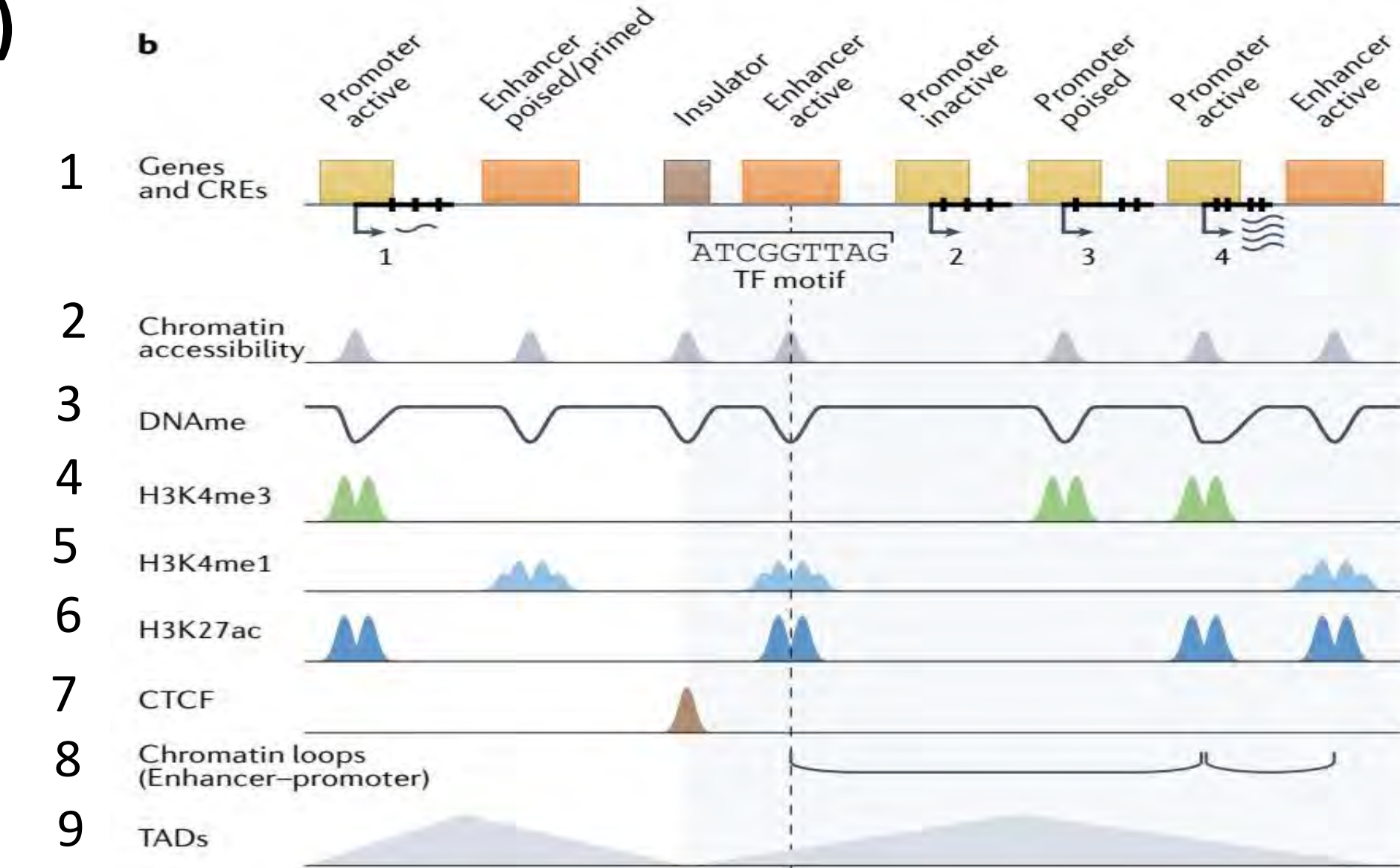


Figure 4 above is sourced from Preissl, S., Gaulton, K. J., & Ren, B. (2022). Characterizing cis-regulatory elements using single-cell epigenomics

## What is the state of the field?

- ❖ We are just beginning to understand the underlying biological mechanisms of epigenetic changes.

### Improvement in Technologies:

- ❖ Improved sensitivity in sequencing technologies
- ❖ Changes in tissue storing or changes in sequencing chemistry

### Ethical Considerations:

- ❖ How do we use this information ethically in understanding the plight of minority communities?
- ❖ Is it ethical to have this much information about an individual?

## Conclusions:

- ❖ Epigenetics is the study of **how the environment influences the expression of your DNA**
- ❖ **The main levels of epigenetic modification** are DNA methylation, histone modifications, chromatin interactions, chromatin accessibility and RNA interactions
- ❖ Epigenetic Modification can be collected through **single-cell sequencing**
- ❖ As we move forward with epigenetic research, we need to **consider the ethical implications**

## References

Preissl, S., Gaulton, K. J., & Ren, B. (2022). Characterizing cis-regulatory elements using single-cell epigenomics. *Nature Reviews Genetics*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41576-022-00509-1>  
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*Epigenomics Fact Sheet*. (2016). Genome.gov. <https://www.genome.gov/about-genomics/fact-sheets/Epigenomics-Fact-Sheet>