

waist, well-groomed moustache, splinters of hunger in his movements, the marks of sunspotting around his face. And all this in a slit of light. Always in tune, always going with the right notes, finding the pianos and the fortes and all those things that Stag really doesn't know at all how to find. That's why we sing the music of folk here in the West, he thinks, because we don't know sheet music. He wonders where Jeb is with his harmonica, or Lissabet with her loud piano playing, or Igor with his groaning instrument of a voice. He wonders where anyone is, anyone at all, and he lets the wood grain sink further and further into his skin.

*Ruby lips above the water,
blowing bubbles, soft and fine,
but alas, I was no swimmer,
so I lost my... hey, kid. Kid.*

"Kid, I'm closing up. It's three in the mornin', what're you doing abouts here? How'd you stay so long?"

Before Stag can react, he feels his hood—heavy for its great big antlers and its crude, thick sewing—tugged behind his head. His hair is mussed, somewhat greasy from days on the road, his face likely dead-looking in its gauntness.

The bartender slinks backward for a moment, releasing the hood, watching the stranger's slow movements as they rise slowly from the table and push themselves back in the rickety pine chair. Beneath the thin, gossamer lights, golden and flickering in slight deaths as the shift comes to its end, Stag's unprotected hair glows a soft orange, kind of like those ochre spots on rotting pumpkins. Strands of it are loosely flying from his scalp and his lengthy twin braids, which fall on either side of his neck in messy tassels of hair. His cheeks are thinned out in an awkward way when combined with his square jaw. His eyes are low and sad and seem to be staring somewhere far, far away even as he looks up to face the bartender—searching for someone, something familiar. His body seems consumed by his deer-pelt cloak. He seems too small to be any older than sixteen.

And, dizzy, chapped-lipped, Stag remembers a few things about where and who he is. Jeb and Lissabet and

Igor aren't here, they haven't been here for a year. Stag hasn't washed in weeks, hasn't done his hair in weeks, hasn't spoken in weeks. Stag came to drink a bottle of bourbon and hit the hay here, but was refused by the bartender on duty for not seeming old enough, and decided instead just to fall asleep at the nearest table. Stag is probably dying. That's what it feels like, anyways. And Stag yearns for the sound of a song, that "Clementine" tune once more, before he passes away leaning against the ribbed back of the pine seat he's in. Stag is twenty-five and he looks like a child because he eats a rabbit a day and he's dying, right here he's dying, and he just wants music so that he can feel like the child that he is again and he wants to be with his grandpa and now he's awake and thinking and working again and he wishes so badly he wasn't. Something about being alive makes his hair stand on end. His body shudders and fills up with goosebumps, with the ring of the silence, and he feels as though he's glaring at the bartender although he knows he isn't.

Kid? Are... You look hungry."—"Yup." It's a crackly noise he makes, barely audible. He elaborates with a nod.—"What... are you? You're..." The bartender keeps losing his words, keeps dropping them like rings between cracks or drops into seas or bodies over bridges. "Hungry." And he is. And he wishes he could cook. "But... you're a girl? Or a boy? What are you doing in here, I don't... get it..."—"I'm hungry." Now it's thicker, what he says is clearer, the blur of water droplets over the window is beginning to clear. And not like dirty sinks, there's no calcium deposits. There's no white stains in your clothes, against your collar, no bad beds and no long baths that freeze you up like hell. Stag is dying all the time. Stag is drowning here and now, drowning beneath his pelt, drowning in dehydration. "I'm hungry, and I want to..."—"Want to what?"

Stag thinks, slow to do such a thing, slipping in and out of panic with every moment that he transitions into waking. He's wet and he's falling overboard. But the boat isn't moving, because... there's no sound... there's no song, not here, not yet, not anymore.

"I want to hear you sing." Each word is prickly, sharp. The bartender catches a glance of this stranger's teeth, and every sharp detail and long lash and square face can't fight the fact that this stranger is not human, is not a hunter and is not a child. Stag's small frame seems to grow smaller with every second, every moment away from that song, and the bartender can't help but soothe himself back into the music, that folk tune.

"Oh my darling... Oh my darling..." He begins, and so he ends, and it's not so steady and relaxed now. The ship has begun to sway, but at least the ship is sailing, and at least Stag sees his crew. He can almost hear them now, yes, as he begins to fall asleep in his chair again... Those sounds, Lissabet, and Igor, sing again... Low, just so... Yes, we are sinking, we are dying, we are drowning. *And no pelt can keep me afloat*, Stag thinks.

Stag just thinks. ■

Vex V5 Robotics German Masters

BY ALEXANDER VON DER SCHULENBURG

The Vex V5 Robotics German Masters are held in Hamburg each year, where the best teams in Germany compete for a spot in the world championships that used to be held in Dallas but will take place in St. Louis this year. Our V5 B-Team (Cosmo Metal) consisted of members are from eighth grade: Oscar, Leo, Zahr and Alexander. The German Masters were very fun and incorporated many teams from all around Germany, from Rüdersdorf to Rockenhausen. There is a skills element, which consists of an autonomous part and a driver part, in both of which the robot is the only one on the field. The second part of the contest is the driving, which consists of four robots in two alliances (red and blue) who both compete for points. ■



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"THE ONLY THING MORE POWERFUL THAN HATE IS LOVE"

WHY BAD BUNNY'S SUPER BOWL HALFTIME SHOW WAS MORE THAN A PERFORMANCE



BAD BUNNY AT THE SUPER BOWL

CULTURAL FUSION MADE THE U.S.

LA MARQUETA



SO WHY IS IT BEING REJECTED NOW?

BY ALMA SCHNITGER

Before 2026, would you have ever thought that the Super Bowl could hit four billion views across all streaming platforms and countries in just the first 24 hours, from the mere presence of a Latin artist? That's a 137% increase from the previous year. My mom's family, who moved from Peru to the United States almost 40 years ago now, certainly wouldn't have expected that. And this is exactly the issue with the US right now: it's rejecting cultural fusion.

Because Latinos are such a fast-growing community, accounting for 65% of the US's growth between 2000 and 2024, cultural fusion is bound to happen. Living in the same spaces, restaurants which sell American food might start adding some Latin American menu pieces, and Latin-American immigrants will have to learn English. This is cultural fusion.

For example, Tex-Mex food, taco Tuesday (Mexico), hot sauce's slow increase of being a staple in American kitchens, Shakira's music, barbecue (Dominican Indians), the American cowboy tradition (vaqueros: cattle herders from Mexico), salsa (which has outsold ketchup), chewing gum (chicle from Mexico originating from hardened sap from the sapodilla tree), vanilla and chocolate flavors,

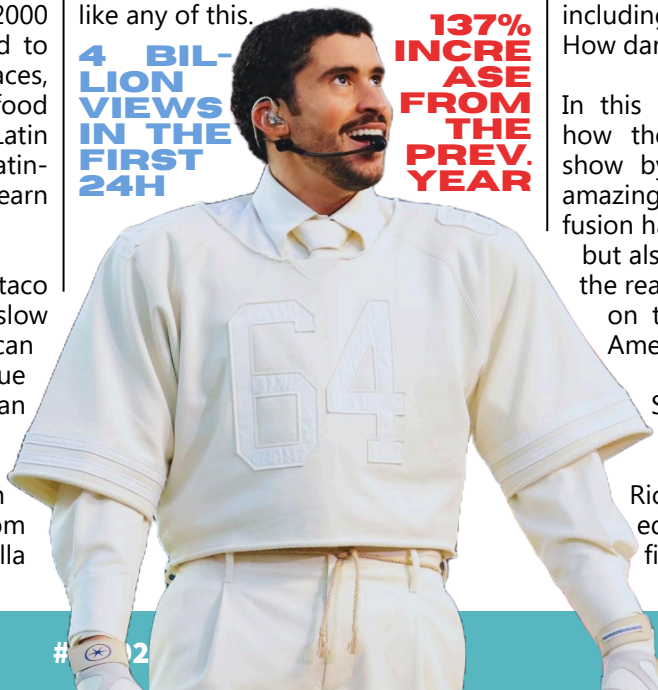
and even red dye (referred to as cochineal in the Inca and Aztec times)... The list just goes on, but I have to say, it does make sense.

Cultural fusion has been happening for the past 50 years, or more. Of course, many foods we have now come to know as American originally stem from elsewhere in the world. In fact, almost all foods we now call American stem from other parts of the world, because the United States was built on immigration.

And now, Trump has finally taken a look around, and decided, he doesn't like any of this.

4 BILLION VIEWS IN THE FIRST 24H

137% INCREASE FROM THE PREV. YEAR



The Latin Americans should be forced into mass deportation and stop positively influencing his country! (Which, if the US didn't want Latin-American culture to be part of the US, why would it take control of Puerto Rico from Spain after the Spanish-American war in the name of giving them independence?)

So how does Bad Bunny respond to the haters? With an amazing show, exemplifying more of these horrible crimes the immigrants (many of which are from Puerto Rico, which is part of the US) have brought upon America, including... good music. How dare they.

In this article, I will be investigating how the 2026 Super Bowl halftime show by Bad Bunny is not only an amazing example of how cultural fusion has positively influenced the US, but also a telling call to stop rejecting the reality of Latin American influence on the United States. Not just in America, all over the world.

Starting strong with the set design: it was designed to model a mini neighborhood in Puerto Rico, but confusingly also mirrored parts of the US as well. Specifically, I'm hinting at the Bodega with the "We accept EBT" sign.

EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) is a government-funded card used like a debit card to pay for food only. This tiny little detail may have seemed unimportant, but I can tell you it's really the opener to a big can of worms not enough is being done about. It represents how even though Puerto Rico is official US territory, it was labeled an 'unincorporated state' in 1904 (basically giving Puerto Ricans a capped US citizenship, with less rights overall, and no voting rights at all), due to multiple reasons. One being that there wasn't enough court representation for Puerto Rico to stop this, and secondly, that the US at the time was hesitant to include these non-Americans in their country (aka racism).

And this was all even though the official reasoning to take on ownership of Puerto Rico was to give Puerto Rico freedom from Spain (a whole lot of freedom they gained, didn't they?).

But going back to the Bodegas after that little side discussion about the EBT sign and everything going on with Puerto Rico. What's interesting is that you can find bodegas in the official US states as well, albeit without the "We accept EBT" sign. Why? Because Puerto Rican and American cultures have merged.

The fact that Puerto Rico is neither allowed to be an official state nor its own country is further proof of the rejection to the cultural merge, which, as we established earlier, has already occurred.

Second of all, what kind of effect did a non-English Super Bowl have on the audience?

This really depends on who is being asked. I know many people in my family often felt like they needed to hide their Latin-Americanness when they moved to the US. Not speaking Spanish around their classmates, changing the music to American pop, being judged for the food we eat... which isn't even that different. Hearing, and seeing a part of yourself you've felt you needed to hide or blend into America, suddenly celebrated on its biggest stage just hits different. Especially because of all the deportation happening recently, which must cause the Latinos living in the US to feel very unwelcome and unsafe.

I know I was lucky in not experiencing this as much as my family did, since I grew up in Germany, but I could still relate to this feeling of pride and liberation at seeing Latina music, which I usually only hear at home with my family, be acclaimed by the mass-media. I feel like the experience also changes depending on what state, or country in my case, you grew up in.

SEEING A PART OF YOURSELF YOU'VE FELT YOU NEEDED TO HIDE SUDDENLY CELEBRATED ON AMERICA'S BIGGEST STAGE JUST HITS DIFFERENTLY.

However, this same query can have completely different meanings to the average Anglo-American. I imagine it might not have been as emotional, but probably still very much enjoyed and appreciated as a halftime show, because even just the show by itself was spectacular. I am basing this off my German father's reaction, so really just guesswork here.

Now this leaves me with side question on this topic: why did the Super Bowl organizers choose to ask a Spanish-speaking artist to sing for an English-speaking countries' ball game? My family's theory: maybe they're trying to get the future viewers to continue watching by making them feel represented? Going back on the number of Latinos creating the next generation (65%), doesn't this mean we're going to be the majority in the US in the next century? Perhaps the Super Bowl organizers are preparing for their future audiences already? Or they felt this was what the US needed to hear at that time considering everything that's happening.

Last but not least, what was Bad Bunny trying to tell us when he led the flag parade of all the countries in the continent of America?

WHAT DOES THE WORD "AMERICAN" EVEN MEAN?

My take on it was; whether Trump likes it or not, the word 'America' was first used to describe, "the lands of the Western Hemisphere" (Britannica Dict-



Bad Bunny's carrying Puerto Rican Flag.

tionary), comprising North, Central, South America and the Caribbean. It was first documented as such in 1507 by a German cartographer called Martin Waldseemüller. This was defined over 250 years before the country America, or the USA dubbed itself as such. Meaning Latin American countries have been geographically classified as American for 250 years longer than the group of people we call American nowadays. Why is it that Trumpers are now claiming 'non-Americans' should leave? What does the word American even mean? And how does the definition of it change depending on who you ask?

rump clearly thinks America only includes the United States. So, to give him a geography lesson on America, Bad Bunny made sure to parade all the countries in America the continent at the end of the show.

The US has undergone many cultural fusions ever since it was created, the current 'real' Americans might've been the previous set of terrible evildoers, for example Irish immigrants in the 19th century. In fact, the only 'real' Americans have been mostly wiped out by now: the Iroquois Confederacy, Algonquian tribes, Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Lakota, Navajo, and Apache Nation. That is why it is imperious for the US citizens who agree with the idea to deport all Latinos from the US to look at their roots and spare some sympathy. Don't try and ostracize people with an immigration background when your great-grandparents might've faced the same issues. We need to learn from our great-grandparents' generations and accept the fusion which the US is halfway through already. They could do it 100 years ago for the last generation of immigrants, and here in Europe we all at least moderately get along, why not in America?



By Nike Krückeberg

I'm sure you've heard of Korean Pop. You know, the poppy, electronic beat music, sung in English and Korean, selling millions in many different Korean groups? Yes? You might also remember group performances, including a sort of hip-hop/pop dance style, danced by the members of the group themselves. Maybe some of you might've even tried to learn these dances... eh? Well, this is what K-Pop looks from the outside. Korean performers and groups, singing and dancing their head off... making millions of euros and dollars... Korean Pop has spread Korean culture widely, increasing popularity and money in K-Dramas, clothes, cosmetics, music, food... But what is behind all the success? What is behind it? Stupid question, the same thing that's behind every musical success, you might think. Well... not exactly.

First of all, let me explain how Korean pop works and sells itself. Behind all the glitter lies something purely surprising. Being a Korean idol is hard work, very hard work. Many newcomers, referred to as 'trainees', do not have the blissful stardom life that many look forward to. In fact, many idols quit, never debuting at all. Why?

Trainees sign certain work contract stretching up to 13 years of hard work. These contracts control basically 99% of their lives and offer little pay. Your K-Pop contract and manager will control what you eat, whether you may date or not, your finances and your appearance (some idols have had to have beauty adjustments to be 'able' to perform). The K-Pop industry attempts to make trainees or idols completely marketable, with many tricks and turns

considering finance.

Your finances as a K-Pop idol are hard business. Yes, millions of dollars are invested in every trainee, covering vocal coaching, dance education, food, housing, stylists and clothes... everything is paid for, over 100 million dollars per trainee! What?!, you may think. They get all that money for FREE? Well, no.

As a trainee, your company expects pretty much all the money they invested in you returned as soon as you debut. This is referred to as 'debt'. Even then, your pay may be limited, and it is only with a ton of luck and way after when you're already selling millions of merchandise and concert tickets that you can repay them and keep a mere shard of the money you got. Some performers even take on extra jobs or gigs along with their already-crazy schedule, earning back the money.

Now that we know what's behind it all, let us investigate the question you may think you know the answer to: Why is K-Pop so successful? Behold, the key to all that money BlackPink is earning: SOCIAL MEDIA. Whaaaaat???? Yes, and my proof is right there in your phone. Every fifth video or picture on TikTok is either a Korean dance or content about a Korean group. Try it out. While yes, their music does sell because of its certain popularity and joyfulness among the young, their true spread of popularity lies in social media and hierarchy that K-Pop is. While it may look happy and blissful from the outside, remember the inside is a hardcore space managed entirely by the industry. ■

BRANDED CLOTHES

THE REASON BEHIND THE SUCCESS

BY NIKE KRÜCKEBERG

Do you know those unrealistically expensive or surprisingly cheap and (at times) maybe not at all special clothes? You know, the ones you'd see every second influencer in on Instagram or the ones an entire grade of children wears every day like clones. Brand clothes which are quite prominent as a brand in design are bought by a large amount of people, mainly by teenagers or young adults and can be quite expensive. I'm sure you've heard of them: fancy brands like Gucci, Juicy Couture, Louis Vitton, Chanel, Prada or rather sporty wear like Adidas, Nike, Supreme, Puma and Calvin Klein. Do these sound familiar? Have you seen a lot of people wear them around school? You have, because they are EVERYWHERE. Everyone buys them—but why?



This question has several answers. But first let us go back, way back to the beginning of what grew to be brand clothes buyers. A certain trend around a specific area of clothing isn't a very new idea. Even in the Middle Ages, the 'higher' community had a specific clothing trend to make their social status higher or to simply be what one would nowadays refer to as 'cool'.

Yes, simply being 'cool' is a big factor of the huge success of brand clothing. If you see a socially *continued page 8*

WHEN MUSIC STOPS TIME



EXPERIENCING A LUNCH CONCERT AT THE PHILHARMONIE.
By Yva Toschek.

An opportunity to escape your daily lives every Wednesday, **FOR FREE!**

I've always loved the idea of experiencing classical music live, at a concert, but the thought of going intimidated me. I was worried that I wouldn't be able to truly understand it and would be an outsider among professionals, nodding along, eyes closed. Expensive tickets for a good concert were another barrier.

But once I was looking for activities for the winter break, I'd spend in Berlin, I came across the lunch concert at the Philharmonie Berlin, one of Europe's best and most important concert halls. It wouldn't be the first time for me to attend, although I wouldn't count the first as a true or full experience. The concept of the lunch concert is that a limited amount of people is allowed to listen to a small concert by professional musicians free of charge and get the opportunity to buy lunch there for an hour before, although not required. The first time I went to the lunch concert with my brother and mother we acted like complete amateurs, not knowing how to use this time effectively. We bought and savored lunch for the first hour and then, when we were done, we struggled to spot good seats in the big foyer, as all the people that had "skipped" the lunch part of the

event had already taken them, strategically avoiding lunch and sitting down immediately. As it was the only option, we then had to sit down at a banister, our backs facing the music (we wouldn't have been able to see the musicians anyway because of a stair-case blocking our view) and relying on our ears to take in the glory. We didn't know what we were missing. Of course, the music sufficed alone to satisfy us, but this time, this time we wanted to do everything correctly...

Upon entering the foyer of the Philharmonie Berlin (you get handed one chip from one person and give it back to another so that the amount of people remains controlled), we directly started to look for good seats. Although a lot were already taken, we sat down on some stairs with a great view of the whole foyer and waited for the hour to pass and the concert to begin. As we were sitting there on magazines to make it more comfortable for us, there was a lot of action surrounding us. Numerous people were looking for seats. You can't fail to notice that absolutely everyone is trying to get the best deal for themselves, which is kind of ironic, since this whole event is free... some were even rebelliously trying to take food they had bought in the designated eating area to their seat (that they were, however, still searching for) but always successfully stopped by the guards. I nibbled on some chocolate I had brought with me and started to wonder... the amount of people that came was flabbergasting, definitely a big number, some people weren't even allowed to enter, but inside I believe were about 500. An event as such really proves how many people are interested in this or believe to be interested in this. Even so, are these people actually interested in listening to the music or simply in experiencing something only a limited amount of people can? Or do they all come about because this process effortlessly makes them feel better about themselves, believing to have made good use of their time or to have educated themselves? Perhaps because they have a desire for connection with

people or just some structure in their day? Maybe I'm just overthinking this and all of them are here to relish some music? My thoughts were interrupted... suddenly everyone got quiet. The concert was about to begin. What happened in these next 45min wasn't what I had expected at all.

Over the next few minutes, absolutely everyone was silent, engrossed in the music. Looking around, I felt as though I could physically see the notes of Beethoven's famous Septet (strings and winds; septem is Latin for seven) flying around the foyer. It was truly such a beautiful moment, remarkable to see everyone concentrating on the musicians only, no one distracted by their phone or shifting around. Every single person, even the youngest children, was swept away, carried by thoughts and feelings from within. It seemed like, for those special minutes, everyone was liberated from the demands of their daily lives and drawn away from their surroundings. It came as a shock to everyone when the concert was over so swiftly, and we were thrown back into the ordinary.

If you are yearning for an unforgettable experience in easter break, or possibly have always wanted to go to a concert, here are the upcoming concerts and tips to make the most of them. ■

Wednesday, April 1st, 13:00

Michèle Gurdal Piano
Wu Wei Sheng

Works by Wu Wei, Johann Sebastian Bach, César Franck, Olivier Messiaen, Maurice Ravel and Georg Böhm

Wednesday, April 8th, 13:00

Ismael Arroyo Saxophone
Eduardo Moreno Piano

Works by Gaspar Cassadó, César Franck, Fazil Say, Jorge Grundman and François Borne

Tips

- Arrive at 12:00 to guarantee your entry
- Bring something small and portable to sit on
- Bring a small snack

I hope to see some of you there!

WHY EVERY GIRL HATES THE COLOUR PINK AT SOME POINT (AND WHY IT WAS NEVER ABOUT THE COLOUR)

By Luise Lichtenstein

Almost all girls experience this phase at some point: sometime between kindergarten and graduating secondary school, you start disliking the colour pink. It's a colour for girls, you feel like it should define you, but you don't want it to.

Girls like pink. Girls are emotional. Girls are dramatic. Girls are patient. Girls are helpful.

In first grade, you're playing a game with your friends, giving instructions, trying to organise everyone. A boy joins in, takes the lead, and the teacher calls him "determined" or "a natural leader." You try the exact same thing, and suddenly you're bossy. The behaviour is identical, but even at six years old, the label is not. You're frustrated, but you brush it off. Maybe the teacher was right and you were really just being rude.

Girls like pink. Girls are polite. Girls are well behaved. Girls shouldn't be bossy.

In fourth grade, a boy keeps stealing your pencil case and teasing you in class. You go home and tell your mom, hoping for a solution. She laughs and says, "Don't complain, he's just doing it because he likes you!" You're still annoyed. The problem hasn't gone away. But from that day on, you keep your complaints to yourself, because apparently, no one wants to hear about a girl being frustrated—especially when it's about someone "liking" her. You're nine years old, and you've learned the rules. Attention, even when it makes you uncomfortable, is something you're supposed to feel grateful for. Somehow, his behaviour becomes a

compliment, and your irritation becomes an overreaction.

Girls like pink. Girls should be flattered by attention. Girls shouldn't complain.

In seventh grade, you're put next to one of the loudest and most annoying boys in class. The teacher seems to think that your calmness will somehow balance his chaos. You are chosen not randomly, but because you are a girl—because girls are expected to be patient, responsible, and quietly capable of fixing what others disrupt. You still do your work, because that's what you've learned to do, but concentrating suddenly requires much more effort. And somewhere between trying to ignore his comments and finishing your worksheet, you start to wonder whether the teacher would have made the same decision if you weren't a girl.

In twelfth grade, you're talking about leaving school soon and reflecting on old memories from primary school. You tell your former teacher that you didn't have many friends back then and that you weren't particularly interested in playing with the other children. You mention playing a school version of Germany's Next Topmodel with the popular girls in fourth grade, and how you never really enjoyed it. To you, it always felt superficial and boring.

Your teacher says, "You know, I think you could be Germany's Next Topmodel", without even realising what they just said or how little it has to do with the story you were trying to tell—about preferring books to friends, spending time alone, and

feeling forced to socialise as a child. You're irritated for a second, not quite sure why. Then it takes you a moment to realise what just happened. You had mentioned the show while explaining why you didn't enjoy a particular game in primary school. Somewhere between that sentence and their response, the conversation changed direction.

It was supposed to be a compliment, meant to sympathise with your story. And for the first time, you fully understand what it feels like to talk about something you care about to someone you thought was listening, only to realise halfway through that the conversation has quietly shifted—from what you said to what you look like. You were talking about your childhood. Somehow, you ended up talking about your appearance. Not on purpose, not because it had anything to do with what you were saying, simply because you're a woman. (And in case you're asking yourself whether I politely continued the conversation for another five minutes after that, the answer is yes. Partly because I hadn't even fully processed what was going on, and partly because anything else would've been rude.)

This isn't new.

In her 1949 book *The Second Sex*, French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir describes gender as a social construct, shaped by religion, family, education, and society. Nearly 80 years later, many of her observations are still relevant: girls are taught what to value, what to care about, and what to prioritise, long before they can even articulate it.

Historically, literature was one of the few spaces where women could diverge from rigidly defined gender roles. In Heinrich von Kleist's 1808 comedy *The Broken Jug* (German: *Der zerbrochene Krug*), the woman initiating the lawsuit, Frau Marthe, asserts her rights and her belief in the justice system, defying the village judge Adam, who repeatedly tries to intimidate her and her daughter Eve and prevent them from testifying. Similarly, in the 12th Century medieval German epic poem *Nibelungenlied*, Siegfried's wife, Kriemhild, ultimately kills the antagonist and Siegfried's murderer Hagen in response to her

husband's death.

However, in both cases, the women's actions are motivated by their husbands: Marthe defends property that once belonged to her husband and mentions him throughout the lawsuit, and Kriemhild acts in response to her husband's murder. In this sense, their actions are still defined in relation to the men in their lives.

By contrast, in William Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, published in 1602, Mistress Ford and Mistress Page cleverly manipulate Sir John Falstaff, exposing his vanity and schemes while asserting their own wit and independence. Unlike Marthe or Kriemhild, these women exercise agency not in relation to a husband's fate, but to protect their own households and reputations, demonstrating that literature has long provided spaces for women to challenge gender norms and assert their intelligence and autonomy. Outside of literature, however, many doors were closed to women. While some women possessed limited financial independence or influence within their households, positions of real power remained largely inaccessible. Politics, debates, and other important public affairs were not places where women should be seen, or worse even, heard.

Beauvoir's analysis also helps explain another pattern. She writes that "rejecting feminine attributes does not give one masculine ones," arguing that women should not simply try to imitate the male standard but develop independently of it. This idea brings us closer to what we're trying to understand: disliking pink was never solely about the colour itself. For many girls, rejecting it becomes the simplest way to distance themselves from the expectations attached to femininity. Pink was never just a colour; it became a symbol for everything girls were expected to be.

Girls like pink. Girls are emotional. Girls are nurturing. Girls are supportive.

And not being able to fully understand what was happening around us—why we were seen as bossy when we just tried to explain the rules of a game,

why our problems were brushed off as boys liking us, why we had to sit next to the loud boys regardless of what it meant for us wanting to concentrate on class and learn—it was the easiest way to distance ourselves from being judged for what we do or being treated differently just because we are girls.

The monologue of Gloria, played by America Ferrera, in the 2023 *Barbie* movie brings it to the point:

"We have to always be extraordinary, but somehow we're always doing it wrong. [...] You have to be a boss, but you can't be mean. You have to lead, but you can't squash other people's ideas. [...] You have to answer for men's bad behavior, which is insane, but if you point that out, you're accused of complaining. [...] You have to never be rude, never show off, never be selfish, never fall down, never fail, never show fear, never get out of line."

All of this—the pink, the labels, the overlooked frustrations, the small rebellions, the literature, the philosophy, even Gloria's monologue—points to the same truth: being a girl has always come with expectations that aren't ours to choose. Being a woman will always come with expectations that aren't ours to choose. Disliking pink was never just about a colour. It was about noticing early on that the world treats you differently, that your actions, your voice, your very presence are judged according to a rulebook you never wrote.

And yet, in noticing, in resisting, and in quietly asserting yourself—through play, through stories, through thought—you start to carve out space for yourself. You learn that being a girl doesn't mean you have to fit right in. You can be intelligent, assertive, patient, emotional, witty, independent, and still just be you.

Pink doesn't define you. Society doesn't define you. Only you do.

Girls like pink. ■

Zu Besuch bei der Berlinale

von Leo Freier



Die Internationalen Filmfestspiele Berlin, kurz Berlinale, sind ein Jährliches Filmfestival in Berlin. Neben Cannes und Venedig zählt das in Berlin zu den wichtigsten Filmfestivals der Welt. Auch dieses Jahr durften bei der 76. Berlinale wunderbare Filme gezeigt werden, die immer neuen Themen an die Oberfläche holen. Mehr als 400 Filme wurden in den verschiedenen, mittlerweile zwölf Sektionen gezeigt. Von den 400 Filmen wird noch mal zwischen Feature und Shorts unterschieden. Feature Filme sind Langfilme, die die normale Länge von einem Kinofilm haben, dagegen sind Shorts nur 20 bis 30 Minuten lang. Die bekannteste Sektion ist „Wettbewerb“. Diese Sektion war die erste, die es gab. Die besten internationalen Filme werden bei der Berlinale mit dem Silbernen und Goldenen Bären ausgezeichnet.

Für Kinder gibt es noch die Sektion „Generation“. Dort wird der Gläserne Bär verliehen. Ich habe mir dieses Jahr auch ein paar wunderbare Filme angeschaut und in der Woche, die ich dort war, haben mich viele Filme fasziniert.

Bei der Sektion „Generation 14+“ fand ich den niederländischen Film *A Family* von Mees Peijnenburg am besten. Dieser Film hat mich sehr gerührt und emotional beeinflusst. Der Film handelt von einer großen Schwester, Nina, und einem Sohn, Elies, bei den sich die Eltern geschieden haben. Auf Augenhöhe werden die Perspektiven der Kinder gezeigt sowie ihre Hobbys und Tätigkeiten. Die Jugendliche müssen ihre Sachen packen und wieder umziehen. Das Problem, dass sich durch den ganzen Film zieht, ist, dass die Mutter elf Minuten zu spät gekommen ist. Ich finde den Film super, weil es so einen wichtigen Teil in unserer Gesellschaft schön aufgreift. Auch nächstes Jahr gibt es die Berlinale wieder. Ich würde die Berlinale für alle empfehlen, die keine Mainstream-Filme mögen. ■

ACTIVITIES FOR SPRING



EIN BESUCH IM HUMBOLDT FORUM BERLIN (LUISE)

An einem der ersten warmen Tage des Jahres beschlossen meine Schwester und ich, einen Spaziergang in der Sonne zu machen. Wir kamen am Humboldt Forum im Berliner Stadtschloss vorbei und entschieden spontan, die Dachterrasse zu besuchen, für die der Eintritt für alle unter 19 Jahren kostenlos ist.

Noch bevor wir das Gebäude betraten, wurden wir auf einige Flyer am Eingang aufmerksam. Wir beschlossen, uns die Ausstellung „On Water“ anzusehen, die sich mit den unterschiedlichen Rollen des Wassers in Kontexten wie dem Ozean, Städten, Bergen und der Physik beschäftigt. Die Ausstellung ermöglichte es uns außerdem, Wasser durch Kunst, Fotografie, Skulpturen und Musik zu entdecken.

Sie umfasst nur zwei Räume und eignet sich daher gut für einen kurzen Besuch von etwa 30 Minuten bis zu einer Stunde—natürlich auch länger, wenn man sich jeden Text und jedes Exponat genauer anschaut. Wenn man nur sehr wenig Zeit hat und trotzdem etwas unternehmen möchte, reicht die Dachterrasse allein schon aus: Sie bietet einen großartigen Blick über Berlin und die Möglichkeit, die Sonne zu genießen!

UNWINDING AT KÖRNERPARK IN NEUKÖLLN (YVA)

When visiting cities like London, Paris or Budapest, one charm that I appreciate is the parks. Since they are uncommon in Berlin, I love the sight of beautifully maintained parks, with thoughtfully designed pathways, wooden benches, old trees, or that sense of escape from the city. Even in the movie Notting Hill, the private gardens are highlighted as a special place... But why am I telling you all of this? There aren't any well-kept parks or gardens in Berlin anyway, right?



Well, you're in luck, because I know one (it's actually quite known): the Körnerpark in Neukölln. The trip might be far for some, but it is definitely worth stopping by! On a nice day, you can stroll by the fountain or the grand, neo-baroque orangery (orangeries are historic, specialized park buildings designed to overwinter tender plants) and sit down on one of the benches with a good book. It is a great park for picnics in summer, where you can spread out a blanket and have a nice meal on the lawn. If you are too lazy to prepare a picnic, you can go to the cafe/restaurant inside the Orangerie that looks very promising! You will feel like you've stepped into a beautiful city, away from all your obligations.

BOOKSTORES TO CURE BOREDOM (ROBIN)

By far my favorite thing to do over a long break is to decompress through reading, whether by exploring new graphic novels or reading centuries-old poetry. Here are a few of my recommendations for the best reading experiences:

Love Story of Berlin (Kastanienallee 88) is a cozy, sweetly-packed English bookstore with plenty of alternative lit, classic lit, and an entire shelf of Penguin Classics—it offers gorgeous hardcovers, underground authors, and a concise experience that never has you feeling like you've overstayed your visit. 100% recommend you go here over the break!

Modern Graphics (Kastanienallee 79) is a beloved comic book store with an unbelievable selection of classic, recognizable comics, fresh new picks from diverse authors, and fun trinkets for all your reading needs. They offer an almost infinite selection of titles in both German and English, and the staff are superbly kind.

Shakespeare and Sons (Warschauer Str. 74) is a real treat—combining English literature with a warm café experience. Their bagels and coffee are beyond, and their book selection is even wider than the other two stores I've named. Bask in the calm environment and have a light breakfast that'll have you floating the whole day!

MnogoKnig (Friedrichstraße 176-179) is one of the largest Russian bookstores in Berlin with accommodating staff, a vast plethora of genre-spanning books, and a specialty in classics. If you're a Russian speaker, this store is highly recommended!

MARKTHALLE PFEFFERBERG: LA VICTORIA (ALMA)

Picture this: you're sitting with your family eating delicious anticucho (cow heart grilled) with another yummy assortment of potato related dishes. Chatter and music humming in the background, the space feels... Alive. Full of dishes and little corners for different cultures: Peruvian, Mediterranean, Japanese, Mexican, etc.

If this sounds like the kind of place you want to eat at, then the Pfefferberg Markthalle is just the place for you. My family and I specifically went to a little Peruvian corner called La Victoria, with the best anticucho, big fluffy fried potatoes, an even better fried soft crispy pig meat sandwich made just like the marketplace on the way to Lima....

It's just very good and authentic. You can tell because the corn they have as a side is fluffy, which means they serve corn from Peru which is grown at high altitudes causing the corn to be fluffy and less sweet than the ones grown in Europe. (A lot better than the ones here in my opinion as well). If you don't believe me that giant fluffy, crunchy corn pieces sometimes the size of grapes but with little taste, go try them. At the best place to get yourself some authentic Peruvian food in Berlin (from what I've seen), La Victoria in the Pfefferberg Markthalle.

FRÜHLINGSFEST AM KURT-SCHUMACHER-DAMM (LARA)

Das Frühlingsfest, das vom 28. März bis zum 3. Mai stattfindet, ist die perfekte Aktivität für dich und deine Freunde an einem schönen, sonnigen Ferientag. Das Fest findet auf dem Zentralen Festplatz am Berliner Kurt-Schumacher-Damm statt.

Der Eintritt ist kostenlos, aber für die Fahrgeschäfte muss man bezahlen. Es gibt viele verschiedene Attraktionen, zum Beispiel ein großes Riesenrad und über 50 weitere Fahrgeschäfte. Die Preise variieren je nach Attraktion.

Neben den Fahrgeschäften gibt es auch viel leckeres Essen. Man findet dort typische Kirmessachen wie Süßigkeiten und andere Snacks, die man sonst nicht jeden Tag isst. ■

continued from page 3 popular 'cool' clique or person, whether a real celebrity, a famous influencer or simply person next to you in chemistry class, if this person is wearing cool clothes you'd like to own yourself (regardless of whether you really like the clothes, sometimes you wanting to be cool is enough), will you buy this shirt soon? Yes. Does it help that you know the exact brand since it has a massive logo screaming PUMA in your face? Yes. Do you think someone will smile, walk up

NORTHERN LIGHTS

BY AKKSHATH CHAWLA

The Sun often has explosions, Coronal Mass Ejections or CME, on its surface that are visible from far away. When the charged particles of these explosions hit Earth's magnetic field, they split. These particles primarily hit oxygen and nitrogen molecules, since they are dominant, and push them into a higher energy level - where they don't stay forever. When the energy levels decrease naturally, they emit light. Each type of molecule in our atmosphere gives off a different light colour. This creates the beautiful lights we know as Northern and Southern lights or auroras.

The Sun and its Cycles

The Sun goes through cycles (which on average last eleven years) in which it goes from low to high in terms of activity. The more sunspots on the Sun, the more active it is! If there are less sunspots on the Sun, we are in solar minimum, and if it is high, we are in solar maximum. In the years 2024, 2025, and 2026, we are at Solar Maximum, therefore you can see more auroras. These ejections are not completely harmless, since if they happened on a huge scale, it would short circuit our satellites and alike (therefore many of them are "electronically hardened"). A major example of this is the Carrington Event.

The Carrington Event

The Carrington Event in 1859, just before the solar maximum in 1960, was such a big solar storm that peop-

le could read newspapers by the light, and gold miners woke up thinking that the Sun rose on a cloudy morning and made breakfast at 1:00 a.m.! Solar storms like the Carrington Event only happen once every 500 years.

On September 1st, 1859, Richard Carrington, an amateur skywatcher in Redhill (near London), was sketching sunspots when he was blinded by a "white light flare" which lasted for around five minutes. After the event, a day later, the earth experienced an unrivalled geomagnetic storm (disturbances caused by CMEs on earth's magnetic field) which caused the Telegram systems to go crazy and stop working. Carrington added up all the facts and found out that the "white light flare" he had seen earlier was the cause of this storm.

This was a connection which hadn't been made before, and that is why we call it the Carrington Event in his honour.

Conclusion

These lights do look cool, but if something like the Carrington Event happened again, our technology would short circuit, which in turn would create a safety hazard which could injure and or kill people who are surrounded by technology. Scientists still cannot predict every outcome of these solar storms and therefore we are still at risk. ■

to you and say, "Oh, I LOVE your shirt!" the next day and immediately assure you a cool spot at lunch? Yes. Let's address this situation more deeply in terms of social media. This effect, the inspiration, longing, then buying is why influencers are successful. And it doesn't even have to be the ultra-rich clothes. Imagine: A highly famous influencer wears nicely affordable glasses in their next video consulting another slime video, many people will then in turn buy the same

glasses in the future (this is why sponsors send free products to influencers!).

Now, what else could tempt the typical middle-schooler to buy the next pair of Isabel Marants? Well, aside from the psychological reasons, the simple truth of it is: They look good, they tend to actually have good quality and they make you feel good about yourself. Of course, there is the question of do you NEED a Gucci cap when you already

SHOULD YOU FEEL EXCEPTIONALLY BORED DURING EASTER BREAK AND START TO MISS SCHOOL...

We are always happy to receive guest contributions from all grades! If you come across something interesting during the break that you want to write about, don't hesitate to reach out to us! Additionally to articles, we also publish book and movie reviews, comics, illustrations, and short stories.

Reach out to us via thecosmopolitan@cosmopolitanschool.de, talk to Mr. Holmes or come to one of our meetings, which take place on Monday and Tuesday at 4:15 p.m. in Room 301. **We wish everyone a wonderful Easter Break!**

have twenty regular ones, but in the world we live in, not many people ask themselves this. Do YOU need half a pound of makeup to stick on your already very beautiful face? Probably not. What a lot of companies do is to not go begging in advertisements for you to buy their products, but to make you notice on your own and give you the impression that you should be glad that you can buy something at all. "We don't care if you buy something, but you should be glad that we have this

offer that you CAN buy to be cool!" What a lot of companies do is to not go begging in advertisements for you to buy their products, but to make you notice on your own and give you the impression that you should be glad that you can buy something at all. "We don't care if you buy something, but you should be glad that we have this offer that you CAN buy to be cool!" he longing to be cool is very complex, wherever it may come from. But what is cool?

Teacher Spotlight

CHLOÉ BION

"SCHOOL IS JUST ONE ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE, IT DOES NOT DEFINE YOU."

Madame Bion in Èze, France.

What inspired you to become a teacher? The fact that I come from a family of teachers probably had something to do with it!

What profession would you choose if you weren't a teacher? Before becoming a teacher, I studied and worked in journalism so if I weren't a teacher I would do something in that field. I also do love to study so I could go back to uni one day and learn something completely different.

What do you think makes a great teacher? You tell me!

What was your least favourite subject in school? We had a subject called "technologie" where we were supposed to learn some handiwork. For instance, we would use a soldering iron and other machines to make small objects like a luminous key-ring or a clock with a CD as a dial. I might as well tell you that neither of these ever

worked in my case.

What's the most rewarding part of being a teacher? Seeing students grow up and gain confidence.

What advice would you give to students struggling in school? School is a great place to learn, discover, ask questions, try new things, experiment but also read a good book, laugh, make mistakes, make lifelong friendships and so much more. Do your best, but remember you are not your grades. School is just one aspect of your life, it does not define you.

Do you have any pets, family, or siblings? I'm married and have a daughter.

What are your middle names? Chloé Océane Malou Bion

Which languages do you speak?

It is cool to belong amongst the other cool, but it isn't cool to try to hard to do so. It's cool to have control, but the dictator who controls everything is not cool at all. It is cool to be a perfect perfectionist, but these idealists can also be terribly annoying. What is cool for you? If it is to wear the Birkin Bag from Hermès, then that is cool for you. But is it cool to others? And isn't it others you want to impress?

French is my mothertongue. I learnt English and Italian at school and later on German when I came to Berlin in 2017.

What's your favorite movie or series? I loved Babylon Berlin. I watched it as I was learning German and it's also a good series to understand the Berlin society of the 1920s. I'm also a big fan of Le Bureau des légendes, which is a series about the French intelligence agency DGSE.

If you could teach any other subject, what would it be? Italian or History/Politics

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be and why? I could see myself in Rome or Florence, and the food would clearly be a strong argument.

If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be? One of the many women forgotten by history books. On that topic I recommend the excellent book "Les grandes oubliées. Pourquoi l'histoire a effacé les femmes" (Why history has erased women) by Titiou Lecoq. And also the comic "Culottées" in which Penelope Bagieu draws the portrait of historic women who invented their own destiny.

Do you have a favorite holiday or festival? I never miss a French holiday that involves eating good food (which my students might have noticed). I especially like the Galette des Rois in January, la Chandeleur in February (we eat crêpes) and la Saint-Nicolas on December 6th (in my hometown we eat man-shaped brioches that we call *jeanbonhommes*).

Who are your favorite teacher friends? The Roman Language Department of course. ■

"Books Should Never Be Banned"

Interview with BCS Librarian Mr. Feldmann

By Akkshath Chawla and Leo Freier

Why did you become a librarian?

I love reading and I love books. I studied literature, German, and comparative literature, and I've always liked the atmosphere in a library, the quiet, the peace. And just the fact that you have so many different books that you can choose from, I really like that.

What is your favourite book?

I read a lot of different books, so there are a lot of classics. I would say my favourite book is probably Letters To A Young Poet by Rainer Maria Rilke. It's a collection of letters he exchanged with Franz Xaver Kappus. His poetry is really amazing. I love reading novels as well, for instance I like the author Jostein Gaarder. I read a lot of different books, so it's hard for me to pinpoint one favourite book.

What's your favourite genre?

At the moment it's Solarpunk. It's a fairly new genre and sort of a sci-fi genre with dystopian elements, but it has a more hopeful twist to it. It deals with themes of climate change and climate collapse, but it shows us what we can still do to turn things around in a positive way.

What do you think about the 23,000 books that were banned in the US? I think book bans happen in different regions for a lot of different reasons. This particular list seems like a great recommendation for where to start reading. There's books like Margret Atwood's Handmaid's Tale for instance, which is a book that our students read in class commonly, Animal Farm, 1984 or Fahrenheit 451 as well. Those are



Mr. Feldmann at the Leipzig Book Fair.

books that talk about different versions, different visions of society and the relationship of certain types of dystopian governments, with literature, reading books, knowledge and so on. There is great literature on this list.

Do you think these kinds or these books will also be banned in Europe or in Germany?

I hope not. I know that there a lot of books that were banned in Germany before, and they were burned in the 1930s by the Nazis. In general, I think that books never should be banned. Of course there's books that you need to read with caution or that you need to read with a certain understanding of their context, but banning books generally means to deny access to whatever's in them, and especially where it concerns books that are critical of certain types of governments or societies. I think that people should be free to encounter these ideas, discuss them, and then come to their own conclusions.

Book banning in America has reached record highs, with nearly 23,000 instances of books removed from public school libraries documented since 2021. Driven by organised campaigns, these bans disproportionately target books detailing with LGBTQ+ topics or racism, for example.

Under the Nazi dictatorship (1933-1945) in Germany many books were banned or subject to heavy censorship. In May 1933, over 20,000 books were burned throughout the country, including at Bebelplatz in Berlin. ■

THE BARTENDER'S SINGING "CLEMENTINE"

A SHORT STORY BY ROBIN AVIÑA POLISENO

Drove she ducklings to the water, every morning just at nine, hit her foot against a splinter, fell into the foaming brine...

The notes flutter in flapping, vibrating gusts through the thick air of the bar, little sailboats of noise carrying their way across the world. Beer spills are oceans, bottles are seas, the landscape is bourbon and brandy and hashbrowns are coral. The bartender is large but lithe, owning the space as he moves through it, sorting out short glasses of whiskey and shots of vodka, wiping the tables with a thin rag nearing the end of its days. Its edges are frayed, it's been stained far past its original white, and it's being picked apart in the middle—little strands of thread tearing away from each other, fearing the center. The bartender hums to himself again and again, the chorus before and behind each verse, no bridge in sight. Quick, quick! Place to place! Race across the sea and find the next shore—there is never any time for a distant isle, for a light adventure.

Oh my darling, oh my darling, oh my darling Clementine, you are lost and gone forever, dreadful sorry, Clementine...

The sound catches in his too-keen ears before any view can even catch in his eyes—grim little things, ruddy and brown and often rueful to all who can manage a glimpse of them—circling his head now in dull rings. Faded jewelry, maybe rusted (though the song lacks that crunch), is what it reminds him of. He doesn't dare lift his head; his cheek keeps itself pressed to the wood grain, softer than most things he's slept against as of late, little patterns soaked up by the spongy skin of his freckled face. Reddish portals to other worlds, or maybe ripples in puddles outdoors, effect and aftereffect.

Stag opens his eyes to a squint and sees the bartender through the small gap between the table's surface and his hood. Pale blue apron around the