

DISSONANT



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ISSUE 1

MEET OUR BOARD MEMBERS



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WHO ARE WE?

Dissonance, in music, is disharmony. Dissonance is never pretty, notes clash and fight with each other, it sounds more like noise than music. Musicians use Dissonance to make us uncomfortable, to build tension. This tension can be unbearable, forcing the listener to desperately seek a resolution, a return to harmony. Without a resolution, you'd be left feeling empty and unsettled, like you listened to an incredible story without an ending.

Now, more than ever, America is in a state of Dissonance. Political discourse has become an ugly and unbearable noise, as opposing sides fight bitterly on so many issues. We cannot stand the noise of disagreement, and so we surround ourselves with people who think like us, who sound like us and consume media which fits our own worldview. As a whole, America has seemed to have lost its ability to listen and engage with one another. We cannot continue to ignore this clash of ideas in our country, as ignoring it only further divides us. We cannot come together and solve anything without being able to tolerate each others' differences.

Cognitive Dissonance is the discomfort you feel when you hold two or more contradictory viewpoints in your mind. As the co-editor, I'm going to ask you to allow this discomfort, to really listen to the varying perspectives in this magazine. You don't have to agree with it, you don't have to love it or even like it, all we ask is that you engage and think about it, even for a moment. If something angers you or upset you, we aren't asking you ignore those feelings, but to look deeper and ask yourself why? Why does that make you uncomfortable?

There are so many beautiful voices on this campus, and this magazine is a platform for those diverse perspectives on this campus, many of which have not been given a voice yet. Personal expression through art, music, photography, and writing serve as powerful tools for understanding one another. These diverging perspectives, even if they make us upset, even if they clash with our own politics, they must be listened to, because we cannot have a truly harmonious campus without hearing the Dissonance around us.

Signed,
Co- Editor
Alex Hagan

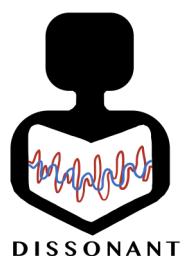


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~Special thanks to Zainab Manzoor for all artwork in this issue~



**WHERE ARE
YOU FROM?**

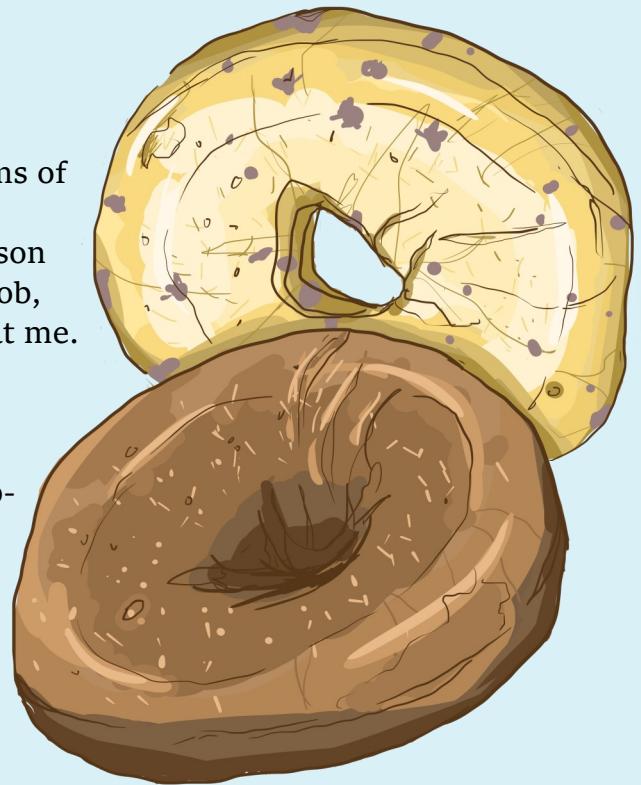


Interview #1

Tenten He

Where are you from and what does that mean to you?

To answer this, I have to consider family history. In terms of where I was born and raised, I am from Madison, WI. I went to elementary, middle, and high school here- Madison is where I met all my best friends, where I got my first job, and where I overcame major challenges that life threw at me. Through and through, Madison is my home. I want to recognize that I come from an immigrant family with impoverished rural roots. I've visited family members overseas who still don't have the luxury of indoor plumbing or electricity inside their homes. It's extremely humbling to be reminded that the lifestyle I have been blessed with is the result of decades of sacrifice and hard work of my family. Even though I am a native Madisonian, I know my roots run deeper than just this city.



What is your favorite thing about where you are from?

THE FOOD! From the Farmers Market produce to quirky food carts, Madison does food surprisingly well, considering its size and location. We do fries and curds like no other, and our ethnic food options aren't too shabby either. Some of my favorite culinary highlights in town are the spring rolls from Fresh Cool Drinks, the tofu buff and dal from Himal Chuli, the all-you-can-eat lunch buffet at Swagat, and fresh bagels from Bagel's Forever.



A hidden gem from where you are from:

Every June for the past 7 years, we've hosted our own version of The World Naked Bike Ride to promote body positivity & raise awareness about reliance on fossil-fuel based transportation. People meet up, strip, and ride their bikes nude with other naked bikers around the city. Look out for this fast growing event if you're ever in Madison over the Summer!

The Questioned Mirror

Shehrose Charania



I don't wear a hijab.
But that does not make me any wrong.
I am asked "are you a muslim?"
My heart pounds like a drum.
Knowing what this will become.
It will lead to comments that I need to overcome.
"You don't look like a muslim?" they ask.
I don't understand what that proves.
I answer with a half smile not knowing what to do.

I am an American Muslim.
"You're from India?" they ask.
I answer yes because it's shorter than explaining no.
I am from the land Pakistan.
Not the land of the Taliban.

"Aren't muslims terrorists?" they ask.
No my friend, the truth is masked.
Behind all the media and stereotypes.
I hear the snickers and jokes from 9/11.
There is some misconception.
Now I have a confession.
I don't use any weapons.

As I look in the mirror.
There's disunity and disconnection.
My identity questioned.
And a question replayed in my mind.
"What are you?" they ask.
answer with I am an American Muslim.



To all the people who have ever asked me where I'm really from...

Daniel Kwak

I'm from a diverse suburb of Chicago called Skokie. I have previously lived in Beijing, Seoul, Jilin, Chicago, and New York, but Skokie is the permanent residence written on my US passport, so I consider it home.

I moved to Skokie when I was 8 years old. Being a resident of Skokie means that you must be open to diversity and inclusiveness. Skokie is comprised of almost 60% minority ethnic groups, so there is no way of avoiding people of different cultures and backgrounds. In fact, one of our slogans is "Skokie welcomes everyone".

Coming to Madison made me appreciate the diversity that defined Skokie. When I was applying to colleges, I never really thought to factor in racial demographics because I believed most places in America were like Skokie. Diversity was a part of my everyday life, so it was something that I took for granted. When I moved to Madison, it was a genuine culture shock to be surrounded by so little people of color. It actually felt like I was in a different country. One thing that really disappointed me about Madison was the lack of awareness

that people had. People were questioning why my English was so good, asking me General Tso's chicken recipes, what my real name was, and other stupid shit. It was like these people never met an Asian person before and just wanted to push every stereotype and button to see if I would do anything. I went home almost every other weekend during freshman year because I just couldn't handle being in Madison. It truly did make me appreciate home even more.



One of my favorite aspects about Skokie is its access to the CTA (Chicago Transit System). I honestly think Chicago has one of the better (if not the best) subway systems in America. It's a 10-minute walk to get to the train station, and it lets you go anywhere in Chicago. If I wanted Pho for breakfast, I could take the Red Line to Argyle and get the best fucking pho of my life. If I wanted cheap layering clothes for the winter, I could easily go downtown to Uniqlo and grab some heattech long johns. If I was twiddling my thumbs at home with nothing to do, I could go to a bar with my friends and watch a live show (they usually don't card in Chicago). Skokie being so close in proximity to Chicago while having cheaper housing costs truly makes it a great place to call home.

Interview #2

Emmanuel Ankomah

Where are you from and what does that mean to you?

I cannot believe **it has has been six years since I moved to the US** with my family. It feels like it was yesterday when I said goodbyes to my family and friends. I have missed my homeland dearly. I have missed the welcoming nature of the people, street food, favorite historical sites, and the fresh produce.

As Kwame Nkrumah, the first Prime Minister of Ghana, said "**I am not African because I was born in Africa but Africa was born in me.**" I take huge pride in being Ghanaian. I spent all of my childhood in Ghana. I would not be the person I am today if I did not grow up there. My culture and heritage is exhibited through the way I dress, the food I cook, the way I talk and act. **Being Ghanaian is who I am;** I can never get rid of this part of me which I cherish so much.

What is your favorite thing about where you are from?

I do not have one favorite thing about Ghana; there are multiple things I love about Ghana. The Ghanaian cuisine is one of my favorite thing about my homeland. Every region of Ghana has its own staple food which makes the Ghanaian cuisine so **diverse and unique.** Ghanaian food is spicy, flavorful and delish. Since I grew up eating Ghanaian food, I cannot live without spicy food. Another favorite thing is the sense of fashion. Across the African continent, **our fashion sense as Africans is uncommon.** Clothes from the continent is made with authentic African print. Styles can range from casual, semi-formal, ceremonial, and formal. African apparel looks chic and sophisticated no matter how one chooses to wear it.

A hidden gem from where you are from:

The Golden stool is a sacred gem that no one knows about or talks about. This golden stool is hidden somewhere in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. History has it that, this golden stool was summoned from the sky to help unify the people of the Ashanti Kingdom during the 17th century. A new king is lowered and raised over the Golden Stool without touching it. **No one could be a legitimate ruler without the stool.** During the Colonial era, a European governor demanded to sit on this sacred stool, but the people of Ashanti did not let him. War eventually broke out; the people of Ashanti came out **victorious.** This proves how precious and important the golden stool means to the people of Ashanti. The golden stool has never been brought out to the public ever since the Golden stool War.



“If you were to ask me ...”

Jocelyn Huey

If you were to ask me where I'm from,
I would tell you that I was born and raised in the suburbs of Chicago.
The milk and honey of the Midwest.

What a privilege it was to grow up in a place where you could buy your way into acceptance.

A place where everything is an investment,
From the clothes you wear to the lessons my parents paid for.
I learned that suburban kids don't like the idea of being different.

Growing up in the midst of white picket fences and privilege meant I forgot the sacrifices it took to get here.

This American dream was handed to me and only American was what I wanted to be.

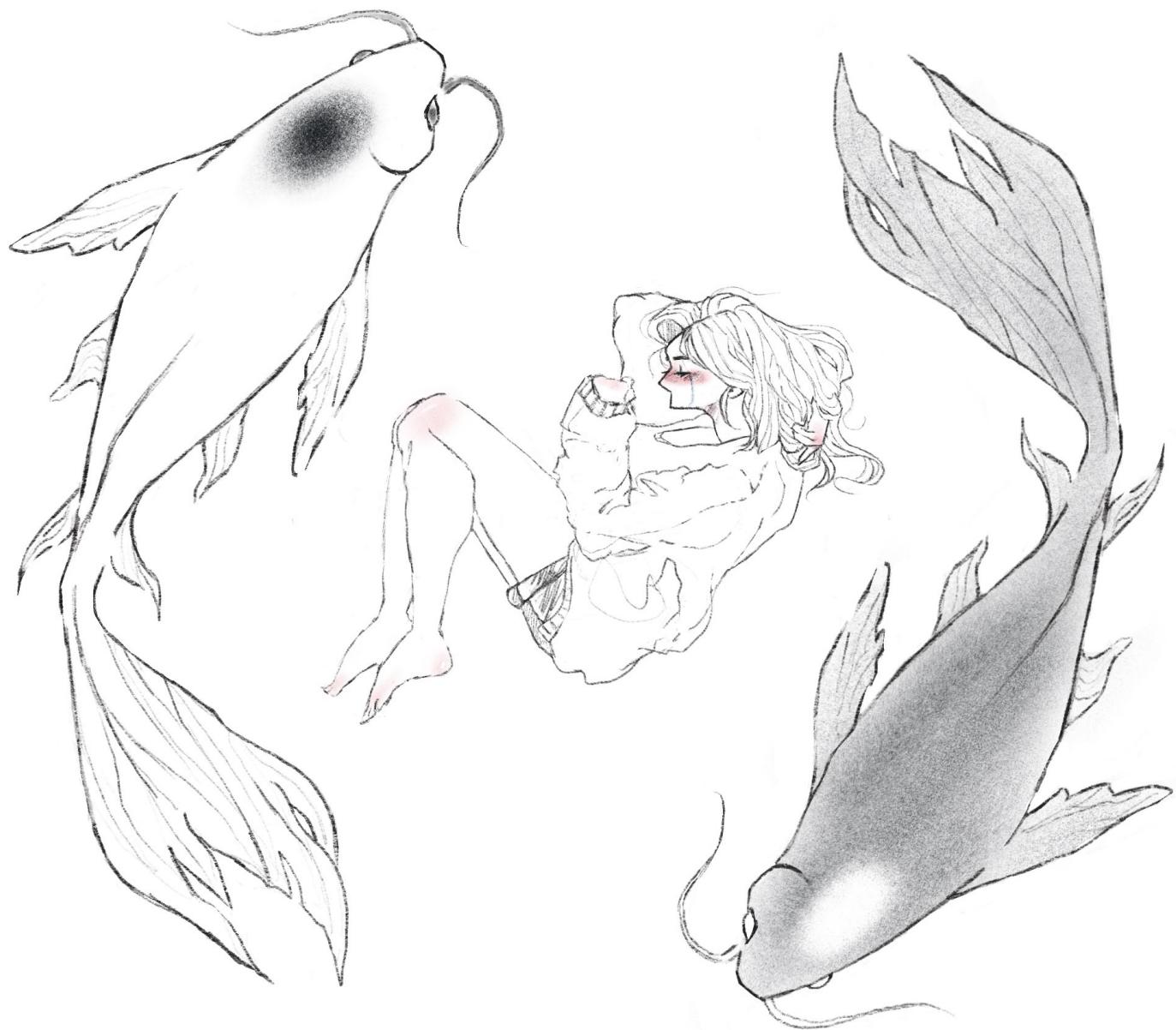
I grew up learning about another man's biased history.
The history my people were never a part of until recently.

I tried to unlearn my culture.
I tried to suppress a part of me to please those around me.

I grew up middle class as the middle man.
Not American enough.
Yet not Asian enough.

My roots scattered between China, Indonesia, and America.
My family name assimilated when my grandfather immigrated.
Hui turned to Huey.
Yet my first name was born English before Chinese.
ABC
Just like me.

So I guess if you were to ask me where I'm from,
I'd tell you
我在美国出生的和长大的。





Let me begin by saying that I was not able to visit my home country for around 12 years. Due to some complications with my parents' divorce, we were ruled unable to leave the country until I turned 18. So, when people asked me "Where are you from?" I had a hard time deciding what to answer. Do I tell them that I've lived near Milwaukee almost my entire life? Or, do I tell them that I was born in Pakistan- that the last time I visited was when I was 6, but I still felt strongly connected? When I am asked about my origins, it used to be very hard for me to explain to people. Yes, I don't speak with an accent and I don't wear a salwar everyday- I definitely say 'ope' all the time! Yet, at the same time, there are moments where I wasn't distinctively "Wisconsin" or even "American". I speak Urdu at home and often watch Bollywood movies, or do whatever I can to make sure a guest is comfortable. I still sometimes get a cultural shock at some things- whether Pakistani or American. With American friends I was too Pakistani, and with Pakistani friends I was too American. I was at this weird limbo for a long time, between these two cultures that often had opposing views and outlooks on life.

Sometimes, one half seems to be more dominant than the other. Now they sort of coexist. Some days I'm definitely more Pakistani and other times I feel very American. After years of trying to figure something out or understand myself I just began to identify as both, a Pakistani-American. My favorite thing about Pakistan is the pride and hospitality that I feel from people there. Something over there just feels real to me. I always meet people that seem genuine with their intentions- I think that they're more of the type to wear their heart on their sleeves and be generous even if they don't have

anything to offer. There's a pride in their richness of culture, respect, and dignity. Then my favorite thing about Wisconsin is sort of similar- but I swear, Wisconsin is the only place where you can rear-end a middle-aged lady and she would bring you some water and not even consider making you pay (true story, it happened to me!). But I definitely love the cold here- I can't stand the heat.

For me, Pakistan and Wisconsin are important. So many of my values and morals have been shaped by the two. I experience so many traditions and different viewpoints from the two. A lot of people have told me that they were surprised that I seemed to love Wisconsin as much as I do- as they automatically thought I would have been more attached to Pakistan, of course not. They both offer so much to me. Being bicultural means being surrounded by two different types of beautiful.

"Let me begin by saying...."

Zainab Manzoor

“i met a boy...”

Anonymous

i met a boy
lesser than a man
who met me
younger than a woman

he saw me
he saw the strength
he saw my strength
he felt fear

he took it from me
he stole my strength
it was my fault
i need to be punished

but i was stronger
stronger than his words
stronger than his actions
and still i grew stronger

i am strong
i am more than his words
i am more than his actions
i am stronger than that
boy, lesser than a man

who am i?
i am a woman
shaped by my past
but not defined by it
i am a woman, stronger,
better, than that boy



Laid to Rest

Anonymous

D works the night shift, stocking shelves at Target. M is a social worker. My sister S is the sweetest you'll meet. K is the family dog and M's Seeing Eye. We rent on Russell Avenue in a duplex above my Grandma. I cruise around the neighborhood on my lowrider with the blue banana seat. My older cousins keep my wardrobe stocked. They deliver the goods in big, black garbage bags. Whatever I don't fit in, I sell. I'm saving to buy a PlayStation 2. M thinks it is funny that I keep my wealth ironed and rubber-banded. But money was always on my mind, and my parent's. M gives all of our money to Coors and Smirnoff, at least that's what I hear D scream.

Mom was fired from her job for telling the truth, kicking us deeper into unspoken but understood poverty. Dad had to start working three jobs. Based off of my calculations he's putting in over sixty

hours a week. Mom kicked Coors and Smirnoff to the curb because they were too expensive but at the curb she picked up Keystone. I can't say I blame her but I can't say I love her. *Save us, oh save us.*



Mom died of an aneurysm. I performed CPR but couldn't bring Her back. I tried to save, oh I tried to save, but death palpates even the brave. I am alone now. I've lost somebody I can't remember. The banana seats and alleyways must have been a dream. Keystone's spilling but not out of the can, life moves on because the new semester just began. The black garbage bag is knotted around my head deflating like my dad's will. The hours of work numb the pain and the bills keep piling; I cannot survive without financial aid, take Her away and I'd surely be dying.



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YOU

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