

VOL 1 | ISSUE 1

mini issue

# OR IG NS

race + ethnicity

## Will the Black Society Continue to be Erased?

Race. A controversial topic in today's society. I'm African black. That shouldn't necessarily be a problem, but it unfortunately evokes a lot of squabble and prejudice in the first world. I didn't choose who I am, but I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world.

Unfortunately, over the past half a century, this bigotry has led to a sudden shift from the communal African community my ancestors grew in, to an envious, competitive one. For the longest time, the white person has been viewed as superior to the person of color. This bias is undeniably existent, and as much as it's not as ugly as it has been in the past, the consequences are indeed hideous.

In the black society, the term 'colorism' has been an adamant issue that needs to be tackled with, especially among the female population, due to the inevitable interactions between dark-skinned women and light-skinned women. The truth is that it is no longer only about the inequity between the black and the white, but also increasingly about the inequity between the black themselves.

Well-known social influencers of the youth have been lightening their skin, imposing the idea that the lighter you are, the more successful you are deemed to be; the more westernized and thus, 'modernized' you are, the more prosperous you'll be in life. In the past and present, the interactions between the 'affluent' white and the 'backward' black have led to the degradation of the embracement of the African ethnicity - the culture, the religion, the language, the dressing, the hair, the skin.

All in the view of becoming like the white, modern world, and gaining their respect rather than their discrimination, for example, President Trump blatantly referring to African nations as 'shithole countries'. Fascinatingly enough, though, is that in the hopes of modernizing, we, Africans, are not working together toward this obtuse goal that is the reality of our world, but instead, individually striving to be our most western selves, which happens to work against us rather than for us.

Competition has become part of who we are - to be the lightest, the richest, the most 'civilized' - forgetting to adore and love ourselves in our skin, and appreciate our black community. We need to open our eyes, be our truest selves, value our culture, and love each other. For our voice to be heard, we need to stand as one, because together we can do so much, and divided we are weak. If you forget your roots, you've lost sight of everything. What have we come to? Will the black society continue to be erased? — DASHA ASHIENGA '20

# Ernesto Lecuona

What I knew:

Tropical islands, 90 miles off the coast of Florida

A communist dictatorship

Where freedom, and everything that comes with it:

Paintings, writing, creativity, individuality, is

Stifled.

A place from which my abuelos emigrated

A country comprised of cherished black and white photos

proudly presented to me whenever I visit Miami

But also of the images on the news,

The same beautiful, haunting 1950 American classics parked along the streets

there in every photo

A country that represents half of me, yet feels distant

A place that I yearned to study, grasp, understand, but didn't know how

My first true glimpse of my family's Cuba was through a piano piece

My abuelita showed me an anthology of songs

each written by her favorite Cuban composer, Ernesto Lecuona

I spent months,

Curiosity fueling learning fueling growth

But I didn't learn the songs, I memorized the songs

Instead, I learned of Cuba, of my abuelos, of me

The music was a lense through which I had never seen Cuba before

A lense that demonstrated the joy, the passion, the pride

Each drop of a hammer against a string within the piano

A vessel, connecting me to my past,

influencing my future

Tropical islands, 90 miles off the coast of Florida

A communist dictatorship

Where freedom, and everything that comes with it:

Paintings, writing, creativity, individuality, is

Stifled.

A place from which my abuelos emigrated

A country comprised of cherished black and white photos

proudly presented to me whenever I visit Miami

But also of the images on the news,

The same beautiful, haunting 1950 American classics parked along the streets

there in every photo

A country that represents half of me, yet feels distant

A place that I yearned to study, grasp, understand, but didn't know how

My first true glimpse of my family's Cuba was through a piano piece

My abuelita showed me an anthology of songs

each written by her favorite Cuban composer, Ernesto Lecuona

I spent months,

Curiosity fueling learning fueling growth

But I didn't learn the songs, I memorized the songs

Instead, I learned of Cuba, of my abuelos, of me

The music was a lense through which I had never seen Cuba before

A lense that demonstrated the joy, the passion, the pride

Each drop of a hammer against a string within the piano

A vessel, connecting me to my past,

influencing my future — ISABELLA MANDELL '21



HOLI  
*MARCH 2016*

Holi is an Indian festival of color celebrated in either February or March to honor the Hindu god Krishna. People throw colored powder at each other and on themselves to celebrate. Usually, a bonfire is lit. This is my family during the 2016 celebration.

— MEDHA ILLINDALA '21



BO KAAP, CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA  
*MARCH 2018*

After the Apartheid, Bo Kaap residents, predominantly Cape Malays (Southeast Asian Muslims), decorated their homes with lively colors as a celebration of previously restricted individualism, and have since kept up the tradition.

— ISABELLA MANDELL '21



# Cuban Black Bean Soup Recipe

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound of dry black beans
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 large green pepper
- 15 stuffed pimiento olives
- 1 large chopped onion
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 small jar of red peppers (pimientos)
- 4 tablespoons vinegar
- 2 tablespoons dry red wine
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon oregano leaves
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt to taste

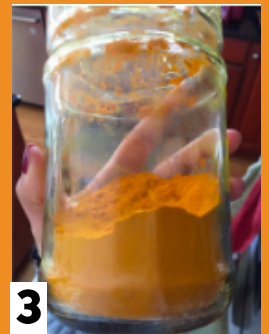
**My abuela's mother created this black bean soup recipe in Cuba, and it has been served at every family Noche Buena (Christmas Eve) since then. — ISABELLA MANDELL '21**

## DIRECTIONS

Soak the black beans in a large pot with 3 cups of water for approximately 1 hour. Bring the water to a boil and add the green pepper and bay leaves. Add more water, as the liquid reduces, and continue boiling until the beans are soft and the liquid thickens (becomes creamy). Then, reduce to a slow simmer. Add the vinegar, wine, sugar, salt, stuffed olives and red pimientos.

# Indian Pantry Staples

1. **Frooti** is an iconic mango juice. Essential when going Indian grocery shopping, the yellow **Frooti** is typically sold as a juice box. If you wanted a larger bottle, **Maaza** is the way to go. Either way, you've found something delicious!
2. **Maggi** are everyone's favorite 2-minute noodles. The spices and vegetables are completely customizable to fit your taste. After being banned for containing high lead concentrations, the noodles are back in stores. Delicious *and* convenient.
3. **Turmeric**, an Indian spice, has become a little more popular in the US recently. It's very common in Indian cooking and prayer ceremonies. Turmeric has great benefits when applied on the skin, but watch out — you can get stained yellow very easily! — *MEDHA ILLINDALA '21*



# sometimes

esinam dunyoh '20

sometimes, birds don't fly.  
it's hard to escape without the means.  
trapped, night and day  
without knowing what it's like  
outside this population.

sometimes, flowers don't bloom.  
a forgotten seed is all it could be.  
seasons come and go  
but that seed stays.  
alone, but unashamed.

sometimes, people don't change.  
a facade of peace can't last eternally.  
a hopeful dream  
is all that remains.  
hushed, waiting for it's time.

but when that time comes,  
one of those few,  
one of some times,  
it's a time to fly.  
to bloom.  
to change.  
because sometimes, they do.



**SUBMIT TO** [ORIGINS@CHOATE.EDU](mailto:ORIGINS@CHOATE.EDU)

**MASTHEAD** » EDITOR-IN-CHIEF // CAMILLE GRANT '21 «  
MANAGING EDITORS // MEDHA ILLINDALA '21 & ISABELLA  
MANDELL '21