

# ROGUE

MONDAY 20TH APRIL 2020



# EDITORIAL BY ZOYA LULU KIRMANI

Welcome to our fourth weekly edition of the Rogue! Our writers have been hard at work, churning out pieces at the usual high standard like there's no tomorrow! Apologies, that may have been a poor choice of words, but I'm sure we're not at the point where the mention of anything remotely apocalyptic strikes a nerve... Right?

This week we bring you a number of fascinating articles, some by familiar faces and others by new additions to the team! We continue to encourage new writers, students and staff to contribute; today you'll find articles by both Mr Parham and Ms Pringle. Mr P is addressing low probability, high impact events, known as Black Swans; Ms P is giving some helpful book recommendations that are 'bizarrely, [they are] less bleak than [they] might seem'. If books aren't so much your scene, let Anastacia Allan's movie review on 'Marriage story' lead you to an enjoyable evening, hopefully full of popcorn and some Sour Patch Kids!

After our very own Vlada and Ark shared their experiences with COVID-19 in Russia and China, we received plenty of positive feedback, as well as requests for similar content. So, on a quest to bring further insights for our avid readers, Ella and I asked our Rogue writers to request 'COVID experiences' from their family and friends overseas. When I tell you the team delivered, they really went all out! They all pitched in and we now have an incredible line up of 'interviews' from all over the globe, including Malaysia, Singapore

and Thailand, in today's issue alone. Stay tuned for more international stories.

Adina Browne takes a different angle on the pandemic. She explains a concept that's been floating around social media a little bit lately, mass hysteria. She looks at what it is, what the effects are and if it's roiling already murky waters.

On another note, you might be wondering why Tony Stark, otherwise known as Iron Man, is plastered all over the front of today's issue. Firstly, I'd be wondering why you are wondering... does he not deserve to be loved 3000? Secondly, buckle up because I'm sure you'll be seeing more of the gang in upcoming issues; Alexandra Hugget will be giving you her stance on how the Russo Brothers treated all our beloved Avengers, and whether or not it was deserved. For her first piece, she decided to look at the man who started, and ended, the first phases of the 'MCU'.

Iris Nuredini will educate you on the wonders of the sneaker world and the role Nike has played in the industry. She discusses what makes this market so desirable and offers a deeper evaluation of some peculiar designs. As a sneakerhead, I especially enjoyed her article, but even from a layman's perspective, it's a wonderful read.

Last, but not at all least, Grace Scott shares some wonderful news about a new development in cancer research!

Enjoy flicking through this week's issue! We would love to hear your feedback, requests and suggestions so do email us at the addresses listed below. Thank you to both our readers and our writers, we hope you're all doing well and staying safe, just keep swimming :)

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## ROGUE NEEDS YOU!

We're looking for contributors, whether that's weekly or just a one off, no journalistic experience is required we're open to all! Rogue is not just looking for articles, we're also looking for any content you feel others might enjoy. Have you heard or seen something funny on Microsoft Teams, got a picture of a pet working from home, heard some good gossip, learnt a new skill you'd like to share, want to set a quiz, got a good (clean) joke or just got a question that needs to be answered? We want to hear from you!

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# A MARRIAGE STORY

You cannot simply watch 'A Marriage Story'; talk about how good a movie it was and then move on to decide the next big movie you plan to watch. Whilst I understand not every movie is for everybody, I'm yet to hear a negative review.

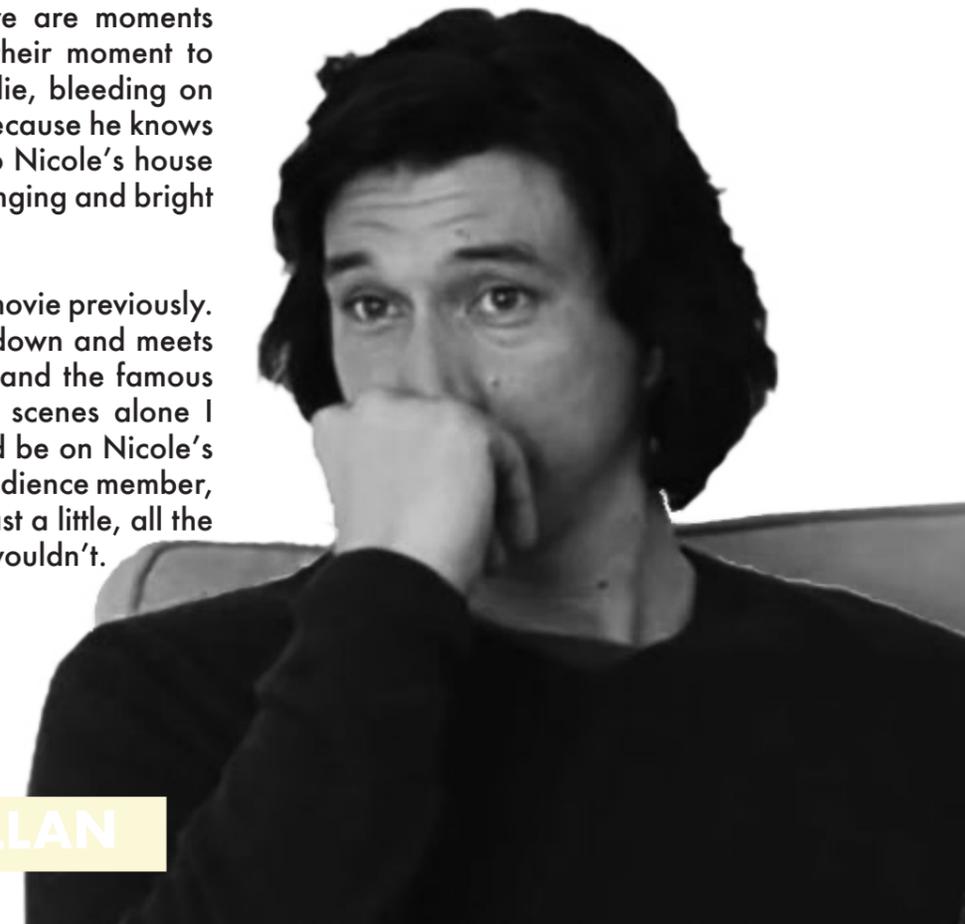
The movie starts with two love letters. Each partner of marriage voicing what they love about the other, and then they continue with their divorce. As an audience, it makes that truth even more painful than it must be but not more painful than it should. It is a movie often praised on its realness. Right from the start, it is not emotional in any of the places that feel right in a big movie. Nicole's tears are quick and out the blue, after an argument with Charlie and during the courtroom scene neither of them say anything at all. In marriage story the picture is grainy, all the mise-en-scene is simple and there isn't much variation in camera angle and movement, it is raw. There are scenes where the silence is uncomfortable, scenes don't always end when the dialogue does, the audience is forced to feel the full emotion, awkwardness and pain of the characters. Then there are moments which rob the audience of their moment to grieve. We jump from Charlie, bleeding on the kitchen floor, defeated, because he knows he's lost the divorce battle, to Nicole's house which is lively and fun, with singing and bright colours. It feels ugly.

I had seen two clips from the movie previously. The scene where Nicole sits down and meets her lawyer for the first time, and the famous argument scene. From these scenes alone I began the movie believing I'd be on Nicole's side and yet I wasn't. As an audience member, I wanted Charlie to win at least a little, all the while being fully aware, he wouldn't.

Each actor moves slightly away from the screenplay, enough that it didn't feel scripted. 'A Marriage Story' is 'A love story about divorce.' It is raw, uncomfortable, emotional and feels like an invasion of privacy.

The film is perfectly timed at 2 hours and 17 minutes with an ending, though sweet, that left me feeling as though I had given apart of myself to Adam Drivers character - Charlie. The movie starts how it almost ends. Which I would usually find cliché. Their child reads out Nicole's love letter to Charlie before he takes over. A love letter Nicole refused to read at the time. However, it isn't cliché. It makes the movie even more perfect.

So, when I finished 'A Marriage Story,' I didn't need or want to see any more additional storyline. I didn't want to intrude on this family's life any more than I already had. 'A Marriage Story' is a movie so perfectly made from the still angles to the perfect screenwriting whilst you aren't left wanting more, you're left wanting to watch it again.



BY ANASTACIA ALLAN

# STARK'S SACRIFICE

BY ALEXANDRA HUGGETT



**SPOILER  
ALERT!**

Tony Stark ("the genius billionaire playboy philanthropist" better known as Iron Man) is the godfather of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) as we know it; his trilogy markedly changed the comic book cinematic world and birthed the modern-day superhero genre. It makes sense that many fans were shocked at his death in the record-breaking film *Avengers: Endgame*. Many questions ran through the audience's mind, but most importantly we wondered why exactly the Russo Brothers decided that an appropriate ending for him would be death?

Iron man's storyline is arguably the most tumultuous out of the main three - Captain America, Iron Man and Thor. Even before his cinematic entrance, his storyline was marked by the death of his parents at the hands of the winter soldier, and his arc through the movies was laced with tragedy. For those of you less versed in the MCU, here's a quick rundown: he was betrayed by his father figure, kidnapped, tortured/mutilated, carried a nuke through a wormhole, had his house dropped on him, had his mind messed with by a witch, was left to die in Siberia by his 'friend', watched two people that he loved 'die'; and that's to say the least.

A hero who goes through unspeakable trauma and actually displays symptoms of PTSD is practically unheard of in any fictional universe. To associate these traits with the leading character of the MCU gives hope to people like him. What sets Tony apart from other superheroes is that there was no radioactive spider bite, super serum or gamma radiation. Iron Man is the result of a singular man's genius brain - he's "just a man in a can". His fallibility makes him more relatable and evokes pathos.

The Avengers are the worst thing that happened to Tony in some ways. He went from building them each a personalised floor in his tower and having the promise of defeating anything 'together' as a team, to suddenly disparaging and criticising him; everything's all his fault, always his fault, right, Stark? And then he's lying in an abandoned hydra facility in Siberia after his 'friend' stuck a shield in

his arc reactor. They turned him from having the effervescent drive of an Avenger, to the determinism of a dying man.

In *Avengers: Endgame* we were therefore relieved to see that he had somewhat recovered from his past trauma and settled down with the love of his life, Pepper Potts, and have an adorable child, Morgan, together. Though, let's not forget that he practically adopted Peter Parker - Spiderman, as his protégé in *Captain America: Civil War*. The fact that he went through so many tragedies and still managed to settle down and create some semblance of a "normal life" is inspirational.

For me, Tony Stark represents second chances and recovery, no matter how many times you've messed up before. To survivors of trauma and people with mental illness, Tony Stark represents the ideal life that you aspire to attain, where you do not just survive your trauma, but you heal. To kill him off just as he settled down is a disservice because it presents the notion that this life isn't attainable for people like him, at least not permanently.

Something that makes it more upsetting is that Tony had finally reached a point where he wanted to live. In almost every movie before *Endgame* he had no qualms about sacrificing himself if it meant the greater good won. In *Endgame* he stated that he didn't want to die, he just wanted to bring everyone back. To not die trying. He wanted more time with his family. Yet when it came down to it, he decided to save a world that never truly loved, respected or deserved him.

Anthony Edward Stark, Earth's best defender, the man who built the MCU out of "a box of scraps", died with pain in his eyes and regret behind his smile, but at the same time we are able to see a subtle glimpse of content, of being at peace with the knowledge that Thanos, his worst nightmare since Ultron, was gone for good. While I am adamant that his death was unjustified, it's comforting knowing that he died with some semblance of peace.

The sneaker industry has been right under our noses and we never looked down. Sneakers are an everyday choice of footwear for millions around the world; whether that's for comfort, accessibility or the lack of accessibility. Rare and limited shoes are a sneakerhead's gold in this almost \$2 billion market where the resell of such shoes make up most of it. Nike is the number one brand for such investments and has ingeniously curated such a market simply by controlling supply and distribution according to demand to their own benefit. This is no different to any other collectible market such as the Birkin bag by Hermès, contemporary art, watches and jewellery. It has provided thousands of people with lifelong passions fuelled by today's celebrities. For example, rapper, Travis Scott may simply wear a pair of Jordans to an event or in an Instagram picture and the once low resell point of perhaps \$200 - \$300, can all of a sudden shoot up to \$1000 + or even just under \$10,000. It's no secret that the shoe industry loves Jordans. Jordans came about when famous 90's basketball player Michael Jordan was made a pair of Jordan 1's exclusively for his games in 1984 but was then later released to the public that same year. Many different popular variations of the shoe include, Air Jordan, Jordan 4s, 6s, 3s etc. The basketball player very nearly signed a deal with Adidas but was refused due to the company thinking no one could relate to a 7-foot-tall man. Nike pounced at the chance and a deal was signed with the soon to be best NBA player ever (arguably).

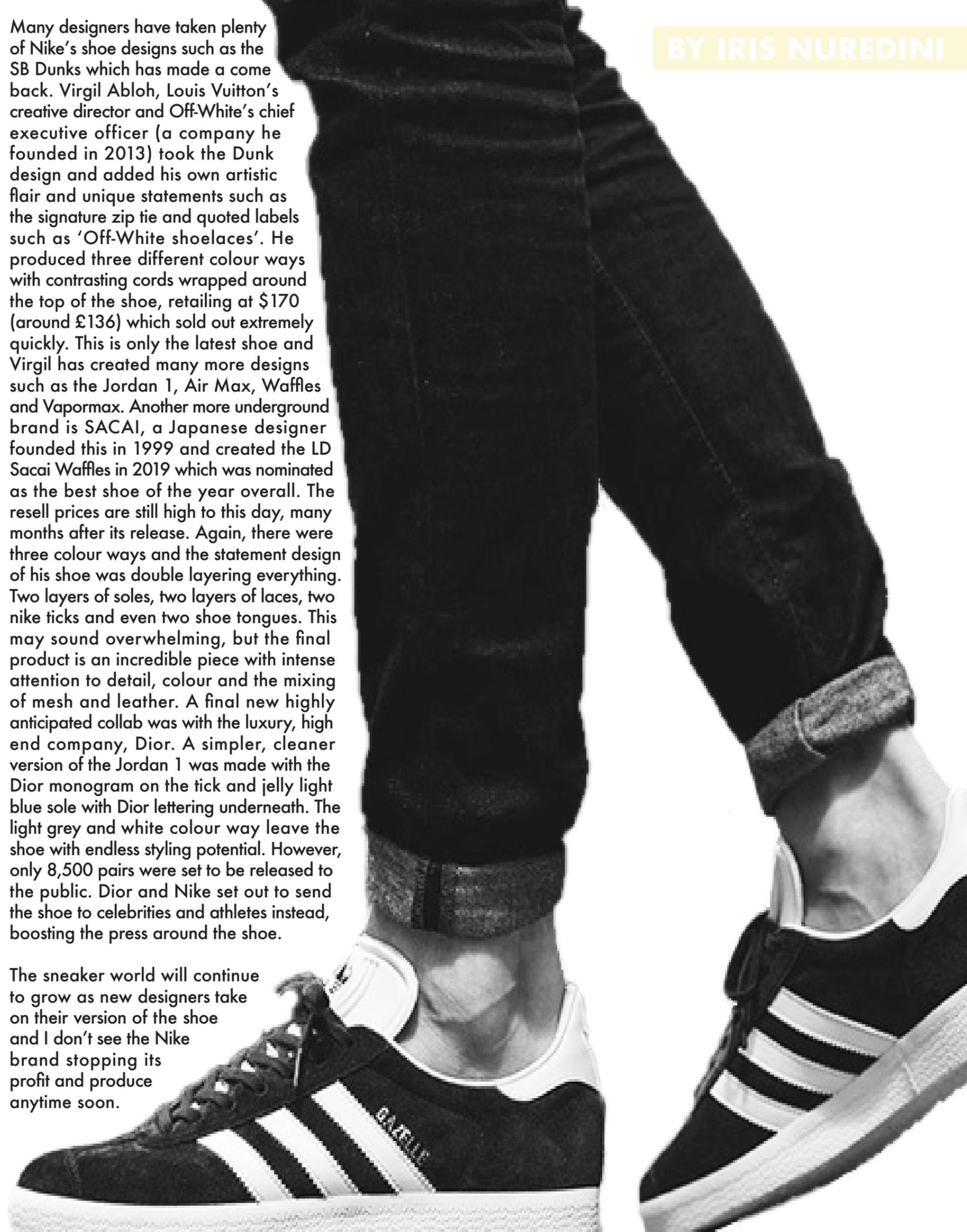
Nike did originally have the famous outlandish Kanye West for a while selling some crazy popular shoes that changed the game, but he left to set up Yeezy with Adidas instead. Yeezy's market was and still is an incredibly huge and profitable one but now it seems to have slowed down due to lacklustre products and constant releases bringing down the rarity. A large social media influencer is Kylie Jenner, no doubt. She was an Adidas ambassador until 31st December 2019 and was finally free to wear clothing and shoes by popular athletic brands. It was no surprise she was drawn to Nike and with her large following of 159 million people on Instagram, this only increased Nike's popularity and demand.

Many designers have taken plenty of Nike's shoe designs such as the SB Dunks which has made a comeback. Virgil Abloh, Louis Vuitton's creative director and Off-White's chief executive officer (a company he founded in 2013) took the Dunk design and added his own artistic flair and unique statements such as the signature zip tie and quoted labels such as 'Off-White shoelaces'. He produced three different colour ways with contrasting cords wrapped around the top of the shoe, retailing at \$170 (around £136) which sold out extremely quickly. This is only the latest shoe and Virgil has created many more designs such as the Jordan 1, Air Max, Waffles and VaporMax. Another more underground brand is SACAI, a Japanese designer founded this in 1999 and created the LD Sacai Waffles in 2019 which was nominated as the best shoe of the year overall. The resell prices are still high to this day, many months after its release. Again, there were three colour ways and the statement design of his shoe was double layering everything. Two layers of soles, two layers of laces, two Nike ticks and even two shoe tongues. This may sound overwhelming, but the final product is an incredible piece with intense attention to detail, colour and the mixing of mesh and leather. A final new highly anticipated collab was with the luxury, high end company, Dior. A simpler, cleaner version of the Jordan 1 was made with the Dior monogram on the tick and jelly light blue sole with Dior lettering underneath. The light grey and white colour way leave the shoe with endless styling potential. However, only 8,500 pairs were set to be released to the public. Dior and Nike set out to send the shoe to celebrities and athletes instead, boosting the press around the shoe.

The sneaker world will continue to grow as new designers take on their version of the shoe and I don't see the Nike brand stopping its profit and produce anytime soon.



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# WHY DIDN'T WE SEE IT COMING?

If you were to ask, 'What is a swan?' replies might include 'white birds', 'elegant birds', perhaps also 'with an aggressive streak'. But what about a black swan? They exist but are rarely cited as an answer.

The term black swan is a metaphor for the outliers – the unusual and unlikely events – in our life which seem beyond the possibility of regular expectation. It is an event which carries an extreme impact and, despite our inability to see them coming, are events which we will then normalise afterwards as a way of explaining why they happened.

The combination of low probability and high impact make black swans a puzzle in day-to-day life. Indeed, if you had asked an 'expert' to forecast major changes between 2019-2021 their answer would have been based on normal routine and not included black swan events. We are blind to randomness and uncertainty.

However, these 'surprising' black swan events are not actually so rare. People face many such events in their lives; some positive, i.e. the invention of smart phone technology, the internet or advanced medical cures; some negative such as financial market crashes, natural disasters, plane crashes, terrorist attacks or pandemics. And the latter we always remember more clearly.

Why do these events have such an impact? Take COVID-19 in the UK. Why have we been hit so hard? Is it simply a failure to act quickly? There have been numerous past global pandemics – perhaps not all like coronavirus, but they are there. The UK even prepared and ran a simulation for a pandemic in 2016 involving government, the NHS and elements of the military, so why were we not ready? Unfortunately, the answer may be found in something less surprising. Our lives are consumed by less significant (in retrospect), more frequently occurring events and these sit at the forefront of our thinking and planning. Since 2016, for example, the UK has been concerned with a myriad of more immediate events: global conflicts, the election of President Trump, religious conflict and our own internal politics, namely Brexit. The news media reflects these, of course, and our eye is kept locked on their rolling coverage. Meanwhile, other distractions – the internet, TV and social media – flow 24-hours-a-day reducing our ability to see past

the mundane and leaving us little time to consider the potential for black swan events.

Having studied the risk of large-scale natural disasters on populations, one of my biggest concerns is always a failure to prepare, regardless of past events and experiences. In 2017 the people of Dominica in the Caribbean were affected by Hurricane Maria, a Category 5 hurricane, the strongest type. Despite experiencing many passing hurricanes, Dominican authorities were reluctant to prepare for future threats like this often due to cost or political reasons. These 'distractions' led to a failure to maintain hurricane shelters, practice drills or develop emergency aid supplies all of which increased the impact. After 2017, the government promised to 'build-back better' but questions remain in the population as to whether they would be able to respond to a future event (despite their increased likelihood as a result of climate change).

Another element of preparing for uncertain events is cultural. When we look at the recent impact of coronavirus on Royal Russell some of our community were judgmental towards those who chose to adopt the use of masks early on, for example. I wonder whether, on reflection, this event will mean we behave differently next time?

One success of COVID-19 has been our ability to change our own behaviour, adapt to our situation and improve our awareness of hygiene, such as the frequent and thorough washing of hands and the maintaining of social distance. But will it continue (if it needs to continue), or will we simply revert to our norm quickly once the threat has 'passed'? Will we be able to say our experience of this black swan event has changed us in a positive way?

We cannot prepare for all uncertainty but, equally, we should not forget or undervalue our experiences in these times and take stock of what has worked and what was valuable. Ultimately, these black swans can make us more resilient in the future.

For further information about Black Swan events read "The Black Swan" by Nassim Nicolas Taleb.

BY MR PARHAM

# MASS HYSTERIA

Mass hysteria, also referred to as collective obsessional behaviour, is a phenomenon where a large group of people believe that they are likely to be in danger as a result of (possibly untrue) rumours or psychological distress. It is also a type of psychogenic conversion disorder – a mental condition where more than one person suffers from the same/ similar neurological symptoms and behaviours that are unexplainable. Mass hysteria can be split into different categories, one being where multiple people are under the impression that they may be suffering from the same illness and may even develop those physical symptoms without even having the illness - known as mass psychogenic illness hysteria or epidemic hysteria.

Previous occurrences of mass hysteria include the Salem Witch trials of 1682-93, where women began experiencing seizures that they claimed were a result of the actions of local 'witches', as well as the Tanzania Laughter Epidemic of 1962 where more than 90 students at a girls school had laughing fits for over 2 weeks in some cases. More recently, in 2012, around 1,000 people in a small part of Sri Lanka were admitted to hospital with similar symptoms of coughing fits, rashes and headaches. It could not be medically explained, as the 'illness' spread alongside the panic surrounding it, and the patients recovered almost miraculously.

Mass hysteria has been used inappropriately to explain unfavourable or widespread behaviours performed by a group of people, such as riots and trends in fashion. To clarify this, Professor Wessley of King's College London suggested the following 5 principles that correctly define an occurrence or incident as a result of mass hysteria:

- It is an outbreak of abnormal illness behaviour that cannot be explained by physical disease
- It affects people who would not normally behave in this fashion
- It excludes symptoms deliberately provoked in groups gathered for that purpose

- It excludes collective manifestations used to obtain a state of satisfaction unavailable singly, such as fads, crazes, and riots

- The link between the [individuals experiencing collective obsessional behaviour] must not be coincidental

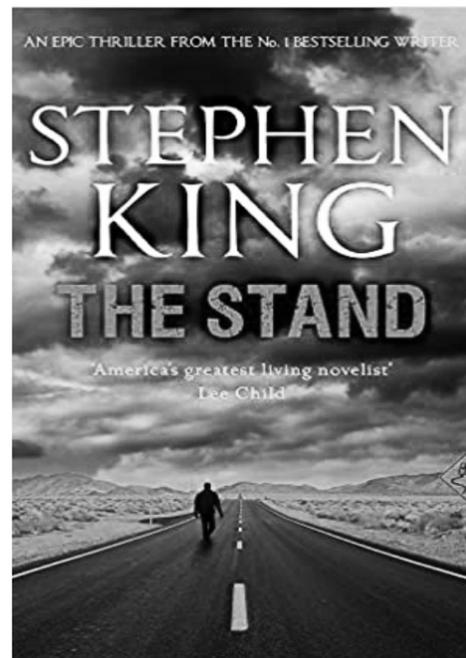
So, is what many people are experiencing now, concerning the management of and reaction to coronavirus, an example of mass hysteria? Another possibility is that the circumstance occurring now is a case of 'Groupthink', a different phenomenon where a group of people will come to an impulsive decision, instead of assessing the situation and information present in order to come to a proper conclusion. Instead, people have been panic buying food and items like toilet paper in bulk across the world – causing shortages that particularly impact vulnerable people. However, as all forms of media have contributed to panicked reactions, some people argue that others may be being affected by mass hysteria - falsely developing the symptoms of coronavirus due to their minds tricking them, convincing them that they have the disease. Typically, Groupthink and mass hysteria cases occur together as anxiety and fear spreads from person to person, causing people to look to each other for quick advice in times of need – especially with unprecedented situations like the current pandemic.

Above all, mass hysteria has proven to be dangerous as it can cause unnecessary worry and stress and can impact both people's mental and physical wellbeing. Many people during pandemics become very anxious and cannot behave calmly. With the purpose of preventing yourself and others from being impacted by both mass hysteria and Groupthink, you should try your best to remain calm in order to act logically. This could be done by using mindfulness techniques or even by ensuring that you are not listening to or spreading false information and are using trusted sources only.

BY ADINA BROWNE

# A JOURNAL OF THE PLAGUE YEAR 2020 EDITION

We are living through what might be more politely termed as 'unusual times'. However, there is nothing new under the sun, and many writers over the years have lived through similar times and documented their experiences. While some people seek escapism through reading, others turn to books to make sense of the world around them, and look for hope, empathy and a shared experience. Some writers have lived through plagues and epidemics, and others have imagined what the world would be like if – or perhaps when – the worst was to happen. Some 'plague' novels are literal tales of disease, while others use illness explore other themes such as oppression, fascism, xenophobia, but also the triumph of the human spirit in times of adversity. Now, books about plagues, epidemics and pandemics are selling faster than ever as people turn to fiction to provide them with some comfort from reality, and perhaps some tips for making sense of the situation we currently find ourselves in.



## The Decameron – Boccaccio

This collection of tales was first written in the 14th century and was a huge influence on Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. In this book, ten people take shelter outside of Florence, while the Black Death runs rampant in the city. To pass the time, they each tell a story every night (except on Holy days and a day off each week for chores), totalling 100 stories across a two-week period. The stories themselves are hugely varied and often philosophical, exploring the vagaries of fortune and how life can change so quickly. This is something that many of us can relate to!

## The Plague – Camus

Albert Camus is not a man known for cheery books, and this is no exception. It tells the story of a plague sweeping through the French Algerian city of Oran, where the town is sealed off, travel is prohibited, and the only means of communication is through telegrams. The townsfolk gradually become isolated and unhappy away from those they love. But as time passes and the plague recedes, the town gates reopen, and people are reunited with their loved ones.

## The Masque of the Red Death – Edgar Allan Poe

A short story this time, about a wealthy man who fears a plague, and gathers all of his powerful friends within his abbey to shelter, ignoring the suffering of the general population. Whilst safely locked away from the dangers of the plague, the rich man hosts masquerade parties, but discovers that one mysterious guest is not what he seems. There are lots of interpretations of this story, such as the futility of trying to control everything or the dangers of selfishness.

How long will it be before we start seeing novels based on recent events? A Canadian director has already made a film inspired by recent events and exploring the dangers of panic and xenophobia, so perhaps there will be more to follow.

## A Journal of the Plague Year – Defoe

This was first published in 1722, but the events recount the bubonic plague of London in 1665. Having read this recently, I was immediately struck by the similarities between the way the plague was handled in 1665 and how we are living now. Any sign of infection in your home in 1665? You were locked in for 40 days, often with a guard outside to make sure you didn't try to sneak out – perhaps our lockdown isn't so bad after all. Perhaps you might think that Londoners of the past wouldn't be panic buying and stockpiling, but '...many Families foreseeing the Approach of the Distemper, laid up Stores of Provisions, sufficient for their whole Families, and shut themselves up, and that so entirely, that they were neither seen or heard of, till the Infection was quite ceased...' Sounds rather familiar...

## The Stand – Stephen King

I first read this behemoth when I was 13 and tore through all 1000+ pages of it in next to no time. In this novel, a superflu hits America and then the rest of the world with devastating consequences. Near the start of the novel is a fascinating (yet chilling) chapter where we watch the rapid spread of the superflu from one person to another as they go about their daily lives – at the swimming pool, at the gas station... you get the idea (Stephen King has recently posted a link to a reading of this chapter online here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jwN5vYGizws>). Whilst this may seem like a depressing book, it is actually a fascinating story of good and evil, as the survivors of the plague band together in two separate groups. It is well worth a read if you happen to have a bit of time on your hands!

# WINNER THER WER WS

## THAILAND

As we all know, this deadly virus is constantly spreading. Nowadays, I find it quite challenging to relax because there is this feeling of worry and fear inside of me. I honestly do not know what the results would be and how this virus could affect my family and the people I care about in the near future. Honestly, I know a lot of people who have confidence in being prepared for this virus, but in reality, this confidence is built up on high expectations of our healthcare. That everything would just come out as fine without any consequences. It is irritating to see some people in Thailand not wearing masks and simply not isolating themselves like they should. Though it feels strange being back home for such a long period of time, because I'm used to staying at boarding school in the UK rather than at home, and everything with online schooling is really difficult because of the lack of motivation sometimes.

Therefore, my government has been taking this situation really seriously. They have shut down all of the shopping centers, to prevent any crowded places in the capital. This really changed attitudes of many people because now the citizens go out to buy specific groceries and medicine without wasting their time out in the open. This outbreak further affected the citizens of Thailand because there is this spread of paranoia and fear about potentially being exposed to the virus, so it caused many people to take this situation more seriously. I feel that the government is doing the great job in containing the pandemic in Thailand. Even just by reducing feelings of fear and stress as much as possible.

Though their simple messages to not panic and avoid ruthlessly buying necessities were really useless at the start because it didn't change the situation in any type of way. In addition, the Thai government has announced that workers whose employment has been affected by the current situation will receive a fair amount of money in order to maintain their lifestyle. However, these people were chosen

at random. In other words, citizens who are struggling with their work have filled out their details and the government, sends money to citizens chosen at random. So, in some cases, Thai citizens who are seriously struggling financially are not receiving money to help support their families, whereas wealthier people are receiving extra credits due to the policy even though they are not the majority in need. Therefore, I believe that the poorer citizens should receive more money from the government according to their damaged employment due to the COVID-19.

In Thailand, many citizens are dealing with the outbreak by simply wearing masks and using hand sanitizers, as well as isolating themselves as much as possible. Many employed people have transferred their offices home, not literally, and are using an online systems to attend meetings and even buy groceries so they get delivered into their houses. My family is avoiding leaving our house unless it's an emergency in order to avoid getting any direct contact with COVID-19 and to potentially put my grandparents at risk as they live with us. Also, we use alcohol to sterilize the house at least once a week to prevent any type of potential risk.

Being in the quarantine is strange because of a lot of limitations and lack of freedom, however, as I study abroad and not see my family as often as I used to before moving to England, spending more time with them is definitely the best thing about being in the quarantine. Although, due to having my friends in other countries because of the boarding school, I cannot see them until this situation resolves so I miss them quite a lot.

Angel Tako

# MALAYSIA

I usually live and go to school in Liverpool, UK, but the virus pandemic has caused my parents to worry, regarding the capability of the NHS dealing with patients. Because of this, I have returned home to Malaysia and I am currently completing my school year online, therefore you can say that corona has affected me massively.

I live a very busy life and constantly meet people and walk places, so living at home during lockdown has been very hard since I can't leave my house and I have to interact with my friends online. Though it's a sort of blessing in disguise as coming home means I get to spend a lot of time with family. Living abroad means that I don't see my family as often and not for long periods of time.

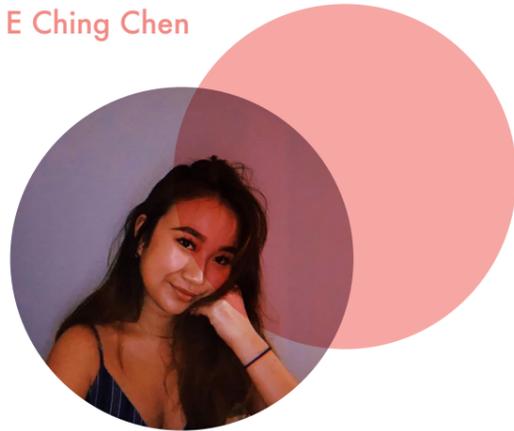
I am frustrated that my life has been put on hold and very scared since there is so much uncertainty in my life right now. I am not sure whether I will be able to return to the UK to complete my final year at university and I'm very sad at the thought of having it robbed from me. I am also ashamed of feeling like this because my problems and worries are superficial compared to what key workers and health workers are going through, not knowing whether they will be alive the next day. I am complaining in the comforts and safety of my own house and they're very privileged thoughts.

I think my government has dealt with the situation well and implemented regulations that I believe the UK should have done earlier on. However, I think my government is lenient towards religious gatherings and may be sympathetic towards future religious events which should not be allowed. I think Malaysians have acted responsibly towards the regulations and responded well to the outbreak. Whilst the panic buying was expected, the current behavior in supermarkets is very civilized and strict. Everyone is being very positive and encouraging others to stay at home.

I have not left the house since returning from the UK and I spray Betadine spray every time I cough as a precaution. My family and I take vitamins and other health supplements too. We also buy food from local and small businesses to provide income to lower class citizens support our community.

The best thing is how my exams are affected. Instead of timed, closed book exams, the university has allowed me to submit written assignments, which I perform better in and would help improve my overall marks. The worst thing about quarantine is the lack of freedom I have and that my life has been put on pause.

E Ching Chen



# SINGAPORE

In March, I had to leave my boarding school in the UK early to go back to Singapore as the situation worsened. When I came back to Singapore from the UK, I was issued a 'stay at home' notice, which meant that I had to return to my home immediately after landing at the airport and couldn't leave the house for 14 days. However, because I live with my grandfather, who is considered a person at high risk of catching COVID-19, I was put up in a hotel room instead for the two weeks. Because of the 'circuit breaker' measures that the government has recently implemented (which shut down non-essential services) my family has mostly been stuck at home. When I'm in Singapore, I normally meet my friends or study at a public library, but because of the coronavirus I cannot do those things. Once a week, one person in the family goes out to buy groceries, but other than that, everyone stays inside. My siblings and I have online learning, which is difficult because we have to share the Wi-Fi with not only each other, but also both our parents who both have work as well.

The COVID-19 pandemic is unlike any situation many of us have been in before. I hope it improves in the coming months, and a vaccine is developed quickly so we no longer fear the virus as much as we do now.

I think the government did well in keeping everyone informed. While fake news circulated widely over local social media, the government kept the public up to date via WhatsApp messages. These messages included an update on the number of cases that day, a summary of new policies implemented (if there were any) and debunking of fake news that was spreading. The government has handled the outbreak well, but in my opinion, an earlier lockdown could have potentially prevented many cases. Singapore's lockdown came late compared to many other countries.

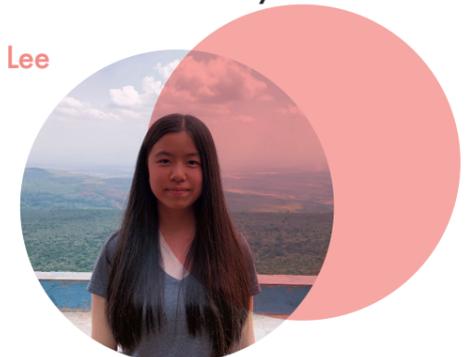
I think citizens have largely dealt with the outbreak quite well. The SARS epidemic in 2003 and the H1N1 influenza in 2009 provided some relevant experience for Singaporeans, so many have an idea of what to do during these uncertain times.

As part of the 'Circuit Breaker' measures, I have stopped going outside other than for essential purposes, such as buying groceries. I have kept myself busy by studying for my end of term exams, which are in a month's time. Although personal protective equipment (PPE) is important to have, healthcare workers on the front line are the ones providing care for the COVID-19 patients, and many of them have a limited number of masks. We can combat this by donating money to non-profit organisations so they can buy PPE for the people who are putting themselves at risk for our health and safety.

The Singapore Red Cross has encouraged people, on social media, to continue donating blood. When cases began emerging in Singapore, the blood stock for several blood types plummeted and so many people began sharing the Red Cross' posts on Facebook. Thanks to the community, the blood stock rose to a healthy level again and people with conditions such as thalassaemia can continue to have regular blood transfusions. As well as this, early into the outbreak, the government introduced an app called TraceTogether. It enabled mobile phones to automatically leave signals, so if someone using the app had caught the virus, people who had been in close proximity to them would be easier to contact and trace. This has been proven to be useful for contact tracing in Singapore and has helped to minimise risk in communities as close contacts can be contacted and isolated quickly.

The best thing is probably being able to catch up on all my schoolwork, but not being able to go outside as often and see my friends is the worst.

Emma Lee



# MIRACLE BLOOD TESTS?

BY GRACE SCOTT

While the pandemic continues and everyone is feeling rather down, there has been a huge scientific discovery. A new blood test that can not only detect cancer, but different types; including, breast, ovarian, pancreatic, colorectal and lung.

It works using a type of DNA released by tumour cells, which sheds into the blood, where it is cell free (cfDNA). The test detects DNA that is specifically from cancer cells using changes to the DNA -the addition of a chemical called a methyl group, which is associated with tumour growth. Healthcare professionals isolate the cfDNA from the blood sample and sequence it to find the methylated parts. They then feed the results into a computer that can recognise DNA from cancer and non-cancer cells. The computer can then predict whether a person has cancer and even what type it might be.

The study, which is part of a larger study of 15,000 people, tested the blood of more than 4,000 people, roughly half of which had cancer.

The test was accurate in 93% of the samples. The researchers included over 50 types of cancer in the study. The test could also accurately predict where in the body the cancer had developed in 96% of the samples. The false positive rate was 0.7% whereas breast cancer screening has a false positive rate of approximately 10%.

Although this test is still under development to improve the accuracy, it is a huge step for scientists and patients alike.

