

Max Himpe



"I was born in Belgium & grew up in London since age 3. Weirdly, I can't vote in any of the countries I care for. In Belgium, I have no community other than family, since I left so young. I care so much about the UK & Brexit, but can do nothing about it politically because I wasn't born there. Just when I was becoming a "Londoner" & involved in community work, I left for Yale. I've spent 2 years grappling with American politics, Yale's relationship to New Haven & other issues I had no knowledge of before. I've become so passionate about the things I've learned, I forget my VISA expires in 3 years. I invest so much time immersing myself in the present & catching up on all this knowledge, it's hard sometimes because I don't feel I can fully be anywhere without eventually leaving.

I plan on being in New Haven for the summer & won't be home until August. Though I don't usually believe in national sensibility, there's definitely something I really miss about London, its norms & what it means to just be in the city. One of them is pub culture. Pubs are democratic spaces, where the elderly coalesce with artists & businessmen alike. I can't think of anyone I know back home who doesn't frequent them & yet it's something that does not exist in my life here.

In my musical improv comedy group at Yale, we work a lot on rhyming in songs & it's hard sometimes because the "american pronunciation" of so many words is different - like "chance & romance" don't rhyme in British English but does in American English.

As someone studying anthropology, I try to be cognizant of my surroundings. There's moments where I think I've grown here, but don't know exactly why. For example, to be queer has its own vocabulary here that I'd never

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encountered. Americans have so many expanded ideas, that I probably wouldn't have gotten back home. I can't tell if that's because queer friends & I are all young, all Yalies, or all in the US? Similarly, by being here I realize how complicated and painful the state of this country is- but I also don't know if it's due to my classes, the people I'm around, or just how I see the world. It all blurs." Max Himpe, Yale College '21 #HumansOfOISS

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