

# AMP

october 2022 | volume 19 | issue 2 | [ampatutd.com](http://ampatutd.com)

## Comet Election: Enarc Rises

We've got **99 PROBLEMS** and  
**88RISING** is all of them.

**CHURCH** and **COSPLAY** have more  
in common than you think.

Do you really have to  
**APOLOGIZE** when you're  
**NEVER WRONG?**



# AMP

## Editors' Desk

### Voting Good, Monarchy Bad

Happy Halloween, Comets! We're almost halfway through the semester and some spooky things have been happening. Firstly, the British monarchy had a huge change in leadership with Queen Elizabeth dying and her son King Charles III taking her place. Many have taken this time to express their thoughts on the unsavory history of Britain's royal family, particularly with colonization and imperialism. Even we here at AMP have our own questions. Now that the Queen has passed, can Britain finally return the extremely rare jewels they stole from various parts of the world to make the Queen's outfit shiny? Starting with the priceless Koh-I-Noor diamond stolen from India during the period England colonized, persecuted, exploited, and committed other human rights violations against India and its people. We just think if England (and to be fair, most of Western Europe) wants to be remembered for more than being a thieving, imperialist, racist country that forced its greedy hands into other nations and caused irreversible damage, they should probably start by returning what they stole. They can also go ahead and return the largest clear-cut diamond recorded in the world, the "Great Star of Africa". Also known as Cullinan I, this diamond was stolen from South Africa while it was — you guessed it — a British colony. When they're not being used to accessorize unelected state leaders, both diamonds can be viewed on display in the Jewel House in the London Tower, so ordinary people can still marvel at the opulence of imperialism. What could more effectively show how proud Britain is of the atrocities they committed than proudly displaying their conquests? And before we start getting crazy and believing these extremely rare gems were a "gift" to the Queen, let's remember: A colonized country cannot "willingly give gifts" to the country that is destroying

its land and people. America has its own issues, but at least we have a deep distaste towards any level of a monarchy. Speaking of which, it's time to start making sure you have your voter registration cards ready! Yup, instead of investing in a useless monarchy with a past rooted in white supremacy, we get to vote for the people in positions of power. This November, we'll be having a gubernatorial election to elect a new governor in Texas. It's between the incumbent Republican Greg Abbott and Democrat Beto O'Rourke. Abbott has been criticized for doing nothing to address gun violence after the horrific school shooting in Uvalde, Texas. Between the school shootings, anti-abortion laws, and anti-trans rights laws, Texas has experienced a lot these past years. If you want things to change, Comets, make sure you vote. Voter registration is happening on campus, so get registered and get to those polls! Another thing you'll need to vote for sooner than the state election is the fee referendum for a new Student Union and Athletics Department at UTD. Voting for that is happening from October 4th-6th, and every UT Dallas student will be receiving an email with the link to vote.

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### Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in AMP are those of the editor or of the writer of the article and are not necessarily those of the university administration, the board of Regents of the University of Texas System, or of the operating board of the magazine.

### Have an opinion? Think you're funny?

Write for AMP! Contact us at [ampatutd@gmail.com](mailto:ampatutd@gmail.com) and follow us on social media @AMPatUTD for more information.





# AMP HOROSCOPES

♦ l i b r a ♦

9/23 - 10/22

**Aries:** Beware the pull of the Aries full moon. You're standing on a cliff face, and it will try to drag you off the edge. Keep your emotional responses in check, and ask yourself what you're really angry about.

**Taurus:** You are drowning, barely keeping your head above water in a sea of endless responsibilities. A water sign could help, but no one can throw you a lifeline if you don't call out.

**Gemini:** A sense of dread is growing within you. Things have been good lately. Too good, perhaps. Listen to your instincts and ready yourself. You've worked too hard to lose everything now.

**Cancer:** How many times have you dug your own grave, only to fill it with someone else's body? You can't keep letting others take the fall. It's time to take responsibility for your own actions.

**Leo:** You're here for a reason. But what was it again? There's something strange lurking at the edge of your memory. Don't ignore it. What — or who — are you forgetting?

**Virgo:** Life is full of ups and downs. There will always be creatures waiting in the dark, but it's up to you to decide whether to live your life in fear or take the quiet moments when they come.

**Libra:** This is your time of year! October is a great time to externalize and confront the things that scare you. Make the most of this season, and you may come out better for it.

**Scorpio:** It's no coincidence that Halloween falls during Scorpio season. You thrive off of reinventing yourself. Be careful — you may look in the mirror one day and find that the person looking back isn't you.

**Sagittarius:** You have a choice to make. A storm looms over you, getting closer with each passing day. Will you stay put, or seek out better shelter? Sometimes the easy decision is not truly the safer one.

**Capricorn:** Facing the shadows on your own doesn't make you strong. What you're really afraid of is being alone, and yet whenever you feel overwhelmed, you isolate yourself.

**Aquarius:** As long as you carry the demons of your past with you, you will never outrun them. Consider getting therapy.

**Pisces:** This may have felt like a twist ending, but play things back in your mind. Were the clues really hidden, or were you just scared to see the monster for what it was?

# Food for Thought

## INSOMNIA COOKIE



PRICE ..... \$\$  
RATING ..... 3/5

Reached with a brisk walk from campus and the newest addition to the strip mall by Northside, Insomnia Cookies is fulfilling the need for late-night snacks for college students, crucial to midterm study sessions. The biggest pros of the cookie and ice cream shop are the proximity to campus and the later hours (open until 1 AM Sunday through Wednesday and 3 AM Thursday through Saturday). The wide range of flavors is the main pull to Insomnia, from traditional chocolate and snickerdoodles to s'mores and salted caramel with vegan and gluten-free options as well. They even have a flavor lab where they are conducting "cookivation" to make new combinations. But the hot cookies are on the expensive side with one classic being \$2.25 and deluxe at \$3.75, while a small cup with two scoops of ice cream is \$5.00. If you want the most for your money and aren't afraid of getting messy, the ice cream on a cookie combo gives you a cookie and 2 scoops of ice cream for \$6.25 at the smallest size. What makes us stay up so late for Insomnia Cookies are the convenience and unique flavors, but it's a treat best saved for special occasions like that needed last bit of motivation to push you through exam season.

## MONSTER YOGURT



PRICE ..... \$  
RATING ..... 5/5

The only thing scary about Monster Yogurt is having to make the choice of what yogurt flavors and toppings make the perfect cup out of the millions of combinations. A 3-minute drive from campus, Monster Yogurt is the best place for an affordable and tasty sugar fix for yogurt fanatics or lactose intolerants- essentially, anyone and everyone. The staff was super friendly to a group of college students going to an establishment primarily geared towards kids and parents, as seen by the playground and coffee station (a portion of the proceeds from their coffee sales goes to charity!). We were even encouraged by them to take small paper cups and sample as many flavors as we wanted to ensure we spent our money right. There's something for every palate from flavors like pumpkin (which, paired with the nitro cold brew flavor, made pumpkin spice coffee) and pomegranate honey to classics like cake batter and cookies and creme. Everything was all self-serve from yogurt to toppings and condiments like marshmallow spread and hot Nutella. The best part was the affordability: 69 cents for every ounce. You may feel guilty about the big sweet treat, but your wallet won't be screaming at least. Maybe having to make the choice of the perfect yogurt combination isn't so scary, since I'm sure to be back again.

# DJ Showcase:

## Small Moments

At the end of a long week of classes, the last thing you'll want to do is head into the weekend with more work. Luckily, Small Moments DJ Marco Frescas has something to replace homework in your Friday night schedule: three hours of musical celebration in a variety of styles and genres. In tune with Radio UTD's anti-Top 40s policy, Frescas' show focuses on tracks that shy away from the spotlight of commercial radio- which, in fact, is what enticed this DJ to create the show in the first place.

"My taste in music was so outdated in comparison to the rest of the world," Frescas said. "I saw an opportunity to play and share my taste in music, and I took advantage of that as fast as I humanly could."

Frescas releases mixes and music as "Name-Searcher", an alias chosen to reflect his literal search for a catchy artist name. In his pursuit of a snappy title, Frescas also wanted a way to showcase his varied, often obscure music taste, thus Small Moments.

"I like to make the show a little unique by creating some sort of progression in the tracks I play every month," Frescas said. "These are all tracks that I usually listen to when driving around at night pondering whether or not the chicken came before the egg."

Each month of the show depicts subgenres of electronic music, starting out with what Frescas describes as a "sampler" episode with calm tracks and then building up to faster, entrancing pieces. The moods of these songs are generated by their tempo, with tracks played towards the end of the episode reaching up to 136-140 BPM. After allowing listeners to get an overall glimpse of what the show has to offer, week two begins Frescas' deep dive into the subgenres, kicking off with downtempo, deep house, and melodic techno tracks.

The show continues its subgenre exploration in week three, which is dedicated to mainstage music. Frescas describes this episode as the one with tracks usually heard at raves and festivals, playing the songs that are exciting enough to encourage him to host a party of one. Finally, week four focuses on music from recent decades, showcasing trance music from 10-20 years ago. For Frescas, this episode is an opportunity to look into what club-goers of the 2000s would have enjoyed on their nights out.



"I've always loved to take a look back in time and hearing what music people used to listen to," Frescas said. "It gives the show a nice touch of variety."

Small Moments allows Frescas to build on the vision he had when touring UTD as a high schooler. The radio station immediately caught his eye as a place to present his favorite music styles that contrasted so heavily from what was constantly playing around him. Frescas applied as a DJ during his first semester at UTD and had a trainee show at the time. Now, as a sophomore, Frescas says he has become laser-focused on hosting Small Moments during every semester possible, even over the summer.

"I've been able to dive deeper into genres I was already listening to," Frescas said. "I can't remember the last time there was a show dedicated to playing music from so many different subgenres of

showcase by: sneha raghavan  
design by: sean sepdham

electronic music.”

Aside from continuing to connect his listeners to these unsung subgenres, Frescas hopes that the future of the show will allow him to showcase his mixing and DJ skills more often. As a personal goal, Frescas also plans to work his way up to produce and play music on larger festival scales, such as with the Group Therapy Milestone festival, an event hosted globally by the electronic music band Above & Beyond known for its extremely talented headlining acts. For now, though, Frescas continues to give his all towards Small Moments and encourages the UTD community to tune in on Radio UTD’s website every Friday from 6 to 9 p.m. to join his musical exploration.

“It’s mostly a show for people who aren’t allowed to go to the club, but still want to feel like they’re at the club,” Frescas said. “I’d like to think that my taste in music brings a new perspective to Radio.”



## ***DJ Deets:***

***Album on repeat:*** Rotates every month or so, but currently it’s *Common Ground* by Above & Beyond

***Vibe of your show:*** 2/3 crying in the club, 1/3 crying at home

***Favorite song recently played on your show:*** Changes every week, but currently it’s *Brake* by Departure

***Favorite character:*** Morty from *Rick & Morty*

***Go-to coffeeshop order:*** An ice-cold cup of water

***Temoc v Enarc:*** Temoc all the way

***The elite pizza topping:*** Pepperoni





# EVERYONE SLEEPS on kids' shows

"Jurassic World: Camp Cretaceous" is an animated TV show about a band of kids stranded on Isla Nublar following the events of the film "Jurassic Park." Sounds exciting, no? Indeed it is, at least for those who chose to give it a chance once it was released. Unfortunately, animation, especially children's media, is disregarded as worthless the moment the medium is mentioned. This is not unique to western animation — ask any weeb what it was like being the only fan of "Dragon Ball Z" or "Naruto" back in the early aughts. And yet, anime now holds a place in the mainstream most introverts couldn't even dream of during that period of humiliation. If this is the case, why do animated shows like "The Owl House", "Infinity Train", and "Camp Cretaceous" get treated as if they aren't worthy of praise?

"Camp Cretaceous" consists of a main cast of six characters and seasonal challenges, both internal and external in nature. Darius is in mourning after his father's passing, Brooklyn has self-worth issues, Ben is scared of everything, Sammy is dependent on the admiration of others to thrive, Yazmina is a socially scarred loner, and Kenji is the sad bourgeois boy. Each completely different from the other, only connected by respective reasons in being chosen as the first kids to try out a brand new experience: Camp Cretaceous.

But disaster strikes and they must survive on the island until they get their chance to escape.

Clearly, this show offers plenty to enjoy without experiencing the supposed immaturity that most anticipate from children's media. From drama to problem solving, these kids become the friends and family of the viewer. The characters can relate to missing their parents, dead or alive. They can be angry and be given space. They have the power to plot against Doctor Wu in his attempt to revive the Indominus. They defeat monsters and overcome everything together, with plenty of morals to spare. So why is "Camp Cretaceous" so unknown?

Perhaps if it were live action, the show would have been seen as revolutionary within the context of kids' media. In fact, it was revolutionary within the realm of animation: "Camp Cretaceous" won an Annie Award for Outstanding Animated Effects, a Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Individual Animation, and was nominated for its achievements in sound editing. This show has set the standard for quality in animated TV shows. Despite this, it silently faded into the background of Netflix's catalog of ever-worsening quality, which is sadly not a new problem for trailblazing animated media.

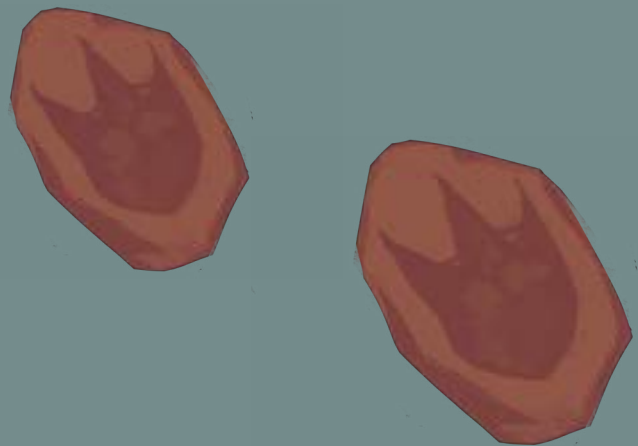
design by: sean sepdham  
layout by: izkra chavez



Another show that has forever changed the standards of storytelling in children's animated media was "Infinity Train." For those of you who can't watch the show legally, this was a masterpiece of pacing and addressed nuanced morals, on par with other animated legends such as "Avatar: The Last Airbender," "Over the Garden Wall," "Gravity Falls," and "The Owl House." Similarly, with a brilliant yet simple setting, excellently written characters, and real stakes that had depth, "Infinity Train" was a glimpse into the gold that Cartoon Network could platform over the endless seas of "Teen Titans Go" reruns.

But the miracle of "Infinity Train" got canceled, even after the fandom pleaded with their overlord to keep the show going. It was clear that people wanted to keep watching the series, to the point where Twitter saw #InfinityTrain among the most trending phrases for days on end. The show was axed because it didn't conform to the status quo. It was bold, daring, and serious. It tackled divorce and mourning, it spoke on the matters of personal identity and queerness. It even warned its audience not to fall down the alt-right pipeline. Pretty important for the modern age, but it didn't fit what the network wanted to promote — more mindless content.

A more immediate example of a short-notice cancellation is "The Owl House." It's a worldwide phenomena admired by those who adored "Gravity Falls" and the first season of "Star vs The Forces of Evil." The reason for its cancellation? Explicit portrayal of a relationship between Luz and Amity.



For as long as animation has focused on not being repeats of minstrel shows, the medium of animation (especially in kids' shows) has pushed for empathy and understanding towards others. They served to educate the minds of tomorrow and create a world better than yesterday. It is no surprise then that the battle over queer representation has drawn animated shows into the mix. All shows mentioned here have fought tooth and nail to provide further empathy for queer youth. "Camp Cretaceous" continues this trend with their inclusion of the relationship every queer person could feel since the very first episode, Sammy & Yazmina. Watching them together had been the joy of each season, and seeing them finally be confirmed in the final few episodes was the celebration that the fandom deserved before the inevitable end of their beloved show.

What's often missed is that the kids and early teens watching are smart enough to know when their parents won't live for long, when they have been wronged and deserve to know why, when they develop feelings for their friend who is the same gender as them. These shows are pivotal in their safety of knowing that they are valid in their emotions, and the world is easier to handle if they know how to deal with these problems.

This all culminates to one fact that cannot be ignored: the medium does not define the quality of the work that has been put to screen. Animation is not a dirty word that describes something as less than its live action cousins. Animated shows do not need to be placed into a box that forever sets them apart from the "truly serious" material, even for people over the age of eighteen. All it is — and ever will be — is a tool which can be used to create anything and everything the brain can imagine. And in the end, aren't other forms of film also imagined stories? All of them are deserving of recognition for the work put into them and the passion evoked from their respective fanbases. All pieces of art, in the end, are valid, and all who gaze upon something that catches their eye are deserving of being respected and heard.



**CARLA BAUTISTA**

junior | atec

"That girl who will force you to watch POSE with her."

# 88 Reasons Why 88Rising Sucks

**F**or the last few years, 88rising has been 88falling. The American media company 88rising founded by Sean Miyashiro in 2015 is known for promoting primarily Asian and Asian American musicians. Some of the most famous artists that work with 88rising include Joji, Rich Brian, Niki, Jackson Wang, and several others. At least, that was their original intention all those years ago. Since then, there is little hope that fans can hold on to their performative activism and soulless cash grabs.

Back in June 2020, millions of Instagram users posted black squares as part of the #blackouttuesday campaign as an act of solidarity in support of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement. When the black squares were posted, many complained that the black posts clogged social media timelines, and this act of performative activism drowned out the voices speaking about BLM. In March 2021, a mass shooting occurred in Atlanta, Georgia with most of the victims being Asian women. Following the shooting,

88rising posted a neon yellow square in solidarity with the shooting victims and the Stop Asian Hate movement. People immediately started to criticize the post, many commenting on the fact that yellow is a stereotypical and often racist color to describe Asians. Though 88rising apologized and took down the yellow square from their social media posts, equating Asian activism to a simple yellow square on an Instagram post is an example of performative activism, simply posting on social media to raise awareness without doing something tangible for the Asian American community. The company did learn from this mistake and hosted the Asia Rising Together concert two months later in May 2021 as well as a fundraiser to support the Asian Mental Health Collective.

Following the trend of performative activism, 88rising created three NFT collections at Coachella for the diversity points. Specifically, the 88rising x Coachella NFT Collections launched with digital collectibles and in-person

experiences for the Coachella festival in 2022. 88rising features some Asian representation by having Curry Tian, an Asian Artist, create these digital artworks and donate a portion of the proceeds towards the Asian Mental Health Collective. However, no matter how diverse or inclusive an NFT is, cryptocurrencies are widely criticized for their environmental impact, given the energy requirements needed to purchase and transfer cryptocurrency and NFTs. This digital collectible actively harms the environment and is exclusive to a small minority who have access to them. How can this NFT benefit the Asian American community?

These diverse NFTs tie into the concept of boba liberalism—the ideology used to describe superficial political activism, especially in the context of Asian American activism. Like boba bubble tea, the ideology is without substance, trendy, and easy to digest. From buying movie tickets to go see Shang-Chi or Crazy Rich Asians, to buying t-shirts and merchandise

design by: Michelle Le





that help affirm one's Asian identity to ordering and drinking boba tea, the essence of boba liberalism has to do with how to best capitalize on the Asian/Pacific Islander identity.

88rising's official website is a perfect example of profiting off the "Asianness" of their artists. Looking at their current (9/16/2022) website at 88rising.com, the website features several links where you can buy tickets to the Head in the Clouds Festival in Manila and Jakarta and a shop to buy merch for the festival and for two Asian artists. However, this website does not have much information about 88rising as a company itself. There is no about page or a list of the artists on their official website. Sorry, Warren Hue, but I don't want to buy the \$80 Warren Hue Premium Off-White Hoodie. Nor do I want to buy the \$69 GUE88 HITC Purple Shorts (GUESS x 88rising collaboration for Head in the Clouds), I simply wanted to learn more about 88rising as a company. Their Wikipedia page has more information about the company than the official website. Their website prioritizes profit by only putting links to sell products and tickets without an explanation of who they are as a company. There is no substance, only the goal of profiting off people who already know 88rising.

If 88rising aims to represent Asian and Asian Americans, do they intend to represent every single country in Asia? The 88rising artists signed onto this label hail from Indonesia, Thailand, South Korea,

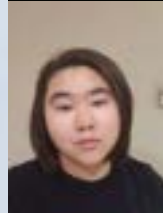
China, Japan, and the Philippines... but what about the other countries? KOAD, an Indian artist had his song "Jaunty" featured on the 88rising YouTube page and performed at Asia Rising Together: Benefit Concert. However, he is one of the few South Asian artists that has been mentioned on 88rising's social media pages. In addition, most of the artists are fair-skinned and conventionally attractive Asian artists hailing from East/Southeast Asia. Some of 88rising's most popular songs that are produced are sung in English. An exception to this remark is the group Higher Brothers who rap in Mandarin and Sichuanese in most of their songs with occasional English phrases and verses throughout the songs. It is currently uncertain if the group is still together as each of the individual members of Higher Brothers works on their solo projects nowadays. As a whole, there are not many songs produced in the artist's native tongue except in a few instances. These trends model what an international Asian artist should look and sound like according to Eurocentric beauty standards and the ability to sing in English with little to no accent. They represent what a model minority should be.

To note, this is not an attack on the individual artists who are signed to this label. I've been following this company since Joji signed on with them in 2017 and I loved what they stood for initially. As a young Asian American with little experience seeing people like me in Hollywood, it was neat to see these cool

Asian artists in the mainstream. The first collaboration album, "Head in the Clouds", is one of the albums I need to listen to every summer. "Midsummer Madness" is one of my favorite songs for nostalgia value and how each verse joins all the artists together in a cohesive song. When 88rising got the attention of Marvel and worked on the Shang-Chi soundtrack, I was impressed. This collective of wealthy Asian musicians and artists got featured in a Marvel movie... but in the end, it feels like a cash grab to put more names on the poster so they could sell tickets and give Disney more money.

Out of nostalgia for when 88rising used to be amazing, I wished to comment on the company's state and the publicly known information about 88rising in recent times. If I could go back to when I was in high school as an 88rising stan, one thing I would tell myself would be this: Never stan companies. Companies are for profit, not for the pursuit of artistry or activism. The individual artists signed on to 88rising are excellent musicians in their own right but the company's recent decisions made me rethink who I should follow. There are countless Asian and Asian American talents out there, it's not necessary to rely on a sole company or group to promote this goal.

## AKIE KASAI



junior | literature  
ough



DALL-E is a neural network that can create images from text captions. It uses a dataset of text-image pairs and creates archetypal images of animals, artwork, and objects. Moreover, it can understand and plausibly relate these concepts and can also transform them into existing images. There are many controversies regarding DALL-E as people think that it might replace human artists, but don't worry, this will not be the case.

DALL-E is a 12 billion parameter version of GPT-3 (Generative Pre-Trained Transformer) which can receive both the text and image data in a single stream of 1280 tokens. This special feature of DALL-E allows it to generate 4X greater resolution images than any other Open AI platform.

The model first takes the input image-caption pair in the form of CLIP and creates a representation as vectors, called image embeddings or text embeddings.

Later, a prior model is built which takes the CLIP and tries to fit the embeddings into the model. This method is called 'Image-Text Processing'. Consequently, these image embeddings are processed using an Unclip method called the "Decoder Diffuser Method" to generate real-time images. DALL-E is the combination of Image-Text Processing + Unclip (Decoder Diffuser Method)

Let me simplify it by giving an example: a house is surrounded by hills and a lake in the front. Going from the sentence to the mental imagery is what Image-text processing does. Translating the imagery you have in your mind into the real drawing is what Unclip does. Now, think about which feature best represents the sentence "a house surrounded with hills and a lake in the front" (there is a house, sun, hill, etc.,) and which represents the image (the color, the shades, the styles...). This process of encoding the features of a sentence and an image is what CLIP does.

DALL-E has been impacting many sectors. For example, it can structure and restructure buildings by giving a three-dimensional view at each angle from a sequence of equally spaced angles, and can recover a smooth animation of the architecture of a building. Since DALL-E is an Open-Sourced Artificial Intelligence platform, it allows normal people to work on it without any contribution. Consider a case wherein a builder wants to restructure an existing apartment. Either he must do it manually or he has to hire an experienced architect to give him a safe plan of the building. If he uses DALL-E, he can input his instructions in the form of words. The model generates pictures of the restructured building within a few seconds.

DALL-E appears to be able to apply some optical distortions to scenes, such as a "spherical panorama or lens view". This means that DALL-E can generate reflections too.

# The Possibilities of AI art





DALL-E has another cool feature of interpolation where it can transform one image into another. For example, if you want to see an 'unmodernized' version of an iPhone, DALL-E transforms the current version of the iPhone into the old version. On the other hand, if you want to transform a Victorian house into a modern house DALL-E simply does it by maintaining the semantic coherence of the original picture. You could also ask for changes in objects, landscapes, clothing, and more by changing a word in the prompt and get results in real-time.

DALL-E has also become an extremely powerful tool in the fashion field. In a fashion show named 'Trillo's Creative Arsenal', Trillo, a famous fashion designer, created an impressive series of stop-motion composites combining real-world imagery with DALL-E's synthetic creations. He created a beautiful 30-second fashion show that used AI to generate outfits in collaboration with his wife. This is an interesting and smart way to brainstorm costumes and fashion ideas.

In this way, time, effort, and budget are saved, as the process is being done automatically by DALL-E. Also, the ideas of the artist can easily be represented in the form of images or videos even before exhibiting them on models. They could also change the costumes based on the genders, such as a male mannequin dressed in a blue shirt with a leather jacket or a female mannequin dressed in a gold pleated skirt.

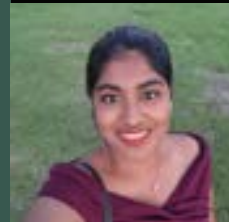
Some disputes have been raised because DALL-E represents people and environment in one form or another depending on their identity (e.g race, gender, nationality, etc.). It also uses deep fake technology which allows people to add or remove objects or people, even though it is prohibited by OpenAI's content policy. While deep fakes can create pictures close to reality, it can also create images that are misleading. Also, DALL-E is very bad at spelling because it does not encode spelling information from the text present in the dataset images.

Furthermore, DALL-E cannot replace human work due to technical limitations. Lack of common sense, understanding, and coherence make DALL-E different from the way human beings think. The model can also be over-trained sometimes, which can make its behavior unreliable when it comes to compositional thinking.

We cannot underestimate the ability of DALL-E nor can we overestimate it. It is a creative, versatile tool that can make our work easy in many ways. Nonetheless, there would not be any halt in the recruitment of people working in different sectors: DALL-E can make the work easier, but cannot replace human intelligence.



## KRITHIKA SANGAREDDYPETA



grad student | itm

I am a jovial person and a fitness freak who also loves to cook and bake. I also write articles for an American website called "Hub-pages".

# America's #1 *Transmasculine* Icon is Dead... or is He?





**A**s we enter this month of spooks, scares, and other sinister synonyms, I want to bring the hearts and minds of the UTD public to a solemn topic. It is with a heavy heart that I inform you all that Danny Fenton, a boy who is “just fourteen,” has died... or has he?

“Danny Phantom” was an immensely popular cartoon that debuted on Nickelodeon on the 3rd of January, 2004. The show featured everything that young children could want: action, comedy, and a protagonist who was intensely relatable and realistic. But what was it that made Danny relatable? Was it his witty comments? His parents expecting too much of him? Or perhaps even that he was the subject of many bullies’ belittling beatdowns? While all of these may be aspects people related to, many saw themselves in Danny more because of another aspect: his transgender identity.

No, unfortunately Danny is not canonically transgender. The show’s creator, Butch Hartman, is rather transphobic, and has stated so. Does that really matter though? Danny has numerous traits that have lead many a young transgender boy to identify with Danny’s daily struggles to hide his “ghost” side. Whether it is something minor like Danny wearing a shirt to the pool or clearer parallels (such as Danny being labeled “not a ghost and not a boy”), the show seems to continually stumble into pushing a pro-transgender message. This has lead many people to relate to Danny in the same way young non-binary children relate to Raine Whispers from *The Owl House*, or the way young lesbian girls relate to Catra from *She-ra*. But the question that I have often seen raised about “Danny Phantom” in particular is whether or not it is “okay” for trans men to see themselves in a character that isn’t technically transgender. While my immediate inclination is to say that there is nothing wrong with this, I myself am not a transgender man and would like

to hear the thought process of actual trans men before I go making any bold statements. That is why I have asked several trans men from this very school, who have chosen to remain anonymous, to give me their own thoughts on the character of Danny Fenton. These amazing gentlemen have gone out of their way to watch, or rewatch, a couple of episodes of *Danny Phantom* and give me feedback to the questions I asked below. I have compiled their eloquent answers here for your reading pleasure. Please enjoy!

**To begin with a more open-ended question: after watching the aforementioned episodes of “Danny Phantom,” what are your general thoughts on the show and Danny as trans-masculine representation? Are there any ways that you personally related to Danny and his experiences as a “ghost”?**

One of the key things shown about Danny is his varying levels of confidence. When Danny is in his human form he is often self-conscious, easily irritable, and quick to call himself a loser. As a phantom he is witty, sharp, and confident. “He’s cool, he’s someone I looked up to as a kid, but he was also a deeply self-conscious character,” notes one interviewee. A level of self-esteem that is



in flux is very common among those who feel that they have to perform around others to make them happy. For closeted trans men, it can be very hard to feel confident as they are forced to walk around in their day-to-day life as something they fundamentally aren't.

This isn't helped by the fact that many trans men are closeted because of the people closest to them. For example, one interviewee adds that people, both on "Danny Phantom" and in real life, "say they love him, but they hate people like him. We get to see Danny's reactions to those moments of anger and see him have to weave around them." This is an all too common experience for most trans men, closeted or not. The media, the people closest to them, and even those they trust slander their very existence while they are expected to remain quiet — or worse, laugh right along. I was curious about this experience and how it was similar to Danny's experiences in the show.

**Danny, as a ghost, is represented in the media of the town as dangerous and intrusive to "normal" society. With being a ghost in this comparison being akin to being trans, would you say that the media has made you feel dangerous or intrusive in the lives of "normal" people, just as Danny is labeled?**

The responses I received to this question seemed to be, by far, the most united in their message; trans men are stereotyped as

improper, threatening, and downright invasive to the lives of "normal" people.

One interviewee writes, "according to the media, we're predators lying in wait in bathrooms and the like. And when we're not dangerous, we're a spectacle of a circus animal." This is a common tactic used against many marginalized groups. By making trans men seem both dangerous and ridiculous, the media is able to make them the butt of a joke in any scenario. In most depictions of trans men, who they are is often made to seem like "a bad lifestyle choice" at best. This close-minded thought process is carried into Danny's life as well.

Most ghosts in "Danny Phantom" only care about meeting their own goals, at the expense of others if need be. Unlike the case for trans people, this gives the media some rationale for hating ghosts. As one interviewee writes, "Danny Phantom isn't a perfect metaphor, as I would say there is some reasonability to the in-universe fear of ghosts considering how other ghosts in the show do appear to be dangerous and sometimes malicious." For those people who are not trans, it is important to remember this. There is no real basis for the stereotypes against trans men in the real world. To further this topic, I wanted to address one of the most damning places for stereotypes to rear their ugly head: the home.

**Danny feels as if he has to hide aspects of himself from not just his enemies, but especially those closest to him. The only**

**exceptions to this are his closest friends. More specifically though, Danny feels that he has to hide the entire truth about himself from his parents. Do you find that this speaks to the trans-masculine experience?**

For many queer people, friends are some of the only people that they can be truly themselves around. However, the opposite generally seems to be true when it comes to their families. This is especially true for many transgender people. Something so fundamental to who they are — their gender expression — is a constant balancing act that they have to keep track of. In a similar sense, Danny has to keep a tight leash on who exactly he reveals his ghost side to. Friends are, for both Danny and many trans people, the only people with whom they can openly discuss who they truly and fully are. “Danny talks with [his best friends] about ghost stuff like it’s an inside joke — I remember talking with friends in high school the same way about my gender.” Friends provide a certain level of comfort and comradery to many trans men just as Danny’s friends do for him.

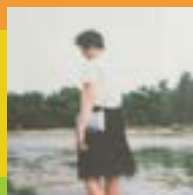
Unfortunately, many trans men relate to Danny in their struggle to feel safe and recognized in their own family. There are many loving parents who support their trans children. However, Danny is more relatable in this aspect to those trans men who feel unsafe around their parents. This is due to Danny’s parents being ghost hunters which, in this comparison, is a less than exciting job description. As one interviewee boldly puts it, “many trans kids, including myself, grew up in a total silence order. Everything to hide, and potentially their livelihood on the line. His parents realizing he is a ghost could mean his death. For many trans kids, it’s the difference between having a roof and not.” Danny Fenton is a young boy who

has to hide an innate aspect of himself from those he loves because, if he doesn’t, they may not love him. In fact, they may wish to harm him.

With all of this in mind: Although he is not canonically transgender, is it wrong for trans men to relate to him and other non-canonical characters? Having done my research, and now having conveyed it to you, my answer is unequivocally ‘no.’ While Danny Fenton may just be a cartoon character who makes funny remarks, defeats villains, and hides his full self from others, that doesn’t mean he can only be that. To others, he is an inspiration. To others, he shows them that they aren’t alone. Because to some he may just be another cisgender cartoon boy, and that’s fine, but to others he is a perfect example of their everyday struggle to be seen as what they are, a man.

What is the point of art, if not to be viewed through the lenses of many different viewers? In my eyes, half of the beauty of an art piece is seeing the many ways it can be interpreted. Oftentimes it even helps push past the narrow and arrogant mind of a flawed creator. Maybe it’s true that Butch Hartman would never have intentionally have made Danny trans, but why does that matter? Why be constrained by the thought process of someone who, ultimately, has no more control over how you view art than anyone else? At the end of the day, even though “Danny Phantom” wasn’t created to be a point of connection for trans men, that he is to some people that is fundamentally good.

It is okay to find meaning in art that wasn’t the artist’s original intention. In fact, I urge you as an audience to look deeper into the art you see. Don’t allow yourself to be a passive observer. Engage, actively question, beg to understand the fullness of what you see. Growth can only happen by asking questions and seeking to discover more. It is through learning about others’ experiences that we learn, to quote the oh-so-catchy theme song, what makes Danny “much more unique than the other guys.”



## MURPHY VUYK

sophomore | atec  
I care about D&D... Dilfs and Dionysus!  
Also Dungeons and Dragons.



# Shifting Gears:

## Metal Gear

### Makes Peace, Not War

design by: gavin arriaga

Back in ye olde times (by which I mean the year 1973), a notable French director named François Truffaut made an offhand point in the *Chicago Tribune*, which simultaneously aged like a fine wine yet continues to plague the mind of just about every Stanley Kubrick fan on the planet. Unfortunately, I am one of those Stanley Kubrick fans.

“I don’t think I’ve really seen an anti-war film,” he stated. “Every film about war ends up being pro-war.”

At the time, this opinion had people metaphorically tipping their heads and doing their best Tim Allen grunt. But now many agree that Truffaut was onto something big — something potentially universally relevant.

The idea that depicting war in a piece of media, regardless of intent, will automatically appeal to the ‘thrill’ and ‘victory’ of imperialist conquest isn’t a new one. As early as 1968 critics were making very similar points, such as Roger Ebert in his critique of Richard Lester’s *“How I Won the War”* (1967).

“Lester has no more made an anti-war film, than has Goodbody, his hero, won the war,” Ebert states quite bluntly. In other words, war can’t be used to critique itself. No matter what lengths creatives might go to convey the horrors of warfare, someone out there is gonna think it’s the coolest thing ever — or even worse, that it’s something to aspire to.

It certainly happens! Even in mediums such as comic books and graphic novels, there’s a gratuitous misinterpretation of violent, tragic stories and characters among both fans and the general public. For example, how many cops have you seen sporting a Punisher emblem somewhere on their Facebook page or other social media profiles? More than just a handful, I’m sure. Or how about a self-proclaimed apolitical *Rage Against the Machine* fan (which is essentially an oxymoron)

complaining about how the band has been spouting a little too much anarchist rhetoric for their tastes lately? The list goes on.

Following that train of logic, we can extend this idea to other forms of popular media today, like video games. I’m sure you’ve heard your fair share of the pearl-clutching “video games encourage violence in our youth!” This debate has raged since the early 90s, and somehow continues to rage today, although two-thirds of the people in this country play video games. Personally, I think we should be focusing more on this encroaching epidemic of gamer-on-gamer violence. We should work with each other, not against each other!

Back to the initial point; many believe that war can’t be used to critique itself. Perhaps they’re onto something, perhaps not. This is something I’ve thought long and hard about, and I think the answer might lie in a totally obscure video game franchise you’ve probably never heard of.

I’m kidding, of course. I’m talking about the *Metal Gear* series.

There’s a decent chance you’ve heard of, or at the very least seen, our favorite bandana-wearing, overly gruff super soldier on one occasion or another. Solid Snake, a man of the people! A guy frequently found either hiding in a cardboard box or monologuing to himself about whichever ethical dilemma is currently plaguing him. Or both of those things simultaneously. A dude who has us raising our glasses and proclaiming to the heavens, “he’s just like me, for real!” ...Or maybe that’s just me.

Either way, there’s a significant number of folks that have played *Metal Gear* or are at least familiar with it. A common idea about *Metal Gear* is that it’s a series full of machismo; a mere power fantasy for those of us who will never be able to experience tactical espionage in real life. Which, honestly, is most of us. However, if

you happen to be in the small percentage of people who have experienced real tactical espionage, congratulations! You are officially more interesting than me.

Jokes aside, there’s a whole lot more to *Metal Gear* than its first impressions. To start, we should probably look at who got the ball rolling in the first place; *Metal Gear*’s creator, Hideo Kojima.

Kojima has never been subtle about his abhorrence toward the military-industrial complex, particularly when it comes to nuclear warfare. In a Twitter thread from February of this year, Kojima shed light on Konami’s initial reaction to his vision and intent behind *Metal Gear*.

“When I mentioned ‘anti-nuclear and anti-war’ in an interview, the media laughed at me,” he recalled. “The entertainment industry criticized me, saying, ‘You’ve got to be kidding! Anti-war, anti-nuclear, when you’re playing a game where you shoot guns?’”

Typically, they’d have a point (although they could’ve conveyed it in a slightly more constructive manner). Most games, films, and novels that attempt to push back against the very institutions they’re written about tend to fall flat. I’m sure I don’t need to point out the irony that so many popular shows and films that critique capitalism are funded by hyper-capitalist conglomerates that have essentially monopolized the entertainment industry. Now if you’ll excuse me, I’ll be wearing my ‘there is no ethical consumption under capitalism’ shirt to the premiere of the second *Spider-Verse* film when it comes out, and you can bet I’ll be spending full price on those tickets. But I digress.

What Kojima’s coworkers and various media moguls at Konami didn’t realize was that *Metal Gear*’s narrative focus wasn’t on war itself, but the people who carry it out. I don’t mean the people giving orders. I’m talking about the people who take them.

Within a series of briefing files found in “Metal Gear Solid: Twin Snakes,” a remake of the original “Metal Gear Solid,” the first recording we see shows Snake begrudgingly forced out of early retirement by his former commander. Unlike what we’re shown in “Metal Gear Solid,” it’s obvious to us how much Snake doesn’t want to do this. He’s young, only 26, yet he’s experienced more than enough horrors at the hands of those he was once in service to. Snake makes his feelings on continuing to do the government’s dirty work VERY clear, but we as the audience know that this is only the beginning of Snake’s story.

Already, there’s a discrepancy between what we’re expecting from our protagonist and what we’re given. Well, you might be thinking, obviously, he’s the only guy for the job. That’s why he’s got no choice but to do this. Once he saves the day, he’ll realize that this is what he’s meant to do. Being a hero is his purpose! His destiny, even. Am I right?

If only! Without spoiling anything from future installments or infodumping until your eyes bleed, it’s pretty much all

downhill from here. No matter how good Snake is at his job, no matter how many times he defeats the bad guys, he’s never finished. His superiors never really let him go. He’s always called back to deal with crises that are no fault of his own, nor his responsibility. He’s always relied

on, yet rarely provided for. This guy never ever catches a break, not even on his literal deathbed — to all my homies who have played MGS4, you are entitled to emotional compensation.

So, how exactly does this offer a critique of war? Because right now it just sounds like a long, depressing story with an unsatisfactory end. And... yeah, actually. You’re correct. It is a long, depressing story with an unsatisfactory end.

Metal Gear gets to the heart of what many of us know, yet often refuse to acknowledge about imperialism and the war economy that drives it. War has no place for people. I don’t mean in the sense of bodies, labor, or anything else that people can provide. I mean people. Humans. War has no place for feelings or families or any collective benefit to the creatures we share this planet with. War is devoid of empathy; it’s emotionless and it doesn’t discriminate between the ideologies or intentions of the people who perpetuate it. Kojima and the others who worked on Metal Gear knew this too, only they opted to shine a light on it when most other games feigned a blissful ignorance in favor of making their games more marketable. In hindsight, the irony is like a slap in the face.

So I suppose that brings us back to the original point. Is Metal Gear really an effective critique of the military-industrial complex, or does it fall short like so many other pieces of anti-war media do?





Well, yes and no. On the one hand, Metal Gear is a game. In the wise words of my totally real and legitimate uncle who works at Nintendo, Reggie Fils-Aimé, “The game is fun. The game is a battle. If it’s not fun, why bother? If it’s not a battle, where’s the fun?” And he’s right! Metal Gear is a video game where you’re a cool guy with tight glutes kicking other people’s less tight glutes into oblivion, and you’re damn good at it. Some might even say you’re the best at it. What’s not fun about that?

In that case, maybe we need to look past the game itself and look more into the game’s narrative, themes and characters. What’s the story trying to say? What are the characters trying to say? Judging by what’s been stated already, I think they drive the point home as effectively as they can.

At its core, Metal Gear isn’t about winning, or doing your duty, or enjoying the spoils of battle after beating up a bunch of people because some middle-aged guy in a beret told you to. It’s about humanism. It’s about empathy. It’s about finding things to cherish in life despite its horrors. It’s about breaking the cycle of violence you’ve been forced into by leaving the world a slightly better place than it was when you got there. And, cheesy as it may sound, it really is about love. Loving others! Finding a capacity for love you didn’t even know you had! Loving the world and wanting to make it better on your own terms, not the terms you’ve been given by someone else.

In Solid Snake’s own words, he sums up Metal Gear’s core philosophy succinctly. “Life is worth living, even if it hurts you, even if you hurt in it.”

If there’s one thing this ridiculous series of games has taught me, it’s that we’re the only ones to decide what our future will look like. Our actions affect other people to an extent we can never fully comprehend, and we ultimately control our actions. We shape the world that everyone after us is born into. Who would’ve figured that all this time, we just needed a disgruntled man in a skin-tight bodysuit to remind us of that?

## MICKY DOLPHIN



sophomore | atec  
philosophy  
bloodborne (2015)  
made me transgender  
but not in a way that’s  
comprehensible



# "What Year are You?"

Why are you being asked?

*It's just an icebreaker.*

*It's about the Future^TM.*

Are you a grad student?

*Yes!*

Just tell them your expected graduation date.

*Nope, just an undergrad.*

You can just say that

Is this your first year attending UTD?

*Yes, but I transferred.*

*Sure is!*

*Nah. I've been here.*

How many credit hours do you have?

For how many years?

<30

30-53

54-89

>90

2

3

4

5+

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Senior (or super senior, if you're feeling honest)

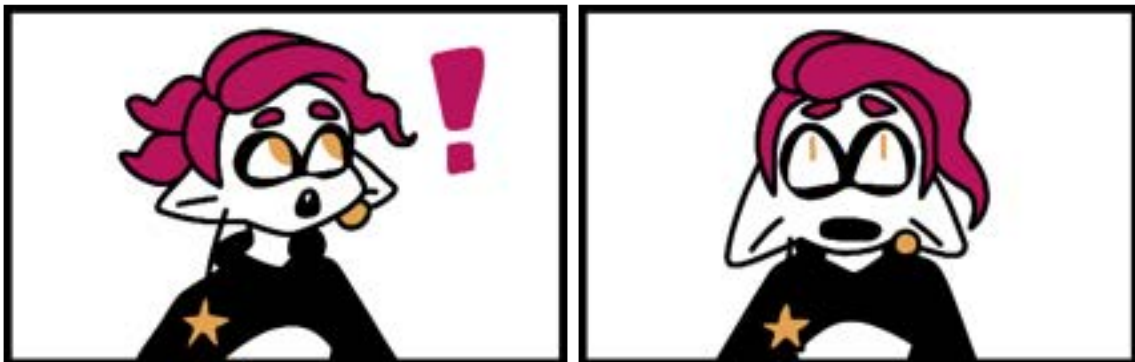
*Wait! By credit hours I'm actually-*

Are you on track to graduate this academic year?

*Yes. I am!*

*No. but-*

*Don't count your chickens before they hatch.*



by: gavin arriaga



# COMET ELECTIONS



design by: yeon poche  
layout by: izkra chavez



# ToborX candidate charged with employment exploitation

Tobor is charged with employment exploitation and violating UTD contracts, police said. Police said that Tobor violated the provisions of the federal work-study program by regularly scheduling students over 80 hours a week for part-time food and Tobor repair positions. Discrepancies in the worker shifts were noticed by managers when one worker showed up to work at three restaurants at the same time for five days straight, which led to the ongoing police investigation. While no restaurant operations are being disrupted, a Chartwells representative said that all schedules and workers were being closely monitored. "We at Chartwells highly value student worker safety and stability," the representative said. "The recent hubbub regarding our partner Tobor is unfortunate, but we are confident that the issue will be resolved in a whoosh." Tobor said that they were just trying



to accommodate students' desires to work more hours and earn some extra income. While some students were then able to work more, this came at the cost of their academic performance and other students hours as well. Business junior

Ayesha Mazadoor said that Tobor's policies actually led to her having less shifts. "It used to be that I worked Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays," Mazadoor said. "But then after a while, all of my Tuesday hours got cut, then my Friday hours, and now I only work for an hour on Thursdays, but I see some people working the register every single day, even when the restaurants are supposed to be closed, and that started to make me a little suspicious." Tobor is also charged with violating the contracts that they signed with UTD, with police saying that the robot's employees regularly failed to respond to customer support requests, provide refunds for failed deliveries and shouted curse words at students in binary while making deliveries. Student

supporters of the ToborX party are worried that the arrest will affect support for Tobor in the upcoming student election, with computer science freshman Kate McMoney saying that she still has hope for the robotic mascot candidate. "Hey, everybody commits a little light law-breaking now and then," McMoney said. "I just don't think that Tobor should be looked upon badly for a small incident like this. I really support his initiatives for 5-minute Chik-fil-A delivery to the dorms and apartment complexes, so I really hope that this doesn't affect his popularity for the upcoming elections."

# New mascot church group raises hopes for construction

Enarc's return came alongside the creation of a new religious group on campus dedicated to his teachings. The Holy Church of Enarc started meetings on campus soon after Enarc's bid for the 2022 mascot election was announced. They meet in the Student Union at room 1.602

on Mondays at 1pm, where a member of the group speaks for Enarc as "The Voice of Enarc" on various topics that are brought up for discussion. Enarc says that he wants to bring a new kind of religious group to UTD, one that focuses on the issues that are most important to students on campus.

"Sure other church groups focus on the profession of faith, or the afterlife or taking 10% of your income, but we're really all about change," Enarc said. "The big thing is that we want to bring change to this campus and to its students, for the better!" "Change by Construction" is a big part of the Holy Church of Enarc, with Enarc himself being a big proponent of the upcoming SU and Athletics fee increases to be voted on by students on October 4th-6th. The group places a high priority on bringing

more construction to UTD for its own betterment, and is advocating for students to vote for any measures that may lead to more construction. This might be seen as a conflict of interest, as having more cranes on UTD actively increases Enarc's power, but computer science senior Bob Baumeister said that it's just for the betterment of the school. "The upcoming fee increases will support construction that supports all students equally," Baumeister said, "and it's great to have a mascot candidate like Enarc throwing his support behind the project. I mean, surely it's not just because it'll bring more construction cranes to UTD right?"

The new group is also supportive of the new Silver line DART rail station coming to Northside, and is advocating for more construction to make the campus easier to access as well as easier to park at. After a large influx of students in the Fall 2022 semester, parking has been more difficult for students across campus, and Enarc hopes to resolve that alongside a plethora of other issues. "I just want students to support me so I can support them," Enarc said. "In order to raise everyone's GPAs, I need everyone's support for initiatives that will make this campus a better place."

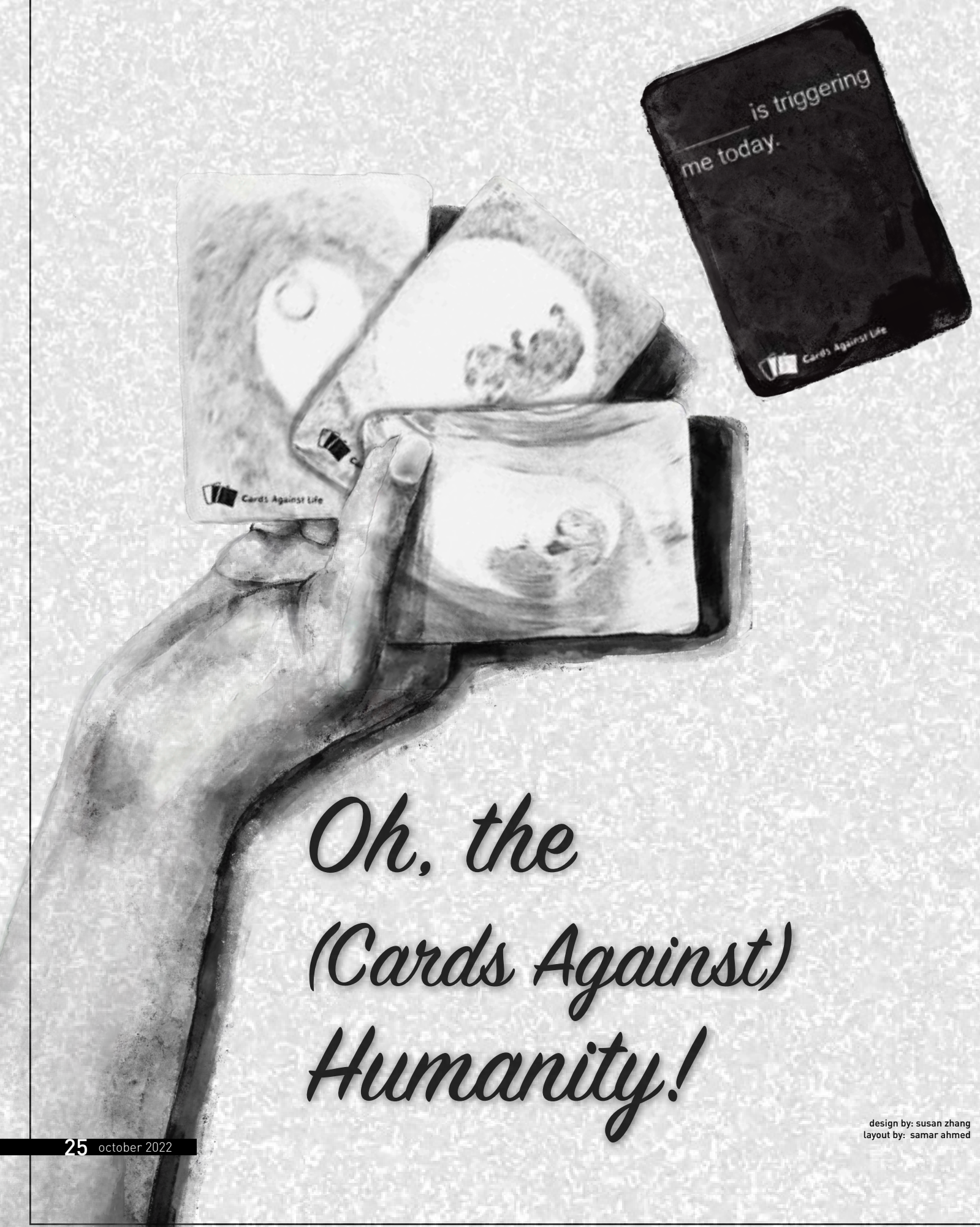


**BEN NGUYEN**

senior | computer science

An expert in the ways of the keyboard warrior, he's spent the past decade fighting off the incels and the swimps, preserving the memes of the past and developing the memes of the future.





*Oh, the  
(Cards Against)  
Humanity!*

design by: susan zhang  
layout by: samar ahmed



We live in troubling times, folks! The supervillainous team known as the SINISTER RADICAL-WOKE-LEFT have cooked up yet another diabolical scheme to wreak havoc upon our helpless society, and they do not discriminate between man, woman, or child! They're corrupting our precious entertainment and media with malicious propaganda, injecting messages about garbage SJW politics in order to poison the brains of the impressionable public. I mean, just look at Pixar's most recent film "Lightyear"; what should have been a fun family flick snuck in a horrifically graphic and intense scene of two women kissing! How scandalous! God knows just how many countless innocent children were exposed to such nefarious brainwashing. It goes beyond just movies, however; every medium of our entertainment has been corrupted. Even the games we play have been tainted by an ill-intentioned need to twist our brains with forced politics!

For instance, recently in August, I received some disturbing news. The company behind the popular card game Cards Against Humanity announced they would be donating 100% of their profits from 22 abortion-restricted states to the National Network of Abortion Funds. They spewed some kind of phony make-believe fairy-tale business about "protecting the bodily and sexual autonomy of our citizens" — whatever that could mean. Now I don't know about you, but I for one can't help but feel sick at this! First things first, what business does a card game have with abortion? Don't get me wrong, Cards Against Humanity is a fun little game to play at gatherings and such, but that's ALL it should be. The people behind the game should only be doing two things: making cards and selling games! All this fancy mumbo jumbo isn't needed!

Even worse, the customer gets no say in it whatsoever! In fact, trying to decline the donation just rings you up for another \$5 out of your own pocket. You want to talk about protecting rights, Cards Against Humanity? Ever heard of the Bill of Rights? Newsflash: YOU JUST TOOK A DUMP ON THE THING! A person's money is their own possession, so they should be able to decide what to do with it! I mean, imagine if someone told you that you weren't allowed to act a certain way just because they didn't like it. That's ridiculous! I can't stand the idea of

any larger organization having the sheer audacity to impose its values on the public without any regard for personal freedom. Now a lot of people ask me, "Then what about our freedom regarding abortion? Isn't that important too?" What does that have to do with ANY of what I'm saying? I know what's really going on; I'm surrounded by a bunch of spies trying to convert me with their WOKENESS-HYPNOSIS!

Now, I don't want any of you fine readers misreading my stance here. My own views on abortion are totally, absolutely, and indisputably 100% irrelevant to this piece. In fact, I usually pride myself on being very impartial and level-headed about this kind of stuff. Unfortunately, it seems as if Cards Against Humanity is an EVIL organization that HATES FREEDOM. They made a single little card game, and now they claim to have a voice on the rights that women "should" have over their bodies. It's inhuman! Cards Against Humanity is anti-freedom, and against ALL our core principles of humanity!

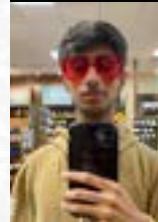
It's not too late, however! Should the creators ever come to their long-lost senses, there are plenty of solutions for this mess. You see, I've spent countless hours conducting close research on the current debate over abortion, and analyzing comprehensive databases like r/Conservative and Ben Shapiro's Twitter. I don't mean to brag, but I know a few ways this can be fixed. My personal take? Cards Against Humanity should instead start directing proceeds to conservative, ANTI-abortion politicians and platforms as an apology! How's that for a genius idea? This'll let them make up for all the money they've smuggled into the hands of their radical commie partners-in-crime during this plot of theirs. Of course, there's always the possibility that this might be too triggering for all of the small snowflake libs out there. God knows how those avocado toast hippies always find a way to complain about everything. Sad! In that case, they could try evenly splitting any and all proceeds in the future between pro-abortion AND anti-abortion platforms. Brilliant, I know. If they split things fifty-fifty, how could anyone possibly get mad? Cards Against Humanity would become an apolitical champion of people's thoughts and beliefs, which is a big improvement over upsetting your paying customers by expressing thoughts and beliefs that they don't want to hear!

Now I know these solutions might seem like they have a little, itty-bitty, teensy-tiny bit of bias, but that is completely wrong! See, I'm merely proposing hypotheticals here for the sake of argument. That's my fancy way of saying I'm completely absolved from any kind of blame or logic you could possibly refute me with. Overall, however, Cards Against Humanity should be ashamed right now. Their grievous transgression against our basic rights and freedoms is a crime that I cannot overlook! I will not rest for a second until the scoundrels behind this, the true menace to our society, either change their ways or are brought to justice!

Unfortunately, this trainwreck is just one of many examples of the political pandemonium affecting our society. I have no idea where this notion came from, but it seems as if every single outspoken hippie nowadays is trying to send some kind of "message" with their craft. WHY? Why is our media forcing us to think about the world we live in? Thinking is too difficult to do, and it scares me! Each and every single one of us should have the God-given right to cherry pick the messages we hear, otherwise, how else will we truly be free? If the folks behind Cards Against Humanity want to whine and moan on and on about abortion rights and peoples' personal liberties being taken away, then great. They can write a whole article throwing a temper tantrum about it if they want. Just PLEASE keep this stuff out of my games. Frankly speaking, I just don't care!

Now if you excuse me, I have a very important social media argument to get into. I'll leave you fine readers with one last plea: I urge each and every one of you to take a closer look at the media you like and dig up all the dirty little messages they're trying to shove down your throat! Take advantage of your freedoms before they're stolen from you, and speak out against this MADNESS! We have the right to live life as ignorantly as possible, and I want each and every one of you to do just that!

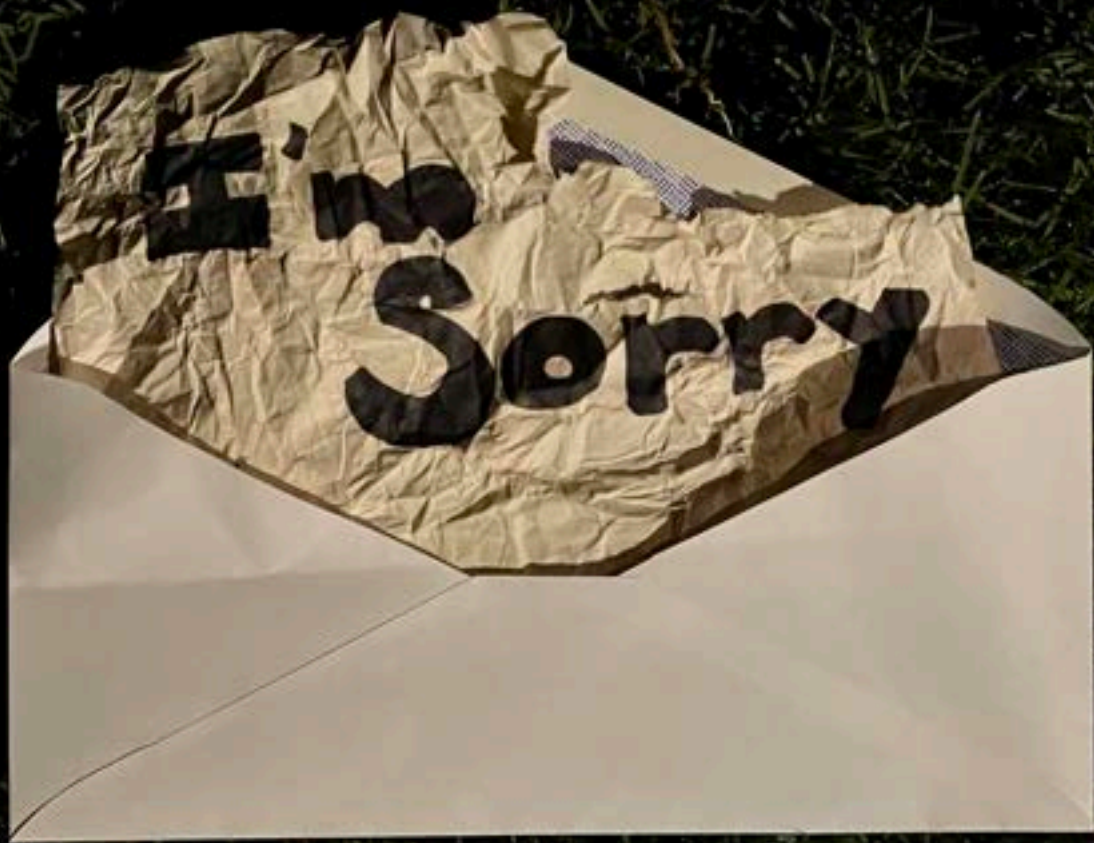
## RAYHAN YOUNAS



??? | ????

"Currently hard at work procrastinating."





*... that your feelings  
were hurt*



# From: An Anti-Socialist

Recently, I have come under fire for some of my actions. People have gotten deeply upset, and my superiors at work are threatening to fire me. Sure, apologizing is the only way to keep my job, and it's questionable that I only decided to apologize after I was threatened with consequences for my actions. However, I'm being super honest and sincere when I say this: I'm very sorry for my actions. I have somehow miraculously completely changed my mindset and lifestyle now and changed entirely as a person. Sure, I'm only apologizing for the one event people know about, and it's likely I have done worse things prior that nobody knows about, but I apologized and now you have to forgive me until I do some other heinous act, where I will then apologize and avoid all consequences again.

However, nobody has thought of how hard this has been for me. People online have been calling me very mean names, and it's honestly very hurtful. It doesn't matter what you think of me, there is no excuse for being so mean to me. Can you even imagine? People being mean on the internet? Impossible. This is too cruel for a man like me. And nobody cares about the good I've done! All they talk about is the bad. Last week, I gave a homeless man one dollar before calling the police to get rid of him. Is anyone talking about how charitable I was then? No.

Additionally, can you really blame me? How was I supposed to know that somebody was recording me on that street? I was simply minding my business, yet somebody was recording me from afar! They're the bad guy here, recording a random citizen. That sounds like an invasion of privacy if you ask me. Sure, they just so happened to record me drop-kicking that small child, but they didn't have any context and didn't understand the situation at all. Sure, I was then seen tweeting about how they had it coming later that day, but that's not relevant here either- people can post whatever they want online, so you can't criticize me for that. And everyone was so quick to pass judgment on me, but never stopped to ask about why I did it. How does anyone really know that the small orphan child was in the right here? See, I had good reason to do so. I had just bought myself some candy from the store, and on my way home this little gremlin dared to walk up to me with their dirty little orphan hands, and ask if they could "please have some candy?" This is absolutely insane, and a horrible anti-American act. I bought myself that candy with my hard-earned money. Do you know what sharing candy with the underprivileged sounds like? Socialism.

That child had succumbed to the socialist propaganda taught in our schools that "sharing is caring" and was going against everything capitalism stands for and, in turn, everything America stands for. That child was spreading socialism in our glorious nation. I was just teaching that child about the evils of socialism and why they shouldn't be relying on the kindness of strangers. That leech is already living in an orphanage paid for with taxpayer money, they should be grateful that they don't live in the streets. It is not my job to take care of every little whim that they have or to make their lives easier. That child should have pulled themselves up by the bootstraps, gotten a job, and made money to buy their own candy, just like my parents taught me when I was growing up in our Los Angeles mansion. Yeah, the child would struggle with finding a job, since they were a five-year-old cripple walking with crutches, but they simply had to turn their mindset into a grind-set and make that money anyways. Children in foreign countries do it all the time! I saw thousands of them when my dad took me to his company's factories in Somalia. That child needed to be taught the importance of capitalist values, and I was simply providing that lesson, me being the good citizen that I am. I saw a post online asking, "Oh my god, why would that man [referring to me] kick a small 5-year-old crippled child, before then saying, 'yeah, go tell your parents! Oh, wait, you can't, because they didn't love you, and that's why they left you at an orphanage, you little ingrate!' What reasons could a man have for doing something like that?" I am grateful that at least somebody was interested in my reasoning. I wish more people at least attempted to understand my point of view. Society these days can be so unfair and intolerant to simple, rational thought.

So, clearly, I've explained my actions were justified because they were in pursuant to stop the spread of socialism. However, I know that many found them a bit harsh and cruel anyways. And to that, I simply say, do you want communism to invade this country? No. That's what I thought. I am protecting the American way and doing what must be done, and other people simply don't understand that. But I am sorry anyways. Sorry that all of you are so blind and ignorant that you can't see how I'm in the right, that none of you contain the intellectual capacity to understand this. I'm sorry that my actions hurt your sad little feelings. I didn't know society was so sensitive nowadays! Now that I have apologized, I can return to my important work of running that orphanage again, and I promise, I won't get caught treating the children living there under my care like that again. And if I do get caught, I promise to apologize again.

# To: A Sensitive World



**NICO CHUCK**

freshman | psychology

Oh no the cat got internet access again



# No Clemency for Cosplay

Dear Hadnson,

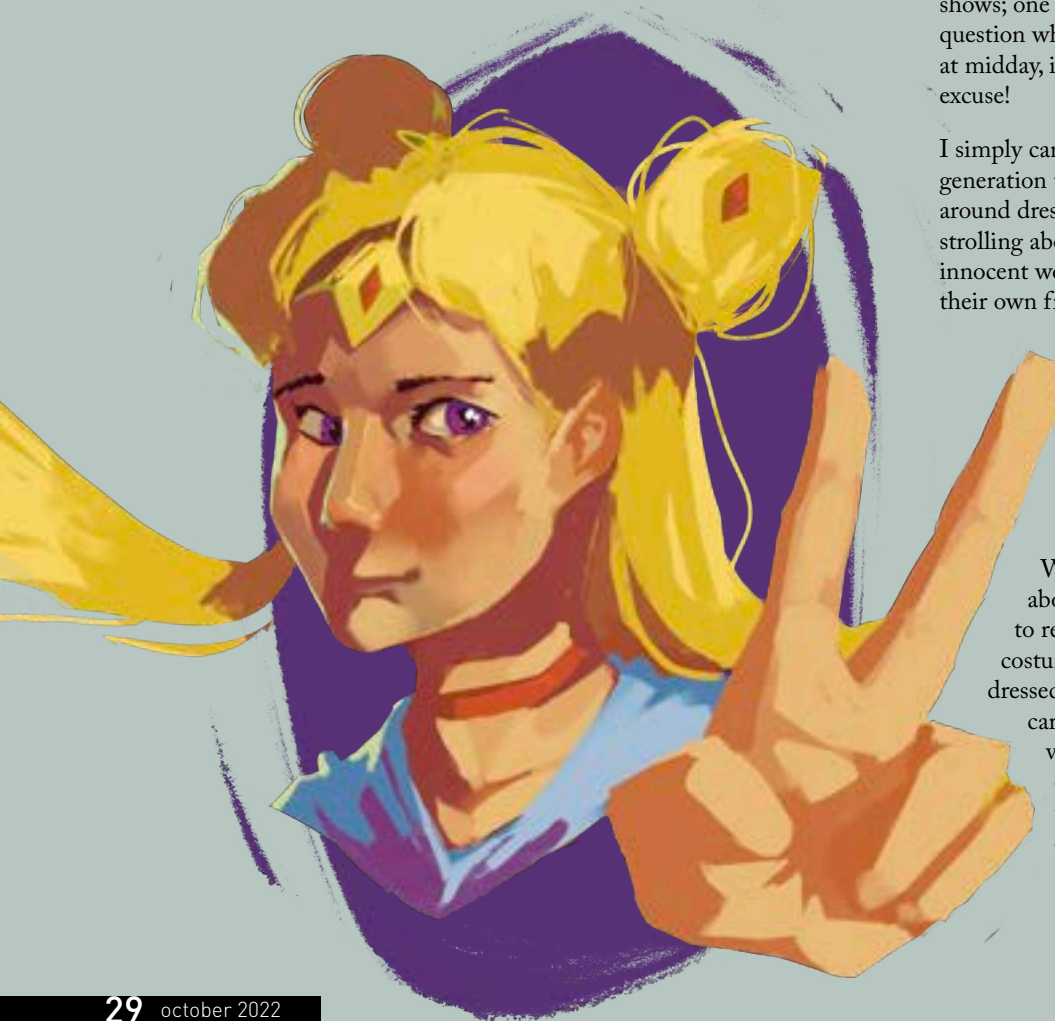
I write to you on this fine Halloween, the day children egg my house and run in costumes amok, even though I gripe about it now I remember when I'd dress up those wondrous Halloweens. Remember when we TP'd Mrs. Hatcherie's house while dressed as the goonies? Ah, good memories. Anyway, I write to you not just in recollection of the old. No, I'm afraid there's been some horrid rebellious act of youths that I'm reminded of this evening. Seeing the children running around celebrating costumed reminded me of a time I saw a group of young men and women all dressed up in the most ridiculous costumes at a gas station. Now, Hadnson, you might say that, "the youth occasionally still arrive costumed to their Halloween parties", in response to my shock at the gas station, but that's it, my dear friend. It wasn't Halloween. It was the fifteenth of July that I encountered the ridiculously costumed youths.

Now even in the stupor I found myself in at the time, I risked approaching to inquire what had them in such an outlandish position as to be costumed in a gas station at midday, so far from the costume holiday in which I referenced to earlier in this letter. I tapped one of the young women on the shoulder to ask my question. She was in some get-up of a red trench coat and witch hat and as she turned to me the rest of her costume looked like some school uniform- ridiculous, I thought- anyways she answered my questions by saying they were on their way to some kind of convention. Mentioned what they were all doing was something called "cosplay". I asked further what cosplay was. She said that she and her associates were dressed as characters from one of those Japanese cartoons, you know the ones that are a slang of animation, "anima" or something along those lines. I don't know any of those shows; one of my granddaughters watches them, which brings to question why this young woman is dressed like a cartoon character, at midday, in a gas station, so far from Halloween! There's no excuse!

I simply can't wrap my head around where we messed up in our generation to where the adults of today think it's entirely ok to walk around dressed as cartoon characters. Those blasted young heads strolling about in costume anytime of the bloody year. Bringing innocent women to swoon while they tramp about town as if it's their own freakshow closet. And these excuses of their conventions,

for practical adults to be wandering around in costume instead of simply going to the park or playing checkers with their associates. No, they instead spend their house savings on costumes of their favorite cartoon characters. There's no time nor place where it's appropriate to be wandering around in a costume publicly.

Well, Hadnson, I will admit that I had almost forgotten about Halloween. Now you might be seemingly quick to return with the children walking around dressed in costumes asking for candy, but I bring up what everyone's dressed as. You see, Halloween is meant to be scary, not some cartoon characters walking around. It's a time of skeletons, vampires, werewolves, and Jason Vorhes. I guess that last one is from a film, but still carries on the scary theme of the tradition. Though I guess there are plenty of children dressed as that laughing square-panted sponge and that



design by: sean sepdham

ice witch. We did dress as our favorite characters from the Goonies back in our day so I guess dressing as favorite characters is all fine and normal. Even if it is from one of those Japanese cartoons.

But, Hadnson, it is still on Halloween, the time of the year where people traditionally dress in costume publicly, not just any old day in July. What is this convention they speak of, hmm? An event where everyone comes dressed in specific attire. Ridiculous! I can't think of a time I've dressed up with people at an event. Aside from something like a wedding, of course, with everyone working to look their finest with each other. Though dressing up for a wedding is entirely different from some sort of costume party. This is formal wear, there's codes, time, and money that go into assembling a suit or dress, not like one of their costumes. No relations whatsoever in the decisions made in the formal wear of such an event. Though you might say the investments are similar, this is an event where everyone is to prepare an outfit.

People don't just dress up regularly in planned out outfits. It's daily wear, pre planned events, and Halloween that one wears a planned outfit. This is if I'd be giving this cosplay credit as an "outfit", which it shouldn't be considered such. You dress up for Halloween, weddings, and church every week in Sunday's best. You have to wear the proper attire to church, not some goofy costume, and everyone in mass comes to look the part of a good Christian and not some highschool witch.

Apologies, Hadnson, I had wandered from our topic of discussion. The mind plays such tricks at this age as you know.

Though returning to traditional holidays, you only dress up in costume on Halloween and no other significant holiday. When are these so called conventions and meets, the middle of July, the second coming? Look towards the Christmas season, the largest holiday of the year, there's no dressing up. I doubt you'd even be able to find an excuse, Hadnson. It's simply a time of getting together with family, drinking eggnog, presents, wearing ugly sweaters and christmas hats. The specifically ugly sweaters and hats I guess are traditional wear for the holiday, but not a costume. It's not like anyone dresses as Santa or anything. I guess I do dress as Santa for the grandkids on Christmas Eve, but that is a tradition to the family. A tradition I started yes, but dressing as Santa is not cosplay it's entirely different. Oh dear me, this letter has grown quite a bit. I'll leave for your response.

Your Friend,

Absterg



Dear Absterg,

You worry yourself over the most trivial things. This whole letter raving on about the legitimacy of some celebrations over others ending in a circle you refuse to leave. You forgot to even write about the rest of your Halloween, or of that even your grandchildren.

Your Friend,

Hadnson



**ZACH STOEBERL**

senior | literature

Talking way through life since it seems to be working.

by: jade dotson



Tobor Sees You

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