

AMP

february 2023 | volume 19 | issue 5 | ampatutd.com



Femininity is Not The Enemy

How to break up
before Valentine's Day!

Which Pokémon movie is
the **very best**?

Who needs romance?
Not everyone.

AMP

Editors' Desk

Republicans are Scared of Tiktok

Happy Valentine's, Comets! And welcome back to school! The spring semester has officially started and Valentine's Day is coming up. For those that are celebrating the holiday, congratulations! And for those that won't be celebrating, try to stay off social media on the 14th to avoid everyone's relationships being shoved down your throat. The library is now open 24 hours on the weekdays again, so if you don't have a special someone, have a date with those books. Work on yourself. Or... you can take online dating to the next level and play the newest installment of the famous fantasy dating sim series, Fire Emblem Engage.

One person that definitely isn't thinking about Valentine's Day is our brave and mighty governor, Greg Abbott. Governor Abbott is busy fighting anti-capitalism and protecting the people from what he perceives as a very large threat to Texas: the Chinese government. Comets, if you've noticed that your TikTok isn't working when you're on campus anymore, or if you read the email sent out by the university, you know that TikTok has been banned on our university campus. The ban started by prohibiting the use of TikTok on government issued devices for government jobs. A lot of the ban mandates were inconclusive with various departments at UTD (including our esteemed magazine), which left us wondering what changes they would have to make to comply with the new policy.

However, once the start of the semester began, schools like UT Austin, Texas A&M, and our very own UTD decided to ban the use of TikTok on school wifi (excluding university housing). Republican members of our national government have cited their concerns about the Chinese-owned app being used to influence and manipulate those here in America—but in reality they're just afraid to have their feeds expose them. Many other states in the US have already banned the use of TikTok for cybersecurity and content-based concerns. During our last presidential administration, Donald Trump talked about banning TikTok for similar reasons states have banned TikTok. So all in all, Republican members (former and present) of our government really hate TikTok; it will be interesting to see how this plays out.

But let's not think about that and focus on the real future: February 15th, Discount Candy Day.



Bethel Bekele - Editor-in-Chief



Sebyul Paik - Managing Editor



Victoria Bruno - Asst. Art Director



Ally Duong - Web and Copy Editor



Gavin Arriaga - Marketing Director



Danny Torres - Asst. Art Director



Ethan Wu - Asst. Marketing Director



Sneha Raghavan - Asst. Copy Editor



The Tragedy of Berkner Hall 12

A Scientific Ranking of Pokémon Movies 16

Campus Critter Showdown 20

THIS ISSUE:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 4 February Horoscope | 12 From Native To Na'vi |
| 5 Restaurant Reviews | 16 A Scientific Ranking of Pokémon Movies |
| 6 Romance With Ratford | 18 SG Comet Lore Competition Winner |
| 8 Femininity Is Not The Enemy | 20 Campus Critter Showdown |
| 10 You Don't Need Love | 22 Ultimate Guide To Dumping Someone |

Editor-in-Chief
Bethel Bekele

Managing Editor
Sebyul Paik

Assistant Art Director
Danny Torres

Assistant Art Director
Victoria Bruno

Web/Copy Editor
Ally Duong

Assistant Copy Editor
Sneha Raghavan

Marketing Director
Gavin Arriaga

Assistant Marketing Director
Ethan Wu

Contributors

Sebyul Paik, Ethan Wu, Mickey Dolphin, Rayhan Younas, Malu Yitages, Gavin Arriaga, Kevin Wang, Hayden Siebers

Designers

Sinclair King, Izkra Chavez, Susan Zhang, Sean Sepdham, Lyssa Copeland, Brianna Bitar, Victoria Bruno, Michelle Le

Media Advisor
Jonathan Stewart

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 and follow us on social media @AMPatUTD for more information.



AMP HOROSCOPES

• *A q u a r i u s* •

1/19 -2/18

Aries: Do you even have time to be looking for love right now? Before you buy someone dinner, consider buying yourself a planner.

Taurus: Routine is important, but beware of stagnation. Hang out with someone you haven't seen in a while!

Gemini: Compartmentalizing every part of your personality into neat little boxes is not going to help you find love. You need to figure out what it means to be yourself authentically.

Cancer: You're never going to meet anyone if you just stay inside all day playing video games alone. Go out and find someone to play video games with!

Leo: You have a tendency to get attached quickly.

Virgo: Quit being so anxious! You're a catch, and you need to learn to own that.

Libra: Tell someone you miss them today. You might not be the only one feeling alone.

Scorpio: Don't spend too long dwelling on your recent failures. You will have more chances. This is not forever.

Sagittarius: This month is going to bring the start of something new. Don't let it pass you by!

Capricorn: Your love life is perfectly fine as it is. You just need to get comfortable with it.

Aquarius: Stop waiting for other people to reach out. Sometimes to maintain relationships, you have to make the first move.

Pisces: Are you seeking out relationships because you want someone to love, or because you want to be loved? Wanting affection isn't a bad thing, but make sure you're ready to reciprocate.

SEBYUL PAIK

senior | literature
Capricorn sun, Leo
moon, Capricorn rising

Food for Thought

Pinto Urban Thai Diner



Photo courtesy of Pinto Urban Thai Diner

Pinto Urban Thai Diner is a themed diner at Northside that has a variety of Thai food. It's notoriously known for being over-priced for the amount of food given—however, the quality and ambiance of the restaurant make it worth checking out. They have appetizers like spring rolls, fish cakes, and shrimp tempura. Then there are classic entrees like pad thai and drunken noodles. There's also fried rice, soups, curries, salads, and desserts, plus they have vegan options for those with dietary restrictions. The average price of an entree is around \$12–\$15 and prices vary for appetizers and desserts. One of my favorite things to get at Pinto is actually the iced Thai tea; it's a sweet delectable drink that always leaves me wanting more. There is outdoor seating available but you can also sit inside. The plants and lights around the restaurant make for comfortable seating.

If you're craving Thai food, make the short walk from campus over to Pinto!

Chopped Halal Grill



Photo Courtesy of Chopped Halal Grill

Located at the Northside Apartments strip, Chopped is arguably one of the favorites around UTD's campus. The portions are large, pricing is reasonable, and the quality is something to write home about. An average bowl entree at Chopped is approximately \$13, depending on what you include in the bowl. There are many ways to mix and match the ingredients because it's a "make-your-own bowl" restaurant, similar to Chipotle or Halal Shack. There are rice or salad bowls, or pita wraps with basmati rice and your choice of chicken, gyro, kofta, or falafel. Then there are sides and toppings like chickpeas and various vegetables that you can choose from, topped off with rich flavourful sauces. And as mentioned, the portions are considerably large which is convenient for college students that enjoy saving one plate of food and making it last for 2–3 meals (caution: this won't work for everyone equally, it depends on how much you eat in one sitting). There is outdoor seating to the restaurant, however, the inside has a really nice ambiance to it that can be part of your eating experience. There isn't much room on the inside but the decor is lovely, from the wall art to the flowers on each table.

If you're looking for a good hearty meal with a lot of rich flavors, definitely give Chopped Halal Grill a try.

Romance With Ratford

*Students ask the
ESTEEMED LOVE EXPERT, RATFORD THE RAT,
for advice regarding their wooing woes.*



Q: Would you rather date Temoc, Enarc, or Tobor?

A: Bold of you to assume that any of our beloved mascots/idols aren't hitched already.

Q: What makes you feel the most loved?

A: 

Q: How do we rizz?

A: Either do well in class so people come to you for answers, OR do poorly so people feel compelled to help you.

Q: How do you know if someone is interested in you romantically or wants to be just friends considering that they want to be around you?

A: Read the article on page 10.

Q: I've been repeatedly told that I need to "be confident" when asking out women. How am I supposed to?

A: Women *loooooove* when you refer to yourself as an alpha male and talk about League of Legends unprompted.

Q: What are some red flags to avoid?

A: Comp-Sci majors.

Q: Have recently started talking to my ex who says she is interested in getting back, but I am not. Bad idea?

A: *three bottles of soju later* Not at all!

Q: How should I ask out this girl at the gym?

A: Stop her in the middle of her set and tell her how to use the machine she was just using. This way she'll really look up to you.

Q: What's a good first date location?

A: Dining Hall West dinner date.

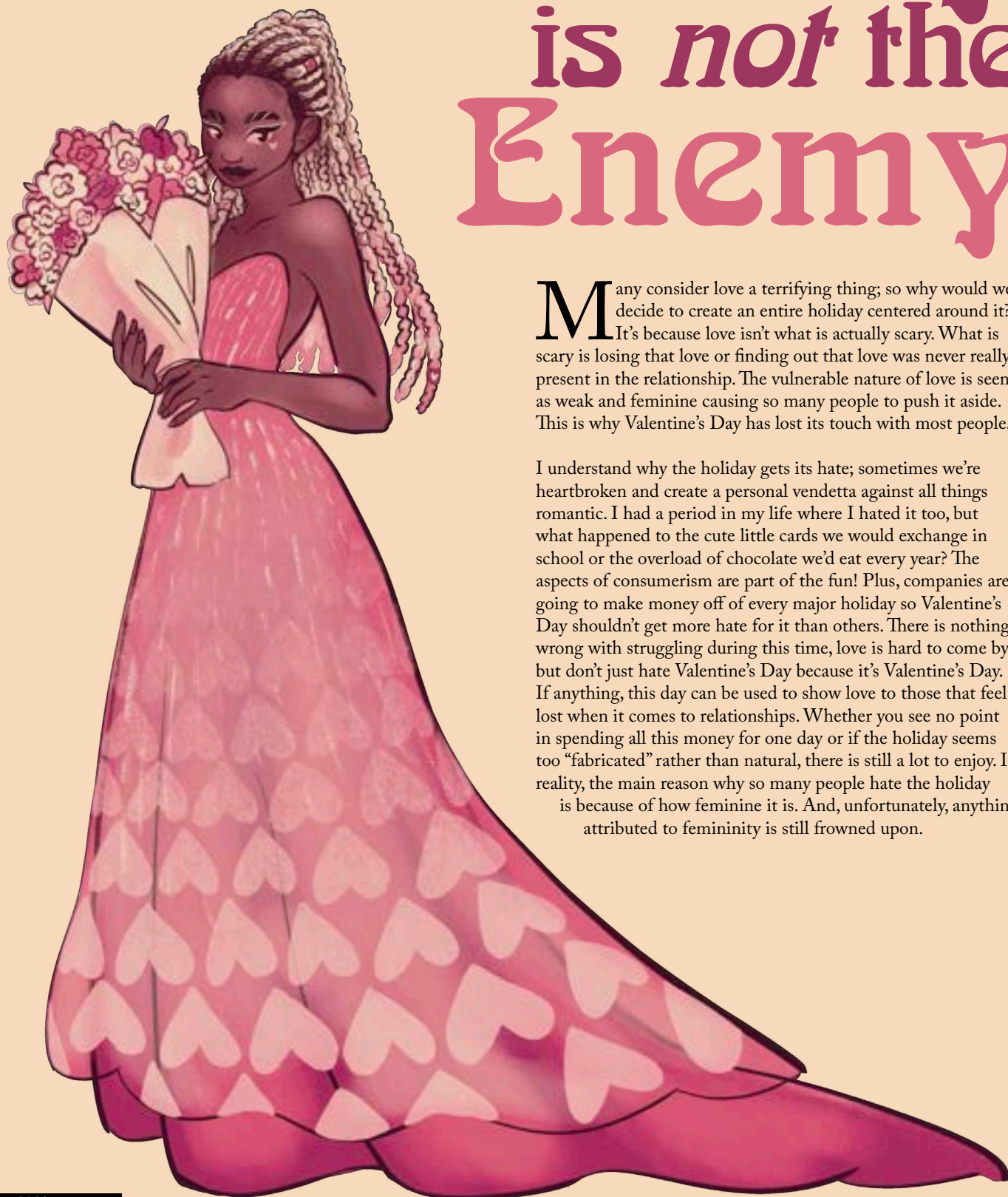
Q: What's a good pick-up line?

A: Baby you can call me tobor because I'll bring you taco bell any hour of the day.

Q: Why is it that UTD doesn't do more events like [speed dating]?

A: See above questions.

Femininity is *not* the Enemy



Many consider love a terrifying thing; so why would we decide to create an entire holiday centered around it? It's because love isn't what is actually scary. What is scary is losing that love or finding out that love was never really present in the relationship. The vulnerable nature of love is seen as weak and feminine causing so many people to push it aside. This is why Valentine's Day has lost its touch with most people.

I understand why the holiday gets its hate; sometimes we're heartbroken and create a personal vendetta against all things romantic. I had a period in my life where I hated it too, but what happened to the cute little cards we would exchange in school or the overload of chocolate we'd eat every year? The aspects of consumerism are part of the fun! Plus, companies are going to make money off of every major holiday so Valentine's Day shouldn't get more hate for it than others. There is nothing wrong with struggling during this time, love is hard to come by, but don't just hate Valentine's Day because it's Valentine's Day. If anything, this day can be used to show love to those that feel lost when it comes to relationships. Whether you see no point in spending all this money for one day or if the holiday seems too "fabricated" rather than natural, there is still a lot to enjoy. In reality, the main reason why so many people hate the holiday is because of how feminine it is. And, unfortunately, anything attributed to femininity is still frowned upon.

There's a "double-whammy" that allows for the holiday to be discredited: not only it is attached to femininity, which is not inherently the issue, but femininity is also seen as lesser than masculinity. There's absolutely nothing wrong with this day going hand-in-hand with feminine values, but there is something wrong with it being hated *because* of its feminine values. So much gets ignored because it's considered "girly": rom-coms, makeup, dolls, the color pink, etc. Although we've started to rid ourselves of gender norms, there are still a lot of bad habits that we slip into. Valentine's Day is seen as a very heteronormative holiday; it's assumed that a boyfriend should dread the time and effort that is needed to please their "high-maintenance" girlfriend, ultimately disappointing her. Not only does this narrative impose toxic gender roles, but it also diminishes the value of femininity creating partners that have lost their romantic side. This also causes many people to take on a "pick me" attitude in order to reassure their partners that they don't need anything because they're different from others. The crazy thing is, they could both enjoy Valentine's Day if they put their masculinity aside and embrace how nice celebrating love can feel.

Of course, Valentine's Day tends to be centered around romantic relationships, but all over the world cultures celebrate more than just romance; they celebrate any relationship that have positively affected their lives. Whether we look to Denmark where friends create handmade cards for each other or Estonia where a festival is catered to honor friendship, we can see that there is more to love than what we see here in the states. This holiday doesn't need to only highlight all the couples that annoyingly post on social

media about how "perfect" they are for a single day, but it can be about showing and receiving love from different (and even unexpected) places. Valentine's Day is not meant to be the only day when we show affection, but it is the day when affection is supposed to be emphasized. Love has extended past the need for a relationship to be between a man and a woman. In order for Valentine's Day to be properly celebrated, it must be inclusive. People of all gender identities and sexual orientations should be able to enjoy and experience love just as much as the next person. This is what Valentine's Day can be all about if we decide to embrace it.

It's not enough for people to simply not hate the holiday, people should be excited to celebrate it! We all know it's a cheesy holiday with presents and chocolate but those things are great anyways so why not enjoy it? Valentine's Day can be a chance for people to understand love languages and how to best meet those needs. A better understanding of how people express their affection can be extremely beneficial and make life more enjoyable. It's an opportunity for love to be practiced and intentional; you shouldn't half-ass Valentine's Day, that takes away the importance of it. There are benefits to everyone getting in touch with their feminine side, not just those that present themselves as such most times. Femininity is beautiful and should be encouraged for everyone. Instead of feeling ashamed for finding joy in areas of life that are loving, gentle, and kind, like Valentine's Day, feel pride in accepting a part of you that many have yet to embrace about themselves.



MALU YITAGES

senior | atec

I worked at Disney once.



You Don't Need Love

With Valentine's Day fast approaching, romance is on everyone's mind. I bet you're busy buying chocolates and getting a reservation for the perfect date spot to surprise your loving partner. And if you, unfortunately, don't have anyone to wine and dine yet, you're frantically searching for the perfect person to be your valentine this year before it's too late.

That is... unless you're happily single and aren't looking for a romantic partner. That viewpoint is so often overlooked at this time of year, isn't it? In fact, romance is pushed on us as the only option during almost every moment of the day.

People are conditioned to not only seek out but expect romance as a part of their lives, and those expectations are taught early. You may have seen cringe-worthy baby clothes with phrases written on them that imply romance before they can even talk, like "Ladies' Man" or "Lock Up Your Daughters." You've heard mothers gush about a normal interaction between two toddlers just because one is a boy and one is a girl. Parents talk about "when you have a boyfriend," or even "when you get married," as if this is something everyone knows will happen eventually. The movies we watch as children often have a happy ending for the protagonist that includes "getting the girl," even if it feels tacked on because the movie hadn't centered on the characters' love lives until those final moments: falling in love is a necessary part of a happy ending, a box to check off.

This type of clear-cut thinking ignores the many people who don't want romance in their lives. Aromantic people are those who don't experience romantic attraction to others, not because they don't want a partner at a certain point in time but because they just aren't wired that way. Just like gay people are born attracted to the same gender, aromantic people are born without romantic feelings at all. They can still feel platonic love and familial love, but they don't feel a romantically motivated pull to anyone around them. (This is a simplified explanation of course, feel free to do more research!) The equivalent of being straight in this case is "alloromantic," describing the majority of people who do feel romantic attraction.

While many of us are aware of the concept of heteronormativity-- when society normalizes straight relationships and in turn alienates gay people-- we may not notice the amatonormativity that normalizes needing romance. This can make it difficult for aromantic people to realize that they are in fact aromantic, because of the finality of statements like "I can't wait until you get married!" that imply a romantic outcome is inevitable for everyone.

I experienced amatonormativity often as an aromantic child, and it was confusing and nerve-racking because I thought I was the only one who felt this way. Sure I'd never had a crush, but that just meant I was a late bloomer or hadn't met the right person- or so the adults around me would say, over and over. So instead of admitting I didn't get it, I'd fake romantic attraction to fit in, claiming to have



crushes on fictional characters or unattainable celebrities to use as leverage during my peers' conversations about love. Sometimes I would even mistake friendship for romantic attraction: we've been taught from the moment we were born that we must have a crush on someone at some point, so this desire to be close to someone must finally be that moment. It can't just be platonic. (It didn't help when my classmates would insist that I, a feminine-presenting person at the time, couldn't just be friends with a guy. Ultimately trying to think of him as a crush instead of a friend just made me sad for a reason I couldn't pinpoint back then, and our friendship eventually dissolved as a result of that peer pressure.) Overall, there is a lot of anxiety about if something is wrong with us as aromantic people, especially because aromanticism has remained so unknown in the mainstream while other queer identities like being gay or transgender have slowly become more recognized.

Amatonormativity directly harms aromantic youth, making them think they must conform to what is expected of them. They'll likely try dating and find it strange or even upsetting, but assume it's a problem they need to fix rather than a societal pressure they don't have to follow.

However, this is damaging even for alloromantics who simply may not want to pursue a romantic relationship. Romance is often presented as a "when," not an "if," something that will happen to everyone at some point in their life. Anyone not in a relationship is perpetually asked when they will enter one by friends and family, as common of a catching-up question as how school is going or if you have a job yet. Focusing on work over romance is seen as a sacrifice (especially for women) even when the person is successful and proud of their accomplishments as if being single is some sort of failure. All of this eventually breaks down a person's confidence in themselves as an individual and makes them think that they can only be truly happy if they have a romantic partner.

As obvious as it may sound, you don't need romance to be happy. Relying on a relationship with another person to feel "complete" or "accomplished" is not healthy. Although it will be hard due to how deeply ingrained these ideas are, it's best for your own sake to start

unlearning them. If you're alloromantic and struggle to feel whole without a partner because of this type of ideology, here are some tips: Don't be scared of being single. Don't define your life as the periods when you're in relationships and the "gaps" between them. Evaluate your feelings and needs before entering a relationship, instead of jumping in because you're used to always being in one. Celebrate your individual successes. Take time for yourself, even when you are in relationships, rather than spending all your time glued to your partner's side. Identify the things you really enjoy doing and don't let yourself sacrifice those hobbies for another person.

If you suspect you may be aromantic, this is the time to stop letting other people tell you what to do. You know yourself best. If being single is what makes you happy, there's nothing wrong with that. Whether you're spending it with a romantic partner, a platonic partner, or just treating yourself, Happy Valentine's Day.



GAVIN ARRIAGA

junior | marketing

The first amendment protects you from the government not me.

From Native to Na'vi

The controversy over cinematic cultures

Just as the long year of 2022 was winding down to an end, renowned director James Cameron's newest film "Avatar: The Way of Water" released to stunning commercial success, smashing annual and historical records to quickly become one of the highest-grossing movies of all time. Although it was released a whopping 13 years after the original "Avatar," the sequel's success demonstrates the clear interest audiences have in witnessing this story continue.

However, "Avatar" has one big problem that has become a hot talking point both online and across the media: to many, it's outright culturally offensive! As popular as "Avatar" and its sequel are, they are also a prime example of why POC perspectives and influence are still an urgent necessity in the filmmaking industry.

"Avatar: The Way of Water" continues the overarching storyline introduced in the first film, focusing on the otherworldly Na'vi people of the alien moon Pandora. Their identity and way of life, a prominent focus in the films, has been directly inspired by and compared to various indigenous cultures across the globe. Cameron himself has called the Na'vi a reference to Native Americans, although many aspects of their customs and appearances stem from various indigenous Polynesian and Asian peoples such as the Māori people of New Zealand. In a conflict tackling the dangers of imperialism and colonialism, the alien race finds their home under invasion from mankind, who aim to pacify the natives and exploit their moon for its land and resources. Audiences are taken into the world of Pandora and shown how the Na'vi live, growing to sympathize with them as they are shown their struggles and victories against the oppressive militaristic force of the humans.

Alongside the anti-imperialistic themes of *Avatar*, however, are a slew of dubious cultural portrayals and questionable implications that have upset audiences and activists alike. With the release of “The Way of Water,” discussion over these issues has returned to the spotlight. A common complaint concerns main protagonist Jake Sully. Jake is a former US Marine tasked with using an artificially grown Na’vi “avatar” to infiltrate Pandora and negotiate with the natives. The first film follows his perspective as he learns more about their society, falls in love with one of their own, and eventually becomes a leader of the race before permanently transferring his consciousness into his avatar. Rather than rooting for Jake, people have often seen his character arc as pushing a white savior narrative. The concept of the “white savior” revolves around the depiction of white people as liberators, saviors, or mentors for the rest of the world. It’s generally considered a very racist and condescending idea, one that disregards the strength and agency of people of color. Jake, being a white man who impresses the indigenous-inspired Na’vi with feats of heroism before becoming one of their leaders, unfortunately becomes a white savior in his own way. The presence of such a protagonist in a story that’s supposed to be about the struggles and efforts of an indigenous community is rather jarring. Additionally, the portrayal of the Na’vi in general has drawn a lot of ire from the public, stirring accusations of cultural appropriation and painting different indigenous values and traditions in a monolithic, alien light. After all, the movies are borrowing customs and ideas from several separate real-world cultures and incorporating them all within a bizarre, otherworldly, and exotic fictional race. In a sense, the Na’vi are an inadvertently unflattering stereotype of their original inspirations.

Amidst the controversy there is a major underlying root issue: the inherent disconnect between the perspectives of the creator and the creation. The “Avatar” movies are about colonialism and the struggle of indigenous people... from the perspective of a white male protagonist, in a story written by a white male director! Cameron, the leading creative mind behind “Avatar,” is ultimately a complete outsider to the very real cultures and conflicts that

have inspired this fantasy saga of his. In terms of thematic intent, the story being told comes off as benign, but ignorant. Cameron himself has acknowledged the complaints that have been directed towards the movies, expressing the desire to continue learning and honing his stories, but there remains a gap that cannot be crossed. From a production standpoint, the films are lacking the indigenous perspective and influence needed to tell a story about this sort of issue. As a result, the “Avatar” movies merely cherry-pick from different indigenous cultures in a performative, shallow way while still rendering them subservient to the white presence via the main protagonist.

The topic of cultural representation versus exploitation has been a long-standing discussion in the film industry, one that is certainly not exclusive to just *Avatar*. These issues have pervaded countless movies for decades on end, including classics that I’m sure many of you are very familiar with. Disney, for example, has spent the better part of a century building a long line of animated films, establishing a legacy built upon the diverse representation of various peoples, cultures, and regions. “Aladdin,” “Mulan,” “Moana,” “Pocahontas,” “Princess and the Frog”... the list just goes on and on! Many of these movies are childhood staples and acclaimed classics, but they often contain questionable stereotypes, prejudiced portrayals, and excessive romanticization that all reflect poorly upon scrutiny.

Similarly to “Avatar,” “Pocahontas” is a tale about the impact of colonialism on an indigenous community, this time between the early English colonists and the Powhatan Native Americans. Historically speaking, the colonists and Powhatan people were initially co-existing trading partners. This relationship, already a tenuous one rife with kidnappings and negotiations, began to sour upon the increasing demands and encroachment of the colonists, eventually leading to all-out war. The Powhatan and their allies endured unprecedented losses, marking the conflict as one of the many grave difficulties that European imperialism brought upon the indigenous people of the Americas. As many of you probably know, however, Disney’s family animated adaptation of the events

REPRESENT US



is a dashing, romanticized princess fairy tale filled with acts of heroism and love, where the big bad is defeated and the natives and colonists all get together to (metaphorically) sing kumbaya. Titular heroine Pocahontas, portrayed as a young adult Native American who bravely stops the fighting, was actually a young teenage girl who was tragically separated from her people by the colonists. Pocahontas wasn't even her real name! It was Matoaka, with "Pocahontas" merely being a nickname that meant "playful one". Standing alongside Pocahontas in the movie is supporting protagonist John Smith, who plays the essential role of the heroic white sympathizer to the natives, not unlike Jake Sully — but completely unlike the real-life, authoritarian colonial leader Smith was based off of.

Disney's "Aladdin," similarly, was inspired by the nations of the Middle East and Arabian Peninsula. Set in the fictional sultanate of Agrabah, the film depicts Arabian culture and people as exotic and alien in a similar, albeit less literal case than that of "Avatar's" Na'vi. Agrabah is a harsh, desert wasteland full of magic, mischief, and eccentric characters. It's a bizarre, barbaric land where the men are all mustached brutes prone to violence, while the women are all scantily clad objects of eroticism. Notably, main protagonist Aladdin is slim, fairer-skinned, clean-shaven and completely lacks any kind of regional accent or inflection, making him distinctly whitewashed when compared to his supporting cast of walking stereotypes. Like Jake Sully, he stands out as the "superior" anglicized insert into a foreign culture, once again pushing the unfortunate implication that said features are synonymous with heroism and necessary for an audience to be able to empathize with their protagonist.

Both "Pocahontas" and "Aladdin" were released in the 1990s. It could be easy to say that these movies are simply products of their time, alongside the dubious cultural implications that they carry. However, this is an issue that plagues Disney in modern years as well, as seen with the 2019 live-action adaptation of "Aladdin." Several bouts of controversy and backlash were sparked prior to the film's release due to questionable decisions being made during production. For instance, at one point it came to light that the filmmakers were "browning up" white actors in order to play

colored extras and minor characters, using makeup to darken their skin in what resembles the unfortunate practice of brownface. The main cast fared little better, with ethnically incorrect casting being swept away with the cheap studio excuse that there simply weren't enough feasible choices when it came to talent. Altogether, the production of "Aladdin" (2019) shows a modern-day example of the clear cultural disregard and insensitivity that creators have exhibited in the movie-making industry.

Over the span of decades, countless movies have attempted to display diverse representation only to turn towards the performative appropriation, romanticization, or transformation of very real cultural identities into caricatures for entertainment's sake. The root cause of this issue is the fundamental personal disconnect between the creators and what they are portraying. When topics as nuanced as colonialism or foreign representation are handled by this outside white perspective, a gap formed by the creator's personal distance from the matter begins to manifest. As we have seen time and time again, this is a gap that stereotyped beliefs, biases, and cultural faux pas seep into, tainting the stories and messages that we as viewers take in.

Diversity as a fundamental concept is not a problem. There's no question that film, and really any creative art in general, can only stand to benefit from the increased scope of worldviews and people. Portraying diverse cultures in media allows audiences to learn about values and ideas they knew little about beforehand, opening up people's minds to the world around us. However, it's because of this need for diversity that the film industry needs the POC perspective, instead of the outsider attempts at substitution that we so often see. We don't just need diversity playing out on a movie's scenes — we need it behind them as well. Without a varied array of authentic perspectives and experiences, our film industry would lack the range of vision it needs to reach its full potential, telling stories of complicated human and cultural matters with the nuance they require. It is a necessity that absolutely shouldn't be ignored, and although steps are being made, people of color are still an ultimately underrepresented demographic in the industry. Non-white leads still make up a small minority share when it comes to roles, and there are even fewer writers, directors, and producers of color out

there. According to UCLA's annual "Hollywood Diversity Report", people of color only make up 30% of directors and 32% of film writers. The remaining 68-70% are all white, painting a sobering picture of the prejudice and privilege that continue to dominate the film industry to this day.

From where we stand right now, however, we're fortunate enough to have been graced with some shining, creative examples of what the authentic POC perspective can bring to cinema. Black director Jordan Peele, for example, has famously written and directed "Get Out," "Us," and last year's "Nope." Each of these movies are deeply enthralling, thrilling films that tackle various societal concepts, such as systemic racism and classism, the power that privilege holds in life, and the pursuit of luxury, entertainment, or spectacle at the expense of life. Additionally, Mexican filmmaker Guillermo del Toro has carved a reputation for himself as a beloved contemporary director. His filmography includes the dark fantasy classic "Pan's Labyrinth," as well as a very recent, critically acclaimed stop-motion adaptation of "Pinocchio." Each and every one of these wonderful movies shows the power the POC perspective holds.

Through their creation, consumption, interpretation, and reception, all mediums of art tell a story. A web of ideas, themes, and emotions takes a firm hold on each and every piece, and it's no different when it comes to the art of movies. The film industry should strive to accurately and justly portray the world we live in, and the fact is we live in a very large world. When you have a diverse array of people belonging to countless different countries, ethnicities, and belief systems sitting down in front of their screens to witness these stories unfold, it is absolutely imperative that an equally varied share of creators from different backgrounds can get their chance in the director's seat. Otherwise, Jake Sully sporting dreads as he flies around on his mountain banshee will continue to be just one wave in a sea of cinematic culture shock.



RAYHAN YOUNAS

sophomore | psychology

Currently hard at work procrastinating

A Scientific Ranking of Pokémon Movies

For years, YouTube video essayists have worked tirelessly to definitively find the best Pokémon movie. With Ash Ketchum's journey as a forever 10-year-old protagonist finally coming to an end, I took it upon myself to figure out the true answer, once and for all.

Historically, this field of study has been fraught with bias, rooted in reviewers' nostalgia for whatever their favorite Pokémon movie was as a child. Others are too critical, choosing to grade films on their actual quality instead of their ability to market children a world of portable magical creatures with limitless power. My scientific rating system avoids these pitfalls by awarding points based on the following categories: bad guys, movie-exclusive characters, main character growth, Pokémon marketing, and actual film quality. For my own sanity, I chose to focus on only anime spin-off films, bringing the total number of feature length films from 24 to 19. Of those, here are the very worst and the very best. For the full ratings, visit our website at ampatutd.com.

The Worst Five:

5. Pokémon: The Movie 2000 - The Power of One (1999) - 19/50
Most of this movie focuses on Ash dealing with being 'the Chosen One' and having to save the world alone. Points were awarded for character growth and interesting side characters, but in terms of Pokémon marketing, it falls woefully short. Plus, the title alone is bad enough to make the bottom five.

4. Pokémon 3: The Movie - Spell of the Unown (2000) - 18/50
"Spell of the Unown" came out just a year after "The Power of One," and while it managed to do better on Pokémon marketing, it was still very mediocre overall. The most interesting part of this movie is the antagonist, Molly, a distraught child whose parents have gone missing. When given unlimited power, Molly attempts to recreate her broken family, abducting Ash's mom in the process. It's a compelling concept, but unfortunately Molly is also extremely annoying.

3. Pokémon: Giratina & the Sky Warrior (2008) - 17/50
I hate it when legendary Pokémon talk for no reason. It completely breaks the immersion and destroys any mystique or majesty they'd otherwise have. This movie is the perfect example. The titular 'Sky Warrior' is Shaymin, a mythical Pokémon unfortunately caught

in an interdimensional conflict between gods. Shaymin is a tiny hedgehog covered in flowers, and it would be extremely cute if a third of the film's running time wasn't dedicated to it being a whiny, ungrateful brat. By the end of this movie, I was ready to punt Shaymin like a football.

2. Pokémon: Jirachi — Wish Maker (2003) - 16/50

I had high hopes for this one! It's the first movie where Ash isn't the main character, instead choosing to focus on Max, a character that's usually just comedic relief. Unfortunately, this movie is weirdly low-budget compared to the rest of the films. Jirachi is adorable, but the pacing is slow and the animation is lackluster. Worst of all, there isn't a single fun Pokémon battle! In the entire movie!

1. Pokémon the Movie: Kyurem vs. the Sword of Justice (2012) - 6/50

This movie doesn't have a single redeeming feature. The main character is Keldeo, a horse with the color scheme of Crest toothpaste and the voice of a prepubescent middle schooler. The plot consists of a single battle between two legendary Pokémon. Ash and friends show up at some point, but play fairly minor roles in the "story." We barely see any other Pokémon, which is really the bare minimum for a movie about Pokémon. By the end of this film, I deeply regretted all of my life's choices.

The Best Five:

5. Pokémon 4Ever: Celebi - Voice of the Forest (2001) - 34/50

A fan favorite, "Pokémon 4Ever" is a magical forest romp of time travel and the enduring power of friendship. It's a knockout on Pokémon marketing, with a solid mix of adorable Pokémon



shenanigans and fun, dynamic battles. The cherry on top is the plot reveal at the very end of the movie, which blew the minds of elementary schoolers across the world. The only major flaw was with the animation, which featured some of the worst CGI to ever grace the screens of Cartoon Network.

4. Pokémon: Destiny Deoxys (2004) - 40/50

“Destiny Deoxys” features one of the franchise’s more compelling stories, tackling complex themes of trauma and recovery. It’s a surprisingly touching film! Its biggest strength is its colorful ensemble cast of movie-exclusive characters, which showcase a variety of trainers and Pokémon. There’s a minor character for every child to project onto here!

3. Pokémon Ranger and the Temple of the Sea (2006) - 40/50

“Temple of the Sea” has it all! Undercover spies! Pirates! Lore! A coherent plot! Just like Jirachi, Ash isn’t the main character. Instead, “Temple of the Sea” focuses on May, who forms a special bond with the Pokémon Manaphy. Manaphy is under hot pursuit by a crew of high-tech pirates, but luckily the Pokémon Rangers (action heroes slash park rangers) are here to save the day. In addition to being thoroughly entertaining, it’s a great ad for the Pokémon Ranger spin-off games.

2. Pokémon: Lucario and the Mystery of Mew (2005) - 42/50

“Lucario and the Mystery of Mew” is a pretty common pick for Top 5 Pokémon Movie lists. It has good writing, solid Pokémon marketing, and an unconventional bad guy. Those are all fair points, but the real reason this movie is great is because the gang goes to a renaissance fair and dresses up in fun little costumes. They dress up Pikachu like a court jester! It’s fantastic!

1. Pokémon the Movie: Volcanion and the Mechanical Marvel (2016) - 44/50

This movie was the last one on my list, and I nearly skipped it altogether. I’m glad I didn’t, because “Volcanion and the Mechanical Marvel” manages to perfect the Pokémon movie formula like never before. For its brief 95 minutes, the film chooses to prioritize featuring as many Pokémon as it possibly can, using a variety of settings to showcase their different strengths and personalities. It doesn’t have the most compelling story or the best quality animation, but this movie sold the concept of Pokémon like no other. If I saw this movie as an eight-year-old, I would have begged my mom for every piece of Pokémon merchandise in the grocery store. And that’s what Pokémon movies are all about!



Sebyul Paik

senior | literature

Former computer science major, current
computer science hater

The Tragedy of Berkner Hall Basement:

The Comet Lore Competition Winner

If you are reading this, I need your help.

During Thanksgiving Break my best friend Damian and I decided to check out the Berkner Hall basement from that UT Dallas subreddit post, and what we found will astonish you.

We followed the instructions left by explorers of the past and picked the lock on the grate between Berkner and Founder's Annex. We began heading north. Turns out the UTD tunnel system is much more expansive than we thought. We walked for a while through the dimly lit twists, dodging steam pipes and deftly outmaneuvering the heavily-armed combat Tobors, until we arrived at a lengthy corridor. A whooshing gust of wind brought to our ears the faint sound of crashing. I should have turned back. I wanted to turn back, but Damian, ever more mentally resilient than me, persuaded me to continue our journey.

At the end of the corridor we found a thick, heavy door. As Damian pushed it open, we found ourselves on the threshold of a sophisticated, well-stocked laboratory.

Where did UTD have labs underground? We had gone so far north, maybe we were under the Bioengineering and Sciences Building? The lab was in a state of disarray. Test tubes and Erlenmeyer flasks lay broken on the ground, and a strange fluid covered the green and orange linoleum tiles. Damian found a mess of papers lying on a desk. He called me over to check it out.

PROJECT T3M0C: Iteration 55.



design by: alyssa copeland
layout by: izkra chavez

Skimming through, we saw all sorts of biology jargon incomprehensible to a CS and Global Business major. That's when we heard another large crash. This time from much closer. Reflexively we ran towards the door...but it wasn't the exit.

We'd run into a spacious underground parking garage. Damian and I exchanged glances. Was this...Parking Structure 2? In each parking space there was a vat of green fluid from some Bioengineering professor's expensive experiment. As we kept moving towards the back of the structure, the biomasses inside each vat were more and more developed than the last. We could see the progression of experimental specimens. The vats were iterations attempting to create a biological replication of our beloved mascot—Temoc! But it seemed that something had gone wrong. The attempts started to diverge from the beautiful form of Temoc. Spikes began protruding from its face. One had massive claws. The next had eldritch tentacles coming out of its back.

It was then that we discovered the broken vat. Our footsteps crunched on the glass littering the cement while some sort of amniotic fluid flowed from the parking spot.

Right then a giant, green bio-horror-Temoc burst through the door, pounding its chest as it belted out a stentorian roar.

Damian yelled at me to run, that he would distract it. He gave me his Comet Card, a single tear sliding down his cheek, and told me to use the rest of his meal money. I screamed and cried, but he was adamant. My last sight of him was his peaceful, smiling face as he guarded me from Temoc.

When I got the opportunity, I took off running for the lab door (I did track in middle school, so I'm pretty fast). Soon I was running down the long tunnel system corridor. My legs carried me all the way out of the tunnels, though the Berkner Basement, and onto the deserted campus pathways, while my mind was carried to Damian. I couldn't go back in and get him. I couldn't. He never made it out of the Berkner Hall basement. Please, I need your help to rescue Damian.

I miss you Damian, come home soon.



HAYDEN A. SIEBERS
KEVIN WANG

CAMPUS CRITTER SHOWDOWN



Curio Queri: Hello, and welcome to our first annual campus critter showdown! Throughout the month of February, we'll be conducting a battle of the beasts to determine who will be crowned UTD's ultimate little guy. I'm your correspondent on the scene, Curio Queri, and I'm here to ask all of YOU who's favored to come out on top this year.

Curio Queri: Although this is a cuteness competition, we take many factors into consideration when selecting our contenders. Intelligence, guts, talent; sources say that all these features add to a critter's cuteness factor. Now, before we begin, we'd like to give a shout-out to the teams who sadly weren't able to make the bracket this year. Teams Duck, Possum, and Toad failed to meet the popularity threshold and will be dearly missed. Without further ado, let's begin! Looks like someone's approaching now.

Curio Queri: Excuse me — in the green hoodie! Could I ask what your name and major are?

Jesse: Oh, I'm Jesse, I'm majoring in Psychology. What's this about?

Curio Queri: Would you mind sharing which critter you're supporting this month and why?

Jesse: Team Bunny, duh! Tell me those adorably vacant eyes don't immediately win you over. I've always wondered why they only come out at night, though. Hey — have you ever noticed them hanging around in the Plinth some evenings? I swear they'll sit in a circle and just stare at the pool, like they're waiting for something. I'm sure they have their reasons though. I dunno, I'm not a rabbit.

Curio Queri: Well, that's... uhm. Intriguing, if not slightly unnerving. How about your friend? Would you mind sharing which team has your support?

Seth: Me? My name's Seth, I'm an econ major. If you want my honest opinion, Team Crow is guaranteed to win; they've practically got it in the bag already. Think about it: crows are some of the smartest birds on the planet — even smarter than owls! Way smarter than a bunch of rodents with big ears.

Curio Queri: Actually rabbits are leporids, not rodents.

Seth: Rabbits aren't leopards dude; I have no clue where you got that from.

Curio Queri: I... okay. He's leaving. I didn't have a response for that, so maybe it's for the best. Excuse me, on the skateboard! Would you mind sharing your name, major, and which critter has your support?

Jay: I'm Jay and I'm a Geoscience major! Listen, if Team Blue Jay doesn't win, I'm gonna be out of a lot of money. I need this. These are my people. Er, well, birds I guess.

Curio Queri: So your name is Jay and you're supporting Team Jay?

Jay: It's not just because of the namesake, y'know. Blue jays have a bad reputation! They're misunderstood creatures. I mean yeah, they bully other birds on a regular basis, but we don't know what their reasons are. Maybe those birds have bad vibes. Maybe they owe them money. We don't know.

Curio Queri: Alright, fair enough. Pardon me miss, would you mind introducing yourself and sharing which critter you're supporting this month?

Lily: My Name's Lily and I'm in ATEC; Team Squirrel has my vote! I wish I could ask them for tips on how to be more productive, I don't think I've ever seen one of those little guys sitting still. Ugh... sorry I can't stay and chat, I got into an argument with a barista and I'm late for class again. Can you believe that Starbucks cuts you off at 10 shots of espresso? I mean come on, if I'm paying for it then what's the harm, right?

Curio Queri: Um... a heart murmur, maybe?

Lily: Heart murmur, pfft, I don't even know her! Anyway, these lab assignments aren't gonna finish themselves. See ya!

Curio Queri: I'm praying for whoever her cardiologist is. Either way, we're short on time so this next interview might be our last. I think I see someone now — hello there! Would you mind doing an introduction and telling us which critter has your vote this month?

Harley: Hm? Oh, I'm Harley, I'm a bio major. Let's see... I guess I haven't really thought about it. Is there a team for toads?

Curio Queri: I'm afraid not, sadly. We're a bit lacking in amphibian representation. There's a team for turtles, though.

Harley: Oh perfect! Yeah, I think I'm Team Turtle. Somebody's gotta rep the reptiles. They may not be the brightest, but they'll outlast birds or mammals when the going gets tough.

Curio Queri: Those sound like fighting words to me. We'll just have to see! Thanks so much for your time. And that concludes —

???: WAIT! Aren't you forgetting someone?

Curio Queri: Pardon?

???: Seriously, what happened to journalistic integrity? If you'd done your homework, you'd know that there's an underdog in our midst. A small, six-wheeled, food-toting underdog. The utter lack of respect is embarrassing.

Curio Queri: I'm not sure I understand what you're saying — you mean Tobor? I was told that only critters qualified for the bracket.



???: Well, you were LIED TO. Besides, Tobor is as critter as you and I are human! Artificial or not, it doesn't make them any less endearing. In fact, quite the opposite is true. We're in for a real #TOBORSWEEP — it's been trending on Reddit for the past week!

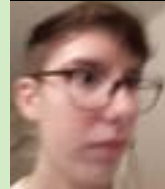
Curio Queri: I don't use Reddit, I have a job.

???: SILENCE, NAYSAYER. Just you wait, these weakling competitors have nothing against cutting edge technology and engineering. Can squirrels deliver Panda Express? No. I rest my case.

Curio Queri: I suppose I can't argue with that. This is an unexpected turn of events; it seems like the competition is even stiffer than we thought! Looks like we have a new contender on the block whose name starts with 'T' and ends with 'obor.' I'm your host, Curio Queri, making my exit before any more strangers can yell trending hashtags at me. Here's to survival of the cutest and may the best little guy win!



MICKEY DOLPHIN



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



Ultimate Guide to Dumping Someone

Love is in the air! And just like any airborne affliction, you'll get over it. Or die, I guess. Either way, this February is the perfect opportunity to learn how to say goodbye — and when it's your heart on the line, you're better off beating your valentine to the punch. Waste the next 10 minutes of your day here, and I'll teach you how to drop your date like no other magazine could.

When to Break Up with Someone

Every breakup is special, and it pays to know when and why you're making such a big decision. Thankfully, a childhood built by Disney Princess magic gave me the True Love expertise to know that if

it's meant to be, you'll know! Therefore, the moment the sparkle in their eye stops twinkling is obviously the moment you should break up with your significant other. A love that lasts is one that's instant and flawless. As soon as you dislike anything in your relationship, from the way they pronounce "gif" to a lack of devoted 24/7 servitude to you, it's time to dump and dip so you can move on to the next big thing.

And keep in mind, your time is valuable! This means you should date and split up as often as possible to optimize your search for your eternal soulmate.

design by: michelle le

Ways to Break Up

Over Text

Tried and true, a good break-up text never fails to send the message. While indirect and usually considered disrespectful, texting gives you all the freedom to say whatever you want, as casually as you want, with plenty of distance from your soon-to-be-ex so you don't have to see their stupid face cry. Have fun with it! Throw in some jokes or memes, list out all the dozens of grievances you have with them in a terrifying super-paragraph that spares them no dignity, and tell them all about how you're sleeping with their best friend(s). It doesn't matter, because you don't have to look at them or discuss anything — especially if you block them before they can respond.

Also, the text doesn't have to be a text. Anything that keeps to one-sided communication with distance works; try a hand-written letter, an etch-a-sketch portrait of them in the garbage, or even putting herbicide in their grass for the extra personal touch a phone can't provide.

Throwing a Tantrum

Contrary to the tactful nature of a message written in dead grass, tantrums are a fantastic way to spread the word of your break-up far and fast. Pick a spot that's public, on the quieter side, and open. Parks, restaurants, and libraries are your friend. When you and your partner are in position, pick a fight about something glaring in your relationship — like how they keep asking you to stop watching Andrew Tate, or insist upon having social connections that aren't you — and find an opportunity to escalate. Kick, yell, and spit in their face as you tell them you've never had any respect for them and spout out every one of their insecurities and flaws for all the world to hear. For some extra flair, find something nearby to throw or break, and come up with some explanation of how important you are if the cops come poking around. If you do it right, a sizable audience should be standing in shock around you, clearly appalled at your ex's horrible relationship skills, and you'll be able to march your way out of the sea of people single and unbelievably vindicated.

Ghosting

Relationships take soooooo much effort, but break-ups can be hard, too. Therefore...don't! A common solution to accidentally catching feelings for someone you don't take seriously, recovering from an embarrassing moment, or straight-up boredom, ghosting serves as a staple break-up tool for the modern dater. Simply stop talking to the person you're seeing and move on with your life, and it'll all work itself out. Probably.

Your ex might try to approach you with lame sad loser ideas of "closure" or "common decency" or "confronting your issues like

a responsible human being." Do your best to ignore them, but if it makes it easier you can try moving out of town, changing your name, and undergoing plastic surgery to avoid the terrifying prospect of a difficult conversation.

Situationships

Words from the wise: if you never begin a relationship, then you never have to break up in the first place. Go out, have a blast, and do all the things a couple would do, but when a month goes by and your date wants to go official, dodge all the questions to keep your guilt-free fun label-less and casual. Maybe you're leading someone on, but maybe it's just easier not to care!

Situationships are also nice because if you ever decide to slide back into a person's life, you never technically broke up, so they aren't allowed to be mad. Ambiguity makes it easy and simple to hit up an idiot for a good time, disappear for a while, and come straight back whenever you feel like it without any remorse or obligation. The hard part is making sure they don't figure out that you never actually intend to start a relationship with them, especially as time goes on. However, once you're done with them, the line "I'm not actually able to handle a serious relationship" is the most you'll ever need.

Breaking Down the Incompatibilities in a Mature and Constructive Way with the Understanding that While Not Every Relationship is Permanent Each Can Still Be Valuable and It's Not Always Anyone's Particular Fault That It Didn't Work
BAHAHAHAHA no I'm just kidding around.

Murder

If all else fails, you can always look back to the classics, such as straight icing a fool like women did before divorce became socially acceptable. The best methods are discrete and allow for easy cover-up of your latest failed relationship, such as poison, arson, or an unfortunate accident in the shower. This works best when married to somebody rich, but stay aware of how much suspicion you might draw when you have something to gain.

And with that, congratulations! You've successfully dumped your valentine, and now you're ready to enjoy the single world again. Thing is, the single life's kind of lonely, isn't it? Hmm. Maybe you should give your ex a call....

ETHAN WUU



freshman | atec

Intellectual Genius —
pictured eating \$30
worth of sushi when
he meant to order \$15.

by: victoria bruno



Temoc has a crush.

AMP

ampatutd@gmail.com

Like us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter @AMPatUTD

ampatutd.com