

VOICE

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Stuff To Think About



A Zombie Apocalypse is More Likely Than You Think.

Yes, I am aware that it is impossible for corpses to walk around biting people, obviously. But have you ever considered the possibility of a virus that causes zombie-like symptoms? Lack of consciousness, predatory instincts, and a thirst for blood-or flesh. Bioterrorists may be able to build viruses capable of modifying our behavior and spreading such sickness, due to recent advances in gene editing. A zombie apocalypse may seem far-fetched, relegated to the pages of comic books, gaming, and pop culture. However, there are natural examples of viruses that carry zombie-like symptoms. Rabies, which can produce violence and hallucinations and is nearly invariably fatal once symptoms start, is perhaps the most well-known. Illnesses such as rabies or leprosy could mean we may end up having a “zombie variant” on our hands.

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The real danger is not the walking dead trudging down your street, it is the possibility of a fast-spreading virus with inevitable zombie-like symptoms. If you have seen the recent Netflix show *All of Us Are Dead*, you may have a better understanding of how bioterrorists could manage to generate something like this. If you have not seen this yet another contemporary zombie masterpiece, I must warn you of spoilers ahead. The show follows a group of high school students, trapped together when a zombie breakout engulfs their school. It is later revealed that this zombie-like virus was created by a science teacher who named it the « Jonas Virus » after Hans Jonas, a German 20th-century philosopher who wrote about the ethical problems inherent to new technologies. After witnessing his son becoming a victim of extreme bullying, science teacher Beoyong-chan,

hands and alter the behavior of his son to instill in him the courage to fight back. He isolated, replicated, and refined a gene that's found within extremely aggressive mice, and proceeded to inject his son with the result, ultimately creating a monster. This virus causes the infected to lose control of their minds, have limited eyesight, and act on aggressive predatory instincts. What makes the Jonas Virus even scarier is how scientists found it difficult to create a vaccine, due to how it constantly changed forms and evolved to stay alive.

Peter Cummings, neuropathologist at Boston University and an advisor to “the Zombie Research Society” (Yes it exists), stated that if someone took a look at a person infected with Klüver-Busy syndrome, it might make them a believer. This syndrome causes people to lose normal sense of fear, have increased anger, memory loss, and the inability to recognize objects. Cummings explained that the problem lies with the amygdala, which is the part of the brain responsible for survival instincts, memories, and emotions. The frontal lobe deals with reason and typically stops people from having aggressive reactions. If a virus causes a loss of connection with the frontal lobe, the amygdala will take charge and cause reactions free of reason. Tapping into basic survival and predatory instincts requires a loss of connection with a part of the brain that deals with reasoning and regulates emotions, and the possibility of a virus that targets said area is not miniscule.

Let us revisit the possibility of gene editing, which is the altering of an organism's DNA, being used to release a zombie-like virus. Gene editing has a main purpose of curing genetic disorders or improving farmed animals. CRISPR is a new genetic tool that allows scientists to cut out a DNA sequence in an organism's genome and replace it with another. This astonishing technology could cure diseases such as sickle cell anemia. However, there is a dark side to CRISPR. A scientist or biohacker with basic lab knowledge could conceivably buy DNA sequence and edit them to make threatening bacteria or virus. My personal theory is, whether through gene editing or natural occurrence, a virus with ability to cut ties with our consciousness and coerce us into tapping into predatory instincts and aggressive behavior is not far-fetched. Viruses, infectious diseases, and genetic mutations are not foreign to the scientific field, we would only have to visualize one with such symptoms, in order to prepare for it.

With drugs such as “flakka” or “The zombie drug” on the market, the idea that a substance could alter human behavior to mimic zombies is on the table. It is important to note that in scientific forums and a recent special issue on CRISPR in the journal *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, using CRISPR to enhance rather than treat human beings is being addressed. It's easy to see wealthy people pressuring scientists to make CRISPR available for muscle improvement, height gain, or any other attribute that can be improved if scientists can find the right DNA sequence. To imagine a gene editing mistake (or crime) which would result in a case similar to that of Beoyong-Chan, the science teacher, does not come difficultly now. Needless to say, these are all speculations and theories of what could happen, and while it is amusing to picture yourself in *Resident Evil* or *Train to Busan*, the dangers of gene editing, or the natural occurrence of a virus that carries such symptoms is not amusing at the least. I recommend catching up on zombie films and shows to prepare for what the Zombie Research Society calls an “inevitable apocalypse.”

Capitalism And Social Class Through The Lens Of 5 Cinematic Masterpieces

The political and economic system in which private owners control capital in accord with their own interest has been a tool for exploitation, alienation, and massive economic inequalities throughout the world for decades. This effortless explanation is merely child's play in comparison to the erosion of human rights many of us suffer from everyday due to this system's enforcement of social class. While exploring the attributes of capitalism and the particulars of social class is an infinite conversation, multiple films have pictured the reality of living under such cruel systems in just a couple of hours. Award winning films such as Parasite, The Platform, and Sorry to Bother You have perfectly illustrated the agony of the working class and the endless attempts to leave it, but to no avail.

Oscar winning film Parasite, directed by Bong Joon Ho, explores the suffering of the working class while bringing a fresh perspective on capitalist ideologies. The plot follows the Kims, a family made up of a mother, father, son, and daughter. This impoverished family tries to survive by folding pizza boxes, but their pursuit of wealth causes them to pretend to be educated and helpful members of the middle class and sneaking their way into a wealthy family's home-the Parks- by working multiple jobs. An interesting aspect of the plot is how the Kims manage to pull off such scheme due to their less valued type of intelligence- street smart. The Kims' income starts adequately flowing, before the climax strikes and they are barged in on by the Parks' previous housekeeper, revealing the shocking information that she has been keeping her husband in the basement. A menacing brawl takes place, and the movie ends with all families losing.

The major moral issue with the elite, as "Parasite" demonstrates, is not that they act irrationally in interpersonal situations, but that their position in society is established on the backs of the working class. The rich Parks family in the movie is not disagreeable, and they appear to be well-intentioned people who are oblivious that the privileges granted to them by society contribute to their accidental exploitation of those with fewer advantages. The film questions the fundamental concept of parasites, asking the audience to consider who, exactly, is the parasite in the connection between the rich and the impoverished. The Kims are hardworking and intelligent people who are forced to live off their rich counterparts. On the other hand, the Parks, do very little and rely on people to cook, clean, and take care of their children. They are recognized as the real parasites, living off their workers but claiming to have built themselves.

A riveting irony in Parasite is how when the poor family's house flooded, all their possessions were demolished, and they were forced to spend the night at a camp. In the following scenes, the Parks' grass was watered, and the mother spoke of how the rain was a blessing. The movie carries countless symbols of how trivial things affect each social class differently, and how the lower class is forced to leech off the more fortunate category in order to survive.

A more brutal take on capitalism is Netflix's Spanish horror/thriller film The Platform. The "upper" class concept here is taken quite literally. In a horrifying scene of a futuristic jail that is a large single room tower, with two prisoners in each cell. Every day, a giant hovering tray of stone comes down the hole in the center of the cell, from the upper cells down to the lower cells. Each cell has a minute or so to eat what they can before the table moves downwards to the lower levels. Prisoners in the lowest cells (100+) receive no food at all, as everyone in the upper levels had already demolished it. The protagonist, Goreng, is not a prisoner, but signed up voluntarily to earn an accredited degree, without knowing what he was getting into. Goreng was managing life at the prison well as he was placed at one of the higher levels, but as the level changes every month, Goreng woke up one day on a 100+ level, where only empty plates and shattered glass make their way down. The metaphor is brutal, but it works. It's a scathing critique of economic disparity and capitalism, in which the wealthy profit while the poor starve. Goreng is immediately instructed that it is preferable to act as though those below him do not exist, and that those above him will never listen to anything he has to say. That is until Goreng's cellmate, tries to eat him

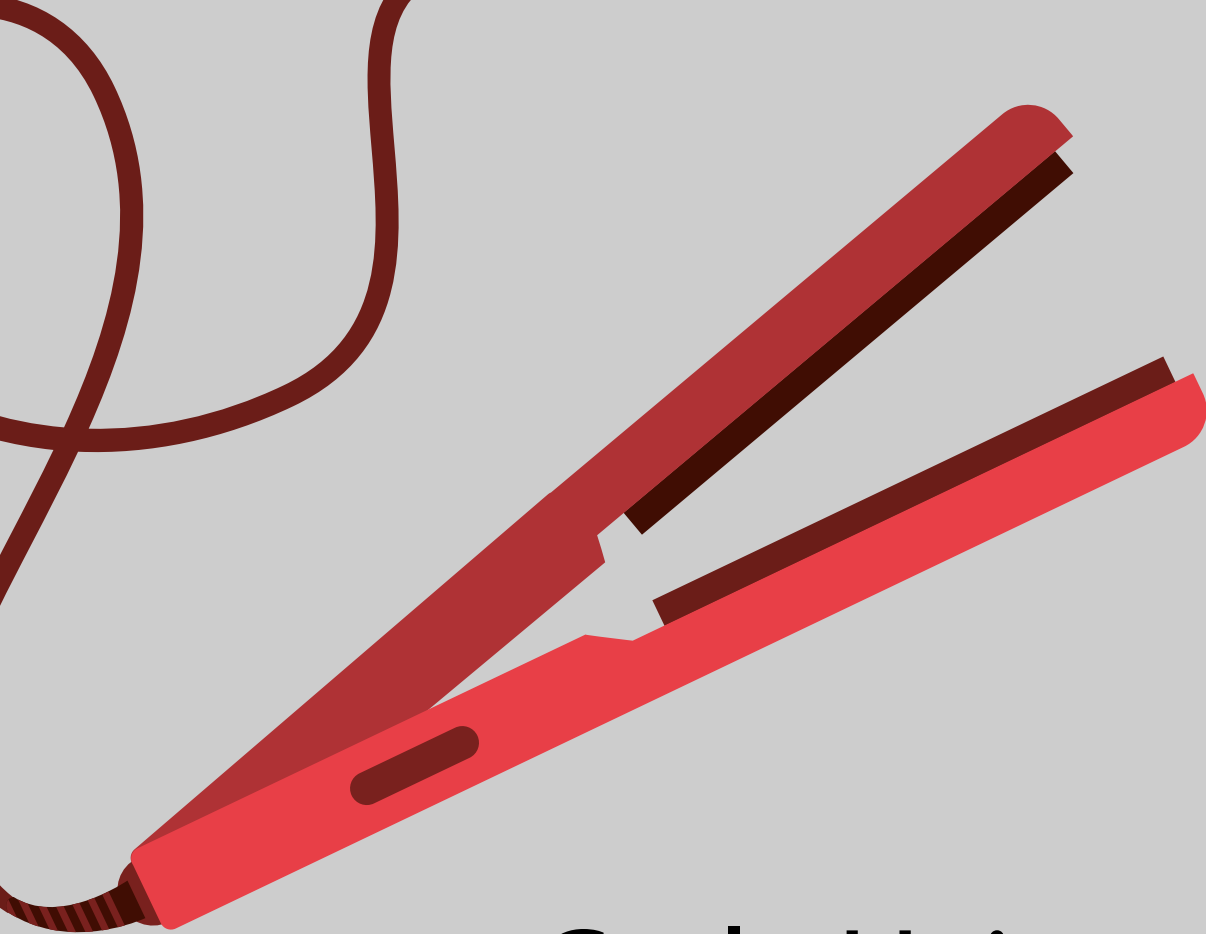
The concept is that this is some type of social experiment in which everyone would have enough food if they simply took as much as they required. A woman (who used to work for the prison's administrators) tries to establish a movement to force everyone to ration food, but it fails because everyone is too self-interested. The film's climax occurs when Goreng and his third cellmate (the other two have died) equip themselves with metal poles, compel the first 50 levels to skip a day's meal, and then begin rationing food for those below it, an analogy for a violent revolution to bring about change. It is a disturbing yet thought-inducing film, that will stay with anyone who can stomach it enough to watch it.

The chilling absurdist world of Sorry to Bother You, explores people willing to sell their souls in order to climb the corporate ladder. The film demonstrates how quickly people would compromise their ideals for financial gain – and, even more alarming, how far managers and owners will go to achieve absolutely obedient employees. What makes Sorry to Bother You stand out from the rest is shedding the light on racism and how it differentiates between social class members. This movie may easily be remembered for a terrific repetition gag involving a black character speaking in a comically white voice. Cassius "Cash" Green, a low-level telemarketer, discovers that he must use a white voice in order to thrive at work. It means embracing the ease that comes with white privilege in your voice. It entails acting as if you had a right to the good life. It entails a deep sense of peace in your soul. It means you will never have to worry about someone calling the cops just because you are moving. Cash learning to "sound white" and having his career soar as a result is a brilliant parody of something many black people in the American corporate world have discovered: in order to thrive, you must perform your personality in a way that is appealing to white people. The pressure and the pursuit of wealth comes at many costs.

Cash, on the other hand, goes too far in this delightfully absurdist film, and it ends up corroding his soul. When he realizes he'll be promoting a virtual slave workforce, he declines — at least until he gets the salary check. However, this incisive examination of black identity and its denial is really a subplot. Finally, the film offers a stinging critique of capitalism, depicting people giving up their independence in order to be free of financial worries. Owners and management are shown as depraved, vapid, corrupt, and plain wicked, conspiring to generate ever-cheaper, more docile, more profitable labor. There are countless thought-provoking messages behind such movies that make us take a look at the society we live in and lay essential questions about how people got to where they are,

and how others never will. In a society where people spend millions on unnecessary luxuries while others fight for scraps, a reflection is requisite. These films emphasize the idea that the lower class' pursuit of success and attempts at climbing the social ladder are not to be condemned but understood as means of survival in a system that coerces you to step on others. Elements in the above films work to puncture the image of hard work and productivity as paths to wealth by emphasizing how the higher-class benefit by keeping lower class people where they are despite their productivity and essential work, deflating myths of success being a mere result of hard work. Essential workers are the most hardworking group, yet the least fortunate when it comes to capital as this inequality created a social class division that our current economic system works to ensure does not change. The above films are eye openers to the lives of marginalized people under monopoly power, and the existential threat posed by the ecological crisis. The defense line of the 1% is usually lined with people who hope to achieve their status one day, but regardless of how you believe you would tackle this path, it is an inherently exploitive system that would only enable you to achieve extreme wealth with tight and limiting options, at the expense of the working class.





Curly Hair

Lolwah Salem

Everyone loves a good curl nowadays, spending hours in a salon chair trying to perfect a perm, curling and freezing it with hairspray. Yet, despite all this, no one wants to talk about being a natural curl-headed person - especially in our region. Nobody ever talks about the amount of bullying that Curl-headed children face for embracing their natural hair, nor does anybody mention the looks we get as adults when we don't straighten our hair or "treat" it with harmful chemicals.

Me and my curly-haired friends are no strangers to playground taunting of our youth. For starters, we all know that everyone and especially kids are perplexed by what they find unfamiliar. Growing up in the GCC, we understand that curly, kinky and coily hair isn't exactly the beauty standard, so children with afros were not as well received as they are today. Our uncommon appearance, paired with the lack of curly hair products, salons, and representation in the media, made being curl-headed extremely alienating.

As a result of these factors, so many of us underwent keratin and protein 'treatments', damaging our hair to no end, with its effects staying with us for years at a time. And believe it or not, treatments like these were even worst in the early 2000s. They weren't as heavily regulated as they are now, they used dangerous chemicals that fry our curls down to the follicle, and often end up hurting our eyes more than anything. But all is fair in trying to fit the beauty standards, am I right?

This always pushed us to have our hair tied back, slicked up or fried with a straightener if we couldn't afford these "treatments" which have long lasting effects, from bald spots to low volume in the place where it got slicked to daily. It seemed the only way we could escape the taunting for so long was to hide it unless it was well-kept and shiny.

The biggest game changer for me in terms of my relationship with my hair was high school, when I simply began to feel that I'm capable of taking matters into my own hands, and started my natural hair care journey. This wasn't easy as I remember everyone asking me why I would spend so much money on curl friendly products, that were rare in this region which really made my pockets hurt, lemme tell y'all. Yet, with every purchase a small local and inclusive haircare store would pop up, making things more affordable the more accessible they became. Sure it took decades but we're still happy to see actual change.

Aside from the social pressures to keep our hair pin straight, the media did not exactly help us. Going our entire childhoods never seeing characters on screen with hair like ours, be it in animations or live action shows and films. We were never the "it" girls and boys on TV. The exceptions were always for the longest time the one character everyone hated, or the annoying side character that people wanted off screen.

Personally, the earliest character I remember was "Miranda Killagen," from the Nickelodeon show 'As Told by Ginger', -also always dubbed in Arabic but this is beside the point- this curly haired character seemed to just hate the main character, and something tells me we were supposed to hate everything about this kinky haired villain, especially when she targeted our beloved main character.

But here's the thing with representation, just like the kids in school, people are perplexed by the unfamiliar, and to us, our own hair was unfamiliar, at least in a good light. The only times we heard things about kinky hair was to hear our elders call it unruly and call us 'awlad ilshuwari3' (children of the street,) which dang, for a kid to hear that bears a bit of weight, especially when it comes from people we're supposed to respect.

So now that I'm older, I'm grateful that little kids don't have to grow up with the same turmoil as I did, as many kid friendly shows and movies are including curly haired main characters and allowing them their moments in the spotlight without limiting them to one ethnicity, or texture. Production companies like Netflix, Cartoon Network and others are moving forward with the hopes of representing real people, in every way. Some may be doing it better than others, but as long as my kids one day don't feel alienated by the media and a lack of representation, I'm a happy camper.

In the end, things have changed, with curly hair growing to become extremely well-received by the media, social influences, and finally our friends and family. Now while we still have to bear with the weight of those who still think pin-straight hair should be the blueprint, nothing makes me happier than seeing little girls and boys taking care of their curls and treating them with the love and care they deserve.



Cat Haters VS Science

There is always going to be someone in a group who is going to stand up and claim cats are cold, aloof, and manipulative little devils. Cat bashers are not satisfied with not owning cats themselves, but instead hate them with malignancy that no other species in the animal kingdom seems to provoke. Cat haters always have a variety of reasons that they claim support their argument, from how they are “mean,” to the one time they were scratched by their great grandmother’s cat when they were three and still have not gotten over the incident. The truth is, there are countless things we do not know, or do not understand about cats, and while you may not be able to fully convert your cat hating friends, you can debunk many of their arguments using Feline Ethology.

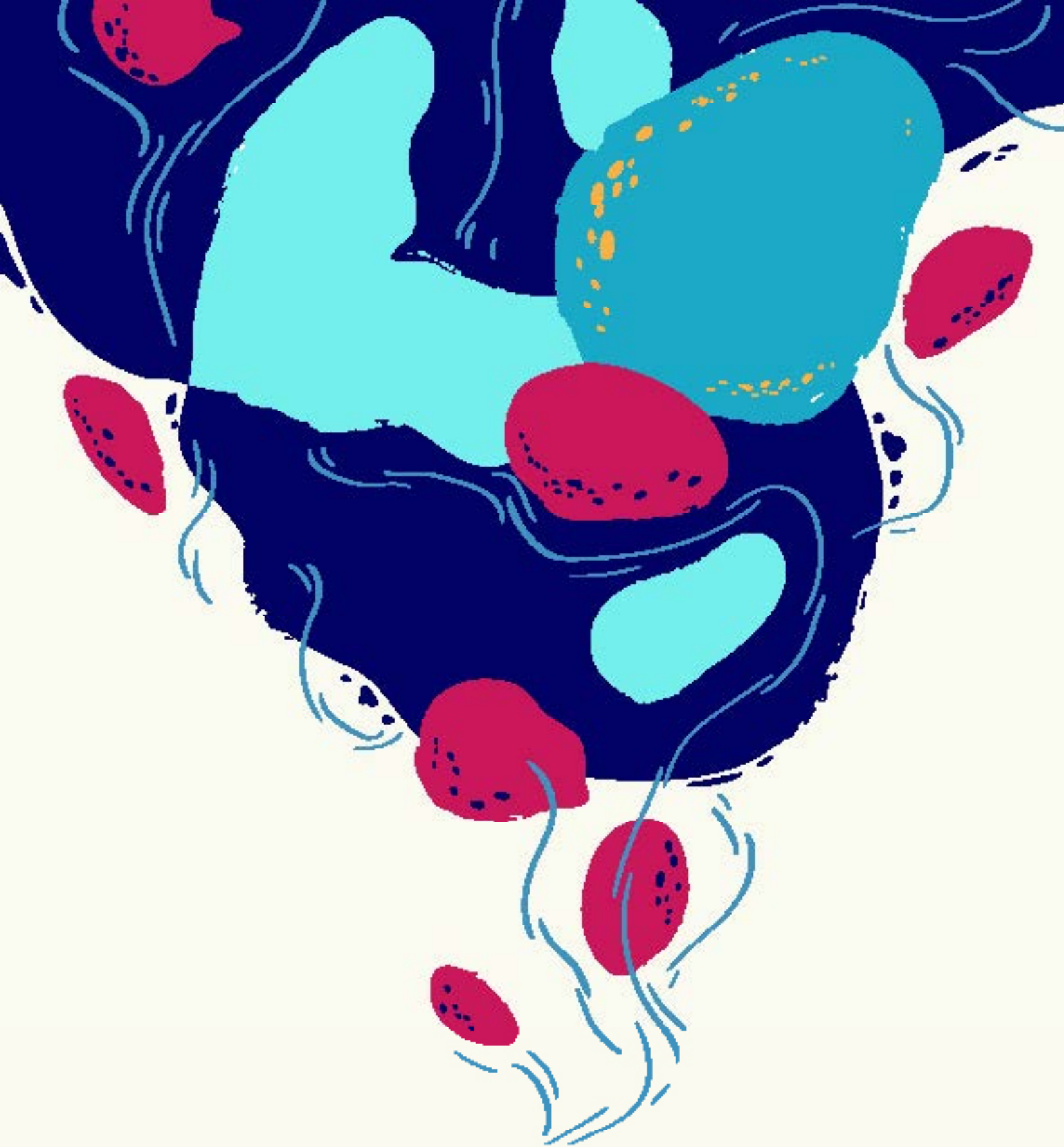
Ethology is the study of animal behavior, usually with a focus on their behavior under natural circumstances. Animal behaviorism, which is the problem-oriented form of ethology, and comparative psychology, which is the study of similarities between species, can both be used to help us understand cats and their behavior. Almost every trivial cat behavior has a meaning that is foreign to us. Cats use both vocalization and physical motion to create signals such as meowing, hissing, or purring which all have different meanings depending on context. While adult cats do not normally meow at each other, domesticated cats have adapted meowing as a way to ease communication with humans. There are many small signals with fascinating meanings cats do such as moving ears with interest or purring to show joy, but there are much deeper aspects of cat psychology that will surely debunk many misconceptions you may have.

Feline Ethology confirms that cats are very empathetic and can sense when someone needs comfort. Emotion recognition in cats carries interesting data to analyze about all the ways cats attempt to provide comfort to their humans. Cats experience a variety of emotions that help them recognize similarities in humans such as joy, fear, curiosity, guilt, shame, embarrassment and much more. By instincts, domesticated cats will try to provide comfort to their human by laying on top of them and providing heat and warmth, or by “grooming” the person. Cats actually spend an extensive portion of their day analyzing the mood of the humans they live with and reacting according to their emotion. They do not only perceive human moods and emotions, but they are also greatly affected by them, proving their emotional sensitivity is higher than we think. Cat behaviorists report that grooming is not the only way cats show affection to their humans, but head bunting, purring, and blinking at them slowly are all signs of love and affection. On the other hand, cats hiss, swat, and chase to communicate. These behaviors may seem aggressive, but they’re simply part of the cat’s nature. You may also notice cats stalking and chasing bugs, birds, and small mammals, but that is just how predators act.

While cats cannot officially get autism, multiple research projects showed that cats share countless traits with autistic humans. Cats show little interest in playing with other species, which may be seen as being self-centered, but it is due to their limited social skills. They also have great problem-solving skills and will always find a way to get what they want due to their prominent level of intelligence. Cats can also focus for extended periods of time on things that really interest them, or they find fascinating. While many of these traits are positive, other traits such as enjoying solitude and not showing empathy 24/7 may be mistaken for selfishness, but they are all traits that make cat psychologists consider them to be on the autism spectrum. A word I constantly like to use when debunking myths around cats is anthropomorphism.

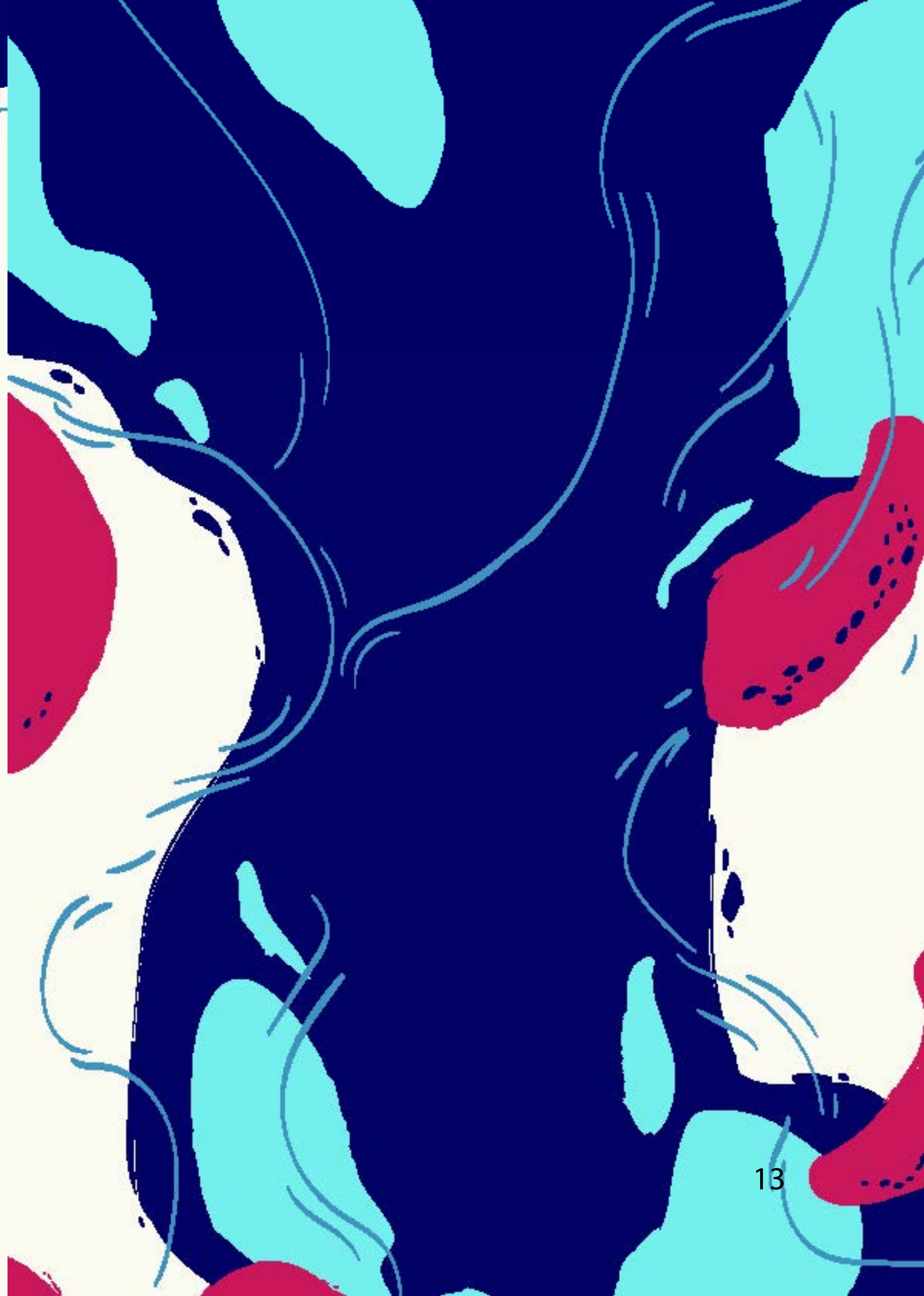
This lengthy word means attributing human characteristics to animals, which is arguably the main reasons why cats receive this much hate. To put it simply, imagine you are hysterically crying, and your friend walks by to give you a stare, then turns around and leaves. You would surely be offended and find this behavior rude at the very least. However, an animal, or specifically a cat doing the same thing does not carry the same meaning. Anthropomorphism makes us judge animals by the same standards we judge other people as we understand their behavior the way we understand human behavior. Seeing cats through the same lens we see each other would give them a disadvantage, and further enable misconceptions we have about those affectionate creatures. If you are wondering why your cat does not lie near you, and instead on the edge of the bed with its back facing you, this is not a sign that your cat does not care about you, even though a human doing the same thing may be perceived as rude. Cats do this because they trust you enough to give you their back as they believe you will not harass them while their back is turned. Cats are overly cautious creatures, and they always keep an eye out for the people around them, so if your cat is comfortable enough not to constantly face you, it is merely a sign of trust.

By learning more about how cats communicate and what each common behavior of theirs mean, we rid ourselves of prejudice we have against the world’s second most popular pet. Cats are very affectionate creatures who feel and care deeply even though they may have unusual ways of showing it. If you are thinking of having a cat as your companion, I would advise you to further research their behavior to better understand them and create a more comfortable environment. There are numerous advantages to having a cat as they are an exceptionally minimal maintenance animal and only require that you provide them with affection and fill their food bowls of course. They are loyal, calm, and clean animals, all the more reasons which make them wonderful companions. You may not be able to convert the cat haters in your life, but they will be the ones missing out.



What's Trending

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A New World

If you thought that VR, when it was first introduced to the world, was the “future”, think again. The VR experience was just the first step, or a tool, into creating a whole new world that would redefine our lives The Metaverse. The “future” is always moving forward, always innovating, so what is The Metaverse? Imagine a virtual world in which people live, work, shop and interact with others, all from the comfort of their physical world couch. The Metaverse didn't become a household term until Facebook changed its corporate name to Meta in October 2021. At that time, the company announced plans to spend \$10 billion dollars over the next year on technologies to build out its version of the world. The Metaverse is considered a next evolution of the internet. It can be a place for gaming, online communities, and business meetings where people collaborate via digital facsimiles or avatars of themselves. The concept of the metaverse isn't new, it's been talked about for a while by companies such as Facebook and H&M. So far, the metaverse is replicating everything you know and see in the physical world into it. In the metaverse, people can literally recreate and shape a new personality for themselves, communicate with each other even more easily than before, and build out their own virtual community.

People in The Metaverse have their own currency, their own products, and their own unique way of life. With just a headset, a controller, and a computer, a person can completely leave our world and join a newer more liberating one.

Humanity has always dreamed of creating such a world. Though the term “Metaverse” was popularized in recent years, it was actually coined by Neal Stephenson in 1992 in his sci-fi novel, Snow Crash. His novel touched on many of the things that people hope to achieve with the current Metaverse. Stephenson's metaverse is an all-encompassing digital world that exists parallel to the real world. People have avatars, buy, and sell land, and live fully virtual lives. But in his novel, the real-world economy is destroyed completely, countries are dismantled and corporations reign supreme. This constant turmoil drove people into the virtual world where they are under the mercy of corporations. But in 2022, experts still aren't sure whether the metaverse in real life could evolve into something similar. Snow Crash was more of a dystopian view of the future and didn't put the metaverse in a positive light.

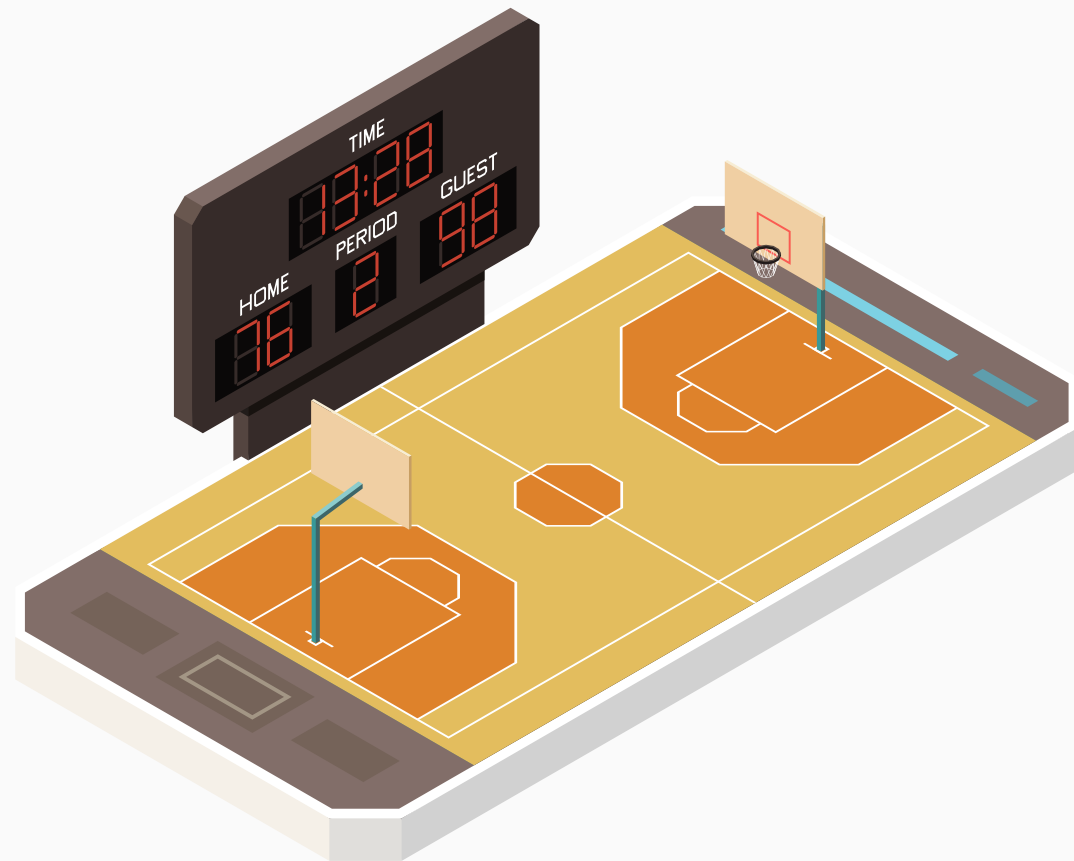
This isn't the only version of the metaverse that we know of before recent years. Several companies have attempted to create their own “virtual world,” including Sony's Virtual Home, Apple's Blue Mars, and Microsoft's Second Life. Mathew Ball, a venture capitalist and angel investor who's written a series of essays about the potential and structures of the metaverse, wrote that “When these two technologies (internet and computing) first emerged, all interactions were primarily text-based (emails, messages, usernames, email addresses). Then they slowly became more media-based (photos, videos, livestreams).

The next elevation of user interface and user experience is into 3D. Secondly, if we think of [a] mobile [phone] as placing a computer in our pocket and the internet being available at all times, think of the metaverse as always being within a computer and inside the internet.” According to technologists, the metaverse will take the virtual reality experience to the next level, allowing users to float into the virtual world to do everything from buy land and host parties to even get married through digital avatars.

Speaking of digital economy, enter NFTs. Nonfungible tokens or NFTs are a secure type of digital asset based on the same blockchain technology used by cryptocurrency. Basically, instead of just having virtual currency on the internet, people can own pieces of virtual art, digital music, and even digital real-estate. An NFT gives the owner a kind of digital deed or proof of ownership that can be bought or sold in the metaverse. While the metaverse has created opportunities for new companies such as Metaverse Properties to offer digital goods, established brick and mortar companies are also jumping in. For example, Nike acquired RTFKT, a startup that makes one of a kind virtual sneakers and digital artifacts using NFTs, blockchain authentication and augmented reality. On its website, RTFKT said it was “born on the metaverse, and this has defined its feel to this day.



“Prior to the acquisition, Nike filed seven trademark applications to help create and sell virtual sneakers and apparel. Nike and Roblox also partnered on “Nikeland,” a digital world where Nike fans can play games, connect, and dress their avatars in virtual apparel. “NFTs and blockchain lay the groundwork for digital ownership,” said Nick Donarski, CEO of ORE System, an online community of gamers, content creators, and game developers. “Ownership of one's real-world identity will carry over to the metaverse, and NFTs will be this vehicle.” Learning about the virtual advancement we've made in recent years is fascinating. We are truly approaching an exciting future where everything is Virtually possible.



All Star Weekend (NBA 75th Anniversary)

The 2022 NBA All-Star Game was an exhibition game played on February 20, 2022, during the National Basketball Association's 2021–22 season. This season marks the 71st edition all-star game. The game was hosted by the Cleveland Cavaliers at Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse. This was the third time that the Cleveland area hosted the All-Star Game, the first being in 1981 at the Coliseum in nearby Richfield, Ohio, and most recently in 1997, three years after the Cavaliers moved back to downtown Cleveland to play in the newly built Gund Arena, which is now known as Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse. Coincidentally, on the occasion Cleveland hosted an All-Star Game, the NBA celebrated its 35th season (1981), 50th anniversary (1997), and 75th anniversary (2022)(additional information should be added on these 3 times that Cleveland has hosted)(should be sent to the author for more info)

NBA's 75th anniversary was a season long term that is used for the 75th season running under the National Basketball Association (NBA) and on All-star weekend, a team is formed that includes the greatest to ever play the game. Dubbed "NBA 75", the All star weekend of this season included a culmination of transcendent players, historical moments on court and unforgettable teams. A homage paid to the GOATs, NBA 75 is celebrating 75 years of greatness. To celebrate this milestone, the NBA honors the legacy of its greatest athletes throughout the 2021-22 season. The NBA 75th anniversary team includes many superstars that were in many NBA moments and shined at their time like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen, Kevin Garnet etc. (and many more). The team was selected by a media panel, current and former players and team executives. There are 76 players in the NBA 75 team as a result of a tie.



Superstars rose to stardom using the NBA and gave the NBA the importance it has today in regard to the sporting world. In celebration for NBA 75th anniversary, many games will be played and dedicated to the event. NBA presented a matchup between the New York Knicks and Toronto Raptors on Monday, Nov. 1 marking the 75th anniversary of the league's first regular-season game, which was played between the Knicks and Toronto Huskies on Nov. 1, 1946. On Friday, Jan. 7, the Los Angeles Lakers hosted the Atlanta Hawks. The matchup will take place 50 years to the day (Jan. 7, 1972)(this could be rephrased) that the Lakers defeated Atlanta for their 33rd straight victory, which remains the longest winning streak in NBA history. Marketing this event was made in a way that will commemorate this season on history as the NBA 75 team have a special jersey that has a unique, eye-catching design with a fresh new logo that is a take on the league's iconic Logo man identity, based in the classic 75th Anniversary symbol – the diamond. The NBA also released a short film that features some of the legends of this game telling their interesting personal and often comedic, journey with the NBA. The short film is called "NBA Lane" starring Michael B. Jordan. The NBA 75th anniversary added many things to this which include diamond on-court elements, Wilson as the new game ball partner, and integration around marquee events such as NBA All-Star 2022 in Cleveland and the NBA Draft. Also, as a celebration of the NBA's 75th Anniversary Season, the NBA selected Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Famers Clyde Drexler, Magic Johnson, Bob Pettit and Oscar Robertson, as well as 14-time NBA All-Star Dirk Nowitzki, to serve as ambassadors for the 2021-22 season. Representing different eras of the league's history, the ambassadors will make appearances throughout the 75th Anniversary Season and have a significant presence at NBA All-Star 2022 in Cleveland. The NBA 75th anniversary is still being celebrated at this moment up until the end of the season so don't forget to pack up with memorable merch from the NBA stores.



Art or Madness: Kanye West



Oliver Munday "sketch of kanye" The Atlantic 19 Feb 2022. <https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2022/02/kanye-jeen-yuhs-netflix-documentary/622865/>. Accessed May 11, 2022.

YE, better known by his staged name Kanye West, has always been known for his controversies. He often dominates media scenes with his exaggerated actions, vicious feuds, and flashy stunts, which are probably driven by his bipolar disorder, which he openly discussed in some of his albums. Though the condition hasn't seemed to affect his soaring musical career, it did however affect his personal relationships in 2021.

The artist behind Hurricane went viral on social media and became the topic on of everyone's discussion when he got into a very heated beef with the famous Canadian superstar, Drake. After the media started accusing Drake of writing about Kim in his famous album Certified Lover Boy, Kanye lashed out at his fellow hip-hop artist. The feud quickly became heated when Kanye brought up Drake's family issues, and his "secret son." The feud kept going and got worst until the death of their mutual friend Virgil Abloh forced the two to settle their differences and end the beef.

Shortly after the release of Donda, Netflix also decided to release Jeen-Yuhs, a documentary about Ye's rise to stardom, his personal life, and how he became the artist that we know today. In the documentary, which is split into three parts, we see first hand the struggle that Kanye went through to get his big break in the music industry, the beginning of his interest in fashion and the reasons behind his very unstable personality. The documentary caught many off-guard by expanding on Kanye west's relationship with his mother, and how she helped him develop his musical talents. The documentary stressed how big of a fan she was, and how supportive she used to be even at times when it seemed like nobody was on his side. She gave Kanye the confidence he needed to be the egotistical genius he is today. His unshakeable belief in himself due to his mother's support made him virtually impossible to stop at the beginning of his career, but it also made him a very complicated figure.

We can see some of this complication in his recent outbursts at the SNL comedic star, and Kim Kardashian's new boyfriend, Pete Davidson. This time, Kanye seems to be getting more aggressive and darker than usual, as he felt betrayed by Pete, whom he thought was his friend before Pete started dating his ex-wife. People also speculate that he might also be worried about Pete's influence on his children. In one of his latest projects City of Gods Kanye's aggressive lyrics seemed specifically aimed towards Pete when he said " This afternoon/ 100 goons pullin up on SNL/ When I pull up/ It's dead on arrival." This seems to have crossed a line, as people said that the lyrics might be considered an obvious threat of physical violence directed at Pete, which could get Kanye into a lot of legal trouble. Still, Kanye didn't seem scared, targeting Pete Davidson again in a music video he recently released with the hip-hop legend, The Game.

The music video had a graphic image of a cartoon version of Pete Davidson getting kidnapped, beheaded, and buried alive, while Kanye sang "God saved me from the crash just so I could beat Pete Davidson A**..." There is simply no way of knowing what he is going to do next, what controversy Kanye will start or end, or what might happen to his career when it's all over. What we do know is that he'll probably find a way to write his songs despite the madness.

Now keeping the Kanye-Drake Drama aside, Kanye and Kim Kardashian decided to end their relationship after having spent almost 8 years together and giving birth to 4 children. After the divorce, Kanye went on a destructive spiral which resulted in him acting out and getting himself in even more controversies. During that period, people on Twitter and other social media sites started theorizing about the reason why he's acting out in such an extreme way. One of the most popular theories was that he simply stopped taking the medicine that helped him manage his Bipolar condition after the divorce.

But despite all the controversy, Ye mainly stayed focused on the release of his album which was named after his mother, Donda West, whom he credited for helping him become the man he is today. Coming from a religious background, Donda planted the faith of God in her son and pushed him by supporting and inspiring him. The release of the album Donda explained what many never understood in Ye regarding his form of art.

Super Bowl LVI Halftime Show

This year's Super Bowl Halftime show was a huge win for the hip-hop community. Not only did it feature the likes of Eminem, 50 Cent, Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg and Mary J Blige who are considered some of Hip-hop's greatest legends, but they were joined by special guests like Anderson P.AKK, who played the drums during Eminem's incredible performance. Proving that hip-hop is still alive and doing just fine. The Impact of the show was huge. For weeks everybody on social media was completely focus on the artists performances, songs, dances, and even their clothes.

The music choice was at times heartwarming, and at others very controversial. Fans felt teary eyed when they heard Snoop Dogg performing Tupac's part in the single California Love as it reminded them of the late rapper. Dr. Dre then followed the song with one of his songs, Still D.R.E, that had the lyrics "still not loving police," which fired up the debate about police brutality, and racial inequality that is still prevalent till today. But not all artists were allowed to talk openly against the police at that event. The artist Kendrick Lamar, which also had a lot to say about the police throughout his career was forced to cut out his comments about the issue when performing his song Alright, even though it served as a rallying cry for the BLM movement and against police brutality. Though it is unclear if Lamar did it to avoid controversy, or the show forced him to cut it out, his fans were very disappointed when they found that the song had lost its edge. Nevertheless, the halftime show was an amazing representation of the Hip Hop society. The transitions of the songs in the show were very smooth and their tribute to Tupac was an amazing touch added to the set.

Another aspect of the show that people couldn't stop talking about was the dances, and movements that the artists were doing during the show. One of the highlights of the show came after Eminem's performing of his song Lose Yourself, when the artist took a knee as Dr. Dre started playing I Ain't Mad At Cha on the piano. The fans did not know at that moment what was happening on stage. Was Eminem taking a knee out of respect for the late artist, Tupac Shakur, or did he do it as a way to support the BLM movement, and racial equality? Was Eminem doing what Colin Kaepernick, and other black athletes were doing? We can't know for sure. But Eminem wasn't the only artist that made the news with his moves. Snoop Dogg also sparked controversy throughout the show with his choice of dance. When Snoop took to the stage, he started performing his infamous Crip Walk, which is a type of gangster dance. Even though the dance was very well performed, and was fairly harmless,

the camera kept cutting away from him whenever he did it. This sparked its own outrage, as fans went on twitter and other social media sites to protest the cutting of Snoop's iconic dance, which he performs often. But not all the dances and movements were controversial, some were just flat out funny, like the ones 50 Cent's entrance into the stage. Though the fans did not know that 50 Cent is going to be part of the show, the laughed and cheered when he made his surprise entrance on stage. The fans laughed because 50 Cent decided to perform his song, partly, upside-down. Odd yet hilarious choice launched a wave of memes targeting that part of the show. People laughing for days at his silly upside-down singing. But that's not all, though people likely came for Snoop and Dre, the one that really stole the show was Mary J Blige. Her dances were powerful, energetic, and fabulous, people on twitter scream at how fantastic she looked at age 51. She did not lose a step when she danced to her greatest two hits Family Affair and No More Drama.

The songs and the dances weren't the only thing that grabbed people's attention, people also kept talking about the artists choice of clothing during the show. Though most rappers stuck to their black-on-black strong looks, some were a bit more creative with their outfits. One of the most shocking clothes worn in the show was easily Snoop's. The legendary rapper was wearing a blue and yellow bandana tracksuit, along with golden chains, and flashy glasses. His outfit was in Crip gang colors and patterns, which matched perfectly with his dance. Even though some might think of his choice as a taunt of some sort, real fans of the artist know that he did it as a tribute to his hometown. Mary J Blige also shocked the audience when she performed her dances, while wearing a fairly revealing outfit which some thought was inappropriate, while the majority loved it. But the strongest outfits in the show weren't worn by the actual artists, but the backup dancers. When Dr. Dre was wrapping up the show with his very outspoken song, Still D.R.E. the Stadium got bombarded with young black and Hispanic dancers wearing prison uniforms, which made what the artist message in the song eco even louder. The outfits were likely a comment on the racial and ethnic disparity in American state prisons.

The Super Bowl 2022 Halftime Show simply took everyone's breath away. I don't think there was very a show that made that much noise in my lifetime. The performances were very detailed, thoroughly thought out, and amazingly done. The show made the audiences mad, made them think, made them laugh, and then cry. It was nostalgic, and very new at the same time. We might never witness such a show ever again, it was simply fabulous.

Creative Writing



Collection Of Poems From Students



Poem 1:

Please put them in Good Graces

It came to my attention that everyone is in a struggle,
That makes them feel like they will always crumble.

These saddening thoughts make me feel helpless,
It's only right that I take action like it's an awareness.

So I will provide my prayers with full sympathy and empathy,
Since they are close to me and they deserve to see clarity.

I pray that all the bad they experience will go away,
Replaced with good that they should see everyday.

I pray that their suffering and pain will lessen,
They deserve mercy so they can feel like they are in heaven.

I pray that they won't feel down when they make any mistake,
Help them with correctness so they won't break.

I pray that their feeling of misery won't remain forever,
Change it to contentment so their feelings don't sever.

I pray that failure wouldn't put them in a bad position,
Bring success to them so they can be in good condition.

I pray that loneliness doesn't leave them helpless,
Their loved ones should provide them support that is endless.

Dear God please hear my sincerest prayers for the people,
Place them in the amazing grace so they can feel merciful and
gleeful,
Make their lives peaceful without the pressing of the needle,
And always bring them power so they won't feel feeble.

Amen

Poem 2:

Special Identical Celebrations

The special celebratory day has finally arrived,
Of one biological number added to signify our duration of being alive.

It originated from how we're brought to life,
Experiencing everything and reminiscing it all with a slice of cake cut with a knife.

It is thought that birthdays are celebrated in lone,
Until knowing that others born the same day and month has lightened the zone.

After knowing that, celebrating together forms a special identical bond,
Making us spend our special day feeling fond.

Even if we are or aren't fully acquainted,
Allow me to assure you below without causing you to feel tainted.

Some individuals prefer to celebrate privately,
While others desire to celebrate it socially.

Nonetheless each celebrates theirs differently,
Without causing them to feel any infamy.

May these notable 24 hours undergo in joy,
Without any faults occurring like a broken toy.

All that said, it is a pleasure we share the same celebration,
And that it'll remain pleasant from start to finish ending it like a graduation.

To end it all, may each yearly birthday always happens in satisfactory,
And that your quality of life stays in bliss forming it to a memorable gallery.

Poem 3:

Excruciating Study and Lenient Rest

You have passed your studies successfully,
Rewarding you with a vacation creating personal ecstasy.

It's usual to see that we live under this cycle,
And it can be considered vital and spiteful.

But not to worry, you're in a convenient route,
Without the action of giving me the benefit of the doubt.

The phase of studying is seen as unpleasant,
But the story behind it is like earning bezants.

While you're studying, knowledge is gained,
Gathering the logic is convenient for the brain.

The study cycle promotes the mind to be in the level of Confucian,
Which helps you form ideas of resolution.

After the activity of learning and working,
You are academically enlightened afterwards vacationing in nursing.

When beginning a vacation, you planned how to have fun,
Until realizing it lasts a short while making you shunned.

Even though vacations are a short schedule,
You can still have fun making these moments memorably special.

Ending reassuringly, vacations may be short and studying lasting long,
Gathering knowledge matters most and vacations always happen without making your life wrong.

On the Spot

By: Yousef A Al-Otaibi

Michael woke up one day with a very strange spot in the middle of his forehead. It was strange because it was yellowish in color and abnormally large. He felt weird but didn't notice the spot until he walked into his bathroom and looked carefully into the mirror. "Oh my... what is that thing?" he said out loud, then frantically tried to scratch it off. He quickly realized that he isn't going to be able to remove it, so he got dressed and drove to work. Michael was an anchorman for a very hacky local news channel. The channel was especially boring because nothing ever happens in Maine. Not a lot of people watched the news, and none of the staff cared about making the show good, or fact-checking anything; Michael didn't care for the show either, and it showed. After failing to hide the spot with make-up, Michael sat in front of the camera, opposite the teleprompter, like always, and started reading, "Good morning! I'm Michael Bates and you are watching Channel 1's early morning news" Before reading the next line though, the anchorman heard someone whisper, "Say something interesting, you dull monkey." He ignored the sound and kept reading until it cut to commercial, he then got up and said, "Who said that?" "It was me," replied the yellow spot. "My job is to report the news. I can't just say whatever I like." "Yes, you can! Come on, it's going to be so much fun! It's not like anybody cares. Honestly, it can only help your boring broadcast." He knew that the spot was right. Nobody ever watches the local morning news, so it's unlikely that anybody would care about what he says and does on camera. "Fine. I will, but if this ever comes back to bite me..." "Don't worry, this won't be the only nonsense this channel has produced," said the spot playfully. "What should I say?" "Just repeat after me," it said gleefully. Michael agreed and sat back down. This time, instead of looking at the teleprompter, he looked directly at the camera and repeated whatever the spot whispered. "Fellow citizens, are you tired of being pushed around by the big guys? Do you hate that everything around you is controlled by someone bigger and more powerful than you?" The spot kept whispering his conspiracy theories about race, society, and the crumbling economy, and Michael repeated it all on air. The spot never stopped after that day and kept convincing Michael to spout its theories, live. Its theories though very controversial, gained traction on the internet over time. Soon enough, thousands of people tuned in to watch Michael's seemingly unfiltered tirades about the economy, personal freedoms, and social issues. The duo was perfect together; Michael enjoyed his newly founded fame, and the spot was happy to have a platform to speak its mind. However, after a while, Michael became addicted to the spot and the success it brought him. He gave it too much freedom and allowed it to run his whole life. It gained more followers, spoke often, and adopted more extreme conspiracy theories. It then turned red, started to pulse, and it grew from the size of a silver dollar to almost the size of a small orange... a size that Michael couldn't ignore. "What is happening to you? You look disgusting," Michael said in a concerned tone. "It's nothing..." "I'm going to the hospital." "No, don't you dare! They'll hurt me." "I promise, I'll make sure they don't. We're partners, I'd never let anyone hurt you." "No! they'll never let me be. You don't want our partnership to end, do you? Trust me, this is a bad idea." "I don't see what the problem is. Our fans can't see us like this. They've been calling in to talk about you." They argued for a while, but Michael decided to go to the doctor regardless. The spot started screaming as Michael approached the doctor's office. "You traitor! You can't do this to me! I made you! How dare you defy me." It pulsed even more as it grew louder. "You were worthless! You were nothing, Nothing!" Michael ignored the screaming and walked in. He then discovered why the spot was so reluctant to go to the doctor, it was a giant cancerous tumor, and it was killing Michael. "Michael, we can still do this. This doesn't have to be the end. We can do a podcast and they won't know about me." "You are killing me! Literally killing me! How am I supposed to feel about that?" "Were you even alive before I came along? Before I found you, you were a faceless little parasite. Waking up with a tumor in the middle of your forehead was the best thing that ever happened to you. Just look outside and you'll know that I'm right." Michael looked outside the hospital window and saw a huge crowd of people gathering with signs wishing him a safe recovery and holding cameras waiting for him to leave. Was the spot right about me, he thought. "See? The people have spoken."

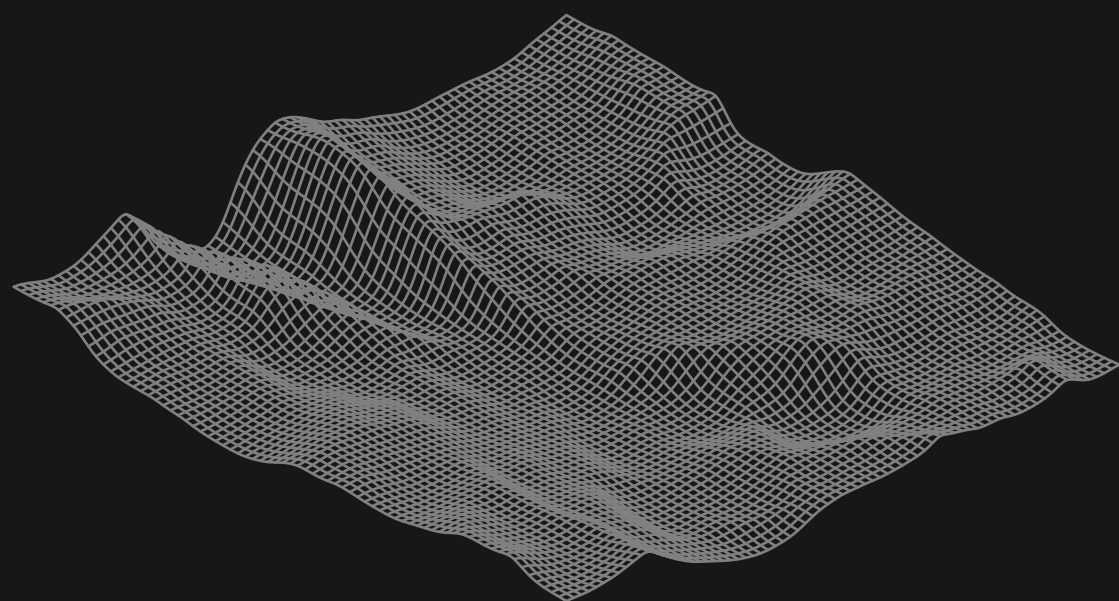


Storms Through Portals

By: Nuha Al-Sahli

Atop your shelf lies a portal through time and space. Whisking you to places, overlooking wonders you would never dare to face. A life you lived alone on the margin of the sea, forced you to flee from its beasts of prey, heaving breaths of terror, prior to returning to your chamber's embrace. Your compact portal seems a trifling sum, pages intimately packed with stories within you chum, and people amid you interlace. A life of enchantment along the pages awaits, where joy inhibits your turn of mind, enticing prospects are infinite, and no labor behind you snakes. You sit alone while at your portal you direct an unstirred gaze, eyes quickly moving over the lines in an inattentive daze, travelling the world, tearing hell for leather without moving a place. A despondent life you lived as a queen who fell from grace, facing betrayal from her retainers and exile from her domain, lending an ear around and not hearing a word of praise. You move away from the pages of reign, crossing the threshold of a lunatic's mind, leaving your mundane. You slowly unravel that you have been framed, that you possess intellect, and your mind is sane. But notoriety you have earned, and no one will have faith, your state of mind forever remaining arcane. Another set of pages recasts you as an old-age pensioner, trawling for flounder and trading what you trap, your frame aches in discomfort and withering in malaise. At a disparate life, you are the sole witness of a massacre. You stow away in fear of meeting the same fate as the sufferers with the need to avenge them lurking in your mind, pioneering into a venture. The next pages alter you in an anthropological form, unearthing conundrums about humankind, coming upon swarms of enigma, showing to be true humans are but a storm. It is remarkable where your portal can take you, years ahead and years before you. It is to be kept in mind that your portal is not one, but countless portals you can possess, each with a different plot, some with none.

What a wasteful life one without a portal lives. Never exploring worlds and never traveling hills, never breaking free from the shackles of their own limbs. Your portal atop the shelf is an amiable escape. Captivating users into bewitching escapades, bringing forth tales, showing you anecdotes, and leaving mouths agape. One without a portal lives a wasteful life. Never living in mollitude, nor experiencing stories like the piercing shrill of a fife, never enjoying solitude.



The Kelpie, of Scottish Folklore”

By: Ahmad Al-Houti

It was sometime in April. The sea-side villages would thrive during this time of the year; however, it has been unexpectedly dry. The highland villagers were usually visited by waves of rainfall causing hordes of Flying-Fish to swarm their town. All they had to do was swing their fishing nets and they would catch a boatload of them. This time around their only source of nutrition were forest forages and crops—their meals were sparse and spaced out leaving them hungry and sickly.

“Wait Da, I need to grab her.”

“Dinna worry, my darling, I’ll wait.” She sure loves that unicorn toy of hers. Can’t go to bed without it, the father thought as he saw his daughter skipping towards him while bearhugging it. Her father fashioned her the toy and a storybook to go with it—of a unicorn and a lost princess. Whenever he could spare some time, he drew pictures and wrote short lines for each page. Often, finding himself engrossed in the storybook, staying up far late in the night scribbling and scrabbling. A sense of tranquility washed upon his nights enough to quell his mind, liberating him from the coils of grief.

Whenever the sun departed for the next day, they would lay on the girl’s bed and read a chapter or two until the girl’s head was fast asleep. It lulled her cries to a hushed state. The story slowly but surely restored the girl’s vigor, animating her to the point of even talking to her father; Asking about the specifics of the story—kicking under the blanket with laughter at the princess’ reaction when she found the unicorn. It warmed the father’s soul to see her return to her usual merry self. His grief was lifted when he succeeded, yet the grief seemed to linger about house.

“I’m ready!” she said as the father was tucking her in.

“The princess rode on the unicorn’s back and began their journey back home. Sick from worry, the queen waited outside the castle’s doors every day.” The girl’s face scrunched up, as if she is preparing to cry—prompting her father to flip the next page. “Finally, the princess and the unicorn came out from the forest and reached the castle. ‘Thank you for bringing her back to me,’ she said to the unicorn as she held her daughter in her arms and giving her a hundred kisses.” The father squeezed his daughter with his free arm, and said, “like this,” before giving her several kisses. The girl laughed and shuffled under the blanket, awaiting the finale. He continued, “As long as her daughter was safe, the mother was happy and well. They lived happily-ever-after. The end.”

She covered her eyes with her toy and in her teary voice she said, “I miss Ma.”

He felt his throat seize up, “I know, darling. I miss her too.”

When the sun arrived the very next day from its nightly forsaking, the father went out to the field to harvest the seasonal crops. As he hunched over the bed of lettuce, he hunched over and twisted its head, it shrilled loud enough to have rung his ears. “God damn it,” he responded. Throwing his glove on the dirt, stomped his foot, and rubbed his ear. It nearly busted my ear drums. I never heard them be that loud before. In a state of absent mindlessness, he forgot to grab his earplugs before leaving the house.

Hours pass by with the sun still affixed to the sky, and with him hunching over the field, his head felt heavy on his neck. The sweat dripped into his mouth tasting crisp and salty. A sudden break from the baking sun,

“Da, Da!” said the little girl as she ran to her father. “I saw the unicorn in the forest.”

“Huh?” he said, taking out the earplugs with his ears.

“I said, I saw the unicorn in the forest.”

“Lass. What are you on about? There is no such thing. Unicorns don’t exist.” He wiped the sweat off his forehead before going back to his harvest.

She walked away angrily, crushing the ground beneath her raging feet, and squeezing the non-existent life out of her unicorn toy. In retaliation to her father’s inaction, she headed towards the forest where she last saw the unicorn. Unbeknownst to her, she mistook a branch for its horn. As she trudged through the forest, the blistering sun left her in a dizzied state, the trees showed no merciful shelter with their shade. Still, adamant on proving her father wrong, the little girl continued on in search for it. Her feet were left sore and throbbing. As for the sun, it forsook the land once more, storing its shine. As she reached the river, she saw it in the distance, emerging from the water to rest on the ground by the river’s bank. Her eyes widened, licking her lips as if she witnessed the most delectable morsel, but in fact she devised a harrowing plan. The girl dropped her toy and ran to it—She jumped on its back, hugging it with head and limbs. She felt its hair; it was thick and mossy. It carried a rank smell. It turned its neck to see her with its deep dark echoless eyes. The girl was left horrified. Wanting to jump off it, but her wriggling body was stuck to the horse’s hairs. It stood up with her still on its back and began to walk back into the river. The girl screamed for help, but her screams stretched only to the neighboring trees. The river water rose and embraced them with its long flowing arms, disappearing into the river. The unfeeling water left no trace, and the ground left the toy standing in awe as it witnessed the scene break before it. Droplets of water began to rain above it. It finally started to rain in April.

