



the spyglass



spring issue
twenty twenty-five



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Loading, please wait...

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It was these three words that greeted me years ago, after I first clicked on a peculiar website aptly named patience-is-a-virtue.org. I should've taken the hint and closed the tab, but I waited thirty minutes for it to load. I reminisce on it sometimes. Who has the time *and* patience for that?

Truth is, I used to have the patience. I could easily conquer any mind or tooth-numbing visit to the dentist, just by spending hours playing make-believe: because back then, all the entertainment I'd ever needed came from within. Maybe you were the same way. But now? We lose our battles with our seemingly shortening attention spans: because for every hour we spend studying, at least two more are spent scrolling. "A well-deserved break," right? Give me a (three hour) break.

But I denied it all. Nah, my attention span couldn't have gotten that bad, right? In a desperate attempt to prove that the human attention span (eight seconds) is greater than a goldfish's (nine seconds), I revisited the strange website I'd discovered. More than anything else, I wanted to prove myself wrong.

My battle against the instant gratification monkey started out strong. It looked like I would win after all, until absolutely nothing happened. I was annoyed. Most websites take one, two seconds to load maximum, but there I was. Tick tock. I didn't have time for this. I wanted results, and fast. Come on, I urged the website. I tried making it jealous, like it would somehow load faster. I listed

// ALEX YANG

PHOTOGRAPHY // DANIEL YANG

DESIGN // MAGGIE LI

everything else I could be doing instead of staring at such *inane* website design. I could be doing math homework, washing dishes, reading a book: it goes on and on. Realistically, I'd be playing Pokemon Pocket; *but there I was*.

Whatever. I left the display on, though I didn't expect much. Then, at the two minute mark, the website had a new message for me.

They sounded apologetic enough, so I stayed. Four minutes in,

Thank you for your patience.

By then I'd realised the display was updated every two minutes. Sooo... I set a timer and scrolled until the bells tolled. I felt like Pavlov's dog, but if I was going to waste my time waiting, I was going to waste it right.

Ding!

Just a bit longer

I thought back to the other day, when I anxiously waited for my Amazon delivery by the door. As a Prime-less user who'd placed an order just the night before, I had no right to be tracking my package obsessively. I had even less right to be sending out silent pleas that went unreceived by my delivery guy, asking *please can you hurry up*. It was wholly unnecessary to watch the tracking blip go from nine stops to six to three, but I did it anyway. I even turned it into a group bonding activity, in which my sister and I glared daggers into our glass door. Why couldn't we just *wait*? Was there something wrong with us, or was this the new human condition?

My questions were only met with an *Eeerh...* It had begun: full-blown life contemplation mode. Where did my patience go? (Poof.) Where were the warning signs? (Everywhere, you just ignored them.) Would I even pass the infamous delayed gratification experiment? (Yes, if only because I don't like marshmallows.) And most importantly, was it over for our generation?

I took it upon myself to do some digging. Here's the thing: the perpetual myth that human attention spans are now worse than that of measly goldfish? Not quite. Microsoft's 2015 study revealed technology doesn't significantly impact our attention spans. They also never said a thing about goldfish. In fact, goldfish are smarter than we give them credit for (experimenters have even taught them how to drive).

Then... how come short-form media is so enticing? As social scientist Herbert Simon once said, "[What information consumes is] the attention of its recipients. Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention." TikToks, Instagram reels, even YouTube shorts are shoved into our faces by algorithms designed to keep us hooked. Have a moment? Perfect! Watch some meaningless reels, send some memes; but what happened to pursuing hobbies in our free time? Instead, hours fly by as we scour our phones. That's exactly what big media wants.

With that in mind, I turned back to the website. Focus. I couldn't, wouldn't fall victim to any throwaway reels.

Pretty good, you?

We really apologize,
this is seriously
taking much longer
than usual

applauds you for your suffering.

Well, we admire your patience. No, really. As they say, 'Patience is a virtue.' You know that you've been staring at this page for 26 minutes, right?

I do,
thanks.

That's not freaking you out? No?
Well, in that case...

As the website got more and more judgemental, I was tempted to leave then and there: but I remembered Aesop's fables. Slow and steady wins the race. Good things come to those who wait.

In its final moments, the website

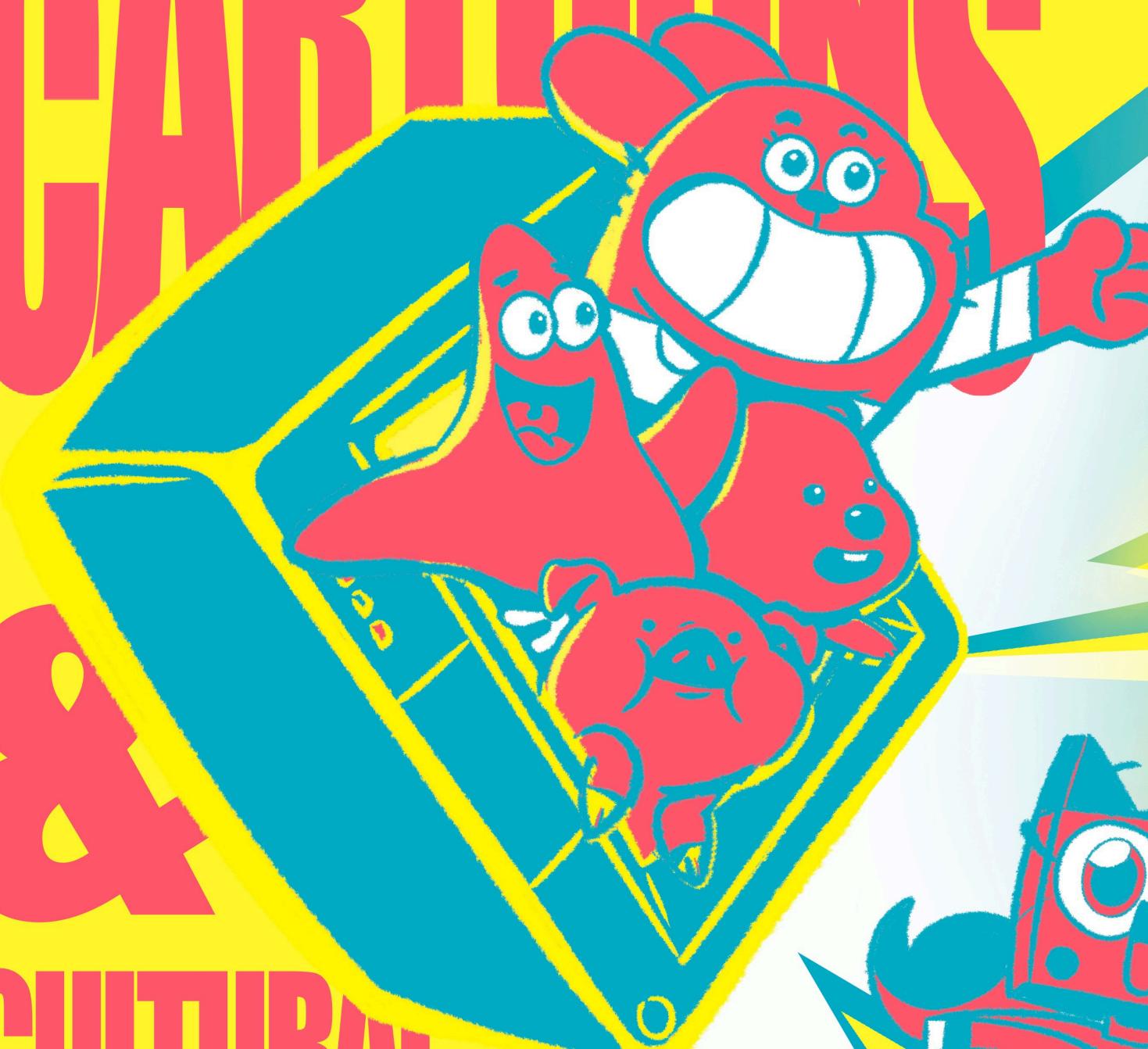
And after an eternity, it loads, leaving you with nothing more than a gif of a... squirrel? Opossum? Leaping off a ledge. To be honest, that's how I felt knowing I'd spent thirty minutes of my life on this website. *Twice*. Maybe that wasn't the best example of delayed gratification, but the point still stands. Patience is a virtue: no matter how little we have left.

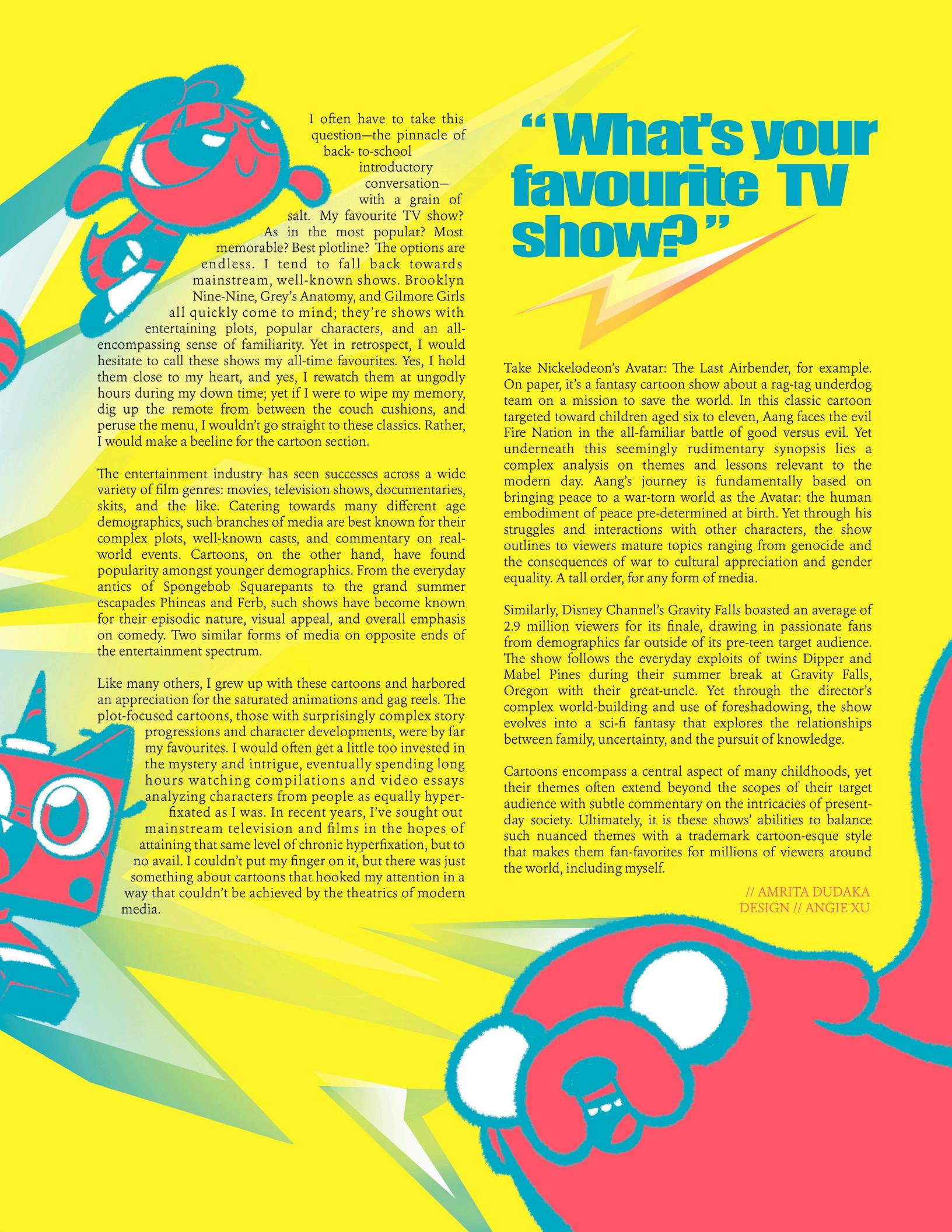
CARTOONS

&

CULTURAL

COMMENTARY





I often have to take this question—the pinnacle of back-to-school introductory conversations—with a grain of salt. My favourite TV show? As in the most popular? Most memorable? Best plotline? The options are endless. I tend to fall back towards mainstream, well-known shows. Brooklyn Nine-Nine, Grey's Anatomy, and Gilmore Girls all quickly come to mind; they're shows with entertaining plots, popular characters, and an all-encompassing sense of familiarity. Yet in retrospect, I would hesitate to call these shows my all-time favourites. Yes, I hold them close to my heart, and yes, I rewatch them at ungodly hours during my down time; yet if I were to wipe my memory, dig up the remote from between the couch cushions, and peruse the menu, I wouldn't go straight to these classics. Rather, I would make a beeline for the cartoon section.

The entertainment industry has seen successes across a wide variety of film genres: movies, television shows, documentaries, skits, and the like. Catering towards many different age demographics, such branches of media are best known for their complex plots, well-known casts, and commentary on real-world events. Cartoons, on the other hand, have found popularity amongst younger demographics. From the everyday antics of Spongebob Squarepants to the grand summer escapades Phineas and Ferb, such shows have become known for their episodic nature, visual appeal, and overall emphasis on comedy. Two similar forms of media on opposite ends of the entertainment spectrum.

Like many others, I grew up with these cartoons and harbored an appreciation for the saturated animations and gag reels. The plot-focused cartoons, those with surprisingly complex story progressions and character developments, were by far my favourites. I would often get a little too invested in the mystery and intrigue, eventually spending long hours watching compilations and video essays analyzing characters from people as equally hyper-fixated as I was. In recent years, I've sought out mainstream television and films in the hopes of attaining that same level of chronic hyperfixation, but to no avail. I couldn't put my finger on it, but there was just something about cartoons that hooked my attention in a way that couldn't be achieved by the theatrics of modern media.

"What's your favourite TV show?"

Take Nickelodeon's Avatar: The Last Airbender, for example. On paper, it's a fantasy cartoon show about a rag-tag underdog team on a mission to save the world. In this classic cartoon targeted toward children aged six to eleven, Aang faces the evil Fire Nation in the all-familiar battle of good versus evil. Yet underneath this seemingly rudimentary synopsis lies a complex analysis on themes and lessons relevant to the modern day. Aang's journey is fundamentally based on bringing peace to a war-torn world as the Avatar: the human embodiment of peace pre-determined at birth. Yet through his struggles and interactions with other characters, the show outlines to viewers mature topics ranging from genocide and the consequences of war to cultural appreciation and gender equality. A tall order, for any form of media.

Similarly, Disney Channel's Gravity Falls boasted an average of 2.9 million viewers for its finale, drawing in passionate fans from demographics far outside of its pre-teen target audience. The show follows the everyday exploits of twins Dipper and Mabel Pines during their summer break at Gravity Falls, Oregon with their great-uncle. Yet through the director's complex world-building and use of foreshadowing, the show evolves into a sci-fi fantasy that explores the relationships between family, uncertainty, and the pursuit of knowledge.

Cartoons encompass a central aspect of many childhoods, yet their themes often extend beyond the scopes of their target audience with subtle commentary on the intricacies of present-day society. Ultimately, it is these shows' abilities to balance such nuanced themes with a trademark cartoon-esque style that makes them fan-favorites for millions of viewers around the world, including myself.

// AMRITA DUDAKA
DESIGN // ANGIE XU

I JUSTIFY my POOR SPENDING habITS

Seven hours in a frowzy room with yellow light and a palette of oil paint. Me, a YouTube tutorial, and art supplies worth a month's bill of groceries; this is what the ideal date night looks like. My eyes are ringing and my ears are seeing orange and there is paint smeared in places where the sun don't shine. I enter that room one hundred and twenty dollars poorer than I had been the week prior, and I leave it equally as poor and probably six times as emotionally destitute. I've been faced with the incomprehensible horrors and come out perhaps as a different man, but certainly not a greater one.

I ask myself, over and over again, whether this purchase was really necessary. This is the fourth time I'm searching up the fat over lean rule because I cannot for the life of me remember the bare bones basics of this god awful medium.

This is the life.

That's how every beginning goes; the learning curve is a pain in the butt, the hole in my wallet is a pain to my heart, and the never ending carousel of pursuit is a pain to my grades. But despite all the ego pummelling I'm subjected to as I learn the fundamentals in a subject I've devoted too much into to back out, I do it again and again.

I, without fail, am always picking up hobbies, no matter if I have the time or the funds. If you squint at a certain angle, I'm sure I resemble that of a housefly: rubbing my grubby little hands together in anticipation upon returning home from yet another DeSerres haul, only to buzz off in a month or two in search for another high. I'm careless with money in a way that's probably risky for someone approaching the age of

I-had-to-pay-two-hundred-dollars-for-my-professors-textbook- so-I'm-eating-beans-on-a-hotdog-bun-this-week.

My life would be a whole lot easier if I hadn't decided that I hated the look of an empty room. I like visibly lived-in places.

I like clutter. I don't like what this means for my interior design budget.

I love tactile things. I'd be lying if I said I didn't appreciate this time of technological advancement where every movie that had ever been is located right at the tips of my fingers, but the joy of owning physical media that the world has forgotten

will never really go away.

I miss my junk of a laptop that took half a dozen minutes to boot up because at least it had an optical disc drive for my DVD collection that hasn't seen a new keep case since 2016. I miss when my dad stored his CDs in a CD case to lug to the

car during road trips back when our car still had a built-in CD player. I miss flipping through magazines filled with dubious comics at the grocery store.

It's only reasonable that I've taken to collecting physical media as a result. My room, littered with aged and slightly torn

posters featuring everything I've had even an iota of interest in since I was 14; my shelves, buckling under the weight of every book I've collected since fourth grade; my desk, a pedestal for all my silly figurines gifted or amassed over the years.

(Sometimes I feel that if I cannot see proof of the life I've lived, I'd never remember living at all.)

Sculpting, painting, piano, digital art, crocheting, baking, gardening, roller skating; the index goes on and on—of the list,

I'll let you guess how many I've stuck with past the fundamentals. (The answer is, like, one.)

Jack of all trades, master of ab-so-lute-ly nothing.

As I approach the end of my teenage years, I often reflect on the few hobbies my parents pushed on me as a kid that I

inevitably dropped because commitment was never my strong suit. Thousands of dollars poured into a piano now covered

in a fine layer of dust and lessons with a passionate elderly lady, all of which I took for granted. Decades worth of DVDs sitting placidly in the cabinet tucked away in the corner of my basement. I want to do so many things that I know require a

degree of financial investment that simply will not be worth the pay out, whether it be a new hobby or something to add to my ever-growing collection of baubles.

And I do it anyway, because my self-discipline is borderline non-existent. I tread the fine line between curator and over-

consumer, and that's a flaw I'll be ruminating over for as long as I collect.

Nonetheless, I carry a LEGO keychain of a silly character on my belt loop. I buy stickers to put on my laptop and

notebooks as proof that they belong to me. I buy a dollar store blind bag because the image of Batman's poses makes me laugh. I buy far too much paint upfront because J. C. Leyendecker's work is far too phenomenal for me not to try it out.

// CLAIRE CHEN
PHOTOGRAPHY // JOLLY YAN
DESIGN // MELINDA LI

United in Faith

// ISABEL YE
PHOTOGRAPHY // CYNTHIA MU
DESIGN // ERIN CHEN



I have fallen to my knees in pure awe. My fingers flit over the stone floor, feeling, searching, chasing the pure love that struck me to the ground.

I breathe. The air is pure, calm, and there's a clarity in my heart I haven't felt before. My eyes are closed, mouth open, fingers splayed over the ground, feeling. For a heartbeat. My heartbeat, which is pouring into the ground, love spreading through the tips of my fingers. We are one: me and the floor of St. Peter's Basilica.

I am cleansed, pure, as hope washes over me in waves that bring me to the ground.

Later, I'll tell you I'd never felt this way before. Later, I'll tell you how I cried that night, because there was finally faith in my heart. Later, I'll tell you about the peace that flowed through me, again, and again, embracing me in such a comforting, gentle hold.

I was in the biggest church in the world, which was also the first church I'd ever visited.

Maybe that's why the twinge in my heart finally dwindled and made room for peace. Back home, I found renewed comfort in everyday life. I have always had faith that something or someone is out there, but I finally found the faith that does reside in my heart.

And this carried me into writing, into appreciation. I wrote, then studied, then admired the world from all angles.

If you'd been there with me, if you'd seen the masses of people that gathered in the church, maybe you'd understand. Instead, you tell me you don't believe in this stuff, that it doesn't make sense.

But why should it? It doesn't make sense to

me either, but there I was, reading article after article about Ramadan, devouring information as wonder filled me up from my toes to the tip of my head.

There I was, reading my aunt's poems, admiring her strong spirituality and devotion to Buddhism.

Here I am, counting my blessings and praying every night.

It lights me up on the inside, it really does, the beauty of it all.

My name is Christian: it means "devoted to God," and I've always laughed it off. You have, too. Funny my name means "devoted to God" when I'm not even religious.

But lately, it's been cathartic. Lately, I love having this connection with this massive group of people. Lately, I've been delving into a spiritual part of myself that has developed and bloomed over the years.

You smile at me fondly, singular dimple in sight. I know you don't see what I see, and that amazes me too.

This is magic. Do you feel it? It's in the very air. We have the power to choose to believe. There's something so magical about that.

You tip your head, and I know you're thinking. A piece of hair falls into your eyes, and I am overcome with emotion. Although we stand on different points, we are still so close.

You whisper to me, *Maybe I can believe.*

I shake my head firmly. That is your choice and your decision.

And then you grin, so full, from cheek to cheek, and you take my hand.

I'll always believe you.

There's faith in humanity after all, because we're able to stand together. That's magic.



searches after adding salt instead of sugar



← → C

COOKIE RECIPE

- G why does my cookie batch taste so salty
- ⌚ do cookies turn saltier after being baked in the oven
- ⌚ where did all the salt in my cookies come from
- ⌚ oh no i messed up bad reddit
- ⌚ what to do if you added salt instead of sugar
- ⌚ how to salvage the recipe if you added too much salt
- ⌚ what do you mean i can't salvage the recipe
- ⌚ can the salty cookies be used for anything else
- ⌚ what do you mean 'throw the batch away'
- ⌚ are there any alternatives to throwing the batch away
- ⌚ what if i spent time making the cookies and i don't want to throw them away
- ⌚ why is the internet so useless
- ⌚ can i sell salty cookies online
- ⌚ what does the government mean by 'health regulations'
- ⌚ do animals like salty foods
- ⌚ since when was salt toxic for wildlife
- ⌚ why is baking so difficult
- ⌚ why am i so useless
- ⌚ 101 tricks on how to stay mindful when things go wrong
- ⌚ is baking impossible or is it just me reddit
- ⌚ i just want to be good at something why am i good at nothing
- ⌚ should i just stop trying
- ⌚ will i ever be happy
- ⌚ i hate everything
- ⌚ trash collection schedule in toronto
- ⌚ bakeries near me /



we think
we know you

I step into the curtain-partitioned space of the DECA judging booth and see a woman my mother's age sitting at the table with a pencil in hand. If I smile just right and angle my head a little downwards, I think that maybe I could remind her of her hypothetical daughter.

Acting quickly on that principle, I extend my arm out for a handshake and, in the most enthusiastic tone I can muster, tell her it's a pleasure to meet her.

Of course, even at the end of the ten minutes, I don't have enough information to make any solid assumptions about my judge's life. The most that I know is that she's vaguely East Asian and that she tolerates kids enough to spend her afternoon listening to juvenile explanations of economics and personal finance.

I don't know nearly enough about her to make the assumption that she has children. At the end of the day, there's a non-zero chance that she returns home to an apartment shared with 47 cats.

When I think about the concept of impression management, or the way individuals influence the perception of themselves by others, it almost seems like another term I'd have to memorize for my favourite business competition.

However embarrassing it is to admit out loud, there's no denying that we act in certain ways for different people based off of our own assumptions. We try to stand out with snappy pitches to the (presumably) tired university student judging our hackathon project and slather on the niceties when we talk to older people. Regardless of whether or not they're more likely to appreciate it based on arbitrary criteria, we put on the version of ourselves we think they'd want to see the most.

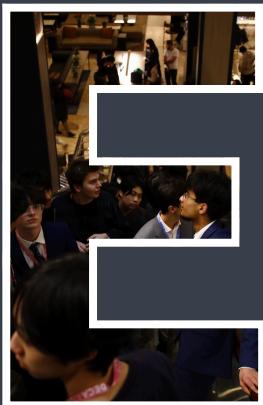
The business world operates in the exact same manner; it doesn't take more than a couple of episodes of Mad Men or a single chapter of a marketing textbook to tell that most advertising is largely based on presumptions and stereotypes. Parents are tired and need to relax. Women are afraid of aging. Every man wants nothing more than to watch a sports game at the bar.

Even when data mining and its influence on company actions comes into play, businesses still take the route of making broad strokes based off of percentages and surveys of dubious accuracy.

Consumers are reduced to numbers used for decision-making, optimizing products, and maximizing profit rather than the complex individuals they are. Even so, it's effective enough to sway economies.

By conducting impression management informed by general trends and observations, humanity has found a streamlined way to form the most connections and gain the most favourable impressions based on vapid characterizations of what we think the people around us are like. Despite the fact that we're losing out on the ability to really be able to display our true selves or create meaningful relationships unrelated to assumptions of character, most bonds don't seem to be nearly important enough for us to care. While it's an inherently flawed system, it works accurately enough for the most part to stay useful.

Regardless of whether or not a company or the people you meet on the daily really understand you for you, they've spent enough time living to think they know you. You can't even be mad, really. You're doing it too.



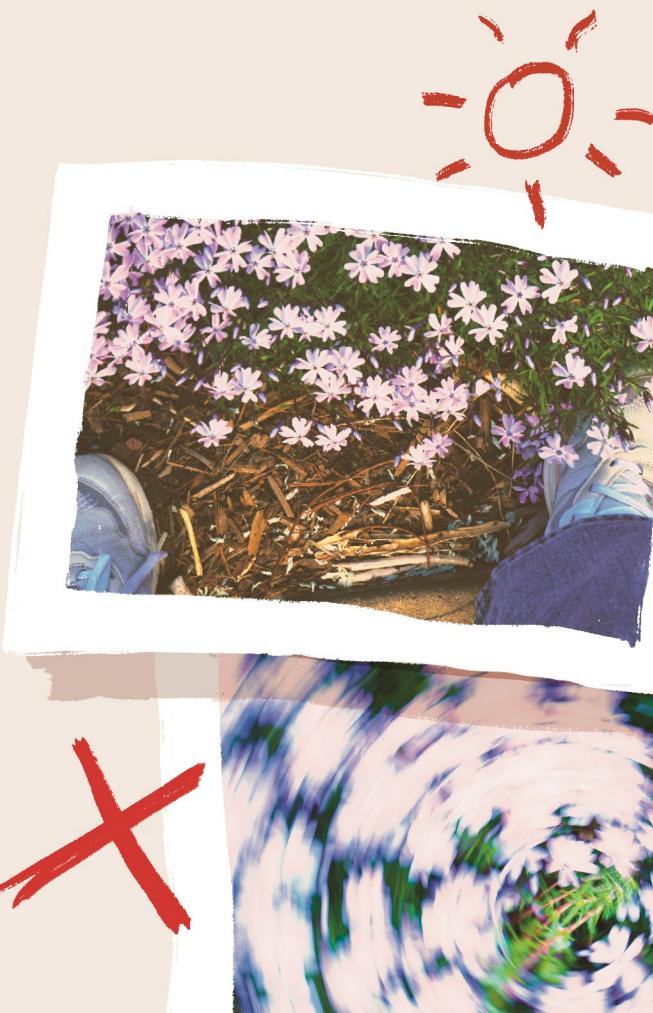
let it happen



When I was younger, I used to look at the world through my special magnifying glass. If I held it at just the right angle, the world was revealed to me in intricate and elaborate detail. My magnifying glass emphasized the seemingly unimportant parts of life, with every event appearing to be “the event” and minuscule daily transitions portraying themselves as something to write home about.

While this meant that I was able to appreciate the small moments in life, it also meant that I got hung up on them. Whether it be my parents switching the restaurant we were going to or deciding not to go on that weekend trip, my magnifying glass accentuated all the details and all the change, usually in the worst possible ways.

To say the least, I despised this effect. I wanted things to always stay the way they had always been; at the end of the day, that was how the world was intended to work. To me, change was a simply unnecessary interruption that ruined my plans and my mood. Unable to put my magnifying glass aside and zoom out, I resorted to the next best thing: doing everything in my power to prevent any fluctuations in everyday life that could possibly ever occur.

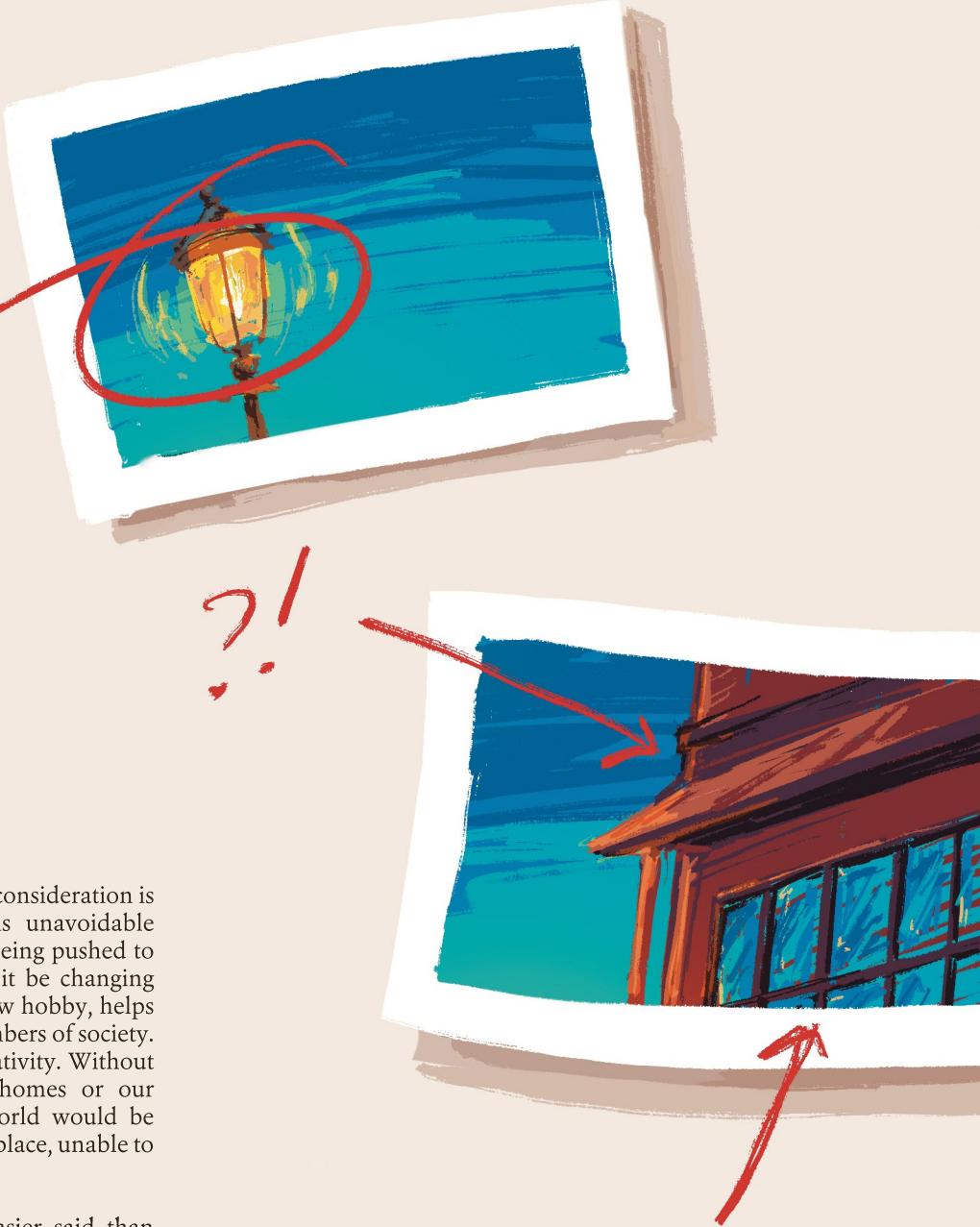


//KATE SHAHIDI
PHOTOGRAPHY // EMILY MENG
DESIGN // PHOEBE SU

The truth is that the world doesn't stop for anyone, and it certainly didn't stop for me. No matter how much I tried to avoid new experiences or hold onto my routines of the past, life always seemed to present itself to me in unexpected ways that I couldn't control at all. That was when I learned the first lesson: change is inevitable, and it can't be prevented.

Looking back, the most important consideration is not even the fact that change is unavoidable (because it is). It's also necessary. Being pushed to adapt to new situations, whether it be changing schools or even just taking up a new hobby, helps us improve as individuals and members of society. Change drives innovation and creativity. Without reforms in our schools or our homes or our marketplaces or ourselves, the world would be stuck in a stagnant and motionless place, unable to cater to the needs of anyone.

Of course, this is easier said than done. Even though the benefits of change are quite apparent to us now, I'm not going to deny the fact that it can still be difficult to adjust sometimes. I had personally become so used to holding that magnifying glass that it seemed completely unnatural to put it down, almost as if I was losing a part of myself entirely. My magnifying glass was the tool that presented the world in an ideal way, warping it to appear as a clay that I could mold if I tried hard enough. Maybe it wasn't even the change that bothered me, but rather the inability for me to control it to my own liking.



As you've probably realized by now, it took me many years to come to the simple idea of just letting it happen. I came to understand that allowing life to just take its course can be okay, and it can even be the best course of action in some cases. So, while it can be difficult to process, if there's a new change you're unaccustomed to or not expecting, just embrace it and see where it goes. Because it will most likely work out. And if it doesn't, that's an issue that you can (and will) figure out in the future.

Radiant Waves on a Golden Shore



When I'm writing this, it's cold and miserable and night falls real early. But when you'll be reading this, it'll be less cold and miserable! Although I'm sure there's a very specific set of students who haven't been outside enough to tell there's been a difference.

I'm sure that we've all heard that going outside is good for you. Obviously, right? I mean, we're creatures who evolved to exist in the great outdoors. Our bodies aren't meant to be sitting all day, they're meant to be running and running and running (though the way our knees are designed might imply otherwise). Aside from physical health, though, there's the growing concern of mental health. We need sunlight to survive, and I'll bring it up, but first, here's a rapid-fire of a few of the benefits of touching grass.

Woke up tired?

Take a step outside, and all the slight changes in air speed/temperature/pressure will jolt your lizard brain. Keep caffeine for when you really need to lock in.

Want to wake up less tired in the first place?

Exposure to sunlight not only produces vitamin D but also helps your body regulate sleep/wake cycles.

Don't feel like working out your calves?

Just speedwalk and you'll feel a burn in no time (but don't skimp on leg day).

// MAX SKIDELSKY

PHOTOGRAPHY // DANIEL SHAMOV

DESIGN // VIVIAN WU

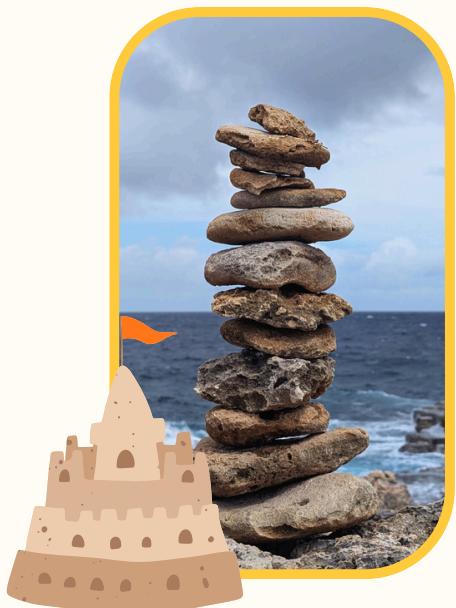
GRAPHICS // CANVA

Lazy way to fill up some words aside, being outside is yet another one of those things that the rat race just doesn't seem to want to make space for. Let's get back to the point of mental health; humans really aren't all that different from plants. We're just a little bit more metaphorical when we say we need sunlight to survive. Time without sunlight won't literally kill you (in fact, too much sunlight can literally end up killing you), but it will make you miserable. Sunlight tickles your brain into producing more serotonin, a chemical that I'm sure you've heard of called a "happy chemical." It's not a bad description for that chemical, either. You can even double down on the whole brain thing; if you just need your brain to be quiet, pop in some earbuds and take a nice walk listening to your favourite music or podcast. If you need to really think about something, then step outside and mull over your thoughts. Walking stimulates blood flow to the brain, helping encode memories and improving your processing power in general. It wouldn't be out of the question to make it part of your study routine.



The most important thing, though, is that going outside is just one part of what should be a healthy lifestyle. If you're eating garbage, sleeping poorly, doomscrolling every day and living a generally poor lifestyle, then you're doing yourself a disservice and not giving yourself a fighting chance at real happiness.

Part of growing up (for me, at least) was learning that the things people always repeat when they give advice ("be genuine", "get some fresh air", etc.) are very, very, very true — despite the fact that I'm sure most of us have spent our entire lives tuning those platitudes out. But there's a very simple reason everyone repeats the same pieces of advice. It's because they're all true, at least in theory. It's up to you to make them true in practice.



SO THIS IS HOW

LIBERTY DIES

// OCTOBER HUA
DESIGN // DORA DUAN

Fascism. You might've seen it being used to refer to a certain nation close to ours in recent times, or you might've heard talk about preventing it here in Canada. After all, the rise in housing and food costs, like the many crises of the past, creates a breeding ground for fascism. Still, the question remains, what is fascism?

This is the question Umberto Eco, who lived through the fall of fascist Italy, tried to answer in his essay "Ur Fascism," listing 14 features typical of fascist rhetoric and governance. A group does not need all 14 to be fascist, but the presence of even some is a cause for concern.

1. *TRADITION*: A common feature of fascism is the romanticization of tradition, of claiming—often falsely—that “the good old days” were better. This is seen today in those calling for a return to traditional gender roles, invoking the supposed perfection of the 1950’s.

2. *REJECTION OF MODERNISM*: In a similar vein, while fascism commonly worships technology and industry, it also rejects the progress made by modern society. The ideology rejects modern art, which challenges established norms, and science, believing it to have a secret agenda, as seen in the anti-vax movement.

3. *ACTION FOR ACTION’S SAKE*: Due to the rejection of learning encouraged by fascism, thinking through one’s actions is seen as something that makes a person less masculine and effective. Therefore, action by itself is idolized and expected to be taken without prior thought.

4. *Disagreement is Treason*: This concept is fairly self-explanatory. Because it rejects critical thinking, fascist ideology claims that those who do not agree with it are treasonous and unpatriotic.

5. FEAR OF DIFFERENCE: Fascism uses the common fear of difference that humans hold. It rejects diversity and variation from the norm and preys on common anxieties over those who are different from the amorphous “us” it claims. This takes the form of transphobia, racism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination.

6. APPEAL TO SOCIAL FRUSTRATION: Taking advantage of the fear of difference, fascist ideals use people’s frustration to create scapegoats who are blamed for all the wrongs of society, from economic hardship to social unrest. This creates an easy target for people’s frustrations, distracting from the real reasons behind problems.

7. OBSESSION WITH A PLOT: Building on the concept of a scapegoat, fascism tries to build a clear social identity for those who feel like they lack one. It convinces people that they are under attack, and by doing so, creates a common enemy to unite against, whether said enemy is real or not.

8. ENEMY IS BOTH STRONG AND WEAK: This might seem contradictory at first glance, and that’s because it is. However, it’s not meant to make sense, but to take advantage of people’s feelings of humiliation and their desire to feel superior or “better than” their chosen enemies. I’m sure plenty of us are familiar with the derision directed at the LGBTQ+ community over its supposed sensitivity, yet it’s somehow powerful enough to enforce its “agenda” over all branches of governance. In truth, the power their enemy holds has nothing to do with any true measure of might or influence, but everything to do with their rhetorical needs.

9. PACIFISM IS TRAFFICKING WITH THE ENEMY: Due to their focus on creating enemies to form a group identity, fascism is constantly at war, forming a view of life built on seeing it as a never-ending battle. In this reality, choosing not to fight becomes a ridiculous concept to be derided.

10. CONTEMPT FOR THE WEAK: Elitism is rampant in fascist ideals, and it encourages disdain for those they believe to be lesser, even within its members.

11. EDUCATED TO BECOME A HERO: Since fascism encourages feelings of being under siege and romanticizes the idea of a noble war, a heroic death is upheld as the goal of life.

12. MACHISMO: Machismo mostly comes down to aggressive masculine pride, including holding misogynistic and queerphobic sentiments.

13. SELECTIVE POPULISM: Made easier by the internet’s ease when it comes to creating misleading narratives, fascism claims to speak for a monolithic people. In truth, it only projects the image of it by selectively crafting a narrative to seem like it holds the popular opinions while casting doubt on democratic systems.

14. NEWSPEAK: This phrase comes from George Orwell’s 1984 and refers to removing words from a language in order to prevent critical thinking. Words shape the way people perceive and process the world, and it’s much harder to talk about or even conceptualize issues without the words to describe them.

The idea that fascism is on the rise is a terrifying one, but its existence relies on complicity or silence, on enough people not recognizing its rhetoric or choosing to ignore it out of a false sense of safety. The only way to prevent fascism is to call it out and refuse to provide it a safe haven to take root.

Remember when you learned about World War II, and you thought to yourself: “How could they allow Hitler to rise to power?” or “I’d have done something.” Well here they are. What are you going to do?

For the

Revenge

Glory of our nation

When Life Gives You REJECTION Letters

"We regret to inform you that you have not been selected for the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra."

Shame and envy struck immediately. As Principal Horn of the National Youth Band, I had worked tirelessly to earn my place at the top, even competing against college-level musicians. How could I have failed to make my city's youth orchestra?

I thoroughly stalked the list of names. Yep, they were set for life. They would walk through doors I could only dream of touching, meet equally passionate musicians, and ride the wave of momentum into successful careers. Jealousy turned to fury, and fury back to grief. This cycle would've continued forever, but eventually, I had to go outside. The world had the audacity to keep turning. My mom still battled our garden weeds, my teachers still expected my assignments on time, and nobody in my school band seemed to care. I tried to follow suit – apathy was more bearable than desolation. I basked in the comfort of illusive pretension over sadness, but that itch to perform soon became impossible to ignore.



// RIANNA ZHU
LAYOUT DESIGNER // KATRINA LAM



Focused solely on improvement, I sought guidance from peers and mentors alike and joined every masterclass I could find. I even emailed the adjudication panel for feedback on my audition. My efforts culminated in earning one of two student scholarships to the Etobicoke Philharmonic Orchestra. There, I was the youngest musician among semi-professionals who had been playing for longer than I'd been alive. Wednesday nights became my musical reset. While I would have found comfort in the familiar faces of the youth music community, I ventured into uncharted territory – connections with people whose lives were entirely different from mine.

Our diversity was textbook photo-worthy. I shared my career goals with a lawyer clarinetist, bonded over having curly hair in non-curl-loving Asian culture with a neuroscience PhD violinist, and discussed Canadian immigration hurdles with a Polish bass prodigy. Despite our differences, the initial awkwardness melted away as soon as we played that first tuning note. I couldn't help but smile imagining how shocked the heart surgeon's colleagues would be if they knew that, once a week, she birthed ephemeral beauty with 57 others all living the same double life. Slowly but surely, I fell back in love. People paid to listen to music – how lucky was I to be a part of its creation?

One afternoon halfway through the EPO

season, I fished my TSYO audition excerpts from the depths of my old folder. As I stared at the comically violent "COUNT!!!!!" scribbled in the margins, I reflected on my failure with newfound clarity. Goodhart's Law states that when a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure. I had set the TSYO as my metric for success, and in doing so, forgotten what music meant to me. I treated it as a ladder to climb, a series of titles to collect, rather than an art to love. Furthermore, my myopic view of TSYO as a shortcut to stardom was flawed. In reality, I could never be "set for life." Just as a viral invention isn't a golden ticket to entrepreneurial success, my accolades required continuous growth and support to remain structurally sound. Failing forced me to confront that truth. In a world obsessed with rankings, they were nothing but a false sense of security. I could always improve beyond my imagined limits. And that realization, as humbling as it was, sparked an ambition both exhilarating and terrifying in its enormity.

In the end, my failure gave me a much richer understanding of success. Nobody forced me to keep practicing my instrument, nobody asked me to audition again after my first rejection. I chose resilience over regret and found new joy in the process of learning, in striving without guarantees, and in the soul of my craft.



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