



Is this lit?

**Premier destination for
amateur writing**



Mess

eau de toilette

the new fragrance by
OPHELIA

Is this Lit?

Our First Issue

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| XBOX HERO <i>JONAS DAVID</i> | 4 |
| BELIEBE IN YOURSELF <i>MONA LOTT</i> | 7 |
| BIO HAZARD <i>DARKLING DANKARD</i> | 9 |
| ALIFEUNLIVED <i>DON JAVIS</i> | 10 |
| A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME <i>ANON</i> | 17 |
| ROMAYYO AND JEWLIETT <i>VICTORIA HISTORY</i> | 18 |
| PERCILES OFFCUT <i>MONTY GUE</i> | 19 |
| ONE DOES NOT SIMPLY WRITE ABOUT MEMES <i>JOE KING</i> | 20 |

From the Editor

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the first and probably last issue of *Is this Lit?*, your premier destination for questionable amateur writing.

Yes, a poor introduction fortunately fits with our theme. Who are we? What do we do? The ethos behind this ezine is a noble one: to bring graveyard stories and poems to a new audience, to really challenge what we might call bad, un-salvageable writing, to embrace it as we enter an age of nuclear destruction.

With our beacons of questionability at the helm of power in the USA, the UK and maybe even Russia, the question is will we attract bad writing or ironic geniuses? Your judgement is as good as mine.

Although the premise of this magazine focused on graveyard pieces only, the magazine has also attracted new, exclusive and creative non-fiction writing, specifically written for this issue. I promise that they are astounding.

While I hope this issue will bring ample entertainment from the dregs and offcuts of old and new writing, let us keep our hearts and minds open for the next literary masterpiece. Is any of this truly not literature?

If nothing else, this issue will prove inspiration for budding writers of parody, writing prompts for those embarking on their own amateur writing adventures, and a useful output for my own creativity. (Not to mention it might look amazing and completely inappropriate in my portfolio for the MA module for which this magazine is being created.)

Jannat Ahmed



XBOX HERO

By Jonas David

Orson had just enough time to dip his face into his bong before the countdown to the next match finished. He snatched up the game controller and rushed into the battlefield, dodging and shooting.

“Orson,” his mother called from upstairs. “There’s someone on the phone for you!”

“I’m busy, ma!” The moment of distraction cost him his life, and he grumbled while the respawn timer ticked down.

“It’s a girl, Orson! Her name is Rachel.”

Orson’s stomach did a little flip. Rachel was into Xbox, like him. They’d exchanged numbers after weeks of sidelong glances in the game store.

The thought of having a girlfriend was exciting on the surface, but now, with the prospect right before him, it seemed more difficult. What would he say to her on the phone? If he managed to get her to go on a date, then what? It all seemed a complicated and confusing balancing act, more stress and trouble than it was worth.

And besides, if he wanted girls, he had plenty on his computer.

“I’m not here!” he shouted.

Hours swam by and finally Orson took a break to check his email. One new message hovered at the top of his inbox, glowing with a yellow ‘important’ arrow. It was from the contracting agency, they had an interview lined up for him.

A job sounded nice, in principle. He’d have his own spending

money, meet new people, maybe be able to afford his own place. But he'd have to wake early, dress up and be sociable, and so much time out of his day would be wasted when he could be gaming or watching TV.

He closed the email. He'd think about it later.

With another puff from his bong, he settled down into the cushions and slipped into a fitful sleep as Star Trek reruns whispered to him from the TV.

A fog passed over his mind. He heard the sound of phasers and rising tension music from the TV, but could not open his eyes. He felt weightless, and the music faded, then he felt heavy again and the fog lifted.

Orson felt like there was gum stuck in the back of his throat. He reached for his bottle of Mountain Dew but his fingers grasped at empty air. He forced his eyes to unstick, and blinked at clean, white light.

"Wha?" He laid on a flat, cold surface that was not his couch. He sat up and swung his legs over the hard edge.

He sat on a metal slab, about the size of his bed, in an empty, white room. Everything was flat and white--the walls, the floor, his 'bed'. Except, he noticed, a black half-sphere in the center of the ceiling.

He sat for a while, not knowing what to do, his heart pounding. Had he been kidnapped? Or--he thought of his bag of weed lying openly on the coffee table at home--arrested? "Hello?" he called out, hesitantly.

No response. He thought he saw something shift inside the black half-sphere. A camera? Orson felt cold, and alone, and very small. Why was he here? What did whoever put him here want?

There was nothing to do but wait and find out. He curled up on the slab and tried to stay calm.

Unit P18 observed the creature on his monitor. It did not try to escape. Perhaps it was trying to lull him into distraction, or maybe it was perceptive enough to deduce the lack of exits purely by observation from the platform. Unit P18 moved a tentacle and activated the next test.

Orson blinked and colored circles appeared on the walls. They were about the size of his palm and circled the room in a single row about waist-high. They were red, green, blue, orange and yellow, and without any noticeable pattern in their order.

Orson sat up again. "What do you want?" After minutes of silence, he heaved himself off the platform and lumbered over to one of the walls to inspect the dots. They meshed seamlessly with the wall, as if they were projected onto it. He touched a green one carefully with his index finger, and jerked his hand back as the spot, and the two alongside it, changed color. The green dot turned red, and the blue and yellow dots alongside it turned green, and orange.

Orson wondered for a moment. There might be a way he could touch the dots so that all of them ended up the same color, but, it was difficult to think about, and would take so long. What would be the point anyway? It wasn't going to help him get out of this room and back home. He returned to the platform and sat down to wait for something to happen.

He tired of sitting, and laid down. The black shape on the ceiling made him nervous, so he closed his eyes.

Unit P18 was not sure whether to be relieved or confused. The creature clearly lacked logic and deductive reasoning, but did not show even curiosity at the puzzle or its purpose. Perhaps the being was too far out of its element. It may need more familiar objects--something from its nest.

6 IS THIS LIT?

Orson heard a hissing sound and sat up. The colored lights were gone, and behind him a platform had extended from the wall. He gasped, and hurried to it. On it sat his Xbox and his bong.

Orson snatched up the controller and powered it on. He had a second to wonder what he would do without a TV screen, when the familiar startup logo appeared on the wall in front of him. But then, instead of his list of games, a row of nine pictures of planets appeared. He saw the sun and Earth, and the one with the rings, and others. "Ugh what is this?" He selected one of the pictures and pressed 'A', and found he could scroll through nine different pictures. He made them all Earths and nothing happened. He tossed down the controller in frustration and picked up his bong.

Orson sat on the floor and puffed. He thought he was probably supposed to arrange those planets in some kind of order, but he couldn't remember much from science class. With enough time he could probably figure it out, but it sounded stressful. He took another hit and decided to lay down for a minute.

He dozed off briefly, then woke up to a ping from the Xbox. He looked up, and the pictures of planets were gone. He grabbed the controller and started his game, a smile stuck firmly on his face. He jumped into a match. All his friends were there, but he was unable to use any of the chat functions for some reason. No matter, he could win anyway. He dove for cover then tossed a grenade.

It was hours later before he noticed an opening had appeared in the wall behind him. He finished his match and went to peek outside. The portal opened into a long hall. At the end he saw a lighted street--his street, and his house. He gasped and walked toward it, but in a few steps he saw a problem.

A pit blocked his path, dropping down further than he could see and stretching more than twenty feet to the other side. A single rope hung across the middle, tied to pitons on each end. "What is this!" he shouted in frustration. His voice echoed thinly. What was he supposed to do, balance his way across? Or hang upside down going hand over hand? He figured he could probably do it--he'd climbed ropes in gym class after all. But it would be scary, and if he fell he'd get hurt or even die.

After a few minutes of pacing and making exasperated sounds, Orson returned to the room and sat down with his bong and Xbox.

It wasn't so different from his own room. It wasn't so bad.

The creature had given up almost instantly at the simple lock on its entertainment machine. And when faced with only the barest physical challenge blocking it from its return home, it retreated willingly to captivity, content to inhale chemicals from its smoke apparatus, watch the images on its machine, and sleep.

P18 had seen enough. He moved one of his tentacles to a switch that would send sleeping gas into the room.

The creatures on this planet were no threat. They had no curiosity or ambition, and would never leave their solar system, let alone their planet.

After returning the creature to its nest, P18 would return home with his report on the newly discovered beings:

It was not worth the price of a fusion bomb to destroy them.

Beliebe in Yourself

By **Mona Lott**



'Belieber'. This is a word that first came into common usage in 2010, and is defined by The Canberra Times as:

“ ‘bad boy’ image ”

der the influence, and making severely racist remarks. What kind of society chooses to venerate someone who put people's lives

a 'blend of Bieber-believer, a fan of pop star Justin Bieber'. His popularity has been so immense that the craze surrounding him has been coined 'Bieber fever'. My purpose within this article is to analyse how this cultural phenomenon has come about, and what it denotes about today's society. I will argue that society's current obsession with Justin Bieber (and other celebrities like him) signals an all-time low in moral judgement and self-esteem of the general populace.

As society and generations change, so too do the figures which are held up as idols. The role models which a society chooses to look up to says a lot about the traits which a culture particularly prizes. For example, James Dean. He rose to fame during the 1940's, so understandably his status as a figure of disillusionment was popular, during a period of history that was so turbulent. But Dean, although portraying a 'bad boy' image, was never an actual deviant, unlike the idols of today.

It is disappointing to know that the person heralded as a 'heart throb' that has sold an approximated 100 million records, and is plastered across the walls of teenage girls bedrooms' worldwide, is a convicted criminal. Bieber has been in trouble over acts ranging from mild delinquency, to rather severe discrimination. The list includes vandalism, driving un-

potentially at risk by driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol? And what kind of example does this set for the young teens who adore him? There are many studies that have looked into the link between media and copycat behaviour, a lot of which come out in favour of media, but if people were willing to adopt the 'Bieber haircut' then there is no reason to suspect that social influence is not strong enough to sway them to imitate other behaviours.

His behaviour rose to such a level that a petition was signed by 270,000 citizens and sent to the White House to have him deported. Personally, that is a fact that I would take into serious consideration when contemplating this person's continued popularity. What does it say about our attitudes today that we allow the youth to fawn over someone like that, when they themselves are too young to understand the full gravity of what he has done?

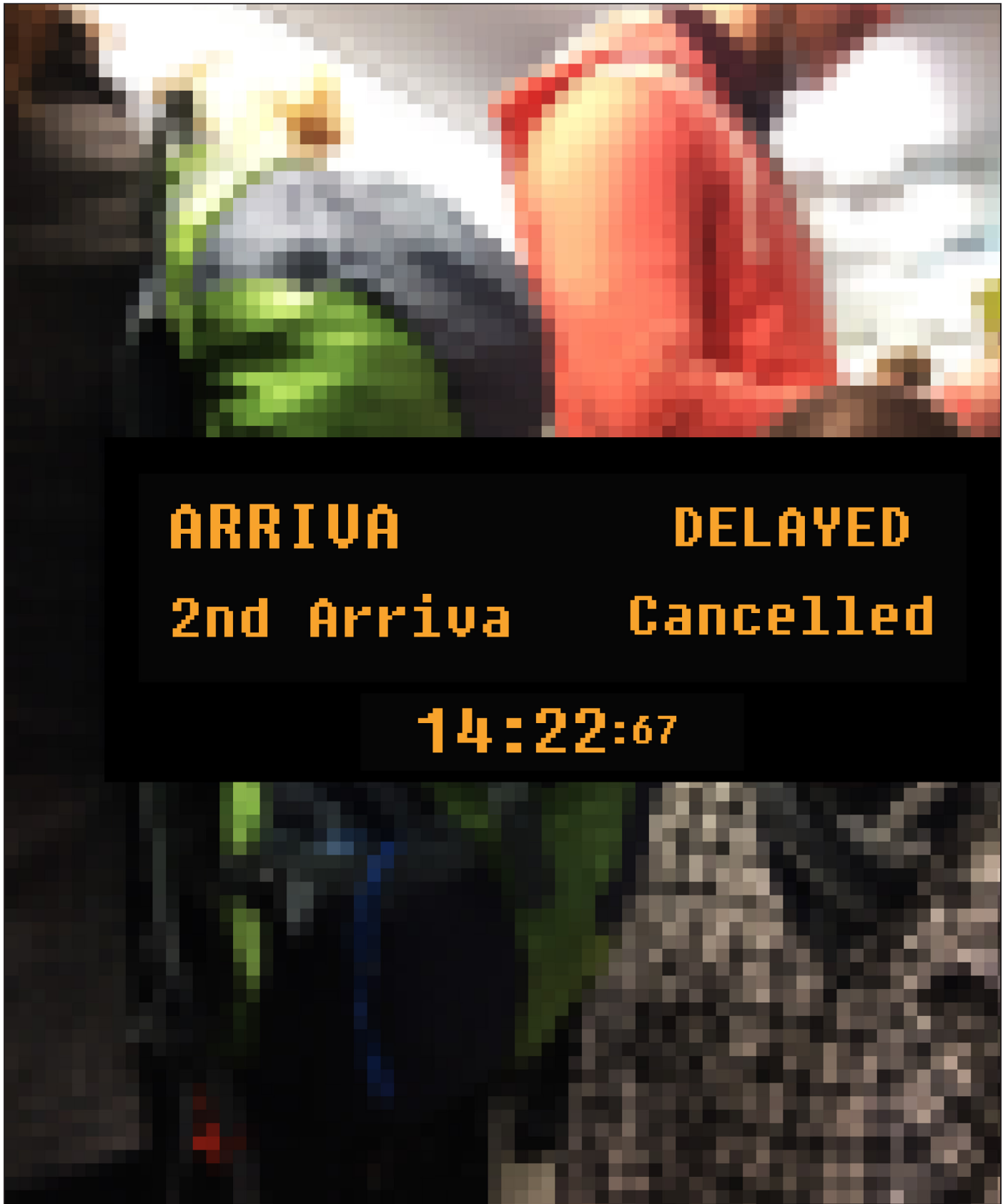
It's not just children either. In the 2013 Rom-Com, *I Give It A Year*, the stern and unforgiving character played by Minnie Driver (who was 43 years old at the time, thereby indicating the intended age of her character) tells the other ladies at a dinner party how sexually appealing Bieber

8 IS THIS LIT?

is, saying 'I'd ruin Bieber'. Whilst the scene is in the spirit of the edgy comedy present throughout the film, it still tells a lot about the spread of Bieber's popularity. People of all ages are equally ensnared by his supposed 'boyish charm' and catchy hits.

I don't believe that demonising anybody will make the difference between people like Justin Bieber being respected or not, not when the demonisation

comes from one lone writer. But, it does serve to show that there is a darker side to the pop industry, and any commercialised industry more broadly, and whilst we continue to allow these sorts of figures to manipulate their way into the minds and hearts of the gullible public, all we can do is moo whilst the masses bleat.



Bio Hazard

by
Darkling Dankard

'new phone who dis'

'hey its me ur brother'

These are the primary words of an internet joke generation wanting to laugh at how shitty communication has become with the internet. But really think about it. What is really the joke? Those on the internet can't be. Brothers. Because none of them are connected. All their activities are veiled in a swathed covering of digital barriers. Their entertainment, their jokes, is far removed from their faces. Their fingers control the keys which control their online personas which are having fun, but, their real personas are not sharing in it. Only their personas that they created as a go-between. Their fingers are just pounding made-up keys; they aren't moulding clay or moulding a woman's curves, just two of the real pleasures of life. The real tangible ones. This is known as what I call digital dancing, also known as digital style.

I slammed down my laptop screen in anger as I finished typing that. This would be my last manifesto. Me saying things online wasn't going to do anything. I had to go out on the streets quite literally and force all of them out.

I called my friend, who was an accomplished hacker, and he came right over as I did. I told him that we needed to take down the internet, which we could do because nobody was watching. Everybody was watching their screens as their stupid faces lit up with the cybernetic backwash of UV that oozed and radiated from the online cesspools. These cesspools



would be their tar pits. They would slowly sink into oblivion, into non-existence; their dino brains unaware that they were even going down. That UV that radiated from the screen was carcinogenic, mutating their DNA in a bad way. All that Tinder-ing is useless; the online is inbreeding our species for us from within; there is no need to breed.

My friend hooked his snazzy laptop up to one of the central pillars of the internet and took it down with a few simple scripts. To think that this overarching system of power over the masses would fall so easily. My friend went home again and I waited in the deserted streets, the sun setting. The sun set the sky ablaze with the light of a new dawn, though it was becoming dusk.

Then the troglodytes slowly emerged one by one from their dank caves. They ambled like neanderthals, dragging their knuckles across the jaunty and stilted pavement and cracked concrete of the street. I saw them gape up at the natural, at the non-digital that had always been there but erased, from existence. Erased by the digital dancing, the footwork of which was so violent that it wore that glorious paint of nature right off the floor. But the dance had stopped, hadn't it.

They looked at the birds drifting on the late summer updrafts, seemed enthralled by the wafting trees that basked in the setting sun's glow. They looked at their hands, knuckles skinned, inspected them as if they had never seen them before. They squinted at the setting sun's glow filtering through the wafting trees. They looked into the light as if they had emerged from a womb.

I walked up to the nearest one and said, 'Hey, it's me, your brother.'

He chuckled and said, 'Haha, I like that meme man.'

And I said, 'No, really, I'm your brother. We all are. We are all united in this world. We are all nature.'

A Life Unlived

By Don Javis

Tim was born in 1971 and had died several minutes ago during what he deemed to be an 'above average' bout of heart-burn. He powered through it with a grimace, his squinted eyes still focused on the TV.

After it passed, he felt a strange, cool relief.

Presently he leaned back in his large squishy leather couch with his feet propped up on a cluttered coffee table and his hands resting on his protruding belly. A scraggly cat sat on his shoulder and a laptop sat in the seat next to him. He leaned over to type at it every few moments, commenting to the only friend he cared to have about what was happening on the television.

His laptop pinged cheerily at him. A new message from Sandra. Tim spent much time trying not to think of the way he felt about her.

'So when am I gunna come visit? ;)'

'How bout tonight?' he replied. Usually a message from Sandra hit him with a surge of adrenaline, at the moment he only felt an uncomfortable gas bubble. Several minutes later, her reply finally appeared.

‘Haha :P Well, I’d teleport over there if I could ;)’

He smiled and typed back ‘I know’

Sandra claimed that she’d injured her hand, and that was why she had been taking so long to reply for the past few weeks, but Tim thought it was likely she just had more important things distracting her. Probably the same things that caused her to ‘lose’ her phone around the same time.

Tim tried to remember the sound of her voice, and wondered if he succeeded.

His laptop pinged in unison with his stomach.

‘I really do want to come visit, you know that right?’

He read the message quickly, then heaved himself off the couch, sending Mr. Poof the cat scurrying through the kitchen. He felt something move inside him. The laptop pinged again as he hurried toward the toilet.

As soon as he sat down he knew something was wrong. His body was emptying itself without any effort or direction from him. And there was lots of it. A glance down at his pants and a suspicion was confirmed. He cringed and kicked them off and away from him.

Finally he was empty and flushed the toilet. Standing up, a wave of weirdness came over him. His skin was cold, his limbs were stiff. He decided to take a shower.

The water was not soothing. The heat of the spray and the pattering of the drops on his skin were like an echo. Though he had never worn one, Tim decided that he felt like he was wearing a wetsuit; there was an unnerving restrictiveness when he moved his arms and legs. With much reluctance, Tim concluded that there was something wrong with his skin.

He wrapped a towel around himself and hobbled out to his laptop with a mind to search the Internet for what might be wrong with him. He saw what Sandra had been typing.

‘Don’t you?’

‘Tintim, are you there?’

Lately she couldn’t go a day without bringing it up. Tim spent much time mulling over scenarios that would explain both her refusal to talk to him and her demands to see him.

He resumed his position on the couch and surveyed the room, imagining what she would say if she could see it. Bags of trash needed to be taken out, stacks of unopened mail and empty cans sat on every available surface, and bits of cardboard and paper littered the floor, no doubt the remains of an epic battle with Mr. Poof.

‘Sorry I’m not feeling very well.’

‘Aww, what’s wrong?’ came the eventual reply.

Tim got sick often, but this didn’t feel like a cold. Perhaps something in this mess was giving him an allergic reaction. He made a mental note to take out some of the trash later.

‘Just feeling weird. Let’s watch a movie.’

'OK! :D'

The weirdness did not pass during the movie. Tim decided to wait until the morning to see if he felt better.

-

Tim awoke to see Mr. Poof chewing happily on his thumb. He grunted and pushed the scrawny grey cat off the bed. It landed on the floor with a thump and a yowl.

He pulled himself out of the covers and noticed that he had made a mess on the sheets. He tried to curse but his tongue did not cooperate; it felt swollen and clumsy. He tore the sheets off and flung them into a corner, then hopped in the shower.

Something was definitely wrong. There were great patches of a deep purple color all along the back of his legs and arms. His stomach felt very swollen, his feet felt squishy and he still had that strange sense of being wrapped in something.

He stepped out of the shower and reached for the towel. The sight of his thumb stopped him short. Most of the tip was ragged torn flesh and exposed bone. Barely a drop of blood leaked from the wound, and he felt no pain.

Not many things made Tim panic, but it was becoming exponentially more difficult to escape the conclusion that there was something horribly and irreversibly wrong with him.

He turned to face the bathroom mirror, not something he did often, and began to let out a low muffled scream.

His face was a pale grey. His eyes were glassy and he didn't seem to be able to blink. His mouth was hanging open and his tongue was swollen.

He was still screaming, he noticed; a low monotone howl slowly leaking out of his mouth. He felt no need to take a breath, in fact, he did not think his lungs or throat were doing anything at all. A cold, swollen hand against his cold chest confirmed that his heart was silent, and probably cold.

He turned and walked numbly into his living room, dripping water behind him. He stopped next to his couch and stood there, continuing to let out his unending breathless wail. He stood there a long time.

His laptop pinged and brought him back to reality. Something was happening to his foot. He looked down to see Mr. Poof chewing at his toe. He kicked the cat off and moved to the computer. Another message from Sandra.

'I really do want to come see you, soon'

'I know you do' Tim lied. He had always figured that actually meeting each other would be something they would talk about but never do. It was safer that way.

'There is something i want to tell you that i'd rather say in person'

Tim felt like his head was swelling up. He knocked away hopes that tried to overtake his mind. He flexed his hands and looked at the strange way the flesh bent.

'I don't know if this is the best time' he said. There was a tugging on his foot and he looked down to see Mr. Poof licking from a stream of blood pouring out onto the carpet. A flap of torn flesh hung, pushed to the side

by the cat's paw, and blood leaked out steadily.

He somehow said 'oh no', though he didn't detect his mouth or tongue moving, and hurried into the bathroom to stand in the tub. He watched the blood flow down the drain. This must be a dream, he thought, and swatted at a fly buzzing in his face.

The blood still dribbled out minutes later, a little red river running over the white acrylic. Instead of the weakness and dizziness he thought he'd feel at this much blood loss, he felt better, thinner. He bent down and poked at the wound. He worked his finger inside and pulled at it. The flesh tore and the blood came out faster; he felt a surge of relief. He dug and pulled more, until his finger hit bone and he pulled away in shock. He could feel with his bone. The bone in his foot could feel his hand touching it more clearly than his hand could feel the bone.

The blood finally stopped and Tim's right leg now felt much lighter than his left. He exited the tub and headed for the kitchen, stopping on the way to look at his laptop.

'Why, what's wrong?'

'You want to see me don't you?'

Tim paused for a moment. He did want to see her. He thought of her face, and wondered if he remembered it right. She had deleted her Facebook account a month or so ago, and he had never thought to save any of the pictures from it. Now he felt weird asking for them. He wondered if she had cut or dyed her hair, or gained or lost weight. A lot could change in a month. He looked down at his mangled foot and disgust gripped him.

'I keep telling you i do' He typed quickly, shaking a fly off his hand. 'I'm just, kind of a mess right now'

He hobbled his way into the kitchen and grabbed a large knife out of the sink then took it back to the tub.

He stood in the tub staring at his bloated purple foot until a wave of revulsion overtook him and he stabbed down at it with the knife. It popped like a balloon and blood splashed out. He felt the knife scraping against his bones with unnerving clarity.

In a flash of rage and denial he began slashing at his hand. Blood sprayed, draining out of his arm. Bits of flesh plopped into the tub below as he hacked away, exposing the bones of his fingers.

He flexed his hand and little founts of blood squirted out. He knew for certain that he must have severed some tendons, but his hand moved even better than before. He felt like he was now wearing fingerless gloves instead of thick winter ones.

He switched the knife into the bloody hand. His exposed fingers felt good wrapped around the hilt, his grip was solid. He began to slice at the fingers on his right hand now, slowly, carefully, like a butcher carving meat.

In a flash of lucidity he realized what he was doing, and the knife fell into the tub with a clatter. He stepped backwards out of the room, leaving bloody footprints on the tile floor, his eyes frozen on his skeleton hands.

He found himself at the laptop again. His bony fingers clicked on the keys, leaving red drops in their indentations.

'I may be going insane. I'm seeing things that cant be real. i think i might be dead.'

'Dead? What do you mean dead? Tim, tell me what is happening' The message appeared quickly this time. Tim wondered if she hurt her hand typing so fast.

'its alright,, maybe i'm having a panic attack, dont worry about me.' He stared at his mangled hands, trying to get a hold of himself. After a moment, he noticed that he felt perfectly stable. Had he been acting panicked because he thought he should be?

'Tim, If anything weird is happening, you can tell me, I will believe you, no matter what it is, really, trust me on this.'

Sandra did seem to know a lot about death and occult type things. It was her favorite subject recently. Tim tried to imagine how he would react if she told him she just carved the flesh off of her own hands.

'I'm fine, really. i'll see a doctor tomorrow if im not feeling better'

A doctor. What could a doctor say or do at this point other than confirm that he was insane? Was he insane? It would be crazy to think otherwise. Tim sat and waited for it to pass, or change. Flies landed on his arms and legs and face and crawled around. Mr. Poof resumed chewing on his foot. He turned on the TV. It seemed more dimly lit than it should be. He typed inconsequential things at Sandra and tried not to think.

Some time later a knock at the door reminded him that he didn't order pizzas today. He didn't feel hungry. He wondered if lunacy had such side effects. He rose from the couch; flies scattered briefly, then settled back down on him. He pulled open the door.

"Hello, we are from the Church of Jesus - oh my GOD!" Two men in white shirts and black slacks stood outside his door. People! He held his hands up to them.

"Can you see me? Is it real?" His vision dimmed rapidly, blurring, like some warped lens covered his eyes. He stepped toward them.

"James, call the police! Oh God, sir, what happened to you?"

"You can see me? I can't, I..." His eyes felt sticky and his face itched terribly; he raked his fingers across it, searching for what blocked his vision. He scrapped and pulled at something soft, it peeled away easily.

"Oh Jesus help us!"

Tim heard the sound of vomiting, then pounding footfalls receding. Still he could barely see. Finally he found purchase on some blob in front of his eye, and dug at it until it popped out in his hand. Instantly he could see clearly again. Between his thumb and forefinger he held an eyeball. Scraps of skin hung from his sharp fingertips. He dropped the eye onto the pavement and took a step backwards, then turned and hurried into the house.

In the bathroom he looked at his face in the mirror. A black hole gaped at him where his right eye used to be. Strips of skin fluttered like ribbons dangling from his forehead, exposing white bone beneath. It looked clean and bright next to the grey flesh.

There were flies in his mouth.

He stepped into the tub and picked up the knife.

'I'm just very worried that you won't like me once you meet me in person' Tim hit the enter key then picked up the blow torch again. He ran the flame over his skeletal arm; the little bits of tendon and muscle that had refused to let go began to blacken and curl. He could feel the heat clearly, but it did not hurt.

'Believe me, I'm more scared about what you will think of me. I wish you would just take a chance.' she replied. Tim was done with his left arm and had begun scrapping at the charred bits with his knife by the time she was done typing. The idea of her hunting for each key made him feel like he was smiling. Phantom face syndrome, perhaps.

'You already know what I think of you.' He was sure he told her some drunken night, he wouldn't be surprised though, if she decided to pretend it never happened.

'well, my appearance has changed some...'

How much could she have changed? Tim peeled a bit of something off of his hip bone.

'Well, it's what's on the inside that counts anyway.' He typed.

'I agree :)'

But how much does it count for, Tim wondered.

Mr. Poof sat in Tim's ribcage and licked at his spine. Tim reached to pet him but then stopped, figuring his hard fingers would scare the little fur-ball. The poor guy would probably be better off if he did run away and never return. Cats were solitary creatures anyway.

'alright lets do it.' He typed.

'Really??'

'Yeah. remember I warned you though, when you don't want to talk to me anymore.'

'I am aware of the risks. You gotta take risks if you want anything good in life.'

Tim scratched at Mr. Poof's ear.

~

Tim pulled the hoodie lower over his head and looked in the mirror again. Most of his head was hidden, and long sleeves and gloves covered his arms and hands. A large shirt was pulled down to cover his waist, where his pants were held up by a belt around his spine. But there was no hiding how thin he was. Hopefully it was enough to convince her for a short time, enough for him to hear her voice again before she fled in terror. Tim looked again at his laptop, reading over their conversation.

'Ok :) I'll be seeing you in about 8 hours then!'

That had been eight and a half hours ago.

Tim sat on the couch. Then he noticed that there was a clear view of him from the window, so he went and stood in the bathroom. Then he thought he might not hear a knock on the door from there, so he stood in the kitchen. Mr. Poof sat on his shoulder and licked the back of his skull.

The doorbell rang and Tim felt something like a rush of adrenaline. He thought of his brain rotting in the bathtub, scooped out through his eye socket, and wondered again how he felt anything. He hurried to the door and peered through the peep hole.

There she was, just as beautiful as in her pictures. She wore a blue summer dress that hugged at her gentle curves. She looked around nervously, touching her long black hair.

“Sandra,” he said at the door. She looked up and smiled.

“Timmy! Umm, well, I’m here.” Her voice was airy and light, not like she sounded on the phone.

“I know. I just...” Tim wondered how his voice sounded.

“Well, I can’t stay like this for long...” Her voice got quieter. “Can’t I see you?”

Tim was silent, his fingers clacked on the knob. He wished he could type something to her.

“Tim, I’m going to do something, because I don’t have much time. Don’t freak out.”

“What do you mean you don’t have-” Tim saw something moving on the door and stepped back quickly, sending Mr. Poof running. A hand poked through the solid wood of the door. It was followed by an arm, and a shoulder, and a smiling face.

“What,” said Tim.

“I know, I just, well... It happened a while ago, and I just wanted to meet you once, before.. well, before whatever happens next, I guess.”

“What happened?”

“Well, uh, I died.”

“Oh,” Tim said. “Me too.” He pulled the hood back from his skull.

“Tim? How...” Sandra’s eyes widened, and she reached out to him. As her hand got near, she shimmered, then faded into a foggy human shape.

“I’m sorry,” she said. Her voice was a thin whisper, barely audible. “I’m just too tired.”

“Not your fault. I just kinda started rotting. And now I’m bones.”

“You can hear me!” The blurry shape spun around him.

“Yes.”

“And see me?” She hovered in front of him.

“Yes...”

“That’s so great!” She spun some more. “Tim? We can still be friends right?”

Tim felt excitement, then sadness, then excitement again. “Yes,” he said.

“Ok!” she said. Tim thought he could hear her smiling. “Well, what shall we do?”

“I don’t know,” Tim shrugged, he hadn’t thought about doing anything but sitting around waiting to die.
 “Want to watch a movie?”

“Yeah!”

Tim sat on the couch and Mr. Poof climbed on his ribs. Sandra hovered over the remote and activated the buttons somehow.

Flies buzzed around the bags of garbage and bits of cat shit, and maggots were born in the tub of rotting flesh in the bathroom.

ARoseByAnyOtherName



She sent you a bloody letter?

Keep it da fuck away from me. She cursed it or summat.

Stinks of BO like.

No, that's perfume, fam.

Parolles. Pray you, sir, deliver me this paper.

Clown. Foh, pr'ythee, stand away. Look, here he comes himself.

Act V. Scene II.



Romayyo & Jewliett

By Victoria History

Romayyo met Jewliett during a sandstorm. Her polished silver skin, then dusted with glitter, was as much as he could hope for. The sand graves of dying and ghost androids swooped in circles around them. Both thought they had found an angel in that moment. Jewliett, who gazed into the Romayyo's bright glass eyes searched and remembered. Seeing his memories sparked her nerves.

'We will be forever, my angel,' Jewliett whispered as the day came. 'Aren't you frightened, Romayyo? I think your chaste heart will crumble.'

A knowing smile cut at Romayyo's lips and softened then cringed at her almost human features. 'As will yourz. Oh, but do not cry. Every night I waz away, Jewliett, I thought of you. I heard a message. I waz the first who had. That will be your gift tomorrow if you want it. So many yearz we've waited for the battle to end. I am back to you now, and you sleep alone one last day, my angel, before we will also know freedom.' Romayyo's warrior voice said. He unhooked her arm from his waist. 'I must go and sleep now.'

Jewliett watched over the balcony after him, following the shadow. The solstarrise set Zearth aflame. Her nose reddened in the dew-frost. She felt the presence of the singing swallows. Oh, she could not let him go without saying goodday. Jewliett flew herself to his window, twenty-two floors below her own. Her smooth arms extended out to the glass. As her brainwaves synchronized with her angel, she felt the echo of his racing heart. Darkness, flesh and song consumed her energy. Her mind fell into an abyss of lust and all thoughts of love fell into the pit of her stomach and acid seeped into her eyes. She dislodged the connection and sent a spike of light into her heart. All those years lost. Madness engulfed her.

As elation subsided and made way for liberation, a sharp bolt cut into Romayyo's leg that half-dangled off

the bed. The bolt danced into the body beneath him. Romayyo felt the words of his angel linger and her lightening reach the metal frame of his bed, 'Romayoo, it iz your death I wish upon you.' His mind-clouds dispersed as the invasive sensation of his angel brushing his wholesome freedom mulched away at the memory of pleasure. The act was tainted.

The wasted human twitched at his side. Weak. 'Oh, perfect human. Too good for me now.' He revolted. Her worried dream-induced murmurs disturbed his air. He twisted to clamp his hands over her face. The muffled cry rebalanced the air. Toe-knee's voice grew around him, but he banished it. "To kill iz our freedom... to be killed iz not."

Finding Jewliett disintegrating in her bed minutes later, scarred to non-existence by self-inflicted lightning strikes, he tasted the tear-stained air and, pressing his lips to hers struck his own heart. Today, Romayyo thought, he found the freedom to cry, sleep and die.

Pericles Offcut

By Monty Gue

The idea of miracles and mysticism is also fundamental in both texts to make them universal. The land that Pericles gets shipwrecked upon where he meets the fisherman seems to be taken out of time and space, thus making it universal. It is not given defining temporal characteristics, but it is not described as being appropriate as an ancient Mediterranean island. Anachronism is again implemented here to highlight the mysticism of Pericles's character. Pericles is presented in the tournament scene as a medieval knight. King Simonides says that 'From the dejected state wherein he is / He hopes by you his fortunes may yet flourish' (vi.49-50) but Thaisa mentions how he delivers 'such a graceful courtesy' (vi.45).

Although Pericles appears poor and unworthy of the tournament, yet in him is spotted some sort of intrinsic nobility common in romance tales. Also that he 'may' flourish shows that his fate is not certain, he has as much chance of success as anyone inside, or outside, the text. Pericles is presented as a sort of universal, stock figure; he looks ordinary and 'dejected', and yet he has hidden inner virtue. Pericles here represents a stereotypical fictional figure found in popular culture across the ages, someone that everybody can identify with. By making both the setting and the protagonist vague and mystical, Shakespeare makes them universally recognisable. Furthermore, the reunion of Pericles, Thaisa and Marina is unbelievably, almost implausibly, fortunate. After Thaisa has named Helicanus as Tyre's temporary governor, Pericles says 'who to thank - /

Besides the gods - for this great miracle.' The word miracle is deliberately emphasised here by describing it as 'great', thus making it even more remarkable. The short timespan between each successive fortunate and unlikely event draws attention to the improbability and sensationalism of such events occurring, especially after so much misfortune. That these miracles were divinely aided, for example Diana's intervention, also demonstrates the constructed nature of the miracles. However, rather than feeling forced and unnatural, the deliberate implausibility of events instead serves to make the text more universal. G. Wilson Knight notes that

these miraculous and joyful conquests of life's tragedy are the expression [...] of a state of mind [...] in the writer directly in knowledge [...] of a mystic and transcendent fact as to the true nature and purpose of the sufferings of humanity.

Knight highlights the importance of the text's connections to humanity in general, both within the text, and without. Pericles is universal because everybody can relate to suffering, wishing for fortune and feeling elated when good things happen. Everybody wants to believe that his or her suffering will end, and Shakespeare provides an authoritative and omniscient position from which to understand us, and promise a change in fortune.



TO DISCUSS INTERNET memes is to discuss the PUREST art form out there. A meme is a beautiful work of art, a cleverly crafted piece of satire that speaks to the current populace about what is really relevant to them. In this article, I will be assessing the uses and importance of memes in today's society, and discussing, with examples, the impact that memes are having on today's generation.

Memes are defined by Paul Gil on Lifewire.com as 'cultural symbols and social ideas that spread virally, primarily with the intent to either make people laugh or to make fun of others'. Memes have been around for centuries, being used and recognised in literature and other media since texts could be categorised into genres. However, the memes that I am discussing here, internet memes, have only really been culturally significant since around 2009.

Memes are spread through social media networks, being passed from person to person and reaching an incredibly widespread audience. The author of the meme is largely seen as irrelevant, it is the content of the meme which is the focus.

The main reason that memes are so significant is because they act as a form of social policing. If you understand a meme, you gain inclusion and you are socially recognised, but if you do not understand a meme, YOU WILL BE OSTRACISED AND SOCIALLY REJECTED. Memes require a certain understanding and knowledge of the cultural interest points of the given period, and so it is only natural that they work to segregate those who are in touch with contemporary values from those who are not. For example, one famous meme focuses on the Council of Elrond scene from the film version of Fellowship of the Ring, and you will only understand the memes if you have seen the film.

Therefore, memes can also work to give people a sense of fulfilment or satisfaction, being proud of the fact that you can recognise how a meme is playing upon the original source.

Memes are also important in governing what is considered 'of consequence' socially. Due to the fact that they reach such a wide audience and age range, they are a good form of PR both for new media and for old. A good example of this is Nicolas Cage. Whilst many of the younger generations may have been unaware of who Nicolas Cage was, his internet presence is huge because of his association with the 'You don't say' meme which uses a still from his role as Peter Loew in Vampire's Kiss (1988). Memes such as these create a renewed interest in older films and actors, maintaining their social prominence. It also works with newer media, spurring people to watch the latest films or TV shows in order to keep up with the inside jokes of the memes and NOT BE MARGINALISED by lack of knowledge.

Following on from this, memes are also vital for social commentary. Memes provide an UP TO DATE VIEW OF POLITICAL CONSENSUS and social trends, who the public like and who they do not. Since the 1980's, Guns 'n' Roses have been widely respected and followed worldwide. Their fame and popularity has continued throughout the decades, and the band has inspired awe for many years. However, in 2011, a meme began to be spread making jokes about Axl Rose's weight gain, using puns based off of Guns 'n' Roses lyrics. One example is instead of 'Welcome to the jungle / we got fun and games', the meme reads 'Welcome to the bakery / we got pies and cakes'. The prevalence of these sort of memes show how Axl Rose's public image changed from the 1980's to the current day. While Guns 'n' Roses are still popular, their bad boy rock image is no longer in existence. They are no longer respected in their own right, but more living off of their success from their early days.

Memes also have an incredibly rapid changeover rate. Several viral memes can be produced each month, and they are so fundamental to social media that people now keep track of which memes are most popular in certain months. There is even a universally recognised 'meme font'. Memes are arguably one of the most important internet creations of the last few years. They shape culture and society in a way that few other phenomena can. So watch out memes, because I WILL FIND YOU, AND I WILL VIEW YOU.



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