

THE NORTH AVENUE REVIEW

GEORGIA TECH'S FREE SPEECH MAGAZINE SINCE 1989

YOUR* AN IDIOT

**& NO ONE CARES ABOUT
YOUR SIXTH-GRADE
GRAMMAR PROWESS**

BEVERAGE POSEURS

you are what you drink

The Remarkable Miri

**AN INTERVIEW WITH THE COSPLAYING
NOVELIST PROGRAMMER**

HISTORY IS A LIE

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“ YOU SHOULD PUT
A **NARUTO** IN THERE,
I THINK SOME KIDS
WOULD REALLY LIKE THAT.
NARWHALS
NARUTO
GNARLS BARKLEY... ”



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CONFESSIONS FROM THE EDITOR

This issue was a long time coming. There are many reasons for this, some entirely valid and some ugly excuses, but what it boils down to is this: I'm a depressive and a perfectionist. Depression makes me a non-starter and perfectionism says, "Well if it's not going to be perfect you probably shouldn't do it, you're just going to embarrass yourself." On days when I'm finally in a good working mode, I spend so much time fiddling with minutiae, seeking that elusive perfection, that I get nothing done-- even if I'm filled with a warm, satisfied feeling at the end of moving an image a quarter of a centimeter on a layout for five hours. The stresses of Tech life pile up and I look at my fellow heads of student organizations with jealous awe. I'm so tired! All of the time! How do you do this!?

But at the end of the day, I did do it. Overdue, still lacking in places, not "up to my standards," but it's done. And that is, incidentally, what the theme of this issue became: accomplishment despite imperfection.

On the facing page, we talk about things to do in Atlanta -- accepting that maybe you wanted to be somewhere else, but while Atlanta is far from perfect, it's still pretty great and there's a lot to do.

On page 8, I ranted about the evils of grammar police. Language is about communication, not correctness -- and one can understand perfectly well what others are saying, even if it is not 100% by the Little, Brown Book, so it's useless to be a pedant. On page 14, we have an interview with Miri Baker a now-4th-year CS student and cosplayer, as well as an eight-time winner of National Novel Writing Month, which, as she says, is about writing a book that "[doesn't] have to be good, you[re] just writing to prove that you [can]."

On page 22, an anonymous submission encourages engineers to branch out of the comfort zone of condescension and time-wasting to try their hand at something new.

And finally, on page 25, we dissect the bland positivity of history textbooks and discuss the importance of historical figures as imperfect humans to learn from, rather than mythic giants to worship.

That this issue of NAR crystallized in this way was unintentional, and as I put the finishing touches on it, ordering myself to calm down and let things be a little imperfect... it's truly comforting. Things work when they are not perfect. Accomplishments are still accomplishments when they are less than immaculate. Imperfection is not failure. We are learning together -- and along with learning to do, one must learn *not* to do. To let go. Don't let fear of falling short keep you from trying. So, thanks for reading. Thanks for waiting. And I hope you enjoy this Summer-Fall-Winter-Spring edition of the North Avenue Review. It has been my utmost pleasure being the editor of this utterly singular Georgia Tech publication.

MELISSA HYDE

things to do in Atlanta

We get it. Atlanta sucks in a lot of ways. MARTA is never as good as we want it to be, Home Park is scary as shit, and also you got rejected from MIT and wish you were in Boston right now. It took me way too long to realize this, but Atlanta can actually be fun. And also living as if you're just waiting to get out of a place is a shitty way to live. So get out and look around!



West Egg Cafe for brunch, **Antico** for some incredible pizza, **Chai Pani** in Decatur for Indian street food and **Taqueria del Sol** on the Westside for great tacos. There are also a zillion places to get a great burger (**Flip**, **The Vortex**, **Yeah! Burger**, **Farm Burger**, etc.) On top of that, a ton of upscale-y restaurants (**Bocado**, for instance) have a weekly burger night which will be less than 15\$ a pop (if you're 21+ they often come with drinks). The food in Atlanta is actually bomb so do some research and stop eating exclusively at the Student Center Chick-fil-A.



My very Baptist parents were concerned I would run off to college and become an alcoholic hedonist. I'm kind of a hedonist but I've proved them wrong on one count: my vices are food, tea, and the Internet (and an occasional G&T). Atlanta is a great place for all of these things. To name a very few: check out **honeybubble** for A+ bubble tea and free Wi-Fi and **zenTea** in Chamblee for a menu of 100+ teas.



Holy heck did you kids see the line-up for **Shaky Knees** at Atlantic Station this year?

Even when it's not one of the costlier festivals (another one is **Music Midtown**), there are a ton of cool venues around Atlanta which host great acts. **Eddie's Attic** in Decatur has a bunch of folky, singer-songwriter types; **Terminal West** just had Chvrches and Bat for Lashes (and I saw Father John Misty there last year); and then of course if you're willing to spring a few bucks there's **The Masquerade** and **Variety Playhouse**. Concerts are a great way to relax a little and stave off the insanity of Tech.

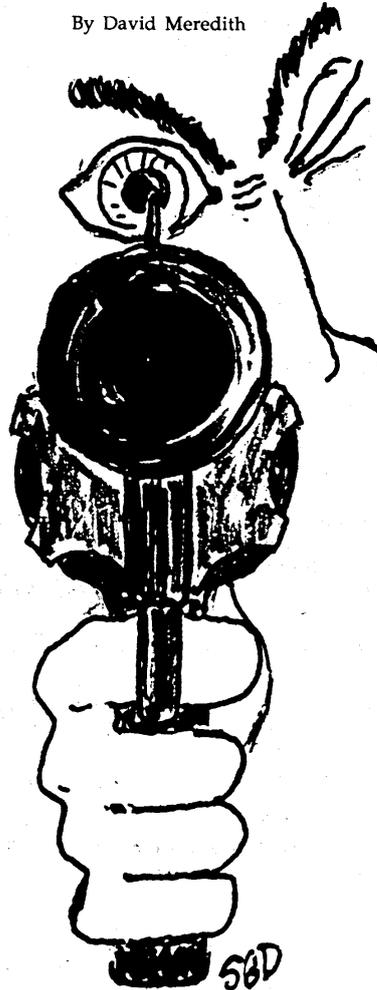


The **MegaBus** stop is in easy walking distance of Tech, and tickets can be as low as a dollar. Hartsfield-Jackson is the world's busiest airport. So if all else fails, get the hell out of here.

Obviously, hopping a plane is not always an option, but Atlanta's environs host plenty of really great hiking and kayaking and other outdoorsy options. Check them out via **ORGT (Outdoor Recreation @ GaTech)**, or do some research via the national and state parks websites. Even just going to **Stone Mountain** one Saturday is a great way to get some fresh air away from Tech.

toward a deeper understanding of gun control

By David Meredith



With all the talk about gun control and the endless propaganda by those who oppose any effort to regulate the gun industry (even to the point of opposing safety standards for guns) it is important to understand the reasoning behind any argument, particularly the emotionally loaded ones that appeal to our sense of outrage rather than reason. Following are some hypothetical examples that expose these tactics and a brief review of the constitutional principles involved.

Take the following hypothetical examples: First, Jane Doe, like other citizens of the future, is prohibited from owning a gun. One night Jane is alone in her house when she is attacked, raped, tortured, and finally killed. Hypothesis: if Jane Doe were allowed to own a handgun, she could have successfully defended herself.

Is this assumption correct? Reflect for a moment and ask, "Could she have defended herself?" The answer to the question is affirmative in that she might have defended herself. But this is just a superficial analysis; just as important in this case is would she have successfully defended herself. Jane Doe's ability to defend herself is contingent upon much more than either legal possession of a handgun or her desire to use it. The hypothetical case here quickly expands to, "if Jane Doe had owned a handgun, and if Jane Doe had easy access to her handgun before her assailants, and if Jane Doe's handgun were already loaded (which it should not have been), and if Jane Doe could effectively use her handgun, etc., etc. In reality Jane Doe's personal safety is dependent on a syzygy of these related factors; if one fails to fall in place, Jane is the loser. It is these other contingencies which, more frequently than not, fail to fall in place. More people are killed or injured with their own handgun each year than those who successfully defend themselves. For example, a recent Time magazine article found that of the 464 firearm related deaths in this country from May 1-7, only 3% were the result of an act of self-defense. Other sources of crime statistics such as police bureaus and the F.B.I. bear the same witness. The overwhelming majority (greater than 90%) of gun related deaths are accidents, suicides, and homicides.

This example points out that the mere possession of a handgun does not ensure the owner's safety or improve the likelihood of a positive outcome. It is this conclusion that too many people can not accept. They can accept that other people are killed with their own handguns. They can accept that the studies show more people are killed or injured with their own handguns than those who actually defend themselves. But many people can not accept that they are just as vulnerable as everyone else. People frequently make excuses such as,

"Those people (killed with their own gun) are stupid" or "They don't know how to handle a gun; I do." The all-time greatest excuse is, "I don't think it will happen to me." Does anyone think it will happen to them? Do not let a feeling of invincibility elevate your pride to the point that you can not accept your own vulnerability.

The second hypothetical example is this: John Doe is alone in his house when he is assaulted. John successfully defends himself with his handgun, i.e., no one else is injured. Hypothesis: If John Doe did not have a handgun, he would not have been able to defend himself.

Is this a fair and accurate assessment? Do we know that John Doe had no other recourse? Is John's case truly representative of the population of handgun owners in the U.S.? Reflect on the aforementioned studies about handgun fatalities. The fact is John Doe's story is not representative of the handgun owning population of the U.S. For every John Doe success story there are more stories of tragedy, of something gone wrong in the danger of twilight, of an argument out of

The third hypothetical example bears added significance because of recent events; it invokes Orwellian nightmares of a police state that controls not only our guns but our thoughts as well! It goes something like this: the government takes away our firearms; the people have no defense against the military. Take China, for example. Hypothesis: without firearms we could become a police state.

How accurate is this assessment? Of all the western political democracies, which ones would you call "police states"? France? Britain? Holland? Which ones are at the mercy of the military? Belgium? Denmark? Norway? Do you believe that the small percentage of the population in this country that owns firearms could, even if organized, take on the U.S. military?

To assume that a citizenry without firearms is vulnerable to totalitarianism, or that there is a one-to-one relationship between the two, is, once again, a superficial

analysis. One must consider the role that the military plays in the government, i.e., the military's relationship to the political leadership must be examined. The military of a country with an institutionalized democracy is not structured the same and does not serve the same functions as the military in, say, China. Although the President, as head of the executive branch, is commander in chief of the military "when called into actual service" (Article II, Section 2, paragraph 1 of the Constitution), the Congress is also given authority over the military not only in appropriations, but also in rules of administration. Article I, Section 8, paragraph 18 of the Constitution grants Congress the power "To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers..." Among the foregoing powers referred to are: paragraph 12, "To raise and support armies, but no appropriation of money to that use shall be for a longer term than two years"; paragraph 13, "To provide and maintain a navy"; paragraph 14, "To make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces"; paragraph 15, "To provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions"; and finally paragraph 16, "To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States..." It is clear that since the Congress is given broad powers over the military and militia (including the right to suppress insurrections) the impending "police state" argument collapses.

And what about the Second Amendment, you ask. Read it and see that "militia" is not simply inferred by those who wish to limit gun ownership. The amendment reads, "A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." The clause, "the right of the people..." is a parenthetical referring to the subject of the sentence, "militia". There is no conjunction such as "and" present to indicate that two subjects are under discussion. Therefore, one subject is under discussion (militia) and a parenthetical ("the right of the people...") makes it clear that the militia is to be armed, rather than a paper tiger.

There is a game called Russian Roulette. If someone handed a gun to you and said, "half the chambers are empty and half are loaded", would you play? The odds are 50-50. What if the odds were in your favor, one bullet and five empty chambers. Would you play? Our society is playing Russian Roulette and the odds are not in our favor. There are five loaded chambers and one empty chamber. Should we play?

investigative journalism by
Matt Cohen and Brent Hornilla
exposes the dark side of
Georgia Tech's new Printer Science division

Deal with the Devil



Earlier this year, Georgia Tech announced that its Institute of Paper Science and Technology would be opening up a technology wing devoted entirely to the research and development of printers. However, many students and faculty are protesting the new addition. Derek Stephenson, a renowned expert in the field of printers and printing technology, said, "Printers are still a big unknown for us. It's still a new field, so it's prone to a lot of trial and error. Until we get a better understanding of what exactly we are dealing with here, I'm not so sure I can support the construction of such a dangerous facility in an urbanized area."

So what are we dealing with? What exactly are printers? We attempted to contact representatives from the industry's biggest leaders, HP, Epson, Canon, to no avail—at least at first. After a week's worth of emails and phone calls, we received a reply from an anonymous source explaining that these companies had been sworn to secrecy. After agreeing to meet in person, our informant asked if we wanted to know the real reason we couldn't get a straight answer. "It's because they can't," he said. "You see, we didn't make the printer, we found it. A whole bunch of them were just buried out in Groom Lake." His eyes darted all over the room, as if we were being watched. After deciding for himself that wasn't the case, he continued: "Anyway, we sold most of them and saved a few for research, reverse-engineering and the like. Never could figure it out. Just when we'd finished selling them all off, a whole new batch reappeared. It was like something out of a science-fiction movie. We saw one sticking out of the ground we'd just patched up and knew to start digging again."

While controversial, leaders within the Printer Research Group emphasize the importance of their work. Over the past few decades, engineering and advances in technology have seemingly attempted to bypass the printer. Computers, televisions, communication and digital media devices have experienced exponential growth, while printers stagnated. Even more, our inability to understand the printer has led to a lack of innovation in the field. When questioned about the inner workings of the printer, Jonathan Stacey, one of Georgia Tech's printer scholars, recounted a freshman lab experience in which they were required to dismantle a printer. "I remember it like it was yesterday. It was the first time they allowed students to do something so dangerous. We all had on hazmat suits and had to go through a decontamination room before we were allowed entry. We were all pretty scared, but I finally mustered up the courage to pry one open. It was a delicate process. Finally, we made it to the core of the device. Inside this InkJet SX500, we found a black box of unknown material, and next to it a stick of gum and a note saying 'I don't know how the hell this thing works.' Another group found the same box, but this time a toy magic wand and a letter reading 'Tap twice to use.'"

There is much uncertainty surrounding the inner workings of the printer and its true history has been the victim of an elaborate cover-up, but do these machines warrant further study, or are they a sign of things to come? Certainly we could further advance civilization by understanding this alien artifact, or we could let it bring about the very destruction of life as we know it. For now, it might be best for the country's brightest minds to focus more on issues such as self-driving scooters and Segways. Besides, some questions are better left unanswered.



let me tell you how
**GRAMMAR NAZIS
ARE IDIOTS**

- or -
fuck you
you pretentious little shits



One day, I was having a conversation with a girl who couldn't shut up about herself (An affliction common to many Tech students). All of a sudden, she started going on and on, completely unprovoked, about how good at grammar she was. Grammar!? This counts as good conversation?! There's this horrifying misconception that if you know the difference between "their," "they're," and "there," you're automatically admitted into this upper echelon of intelligent people who have excellent tea parties where they lament the disappearance of the Oxford Comma.

I imagine the club sends out RSVP invitations biannually, which read, "Your invited!" Those who simply RSVP are removed from the invitee list. Only those who correct the glaring grammatical error with the red pen ever in their pocket are allowed to enter into the Brotherhood of the Little, Brown Handbook. Well, I'm sorry, but fuck you if you think derailing discourse in favor of pedantry makes you more intelligent than anyone else. In fact, I would argue that it makes you *less* intelligent. *In fact*, if writing in Standard English weren't second nature, I would write this article completely incorrectly just to spite you. As it is, I'm just going to enumerate (with grammar largely above reproach because I, too, passed the sixth grade) exactly how wrong you are on so many levels.



Alice felt dreadfully puzzled. The Hatter's remark seemed to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English.

ONE: langauge is in flux. ✓

spelling!
excess punctuation

Let's just get down to the brass tacks of where this silly tongue we speak and write came from (I ended the sentence with a preposition. Forgive me. Wait, don't). Actually, let's not even start with our language. Let's discuss language in general. Language is not a set of rules. Firstly, language is not grammar. Secondly, grammar is a part of language. Thirdly and most importantly, the code is more what you'd call "guidelines" than actual rules. Welcome aboard the *Black Pearl*, Miss Turner. The fact that grammar purists seem to see argotic language as the death of English belies the fact that language is, beyond anything else, a living tool.

The entire and sole purpose of language is communication. Grammar eases communication, in the same way that using the metric system eases conversion and conversation between scientists. However, in order for language to remain useful, unlike the metric system, it must be able to change. In recent news, the dictionary definition of "literally" was amended to mean "not literally," in addition to continuing to mean "literally." This may seem like a head-turner, but it really makes a lot of sense with any rudimentary understanding of communication. The rules of language are democratic, not despotic, and the common use of "literally" for "emphasis or to show strong emotion" means that, no matter what

the dictionary said before, “literally” actually did mean “not literally but emphatically,” entirely because people were using the word to mean “not literally but emphatically.” Language follows the people.

Grammar purists like to bemoan the dissolution of “Shakespeare’s own tongue,” despite the fact that our friend William literally (not-literally-but-emphatically) didn’t give two shits about dictionaries and in fact invented nearly 2,000 words willy-nilly (ha, pun) because he felt that they would communicate what he was wanted. Verily was the bard called a wordsmith as he smithed all these nouns into verbs and adjectives into verbs and also just completely made them new words, with a flair and a freedom of expression that the English-speaking world has found aspirational for centuries. I only wish blogs existed back in Shakespeare’s day, to see all of the language purists clutching their pearls over the genesis of words like “birthplace” and “marketable” and “compromise” -- new affronts to Standard English arising with each new play.

TWO: It's bad form.

This brings me to the second important point -- Grammar purists didn’t exist in Elizabethan times, but if they did, wouldn’t you pity them? To sit through these triumphs of our language and come away in the end thinking only of the demise of that selfsame tongue? What a tragedy! Worse than Hamlet and his entire family lying dead at the end of his play (um, spoilers?) is the person who comes away from Hamlet stewing about “Well, the word is ‘rouse,’ not ‘arouse.’ By my troth, Shakespeare doth verily be an illiterate knave,” or somesuch. Any sensible human would want to punch that person in the teeth, right?



exhibit A : probably not very good at animating an interesting conversation.

Where this tends to break down is when I try to explain to grammar supremacists that correcting the grammar in other people’s Facebook statuses or online debates, et cetera, does not a salient point make. A person who ignores a concept and instead irrelevantly snipes at the grammar doesn’t look smart, they look like someone who is both not good at debating and probably not very good at animating an interesting conversation.

There seems to be this sense that if a person does not have a grasp of “basic grammar,” then they have nothing intelligent to contribute to conversation. This is a dangerous, toxic thought process for many reasons, all of which make me incoherently angry as the editor of a free speech magazine. First of all, it operates under a bizarre, monolithic concept of intelligence wherein all intelligent people must be good, not only at grammar, but at English grammar, specifically. It frankly horrifies me that knowing grammar is so frequently and facilely equated with intelligence. There are many reasons that a person might not know the rules of grammar. English might not be their mother tongue, or they may not have had the same privilege of education as you, who know how to diagram a sentence, among other skills of daily utility.

Secondly, this sets up “intelligence” as a prerequisite for contribution to conversation. This is another article entirely, but in brief, there are many factors of class and culture which prevent very intelligent people from becoming as “intelligent” in this weird, specific sense as you, a Tech student, who through a mixture of genetics and luck of birth and academic instruction have come to know grammar and have in-jokes about the periodic table or what have you. I know a woman who is not gifted with any academic discipline. She is inattentive and doesn’t enjoy or engage with films or literature beyond a very, very superficial level. For example, she enjoyed *Life of Pi* because it was pretty. The message was utterly lost on her. Yet, this woman is one of the most natively intelligent people I have ever met. I am completely

incapable of following her in conversation because her mind flits so quickly from concept to concept. She grew up poor, in a family with no importance placed on education. My science-fiction-aficionado preoccupation with alternate universes makes me ponder who she would have become in another life.

It is no crime to be good at grammar, or to be intelligent in this sense but it is terrible to set yourself up as a gatekeeper for discourse based on such an arbitrary and fluctuating concept, and it is terrible to ignore that the fact you exist in an academic culture which values these rules because your life took certain vectors according to your privilege.

THREE: you look like an idiot.

While I have a substantial tangent I could go on about Standard English as an Ivory Tower gatekeeping construct, I think it's time to move on to exactly how stupid you look when you repost these stupid memes about grammar. Like, friend, listen.

We were all in 6th grade at one time. I don't really know why you think your knowledge of "your" and "you're" distinguishes you in any way? If we want to have a grammar-off, let's discuss how you probably put the period outside of the quotation marks sometimes and you know what, it's wrong--but people still understand what you're trying to say! There's a difference between discrete and discreet and there are probably a million idioms you say wrong, so why is this rudimentary spelling knowledge such a badge of honor? If I had a dime for each time I've seen my pretentious grammar friends write that something "peeks" their interest, or said "less than" when they should have said "fewer than," perhaps I would have many dimes, but the honest-to-god truth is, I don't keep score. I understood perfectly what they were trying to say, and instead of commenting "fewer than lol," I just left it alone. The beautiful thing is that if I truly did not understand, I could use the rest of our handy language toolbox to ask them to clarify their meaning! And of course, if I knew enough to correct them, that would mean I knew enough to understand them.



This is a disturbingly low bar.

My dear, stupid friend. If you cannot understand what is being said unless it is 100% grammatically correct, I truly pity you. You're a delightfully entertaining idiot, parading your sassy virtual red pen, but at the end of the day, I feel bad for you. I know the answer is that you do, in fact understand. You're not an idiot, really. But boy, do you look like one.

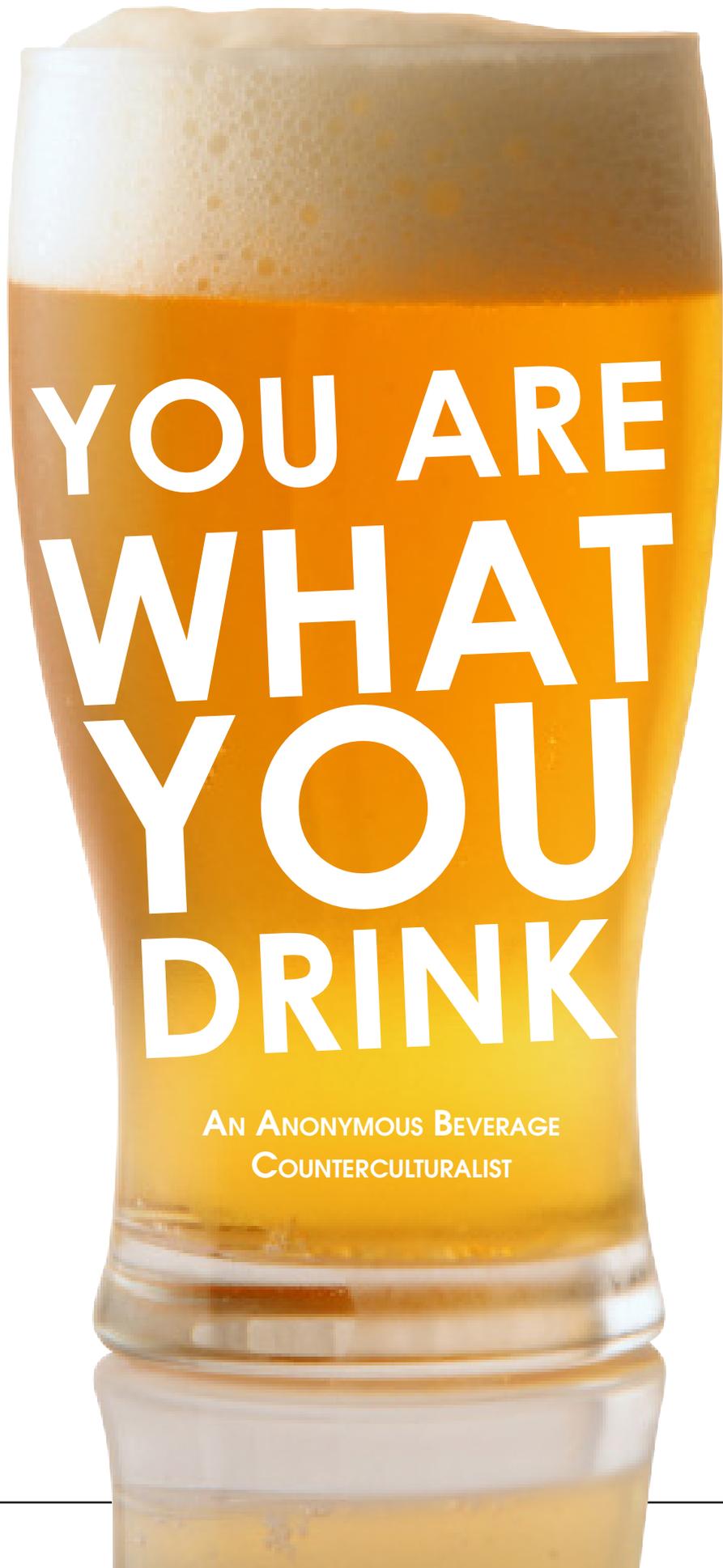
nonstandard

FOUR: You're being a lil bitch.

I have no vendetta against grammatical rules and correct spelling. I do not resent them. I see them as a useful tool for making sure we English speakers are able to understand one another. However, the lionization of Standard English ignores the fact that there are many, many different dialects of English, from British and American to Chicano, Gullah, Hong Kong English, Pakistani English. There is nothing defiling about the growth of a language. Change does not always need to be labeled "good" or "bad," and for language, change means life. Stagnation and stringent canonization mean death -- have you heard anyone speaking Latin lately?

profane!

Clearly, in my capacity as an editor of a magazine, I adhere to Standard rules, I appreciate them, and yes, I do prefer the Oxford comma. However, I will never, ever, unsolicitedly correct another person's grammar or spelling. There are much more important things in life: The lovely, inexorable march of time and evolution of language for one thing, and not being a complete asshole for another.



**YOU ARE
WHAT
YOU
DRINK**

AN ANONYMOUS BEVERAGE
COUNTERCULTURALIST

Remember the days when weekend parties were about sleepovers and cookies, with milk, and Sonic the Hedgehog or Dance Dance Revolution, and Saturday morning cartoons, and not alcohol? I'm fortunate enough to have a minute sliver of a memory of those days, where we liked what we liked without thinking of how it fit into an image. It seems that just about everything these days is about the identity of a person: choice of clothing and shoes, hairstyle, taste in music and film, college major, brand of car. Other elements of life have also taken on some form of identity-bearing importance. Take, for instance, beverages.

We drink what we think tastes pleasant, but sometimes, we drink what the guy in the corner of the coffeeshop or what the "bro" in frat house is having. People consume what society or various social groups expect them to drink.

One example is coffee. Growing up, I remember closely observing my mom as she brewed her morning pot of coffee. The bitter aroma, the aura of maturity and responsibility. I remember watching my dad aggressively press his fingers against his temples on afternoons when he had missed his daily fix of the all-important brew. It was as if he had disrupted the order of the universe by not partaking in the steaming-hot morning cup. I wanted to be a part of this order, this establishment.

Then, one day, when I was old enough and had proven that I was worthy, my mother finally let me try her morning coffee. I took my first sip of this liquid conjured from the dark, bitter depths of Mordor, and I quickly understood that I would soon break the apparent order of the universe. Despite the variations on the theme presented to me--cups filled with sugar and powdered creamer, others with enticing flavors such as Egg Nog, Pumpkin Spice, and Gingerbread -- I could never adapt to the overwhelmingly one-dimensional darkness of coffee.

Another beverage rite of passage is beer, which ended up being about the same as coffee for me. Even the supposed best, the most lovingly and caringly brewed beers, the stoutest of the Stouts and palest of the ales and holiest of the Belgian trappistes were, to me, still inferior to a decent root beer. Drinking beer simply makes me regret not purchasing a fresh loaf of bread instead.

But maybe I'm just drinking beer and coffee improperly. I might just be a Philistine-- so many people speak of the intricate flavor elements at work in a well brewed beer and well roasted coffee beans. It's the same with scotch, which has been billed in media as "what real men drink." The beverage of choice for Don Draper-types, its popularity has given rise to online guides of how to work one's way up to drinking scotch neat. It's clear that despite how much is made of the beverage's complexities, truthfully the stylistic elements and the awareness of the produced social image associated with these drinks is frequently more important than the taste itself.

As for me, I've found my beverage vice, falling prey to an overpowering tea phase in my life. There is so much subtlety and so many distinct variations with teas; it is like consuming pure relaxation, all-encompassing warmth, or liquid enlightenment. Tea truly is a blank canvas. One does not have to be a member of an affluent British family partaking in high tea or be a stereotypical nature-loving, yerba-mate-devouring forest hippy to acquire the full experience of consuming tea. It is cheap, easy to make, and even easier to enjoy and appreciate.

Like many other things in this world, beverages reinforce this idea of us all being slaves to an image. People strive so dilligently towards these images that they will follow whatever lead they can, which include consuming the same beverages as others in certain social circles they want to be a part of. Let's face it: most people don't even enjoy the taste of beer, coffee, and liquor upon first trying it (many will likely disagree with this statement, but I don't buy it). Think about all the people in public locations who overload their coffee with sugar and creamer, or slowly sip their beer down for an hour and a half, or who order their liquor in cocktail form that takes on a color as bright as neon lights and tastes like straight juice. Acquiring a taste for these drinks is a fairly arduous process, but it is what people do in an effort to help label themselves under these images. People shouldn't let a drink help define who they are or construct false images of themselves. If we do, then what are we but the things that we drink?

the remarkable

MIRI

AWARD - WINNING COSPLAYER. FOUR - TIME NOVELIST.
A GEORGIA TECH CS STUDENT.





I met Miri Baker in high school, where she was my dance partner and resident seamstress in our school's production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. I was struck not only by her intelligence, creativity, and friendliness, but by her all-too-rare pragmatism. Understanding the importance of sheer, backbreaking hard work, she has a gift for making pipe dreams actionable. Now, five years after I first met her, Miri has eight novels, numerous cosplays, and nearly a CS degree under her belt. In this interview, we conversed about her plans, dreams, and, of course, the incommutable merit of gritting one's teeth and making dreams happen.

NAR: You started out at Tech as CM. What drew you to that?

MB: Originally I was actually very interested in going into the video gaming industry, because I thought it was a really good combination of art and writing-- one of my real passions-- and this technical aspect. I never really did a whole lot of programming until my senior year of high school. We were offered an AP Computer Science class, and I figured, "What the heck, I'll give this a try." I *loved* it; I made applications to help me with keeping character names straight for National Novel Writing Month, and so forth. It's very neat to be able to build something that you want to use, not because someone else is telling you to do it, but because it's a really good way of solving these little problems.

Then, I realized how scary the video game industry actually is, and uh, my interests have turned a little more toward UI design and user interaction, and making things very intuitive, and usable, and still having that design sense that I really like.

NAR: What led you to change to CS?

MB: Our CM program is very, very geared toward video game production and video game design, and while it's a fantastic industry, I just don't think it's for me. In not going to school for writing, I've already kind of given up one particular passion of mine, and I don't want to give up something that I'm really really passionate about--this high creativity competitive industry-- for something that I'm not as interested in the more I find out about it.

NAR: Speaking of high-creativity, how did you get into doing NaNoWriMo [National Novel Writing Month]?

MB: I was already big into writing. We've all had our fan fiction phase, and I was writing longer and longer stories and was never really interested in using other peoples' characters. I've always loved creating characters and making people and worlds and languages and whatnot. Then, around June 2005, I found out that there are these people who wrote a book in a month. Just because they wanted to! It didn't have to be good, you were just writing to prove that you could. Because it was fun. I mentioned it to my mom, who said "Miri, that's crazy," and I'm sure she thought the interest would just die out immediately.

Come October, I was on the NaNoWriMo forums the second they opened sign-ups, I'm like "Mom! There are people in Warner Robins from the Internet who do this!" And she's like "... Wait, what?"

I remember writing up a contract of all the chores I would do and the room I

would clean, and I convinced her to take me to this meeting and meet all these people. We convinced her to do it as well, and both of us have successfully hit 50,000 words all eight years now. You meet the best people through NaNoWriMo because crazy people from the Internet, in that kind of setting -- kind of the best people.

NAR: Another one of your creative interests is "cosplay." It's a similar practice to fanfiction -- taking existing characters and playing with them. So how did you get started?

MB: Probably one of the fan sites, but let's just say "on the Internet," I found out about Dragon*Con. I started looking at pictures online and everyone was dressed up as these different characters and some of them I would recognize, and I thought, "I could do that. That would be fun. I could totally do that!"

I could sew... pretty much a straight line, basic stuff, pillows. That summer I decided, "I'm going to make a costume. It's going to be great!" And I did. It was Tai Lee from *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. It was held together with hair clips and safety pins, and pants are *really difficult to make* as little fourteen-year-old Miri found out. But even in that first summer of not really knowing what I was doing, I got to the Con and I changed into the costume and suddenly everyone wants pictures. "Oh, I love that character," and "Oh, I love what you did with it," and "You look so cute as this character," and you're surrounded in that situation by so many other people who love these characters and love this art form, this interpretation of these 2-D designs into a 3-D, almost theatrical space. I was just in love with it, from that moment on.

What's your most recent cosplay?

A character called Spooky Boogie, from *Psychopass*. It's a very, very new anime.

It's still airing in Japan (at the time of this recording); I finished it over pretty much a week of staying up until 3. I decided to do [the cosplay] a month ago. I've been acquiring the materials over the last couple weeks, and most of the sewing was done in the last week and a half. I debuted it this past weekend.

This one was a bit of a departure for me, as I'm usually very into the sewing aspect, the fabric elements, the "how do I take this flat sheet of material and transform it into this outfit" you know, with understructure and ruffles. Spooky Boogie had the dress and the sewing I love, but it's also not even a human character. I could have done it as a mascot, but decided to take a more interpretive approach. It was almost a cat idea but not quite. I had fun taking these different elements, like a giant safety pin built from coat hangers and plastic tubing and swirls carved of foam, and mixing all these things together to make something that was not line-for-line identical to the source, but interpreting the image onto a human cosplayer. It was very faithful without being super literal. This was the first time I'd done anything like that with heavy makeup and large, non-fabric elements.

Finding new ways to figure out how to do things once you have a different skill set can be difficult, but very rewarding.



"I could sew pretty much a straight line."

2009
PRINCESS TUTU
FROM PRINCESS TUTU



2007
TY LEE
FROM AVATAR
THE LAST AIRBENDER

2012
ALMOND
FROM CUCUMBER QUEST



2011
OZ
FROM PANDORA HEARTS

2013
SPOOKY BOOGIE
FROM PSYCHOPASS



2012
AKEMI HOMURA
FROM PUELLA MAGI
MADOKA MAGICA

How do you manage to juggle the heavy Tech workload and your other interests?

We're all Tech students, and we all have the homework we have to do, and the tests we have to study for, and these things that are necessary to our continued existence at this school.

If you're an in-state student and on Hope [Scholarship], you have an unforgiving grade point average that is difficult to maintain. You really just have to prioritize. Then, once you have a list, you go. You do as many things as you can. Anything you want to get done you do until you can't work anymore.

I do believe that people at Tech have time to do the things that they want to do, whether they're using that time to make costumes or write books, or make their own games as many of my friends do, or do research or club activities, or they spend that time playing video games or browsing Reddit. And there's nothing wrong with that, either. It's important to have that stress-reliever because we're all wound really tightly. People say they don't have time, but if you really want to do something, you can find the time. It will not always be comfortable or easy. Sometimes you do have to make the determination, "Would I be better off letting this wait," and you do have to keep your health in consideration because I am at a very deep sleep deficit at the moment. (*Laughs.*) That is the choice that I made, that I'd rather have this costume than more than five hours of sleep at night for a week. But, you *do* have time. It's up to each student whether they use that time.

NAR: Sometimes I think it's better to push harder and have something tangible to show for it. Having something concrete you've created is so satisfying.

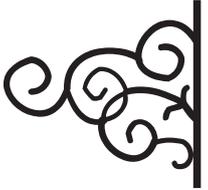
MB: It's so rewarding. Having tangible rewards is a big reason why I do cosplay. I put all this blood sweat and tears into this outfit, and you put it on and sometime I think "I hate this" because a lot of times my own standards are so much higher than what anyone else who's standing three feet away can even see. And once you put it on and everyone else is like, "Oh my gosh, this is so great." They don't know or care about the very small mistakes.

NAR: What are you most proud of?

MB: Honestly there are a couple of those. I'm very proud of eight successful years of NaNo. I am more proud of the four books I've managed to finish inside NaNo, which, this past year was not one of them. Sophomore year at tech has been kicking me pretty hard. But again, it's that feeling of finishing something, that's actually very difficult.

My costumes -- being recognized in a very niche costume is a very satisfying feeling. And, I compete. I've won a couple of major contests now and that's just such great validation. It's also saying okay, next time you compete, we expect even more from you now! Which is why I haven't competed in a while... (Laughs)

I'm also very proud of being in costume at a convention which means you become a sort of ambassador. I've perfected my spiel of "This is what's going on, and it's cool because of these reasons, and we're not really scary I promise, and of course I'll take a picture with you if you want." Being a representative for these people that have these very specified interests is something that I feel I do very well, for NaNo and cosplay and HvZ on campus. Being able to communicate, "Yes, we're different, but no, you shouldn't be scared of us," I think is very important.

 "People say that they don't have time, but if you really want to do something, you can find the time." 

NAR: Who or what inspires you?

MB: There are two different answers here -- one for cosplaying and one for writing. For costuming, it's hard to point to one specific person or group, but just the entirety of it. The fact that Dragon*Con and MomoCon exist, and all these people put so much time in it just for the love of these characters. This entire culture built around if you want to dress up as this do it, and this is how you do it, and here are these people who do it for a living, and grown adults who are Cat Woman every other weekend. There's a very liberating nerd-dom, and I'm very happy to be growing up in a generation where nerds are cool and accepted, and that we have these conventions and things we can do. Someone in my parent's generation going to a Star Trek convention was a little bit weirder -- but it's just wonderful that these fans through the years have built this substructure so I can have this hobby that I love.

As far as writing, there are so many specific writers that I love or am terribly jealous of, or who are incredibly prolific or just do consistently good work. Brandon Sanderson is unfairly good at everything he writes, and a wonderful human being. That's the kind of author that I'd like to be, the kind of writer who shows a lot of love for what they do, and the people who appreciate them, and anyone who never gets too good to say to their fans, "I'm here because of you and I love that you love my work."

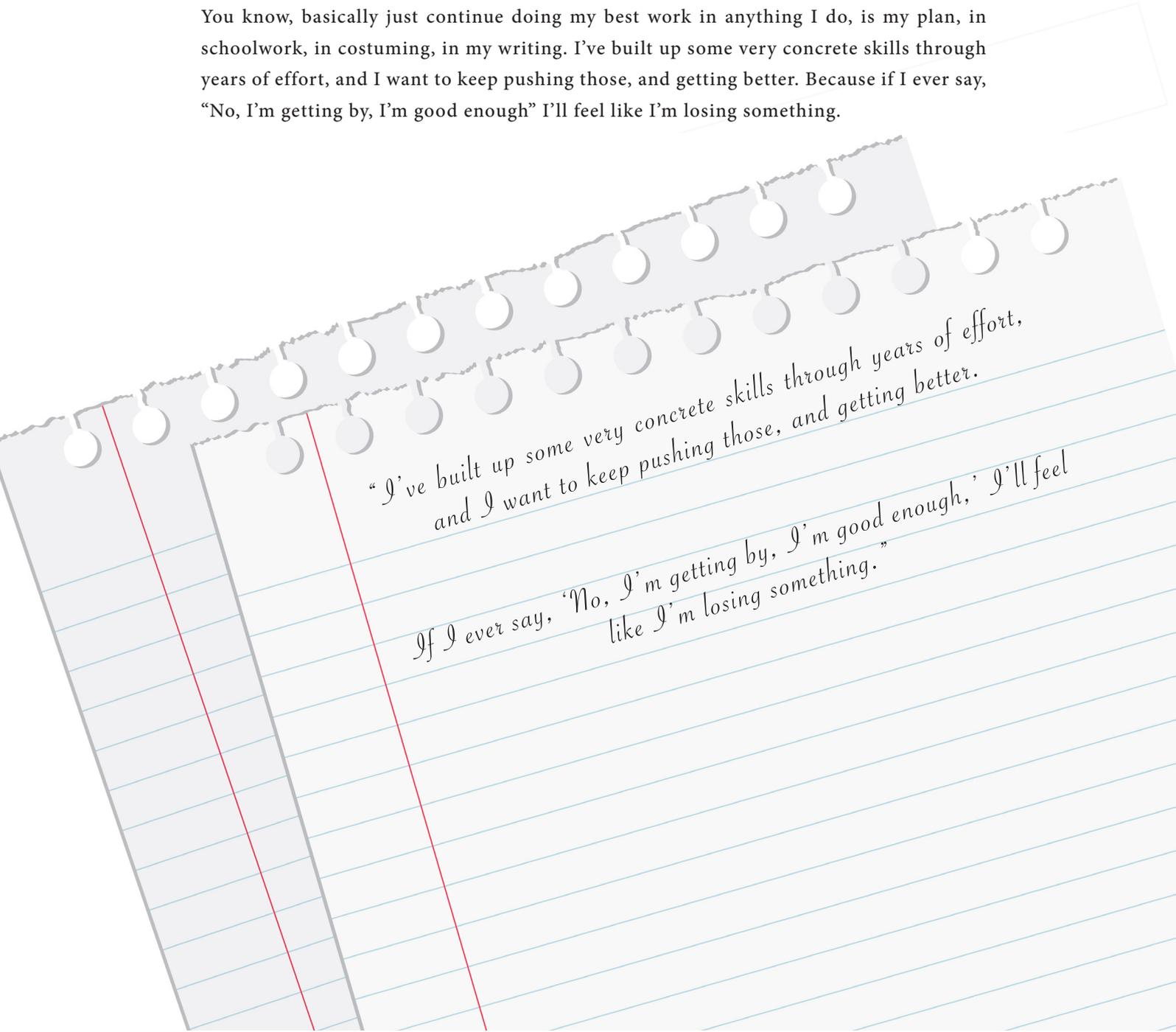
NAR: Last question: what is your dream? Well, what are your plans more concretely, and what are your dreams more abstractly -- if you could do anything?

MB: As far as dreams, I'd love to have books traditionally published. I know self-publishing is big but I really want to be published by random house or one of the big five, their fantasy imprints.

I'd kind of love -- and this isn't even a farther off, sort of pie-in the sky kind of thing-- I'd kind of love to represent the US at the world cosplay summit one day. Which is a thing that exists! The US has done well with it, but usually if a country wins, it's going to be Italy, Brazil, or Japan. I love what I'm doing with cosplay, and it's such a crazy, problem-solving, fandom exercise.

As far as plans, just continue through Tech, gain usable skills, survive, try to get my foot in the door of some of these really computer science-y places, you know, point one: Get A Job.

You know, basically just continue doing my best work in anything I do, is my plan, in schoolwork, in costuming, in my writing. I've built up some very concrete skills through years of effort, and I want to keep pushing those, and getting better. Because if I ever say, "No, I'm getting by, I'm good enough" I'll feel like I'm losing something.

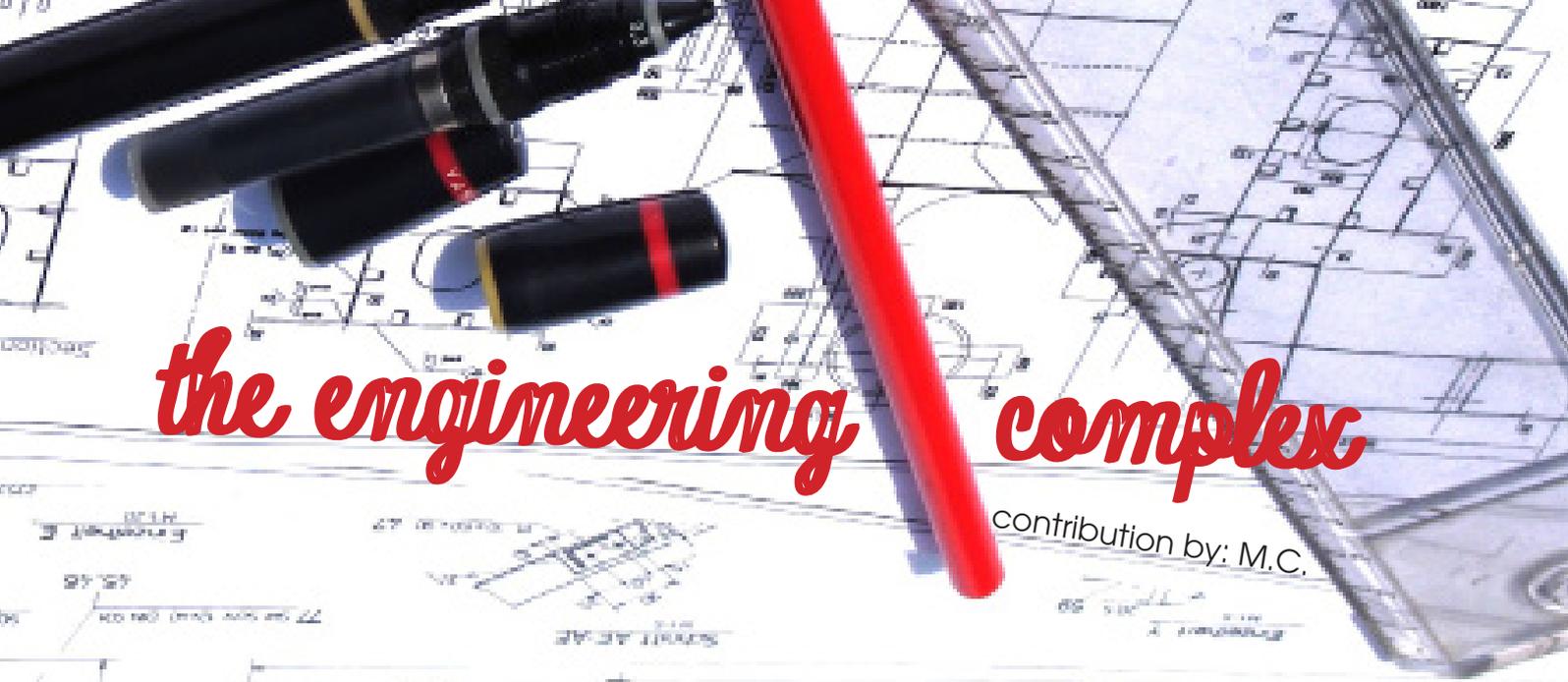


*"I've built up some very concrete skills through years of effort,
and I want to keep pushing those, and getting better.*

*If I ever say, "No, I'm getting by, I'm good enough," I'll feel
like I'm losing something."*



Regina from Once Upon a Time. Image cred: Henry Mei

The background of the page features a top-down view of engineering blueprints. Several markers (black, blue, and red) and a red pencil are scattered across the drawings. The text 'the engineering complex' is written in a red, cursive font across the middle of the image. Below the title, the text 'contribution by: M.C.' is visible in a smaller, black font.

the engineering complex

contribution by: M.C.

After five years, I can say I've been at Georgia Tech for a significant fraction of my life. I have enjoyed my time here, which is quickly dwindling down. I appreciate the education I have received; the research I have been able to witness, and take part in; the solid campus facilities and the Atlanta surroundings. I have endured the competitive atmosphere and stringent grading criteria. However, I have reached the last sliver of the remaining centimeter of the final straw of my patience with a subset of Tech's student body – in particular, my fellow engineering students.

I am an electrical engineering student, and I am proud of it. EE is, in theory, at the cutting edge of research and technology, constantly pushing forward towards bigger and better things in the world of electronics. I *could* argue that EE is dragging behind emerging areas of tech-fusion in terms of the “cool factor” -- such as industrial design and computer science -- but the point is that electrical engineers, and engineers in general, have a history of doing incredible and fascinating things. However, it seems that part of the criteria to be an engineering student is to have a bloated ego and a feeling of excessive self-importance.

First, let's discuss the use of the word “application.” Application is a term that is becoming ever more diluted in the engineering class setting; this is because engineers worship it. Engineers believe they take the tedious and borderline “useless” drudgery of mathematicians and scientists and turn it into astonishingly awesome ideas and products.

“That lecture was okay, but maybe it would be better if it included more about the applications of this (specific convoluted equation) in this (specific convoluted) lecture about semiconductor theory.”

The truth is, electrical engineering at the undergraduate (and even somewhat at the graduate level) is about trudging through the mind-numbing dullness in the development of disciplines within the field. Students think they are going to do amazing projects and build cool gadgets, but they just end up scribbling a few hundred equations onto a crib sheet to struggle through an exam, or build the most inane circuit and perform a dozen different measurements on a dozen different configurations of it. However, if you talk to them, they boast of the importance of what they do, but, in reality, they are just struggling through obtaining a half-empty breadth in an area they could care less about. Let's face it: their studies are by and large far from ground-breaking or interesting, and that includes the contrived undergraduate research projects.

Second, let's talk about campus involvement and resource usage. The League of Legends Club and Reddit karma are not resume-worthy. Students spend so much time reading useless shit on the Inter-

net and pounding the life out of their computer mouse playing video games rather than taking full advantage of the amazing resources that come along with being a Georgia Tech student.

There are tools and labs that can be used to pursue inventions and DIY projects, clubs and organizations that involve bad-ass pieces of technology like robots and solar-powered cars, and publications eager to print student writing and creative works [Ed. Note: NAR, hell yeah]. Yes, I said it – eager! Student publications willing to publish your half-assed, shitty writing (take that as a challenge, if you will – prove me wrong and publish something actually good). The point is, NAR and the Technique are willing to take on anyone, and willing to print whatever written material they are given. That’s kind of awesome. Now, this isn’t referring to Sliver posts - tastelessly and chauvinistically writing about the red-head in your thermodynamics class is far from what I am referring to, and far from being worth anyone’s time.

Unfortunately, it is doubtful that any engineering students will be willing, or capable, of performing some creative written process. I cannot count the number of times I have heard an engineering student explain to another that, as an engineer, he or she has no use for being able to properly spell words, follow grammatical rules, or complete a decent essay or paper. This is just another example of how engineers believe that they are above things like history and literature (the social sciences and humanities, in general).

They simply learn enough philosophical ideas to be able to be assholes about how religion is beneath their superior existence and that being an Atheist makes them better than everyone else. However, a good engineering student quickly comes to learn that an understanding of how to write a good paper puts them ahead of the game when it comes time to write a technical publication or compose a technical report for a company; being able to analyze a piece of literature gives a student the edge in being able to push through dense, arduous technical papers and helps him in performing the proper analysis of the written work. And of course, being respectful of other people is an important part of being a functioning human being. All of these areas expand one’s mind and makes them a more knowledgeable, well-rounded student and person.

Morally Indefensible Professions
a list compiled by **Ashley L. Raiteri**

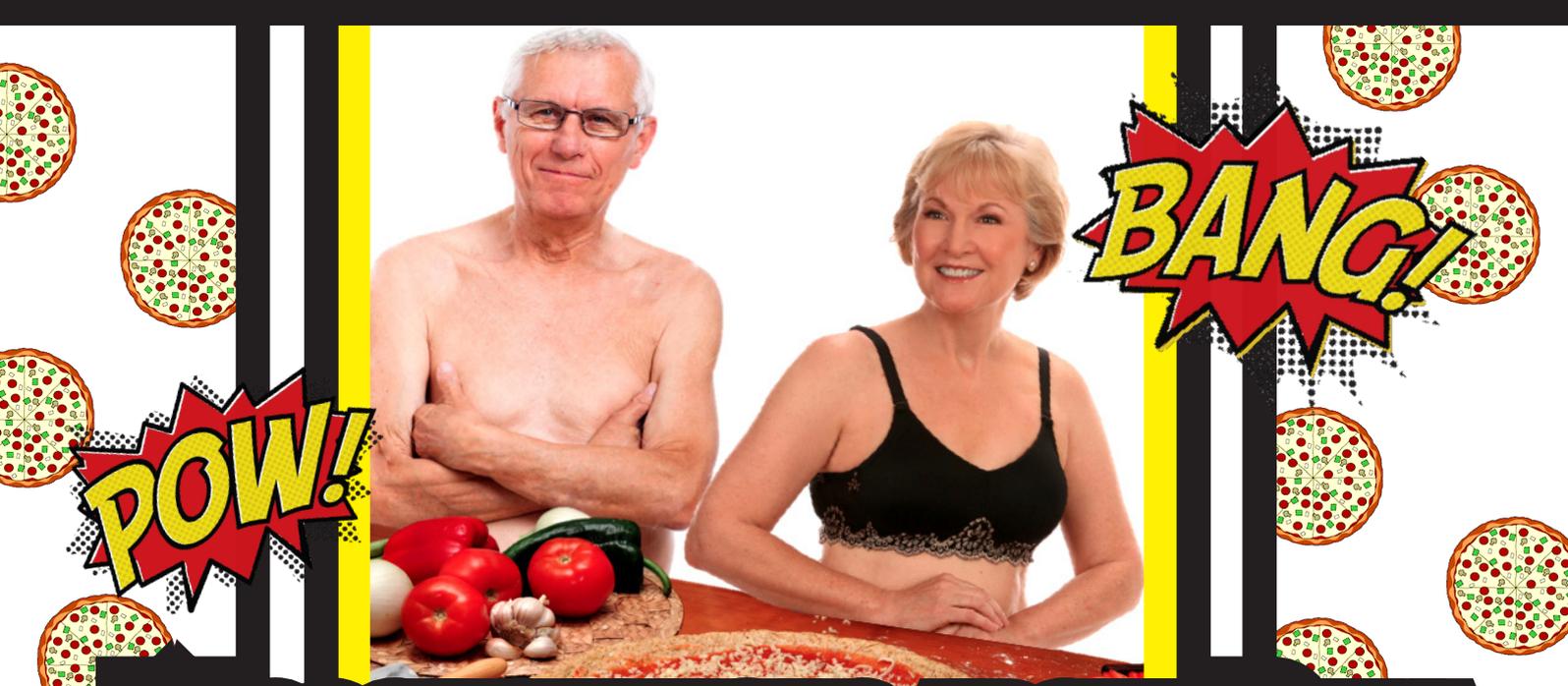
listed in ranking orders of depravity
(1= morally bankrupt 10= unoriginal/intellectually dead)

Profession	Description
10. Engineers (generally excludes BME's and Phd's)	
9. Salesmen (including Retail/Car Salesmen/People who always talk about winning friends and influencing people.)	
8. Doctors (The executioner of midwives and other non standard medical types. The biological reductionist. Those responsible for fabrication of scientific world views and probably number two in scale of hypocrisy. The hypocritical oath. Completely undeserving of trust.)	
7. Religious Types (Possibly anyone who makes a living dictating moral norms for other people and creating a ridiculous faith in a Benevolent Sentient Deity)	
6. Bureaucrat (Those people whose job it is on a daily basis to stall you, delay you, deny you, and refer to the Deities of regulation and policy: i.e.. social service workers, financial aid offices, credit bureaus, etc.)	
5. Landlords (By definition: anyone who makes a profit off of rental property absolutely has to screw you.)	
4. Marketers (Typical Ad Man. Includes Actors, DJ's , and fashion fascists. MTV falls closer to John Birch society and Lawyers because it pretends to have a moral philosophy.)	
3. Lawyers (Only above politicians in that they can ultimate become one and thus become more depraved.)	
2. Bankers/Money Changers (Brokers and other people who produce absolutely zip)	
1. Politicians (Including Senators/Child Molesters, Mayors, Bribe Takers, Kennedys/Rapists, Women Haters/Republicans, and Presidents)	

Hey Kids! Try and create your own list. It's fun. Take potshots at anyone you despise.
For a real hard trick try creating a list of 10 morally positive careers. I could only come up with three: Educator, Artist and Shepards. Of course there are always exceptions but I'll stand by my claims. Do you think you have a defense for any of these professions? Send it in!

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I am sometimes not above, these flaws, but the point of this rant is that engineers are not gods, and being a know-it-all is pointless and self-destructive. There are too many opportunities presented to Tech students that are not acted upon. We are not going to be students forever; once we leave this great school, we will lose many of these opportunities. Take advantage of it all while you can. And I know you all are busy being Tech students, but are you really? Is your time used effectively? Does playing video games hour after hour really count as being a productive use of time? Is it not possible to cut down on some “personal time,” to eliminate some of the hours playing video games and masturbating, to join a cool club, meet new people, or write for a student publication? Don’t be assholes, engineers – you are all humans and students like the rest of us.



MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PIZZA

AFTER FIFTY AND OTHER HELPFUL ADVICE ADAPTED FROM THE BOOK OF SECRETS

MIDDLE AGE CAN BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE PIZZA BETTER AND MORE SATISFYING THAN EVER BEFORE. PEOPLE OF MATURE YEARS HAVE HAD MORE EXPERIENCE IN PIZZAMAKING. THE PRESSURES OF CAREER BUILDING ARE LESS FRANTIC, LEAVING COUPLES WITH MORE TIME TO SHARE. THE CHILDREN HAVE GROWN UP AND LEFT HOME, GIVING ADULTS MORE PRIVACY AND FEWER DEMANDS ON THEIR TIME. AND AS MEN AGE, THEY LOSE THE PRESSURE TO GET RIGHT TO THE PIZZA AND TOPPINGS. THEY CAN CONCENTRATE ON A MORE DELICIOUS AND ITALIAN EXPERIENCE IN PIZZAMAKING.

MOST COMMON MYTHS ABOUT AGE AND PIZZA:

- That your pizza life is essentially over by the time you're in your fifties. Society tends to reinforce this notion with its emphasis on youth. People behave according to the expectations that the culture sets for them and begin to give up on their pizza lives at middle age. This is, in many ways, the equivalent of giving up on life itself.
- That the psychological changes affecting pizzamaking spell the end of your pizza life. This is particularly damaging, because most changes can be readily accommodated. For example, many men age 55-60 or over, worry when they don't get spontaneous pepperoni seeing their partner get the ingredients out as they did when they were 20 or 30. But this does not mean that pizzamaking is over for them. It means only that they now require more kneading. Many men put off pizza until they get a spontaneous pepperoni for fear their wives will think they have some pizza problem. Pizza in these circumstances becomes less and less frequent, and this is what causes partners to fear that they are no longer interested in each other.
- That pizza requires toppings every time. As men get older, they need longer and longer periods between anchovies. A man in his sixties may require a full day or even several days between anchovies. This does not mean that he cannot enjoy pizza and pizzamaking in between. Pizzamaking partners get into serious trouble when they think toppings are essential and that the male, particularly, must have some. (The man feels he must because his partner expects it. The woman feels that if he doesn't, he no longer cares for her.) You can enjoy all the sensations of pizza without toppings.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM PIZZA THERAPY

- A typical session lasts one hour, and therapists usually recommend one session per week. Most difficulties can be successfully treated in three to six months. Some people are helped significantly in a single session because they only think they have a problem. Example: A woman who fails to have olives during pizzamaking. Or a man who feels guilty when his partner fails to have olives during pizzamaking. The fact: most women do not have olives during pizzamaking.
- Lack of pizza ingredients, the most common problem, takes longer to treat. Therapists now recognize that although some lack of ingredients is normal during a relationship, it's often aggravated by depression, stress or emotions that build up at home.
- The most common mistake is assuming that pizza must always be spontaneous. Few things in life really are. Most couples wince at the idea of scheduling pizza. It works, say the therapists. And it's one of the simplest and most effective ways out of the problem.



When I was younger, I loved history. There was something magical about the exploits of the past's heroes. Conquistadors tamed the wild jungles and forests of the Americas with the aid of native translators, Squanto bearing maize and Pocahontases imparting guidance. Abraham Lincoln fought the war over slavery, and now we are all equal. Helen Keller was blind and deaf and learned to communicate. The bison in the prairies just began to disappear, of their own accord, making way for Laura Ingalls Wilder and the trains and outposts which would crisscross the West. And all of this I took as fact, when in fact, it was fiction.

I said there was something magical, but it turns out it was magical. Or rather, unfactual. A myth. Parts of it were true -- In fact, most of it was, *technically*. As it happens, my textbooks were committing a much more subtle sin, lying by omission. The truth came out in a trickle, if at all. In AP US History, I delved deeper into Lincoln and realized that the Civil War was a lot more to do with economics and federalism than ethics. I learned that colonialism was not a peaceful integration of settlers, but a hostile takeover by war and disease -- but that the spread of disease was far more calculated and intentional than I had been taught, and the Trail of Tears was far from an isolated incident. More recently, I learned that the bison on the prairies did not merely "die off" from overhunting by the "Indians." In fact, they were slaughtered in droves by the white man in order to starve the native population into submission. Helen Keller was blind and deaf and learned to communicate, and when she learned to communicate she began to speak out, forcefully and thoughtfully and eloquently against economic injustice, astutely marking the links between disability and wealth caused by increased risk

and decreased health on the part of the poor.

The question for me became, why were we fed such a simplistic view of history when we were children, and our thoughts about the world were just beginning to be formed? Why were we fed a narrative in which the white, entrepreneurial man was the hero, and the socialists and “natives” and minorities were a dying breed or a footnote? In 1984, George Orwell wrote that “He who controls the present controls the past.” But, while it is tempting to view textbooks as a product of a brainwashing white upper class, the reality is not that simple. The fact is that textbooks are chosen by committees who want to please constituents, and these decisions are heavily influenced by the loudest voices in the room. The committees look for particular minute facts (such and such president hailed from our state!) and influence the presentation of perspectives. In a complex

**The difficult, sad,
whole truth is that
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founded, propogated,
and permeated
by exploitation.**

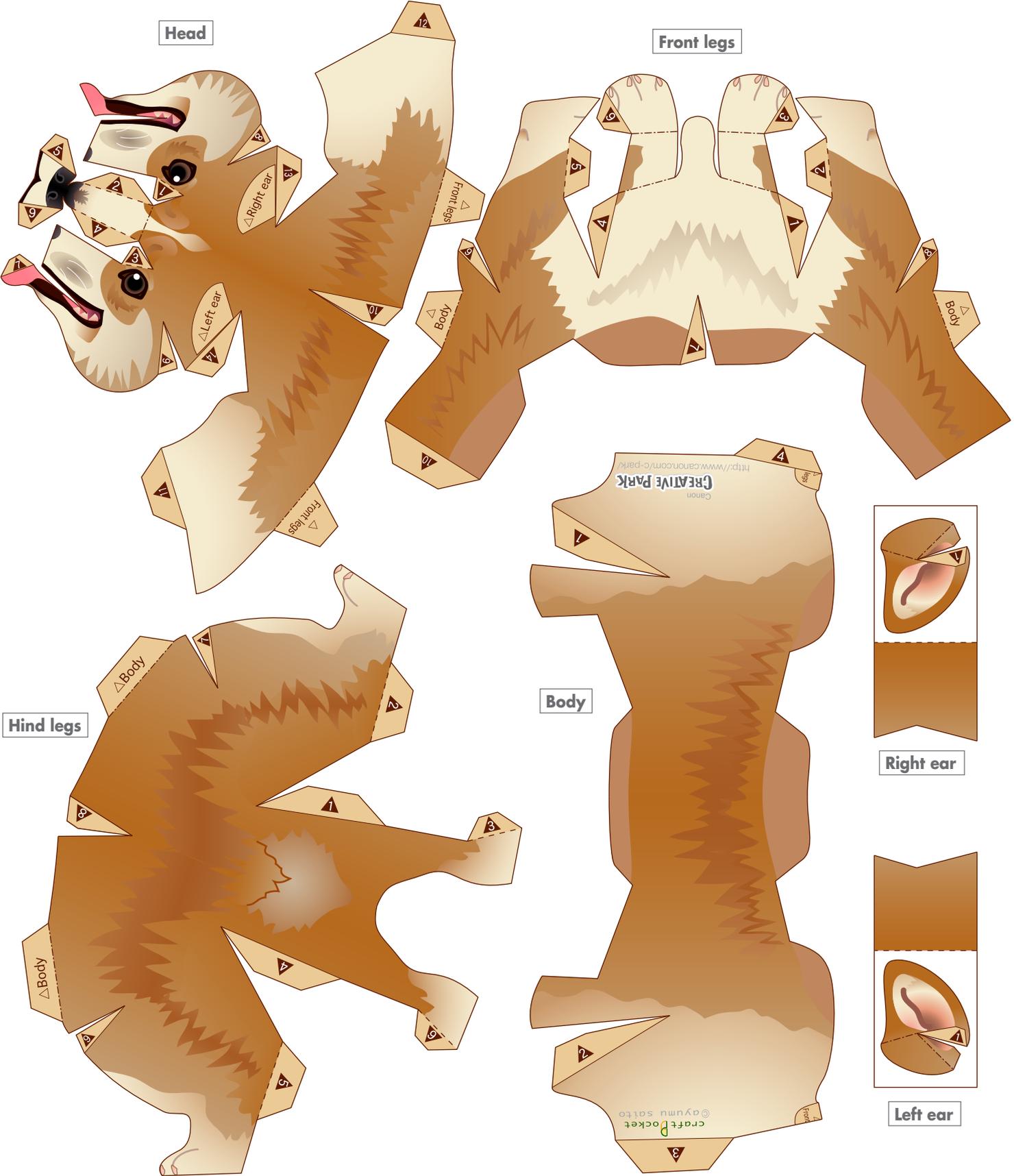
structure of approval committees, publishers must strive to be inoffensive, and in so doing history is controlled, not by the brainwashing white upper class, but by the reactive “middle class” which seeks to maintain the status quo, to be positive and optimistic about yesterday so as to not disrupt order today. In the state of Texas, textbooks are actually prohibited from “undermining authority.” Yet authority, political discourse, all of this is based upon a rubric of social science education which is filled with saccharine half-truths.

The difficult, sad, whole truth is that we live in a society founded, propogated, and permeated by exploitation. This exploitation is not continued and created by evil men, manipulating and orchestrating, but by the average person looking out for their own interests at the expense of others. While history tends to cast Adolf Hitler as a singularly evil man and the architect of that shameful war, the fact is that the great evil of WWII began with toxic political quietism and nationalism in the hearts of the *average* person, both ignorant of privilege and willing to freely “other” their fellowman in order to protect themselves. To have truthful history books is to be aware of the amount of work to be done in the present time. It is uncomfortable, but necessary.

We need history books that put the emphasis on the collective’s responsibility to one another. Acting like America is the product of Great Men Doing Great Things belies that fact that America is deeply flawed, and problems do not go away just by glossing them over in a textbook. We have a long way to go before this is truly the land of the free and the home of the brave.



MAKE A PAPERCRAFT CORGI! - - -



MAKE A PAPERCRAFT CORGI

THEY ARE SUCH DUMB LITTLE DOGS AND I LOVE THEM



you will need:
SCISSORS
A GLUE STICK
THE PATTERN
PRINTED ON THE
BACK OF THIS PAGE

directions:
IT'S LIKE A PAPER-AND-GLUE CONNECT
THE DOTS!

words of wisdom
CORGIS ARE LITTLE DUMB BUNNIES, BUT
THEY WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
so be happy and make a corgi to love