

## TechNews

STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF  
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Our mission is to promote student discussion and bolster the IIT community by providing a newspaper that is highly accessible, a stalwart of journalistic integrity, and a student forum. TechNews is a dedicated to the belief that a strong campus newspaper is essential to a strong campus community.

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## SUBMISSIONS

TechNews is published on the Tuesday of each week of the academic year. Deadline for all submissions and announcements is 11:59 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. Articles, photos, and illustrations must be submitted electronically to the TechNews website at technewsiit.com.

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## Response:

## Art, the lowest form of entertainment

Reno Waswil

TECHNEWS WRITER

Last week, Austin Gonzalez [TechNews' Opinion Editor] wrote an Opinion Section article about what he held to be the lowest form of entertainment, going as far as to call it the lowest form of art, and I feel obligated—having strained myself over this question and having had many times to re-evaluate my notions about the topic—to critique it. He maintained the entire genre of horror to be the all-time lowest form of art achievable, arguing that “there are exceptional pieces, but horror remains the tag of the greatest collection of garbage to pass off as art,” putting forth his definition of art as, “an attempt to create emotion in the viewer.” Though, as he does, I think such a complex question as “what is art?” cannot, in good conscience, be summed up in so few words, and I have no real vested interest in the genre at all—I do not consider myself any more knowledgeable or fascinated by horror than anyone else—and I do admire Austin's recognition of the expectations that can be found in horror as it could in literally every other tag someone at one time or another can try to pass off as art. I find fault in, even in accepting his assumptions, singling out an entire genre as the lowest form of art.

I will concede that the media released under this genre, ignoring that the diversity of this genre with respect to its subgenres is as broad as the term art is to the genre, shows the positive characteristics of originality, creativity, and depth is far outweighed by that which is lacking those traits. Gonzalez's article mentions some of the most famous examples of it in horror, but I say don't criticize the label it is given, criticize the means by which it is produced. The extent to which horror is uninspired is the same extent to which every genre in popular culture is uninspired; it just takes a cultured palate to recognize it (definitely not saying I have a great one though.) One may be biased against certain general classifications of the art but that by no means makes that classification diminished in artistic value and certainly not diminished in entertainment value. The experience involved in being really, truly afraid, that which goes far beyond the cliques clearly outlined in last week's article, is one of

the most powerful emotions one could feel. The truly heart-wrenching, mind paralyzing stimuli that go much deeper than what is used in the most mass produced of the material definitely is worth its merit in why the consumption of art is truly beneficial; seeing and understanding the most sincere commodities of humanity.

Of course, art that is so encompassing of the ranges of human complexity and emotion and by proxy, the best and most deserving of the label as “good” art, is that which cannot be easily applied to a genre, but I say the un-inspiration of horror is equal to that of any other genre out there (unless it is specifically labeled as something using or denouncing the positive attributes but that is another argument). Think of the tendency for comedy to use the worst cliques and rely on the most terrible and unoriginal topics to hyperbolize and find humor in, not to mention the tendency to have quantity over quality with the garbage that is thrown in, and to have no deeper meaning and lose what redeemable quality it might be trying to convey. The industrialization of comedy has even demanded that a laugh track be put behind some television sitcoms to ‘encourage’ laughter, which may be even worse than the tactical periodic jumps in horror.

Even worse is that which associates itself to the label of tragedy, or the slightly less stark but much used drama, which is so easy to manipulate that elements of it are thrown with disregard for deeper development into every single example of every other genre. From the perspective of Greek philosophy, pain—the major motivator in this genre—is the same as fear, only felt in present or retrospect, rather than for some future event, so how can it be considered any different? The act of getting to know a character that dies could be just as methodologically applied as a scary face when we least expect it.

Many may disagree with me, and I am not saying I didn't like the film overall, but the opening scene in Up was about as mechanical as it comes, or at least as much as the Grudge or Ju-on movies where the scary girl with hair in her face crawls slowly down a dark, uninviting hallway (though I must admit I did not see the Japanese version). They both, in me, elicited a response, but I can easily observe from a sort of objective point of view that they are, in their

nature, not very deeply inspired with the full force of the emotion.

Someone getting his or her heart broken is another example of a pandering to dramatic and tragic pain without an extreme form of introspection and practice and creativity; for example, think of the stunning passion in the following infamous lines:

“It's not like you to say sorry; I was waiting on a different story,

This time I'm mistaken, for handing you a heart worth breaking,

And I've been wrong, I've been down, been to the bottom of every bottle,

These five words in my head scream, 'Are we having fun yet?'”

They are almost laudably insincere, and I am sorry for alienating people that might like the band Nickelback or the song “How You Remind Me,” but I chose it simply as an extreme case of the kind of thing used to such an unparalleled extent in music though we as a public not only accept it, but embrace it, is it really better than horror?

The leniency with which we as the public that consume the easy to produce, (though it all takes some skill and inspiration to be sure, even “Paranormal Activity” style horror) superficial, and uninspired entertainment can definitely be strained, as it seems to have been for Gonzalez and his begrudged genre, but I would recommend not forgetting that the best cases of all art, which I would say might be considered Edgar Allen Poe (author) is for jorror, Douglas Adams (author) is for comedy, and Jeff Magnum (musician) is for tragedy, are equally exhilarating no matter the genre, because they take so much from you and leave so much for you. All genres display some aspects of deceptiveness and insincerity, and I feel like I cannot allow even one genre to be broadly disgraced, thereby raising the others, as a mere matter of opinion, though mine is as legitimate as (most) everyone else's and I cannot take offense to disagreement. I also cannot really in the end criticize people for what they might consider their guilty pleasures, but I ask the reader not to ever think that there is no art that would put the rest of it to shame, and we should all be looking for and respecting that rather than calling out any specific genre as marginally inferior.

## Creationism, evolution showdown

Austin Gonzalez

OPINION EDITOR

Where do we come from? This is one question I thought was largely settled, but apparently it isn't so cut and dry. According to recent polls by Gallup, three in ten Americans say they take the Bible literally and 46 percent believe in creationist origin. I spent a solid chunk of my Tuesday evening watching a debate between Bill Nye and Ken Ham and, of course, following the social media torrent thereafter. “The Science Guy” and the founder of Answers in Genesis squared off in a charged, but incredibly respectful debate beginning with the question, “does creationism fit as a reasonable scientific model in modern time?”

Ken Ham defended his position as a Young Earth Creationist with a central stance on the difference between historical science and observational science. Science is based off of observed phenomena and laws that can be used to predict things in nature, since the past cannot be observed (Ham repeatedly remarked, “You weren't there. This book is the only historical record we have”), it can't be proven and origin stories are thus always beliefs. He was adamant to mention that the data creationists use is the same as everyone else's, simply the interpretation and assumptions are different. I think, and Nye voiced this concern as well, that creationist find proof in retrospect and when new data comes out they refit their model and call it a day; it lacks a certain predictive power.

“The Science Guy” used simple and well-known dating techniques to show that many pillars of Young Earth Creationism simply do not hold up. Tree rings, radioactive dating, ice layers, and stars all show the earth is much older than 6,000 years. The Ark was simply too small, built by the unskilled and unknowledgeable to be possible. The number of species in existence, even if you believe in 1000 original “kinds,” is simply too staggering to be accounted for by an ark. The translation of the Bible was juxtaposed with games of telephone and asked viewers to be skeptical of anyone who asks you to simply “take their word for it.” Nye's final remarks often included that innovation is what makes America great.

Science is the bearer of progress, using it to teach our kids to be innovative and to question is what allows us to be the great nation we are. The most interesting criticism of Nye is the fact he agreed to debate at all. Creationism is largely criticized as fact, theory, or belief, but very little was said about Nye. Ken Ham expressed a concern that secularists and the persecution of religious scientists had hijacked science. I find this ridiculous, but it is true that many (at least as far as I can see) take what Bill says for granted.

The debate was phenomenal. Regardless of whose stance you agree with, both men were respectful and—more importantly—had reasons for their beliefs. Whether or not I agree with Ken Ham, he was very clear about the basis of his belief (the Bible) and the path of reason he followed to his conclusions. Of

course that reason came into question when an audience member asked both men what could change their mind and Ham essentially said it would be impossible. Regardless, I have trouble finding people who can back their stances, even if the best you can muster is “it is my belief/opinion,” I respect you, because so few remember to ask themselves why. But I digress. The level of respect was also enjoyable in and of itself. The most aggressive thing said was perhaps Nye saying “bring it on”, in respect to any evidence against evolution. I thought it was classy versions of “come at me bro.” The rapid-fire questions at the end unfortunately became very repetitive, both men being entrenched in their beliefs.

The debate has given me a lot to think about. I am not questioning evolution—I find the Young Earth Creationist model to be in large part ridiculous—but rather how I structure my arguments and how I act when talking about charged subjects.

Other topics, such as the indoctrination of secularism in schools, or the idea that moral relativism was birthed out of naturalist viewpoint, or the lives of scientific Christians as compared to creationist scientists, or the question of consciousness and purpose of discovery, or the number of assumptions I actually make in my reasoning and so much more will give me something to think and write about for time to come.

Ultimately, Nye and I are unsatisfied by Ham's origin model, but enjoyed the discussion nonetheless.