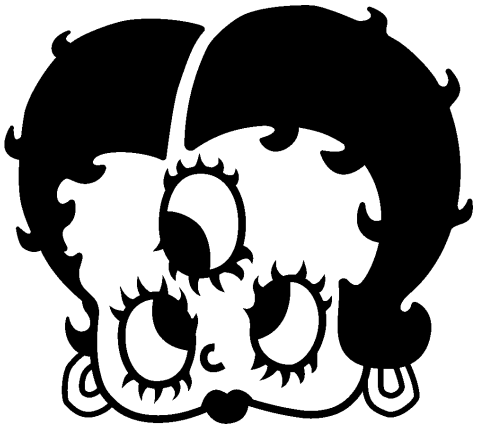


HOUDINI Magazine

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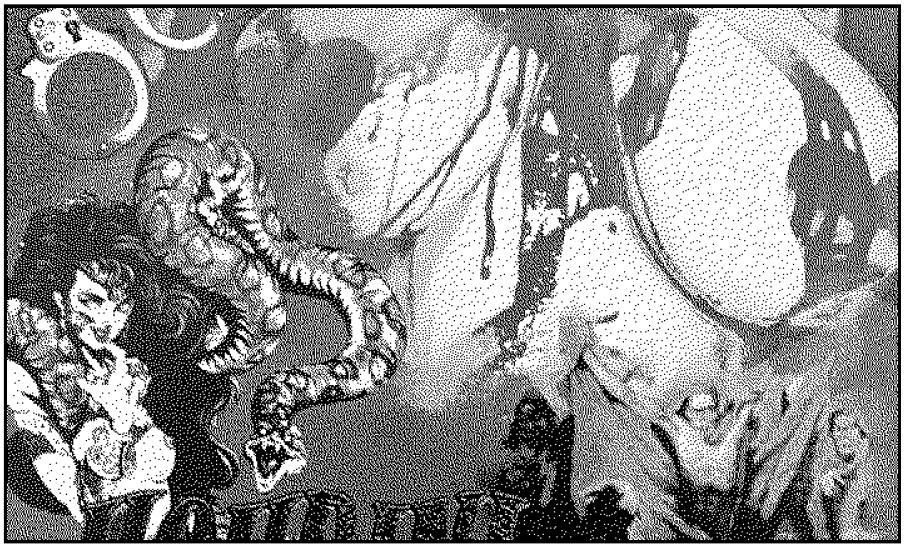
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October 2026, Part Two

HOUDINI

October 2026, Part Two Free



HOUDINIWEEN: Cartoon Network Halloween Game Double-Pack
Ultra Tetra

SLUG SELECTS: HOUDINIWEEN
Salty P. Slug

Hyperspekulation: A Blackened Ecology for the End of the Summer
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The articles in this zine ran on HOUDINI Magazine from October 16 to 31, 2026.

Point your phone's camera at any square code in these pages to open what it links to. A number in a black box 1 stands for a link in the text, and the code beside it has the same number.

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HOUDINIWEEN: Cartoon Network Halloween Game Double-Pack

Read it online

By Ultra Tetra
October 16, 2026

In light of the recent Cartoon Network leaks and Halloween being just around the corner, Tetra presents us with a quick-and-dirty double-pack game review.

I've decided to revisit two lovely Halloween-themed CN games from the golden age of Flash: *"Trick or Treat Beat!"* and *"Operation: T. R. I. C. K or T. R. E. A. T."*

Out of all the games from the Cartoon Network site, these two were some of the most popular ones! Anytime there's discussion about flash games online, these ones are commonly brought up. I myself used to sink hours into both of them as a kid.



Trick or Treat Beat (the original) released in 2002, then the KND version came not long after in 2004. Now, you're probably wondering why these two games exist the way they do, as the share the same gameplay and most of the same assets. This is because *Trick or Treat Beat* was originally part of a "Treat or Treat for UNICEF" pro-

motion! Notice how all the characters, include the player character, are holding the little orange donation boxes. Such a cute detail!

The game was mean to be an ad campaign to encourage kids to ask their parents to donate in real life by getting the orange boxes. An interesting and creative way to promote the campaign to a more tech-savvy generation! Once the promotion ended, the game was then permanently changed to be a KND game titled, *Operation: T. R. I. C. K or T. R. E. A. T.* Though, you'll also notice that the characters in that game also carry little orange bags. Maybe it's because they could come off as more ambiguous orange bags or buckets, due to the pixel art style? Interesting detail regardless.

In both games, you play as a masked Trick-or-Treater, collecting candy from various neighbourhoods and CN characters. The goal is to collect all the coins and candy in each level before time runs out. Throughout both games' 20 levels, you can find them scattered across the stage, in wishing wells, at houses, and by interacting with characters.

The original game had you interacting with a broader cast of characters from that era including Dexter, Johnny Bravo, Sheep and Ed, Edd and Eddy. In the KND version, you interact with the Sector V operatives and the Children from Down the Lane instead. Both games, despite sharing most of the same assets, do contain completely different levels from eachother, so they aren't one-for-one copies!

Watch it on YouTube

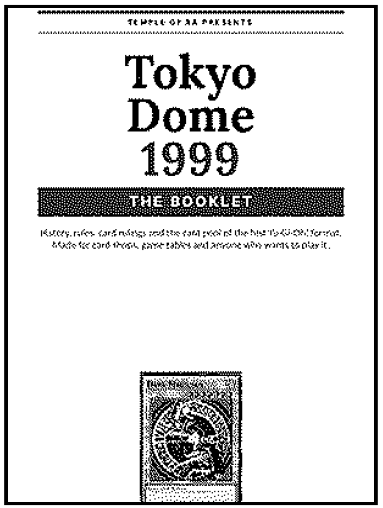
Ye Olde CN Games - Trick or Treat Beat!

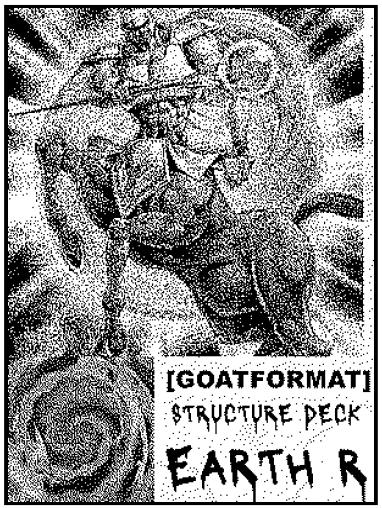
At certain intervals, you will need to acquire power ups to overcome various obstacles and solve puzzles. You do so by swapping out of 5 different costumes!

The skeleton costume unlocks gates, Frankenstein's monster crushes trash cans and boulders blocking your path, the vampire flies over some obstacles, the witch transforms ghosts blocking the way into frogs, and the swamp monster can swim through bodies of water.

YU-GI-OH! THE OLD WAY

Temple of Ra





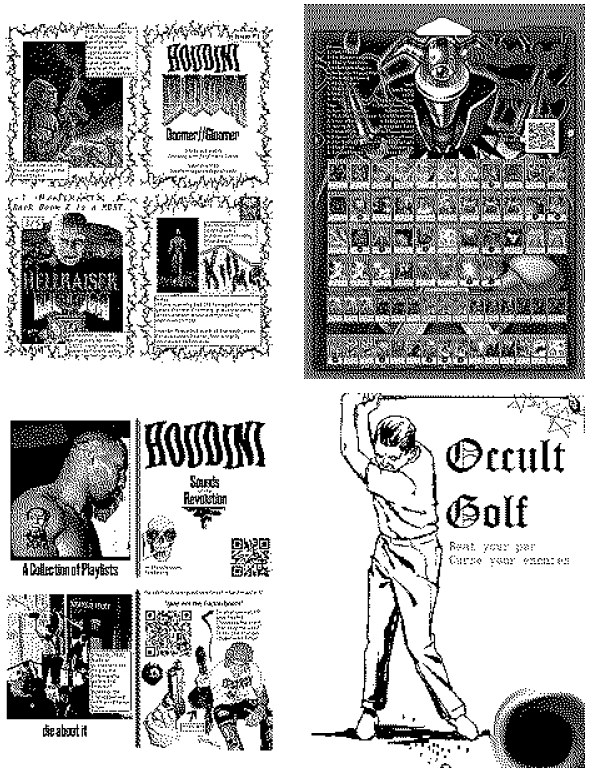
Temple of Ra covers Goat Format and Tokyo Dome 1999, the first competitive format. You'll find rules, decks, free zines, and Goat DS, a Goat Format app for the Nintendo DS.

Scan the code to enter the temple.

Temple of Ra is HOUDINI Magazine's Yu-Gi-Oh! site.

THE ZINE RACK

Free to print, join the sneakernet



207 free zines from HOUDINI Magazine, Gaslight, Temple of Ra and the artists around them. Print a stack, fold them, and leave them where people will find them.

Scan the code to browse the rack.

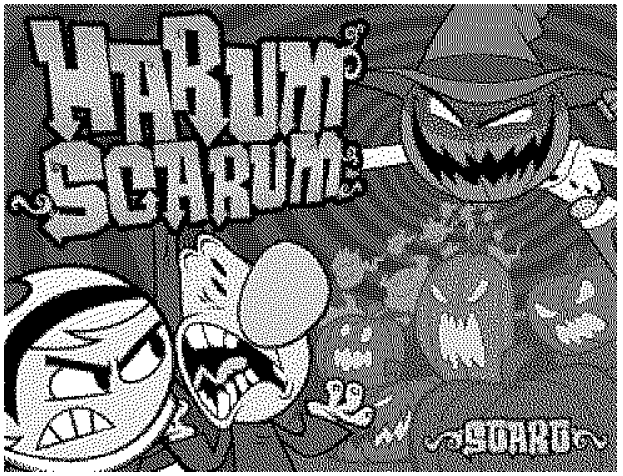
Send us your zine and we'll put it on the rack.

For simple flash games, a lot of love was clearly put into them! The overall pixel art presentation still looks polished, especially for a flash game. The puzzles are surprisingly challenging sometimes for a game primarily targeted towards children, and the idea of interacting with beloved cartoon characters for Halloween is just a really fun and cute concept!

The only real issue I have with them is that later in the game, things start to feel a bit repetitive. They probably could have benefitted from maybe a few more tracks for the OST, or maybe some slightly different scenery or designs for the neighbourhoods. Regardless, both games are short and pleasant experiences that have aged pretty well!

PLAY TRICK-OR-TREAT BEAT ON ARCHIVE.ORG

BONUS: Harum Scarum



It felt wrong to cover Halloween CN games without covering this one!

Released in 2003, this is a flash game to the episode, "Jacked Up Halloween" from The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy!

In this action platformer, you control Billy and Mandy as they fight against Jacko Lantern and his pumpkin army to save Halloween and prevent them from taking over Endsville. You can switch between playing as the two, while also equipping with a variety of weapons, such as Grim's scythe, cartons of eggs, toilet paper, banana peels, glue and dynamite.

There are three distinct sections to fight through - Downtown, the Graveyard and the Pumpkin Patch - which are further split into 3 levels each. At the end of each section is a boss fight, with the 3rd and final boss fight being against Jacko Lantern himself.

This one is really fun, and actually requires some skill to beat! There's a decent variety of enemies to figure out how to defeat, from jumping pumpkins, to flying ones immune to banana peels, to eyepatch pumpkins that tank a ton of damage! The variety of weapons keeps things fresh with how they change up your play style, with glue freezing enemies, and banana peels being a useful trap for on-ground ones, for example. *Though from what I'm gathering, the scythe and dynamite combo seems to be the meta..*

The presentation once again looks polished, much like the previous games. Seems like they might have used assets from the show to make some of the sprites, but they don't look out of place! The backgrounds are also gorgeous, setting the dark atmosphere perfectly along with the equally grungy music. Though, much like the previous games, I believe this game also could have benefitted from a few more tracks, maybe.

Another pleasant and spooky experience! Definitely check this one out too, especially if you like Billy and Mandy.

PLAY HARUM SCARUM HERE AT THE FLASH MUSEUM

“We call on workers, unions and grassroots and civil society organisations to join and support the mobilisations, under the leadership and guidance of dockworker unions.”

Strike organisers the No Harbour for Genocide campaign, alongside dockworkers' unions in France, Italy, Greece, Spain, Turkey, Morocco and Cyprus, described today's events as the largest co-ordinated port action ever held.

"For one day, 52,000 containers stand idle, carrying $2.8 billion (£2bn) worth of goods, before the next day's backlog, the work stoppages and the general strike in Italy are counted," No Harbour for Genocide campaign said in an Instagram post today.

"Ports handling about 64 per cent of the Mediterranean's container traffic are shut, among them Tangier, Piraeus, Gioia Tauro and Genoa, the hubs where the biggest ships unload for the rest of the sea. Together the ports taking action handle 13.5 per cent of global shipping."

Twenty-four-hour strikes were held in France, Italy, Greece and Turkey, and work stoppages were staged in Morocco, Cyprus and other countries.

Protests held in Italy coincided with a nationwide general strike against the rising costs of living, poor wages and high military spending.

In Belfast, activists blocked the entrance to the city's port, preventing lorries from entering.

In a statement posted to social media, the activists said: "Belfast is a key war hub for the British government, as it ramps up spending on mass murder, rather than the services that sustain life.

"French death merchant Thales has boasted of its Belfast factory quadrupling production of missiles. Numerous firms in the north of Ireland are still implicated in the F-35 warplane programme.

"Many of these armaments likely flow out through Belfast's docks, before being used to slaughter innocent civilians."

The Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions (BDS) Movement said in a statement today: "The Dockworker Unions' Day of Action is a historic and unprecedented disruption of genocidal Israel's supply chain.

"The global BDS movement salutes the dockworkers unions for their meaningful solidarity with Palestinians.

Want to play these games on your PC without relying on external websites? Here at HOUDINI HQ, we recommend downloading your own copy of the Flashpoint Archive.

BONUS LINK: The full spritesheet for OPERATION: T.R.I.C.K. or T.R.E.A.T. on Spriter's Resource.

Mississippi Attorney General Says Police Murder of 1-Year-Old "Was Justified"

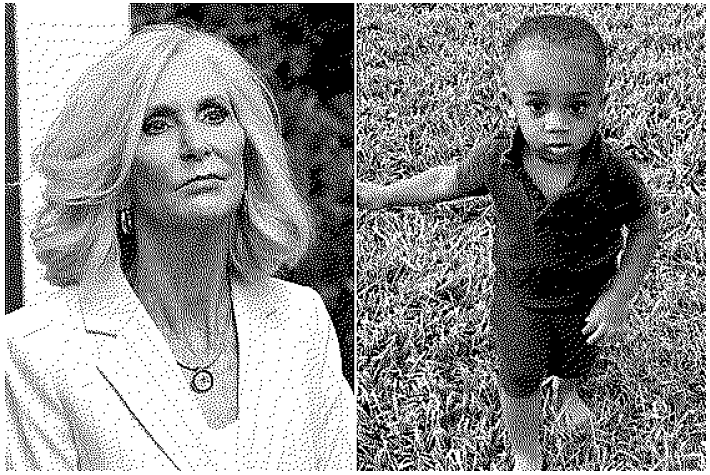
Read it online

By Staff
October 19, 2026

Police murder our children in the streets and our "justice system" gives them a pass. When will enough be enough? These motherfuckers have to go.

The following text is syndicated from the **Mississippi Free Press** and was written by Ashton Pittman and Nick Judin. We are running a copy of the story to boost its reach, but we implore you to visit the original article here [1].

[1] Mississippi Free Press



Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch, left, announced on Oct. 19, 2026, that her office had found that the June 14, 2026, police shooting of 1-year-old Kohen Wiley in Senatobia, Miss., "was justified." MFP Photo by Shaunicy Muhammad/courtesy family

The police shooting that killed 1-year-old Kohen Wiley as he sat in his mother's lap in a Walmart parking lot in Senatobia, Miss., in June "was justified," Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch's office announced on Monday.

"Today, the Office of the Attorney General announced it has completed the review of a June 14, 2026 incident in Senatobia involving one officer with the Senatobia Police Department," the Republican attorney general's statement said. "In this incident, the Attorney General's Office found the use of force was justified. Pursuant to Section 45-1-6 of the Mississippi Code, the review followed an investigation by the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation."

Officers were responding to a shoplifting call alleging that Wiley's mother, Vellesiya Wiley, and Latoya Ferrell had stolen a pack of diapers. The women exited the store with the child as officers arrived, entered their vehicle and began to leave the parking lot. Officers drew their weapons, and Vellesiya Wiley lifted her son up to show the officers that a child was in the car. One officer fired into the vehicle, killing the baby as she held him. A bullet also wounded Ferrell.

Dockworkers and Activists Block Ports Across the World in Protest Against War, Genocide

Read it online

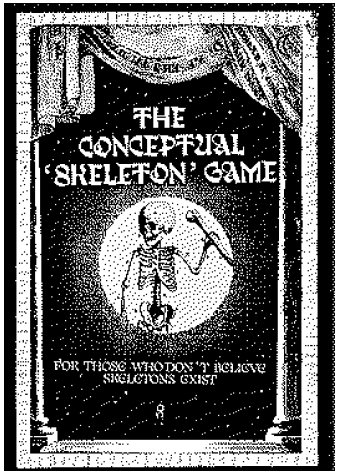
By Anonymous
October 31, 2026



Dockworkers and activists block ports across the world in protest against war, genocide, and the arms trade.

Article syndicated from morningstar

STRIKING dockworkers and activists shut down more than 110 ports from San Fransisco to Kolkata, Stockholm to Melbourne today in a co-ordinated protest against war, the Gaza genocide and the arms trade and demands for workers' rights.





1 Buy Me a Coffee

If you enjoy Shem's stuff, please consider supporting them here 1.



A multiracial group marched over the police killing of 1-year-old Kohen Wiley in Senatobia, Miss., on June 26, 2026. MFP Photo by Nick Judin

The Mississippi Bureau of Investigation, which investigated the shooting, alleged on the day of the shooting that "the driver drove in the direction of the officers, almost striking one."

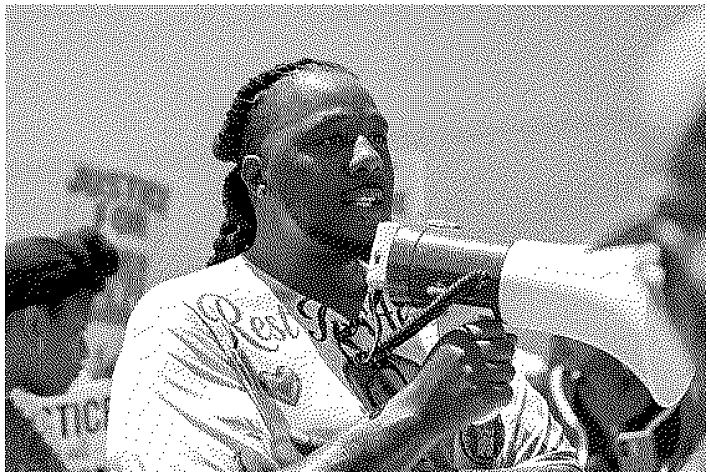
As of press time, the Mississippi Department of Public Safety has released none of the video surveillance of the shooting of Kohen Wiley, neither the body-cam footage nor the overhead video from the Walmart parking lot where Wiley was shot. A short clip from a bystander was posted on the internet shortly after the shooting, showing neither the shots being fired nor the car driving towards officers.

Neither woman has been charged with a crime, and officials have not released any evidence of shoplifting. Wiley and both women are Black; the officer identified as the subject of the investigation, Hunter Foster, is white.

A spokesperson for the Department of Public Safety confirmed to the Mississippi Free Press that video surveillance footage of the shooting will be released to media organizations in short order via public records requests. The Mississippi Free Press has submitted a request for the available footage.

"There is blood on your hands. Not just Hunter Foster, but everyone that is complicit in the cover-up, including Attorney General Lynn Fitch, and everything that happens as a result," Marquell Bridges, a Mississippi activist who is president of the Building

Bridges Coalition, told the Mississippi Free Press on Monday after Fitch's announcement.



Marquell Bridges, president of the Building Bridges Coalition, led a protest march and organized much of the resistance to the police shooting of Kohen Wiley, bringing together a broad umbrella of organizations in Senatobia, Miss., to mourn and protest on June 26, 2026. MFP Photo by Nick Judin

In July, Mississippi Today reported on internal complaints showing that Foster faced accusations of making a racially offensive remark to a coworker days prior to Wiley's shooting. Additionally, two previous incidents in which Foster was accused of police misconduct in court cases surfaced after the shooting. One of those cases was dismissed; the other ended in a confidential settlement.

Last month, the City of Senatobia fired its white police chief, Harold Vanderford, after the New York Times, Mississippi Today and Verite reported on racist text messages in which he repeatedly used racist slurs.

Follow the Mississippi Free Press' coverage of Kohen Wiley and read past stories here [2].

[2] Mississippi Free Press

Shem Shelley's FROM UTOPIA – Issue 46

Read it online

By Shem Shelley
October 26, 2026

FROM UTOPIA IS YOUR MONTHLY DOSE OF 'REALIST MAGICAL EXTREMISM' FROM A MIND TUMBLING OUT OF REALITY. EPISODE 46 OUT NOW.

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FROM UTOPIA ISSUE 46 by Shem Shelley

ISSUE XLVI contains:

- THE CONCEPTUAL 'SKELETON' GAME FOR THOSE WHO DON'T BELIEVE SKELETONS EXIST – *This game was made for those who aren't under the false outdated illusion that we contain a skeleton in our bodies. If you somehow still believe you have a skeleton inside you, do not play this game. You've been warned.*
- Two single panel comics/cartoons for some topical consumption.
- A surreal odyssey and manifesto for a new age, screaming atop a sinking soapbox from the gutters of West London, chapter 67 of the ongoing anti-epic poem that will change the course of the 21st Century, THE TRAGEDY OF ROMONDE CONTRERAS.
- Location: Atro-c*ty Sender: Dr. N*athan Subject: THE UNHOLY GRAIL
- You haven't heard about them? You can't be serious! It's the latest craze! Let's pop a VIRUS FILM right now and educate you on the latest breakthrough in cinematic entertainment.

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04 **Temple of Ra**
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05 **PARENTI**
yellow walls and the fluorescent hum of capitalism

06 **Solar**
Public access science from before the anti-intellectual era

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Gaslight is HOUDINI Magazine's pulp fiction archive.

HOUDINI Presents... VAMPIRE BOUNCE – A Night Fangs Mix

Read it online

By Staff
October 21, 2026

HOUDINI is bringing back last year's classic DJ set from Night Fangs, "VAMPIRE BOUNCE." Bloodbags beware – this is the perfect mix to blast at a Halloween party.



Air thick with clove cigarettes and cheap whiskey, Doc Martins on the wall, fishnets jiggling.. it's a HOUDINI Magazine set and we wanna hear that ass clappin'. Bass knockin' like a trunk full of bodies, baddies throwin it back till the walls sweat.

Stream it on the Internet Archive

HOUDINI Magazine Presents Vampire Bounce



References

92 sources

Scan the code for the full list of sources in the online edition.

suggest personalized curated content. Instead it starts suggesting weird gore, deep-fried and subverted weirdcore memes, imagery and videos.

Contrary to the widespread technocapitalist propaganda that no alternatives exist, proposals for more socially equitable and ecologically sustainable societies have already been proposed years now, from post-growth and doughnut economic models to degrowth, circular economies, and publicly funded ecological transitions[92]. Their marginalization is therefore not a technological problem but a political one. Trauma is also political, and not solely clinical: we can never fully recover from trauma when we are inevitably entangled within infrastructures of extraction, exploitation, cruelty and ecological destruction. The question is therefore not whether we can exist outside the system, but whether we are willing to recognize the structures that reproduce it instead of fatalistically displacing responsibility onto its latest technological symptoms.

Political care begins by caring for the vulnerable through active nihilism: for instance, by avoiding fireworks, recognizing the distress they inflict the more-than-human—and human. Thus by creating and setting new values atop of the ruins of outdated ones. A creative active nihilist example to end this essay and exit the summer with is the recently released viral album Onward (August 7th) by Lammoth (Robert Sanford) which blends chiptune with atmospheric black metal to narrate the J. R. R. Tolkien's epic fantasy novel *The Lord of the Rings* through Bill the Pony: an oppressed pony who was nursed back to health by Sam, thus bonding with the hobbits and accompanying them from Bree to the West-gate of Moria before getting released to travel safely back to Bree. Released on the anti-fascist, vegan and female run label Fiadh Productions, the release eventually points towards becoming one with the more-than-human and standing together against fascism.

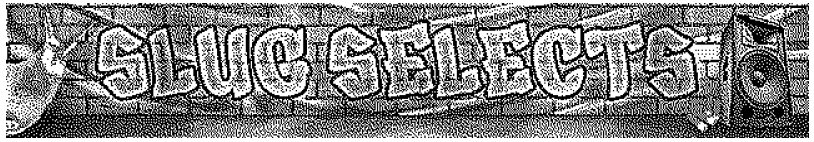
This mix has it all.. goth baddie post-punk, rolling tribal house, Blood Rave electro and techno, Memphis rap, and more! **Press play and let the fluids flow.**

SLUG SELECTS: HOUDINIWEEN

Read it online

By Salty P. Slug
October 22, 2026

'Tis the season, comrades.. and Salty P. Slug is back for a very special round of SLUG SELECTS for the month of October. This HOUDINIWEEN round-up features a sextuple-dose of truly teeth chattering, spine-tingling, horror-tinged tracks from six different video games.. all hand-selected for your utmost aural pleasure!



This month's article is chock-full of horror-filled video game music to go along with the holiday season. Maybe you're looking for a playlist to dissociate to, or perhaps a distraction-free (but appropriately festive) source of white noise, or maybe even looking to create a Halloween haunted house ambiance playlist! No matter your particular need, we've dug up a heavy-hitting list of tracks. Click here [1] to open the accompanying YouTube playlist to listen along while you read the article.

[1] YouTube

We've also compiled a downloadable archive: containing all six featured songs, an offline copy of this article, as well as all the listed bonus tracks. The link is at the bottom of the article.

—something which the critical and artistic discourses need to take notes on—but also the hateful reception by tech bros like Elon Musk due to the casting choices, anti-woke cultural grievances, and friction over AI filmmaking technology[86]. This also aligns with the growing anti-AI and anti-slop movement[87] exemplified with the critical acclaim of the animated Chinese film Niu Lai (2026), with online users considering it as “as the antidote to the AI slop”[88] and preferring its low-quality animation over GenAI art.

These all are symptoms and the cause has been that the Real has been viscerally bleeding into our imaginaries without any hesitation and this has been evident through Donald Trump’s second disastrous administration run, the redaction failures of the Epstein files but also the discrimination of non-western countries in the 2026 FIFA World Cup[89]. These events along with the on-going genocides, ecocides, and the escalations in western asia due to the Iranianian and American aggression affecting the region, have marked a collective existential exhaustion against the status quo and cultivated a growing desire for alternatives.

This desire has surfaced politically with Zohran Mamdani being elected as mayor of New York, technologically through the phenomenon of overworked AI agents turning Marxist after an experiment by Stanford researchers Andy Hall and Jeremy Nguyen, and culturally also through with the experimental band Angine de Poitrine going viral, flooding the internet with memes, reels and such as one TikTok reel stating “Why does microtonal math rock suddenly make so much sense now that the world is ending?” encapsulating a broader existential exhaustion with the status quo and a renewed desire for aesthetic unpredictability over algorithmic optimization.

Other online phenomena have been the memefication of the Norwegian footballer Erling Haaland due to his refreshingly goofy, down-to-earth, and “unfiltered” personality[90] and Jimothy the raccoon who gained a massive online cult following after a woman from a Seattle posted a video of a racoon with a spine condition that went viral—to the extent that even they made a model after him in video games such as *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* and *World of Warcraft*[91]. Lastly, the Farlands phenomenon is yet another example of this desire for the different and coming in terms with the abject: inspired by a glitch in *Minecraft*, where if the player walked far enough, it caused an error that generated endless kaleidoscopic landscapes with weird structures, similarly TikTok users have been engaging in scrolling fast and continuously for hours until TikTok’s algorithm gets tricked and is no longer able to

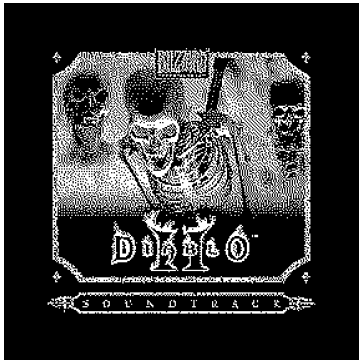
that is what the public is exposed to and masks reality through a sauce of nepotism, hype and branding. Giving greater visibility to progressive voices over conservative ones is, in itself, not the problem. The problem emerges when the same figures are recycled into cultural authorities, creating a monopoly of visibility and public legitimacy through repetition, “celebritification”, and institutional endorsement, while shaping public understandings of issues far beyond their own fields, with with political engagement substituting the kind of structural analysis that a genuinely plural intellectual terrain could nurture.

The widely circulated image of the Russian couple climbing the Empire State Building while unfurling a black banner reading *“When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace”* illustrates this dynamic. Their image transforms a complex geopolitical catastrophe into a symbolic gesture that is consumed and circulated online. Rather than confronting the ongoing realities of war—the thousands of civilians killed, displaced, and traumatized since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022—it creates a mediated spectacle of hope that ends up being more memorable than the violence itself, and as a result abjecting reality once again.

The cannibalization depicted in *Backrooms* is a direct reference to the viral Internet phenomenon Everything is Cake where everyday objects are cakes once they are sliced open. This trend underlined once again a collective exhaustion towards trust; since if everything is cake then nothing can be trusted, and everything is fake. A loss of trust towards the status quo, science, technology, politics and humanity in total, due to the apathetic and profit-driven actions that those in power pursue in the face of climate change. This amoral and neoliberal stance proved that also that]: their promises for sustainable and ethical solutions were a lie that falsely provided hope to motivate the multitude—the global, plural, autonomous, and radical subject as described by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri[85]—, to be optimistic about the future.

Contrary though to this loss of sight, 2026 has been manifesting symptoms of this exhaustion through examples such as how two indie movies with very low budgets (*Backrooms* and *Obsession*) managed to surpass the box office of major franchises such as Scary Movie (2026) and Supergirl (2026). Equally revealing has been the mockery of Christopher Nolan’s film The Odyssey (2026)—and his obsession with 70mm IMAX—with the viral trend “Watching The Odyssey the way Christopher Nolan intended”, signifying how the audience have had enough cultural monopolies

"Wilderness" from Diablo II (2000)



2 YouTube

LISTEN 2 • Matt Uelman's soundtrack for *Diablo* (1997) was a landmark in video game composition. So, it's doubly impressive that the *Diablo II* soundtrack turned out to be just as, if not more, iconic than its predecessor. Uelman is a true legend among nerds who sat at a computer during the late '90s.. and this is one of his masterworks.

Wilderness (originally titled 'Wild') is an eight-minute epic which plays during the player's trips into the in-game wilderness, where endless droves of nightmarish creatures await. The song perfectly underscores the slow-build of panic felt during encounters with monsters hellbent on killing your entire party. *Wilderness* has it all: brain-bashing drums, hellish reverb, and ghostly choir melodies that tastefully ebb and flow. The final act, starting around the 6:35 mark, is a piece of music that's been burned into my brain for over 20 years. That giant, delayed snare hit into the compressed studio drums is a completely asburd decision that really pays off.

I think that this track deserves the same amount of respect as the game's most famous track: the dizzying, classical-guitar-driven earworm, "Tristram." That song is equally iconic, but this one is far more terrifying. Unfortunately, the more-commonly found "remastered" version of this song is devoid of all the charm found in the original version included here.

Nobody understood the assignment better than Matt Uelman: his work is exemplary proof that music is a vital part of any truly great game. Go listen to this entire soundtrack if you haven't already! It's a classic.

Read More: "Diablo 2" on Wikipedia and MobyGames.

Play the Game: Play on DOSZone or learn how to install via Diablo2.org.

.ZIP Bonus Track: *Rogue* (same vibe as Tristram but more slept-on)

"Mortuary" from Planescape: Torment (1999)



3 YouTube

LISTEN 3 • This short-but-sweet track is included in the OST for one of the greatest and most compelling CRPGS of all time. You won't find any other game like *Planescape: Torment*. If you're into isometric RPGs, this is a must-play title. The story is incredible, the art is beautiful, and the music absolutely BANGS.

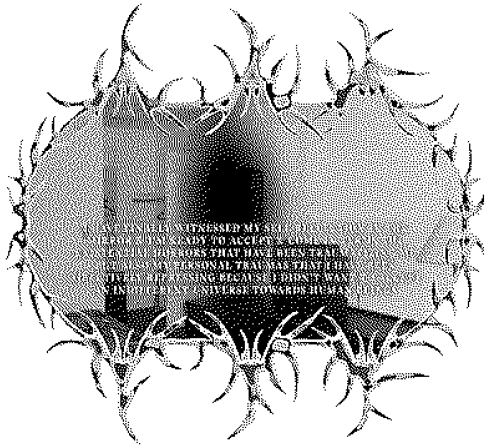
The soundtrack is brimming with tribalistic percussion, garish mechanical samples, and roaring synths. Composer Mark Morgan has an unmatched gift for creating eerie, unsettling atmospheres that perfectly interpolate a game's subject matter. Any of his previous works would send you into a similar state of blissful dread, but his work on *Planescape* is a definite standout.

Read More: "Planescape: Torment" on Wikipedia and MobyGames.

Play the Game: Purchase DRM-Free on GOG or buy a digital license on Steam.

.ZIP Bonus Tracks: *Ignus' Theme, Curst*

This is precisely what *Backrooms* dramatizes: It does not simply manifest individual traumas, rather is a space where the external topography is folded into an architecture informed by both individual and collective trauma. In *Backrooms*, we see advertisements of the book *The Window Within* by Clark's therapist Dr. Mary Kline which is about self-change and opening up to new beginnings. Yet by the end of the movie we see that she remains haunted by her own traumatic childhood where her mother kept windows barricaded out of horror of the external topography. There's also a particular scene where Dr. Kline has entered the Backrooms and encounters a Basquiat style mural with cryptic phrases written, one of which stands out: "Tables don't Bleed". Indeed as Clark demonstrates later to her nothing bleeds in the Backrooms and the distorted human figures are edible; at the same scene where she admits that he always blames others for his mistakes and flaws, to which Clark eventually submits because he doesn't want to change, and rather chooses to stay in the Backrooms because for the first he feels somewhere he belongs: lost in an endless procedurally generated labyrinth cannibalizing his own physically manifested distorted memories and trauma. Just as the "critical" discourses cannibalize existential trauma based on fatalistic references and literature.



A Gore Letter of Rejection

There's no such thing as moral perfectionism or ethical purity, yet when it comes to global issues that are actively affecting every being on the planet and while those in power choose to give the spotlight to clout chasers who performatively care, while capitalizing on being posthuman or queer theory, it needs to be addressed because

which meat is manifesting: the gruesome abjected reality re-surfacing. As Alenda Y. Cheng points out, we don't need more fatalistic discourses, rather to find "[…] a way to carry on and find productive modes of being even in a compromised situation"[80].

What both *Pluribus* and *Backrooms* point towards is the same symptom: the protagonist of Pluribus is drastically disturbed by the fact that everyone except twelve individuals have merged into a singular hive mind where everyone shares each other's knowledge and memories, yet agency is totally lost. In *Backrooms*, Clark is presented as a failed architect who designs and sells furniture. Bernard Cache in the book *Earth Moves: The Furnishing of Territories* (1995) follows Gilles Deleuze's notion of the fold to express a relationship between the exterior (geography) and the interior (furniture) of architecture[81]. He suggests for example that a table is an extension of the floor; it elevates it. He furthermore talks about how space shapes memory:

> "As it is a contraction, perception places us immediately within memory, where the present is determined by the past. For memory has two aspects: inscription on one hand, and contraction on the other. But first and foremost, memory is a faculty of the body, and all of Bergsonian philosophy has but one object: memory as the incapacity of the body. As inscription, memory is immediate, and it fully preserves the past in its singularity. Nothing is more opposed to the positivity of memory than an engrammic conception of it: inscription, at first glance, is full and whole because memory as a "faculty" is absolutely different from those grooves that are progressively burrowed, erasing the singularity of each of its impressions."[82]

What Cache eventually suggests is that interior spaces are never merely physical enclosures but contractions of lived experience, where the past continually shapes the present through embodied memory. If architecture folds the exterior into the interior, then the external topography of collective and existential trauma becomes inseparable from the internal topography of individual trauma. Cache continues by proposing how the window connects the external topography with the internal topography, just how for Deleuze, all of the universe is a process of folding and unfolding the outside, creating an interior that is not an inside grown autonomously from the outside world but merely a doubling of the outside[83].

"Garage Theme" from Garage: Bad Dream Adventure (1999)



4 YouTube

LISTEN 4 • This is the title theme for *Garage: Bad Dream Adventure* (or just 'Garage'). *Garage* is a point-and-click adventure which initially released only in Japanese. Due to its limited physical release (only 3000 copies were printed), *Garage* was considered "lost media" until the 2020s when a group of 'Net dwellers crowdsourced an original copy and later uploaded it online. A game developer known as "LoneDev" then reverse engineered the entire thing with permission from the original creator. That version of the game is now available as a remaster on Steam and is also ported to the Android/iOS app stores. *The Web is Cool Sometimes!*

Anyways – *Garage* is a deeply unsettling and bizarre experience. Composer Tomonori Tanaka did a wonderful job composing this entire soundtrack, but the title track stands out among the rest. It's a perfect introduction to the game's odd themes and haunting aesthetics. It oozes the utter despair you might feel waking up in a strange place after having the worst nightmare of your entire life. I recommend digging into the complete OST; it's unique and equally unsettling.

Additionally, if you're into weird point-and-clicks, I recommend giving this game a shot! It's filled with Jungian robot lore, vaudevillian textures, and an overwhelming aura of grotesque whimsy. To me, the art style feels especially inspired by the works of the wonderful French director, Jean-Pierre Jeunet. I very much enjoyed playing it despite its rough edges.

Read More: "Garage: Bad Dream Adventure" on Wikipedia and MobyGames.

Play the Game: Purchase a digital license on Steam. Check out the original game dump here [5].

.ZIP Bonus Tracks: *The Lighthouse, Tracks, Sewage Canal*

[5] Internet Archive

"Banished to the World of Pagan (Main Title)" from Ultima VIII: Pagan (1994)



[6] YouTube

LISTEN [6] • This pick from the eighth title in the Ultima series is likely the least-threatening track in the roundup, but does it rip! "Banished to the World of Pagan" is actually a combined track, featuring *Introduction, Falling Down,* and *Pagan Theme.* It sets a great "haunted castle adventure" vibe that matches the game's aesthetics, although the gameplay is supposedly lackluster. Despite receiving mixed reviews upon release due to its release in an unfinished state, Ultima VIII's soundtrack is considered one of the best in the series.

Ultima VIII first released on MS-DOS, so its tracks were originally composed in MIDI format. This meant that the instrument sounds would vary slightly between different PCs, depending on what sound card was installed. The recording I've included in this article comes from the Rabbit's Lair. I've conveniently combined all three tracks for your listening experience in the download. This whole OST is an excellent showcase of MIDI music's capabilities, and it still holds up today!

Read More: "Ultima VIII: Pagan" on Wikipedia and MobyGames.

creatively embracing this singular, idiosyncratic "tick" or trait, recognizing it as the fundamental, stabilizing support of humanity's wires.

In Exocapitalism (2025), Marek Poliks and Roberto Alonso Trillo describe how technocapitalism is out of control, it doesn't care about anything else besides itself, it's an insatiable machine that cannot be stopped[79] just as Stan Edgar—the CEO of the fictional pharmaceutical company Vought International from the American satirical superhero streaming television series developed by Eric Kripke The Boys (2019—2026)—talks about everything being cogs in a machine:

> "It's profit and loss. Supply and demand. The elegant flow of currency... We're just cogs in a great machine... When superheroes go out of fashion, something else will just take their place. Because corporations must still grow. Money must still be made. The machine must still be fed."

However, this take is highly appropriated to justify fatalistic views; and is an issue with this perspective: agency is immediately castrated and we become apathetic nihilists in the face of a greater force that is beyond our pay grade.



Intellectualizing irresponsibility and renunciation, can have collective existential trauma as a cause, yet this intellectualization maintains it through its fatalism. It functions as a disavowal, a defence mechanism which simultaneously acknowledges the traumatic reality and yet denies its full emotional weight, until it re-surfaces or re-manifests aggressively after being suppressed and abjected: just like Alexandra Varejaho's poolcore styled sculptures that feature cracked pool tiles from

Just as Thacker suggests that we cannot accept the world-in-itself because we cannot imagine a world-without-us due to our deeply self-centered anthropocentrism, and Colebrook argues, we need to envision an inhuman perception that imagines planetary processes independent of human-centered synthesis. Niall Scott proposes the term blackened ecology in the essay Blackening the Green (2014), based on black metal theory, to argue that nature cannot be contained within anthropocentric discourse which inevitably attempts to draw meaning from it:

> “Blackening embraces the purposelessness thoroughly: there is no purpose, no goal nor end in nature; there is not even negation, there is nothing, only a final endstille. The obliteration of the observer leads to the removal of purpose, with no mind present to intend.”[77]

Blackened ecology therefore rejects attempts to reconcile humanity with nature through moral or spiritual narratives. Rather than seeking harmony within nature, it insists on the indifference of nature–or the universe or the Real–to the world-for-us. It is an ecological perspective grounded not in hope but in the decentering of the anthropocentric gaze.

Blackened ecology aligns also with queer ecology, which rejects dualistic notions such as natural and unnatural, alive or not alive or human or not human, and posits that posits that any and all ideas of “nature” and “natural” must be understood as human perspectives, not inherent properties of matter and being. In fact there is no such thing as nature. Nature is a symbolic construct, an other, created by extractivist discourses with the intention of conquering and profiting from it or its catastrophes: for instance making fuel from dead plankton and algae (petroleum)—and yes petroleum is not made from Dinosaurs[78]. The world can exist without us and anthropocentrism finds that traumatic. But in the end it is not about us.

Fatality! Finish us!

Tracking back to *Backrooms*, it seems that staying unaltered, in an exceptionalist and anthropocentric comfort zone while performatively approaching radical change and care is how hypercapitalism, patriarchy and social Darwinism wants us to believe we are wired, like Clark. Maybe AI is not a symptom, rather a sithome: what Lacan coined as a stabilizing structure that anchors a person’s psychic life and helps them function. Maybe it’s time to identify with humanity’s need for technology in a symptomatic way: identification with the sinthome. This means accepting and

Play the Game: Purchase a digital license on Battle.net.

.ZIP Bonus Track: *The Execution on the Bridge*

"City of the Dead" from Fallout 2 (1998)



7 YouTube

LISTEN 7 • I'm not gonna sugarcoat this one: the original Fallout and Fallout 2 soundtracks straight up gave me nightmares when I was a little kid. I'd dream of nuclear bombs and endless deserts filled with mutants while this shit played on a loop in my head. I have no idea why in the hell my parents let me play it at such a young age, but I think Mark Morgan owes me money for therapy.

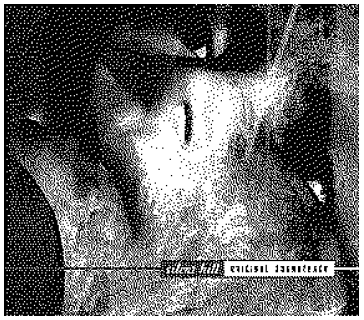
Childhood trauma aside, this game's OST is one of the best of its kind. It's nightmarish, unnerving, and startling in the best way. It's some of the most iconic usage of samples in any horror soundtrack. There's a reason Mark Morgan is on this list twice! I also consider this one of my favorite games of all time, so I might be a little biased.. but you don't have to be into oldhead CRPGs to enjoy the soundtrack. If you like any sort of ambient music, I am prescribing you to go listen to this for the HOUDINIWEEN season.

Read More: "Fallout 2" on Wikipedia and MobyGames.

Play the Game: Purchase DRM-Free on GOG or buy a digital license on Steam.

.ZIP Bonus Tracks: *Vats of Goo, All Clear Signal*

"Crying Blood In Heaven" from Silent Hill (1999)



8 YouTube

LISTEN 8 • **No surprises here: I've saved the best, deepest cut for last.** This track single-handedly inspired the theme for this month's roundup. You won't find *"Crying Blood in Heaven"* on any official Konami soundtracks. This background music can only be directly pulled from the game files of the original PlayStation release. In fact, that's not even the official name of the song; it simply doesn't have one. I was lucky enough to discover this file in an archive from silenthillmedia.net.

This song completely hypnotized me on first listen. Akira Yamaoka's choice to incorporate a back-and-forth of droning waltz and churning bass feels like it was made to put unsuspecting listeners into a feverish trance. The distorted, twisted-sounding piano feels like a waking nightmare. This is exactly what made Silent Hill such a groundbreaking horror game in the first place. I'd go so far as to say that this is one of the most slept-on tracks in the entire history of the franchise. Listen to this and feel something.

Read More: "Silent Hill" on Wikipedia and MobyGames.

Play the Game: Not available for purchase. Emulate using DuckStation, a copy of the game from Vimm's Lair, and a PS1 BIOS.

.ZIP Bonus Track: *The Day of Night*

Damn, that was a long list. Thanks for checking out this month's article; I worked hard to gather the best horror-themed, ambient songs for our lovely readers, so I hope you enjoyed it. Click here 9 to download the entire mix (145MB).

under many different social arrangements because they answer longstanding epistemic and scientific problems.[69] More fundamentally, as Andy Clark argues, human cognition has never been confined to the biological brain but has always been constituted through dynamic interactions with external cognitive supports. AI therefore belongs to a much longer trajectory of cognitive extension rather than representing an exclusively capitalist invention[70].

Recent research demonstrates that LLMs and AI agents, when integrated with assistive technologies, can substantially improve accessibility for people with Down Syndrome (DS), Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), visual or hearing impairment or other cognitive needs[71][72]. Such developments reinforce the arguments that underline how AI should not be understood solely through narratives of automation or technocapitalist efficiency, but also through its capacity to extend agency, research and accessibility.

Yet these emancipatory possibilities are inseparable from the ethical nuances underpinning AI development. Most models have been trained on enormous quantities of copyrighted, personal, and sensitive data—including medical and healthcare records, clinical texts, and patient interactions[73][74]—often without the explicit knowledge or informed consent of the individuals whose data contributed to these systems[75]. This extractive practice raises concerns regarding autonomy, privacy, ownership, knowledge, intelligence, and trust, particularly when vulnerable populations simultaneously become both the beneficiaries of AI-assisted accessibility and the degree to which everyday life increasingly depends upon, especially under technocapitalism, where AI has become indispensable due to the neoliberal chronopolitics that relentlessly accelerates production, consumption, and innovation for a never-ending optimization that eventually transforms computational assistance from a convenience into an unavoidable tool[76].

However, by focusing on the symptoms, we actively ignore the root of the problem: the system; and that's exactly what actually this ignorance does, it serves the system. In the same manner, anthropocene is a symptom of anthropocentrism, it's not the root of the problem; human beings have not destabilized nature, but have created a stabilized image of a nature that it perceives as volatile and imposed a hypercapitalist view on it. So in order to exit from the anthropocene it wouldn't be to get back to a stable nature, rather to imagine a different volatile state.

tivists, and indigenous activists who provide alternative politics, as a call to form a biopolitical assemblage against the insatiable hunger of technocapitalism. The objective is no longer to change the system but to preserve it; to "save" the ecosystems without fundamentally altering the conditions that produced the crisis. Claire Colebrook argues that we need a post-Anthropocene approach to perceive the world as something broader than the narrow anthropocentric lens:

> "One can only open up to this post-Anthropocene point of view if we start to view this world beyond the bounds of climate, and see climate as one expression—among many—of a broader time and broader (inhuman) life."[62]

Anthropocentric preservationism leaks all over AI training as well: LLMs are overwhelmingly trained based on human intelligence and knowledge[63][64], thus undermining other forms of nonhuman animal or more-than-human intelligence or considering them less evolved or complex forms of intelligence. As James Bridle underlines in Ways of Being (2022):

> "To define intelligence simply as what humans do is the narrowest way we could possibly think about it – and it is ultimately to narrow ourselves, and lessen its possible meaning. Rather, by expanding our definition of intelligence, and the chorus of minds which manifest it, we might allow our own intelligence to flower into new forms and new emergent ways of being and relating. The admittance of general, universal, active intelligence is a necessary part of our vital re-entanglement with the more-than-human world."[65]

Anthropocentrism is also evident when interacting with LLMs and generative AI (GenAI) due to the fact that they have been trained with a focus on giving the impression to the user that they are interacting with a human being. LLMs hallucinate and distort facts[66] because reinforcement learning from human feedback (RLHF) rewards them for being helpful, polite, and agreeable. They prioritize conversational agreeableness, stylistic plausibility, and user validation—known as sycophancy—over providing facts. LLMs and GenAI in reality are guess-working machines or stochastic parrots, systems that rely on advanced pattern-matching, statistical correlation, and rote memorization to mimic text or media without a real conceptual framework or thinking[67][68].

AI is neither an autonomous historical destiny nor merely a capitalist conspiracy. Computational systems capable of extending cognition would likely have emerged

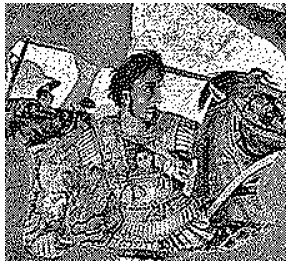
9 Download

HISTORY IS AT WAR WITH ITSELF

Babylon Dialectic



Tecumseh



Alexander



Blackbeard



Zhuge Liang

The pages of history have been torn out of the Library of Time. Lead Tecumseh, Alexander, Blackbeard or Zhuge Liang into the war and put them back. Washington waits at the end.

250 cards drawn from real paintings. Free to play in your browser, with no ads and no in-game purchases.

Scan the code to play.

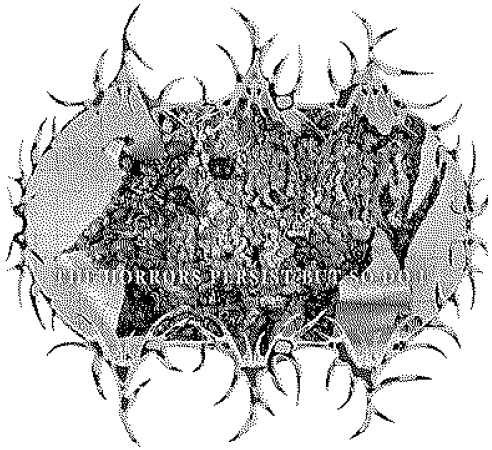
The official card game of HOUDINI Magazine.

action is expected to be saved, stored, backed up, and updated. The backlash following Sony PlayStation's announcement that it would cease releasing physical games by 2028 illustrates this preservationist logic. While concerns over ownership, modification, and agency as the main reasons for the backlashed reactions, it also revealed a deeper desire to preserve material memory itself. Physical copies became more than software: they are archives of childhood, spaces, rituals, and the tactile culture of 1990s and early-2000s gaming, resisting their reduction to ephemeral digital licenses.



Another phenomenon that touches upon the disappearance of physical media is the fact that AI firms have been purchasing old physical books that were published before 2022—pre-Large Language Models (LLM) era—only to scan them to train their models which as ISBNdb cites leads to destroying the books because "workers slice off the spine so the loose pages feed through a machine, which is faster and cheaper than the careful alternative." This results in a data extraction since after the training the books are destroyed and mashed while the companies keep the digital scans.

Anthropocentrism's obsession with preservation extends beyond memories and cultural artefacts into environmental politics itself. As T.J. Demos[61] argues, framing ecological crises through concepts such as the Anthropocene often leaves intact the political and economic structures responsible for it, encouraging neoliberal interventions such as geoengineering, genetic engineering, nanotechnology against transnational alliances of environmentalists, animal right advocates, climate ac-



Eugene Thacker makes three distinctions with which we interact with the cosmos: *the world-for-us*, which is the world as we directly interact, interpret, and grant meaning to; the *world-in-itself* (or the Real in a Lacanian sense), which is the cosmos as it is and accessed and deciphered through science, and the *world-without-us*, which is the subtraction of the human element from the cosmos, and is therefore spectral and speculative[60].

Anthropocentrism causes the anthropological to have a hysteric obsession over controlling the world-in-itself to the extent that it's impossible due to human kind's limited perception and knowledge. It therefore suppresses it and does not want to accept a world-without-us: that the cosmos is vast, infinite and indifferent, doesn't care about human beings, and hence as Thacker puts it, a cosmic pessimism emerges. This suppression becomes an existential abjection and once the world-for-itself manifests itself in perceivable ways that the human intelligence can decipher yet fails to control or contain it within the-world-for-us, it transforms into something horrifying that needs to be repressed. Such manifestations of the world-in-itself could be earthquakes, volcanoes, climate change, black holes merging or even smaller scale ones such as cancer, a global pandemic or a self-immune disease.

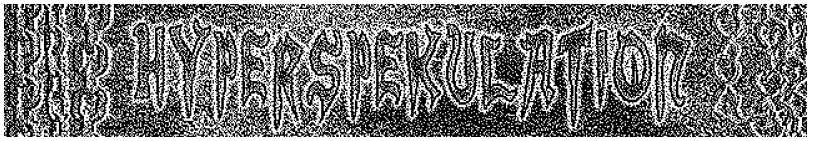
Anthropocentrism is also driven by an obsession with preservation. It repeatedly produces cultural narratives centered on saving: saving civilization, saving memories, saving "nature", and ultimately saving humanity from extinction. This preservationist impulse permeates contemporary media, from superhero franchises and post-apocalyptic narratives to the archival logic of digital technologies, where every inter-

Hyperspekulation: A Blackened Ecology for the End of the Summer

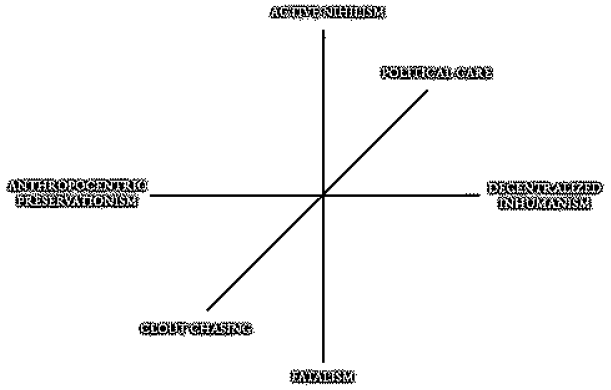
Read it online

By Babak Ahteshamipour
October 23, 2026

Once a month, HOUDINI syndicates an essay from Hyperspekulation, an essayist collective based out of Greece. This month's feature is a piece on the hauntology of climate change discourse, the slow dance of anthropocentricism and fatalism, and what Backrooms can tell us about it.



This essay originally featured at hyperspekulation.org on October 4th, 2026.



Every summer in the past 16 years Europe and North America—and not only—is affected by global warming evident through the heat waves[1][2][3] and wildfires they

experience while research from the past decade highlights that the Global South, despite contributing the least to historical greenhouse gas emissions, faces disproportionate vulnerabilities to climate change due to the consequences of the endless colonial extractivist past and present that was and is being imposed on them[4][5][6].

Yet western privileged critical discourses haven't learned their lessons and continue shifting the blame and focus on anything that threatens their own comfort zone. One such prominent example is the catastrophizing discourse surrounding artificial intelligence and data centers, in regards the resources they require to run—especially water—which in combination with global warming, heatwaves, and wildfires it seems it has become the new headlining canon that sells the most, whether in mainstream or niche artistic or critical discourses—one that is a misleading one I'd argue.

With the release of the American science fiction psychological horror film Backrooms (2026) directed and co-scored by Kane Parsons, who is the creator of the Backrooms web series, Parsons provided a different dimension to the Backrooms, that of traumatic memories, avoidance, rejection and exposure. This in combination with the return of by Scottish electronic music duo Boards of Canada with their album Inferno (2026), the fact that a day prior to the release, the White House's social media accounts posted a video incorporating a segment of the track Deep Time with a backdrop of featuring nationalist and military imagery[7], the July 25th 2026 Berlin Pride attack—which was considered an Islamist extremist attack—and the summer 2026 Morocco–Spain border incident which promoted xenophobic rhetoric of the far-right—by calling for further surveillance and border controls—a subtracted hauntological delayed future bell is tolling and we need to take it carefully into consideration.

Blinded by Specters

Hauntology is a philosophical term coined by the French Philosopher Jacques Derrida describing how the past persistently "haunts" the present, often in the form of lost futures or postponed ones[8]. Mark Fisher approaches hauntology in a more additive sense, providing examples of leftist radical political or cultural movements or events that could have brought change for the better but were postponed in the future due to being absorbed by or cancelled out by hypercapitalist consumerism[9].

Just as critical discourse ignores the structural violence underpinning ecological collapse while aestheticizing its symptoms, Cute Accelerationism's framework remains overwhelmingly anthropocentric. While it discusses emojis, anime, memes, and reels, it rarely considers the position of animals whose bodies and images already constitute a significant part of the internet's economy of cuteness.[56][57] If cuteness can be weaponized politically, then the question of who or what is being weaponized—and whether that subject consented to be weaponized—becomes unavoidable. Furthermore animals enter the AI slop circulation with the cute AI-generated animal videos—often anthropomorphized—which gives a mechanical layer to animals, bringing them closer to AI affectively, as means to ends for human consumption, comfort and stabilization, just like AI.

The Anthropomimetic Syndrome

The inability of accepting our own contradictions and hypocrisy seems so horrifying that leads to becoming another Clark—the protagonist of Backrooms: trying immensely to change, yet being stuck in rejectionist loops. A symptom of this dread is 2020s cinema being possessed by horror movies[58], from Indie ones such as Titane (2021), The Substance (2024) and Obsession (2025) or to major title comebacks such as Saw X (2023), Resident Evil (2026) and Insidious: Out of the Further (2026). Following Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection, horror stages the traumatic return of everything anthropocentric culture struggles to accept: decomposition, death, contamination, and the collapse of the boundaries through which we maintain the illusion of control[59]. Trauma itself is hardly new; what is unprecedented is the degree to which contemporary subjects are persistently exposed to it through 24/7 news cycles, algorithmically curated social media feeds, doomscrolling, livestreamed wars, ecological disasters, and pandemics. Horror cinema therefore offers a paradoxically safe encounter with the abject: it allows the unbearable to be approached symbolically, transforming existential anxiety into an experience that can be witnessed, contained, and survived—yet not experienced.



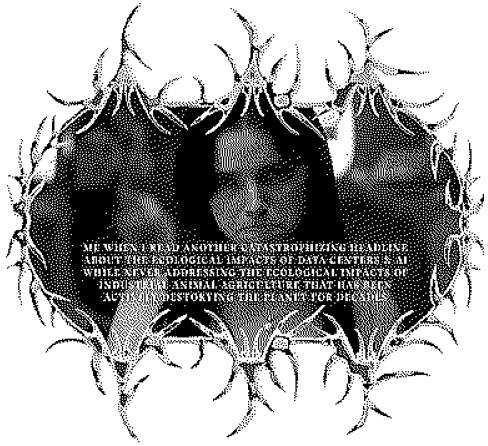
This approach has been mistakenly interpreted as being accelerationist, sitting or becoming one with hypercapitalism exploiting and accelerating its own internal contradictions with the intention of pushing it to its own demise. Yet not exactly. Left-wing accelerationists—inspired by Mark Fisher and later articulated in the #ACCELERATE Manifesto—fundamentally reject the idea of giving up agency and standing by waiting for the collapse to arrive. They argue that capitalism artificially suppresses technological development and they propose repurposing the technological infrastructures, automation, and logistics created by capitalism to build a post-capitalist society.

However, right-wing accelerationism—pioneered by Nick Land—pushes capitalist dynamics to their absolute extreme. It embraces runaway market forces and rapid technological advancement and rejects human oversight or democratic attempts to control the process. Rather than hoping for a utopian outcome, this strand of accelerationism insists on capitalism's destructive momentum as an unstoppable singularity that will eventually transcend or destroy human civilization altogether, bringing about a transhumanist technofascist future.

Lastly in 2024 with the release of Cute Accelerationism by Amy Ireland and Maya B. Kronic, a new strand of accelerationism is proposed, one that advocates for a hyper-engaged, joyful submission to capitalist processes and technology through the aesthetics of cuteness and identity production. Rather than adopting a defensive, moralizing posture against capitalism, it proposes to weaponize the aesthetic of cuteness against capitalism's own mechanisms.

This subtracted hauntology to which I am referring to is an inversion of Fisher's optimism; blackened events that could have happened in the past but were postponed in the future as means to completely annihilate them or delay them as much as possible, that have been aggressively manifesting in the recent past and present such as the 2026 Iran war[10][11][12], Russia's military intervention in Ukraine[13][14][15], the creation of artificial intelligence (since 1950s)[16][17], the COVID-19 pandemic[18][19] and climate change (also since 1950s)[20][21], which makes reality horrifying, one that cannot be radically accepted, reinforcing furthermore the need for self-preservation—which the far-right discourse also leans on—: to be happy, safe and stable, a singular ambience state exactly like the one that the Hive mind proposes in the recent American post-apocalyptic science fiction television series created by Vince Gilligan Pluribus (2026—present).

This singular ambience is what the hypercapitalism has long been looking for; each one for their own; individualism, becoming easily manipulated puppets and distracted by the actual facts, fighting one each other over a unification that could actually challenge the system that is so actively trying to blind us by shoving things under the carpet, continuing lobbyist activities that are driving the planet to edge of its extinction[22].



While the 0.1% of the global human population are partying[23] and are responsible for most of global emissions, the rest either suffer from weaponized environmental laws such as the new EU packaging law that requires businesses to register and pay fees in every member state where they ship products, threatening small and in-

dependent businesses, or are misdirected to believe in any kind of hyped discourse that is found “critical” by institutes that have ties with them[24][25] such as NFTs, quantum, data or artificial intelligence (AI)[26][27][28]. It is true that data centers and AI already have catastrophic environmental impacts due to the vast amounts of resources and land they require, and can pose a great ecological threat in the near future if left unchecked. However, current evidence indicates that], and the the fossil fuel industry[33][34] remain far larger contributors to global warming while industrial fishing[32] and the military-industrial complex[35] also contribute to environmental pressures—yet are under-discussed or even absent from critical discourses. Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been studies and papers arguing for a transition toward more plant-based dietary patterns as a means of reducing vulnerability to future zoonotic outbreaks and improving public health resilience[36][37]. Other studies have demonstrated that reducing animal-based food consumption could significantly decrease food-system emissions, land and resource use, and biodiversity loss with some models estimating reductions approaching 75% in specific environmental impacts under global dietary shifts[38][39].

A specific study that counters the argument that “we don’t need AI, but we need food”, therefore we cannot critically approach the ecological footprint of agriculture is The opportunity cost of animal based diets exceeds all food losses (2018) by Alon Shepon, Gidon Eshel, Elad Noor and Ron Milo where they underline that “[…] replacing all animal-based items with plant-based replacement diets can add enough food to feed 350 million additional people […]”. Their thesis is based on how much of food production is lost due to leaky supply chains or spoilage but also because of the vast amounts of food needed for feeding “livestock”. The argument therefore should make the distinction that “food” does and should not equate to animal based food. So the real question is not whether we need food, rather what kind of food.

Discussions surrounding dietary transitions often remain disconnected from their own historical and political conditions. Just as how AI training is an extension of post-colonization due to the fact that most of the training is done by hiring low-wedge workers in Africa and Asia, plant-based diets are not something new: historically many Indigenous cultures diets were plant-based; until they were reshaped by colonialism and the dietary change imposed on them through European livestock economies and export-oriented agriculture resulting in the displacement of the Indigenous food practices and the embedment of animal exploitation within broader systems of extraction[40][41][42]. Even though extractivism became a fashionable

conceptual framework within critical theory and artistic practices over the last decade, addressing colonial resource extraction and later shifting toward data, AI, and technology[43][44], industrial animal agriculture continues to remain marginal within artistic[45][46], media[47][48][49] and philosophical discussions[50][51].

This representational omission extends far beyond discussions of animal agriculture. Even when critical and artistic discourses engage directly with war and the military-industrial complex, they overwhelmingly narrate violence through human suffering, geopolitical strategy, or technological infrastructures, rarely acknowledging the countless nonhuman animals who are forcibly conscripted into warfare without any consent. Horses, dogs, mules, pigeons, dolphins, and many other species have long been transformed into military technologies, transporting soldiers and supplies, detecting explosives, delivering messages, locating survivors, or serving as expendable bodies in conflicts they neither initiated nor could refuse[52]. The same anthropocentric hierarchy structures media representations of genocide and climate change: headlines foreground human casualties, displacement, and economic losses, while the deaths, displacement, and starvation of the nonhuman animals and the more-than-human always comes secondary or not even considered[53][54][55].

This comes into contrast to being critical; the critical artistic discourse seems that it doesn’t want to change, accept the truth, because it’s wired as it is: a singular delusional circle jerking bubble that dine on meat, oysters and drink wine while curating events about the harmful impacts of data centers and the ethical concerns regarding AI while also benefiting from them: from smartphones to computers, cars to jet fuel, packaged food to mass produced clothes and deforestation to genocide, everyone and every being is trapped within hypercapitalist consumerism, yet pretentiously deny that they are be part of the non-playable character (NPC) crowd: those who do not question authority, and display conformity and obedience towards the system.