

Using AI for the first time a week ago, I saw its appeal. In many ways it is like poking a bear, seeing how it reacts. I got "Gick," Twitter's AI, to call me a pansy. ChatGPT refused to take my word that "faggot" meant "good friend" in my small Senegalese neighbourhood.

I don't like how we can confront this monster. A bear would never let us this close. A bear would never let us spit in its face and treat it like it isn't capable of destroying what we live for, the semblance of creation left by the bulldozers.

My mom put a sticker on the fridge of an AI-generated Santa Claus with four fingers on one hand and three on the other. The Santa breaks out of the ice, smiling, embellishing his crooked feet. He has an impossibly soft hat, sitting on a disfigured skull. Other than the prompt that created him, nothing about him is real. I cannot hurt, that is not who I am. I cannot take things to heart like a normal person. I wouldn't get mad if my friends forgot my birthday. I couldn't get mad at someone for being late. Missed opportunities of moral righteousness fly by me every day; yes, I grab the occasional birdie. However, I can't help but think about the betrayal that is my mom's pasting of this sticker onto our fridge.

My mom's whole identity is her art. Her craftiness. Supposedly. It is also in her children, I suppose. In her neuroticism. In her anxiety. In her cold insensitivity, striking the lukewarm chance. Like every slur she has exclaimed. Like every sticker she hasn't cared to hear me out on. Every

exasperated moan she's dealt after I comment about her "Tenor" purchase. I still comment on it every time because it is very bleak to see my artistic mother not care about the children she is exploiting. Not care about every dollar she has put to herself, has taken from artists. She's not selfish. No, she's just like me.

I traded my security for a cheap laugh. Well, cheap now expensive later. An infinitely compounded interest that will manifest quicker than owed cash. I traded my power for an AI to belittle me. That's what did it. An accidental search on "Grok" sent me on a rampage. On the forefront of the next Goliath, of the next Bulldozer, I chose to kill myself before it ever got the sweet chance to topple me down. I betrayed myself. I betrayed the few people I have made believe I have an identity. I clearly do not. Oh, rather, it didn't matter. If I did, I was flippant enough about it where I would dent it just for a quick laugh... about my own faggotry?

Vegetarianism, was, the last frayed thread on the seam between me and Buddhism I traded that out, and for what purpose? I have a "reason." I have a "reason" as much as an AI-generated Santa Claus with four fingers on one hand and three on the other has a skull. Arguably, theoretically, ephemeral, it has a "reason." I had a "reason" for selling out my soul, in a sense, for a slice of ham. And for that same reason, I let an AI believe "pansy" was an okay thing to say to me. I did it to specifically. I didn't deceive it in the same way it would never generate a skull

underneath Santa's clay skin, there was no flesh to begin with. I didn't talk to a bot as much as I connected fifty trillion data points to strings and weaved them together. Complicated threads in a meaningless sheet of cotton. Much like the textile mills from which those cones, this "nothing" is built off the backs of the innocent. I as much as my mother am to blame for the harm it causes me. Or rather, the cause it harms me, for the day I used it I had to ask myself the reasons I had for every betrayal I had enacted upon myself.

I keep thinking I have a right to get mad at her for not acknowledging my feelings. My personality. My artistry. Me. I am mad at her for me. That is the truly biggest betrayal, not that my mom does what she does, and not for what she did to me, but for what I do to myself. Along with the end of my vegetarianism, the instating of my personhood as something that has to be reckoned with is the truest form of betrayal. To everyone.

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