I had a marginal interest in Minecraft after seeing its characters plastered across backpacks, strategy books, the internet, and a million children’s hearts. As a middle school teacher, I was curious about this blocky game that seemed to have captivated an entire generation. After determining that the racist, sexist, and transphobic designer of the game would not be profiting off our purchase, a few friends and I bought it and created what is known as a Survival Multiplayer (SMP) server so we could build a world together in the early days of quarantine. I was hooked immediately. The possibilities were endless—save the impenetrable bedrock below and y-level = 256 sky. The game unlocked the child in me that was obsessed with Duploes, Kinex, Lincoln Logs, Legos, cardboard boxes, and mud. I convinced my brothers to join. I liked to build stuff and this game had infinite materials to do so. We fed pigs, exploited various glitches in the game to produce infinite chicken meat, crammed villagers into tents and spammed down beds so that they’re triggered to copulate and generate cats and iron golems holding little red flowers. We dug down and built up. We camped out in the wilds and turned the square wolves into pet dogs in faroff polar realms by feeding them the bones of fallen skeleton archers.

The game is a surreal mishmash of different creatures and biomes of jungle, plains, and sea. The only goals are to build, mine, survive, and reach “The End,” a vast uninhabitable realm of floating beige islands and purple fruit (that blinks you a few blocks in random directions upon consumption), so that you can shoot down the ever-blocky and pixelated Ender Dragon before it regenerates all its health from little pink crystals atop obsidian towers. This was surely the best antidote to the COVID blues. We would lose ourselves in an infinitely restructurable playground of primary colors. We would chase the square sun into the horizon and camp out on an island while giggling on the ubiquitous chat program called Discord. We would build a dick out of dirt on this island. We would build a farm and a home near the dick. While the
world outside screamed virus, tyranny, and upheaval, we would shovel out a nice little pool.

A nice little pool.

My friend with eight years of a PhD in Wordsworth attuned me to the phrase “Emergent Narrative” and this I think is part of what makes the game so appealing: Minecraft is a canvas of sorts, with enough suggestions and pieces of narrative that do not impose a single through-line. Hundreds of millions of kids play this game. You build homes and make up stories. You fight each other with wooden swords crafted from the surrounding trees. I was interested in what seemed to have hooked the minds of so many of my middle schoolers. I finally understood.

The game was invented by a Swedish guy named Marcus Persson, or Notch. He has since been erased from Easter eggs in the game and held at maximum arm’s length by Microsoft after they purchased his baby because he is a hateful internet troll who has tweeted horrible things about women, Jews, trans people, and global warming. It is unfortunate that this alt-right schmuck is responsible for designing for what I now realize must be one of the greatest games of all time. His status as a nefarious p.o.s. was strangely fitting for my early experiences of the game because underneath the otherwise child-friendly pink pigs and green grass, both the game and some of its fanbases often make awkward tonal turns toward darkness and fascistic thinking.
Minecraft confronts you with creatures called Creepers that will annihilate themselves in order to destroy your home after nightfall. These moments elicit genuine shock and horror. In the game’s hell, or Nether, huge floating ghosts giggle like babies before they try to decimate you with fireballs. The music confronts you with 8-bit crescendos and metallic hymns of C418’s masterpiece soundtrack with songs like “Subwoofer Lullaby” and “Thirteen.” The sounds can be alternately wistful and melancholic. They perfectly accompany the experience of wandering and digging through an infinite procedurally-generated world. Like many other games, it encourages a kind of blind imperialism of exploitation and dominance. You are rewarded for digging, farming, chopping, and mining every available resource.

Minecraft operates in mutually beneficial relationships with other internet swarms: Youtube, the Minecraft Wiki, and Twitch. You learn the builds and easter eggs on the Wiki, follow the tutorials on Youtube. Kids invent whole worlds and perform longform improv in Minecraft servers for Twitch. The evil that underpins the game and its history permeates the game’s patchwork communities online. Like many nerd spheres on the web, there is rampant harassment and gatekeeping against women. Notorious unregulated servers such as the infamous 2B2T, the “oldest anarchy server on Minecraft” allow virtually any player behavior. According to a self-proclaimed 2B2T historian named FitMC, it is routinely hacked and “griefed,” the term players use for when you become that kid at the beach and kick over the sandcastle. On 2B2T, people revel in the unrule by camping out at the spawn point and murdering anyone who tries to join. On 2B2T, the n-word is routinely spammed into the public chat and tweens create swastikas out of blocks that you can see from the sky.
The 2B2T spawn from above.

Still, most kids play it wholesomely enough and it has even become a bastion for some LGBTQIA+ communities. In the early days, I found myself obsessing over a Youtube series called Hermitcraft. It invited some of the greatest builders and technical players to ever play the game onto a server together so they could build a city, establish a working economy and shopping district, and create stories and games for each other to explore.

There is Mumbo Jumbo, a veritable Minecraft master technician and beefy-necked British man who is known for experimenting with a game component called redstone. The redstone allows you to create circuits that connect pistons and switches, so that people can create automated farms, doors, and even music. Mumbo builds massive industrial farms that exploit various glitches and non-playable character behaviors in order to produce other resources to be sold in the shops to others. He creates elaborate piston doors powered by elaborate redstone circuitry. I became invested in Mumbo’s relationship with other players like Iskall, who was constructing a massive tree, and the ever-devious Grian, who pioneered various building designs and was pumping in hundreds of hours into the sloped roofs of his own mansion.
I watched Grian play in a Minecraft tournament once where content creators compete in minigames designed by the community, and this led me to leap over into the depths of Twitch—this would make me what Twitch streamers derisively refer to as a “Youtube frog.” The most watched person streaming the event was not one of the Hermitcrafters, who seemed to be kings of the Minecraft Youtube scene at the time, but a wiry British child who had completely given up on the competition and instead had resorted to jokes—he had 70 thousand people watching him and his teammates build a large “Seven” out of yellow glass.

They had apparently decided that one of the moderators of the event, known to them only as “7”, was worthy of cult-like worship. They were improvising, kind of. They were blowing out their microphones and drenching everything they said in layer after layer of the dry endless irony that only British teenagers can muster. The leader of the Lord of the Flies mob was a boy named TommyInnit. He was playing the game in a style far removed from the pristine, rule-driven world of the Hermitcraft server. As a product of the PvP scene and Minecraft server Hypixel, Tommy and his friends were prone to constantly yelling, punching, and dynamiting each other’s builds. One of the lines he was most known for in his early days was in a Minecraft Championship, when he blurted out, “Just killed a woman, feeling good!” This was an example of one of the many strange, edgy outbursts that he is known for: pure Id, a midlander British teenager who is somehow both deeply annoying and widely adored. My initial reaction was that this was textbook gamer misogyny. His shtick seems to be a perpetual insistence that all women love him, while also pushing them away with awkward comments. Yet, at the same time, he is largely accepted by a massive hyper-woke mob of young obsessives colloquially known as “stans.” If you don’t know, the term “stan” comes from the Eminem song, “Stan” where a young Marshall Mathers fan writes a long letter about how his
obsessive love for the rapper drove him to a domestic murder-suicide. Originally, it was used to describe die hard fans of K-pop and BTS, who would do things like spam .gifs of dancing k-pop stars in order to drown out the opinions of their foes on Twitter.

The original stan.

Tommy is a member of a server called The Dream SMP where he is a protagonist of sorts engaging in pseudo-scripted theater alongside other Twitch streamers and Youtubers. At the beginning of each stream, Tommy cracks open a Coke in ritualistic fashion as the beat kicks in on a Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA)-free synthy song by an artist named luvbird called “parting words.” In his gravelly midlander Briton accent, he yells, “Boys, welcome back to the stream!” Hundreds of thousands of comments flicker past. There are purple hearts and little emojis of dogs hugging hearts—what I would later learn are called “emotes.” A typical emote happens when you type OFEGALUL in all caps, which operates like a kind of code that will trigger an image of a person laughing—a photoshopped mouth stretched wide open. Tommy hums over the trumpets on the luvbird track and boots up Minecraft.

The original pogchamp emote was recently banned after streamer Ryan Gutierrez voiced support for the January 6th riots. (Fair use)

There is something incredibly addicting about watching Tommy. He brings me back to the feeling I had as a teenager—a particular blend of internet-bred ADHD, sycophancy, naivete, and raw energy. Tommy’s rise can mostly be attributed to cussing in front of kid-friendly Youtubers like BadBoyHalo and telling the most-watched streamers in the world like Ninja and KSI to go fuck themselves while touring them around the Dream SMP. His central role seems to be perpetually ruining and enlivening the narrative of digital theater that takes place over the course of hundreds of hours on separate Twitch streams and Youtube clips. Dream sky-rocketed to success in the early days of quarantine by making videos of himself racing to beat the game while three or four of his friends try to hunt him down and kill him in a series he calls a “Manhunt.” He is one of many new brands of online content creators who never reveals their faces. Dream only ever shows a crudely drawn black smile on a bright green background as his profile picture, or pfp.
In this way, him and other streamers who have chosen to have their faces represented by only their character’s (such as Technoblade, Corpse, and Ranboo respectively), seem to almost embody a space closer to a cast of cartoon characters than real, living breathing people.

Ranboo’s story on the Dream SMP.

That is one of the keys to their success. They perform a brand of improvised theater inside a video game that can be encouraged, attacked, and augmented by the hundreds of thousands of people chatting in real time. Artistically, it represents a shift away from traditional forms of entertainment in film and TV. Everything is rougher and messy. The fact that it is, as the teens would say, “scuffed,” is part of the point. These young creators are constantly pumping out streams of big events on the server, each representing their own perspective. There is no time to polish. Their fans enter into parasocial, or one-sided relationships with these creators. The fans, or “stans” create elaborate fan-art, usually of the manga or anime-inspired ilk, and even construct whole animated shorts distilled from major moments on the Dream SMP. The most impressive comes from a teenager from the Philippines named Sad-ist. Replete with exciting soundtracks and tense moments, she distills the hours and hours of the stream’s narratives down into its punchiest moments.

Sad-ist animates audio clips of Dream SMP lore streams.

Dream has become notorious online for cultivating a following that will do
anything to protect him. The Dream stans often have their favorite creators from the SMP as their avatar. Dream recently came under fire from the speedrunning community for cheating. Other critics of Dream have received a vicious backlash from the mob. Sometimes, Dream, Tommy and the whole gang deserve the mob punishment. As teenagers, Dream and the other teens and 20-somethings sometimes fall into the inevitable subtle bigotry one might hear in a high school lunchroom. One player named Quackity is Mexican-American and created a joke character named “Mexican Dream.” He puts on an exaggerated caricature of a Mexican accent and, well, you can assume the rest. The unsettling part is when all the other white boys start to do this same accent, which seems like it only could have blossomed in this heavily-siloed world. Twitter threads abound about all the things that members of the DreamSMP have said in the past. As young people attempting comedy, they learned funny from edgelord forebears like Pewdiepie and a crass New Jersey guy named Jschlatt. In this way the Dream SMP and Dream’s stan army have become an interesting litmus test for Gen Z’s online discourse. Here, the edgelords and hyperwoke meet in Twitter combat, clipping and attempting to hold the creators accountable for past actions as fans attempt to re-educate their idols.

This also all begs the question, why the hell do I know anything about all of this? Is this what depression looks like? I will admit it began as a morbid fascination with recent trends, but became a full-blown addiction and investment into both the authentic and artificial lives of streamers and Youtubers. TommyInnit is genuinely funny, if in adolescent and obnoxious ways. He even admits this and even begins streams and Youtube videos with the line, “Many people find me annoying, but if you do not, please consider subscribing.” He, and the Dream SMP have exploded over the course of quarantine as kids looked for something to distract themselves from Zoom learning. The fans feel invested in this meteoric rise of the people they worship in a way that feels novel. All of the followers and viewers feel like they are on the creator’s team. During every stream, Tommy, like many others, begs for Twitch Primes, which are the one free $5 subscription you get for connecting your Amazon Prime account to Twitch. Some users will give hundreds of subscriptions on a whim to Tommy, Tubbo, Quackity, Georgenotfound, or any of the other personalities behind the Minecraft avatars. A handful of them have become millionaires in a matter of months.

Minecraft was my gateway drug to Twitch. After a time, I felt weird lurking in the prosceniums during the digital theater of events like the L’Manburg war performance, wondering if they would revive Wilbur Soot or not after he destroyed his own kingdom. What began as a sick fascination with the Minecraft and Twitch scene became a genuine interest and obsession. As a middle child, I liked to stand behind the couch and watch my brother play Chrono Trigger or Final Fantasy. I would walk to my best friend’s house just to kneel on the floor and root my best friend on through seven continuous hours of battles on Warcraft II. Twitch had figured out a way to digitize the arcade and it was infinite. You, along with hundreds of thousands of others, could stand over the shoulder of an eccentric gamer while they play an obscure game and scream at the screen.
I became interested in trying to figure out the dominant political ideology of Twitch streamers and fans. “What sort of people will this mob become?” is a question any middle school teacher often asks themselves. At one point, Tommy’s idol Jschlatt was invited on the Dream SMP server and he immediately gave me the alt-right heebie jeebies. He built a “cuck” shed out of blocks and tried to force Tommy inside. A quick Google revealed he was known for saying controversial things on Twitter, and is basically a reactionary who mocked the BLM movement, made frequent gay jokes, and has said many racist things online. His tough guy New Jersey lilt can only excuse so much. Many of his fans insist this is all part of a pseudo-demonic persona he has developed—a part of his online character in this grand cartoon, but the truth is he is probably somewhere in-between. The Gen Z internet seems largely divided on these lines. Either you are an edgelord who revels in offensive humor and spam racial slurs every chance you get, or you are hyper-woke and sensitive, willing to dox any creator that violates super strict codes of speech. Jschlatt is another one of the wedge issues in this community. Schlatt has apparently since begun his indoctrination into an edgier, older community online that orbits around a creator named Mizkif after getting doxxed and “cancelled” one to many times by the Dream stans. If this all sounds like an endless ouroboros of proper nouns and internet absurdities, that’s because it is. I started watching a political streamer named Hasanabi to help me develop a more nuanced portrait of this scene, and perhaps bridge it all back to some semblance of The Real.
Hasanabi is perhaps best known for bringing Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar onto Twitch for a game of Among Us, the campfire mafia game played in space. That, or for his comment when he joked that the United States deserved 9/11 because of how Reagan funded groups in the middle east that eventually became the Taliban and Al Qaeda. He was let go from the popular leftist Youtube channel, the Young Turks (TYT) started by his uncle, and established permanent residence on Twitch. His general formula is to boot up the stream at 11am and broadcast himself engaging in “agitative propaganda” as he critiques the news, mocks right-wingers, and engages in the occasional Grand Theft Auto roleplay for nine hours a day in the “Just Chatting” section of Twitch. Hasanabi occupies a particularly bizarre space because he appears to be the stereotypical “chad”: a handsome bro who knows how to charm women. One of his top viewed clips is of him at a party full of pornstars and there is a meme about him “getting away with it” with almost every female Twitch streamer.
The greatest source of anxiety I had in my first years as a middle school teacher were that no matter what I or the history teacher next door taught about history, critical thinking, or proper argumentation, after the school day finished the students could go home and consume 7+ hours of content on Youtube or Twitch that would inevitably shift their political worldview one way or another. The New York Times podcast, Rabbithole by Kevin Roose documents how the algorithm was driving people’s videos toward more and more sensational and extremist content. Many people rightly attribute the automatized math problems of internet search engines to our deeply divided political scene. Hasanabi recognizes that Twitch is a battleground for the hearts and minds of teenagers. Another streamer named Destiny has made a sport out of debating alt-righters online. I asked Kevin Roose in a Reddit AMA if he saw any hope in the attempts of commentators like Hasan and Destiny, and he said:

I’m a big fan of Hasan’s, and am really impressed by how people like him and Destiny have used their platforms to try to provide an alternative to the redpill channels. Something Caleb Cain (the guy I profiled in Rabbit Hole) helped me understand is that part of the solution to internet-based radicalization involves learning to mimic the aesthetics of the channels that are sending people down those dangerous paths. It’s not enough just to yell at people or call them bigots – you have to use memes and edgy humor to give them an alternative with a less toxic message.

It is an odd and unsettling experience to look into these varying fish bowls online and see how the terms of the alt-right have permeated mainstream online gamer discourse. TommyInnit regularly complains about Twitter for these reasons. Streamers use terms like “cuck,” “social justice warrior,” “white knight” to deride anyone with an activist bent. If you are sympathetic to feminist aspirations for equality, you get called a “soy boy” or a “simp.” What was once a direct icon of the alt-right, the “Pepe the frog” meme, which has its own long and storied history from comic book creator Matt Furie to Richard Spencer’s lapel, has become a ubiquitous emote on the platform. There is PeepoSad, Sadge, PepeHands, and dozens of others.
The original Pepe has spawned hundreds of Twitch emotes. Are the fascist connotations gone, or merely diluted? (Fair use)

The icon maybe no longer connotes white supremacy when spammed at 100 miles an hour across the live chat feeds of Twitch, but it does remind me that whenever I’m in a place, digital or physical, whether it be a colorful Minecraft server or Anime-obsessed 4chan forum, fascistic thinking may be somewhere not too far off.

Most Twitch streamers and Youtubers are not aggressively trying to convert their followers into right-wingers. They are simply lazy and nihilistic. Some want their characters to continue to have enormous, hyper-bouncy breasts. Others simply blame women for wanting only hypermasculine “chads.” I saw some of my friends fall into similar traps in the Trump era. This is the #gamergate and 4chan arc, and unfortunately the story is far from finished.

Twitch streamers Hasanabi and Destiny have apparently had many falling outs over debates and political clashes online. One of these arguments involved the use of the n-word. Is it ever okay to use the term, even offline? Destiny had a falling out with a fellow podcast host named Trihex who is black. Destiny said that he would not stop saying the n-word (with a soft “a”) in private jokes with friends, namely while quoting song lyrics or Dave Chappelle jokes and the friendship was ended on those terms. Trihex refused to be tokenized as Destiny’s one black friend giving Destiny the eponymous “pass.” A photoshopped cutout of Trihex’s face has become an emote that gets used in racially charged ways in Twitch chat. Some “chatters,” as they are colloquially known, will spam it whenever they see a black person come on screen. One particularly famous Streamer who goes by xQc was famously banned from an Overwatch tournament for doing just that.

I think this is the reason why Twitch is so compelling. I want to see the world heal. It has become one of the last places where people still seem to be trying to reach across the aisle. Destiny might embody aggressive Ben
Shapiro-style debate speech, but there is some part of him that wants to have an actual conversation, and convert the youth away from the alt-right black hole. His approach appeals to his adolescent following’s urge to turn every political discussion into a winner-take-all bloodsport, but at some level, real ideas are being exchanged. Destiny’s tactics seem to have worked for some kids who might have otherwise been turned rightward by people like Shapiro, Steven Crowder, or Jordan Shapiro over on Youtube. It is well known that the political scene is deeply fractured and atomized online. Mainstream liberals dominate the podcast scene. Right-wingers, nihilists, and hedonists have Youtube. Twitch, with players running their mouths non-stop for hours on end, has become another pseudo-public square of discussion between disparate worlds.

Perhaps the darkest hallway I walked down in my unearthing of the strange, insulated world of Twitch was when I started hearing other streamers talk about a streamer named Ice Poseidon. If there is a natural endpoint between the demanding audience of a Twitch chatroom and the streamer who serves them, it is in this man. He refused to moderate his chat and would do virtually anything they asked of him. He walked into restaurants and suddenly the phones would start ringing at the front desk. They would begin innocuously enough with calls trying to locate the streamer, then the Ice Poseidon fans would start to troll and call in bomb threats. Ice Poseidon would leave his door unlocked and let people come into his home. He would wake up to people standing over him and giggling. He would let people buy messages using Text to Speech (TTS) and let them say racist things while he walked by black people in diners. He has been permanently banned from Twitch, and recently explained how far it all went in a therapy session with a Harvard-trained therapist named Alok Kanojia who Twitch to help streamers and gamers named. Kanojia goes by Healthy Gamer on Twitch and he has helped many children with video game addiction, depression, and internet-induced ADHD.

Healthy Gamer talks to Mizkif about coping with ADHD.

Kanojia streams therapy sessions with people like Ice Poseidon. Some streams are more successful than others. There was one particularly tragic chapter involving a streamer named Reckful. Dr. K tried to help Reckful with his clinical depression and thoughts of suicide. Reckful’s dream was to build a top-down Massively Multiplayer Online RPG called Everland that would allow players a sort of second life experience where they could play games and meet up online. It would be a kind of digital heaven with an emphasis on community and play. Unfortunately, Reckful took his life not too long after his sessions with Dr. K.

It feels absurd to even be writing about Twitch as it is a deeply auditory and visual medium that perpetuates itself in a feedback loop of fan made clips on the Reddit forum “Live Stream Fails” and increasingly obscure memes. Things are continuously buried by tidal waves of more drama and content. Esports blogs like Dexerto try to keep up, but most efforts are futile simply because there are so many hours of simultaneous content to cover.
Part of my reason for wanting to write about Minecraft and Twitch came from a desire to exorcise my addiction to these platforms. Dr. K has a quick video for dealing with the kind of addiction teens might find themselves caught up in when they’re in the throes of an algorithmically constructed internet bender. He cites what others refer to as a dopamine detox, debunks some of the common misinformation around the process and offers his own suggestions for relieving our dependence on a vast network of news aggregators and oceans of fresh content. His advice more or less involves scheduling out your day, embracing boredom, and reading a book.

As it stands now, I find myself highly invested in the drama around the big heavy hitters in the Twitch scene. There is the sallow and highly animated xQc, who captures the gamer addict archetype perhaps more than anyone else. Recently, he has been gambling and playing on a Grand Theft Audio roleplay server for 11 hours a day. Streamers are rewarded for streaming more per day because they have a higher chance of catching the interest of a random person scrolling through Twitch. xQc has his own brand of Gatorade’s Gamer Fuel powder called “The Juice.” His fans are called “Juicers” and they follow xQc with a mix of cult-like devotion and troll-infused hate that seems unique to Twitch. They will watch xQc all day long and make fun of him as he rages out on a Minecraft speedrun, or gets banned from The Grand Theft Auto roleplaying server for killing a cop with a reason that fits his character’s narrative. He is just pissed. His fans make fun of his nose and his “pepepaga” (a term used a replacement for “retarded” because the r-word is now widely understood to be demeaning and offensive in gaming spaces online). xQc regularly dominates the front page of “Live Stream Fails.” One clip involved him running into his girlfriend’s room in the throes of what sounded like a night terror. He was yelling in genuine fear and Live Stream Fails exploded with speculation. His fans later surmised that he might have been dreaming about getting “swatted.” xQc was forced to move to a friend’s house in Austin before returning to his native Quebec because the cops were showing up all the time.

The titles of Twitch streams often sound like lines from experimental language poetry. As I write this, one could be clicking on “ASMR EARLICKING BED YOGA,” and see a streamer named Amouranth licking a prosthetic ear hooked up to a microphone. They could tap into a 16 hour xQc stream called, “GAMING GOD WINS AT EVERY GAME AND CLICK EVERY HEAD IN CHILDRENS MOBILE FPS GAME, WINS TOURNAMENT THEN HITS LOWER VAULT IN PRETENDING GAME” or watch “FUNDY ADVENTURE BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD,” which is a stream title that a Minecraft furry named Fundy will be going on an adventure, most likely on the Dream SMP. His title jokingly refers to another creator named Technoblade who fights against governments on the server in the name of anarchy and is known for screaming “blood for the blood god” and quoting Lao-tzu.

It was when I found myself obsessing over a budding romance between a Super Mario 64 speedrunner streamer named Simply and an aspiring Minecraft builder slash environmentalist named Babbsity that I knew I had a problem. I was rooting for their love. The two nerds had met on a scuffed streamer dating show hosted by the streamers’ much more popular roommate, Mizkif. I wanted to see if their performative flirting could blossom into a real relationship. I
had watched the kitchen stream of Nmplol and Malena—their bit has been to “farm pogOs,” which take the form of mildly offensive one-liners that cause Malena to choke Nmplol. It is a kind of reality TV where the stream and edited clips from their cooking show get upvoted to the top of Live Stream Fails, which in turn affects their relationship in real time. In one such stream, they stood behind their kitchen table, and offered their take on something called the “Hot Tub Meta.” Attractive women were streaming themselves writing subscribers’ names on their bodies for subscriptions while they sat in inflatable hot-tubs wearing bikinis.

The Offline TV streamer crew mocks the hot tub meta.

“How did I get here?” is something I should have asked myself a long time ago, but instead I feel this need to watch a conversation between Dream and Hasan as if it is more important than breathing. The clip of the stream on Youtube is called “Talking with Dream.” Hasan had called out Dream for doing a stream with Notch back in November. The Dream stans were mad that Karl Jacobs had been a fan of Ice Poseidon and Hasan said they should be much angrier with Dream for the stream with Notch. They come to some form of an agreement. Hasan admitted that we should stop trying to cancel everyone at the slightest violation of perceived political purity, and while he talked to a smiley face about the responsibilities of being an internet sensation, I thought about how this all started with my marginal interest and subsequent obsession with Minecraft. Twitch, broadly speaking, is driven by these sorts of circles. I began with a desire to escape the terrors of COVID-19 and build a utopian world in the brightly colored block game. I ended up invested in the conflicts, drama, and romances of people I did not know. Since I started out, TommyInnit has moved onto vlogging about his trips to waterparks. Hasan continues to mock members of the alt-right. xQc and Trainwrecks dive headfirst into another stream of him gambling away hundreds thousands of dollars before streaming debates with Hasan about ethics of it all. Babbsity and Simply’s romance continues in fake Minecraft marriages and speedrun lessons. I find myself still struggling to tear myself away from the endless stream of content: people getting paid to sit in their rooms and play video games. The creators, reactors, and streamers are in my dreams. My Youtube algorithm has warped to purely clips from Twitch. It is an endless content-loop of hate-watchers, stream clips, and indecipherable Twitch chat. I will be there with popcorn when it overheats and inevitably goes up in flames, over and over again. Or, maybe I should tear myself away and go for a walk.