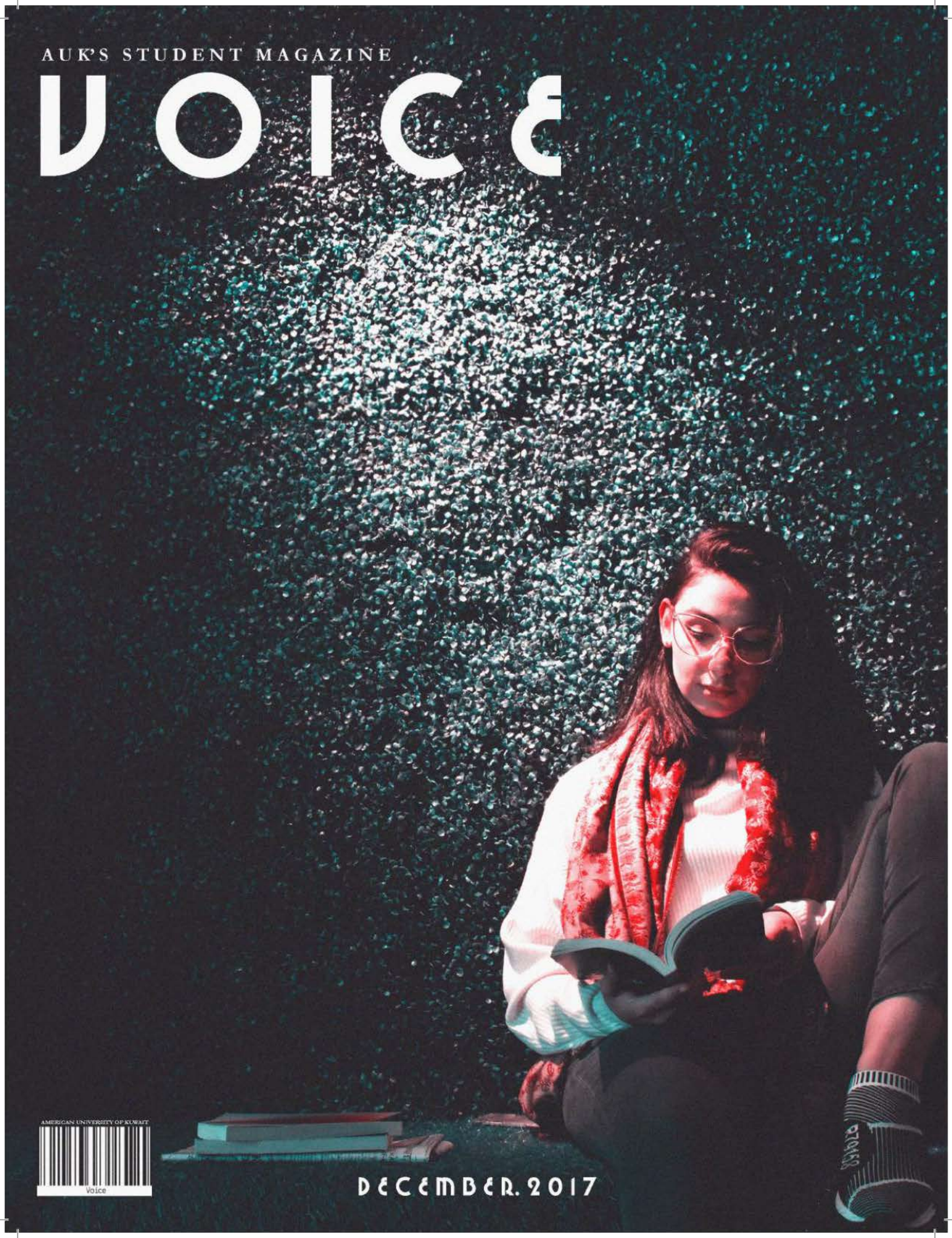
AUK'S STUDENT MAGAZINE

VOICE



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF KUWAIT

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VOICE TEAM MEMBERS

Benjamin Crace
Advisor

Crace is currently working on his PhD in Theology and Religion with an interdisciplinary approach at the University of Birmingham. He has been an Instructor at AUK since 2011, where he teaches various courses in the Writing Program, English 470 Internship Course, and coordinates English 100 as well. His other research interests include: T.S. Eliot, Southern religious eccentricities and literature, esoterica, and Gulf Studies.

Myriam Kotb
Editor in Chief

Myriam is a senior majoring in English Literature. Her interests include film, Children's Literature, drag culture, traveling, and anything related to the 18th Century. She is also an ardent lover of the felidae family, and occasionally slips in "Alas!" in casual discourse.

Khaled F. Abdullah
Creative Manager

Khaled F. Abdullah lives inside the movie of his life. He is a 23 year-old filmmaker and 4th year Graphic Design major. His interests include deconstructing classic pop music and all things David Letterman. He has the unwavering belief that he will one day bring closure to the JFK assassination and maybe, JUST maybe find Amelia Earhart. Roger Ebert is his hero and time is his enemy. Say hello when you see him around. But not on Tuesdays. NEVER on Tuesdays.

Dima Jadayel
Graphic Designer

Dima is weirdly passionate about ART. She has the ability to transform whatever you are saying into an art conversation without you realizing. She is very affectionate toward sloths, and finds dark chocolate and green tea relieving for the soul. You'd normally find her carrying her laptop everywhere she goes.

Shahad Almousa
Executive Editor

Shahad is a senior majoring in Computer Engineering. She is a people person; she's friends with people of all ages and loves being around people with different mindsets. Her hobbies include programming competitively and basketball. Her spirit animal is the elephant, it represents strength and loyalty. She loves organizing and planning events in AUK.

Hager Alazab
Executive Editor

Hager is a sophomore majoring in Mass Media and Communication. She loves music and the color black. If you spot a very tall figure in black from head to toe, that's probably her. She also recently developed an interest in pool even though she is not all that good at it. She is an extroverted introvert and HATES public speaking unless by public you mean 3 people or less.

Lara Jadayel
Executive Editor

Lara is a super hyper individual who admires good jokes but cannot make any. She is a huge basketball enthusiast who also enjoys good coffee and avocado juice with honey and nuts. She is a definite feminist. She loves to strike up conversations, so if you see her strolling down AUK's hallway, yell "WNBA" and witness the birth of a new friendship.

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Living a Dream - Summer Experiences at Dartmouth College

The Dartmouth-AUK Internship Exchange was developed as part of the Dartmouth-AUK Memorandum of Understanding and has been bringing Dartmouth students to AUK since 2005 and sending AUK students to Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire since 2006. The exchange provides the opportunity for Dartmouth students to spend a term at the American University of Kuwait and for AUK students to participate in selected Dartmouth programs, including interning for one month in the summer at Dartmouth College. While this experience is designed to assist with personal growth, it is also meant to build personal bridges between the AUK and Dartmouth communities and to encourage greater cultural understanding between the Middle East and the United States. Since 2005 through this summer, the program has had sixty-eight students participate between both institutions (36 from AUK going to Dartmouth; and 32 from Dartmouth going to AUK).

Two AUK students participated in programs at Dartmouth this past summer: Salma Abdelaziz and Nathalie Matta. In addition to their on campus activities/internships, they had the opportunity to canoe down the Connecticut River, hike up Mount Ascutney, and explore the picturesque New England scenery. Although one month is a very short period of time, this summer's AUK interns took advantage of every opportunity and made sure their experiences would be memorable.

DARTMOUTH: A PEAK AT A DREAM COME TRUE

BY SALMA ABDELAZIZ

Going to Dartmouth was a goal I wanted to reach throughout my years at AUK, but between the excitement and the jet lag it all felt like a dream. I always heard about the beauty of the campus, the surrounding area, and the marvelous weather, which only made me want to see the place even more. We arrived on a rainy day, but it only added to the city's beauty. During the first few days I explored the place and was amazed by how you can almost never tell where the college ends and the town of Hanover begins.

The locals were extremely friendly and my worries regarding discrimination against Muslims quickly dissipated. Some people would approach and ask a few questions and would even get excited when I told them about my exchange program. I loved everything about Dartmouth and I loved how looking at the greenery, mountains, rivers, and old buildings made me feel as if I was seeing in color for the first time. I would always walk around with my camera taking pictures of everything around me to the point where I would forget taking pictures of myself.

Things were the best they could be and even became better once I started my internship at the Office of Communications. The staff was very understanding and always kept in mind my interests by incorporating them into projects. They gave me the complete freedom to choose how to manage my assigned tasks including the times and places I preferred working at. For the more complicated tasks, such as setting up the accounts and analytics, they provided me with some online tutorials and articles to help me comprehend them better.

Once that was out of the way, I started working on designing Snapchat filters to go with the annual events they have every year like Commencement, Homecoming, and the Winter Carnival. This project was one of my favorites as it enabled me to get to know Dartmouth better and explore the different rituals they have for every event. After that, I had a project to animate some of the significant buildings they have and add some effects to them. This allows them to appear as if different colors of spotlights were casted on them the way it happens in real life.

However, the biggest project assigned to me was creating a video showing the Commencement Numbers. These numbers represent the numbers of students graduating from each school and some demographics regarding their classes. Usually the numbers go on their website in a list form that doesn't grab much attention; therefore, coming up with a creative

way to convert them into something interesting and engaging to be posted on different social media channels was a challenge. I started on this specific project from scratch and the department was kind enough to help me produce the footage I needed. The footage was a time lapse video of a tour around campus with a route I mapped showing all of the important landmarks of the place along with the beautiful nature around it. Even though I enjoyed almost everything I worked on in my internship there, this project was by far my favorite and the one I take most pride in.

The atmosphere in Dartmouth encourages hard work; though it might seem like you're doing insignificant activities, once your work is published, you see how it is reflected. The comments received from the feedback system made me want to work and do more. I arrived to the office during the summer; a time in which most of the staff were out on vacation, but when it was time to leave, I was known and acknowledged by the whole office for my hard work and contributions that will hopefully mark my presence there the same way Dartmouth is imprinted in my memories. Now, I am back in Kuwait, but it feels like I left a part of me in New Hampshire and I am still hoping that one day I go back and continue living the dream.

A UNIQUE & ENRICHING BUSINESS INTERNSHIP AT TUCKGO

BY NATHALIE MATTA

The Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College is one of the highest ranked business graduate schools in the United States. Getting the chance to intern at an Ivy League University is one of the best opportunities a student could ever get. I was placed in the Tuck Go department of Tuck, which is the department responsible for managing and planning the global experiences and onsite consultations that every graduate student needs to fulfill in order to graduate.

The Tuck Go department involves a lot of communications and connections with people and clients from all around the world. The international insight they already had, made it easier for them to work with someone from Kuwait and know more about our culture and traditions. I worked with a team of seven members who had experiences in the Middle East, making my experience even more interesting as we would share our thoughts about our different cultures and how being of diverse backgrounds add to our personalities and knowledge.

I was very happy with my internship placement and my tasks in supporting general business work and dealing with day-to-day operations. My internship supervisor and the team at Tuck Go made sure I accomplished all my goals and personal objectives within this internship, not only through my work in the department, but also by attending and meeting different people in the program. I got an opportunity to attend bridge business classes about business communications, which expanded my perspective about communicating in the business world and provided me very useful public speaking tips.

One of the activities I enjoyed the most was that I was given a chance to present and talk about Kuwait. One of the students described me as "very challenging" as I took their perception about the Middle East and tried to change it. It was one of my highest points during the internship; I felt very accomplished that I could represent my region in a very positive way.

I was also given the chance to meet people from different departments. I got emails from people who were interested in knowing more about the culture I come from and we'd end up meeting for coffee and chatting about AUK, Kuwait, and the cultural differences between the States and the Middle East.

I really enjoyed my time at Tuck and the people I was surrounded by made it even more pleasurable. I loved how everyone was very friendly and would always make sure I was fine and well settled. I am really grateful that every person I met and talked with added to my experience and knowledge in some way.

This internship opportunity was incomparable. It was by far the most enriching work experience I have gained, and that itself added a lot to my knowledge of the business world. If I had to do this experience all over again, I won't hesitate, as I worked in a very supportive environment that did not only concentrate on getting the job done, but making sure we all learn something new along the way.

From Left to right - Elizabeth Hindmarsh (Program Manager, Dartmouth-American University of Kuwait Program), Nathalie Matta, and Salma Abdelaziz atop Mount Ascutney in Windsor, Vermont.

THE CHOICE OF INACTION

BY ANONYMOUS

Good and evil is not black or white. It is a messy, multifaceted and an overwhelmingly irritating concept. The more I age, the more the dichotomous notion of black and white disappears. Now I'm left with a messy palette of greys. I grew up with the notion that evil requires an action with ill intention, but as I live, see, and experience, I understand otherwise. Evil is not just an action, it is also passivity.

To me, passivity is the worst kind of evil. I have grown bitter and impatient to it. It is not the self-passivity I speak of, because I believe everyone will experience their threshold at some point in life. But I speak of the kind of passivity where someone would witness any form of abuse and choose to do nothing of it. To me, this is cruelty. It is this passivity that indicates the acceptance of something bad happening to someone else. It is choosing to not help after an assessment of possibilities. There is an inkling of what the outcome would be, and it is choosing to be okay with that. To me, it is just as bad as doing the action. With passivity there is an acknowledgement, a willingness to prefer ignorance, and I will not play ignorant in the expense of another.

It is everywhere I go. On the internet, the Hollywood sexual abuse controversies regarding Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey, and others have given me mixed feelings. On the one hand, I love the fact that women have been given a platform to finally speak up. It is sad that it had to become this bad for women to be heard, and especially sad that this was not 'new' news. These scandals finally gave women the incentive to address the culture of sexual abuse in the workplace, and challenge its normalcy. But on the other hand, I despise other reactions. I have read comments online where people believed that women are still supposed to adjust to the man's inability to desexualize a woman in certain environments. I have also read comments stating and accepting that this is just the way our society is. This passive stance, the acceptance of what is occurring and the unwillingness to change, is extremely detrimental to men, women, and children.

It is here, too. There seems to be a collective effort to remain passive in Kuwait. And it also exists within this culture of sexual harassment. When we are constantly bombarded with articles, images, and discussions of women coming forth to oust Harvey Weinstein, why are we not doing the same? Why are we not having the same discussions in the Middle East? Do we not experience sexual harassment too? Women experience this every single day. When we are harassed on the street by men who feel entitled enough to degrade us, why do we still subconsciously try to not act too 'easy' by answering back, and get blamed for when we do? The choice to not act allows us to accept that this is the way things are, that this is easier that way, and that change is just inconvenient. This choice is done at the expense of women who have been harassed or sexually abused and need a platform to speak up. And this choice also muffles the voices of men who've experienced the same degradation; the choice of inaction hurt everyone.

I admit it has been embedded in me, the need to keep my head down and stay quiet. However, I will then become the very thing I do not like. I do not want a call for action, but I do wish to create a discussion. It is unfair to be complacent in a society. It is the collective effort that makes a society what it is. But it is not okay to pick and choose when.

Joseph Ducreux - "Self Portrait, Yawning"

SOMETIMES IGNORANCE IS'NT ALWAYS BLISS

BY LARA JADAYEL

"I'm depressed... I got a C on my midterm."

"You are so bipolar; you replied with an emoji this morning, what happened now?"

"You are definitely OCD; you always wipe the top of the can before you drink from it."

Casually converting mental illnesses into simple labels completely goes against what we stand for as a modern, educated community. We sit in a psychology class and read about the symptoms and effects mental illnesses have. Yet, we are unconsciously normalizing these heavy, complex, and life-altering circumstances without considering the severity of them on people with mental health issues. Not only do people with mental illnesses undergo challenges associated with their illnesses, they, due to our selfishness and ignorance, have to suffer with the underestimation of the severity of their illnesses too. Sometimes, they have to struggle to keep it a secret from friends and family because being mentally ill has been persistently ridiculed. *Borgen Magazine* reports, "Out of the mere four million people that populate the country [Kuwait], 200,000 have been diagnosed with depression." Nevertheless, we continue to assume it as nonexistent.

I do not hold myself as an expert on the topic, nor do I intend to define mental illness. However, I do believe that if we all have the time to post a picture on our social media accounts, and find the time to comment on others' pictures, then we all have the time to educate ourselves on the seriousness of this topic. Depression is not a joke. It is simply not the correct term to use when wanting to describe how you feel about getting a low grade on your midterm. Depression is not a temporary emotion or a way of getting out of meetings or classes. You cannot walk around claiming you have a cold if you don't, and most definitely, you wouldn't wish to get a cold either. Thus, you cannot walk around saying "I'm soooo depressed I need a change in routine" because as easy as it is to say it, being depressed is not something you are. It's not even something you'd want or can truly imagine to be.

Not only do we frequently address depression incorrectly, we take anxiety and paranoia very lightly too. We tend to not adhere to the elements that categorize them under mental illness. Mental illnesses aren't anything you can just "get over," nor can they be "cured" by taking a "pill" or by going on a "vacation." Mental illnesses are inextricable. They prevent an individual from looking at life in colors, halt them from describing things the majority can, and most strongly, they obstruct an individual from carrying out daily tasks as easy as we would. Remember that the next time you laugh your bad grade away.

TEAMWORK: IS IT DOABLE ?

BY HAGER ALAZAB

Have you ever wondered why the ability to work in teams is so important if you are applying for a university? Why jobs always recruit those with good social skills who can communicate smoothly with others and create a positive working atmosphere? Why they literally force you to take two UNIV classes in AUK in order to strengthen your team working skills? Well, I have and you should probably start thinking about it too simply because it is December now and if you haven't already been assigned a group project, brace yourself because it will be happening way sooner than you anticipate.

Now, I don't know about everybody's experiences with group work but I sure know my own approach to them and let's just say… I am not their biggest fan. For years now, group work has been a major source of stress for me even though there's this myth going around that implies working with other people on the same project helps lessen your workload. As much as I would love to believe this, it isn't usually the case. Not when four out of five of your team members always have some excuse not to show up to those 15 minute meetings that somehow fit all of your schedules. And who knows, maybe you are one out of those four people. There's also the highly dreaded PowerPoint presentation that usually comes along with most group projects where one person ends up doing all the work while the rest of the *"team"* is effectively MIA.

To all my fellows out there who have prepared an entire presentation on their own and arranged a meeting two seconds before presentation time to familiarize your team members with the content of the slides so that they wouldn't look like a deer in headlights in front of your classmates, you are a hero and I am proud of you.

However, just because some people have had bad experiences with teamwork it doesn't mean that yours have to be this way too. You are perfectly capable of working in a group even if you are shy, introverted, bossy, or just have a very low tolerance to humans in general. Here are some steps that you could follow if you have previously faced difficulties while working with a group. And even if you haven't had any setbacks, you have come this far into this article so you might as well read the following *VERY EFFICIENT* steps:

1) You all have a common goal that you want to accomplish. Focus on that goal and all the ways you could possibly accomplish it.

2) Communication is important. Talk to each other and share your concerns and recommendations. Your input is important and encouraged, share it and don't be shy.

3) Make your meetings more concise. Since it's technically impossible to decide on a meeting time that everyone actually agrees on, keep your meeting short and brief. Try not to go off topic and keep your focus on the meeting's purpose.

4) Constructive criticism is necessary but don't be too harsh on your teammates' work. Make sure when you criticize something you always have an alternative solution that could be brought to the table and discussed. Criticize to make your final work better, not to be the boss of your group.

5) For the perfectionists, it's okay to want your project to turn out a certain way; however, **people have different standards and opinions that have to be respected and listened to.**

6) Nobody likes a passive group member. Contribute and do your assigned work. Help with the workload and don't just dump everything on your teammates because you are all as equally responsible for the final project.

7) If your teammates aren't participating and you feel like you might end up doing all the work, **speak up and encourage them to contribute and do their work.** Don't give up and cause yourself work-induced stress.

8) Reward yourself and your teammates for any accomplishment or a solid step forward.

9) Respect your team members and create a positive working atmosphere for yourself and your team members.

10) Last but not least, **enjoy your work and give it your all** until you create something you and your team members will all be proud of.

WHY YOU SHOULD LAUGH NOW!

BY LARA JADAYEL

What does a Finance midterm coming up, a research paper due, a deadline to meet for work, or the semi-finals of your appointed sport all have in common? They, and many other demanding occurrences happening in your life, can cause the undesired physiological effects of stress; anything that possesses a challenge or a threat to our well-being ends up stressing us.

Many articles and books are designed to help relieve stress and help us cope with it. Such stress relievers range from, and are not limited to, meditating, exercising, and venting. However, being a very lazy and antisocial human being myself, I wanted to find a quick but efficient way to lower the stress levels I so frequently experience: Laughing!

Laughing is known to be "the best medicine." We are obviously never unhappy when we are laughing. At least we don't appear to be. More scientifically, Matt Kaplan, writer for *Nature*, an international weekly journal of science, states, "When stressed out, the body constricts blood vessels, elevates the production of potentially damaging stress hormones, and raises blood pressure. Short periods of stress are normal and not dangerous, but over long periods of time stress weakens the immune system and makes heart problems more likely." So, how would the act of laughing decrease such disrupting symptoms? Well, laughter, according to one 2005 research, is known to lower blood pressure, which in return, minimizes stress levels since stress raises blood pressure.

Laughter is not the only act considered good for your health, simply smiling can contribute to boosting your health too. Joseph Stromberg, writer for *Smithsonian*, enlightens his readers on the experiment carried out by researcher Tara Kraft who wanted to investigate whether or not smiling could have "real health-relevant benefit." To do this, Kraft formed a group of 169 college students who were, for the sake of the experiment and its even-handed results, deceived into an experiment of multitasking. Students were divided into 3 groups, a group was taught to hold a neutral expression, another was taught how to smile normally, and the last group was taught to smile genuinely, all while holding chopsticks in their mouths to maintain their facial expressions. All students were to conduct the same stressful tasks while their facial expressions differed. Student's heart rates were continuously monitored. The results yielded from the experiment startled Kraft; the groups who smiled had lower heart rates when recovering from the stressful tasks than those of neutral facial expressions.

This comes to show us that laughing, or even faking a smile, whether it be during studying for a difficult midterm, writing a paper, carrying out work tasks, or warming up for the semi-finals, are the easiest and laziest ways to decrease stress levels, and ultimately, help us achieve better performances and improve our moods and health.

"STORIES"

BY HAGER ALAZAB

I think it's about time we addressed the worldwide, widespread phenomenon of "stories." In the past few years, media platforms came to the conclusion that, as media consumers, we weren't really sharing enough personal info on the internet. And whereas this might be true for former Facebook users who've quit the app altogether after it was hogged by parents and grandparents who only just discovered wifi and suddenly found themselves capable of posting pictures for all 37 friends to see, it is not quite accurate in the case of other social media platforms that have grown in popularity the past 7 years. So can we actually talk about what a "story" is and why it seems like a life or death feature for app owners?

The idea of a story was created by the developers of the one and only Snapchat application. A story is ideally a series of visuals one posts throughout their day to document their everyday lives. However, what makes a story unique is the fact that within 24 hours of sharing the events of your day, all of your content gets deleted automatically until you decide to post more. I won't go into further detail about what snapchat actually is because it's 2017 and as much as you hate to admit it out loud, you know that you are as guilty of using the dog filter as the next person. And while snapchat actually presented a unique idea for those of us who live on social media platforms (aka millennials), the idea quickly rose to fame as it was expected to and gained an insurmountable amount of success until it was eventually (and naturally) stolen.

Now, when an app stoops so low and not so discreetly steals an idea that was developed by someone else, it must be going through a period of decline; a period of a very dire need for users. But why is the feature of a "story" the only seemingly guaranteed way to get those apps the attention they are seeking? Why do media consumers find stories very appealing and attention grabbing? Actually scratch that, why are we so obsessed with documenting every single insignificant detail of our lives to the point where nothing is really private anymore?

I don't have the answers to these questions and neither do you. I know you were expecting this to get deep and sentimental and I am sorry to disappoint, but I do have 3 selfies on my snapchat story as I type this article here. And so, naturally, I am not going to be giving you the customary lecture that usually ends in "drop your phones kids,""spend time with your family," and my personal favorite, "go out and socialize." The only thing I can actually offer is a series of sagacious advice that might be of use in the future:

1) If it's super important for you to report your daily life for your friends through stories, the least you could do is **post a different variety of content on each social media platform,** so that your friends won't have to come across the same California rolls you got at Sakura 5 different times.

2) USE. DIFFERENT. FILTERS.

3) If you are one of the lucky pet owners, **please post more pictures of your pet,** we would like to see that (and that is my very humble, very unbiased opinion).

4) One video of your baby nephew crying is enough. Our ears can only stand so much whining.

5) *Milk and Honey* **was a great book before you took a picture of every other poem, used the black and white filter, and captioned the pictures using the words "important" and "finally, someone said it."**

6) Not everything is "aesthetic."

7) Your squad is cute. Putting up 30 consecutive videos of you all singing "Look What You Made Me Do" in a car is not.**There is a very fine line between stories and Musical.lys, please don't get them confused.**

8) Had a near death experience that left you with a bloody limb? Go to the hospital or this might just be the last picture you will ever take.

9) For snapchat users exclusively, if you post something on your story, DO NOT send it again to someone privately under ANY circumstances.

10) Finally, DO NOT snap pictures and videos while driving.

VOICE THE TOPIC

WHAT SCARES YOU MOST ABOUT OUR SOCIETY?

HUSSAM HELMY
ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

That without any control on my part, my family and I, and so many expats like myself could just be summarily ejected from the country, for no reason other than that we aren't Kuwaiti.

OMAR AL AJMAI
COMMUNICATION & MEDIA STUDIES

It's ignorance. I swear I'm not as pretentious as I sound.

BATOOL HASAN
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

How easy it is to choose ourselves at the expense of other's happiness.

DANA AL ZURAIQI
GRAPHIC DESIGN

Men and religion combined with ego and evil intentions.

ISLAM KHALIL
BUSINESS STUDIES

The scariest thing in the Kuwaiti society is driving. Most of the teenagers drive crazily and without any care about people's lives.

MISHAL AL KHALIFA
COMMUNICATION & MEDIA STUDIES

The thing that scares me the most in our society is racism, because of the fact that some Kuwaitis look down or mock Indians and South Asians even though we're all equal as human beings.

EHAB SOLAIMAN
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

The feeling of being judged. If I don't fit with the people around me, I will always feel unwanted. And I feel that people don't accept you if you're different from them.

RONA HASAN
BUSINESS STUDIES

How easy it is for our society to stereotype and judge people so fast without getting to know them.

GET TO KNOW

Rima Ezzeddine

Ms. Ezzeddine is an instructor in the Department of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. She graduated with a Master's Degree in Biochemistry from Kuwait University, and has been a faculty member at AUK since 2013.

1) What made you get into this field?
My passion for science and my love for teaching.

2) Who is the person you model your life after?
My great mother <3.

3) How do you cope with the stress of being who you are?
I always tell myself if others can do it, I can do it better. :)

4) Was there a situation that made you second guess working here?
Not really but problems do arise all the time everywhere; they're part of life; we need to overcome them.

5) What're you truly ashamed of?
Being a human. Given how humans have turned into cruel beings.

6) When did you last cry?
I almost cried yesterday when my brother found out he's having a baby boy.

7) What scares you most about our society?
How cruel it's become.

8) What do you do when you are not working? Is it sad?
I go out with family or friends or stay home with my family. Nope, it's actually super happy! :D

9) If you were to get 3 people (dead or alive) in the same room for dinner, who would they be?
- Cristiano Ronaldo
- My grandmother
- My mother

10) What word you can never spell?
Words with adjacent vowels are mostly confusing.

11) Tell us 3 things we don't know about you:
- I'm a football fan (Hala Madrid).
- I was born a preemie.
- I love to travel.

12) Top 3 Movies:
- *A Beautiful Mind*
- *The Others*
- *The Village*

13) Top 3 Songs:
- "My Immortal" by Evanescence
- "Heartless" by Kanye West
- "Despacito" by Justin Bieber

14) Which social movement would you have liked to kickstart?
An environmental protection one.

15) Do you ever just sit at home and hate on a specific student? If so, do you throw darts at photos of them?
LOL, No! xp

A.T. Siraki

Dr. Siraki is an Assistant Professor of English. His specialties include 18th Century British Literature, Aesthetics, and Literary Criticism. He's been a faculty member at AUK since 2014. Get to know him!

1) What made you get into this field?
Initially I wanted to do Law School and I was told that – in Canada you have to get a Bachelor's Degree in something first before you can go to law school – a good major is English. I haven't thought of English until a friend, a classmate in grade thirteen, noticed I got A's and B's on papers I wrote the night before and he was struggling. So, he looked at me one day and said, "you know what, you should go into English," and here I am!

2) Who is the person you model your life after?
As far as being a professor, I can answer that more easily. In my second year of my Undergrad I had a professor and he was an old-school British guy, they don't make them anymore; he was educated in the 30s and had this really classic dry wit. He would just get up there and talk about literature and was charming, funny, and witty. I thought "I wanna be him." I just wanna know stuff and talk about literature as easily.

3) How do you cope with the stress of being who you are?
I try to forget who I am! That's probably the best way to deal with it. Also watching T.V (I like comedies) and working out at the gym.

4) Was there a situation that made you second guess working here?
I think there're many answers. One answer is the huge disparity in student abilities and motivations. Probably the best students I've had, I've had here, but dealing with the small fraction of students who don't want to be here can be taxing sometimes. I still love them, but I prefer the good students.

5) What're you truly ashamed of?
Myself

6) When did you last cry?
Probably when I watched the last Pixar movie, whatever that was.

7) What scares you most about our society?
The driving. I haven't driven here for two years and just the thought of it makes the hairs on my neck stand up.

8) What do you do when you are not working? Is it sad?
Depends on your definition of sad. Sometimes I love watching T.V. and eating Cheetos. At the end of the day, it's about whatever makes you happy! So, just chilling, watching T.V., and Cheetos or Pringles. Oh, and working on my Žižek impression at home.

9) If you were to get 3 people (dead or alive) in the same room for dinner, who would they be?
- Larry David
- David Hume
- Earl of Rochester

10) What word you can never spell?
Accommodate

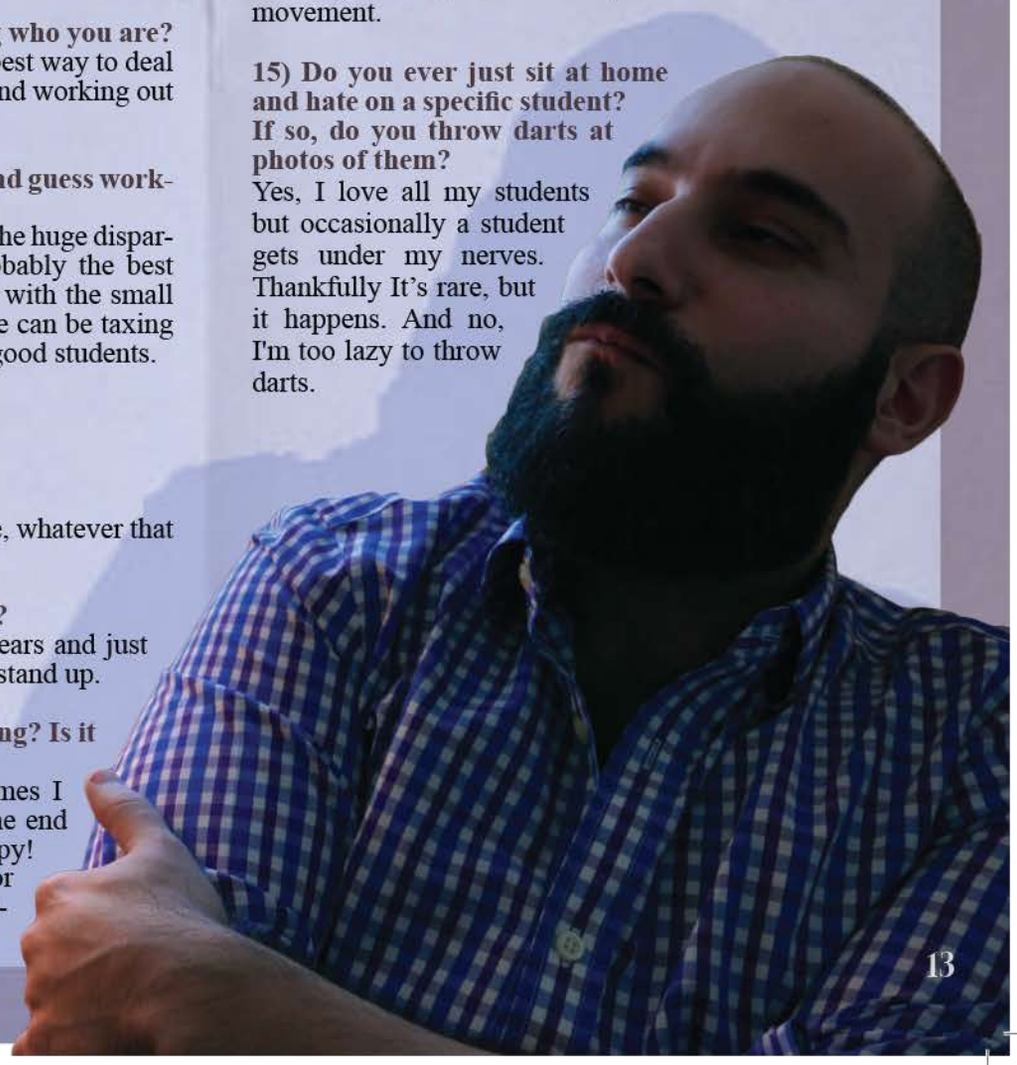
11) Tell us 3 things we don't know about you:
- I'm partially color blind.
- I'm convinced I have this thing that's become popular online called ASMR.
- I used to look older 10 years ago.

12) Top 3 Movies:
- *Back to the Future*
- *Conan the Destroyer*
- *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*

13) Top 3 Songs:
- "Chaosphere" by Meshuggah
- "Long Way to the Top" by AC/DC
- That song that goes DON DIN DAH DON DEN

14) Which social movement would you have liked to kickstart?
I'm way too lazy to be socially active: the Pro-Cheetos movement.

15) Do you ever just sit at home and hate on a specific student? If so, do you throw darts at photos of them?
Yes, I love all my students but occasionally a student gets under my nerves. Thankfully It's rare, but it happens. And no, I'm too lazy to throw darts.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU THINK YOU THINK TOO MUCH

By Dr. Omar al Nakib. Foreward by Dr. Khaled F. Abdullah

Foreward:

Why was foreword spelt with an A? This undermines the integrity of the entire piece.

•

Diarrhea; you'll make a hot diarrhea on yourself. Aristotle said that a little bit more than two-thousand years ago—and now look at you: he's right. And it's because nervousness is boiling your stomach, which is why when it comes time to do a poo it's so hot and watery. He actually said this, but using different words, and in Greek. Diarrhea is why Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, came to hate America. He gave three reasons why: *one*—it complicated his theories of castration and mother-love; *two*—Woodrow Wilson and Congress refused to support the League of Nations; *three*—he couldn't find a public toilet. Freud, visiting America from Vienna, had to give lectures, and giving lectures made him nervous, but he was European, and as a European, would've hated America anyway. Irishman George Bernard Shaw famously greeted America on October 11, 1933 with, "Hello America! Hello, all my friends in America! How are all you dear old boobs?" The novelist Malcolm Cowley, an American himself, wrote that "America was England without the fifty most intelligent men." There was something about America. But diarrhea isn't the worst of it, when you think you think too much. Thinking, *in general*—thinking *even a sufficient amount*—bad things happen and you do bad things.

•

Here are some bad things that have happened to people who thought they thought too much:

The German philosopher Philip Mainländer, who believed that God killed himself and that our universe is actually His dead body, stood on a large stack of copies of his recently-published book, *Die Philosophie der Erlösung*, and hung himself. The book still hasn't been translated into English, so I can't really tell you what it's about.

The German philosopher Karl Marx had so many pimples and boils and pustules all over his body he literally couldn't sit down or stand up or walk. If he sat down, all the pimples and boils and pustules on his backside would explode. Also, three of his six kids died before 1855. He died in 1883.

The German writer Hans Fallada, at the age of 17, made a suicide pact with his best friend. They agreed it's best they shoot eachother. They found a location, held up their guns, and pulled the trigger at the same time like in a duel. His friend misses. In a panic, Fallada shoots himself in the chest, but survives. He was kicked in the face by a horse a year earlier.

The German writer Heinrich Heine, because of his syphilis, spent every single day of the last eight years of his life bedridden. He called it his *Matratzengruft* (mattress-grave). His condition got so bad his eyelids stopped working and had to be held open with his hands.

The Russian-Ukrainian writer Nikolai Gogol, in a sudden bout of religious insanity, burned everything he was working on, stopped writing entirely, and refused to eat. It took nine days to die.

The American writer Ernest Hemingway was sitting on the toilet and when he pulled the lever to flush his poo he pulled some of the ceiling down with him. He would then tell people that that scar on his head was from the War. Eventually, he suffered so much physical trauma his brain turned against him. One of his suicide attempts included walking into his plane's propeller.

The Irish writer James Joyce, who suffered from problems with his eyesight, believed (he's dead now, of course) at least for a little bit, in the now-discredited medical theory that infections and ailments can *migrate* from one part of the body to a completely unrelated part. They'd tell you your knees hurt because of an ear infection. And Joyce had bad

Jean-Paul Sartre

teeth and a disgusting mouth—after all, he was known to enjoy a drinky-poo now and again (among other things). So—and I'm sure this seemed pretty smart at the time—he went to the dentist and had 17 of his own teeth removed. Humans have 32 teeth.

We know Virginia Woolf stuffed her pockets with stones and walked into a river.

The Norwegian writer Hans Jæger, who led a group of Bohemians during the late-19th century, wrote Nine Commandments to follow: You must cut yourself off from your family; you must hate farmers; whenever you went to the theater, you had to make a scene; you mustn't wear celluloid cuffs, and so on and so forth. Rule 9 was you had to kill yourself. I actually think at least one person did.

•

And here are some of the bad things people who thought they thought too much *did*:

The French philosopher Louis Althusser strangled his wife. He wrote *exactly how* in his memoirs: "Kneeling beside her, poised over her body, I am massaging her neck. I have often massaged her in silence, the nape of her neck, the small of her back…. I place my two thumbs on the hollow of flesh round the top of the breastbone and, applying pressure, one thumb to the right, the other aslant to the left, I slowly reach the harder zone beneath the ears. I massage in a V," and choked her to death.

His fellow Frenchman, Existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre would start his letters to his longtime-lover Simone de Beauvoir with, "Dear Beaver," which is questionable.

Yet another Frenchman, Jaques Lacan, the psychoanalyst, suddenly terminated all future sessions with his patient, the ethnologist Lucien Sebag, because he wanted to have very improper relations with his teenage daughter. This led Sebag to kill himself at the age of 32. I'm getting this from a very angry review of Lacan's biography from October 31, 1997—so you can't be sure, but still. According to this review (which only gets angrier), towards the end of his life and suffering from dementia, he would *physically attack* his patients, pulling their hair, punching them a little, which, in turn, led *them* to suicide.

And Continental thinkers *attacking people*, it seems, much like hating America, is not entirely unusual. The Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, teaching math in the small village of Otterthal, would regularly attack his students. Like Lacan, he'd also pull hair and smack upside the head and box ears; he beat a student so hard he collapsed. Google *haidbauer incident*. He taught elementary.

•

The only people who don't have to worry about thinking they think too much are actors and musicians. According to actor/director/magician Orson Welles, actors and musicians are spared strangling their spouses or leading patients to suicide or beating schoolchildren on account of their stupidity. Acting and making music has more to do with emotion, rather than intellect. He then goes on to call Sir Lawrence Olivier, considered by many to be the greatest actor of all time, "very—and I mean—seriously stupid."

If you'd like a musical example, the Austrian composer Anton Bruckner once tipped a conductor for rehearsing. Stupid is very nice people.

What I'm trying to get at here is that if you think, bad things happen, and you do bad things.

The Duty of a Creation

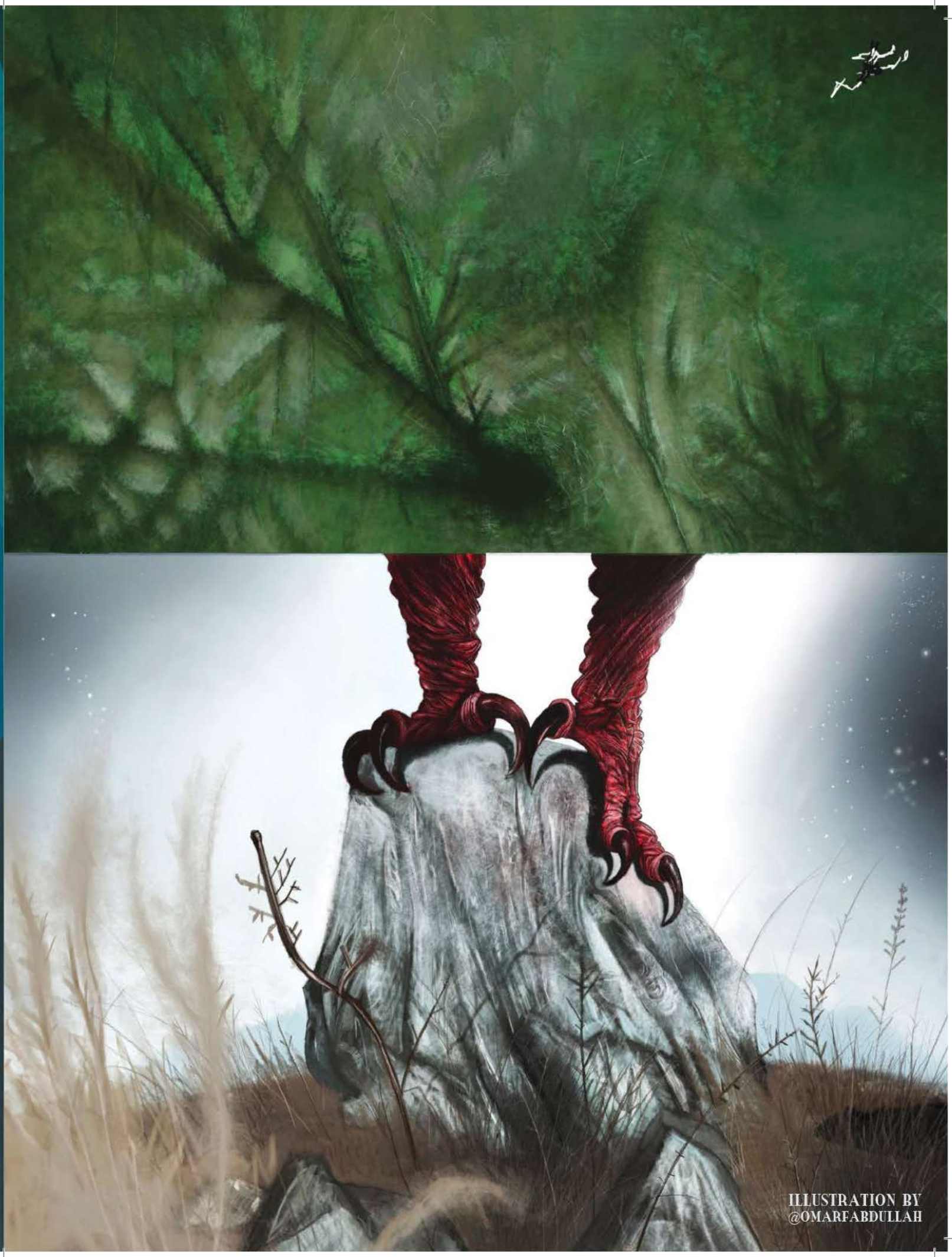
BY LAYAL BOULOS

The flame burnt graciously amidst the wax.
A yellow flicker lights up the dark room.
So delicate, it moves, dances and acts.
Its artistry causes shadows to bloom.

With mastery they side-step, shimmy, and groove,
To the melody of fine illusion.
The flame happily joins in and approves.
Proud of its creation and collusion.

Inevitability of change takes its toll.
Door slams, bringing its ultimate demise.
The candle's wick once snow white is now charcoal,
bends a side in its drying wax and dies.

This is the best a creation can do,
Leave a gay imprint, until it falls through.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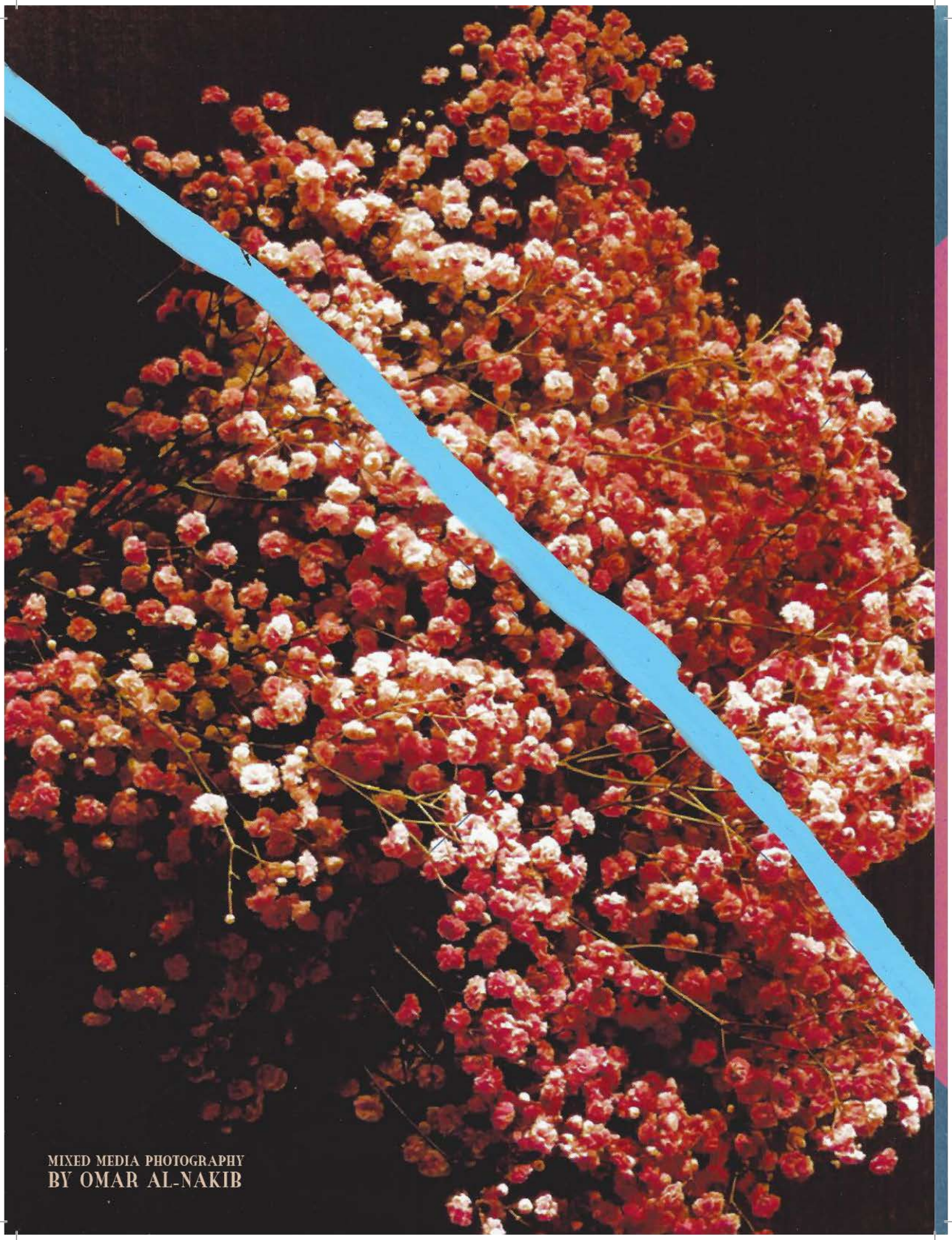


MIXED MEDIA PHOTOGRAPHY
BY OMAR AL-NAKIB

DEAR CURLY SUE

I have this habit of providing strangers a shoulder to cry on. Whenever I see a fellow human moping around in a sorry state, I can't help but ask, "What's wrong, buddy?" Naturally, we exchange numbers and I tell them I'm free to talk anytime. Usually, that's that. But, I've found out some people take the last thing I say literally. I now endure random midnight phone-calls that last 3 hours from this one person I've only spoken to once telling me they're crying in one of the bathroom stalls on the 3rd floor of the Liberal Arts building.

Curly Sue, what should I do?

Sincerely,
Soggy Shoulder

Dear Soggy Shoulder,

Kiddo—at least it's just that one soggy shoulder. Listen, your case is more urgent than you think. You're madly in love with this person and you don't know it yet. Why else would you devote so much of your time to a person you ostensibly wanna get rid of? The good news is you're prefect for each other. But you're also stuck in the Classic Kindergarten Love Triangle (CKLT), and this must be stopped immediately. CKLT is a phenomenon that seemingly squanders after the age of 6, but in reality, its essence lives on in different manifestations.

Shoulder, do you remember your bully in kindergarten? Do you remember who you bullied in kindergarten? And do you remember who they bullied? That's chiefly what you're suffering from right now, a violent CKLT cycle with one impetus: your repressed desires. You are bullying the one you love without realizing it. In order to stop hurting them, and ultimately yourself (as you are an extension of the one you love), you need to understand how to break this cycle; the way to break a cycle is by feeding a cycle.

Selfishness is driven by pleasure. In your case, this pleasure is reciprocated – You're a selfish person who allowed the phone calls to happen 'cause you wanted the pleasure of hearing about others' woes to feel better about your life. And they're selfish for wanting to be listened to without any consideration of others' time or how boring or repetitive they innately are – You might think it's this selfishness that's detrimental to any healthy relationship. You are wrong again. Since this relationship is built on selfishness, selfishness becomes your virtue. The moment you both welcome this virtue into your lives is the moment the CKLT cycle breaks. You will then graduate from Banal Bullies to Virtuous Bullies. So, stop stopping yourself from being selfish and live! Only then will you be free love birdies who bully each other in sheer virtue.

P.S. Don't let the other shoulder get soaked too. Save it for failed marriages.

I Love You!
Curly Sue

IN DEFENSE OF

BRAM STOKER'S

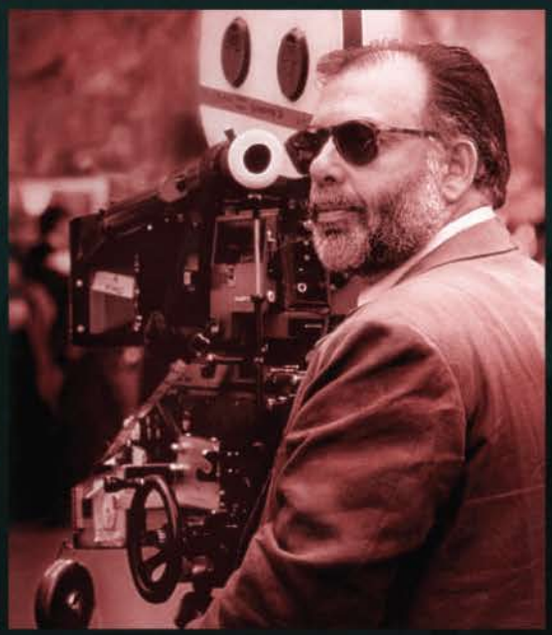
DRACULA

Francis Ford Coppola's nightmarish film has been a bone of great contention since its 1992 release. Fans of Bram Stoker's novel were quick to point out the film's deviation from the source material and critics uniformly lamented its "style over substance" approach. In this VFCA (Voice Future Classic Article), Khaled F. Abdullah argues that those very "flaws" are in fact what make this film a cinematic horror masterpiece.

A sample of Wolfgag Killer's stunning soundtrack

The famous (controversial) arabic subtitle scene

One of the insubordinate cameras presumably used on the video, with director Francisman.



C. 1992 – Hollywood, California Love

The caped shadow of Bela Lugosi looms large over the head of the unfortunate filmmaker tasked with breathing new life into a very (un)dead subject. Lugosi, the Hungarian actor most famous for portraying the blood-thirsty count in Tod Browning's 1931 smash-hit *Dracula* and a myriad of other less prestigious productions, had an undeniable presence and charisma. His performance, mannered as it was, gave new life to a very (un)de- Oh, I already used that bit. He was good is the point. *Too* good. It's a case of an actor embodying a character so well that they would be doomed to play versions of it for the rest of their miserable lives. Just ask John Carroll Lynch, he played that one guy in Gothika. Look at him now. Still Lynchin' around. Absolutely useless. But this curse affects actors who are burdened with portraying the same character in subsequent productions. Christopher Lee, Jack Palance, Jamie Kennedy, and Luke Evans failed to bring the intensity and raw animal magnetism that Lugosi brought to the part. In 1992, Director Francis Ford Coppola, most famous for his 1990 Christmas epic *The Godfather Part 3*, was next in line to deliver the goods. His approach was to abandon all the other films in exchange for all of film. He put a stake through the heart of lazy Hollywood filmmaking by recruiting the special effects artists of yesteryear. In studio, they began building a practical effect paradise. Miniatures abound! His choice to play the titular (tee-hee) character was Gary Oldman, a then practically unknown British actor with a penchant for stealing small dogs and reuniting them with their creator. Oldman's tour de force (???) performance was a sight to behold. Literally. His, some would say, over the top kabuki acting was a perfect fit for the films over the top kabuki filming. It was a wonderful cast, including but not limited to, Sir Ant Hopkins, Winona Ryder, Sadie Frost, Cary Elwes, and of course Cary Elwes. But the performance that really brought the house down was that of Keanu Reeves, who is an absolute powerhouse. The Lebanese born actor got his start in the business by playing Dracula himself in the little seen BBC special *Dracula: The High School Years*, in which lil Drac, when confronted with a poor grade, rips his teacher's head off. What a sick film that was. Well, they're telling me I have to go now. Watch this. Coppola's *Dracula*, it's super freakin' good you guys. John Landis is innocent.

Gary Oldman

Bela Lugosi as Blood

All facts may not be true.

THE SPLENDID 70'S

FILM EDITION

1970
THE ARISTOCATS

A gorgeous, kind-hearted film aided greatly by animator Ken Anderson's striking designs and Zsa Zsa Gabor's natural charisma.

1971
MCCABE & MRS. MILLER

Robert Altman's sprawling revisionist western isn't for everyone, but those of you who can handle a hefty running time will find it worth every minute.

1972
AGGUIRE, THE WRATH OF GOD

Watching a Werner Herzog film is like sinking into a dark pit of nightmarish despair. Roger Ebert describes the film as "one of the great haunting visions of the cinema."

1973
DONT LOOK KNOW

This is one of the greatest Horror films ever made. A colorful surrealist masterpiece. DO NOT WATCH WITH KIDS.

1974
CHINATOWN

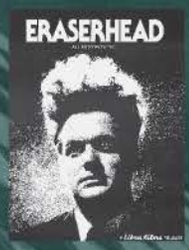
A modern noir that relies less on the tired clichés of the genre and more on the quiet discomfort of everyday interaction.

1975
JAWS

It may be considered one of the greatest films of all time, but that still underrates it. As terrifying today as it was upon release.

1976
THE TENANT

This film is just too bizarre not to put on this list. It feels as though it begins before the first frame and goes on long after its terrifying conclusion. It also boasts an unforgettable soundtrack by Phillipe Sarde.



1977
ERASERHEAD

The disquieting sound design and lush black and white cinematography make Eraserhead an undeniable horror masterpiece.

1978
GREASE

Leave your pretension at the door, guys. Enjoy the love.

1979
ALL THAT JAZZ

Bob Fosse is basically a prototype Baz Luhrmann. If you enjoyed 'Moulin Rouge!' or 'Romeo + Juliet' then this is for you.

THE SPLENDID 70'S

MUSIC EDITION

1970

CAT STEVENS - FATHER & SON

It's both easy and cynical to dismiss this song as the maudlin soundtrack to your parent's high school years, but this classic tune hasn't lost any of its emotional potency.

1971

THE CARPENTERS - RAINY DAYS & MONDAYS

An ode to misery and loneliness sung by Karen Carpenter, whose voice is probably the aural manifestation of vulnerability.

1972

BREAD - AUBREY

Another entry in the unfairly dismissed category. This gorgeous melody evokes such a deep sense of melancholy that one would be tempted to deafen oneself were it not for the possibility of hearing it again.

1973

ELTON JOHN - BENNIE & THE JETS

No explanation necessary. Killer song.

1974

THE HOLLIES - THE AIR THAT I BREATHE

Melancholy rock with a sweet streak. Most notable for its unusual chord progression being (unintentionally?) repurposed for Radiohead's monster hit 'Creep' decades later.

1975

FRANK VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS

December, 1963 (Oh, What a Night): An instantly recognizable drum beat kicks off this boisterous celebration of past romance.

1976

QUEEN - DROWSE

A true gem from Queen's drummer Roger Taylor. Powerhors- PowerHOUSE vocals.

1977

QUEEN - ALL DEAD ALL DEAD

Put the horrifying title aside and embrace guitarist Brian May's genius arrangement.

1978

GREASE SOUNDTRACK - YOURE THE ONE THAT I WANT

Maybe the catchiest song ever written.

1979

THE KNACK - MY SHARONA

Wait- THIS might be the catchiest song ever written. An infectious drum beat with a tremendous guitar solo to boot!

Myriam & Khaled at the movies

Review

JUSTICE LEAGUE

Myriam's Review:

Justice for *Justice League*

This masterpiece is not the critics' favorite but neither was *The Amazing Spider-Man*, so who are they to judge? *Justice League* is not just any superhero movie, it is a human experience. The music, ambience, script, and cinematography all harmonize so effortlessly to create an undeniably enriching and complex artwork. Would "just another superhero movie" challenge our latent societal ideologies so impeccably? When Barry Allen asked Bruce Wayne "What are your superpowers again?," Wayne answered "I'm rich," leaving a poignant taste in our palates. This pivotal moment in the film changed the course of not only "mainstream" films, but all films. Cinema lacks realism. And ironically, this fantasy film presents a more authentic reality than the films that claim to be realistic. This is only because of Ben Affleck's unadulterated talent.

Ben Affleck is misunderstood. He is as hated as the superhero genre by those pretentious snobs. Just because *13 Going on 30* is replayed relentlessly on MBC Max, it doesn't make Jenny Garner a better actor or person. Montannah said it, "Everybody makes mistakes. Everybody has those days." So why can't we look past one's ugly divorce? Ben is a great guy and a great actor. And this film is his redemption.

It is rash to say *Justice League* is free from flaws; just like anything created by man, this film has its failings. However, those failings are what transmute this film into a classic. From the feminist messages to the underlying Marxist theses, this film is both visually and mentally stimulating. Anyone that denies its potency simply did not pay attention. Overall, can't wait to watch it!

★★★★☆

Khaled's Review:

(In)*Justice League*

I don't think this is what Satyajit Ray Romano meant when he said: "জানোয়ারের মন মানুষের মত জট পাকানো নয়। মানুষের মধ্যে যে সবচেয়ে বেশি সাদাসিধে, তারও মন একটা বাঘের মনের চেয়ে অনেক বেশি প্যাঁচালো।"! *Justice League,* Marvel's latest poopie offering, reeks of said poopie. A bloated, sad excuse for a film or "film" as our british friends might say, this ungainly dreck only elevates the stature of Christian Nolan's Apu Batman *"trilogy."* Those films truly were shot on cameras. Unlike this pathetic display of patheticism. First of all, the special effects are anything but. And the plot is beyond unrealistic. How am I supposed to believe that Superman, a handsome criminal with a handsome face, isn't flying about committing the most heinous crimes in his time of leisure? And where in the world is Spider-man? I paid good monies to watch this miserable garbage, the least you could do is allow the human web slinger a cameo. The actress that plays the Wondering woman was the one silver lining in this. Her performance was always audible. Speaking of audible, how are we supposed to see "The Flasher"? He simply moves too fast. And what is he running from? Perhaps it's from Ben Affleck's over the top, hammy performance as The Batman. A pale comparison to Christian Finnegan's Oscar winning portrayal of the Masked Bat. Whatever gave Affleck (a proud drinker) the gall to make some of these choices? It was incredibly surreal, and maybe also not very good, to watch him flail around in a cheap costume while speaking in what has to go down as the most culturally insensitive, racist Bangladeshi accent ever committed to film. Marvel should be ashamed of themselves. The appearance of Thor, Hulk, Captain Marvel, and Iron Head is superfluous and unfunny. The ending in which The Batman devours The Flasher is as shocking as it was powerful. All in all a terrific film.

★★★★★

Critics may not have seen film.

GAMES + PUZZLES

If you're into sports, start here!

Sports

- **Watcher**
  - Gets players' jerseys
    - "We'll get them next time"
    - "They bribed the ref"
  - "I'm with whoever wins"
    - "Messi? who's she?
    - "I'm always right"
- **Player**
  - Bench-warmer
    - "I'll get to shine soon"
    - "The coach calls me You"
  - Starting player
    - "I'm fast"
    - "I'm tall"

A

Woho! You scored the winning shot! You are always congratulated on your achievements, and you have been told multiple times that you are someone's role model. Let's be honest though, did you know the earth was round? We can't all be perfect, so don't let temporary fame fool you; four years of university will have to end sometime!

B

You have been trying and trying but nothing seems to work! You have yet to discover your hobby or interest, but don't let that bring you down! You have a pure heart. You are more likely to succeed academically and have a better chance in meeting the president (maybe that's not so great though)!

- **Singing**
  - "Autotune & I'm good"
    - "I sing in the shower"
  - "I sing in the shower"
  - " I play an instrument too!"
    - "I've performed at the talent show
  - *Awkward walk off*
- **Painting**
  - "My paintings have been requested"
    - Paint on my jeans
  - "My mom says I'm talented"
  - "What! Van Gogh is dead?"
    - "I collect Van Gogh's work"
  - Art will create world peace

Arts

If you're into arts, start here!

HOROSCOPES

Aries

March 21st-April 19th

Well, I think you're brushing your hair with a toothless comb again.

Taurus

April 20th-May 20th

It's really one or the other, at this point. You won't feel the difference, stuffing your pillow with mashed potatoes instead of feathers.

Gemini

May 21st-June 20th

Hand sanitizer is not soap and water, but it does kill microbial cells.

Cancer

June 21st-July 22nd

I'm so sorry; there is nothing we can do. Spend time with family, get your affairs in order. I'm so very sorry.

Leo

July 23rd-August 22nd

Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon, calls *being careful* "Regret Minimization Framework." If you make your words 8 letters longer your net worth will reach $1.6 billion by 1998.

Virgo

August 23rd-September 22nd

Some people are their smell.

Libra

September 23rd-October 22nd

If you stretch the trampoline fabric too tight it's just the floor. You're taking a perfectly nice thing and making children hate you.

Scorpio

October 23rd- November 21st

Don't think your beard's your chin.

Sagitarius

November 22nd-December 21st

Remember—*baby steps*; take it little-by-little, bit-by-bit. If you can't gulp it down all at once, chew it as ice.

Capricorn

December 22nd-January 19th

It's tragic there's no "Low Power Mode" for real life. I know you're feeling 21% right about now. 20%.

Aquarius

January 20th-February 18th

You're the shade of blue Dasman ships from the Netherlands. Blue from the VVIP rooms.

Pisces

February 19th-March 20th

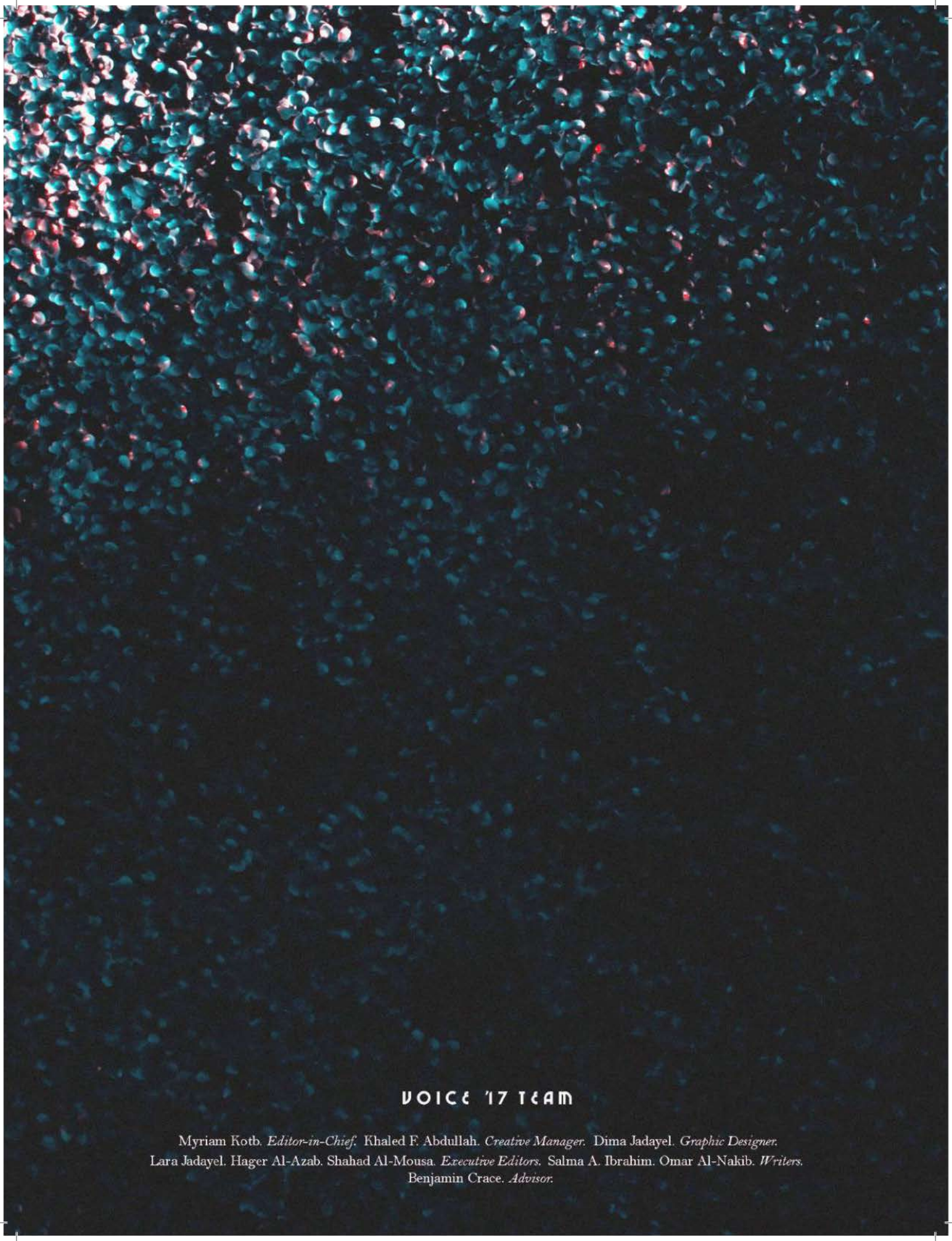
Look, I'm not gonna give you advice—I'm gonna give you something better: the topic of your next paper. "How did Aphra Behn (1640-1689) challenge gender identity during the English Restoration?" Thank me later.

WANNA WRITE?

SUBMIT YOUR WORK NOW AT VOICE @ AUK.EDU.KW

AND EARN A PRINCELY SUM OF FIVE KUWAITI DINARS

SUBMISSIONS MUST BE LESS THAN 600 WORDS



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