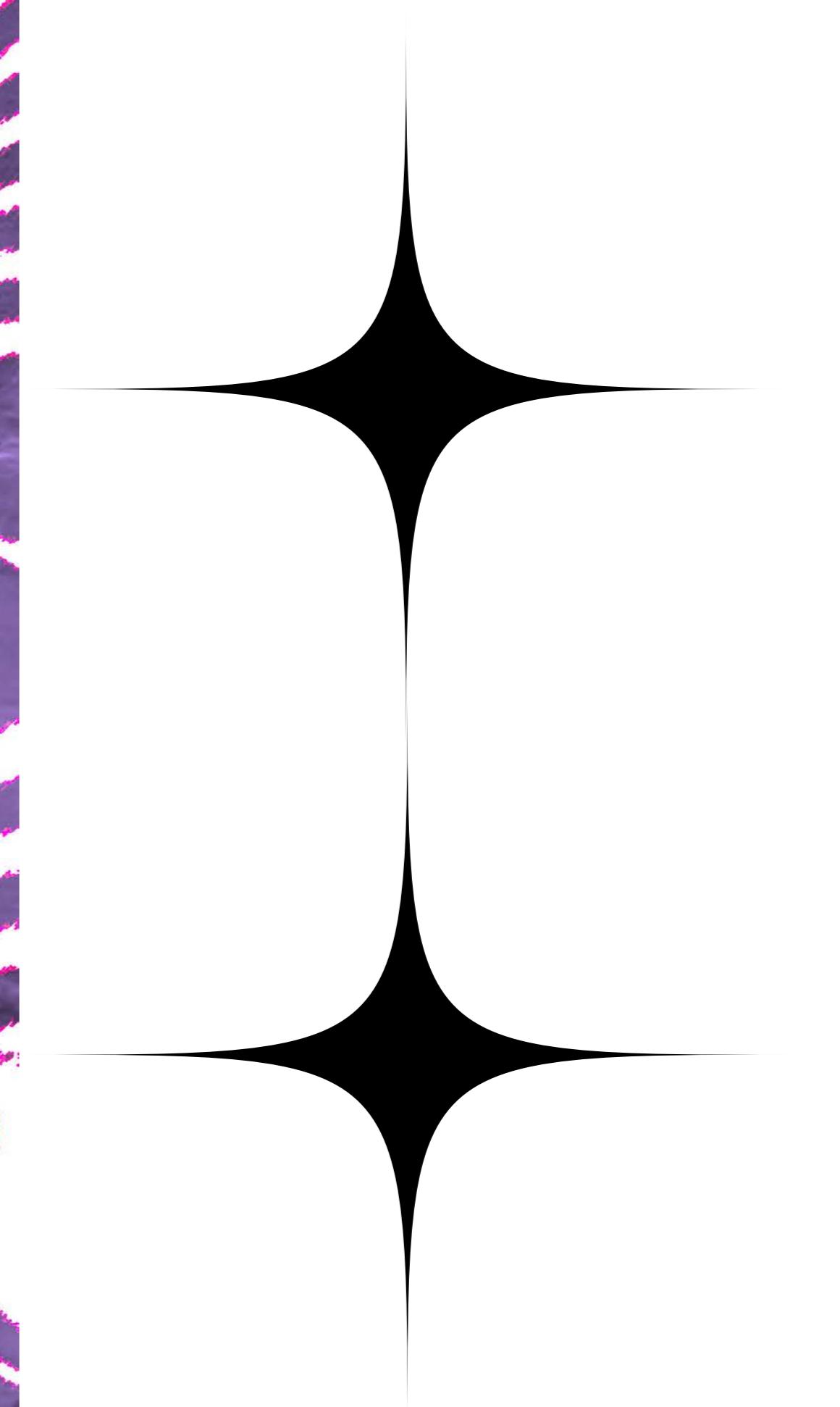


THEIS VOICE

AUK® STUDENT MAGAZINE

FOR THE
STUDENTS

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 01 *For the students, by the students.*



EDITORS NOTE:



Nuha "Nelly" Al-Sahli
Editor-in-chief

Dear Readers,

It is with great excitement and a sense of renewed vigor that we welcome you back to the pages of Voice. In an era where the digital landscape often overshadows the tangible, we stand tall, determined to reclaim our space in your lives.

With each turn of these pages, we endeavor to transport you to a world of curated excellence, where every article, every image, and every thought is a testament to our dedication to quality and substance. This magazine isn't simply a magazine, but a definition of what print media can be in today's dynamic world.

Ultimately, this magazine represents an upgrade not only in form but in substance. We have broadened our horizons, exploring a wider range of student experiences from various corners of academia and skills. From our bustling main hallway to the tranquil retreats of our garden, each tail is delicately crafted from threads of ambition, struggle, and triumph.

In Voice, you will find a diverse tapestry of stories that reflect the vibrant pulse of our university. From thought-provoking features to awe-inspiring visuals, we aim to strike a balance between the timeless and the contemporary.

Thank you for joining us on this adventure. Here's to new beginnings and a bright future.

Warm regards,

***-Nuha Alsahli,
Editor-in-Chief***

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DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR KINGA MASTERNAK

By: Rona Al-Enezi

A Melodious Aura

Nestled in the heart of the G-building, level 1 basement lies the vibrant music department, exuding warmth and inviting charm. Despite its discreet location, it beckons all who stumble upon its melodious aura, making it a haven hard to depart from. The department frequently orchestrates events, rivalling the grandeur of operas, and showcasing a medley of vocals and instruments played by both students and faculty.

Those who visit the G-building basement will find most of the music rooms, including a dedicated piano alcove near the multipurpose room. While these spaces are primarily reserved for music students, they are accessible to all post class; just a quick word with any music professor can grant you entry.

With a vast assortment of instruments, these rooms are an oasis for both seasoned musicians and budding enthusiasts. They are often preferred to the A building's communal music space, offering a more intimate ambiance and a broader instrumental selection, ensuring a more tailored musical escapade. Professor Kinga Barbara Masternak gave me a broad explanation of what the music department is all about.

“

These rooms are an oasis for both seasoned musicians.

”

“So far, it's been great, I love the atmosphere here. I'd say it's a bit different than other places in Kuwait, as I've taught in many places. I've had a good experience everywhere, but AUK has a much more friendly environment, and the students are enthusiastic.”

What is something you have learnt at AUK?

What made you decide to teach music?

“It was my path since early childhood, my education was purely music even in elementary [school], I was focused on it and knew I wanted to pursue it, and never changed my mind. Since elementary [school], I knew what I wanted to do which isn't common, but when you're really into music, you have the talent, and you're devoted, you can't see any other way. I've always seen this way for myself, and it never changed.”



“ it is a different world for students. ”

What course do you most enjoy teaching at AUK?

“Piano labs 216, and 110 which may not be too popular. 110 is basically applied lessons on piano, singing, cello, and percussion but all taught individually, between the professor and student.”

What suggestions do you have to improve the music department?

“We could have more instruments taught here, and I wish we could develop the singing courses more. The students seem a bit shy to sing. So, I think it would be wonderful if we could convince them to be much more open to singing. Between the choir course and 110, it is not that common for students to take them. I don't know if it's based on disinterest in singing or if students don't know about the courses.”

What advice would you give to the students who want to take a course but may be hesitant?

“The courses that are for beginners like 216, are for [anyone] who doesn't have experience in music. So, if they feel like they have a passion and they would like to give it a try, they shouldn't be afraid. I know students can sometimes be afraid, they can't manage it. But we have lots of in-class practice so everyone who puts in the effort will succeed.”

What do you like the most about the music department?

“I like how it's a different world for students which is the most common feedback I get. They enter a different world and it's very creative, so I like bringing this other quality to student's lives.”

What is the most stressful thing you've experienced here?

“Finding parking. So, we come early and start early. But in music when our students perform, we are more stressed than when we perform for ourselves because we feel responsible, we feel their fear, anxiety, and emotions. We want them to do good so it's stressful for us as instructors. We take it upon ourselves so the students can feel good and do well in the concerts or exams.”

What advice would you give to students who find it difficult to learn music?

“I know it may be a simple answer, but I would advise simply scheduling more time practicing in the practice rooms and dividing, or as we say, cutting the elephant into smaller chunks. To practice smaller parts of the material and not to be afraid to come to the office for help, I even have a piano here. Sure, we can't be very loud, but I can still try to help them.”

Will there be any new music events this semester?

“We will have an informal concert which is in December and involves students and faculty performing together.”

How different is this event from previous ones?

“They are the same. We usually have an informal concert in the fall and a formal one in spring. The formal concert is when faculty perform mostly and some students who do well and are confident enough to manage the concert in the G building theatre. The informal one is also held in the theatre but is more relaxed, and students perform in groups so it is easier for them.”



Piano in Music Room GB

Analyzing Songs WE LOVE

Everlong, Foo Fighters (1997)

By: Youssef Al-Qaffas

A Deep Step Further Into Music

Whether it is the tracks that we listen to in movies and video games, or the albums that we keep returning to, most of us are interested in music. But what if we went to take things a step further? Wanting to deepen our understanding of the hobbies we love is natural, but sometimes, it may be a struggle to further our knowledge past the point of simply enjoying the topic. Looking past the medium the music is present in, there are many parts to songs that give them their identity. As we continue to enjoy the songs that we listen to often, we might begin to look past the melodies and look for meaning that might require looking beyond what floats on surface and exploring the parts that require a deeper dive.

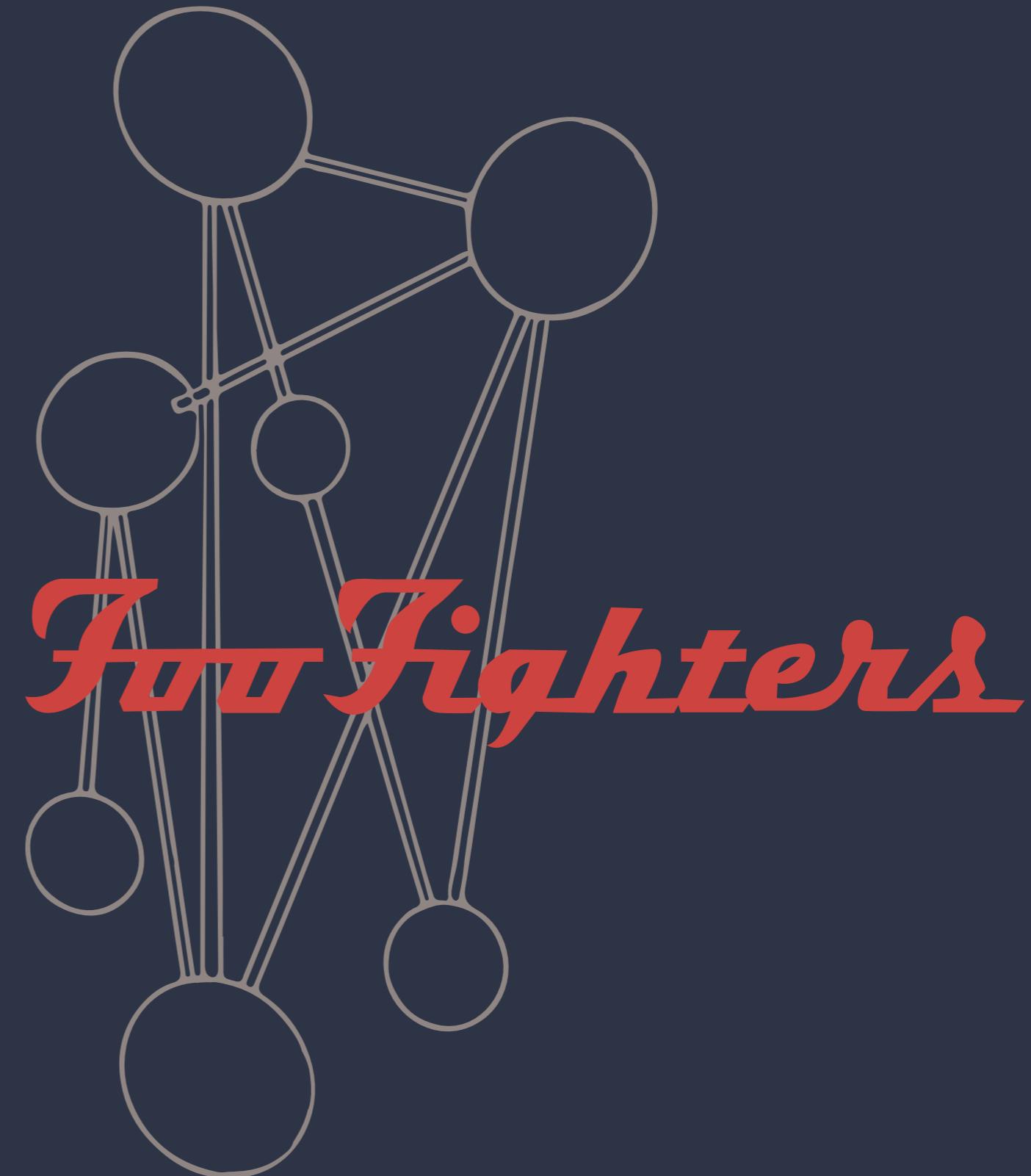
A Preface

Before starting any analysis of song's identity and meaning, selecting a song that matches your taste is important. While every song practically manifests emotions, reading those emotions can sometimes be challenging. Picking a more nuanced song may be more intriguing to analyze than one with an obvious message. Songs may also feature different versions that highlight differing emotions than the original one; an important example of a variant is the acoustic version that many songs have. These stripped-down versions may change the patterns or even emotions present in the song.

THE ANALYSIS OF EVERLONG

In the case of this article, I analyze the Foo Fighter's Everlong, which readers are invited to listen to on YouTube, as the timings shown in this article will be based on the official audio track. There are many elements to a satisfactory song analysis, with the most important ones being intensity and release patterns, virtual experience, and congruity.

Intensity and release patterns are not too complex of a concept as they describe the emotions the song tries to convey. These patterns use paralanguage as a form of communication to audiences that focus on the nonverbal cues derived from the piece of media (music in this case); examples of paralanguage in music include pitch, volume, and pauses, which are all used to communicate any number of emotions without relying on the lyrics of a song. The first pattern that songs use to convey emotions is the intensity pattern. Intensity patterns are usually used to build tension throughout a song to keep the listeners on edge. Release patterns are instead characterized as the release of tension from the built-up intensity patterns. In our example, Everlong, intensity patterns are present throughout the song with little in terms of release patterns. However, we can see an example of a release pattern three minutes into Everlong as we hear the instruments die down and only hear whispers for a few seconds. Identifying these patterns is integral to understanding what emotions are being conveyed by the song at face value, which helps to build into the virtual experience of the song.



EVERLONG'S LYRICS

The Two Types of Lyrics

Virtual experience, in contrast to intensity and release patterns, focuses on the artist's intended emotion instead of the song's conveyed emotion. Two types of lyrics define the virtual experience, with the selections being comic lyrics and tragic lyrics. Based on the old definition of comedy, used mostly for plays, comic lyrics can be described as the artist's (or protagonist's) determination to rise above the coming tide. Tragic lyrics, on the other hand, focus on letting the tragic thoughts stew with a deep sense of hopelessness. While this aspect of analysis seems easy at face value, it may be a struggle to know an artist's intended emotion as it could contrast with the song itself. While Everlong does represent hitting rock bottom, the song features comic lyrics as it depicts the story of finding purpose in a hopeless situation, with the conduit to this being love. Knowing whether a song's goal is to represent a tragic situation, or a glorious comeback can deepen one's understanding of a song's substance.

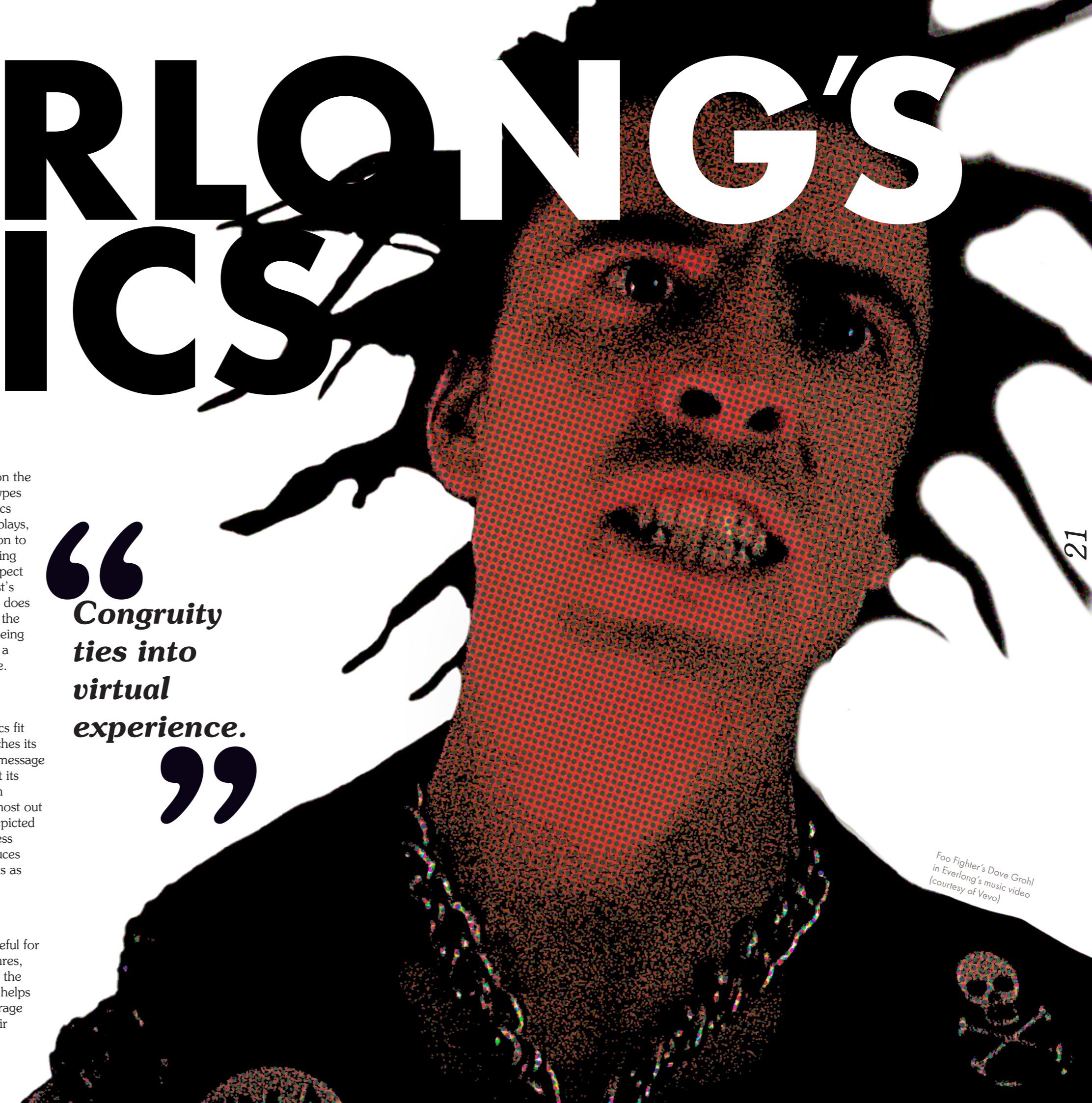
The Lyrical Message

Congruity ties into virtual experience, as it analyzes whether a song's lyrics fit the emotional meaning of the music. A song classified as congruent matches its lyrics to the actual emotions in the song to create a clear and reinforced message for listeners. An incongruent song, on the other hand, chooses to subvert its audience and create a mismatch between meanings and lyrics to make an interestingly shaped message. Everlong's lyrical message of making the most out of hitting rock bottom is seemingly reinforced by the intense emotions depicted throughout the song using paralanguage as the song's intensity. Awareness of the congruity of a song's emotional meaning and lyrical messages reduces the chance of misinterpreting the ideas provided by the artists. It allows us as listeners to deepen our understanding of the songs we love from them.

Deepening Your Understanding

Intensity and release patterns, virtual experience, and congruity are all useful for analyzing songs. Many of us are avid listeners of music from different genres, but it may be hard for some of us to understand the true meaning behind the many songs we listen to. As a writer, I find this process entertaining as it helps to deepen my understanding of the songs that I enjoy. I would also encourage readers who have come this far to use this analysis method to further their knowledge of the songs they love.

“Congruity ties into virtual experience.”

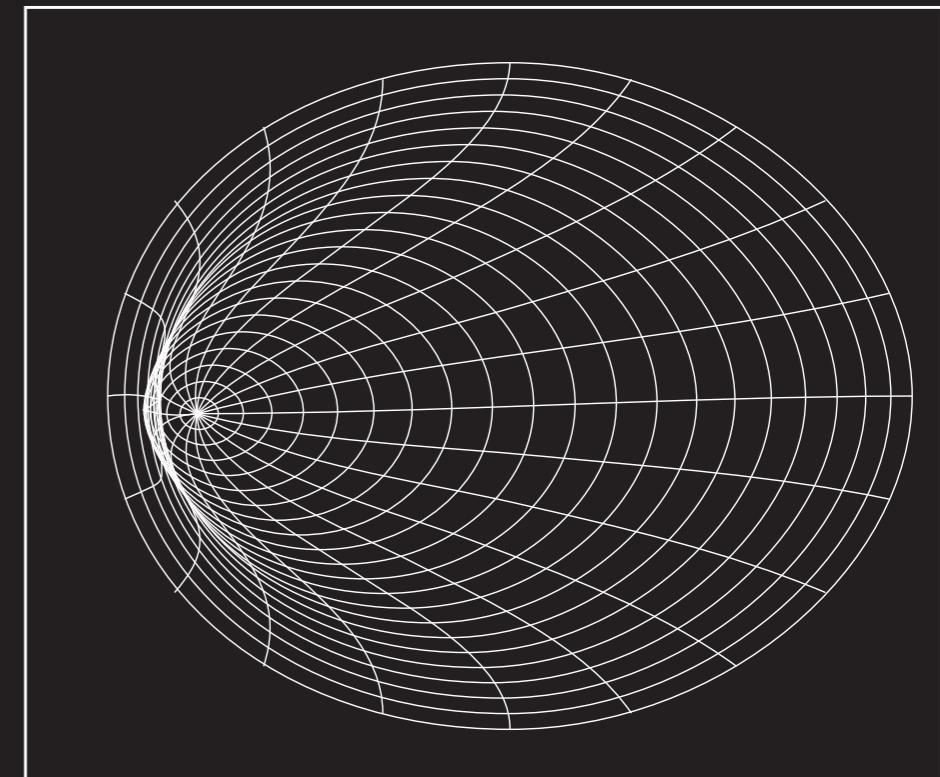
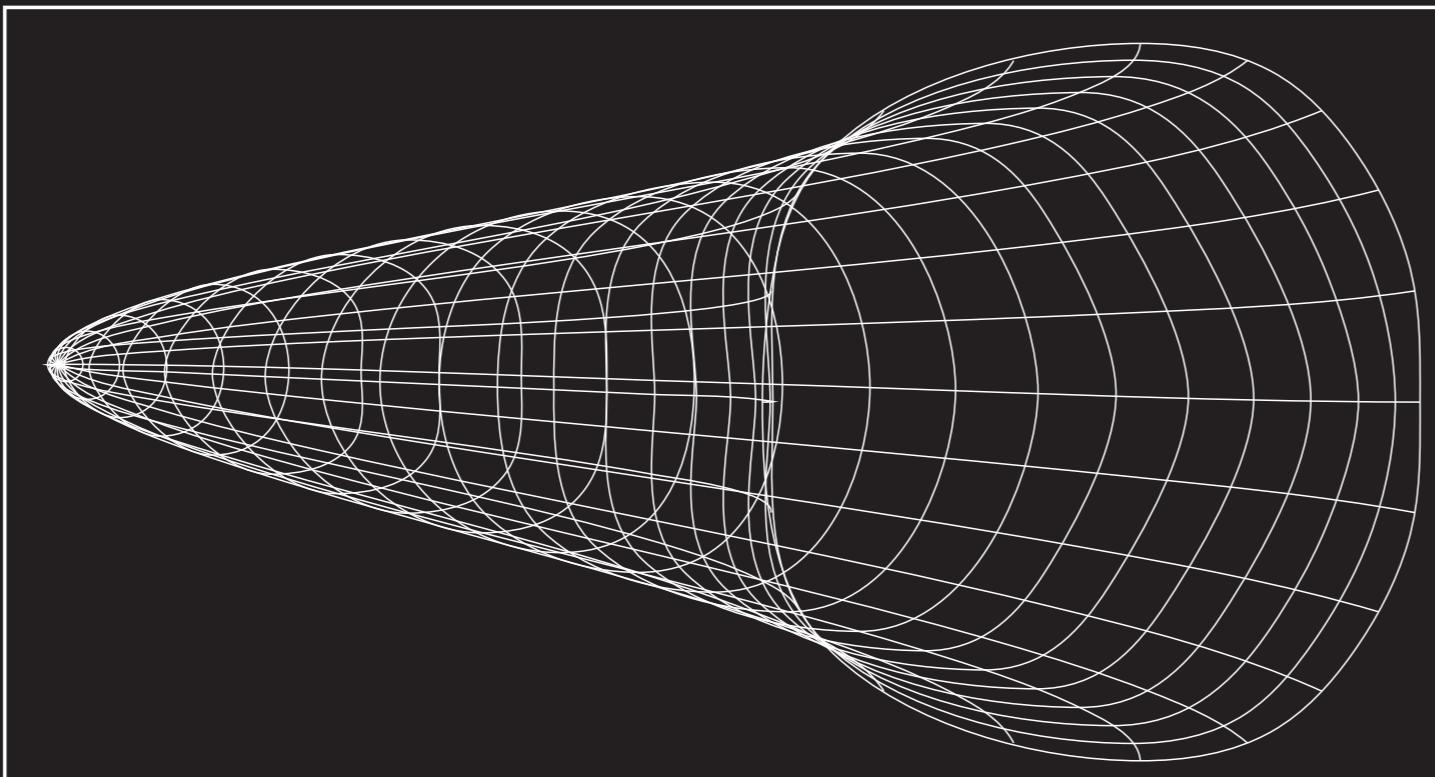


Foo Fighter's Dave Grohl
in Everlong's music video
(courtesy of Vevo)



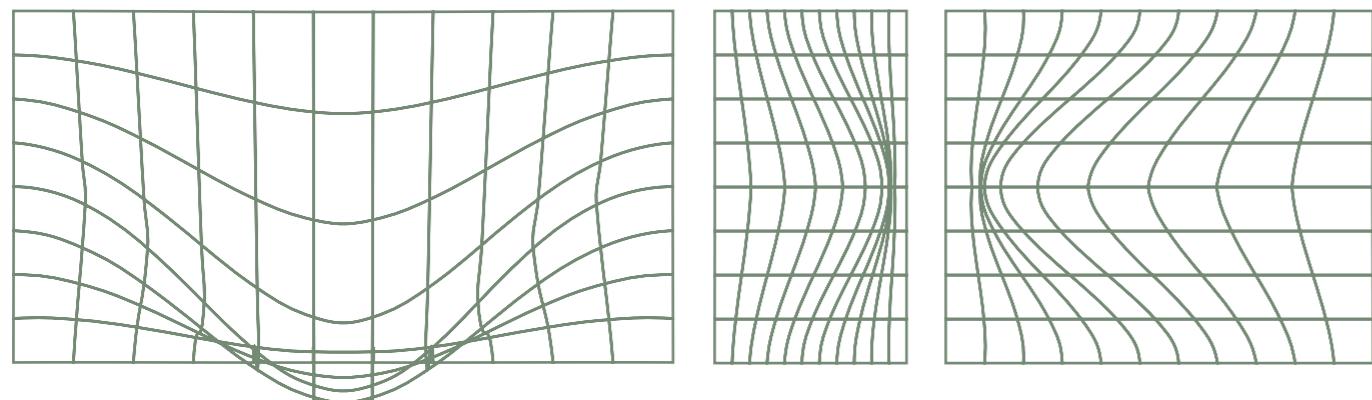
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How Human is

ARTI- FICIAL INTELLIGENCE?



Can we truly be comfortable with the constant innovations in artificial intelligence (AI)? Many jobs are being threatened by AI and its growing ability to mimic humans have raised countless burning questions about its profound implications. This has situated the topic squarely in the middle of a controversy of its own making. AI can be seen as a tool that could ease humanity's burden or, conversely, ruin its creative core. With this in mind, an important factor to consider regarding AI is how human it can be.

By: Youssef Al-Qaffas

Storytelling has long been a medium driven by emotion and meaning; these are two things that AI is forced to replicate to compete with human writers. However, the real question is, how hard is it for AI to replicate emotions? Can an AI write a compelling story without giving away the fact that it is just a program designed to replicate us? In the upcoming paragraphs are two short stories about child actors, one by an AI and one by an actual person. Are you able to deduce which one's which?

WHICH ONE IS BY A HUMAN, AND WHICH ONE IS BY AI?

EXCERPT 01

The Growing Pains of a Child Actor

How can one convince himself of his legitimacy? A baby was found on the doorsteps of an orphanage; he did not grow into a tranquil child; rather confused and curious was how others would describe him. He was not a smart kid, but he could talk his way out of any punishment, even after questioning by the orphanage's director. These linguistic abilities would soon be used in his teenage years as he became a famous actor, a kid whose influence would attract many youngsters to the same career as its value continued to propagate.

The concept of child acting was not reasonably new then, but that same child would put child actors back in the spotlight. As he grew, he was taught not algebra, but acting with the sole, stifling purpose of making a name for himself. But his outlook would soon take a turn as he realized that he was being exploited by the ones that filled his cup - his parents. Stolen innocence decorated the sets he acted in; it was not his first time acting, yet he could not help but be a deer in headlights. "What's wrong?" is a question that they would ask him often, but he never had a suitable response. This remained his story, a legacy that would haunt those who came after him.

--The End--

EXCERPT 02

Family Love to Stardom

Starting life with the love and support of a caring family can be a wonderful foundation for success. One person, in stands out - a unique individual who always left those around them intrigued. Although not a standout student, they possessed a special talent for persuading others with their words. Even when their parents questioned them, they had a knack for talking their way out of trouble.

As they grew older, this skill improved, and they became adept at captivating audiences with their storytelling prowess. They had a gift for turning everyday tales into mesmerizing narratives that completely engrossed their peers. When they reached their teenage years, a game-changing opportunity arose. A talent scout noticed their abilities during an unexpected performance at a local fair, propelling them to stardom.

Their influence attracted many young people to the world of acting, making them an inspirational figure in the entertainment industry. This remarkable journey demonstrates the power of words and the courage to pursue dreams, starting with the love of their family and leading to a legacy that continued to inspire others.

--The End--

AI is a continuously growing tool, one that can attempt to replicate us but also one that can surpass us at times by finding meaning in areas where we can struggle to do so.. AI will continue to develop its ability to replicate the emotions that we pride ourselves on, which is why we must continue developing our own skills when detecting AI.

ROBOTIC FUTURE

How Close Are We?

By: Rona Al-Enezi

It is not implausible to imagine that we will someday live in a robotic-dependent environment as we live in a world where current technology is pervasive and constantly changing. Perhaps the WALL-E film with its chair-riding, lethargic humans over reliant on technology was a foreshadowing representation and an inevitable warning of the future. Technology can only ever improve and evolve if we think about it. We might eventually live in robotically controlled dwellings or adopt robotic bodies. Smart homes and modern prosthetics already hint at these possibilities. So how soon can we anticipate residing side by side and being dependent on robots?

Robots Are Already in Use

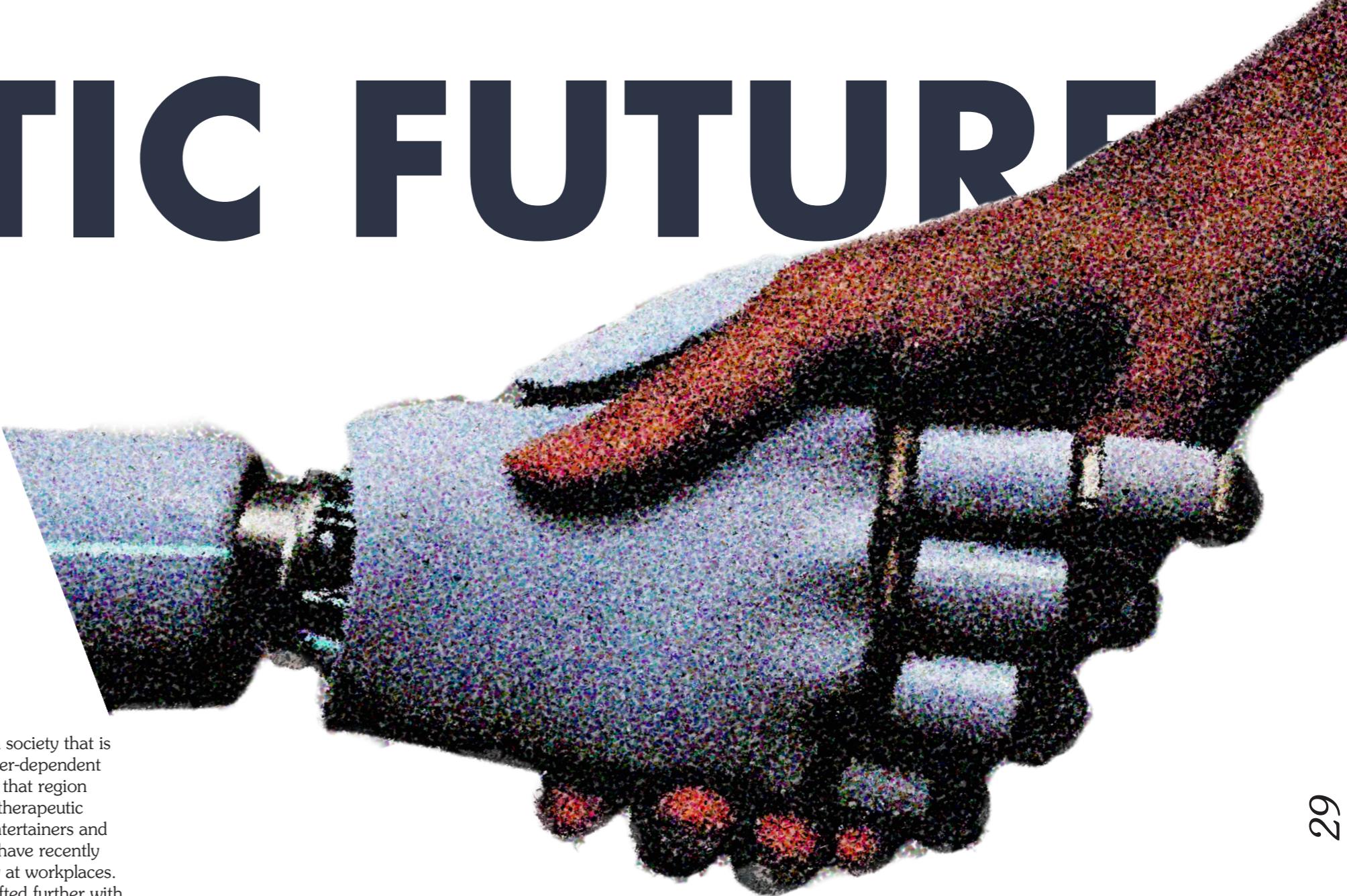
Robots have already made great strides towards widespread use; we see them every day in factories, but traffic-control robots? Robots assisting grocery stores? Robots flying our planes? It could be feasible, but not as soon as many people would anticipate given how long it took for industries to adopt robots. When we think about the future, we always have such high expectations. We used to imagine that by 2020, flying cars would be prevalent, but in reality, it is no different from 2017 or 2015 in terms of the absence of flying cars. To suddenly rely on a machine for daily use when changes are unsteady and still adjusting? Even though we are reliant on our phones, automobiles, laptops, and televisions. They may not be the ideal examples of «robotics», but they do provide a wonderful case study about our gradual transition to technological dependency.

“ ***It instills in us a sense of dependancy.*** ”

Japan & Robots

Japan is an ideal example of a society that is on the verge of becoming hyper-dependent on robots. Moreover, robots in that region craft and repair vehicles, offer therapeutic comfort, serve as household entertainers and educators, frequent cafes, and have recently taken on the mantle of security at workplaces. Recently, the paradigm has shifted further with robots assuming security roles in corporate settings. Given these advancements, it's evident that Japan is strides ahead in embracing a robot-centric way of life. Ought we to draw inspiration, or tread cautiously away, from such a technologically reliant existence?

There are contrasting views on robots; some believe they will enhance and simplify human lives. Others believe that robots are detrimental and that we should keep our distance from them because they may be the catalyst for a global robotic revolution. In my perspective, we already rely on technology far too much. Many tasks that humans can complete we are now handled by robots, and this change has had a significant impact on both lives and employment. It instills in us a sense of dependency that promotes sloth from an early age, which can be harmful if improperly controlled.



Robots in Factories

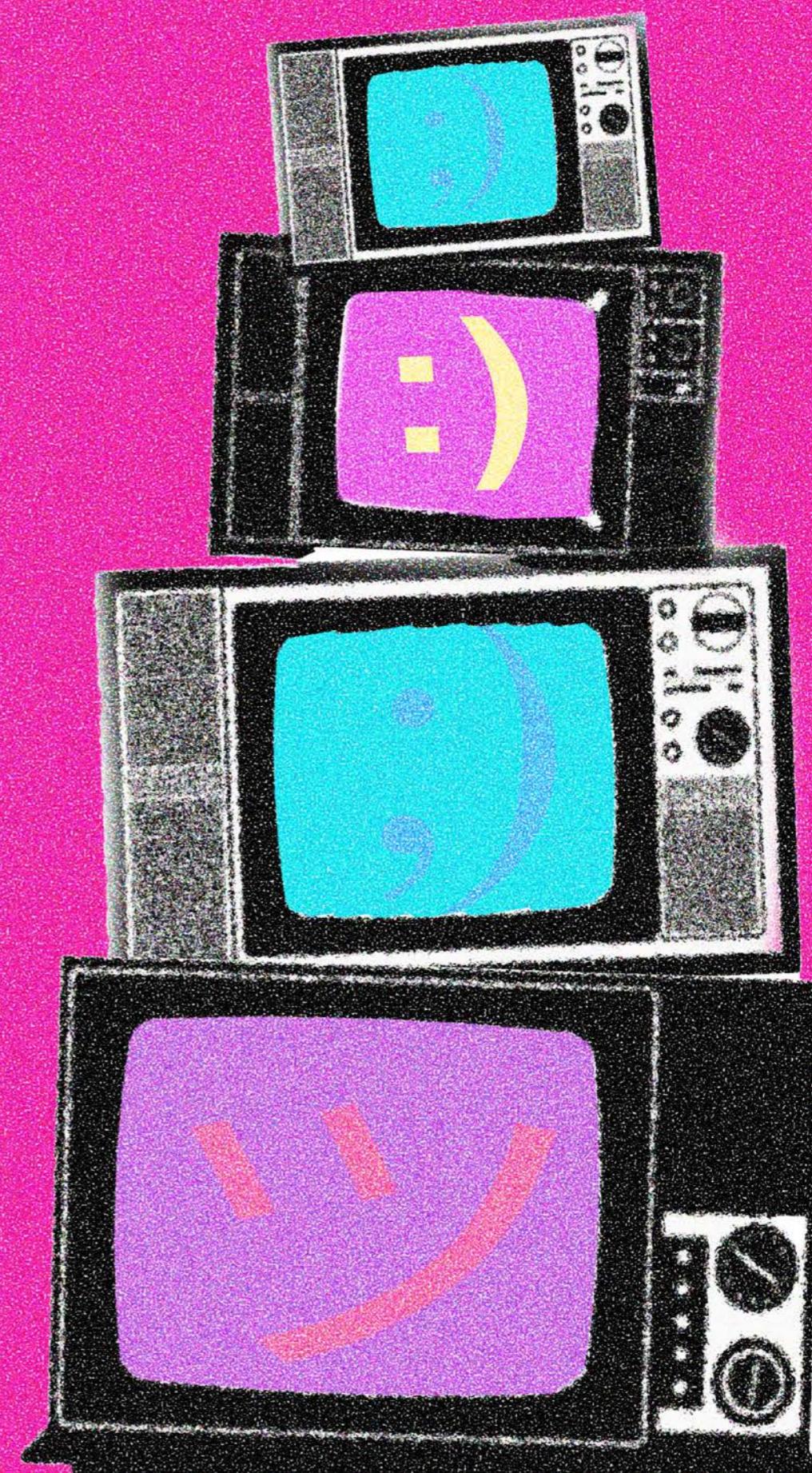
Robots have been engineered to complete jobs without hesitation, thus in a scenario when a human life is in danger, the robot would take the risk without wondering twice. In Japan, where robot guards seem to be climbing their way to becoming a norm, how different would a robot's response be to an intruder in the factory rather than a human's? What is the robot supposed to do if this were to actually happen, according to their programming? Are we willing to risk the lives of many just to take the most efficient route to life?

Embrace the Japanese Way

Embracing Japan's vision of a robotic future could mean car mechanics, therapists, private tutors, and security guards might find their roles challenged or replaced. Many in these professions lack alternative skills or formal education, making job displacement a direct threat to their livelihoods. Yet, the promise of enhanced safety and efficiency through robotics is tantalizing. Machines often outpace human precision and speed, not to mention they can relieve us of tedious, time-consuming and sometimes dangerous activities. Just imagine what life was like before the industrial revolution and the rise of the machine age. Or think about how much harder it was to get a good education before the rise of computers and the internet. But before we fully immerse ourselves in a tech-centric world, we must ponder deeply. The well-being of people should always outweigh the allure of efficiency. To sacrifice even a single life for a streamlined world equates to jeopardizing an entire generation. Can we afford the vulnerabilities of depending on AI? Are we prepared to place our trust and vulnerabilities in the hands of machines?

LOVE
HATE
FRE[EN]ZY

FRE[EN]ZY



The Implications of Short-Form Content

By: Youssef Al-Qaffas

Why is short-form content so popular? With the not-so-recent release of short-form platforms like TikTok and YouTube Shorts it has come a wave that has shaped online entertainment. As students, we have likely interacted with many of these short videos throughout the last few years; using such platforms is likely a daily occurrence for many of us. However, some of us may still wonder about the implications of short-form content as it shapes many of our lives throughout our college years. With the popularity of such content, many critical factors can be considered as to why it is such a popular format for video-based content creation and consumption; these factors include internet addiction, easily digestible content, and the growth prospects relating to short-form content.

Compulsively Online

With the popularity of any entertainment medium comes a likely addiction that swallows the time of its consumers, and short-form content is no exception. Internet addiction is characterized by pathological compulsive internet usage. The symptoms of internet addiction include some severe issues that remain abundant among university students, including the disruptive anticipation for the next time the internet becomes available and the behavior of lying to extend time spent online. I have experienced both symptoms as someone who is somewhat addicted to the internet; I spend hours daily on the internet, and it is not easy to ignore the urge to return to the internet during my “productive hours,” but with enough self-control, I find it possible to resist. However, it does leave me irritable at times. With a staggering 50% of users on short-form platforms aged 34 or younger being susceptible to this, internet addiction is an important factor to consider when spending time on the internet, as moderate usage of any entertainment medium is necessary to avoid becoming addicted. However, it is this propensity for addiction that aids in making short-form content so popular.

50% of short-form content users are susceptible to internet addiction...

The Short Loops

Short-form content is effective in catching the attention of its consumers because of its easily digestible nature. Short-form videos tend to be much shorter by nature, with the average length of videos on dedicated platforms lasting less than a minute. The short length of these videos encourages a more fast-paced and almost rhythmic pace to hook viewers into the entertainment medium, as breaks are not common in short-form videos. Many techniques are also used to capture audiences on these platforms, with a multiple genre-spanning one being the “shorts loop,” in which a video is created with the intention of being a perfect loop that increases watch time as the end matches up with the beginning, causing audiences to stick around for longer, effectively increasing the average watch time of viewers. The quick pacing and the techniques used to increase retention are significant contributing factors to easing the consumption of short videos. Their short duration makes less-patient viewers easier to exploit for more screen time, thus increasing the popularity of short-form videos and platforms.

Benefits of Short Form Content

With an increase in popularity among consumers comes the implication that corporations and creators can benefit from the power of short-form content. This is evident in the push and pivot that many social media sites are making to become functional hub for short-form content. More concise content takes center stage due to the faster pace, causing increased retention among viewers while also showing the best parts of a content creator's repertoire in an easily digestible video, allowing such creators to stand out from other slower-paced creators. Ironically, short-form videos are designed to retain viewers for as much time as possible through repeated viewings, making the medium a popular one for advertisers, to the extent that its effectiveness has surpassed many other relevant advertising trends. The combined usage of short-form content among entertainment corporations, content creators, and advertisers sends the message that short-form content is necessary for growing a brand and serving content.

Be Careful of the Spiral

With internet addiction, easily digestible content, and growth prospects being factors aiding the popularity of short-form content, it is hard to deny that short-form content is a popular medium for video creation and consumption. The effectiveness of short-form content is staggering as consumers, creators, and corporations continue to invest time and money into the format's success. Many students should be careful with how much time they invest into online entertainment, and short-form content is no exception. Still, more inventive students may want to investigate the technique to aid them in growth with their own social media ventures, regardless of the brand they hope to create.

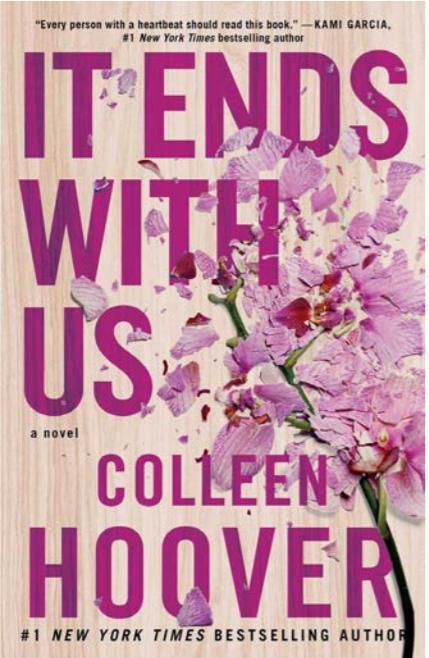
SPiRAL
ENTHUSIASM
ADdICTION

MODERN DAY BOOKS

Many of today's bestsellers are recognized even by those who aren't avid readers. Merely mentioning a passion for reading might prompt others to ask about the latest trending titles. Some might not have a genuine interest in reading, yet they reference popular books just to be part of the conversation. So, we must wonder, do these books truly live up to their acclaim?

By: Rona Al-Enezi

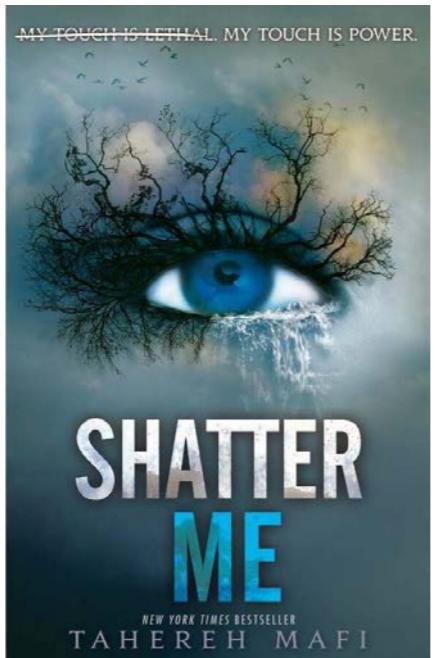
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'It Ends With Us' by Colleen Hoover

SHATTER ME

The second book is 'Shatter Me' by Tahereh Mafi. Its trajectory of popularity differs from 'It Ends With Us', in that it has a knack for resurfacing time and again as one may not be as popular as the latter but is trendy enough that saying it in a group of five would lead you to two 'I heard of that book' responses than none. This book for me is one I'd read over and over again since it holds a special place in my heart. It bridged my transition from Wattpad stories to full-fledged novels. It acted as a gateway, leading me to explore similar titles like 'The Red Queen' and 'The Cruel Prince', unveiling an entirely new literary universe for me.



'Shatter Me' by Tahereh Mafi.

3

IT ENDS WITH US

Let's dive into three of the highly talked-about books, starting with 'It Ends With Us' by Colleen Hoover. This novel quickly climbed the popularity charts in recent times, eliciting strong reactions. Many argue that you either adore it or detest it, with little room for a middle ground – and there's some truth to that. To be frank, it's not the kind of book I would curl up with at a cafe or reach for on a drizzly afternoon. It is more of a last resort read for me. My main gripe is the writing style. The sprinkled-in slang feels inauthentic, reminiscent of an older person trying too hard to sound youthful. Moreover, I have a strong aversion to clichés, and this book had them in abundance, much to my chagrin.

3



'Throne of Glass' by Sarah Maas.

It seems modern authors are leaning towards integrating current-generation slang and colloquialisms instead of adhering to more traditional literary structures.

THORNE OF GLASS

Finally, the last book is 'Throne of Glass' by Sarah Maas. This book represents my last and current reading phase, the one after Wattpad and so deeply engrossed in novels like 'Six of Crows' and 'Shadow and Bone'. This is the type of book I will always unconsciously reach out for, the one I'd read over and over and is in my bag ready for a spontaneous coffee shop sitting. It tops my recommendation list for fellow book enthusiasts, and I can not help but continuously sing its praises. Unlike the previous books, criticisms about this one are few and far between, and Maas's writing is captivating.

3

Contemporary literature has certainly evolved from the classics. It seems modern authors are leaning towards integrating current-generation slang and colloquialisms instead of adhering to more traditional literary structures. While this resonates with some readers, it doesn't sit well with others. Handing 'Pride and Prejudice' to a staunch 'It Ends With Us' reader might leave them perplexed, underscoring the stark contrasts between these literary eras.

I'm not advocating for all contemporary literature to emulate Shakespeare, but I do crave the sensation of being immersed in a novel, rather than feeling like I'm conversing with a friend. Why bother reading when it stops feeling like a book and starts becoming more like a text to a friend? Although it may help those early readers transition from no books to reading something, I don't feel like these books broaden their vocabulary. Given a choice, I'd recommend Dr. Seuss over many mainstream hits, as his works, playful as they are, still celebrate the richness of the English language.



miniatur
observations

Finding Confidence in Our Writing

By: Youssef Al-Qaffas

Growing up, I was not the most confident writer, as my writing would sometimes make me sick to my stomach because of the mismatch between my vision and skill. While the topic is not often tackled, the lack of confidence that students can experience while writing can lead to unsatisfactory papers or, on an intense level, incomplete assignments. Writing is a challenging process, with the ability to make an unsuspecting writer give up if their confidence is not up to par. The good news is that a few techniques can remedy the issue, including rough drafts, peer reviewing, and acknowledging your skill level.

Refining Your Writing

While rough drafts may seem counterintuitive as they lengthen the writing period, the effectiveness of this technique, in my experience as a writer, is undeniable. The rough draft technique is simple but intense as it is the process in which a paper is drafted to create a much better version of it eventually after re-writing or correcting the past drafts. Sometimes, the root of a writer's dysphoria can be attributed to the feeling that the quality of a paper could have been much better than the result they have in hand; this is where rough drafting becomes essential to maximizing a paper's quality. Using a first or second rough draft as a guideline for a much more refined final draft of an assignment can help the average writer iron out the kinks in their paper. At the same time, this technique is still limited to the writer's skill, but it can still be an effective tool for reaching the peak of a paper's potential. The bottom line for drafting is that it can be an integral tool for reassurance and squashing doubts about a paper's quality.

“
*It is important
not to ignore how
a paper can be
tackled mentally.*
“

A seemingly obvious cause of reduced confidence in one's writing is the lack of feedback from other similarly experienced writers, which can be mitigated by using the peer-review process. Many writers may be unable to effectively analyze their papers from a more impartial point of view, which can lead to an unsatisfactory paper through an unhealthy amount of overconfidence or a dreadful lack of confidence. Peer-reviewing is not as intensive as the other techniques presented in this article. However, it is still a very effective advantage to be leveraged when combating a lack of confidence as the feedback provided by a partner can either affirm one's confidence or provide criticism which will help to fix the flaws in a paper and patch up a writer's confidence. Fixing confidence issues is a process that has the potential to be easier with the proper use of the peer-review technique. The tutoring and writing center on campus is a great place to get this kind of feedback.

Choose a Growth Mindset

Writing is a skill; and proficiencies vary when it comes to writing; it is important to acknowledge how skilled a writer is and to approach a paper with accurate expectations. While practical techniques are great for fixing confidence issues when it comes to writing papers, it is important not to ignore how a paper can be tackled mentally. Expectations make up a decent chunk of the battle when it comes to confidence, as higher expectations are harder to match, but lower expectations are less satisfying to reach. Going into every paper, knowing how skilled a writer is can help to settle uneasy feelings as a paper's quality is more likely to match the writer's perceived skill level. However, expectations are more than just setting benchmarks. The writer must expect to improve through experience. By choosing a growth mindset, papers are less likely to feel stagnant in quality, and lower-quality papers will still solidify themselves as learning experiences for aspiring writers to learn from. Being psychologically prepared can be half the battle when facing a lack of confidence in writing.

Rough drafts, peer reviewing, and acknowledging your skill level are all important factors that can help anxious writers finish their papers. Aspiring writers are bound to have some bumps on the road to a successful paper; because of this, many techniques have been found and can be used to achieve a "high quality" paper. Of course, not every method works for every writer, so it is always essential for individuals not to give up and find what works for them. While this paper does target dedicated writers like English majors, these techniques can still be used effectively by anyone who struggles to find an appropriate level of confidence when it comes to writing scripts, video essays, or even more technical papers like research reports; this is why it is important to consider the applications of each technique for each medium of writing.

Rita El-Haddad



How Can Friends Influence Us?

By: Rona Al-Enezi

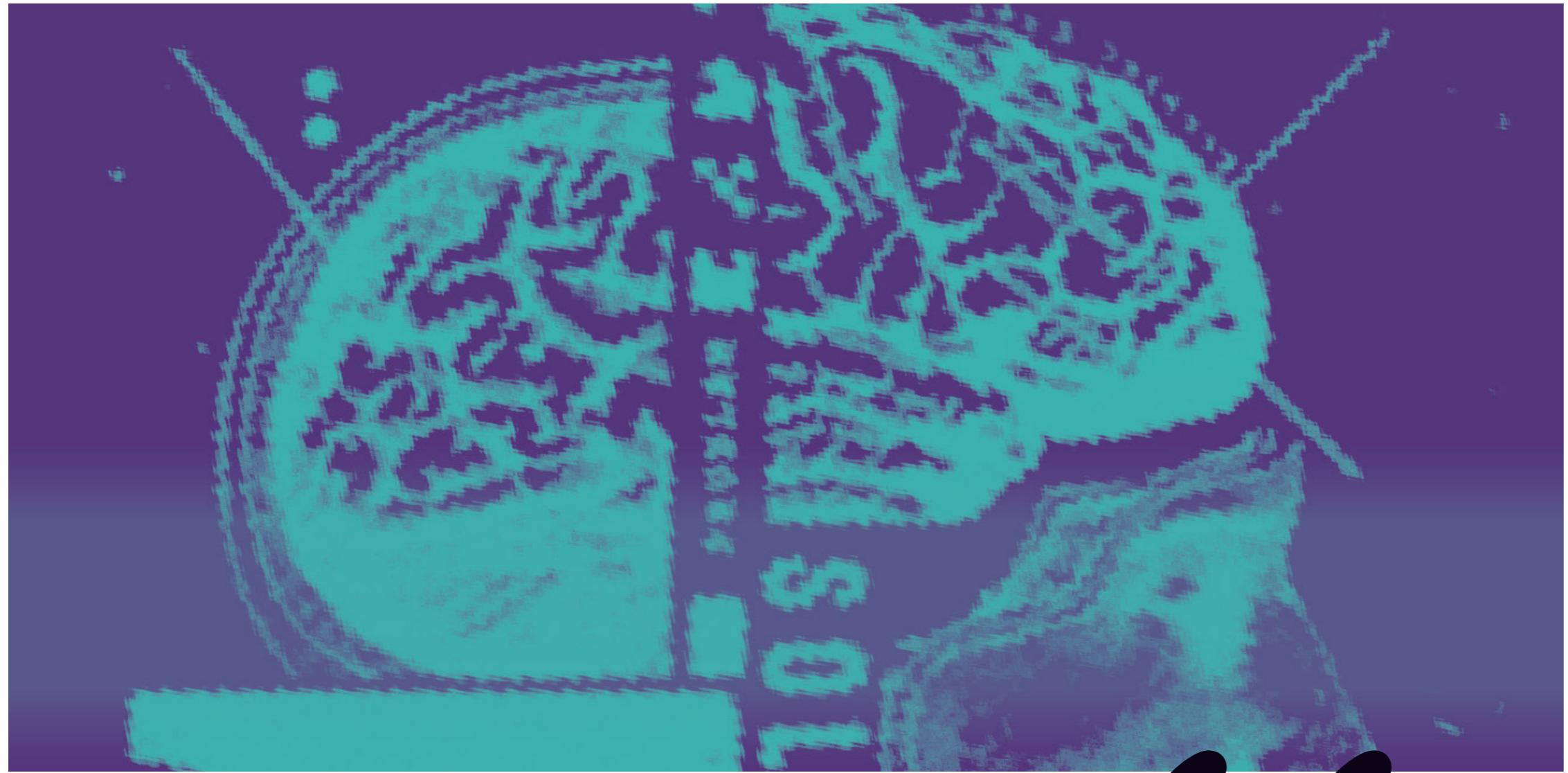
When forging friendships, we often overlook the profound impact they can have on our identity. Unknowingly, we blend friends' preferences with ours, and their values subtly interweave with our beliefs. Their habits become our unconscious ones, and their words are added to our own dictionary. Yet, how deep does this influence run and to what degree do we mirror or diverge? Are we just mindless beings, reflecting each other's essence? Psychology Professor Rita El-Haddad has given us her educated take on the matter.

How can friends influence us positively?

"Happy healthy friendships can have a strong influence on health because they can encourage positive mental health, and well-being. Depending on the type of friendship, maybe your friend encourages you to go out and do exercise and to go on long walks. It does depend on the friendship but, friendships create something positive."

Is there a chance the influence could be manipulated?

"It could be, anything is possible. You need to be aware of the signs of manipulation, and what it means to manipulate. In psychology-203 we talk about persuasion and manipulation- in manipulation, it's more of an "I benefit you don't" approach rather than persuasion which is more both of us benefiting. So that's what you need to pay attention to. What are the signs of manipulation, upon noticing the signs make sure to set boundaries and realize that it may not be a healthy friendship. So of course, it's possible, yes."



In your opinion, is the influence they have on us more beneficial or harmful?

"In general, having friends is more beneficial than harmful assuming that it is a healthy friendship. Because it can help you feel like you belong to a specific group, it can help reduce stress, can help you cope with different life events, you have a shoulder to cry on, and a lot of times you feel less lonely when with your friends. Of course, there are negatives, but it always goes back to the nature of the friendship. If it's a fundamentally healthy friendship it will have more positives than negatives."

If we part ways, do our ex-friends still have a lasting influence on us?

"It would depend on healthy or unhealthy as always but also, were you doing things because you were convinced? Or was it more "I'm doing this because my friend is doing it" and if your friend isn't there anymore you won't do it as much? So, it also goes back to Psychology 203 where we talk about social compliance versus actually agreeing, and that's what makes the difference."

Can one friend be more easily influenced than the other depending on their personality trait?

"In psychology, we use the term agreeableness, how agreeable you are. If you're more agreeable you tend to prioritize harmony and having a good relationship with people, so you would be more influenced in that way. So, people pleasers would most likely be one. I've always read somewhere that extroverts tend to influence others but to be influenced a lot of times is people pleasers."

Does the influence they have ever get so repetitive as to become the main cause of friends drifting apart?

"I think it would depend on where the friendship stands. let us say you are friends with someone and your priorities change and your ideas change and the nature of the friendship changes, is your friend adapting with you? Growing apart? Or is your friend copying whatever you do because they want to do the same thing as you? I think that would make a difference, inherently if you are both in the same place and naturally doing the same things, I do not see that as an issue. But I could imagine if your priorities are shifting, and things are changing and the other person keeps wanting to copy you, you might feel like "I do my thing you do your thing you do not need to copy me" so it's another one of those 'it depends' on type of answers."

“

If you're more agreeable, you tend to prioritize harmony and having a good relationship with people.

”

A TAPESTORY OF
STUDENTS
CHRONICLES

DARTMOUTH

Exchange Program

Lea's Experience

Going to Dartmouth as an exchange student or intern had been on my bucket list since I was in high school, since the day I heard about the Dartmouth – AUK partnership. One would dream to go there because of its credibility or Ivy League status but aside from these, I wanted to as I have always wanted to experience schooling on another continent. Living in the United States is far different from being a mere tourist for short time. Hence, I was up for the challenge.

While my internship is a whole different story, my “Dartmouth Summer” experience leaves me ecstatic every time I reminisce. I spent a night in the Moosilauke lodge, hiked Mt. Tom, swam in the Connecticut River, played volleyball in the Green, ran few kilometers almost every weekend morning, and partied during weekends. Dartmouth is a quiet town; far from the city life that I am used to. But it grew in me. Having to do errands and store visits before 5PM sounded tough but it made me prioritize my tasks throughout the day. The slow mornings and being one with nature allowed me to appreciate the little things too.

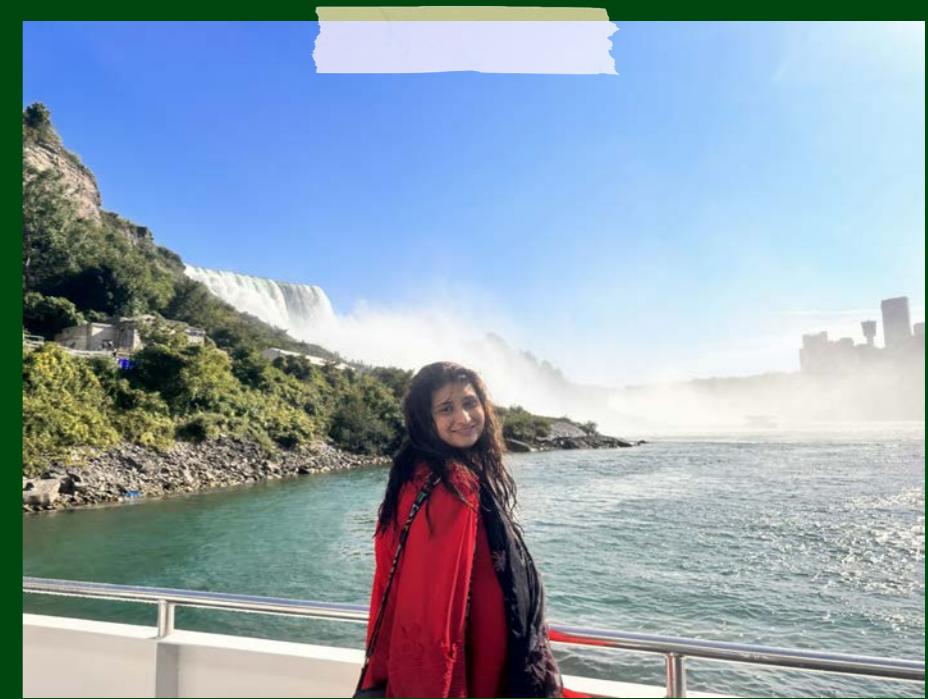
In general, it is beneficial that I was able to experience working/interning abroad, or at least working with people in the United States. This is a great factor to remember and consider if, one day, I decide to work outside Asia. It was a great opportunity to network and meet people who I can depend on someday.

Aiza's Experience

When one ponders about academia and personal growth, Dartmouth stands as a beacon that beautifully balances both worlds. I went into this program, a wide-eyed student from AUK, armed with my love for learning and a suitcase of preconceived notions. What I found was a treasure chest of experiences that changed the very fabric of my understanding, my motivations, and my ambitions. As someone on the brink of stepping into the professional world, this was not just a chapter but an entire volume of life lessons.

As a participant in the Dartmouth program, the university soon became my second home. From late-night study sessions at Baker-Berry Library to heartwarming fireside chats on cold nights, every corner of this campus has a story to tell. Sometimes, even the intense academic rigor tested my limits, but the classes were a passionate discourse that inspired critical thinking, encouraged debates, and celebrated diversity which was certainly the best takeaway.

Dartmouth was not just an institution; it was an emotion, an indelible chapter in the chronicles of my life. There were late nights and challenging projects, and there were moments when homesickness cast its melancholy shadow. But it was precisely these trials that made the triumphs so incredibly sweet. Dartmouth taught me that the journey is just as important as the destination.



Aiza in the United States during Summer 2023



Lea in the United States during Summer 2023

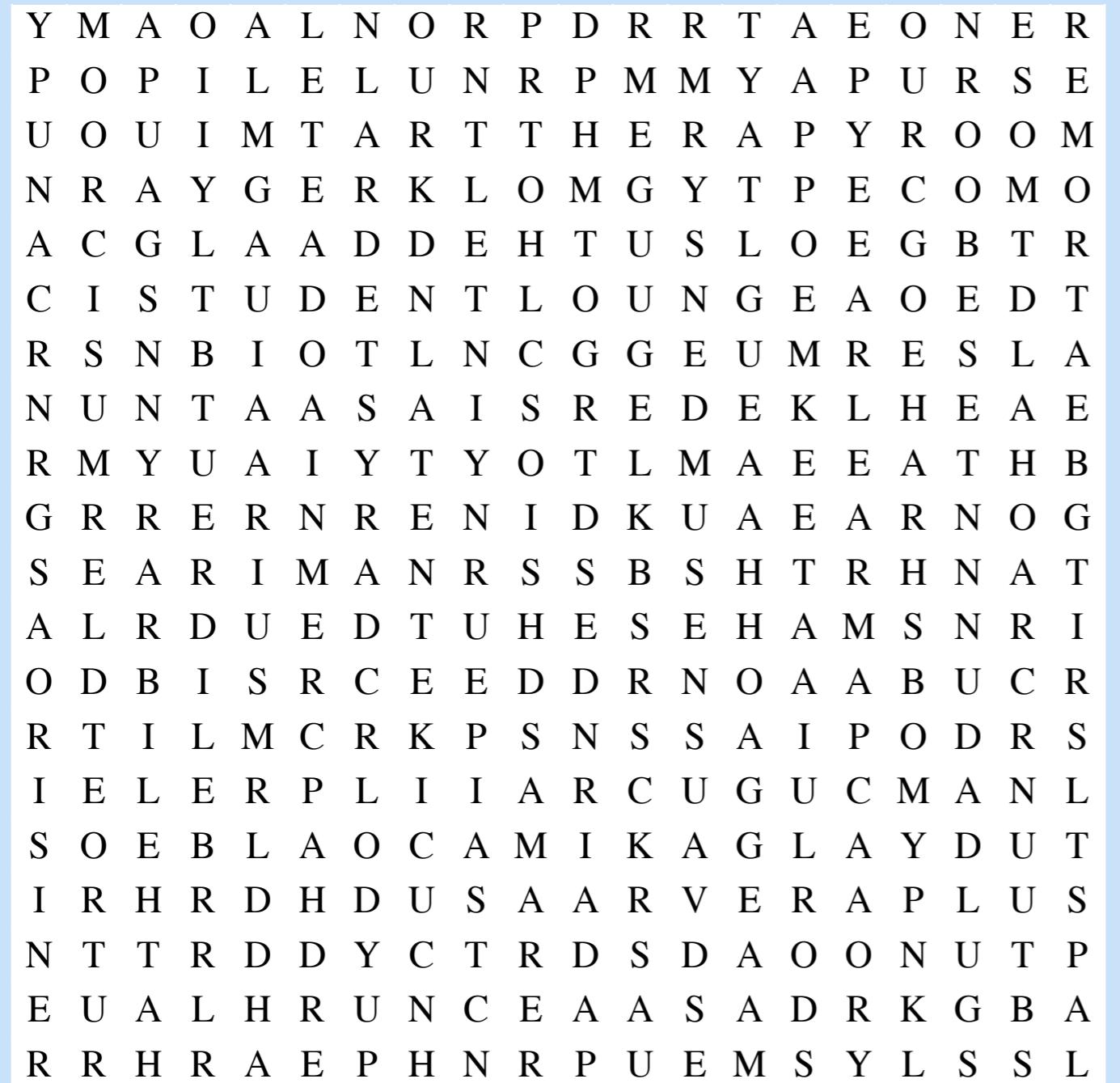
WITH LOVE, FROM DARTMOUTH,
Lea & Aiza <3



THE EDITOR'S PUZZLE

By: Nuhu Al-Sahli

Take on this word search and see if you can find all ten favorite spots for students!



Found all ten? Make sure to share your results on Instagram and tag @voice_auk for a chance to win valuable prizes!

WORD BANK

- AUK ARCH** R S K N B I O T L
 N U N T A A S A
 R M Y U A I Y T
- ART THERAPY ROOM** G R R E R N R E
- GYM** S E A R I M A N
- THE LIBRARY** A L R D U E D T⁵³
- MUSIC ROOM** O D B I S R C E
- PADEL COURT** R T I L M C R K
- AUK DINER** I E L E R P L I
- STUDENT LOUNGE** S O E B L A O C
- VERA PLUS** I R H R D H D U
- BONSAI GARDEN** N T T R D D Y C

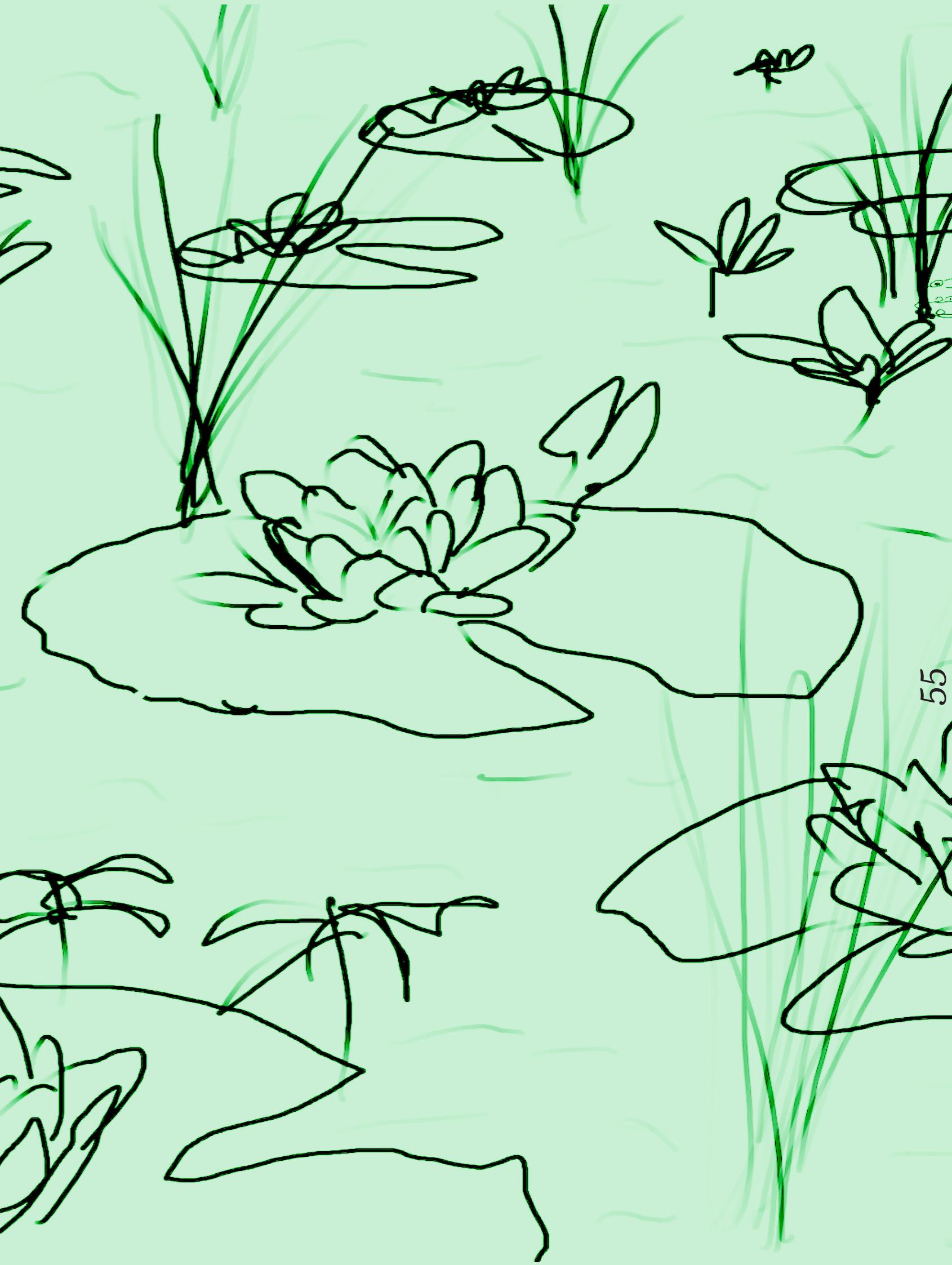
WHERE'S FROGGIE?

By: Rona Al-Enezi

Try to see if you can spot little Fred the Frog!



Found him? Make sure to share your results on Instagram and tag @voice_auk!







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