

Persistent, Aspiring, Noble, Diligent, Achieving

SHSID | TIMES

May June 2024 Edition

HARVESTING

the

DREAMCATCHER

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Letter From the Editor

Dear Readers,

In the delicate web of the dreamcatcher, woven between branches of hope and threads of resilience, we find fragments of our deepest longings. Each strand holds the whispers of forgotten nights and the quiet hum of untold stories, waiting to be gathered in the dawn's first light. The theme "Harvesting the Dreamcatcher" is not merely an act of collection, but a sacred dance between the seeker and the sought. It is a journey of seeking inspiration, securing the everchanging flame to light up the way through perilous tunnels and travesties. To harvest is to claim ownership of the visions that have danced just beyond our grasp, and to nurture them into bloom with our hands and hearts.

In our latest issue, I invite you to explore within our interwoven web of articles, featuring explorations of monumental cultural developments, intimate moments of seclusion and exploration, and the warmth found from promises of renewal. As we reach into this woven universe, we are reminded that our dreams are not elusive phantoms but the very substance of our becoming, the core towards bridging our imagination with our objectives. There will be a lot of introspection from these articles, so I hope you are left with a fresh perspective when reading this issue. Happy reading!

Sincerely,

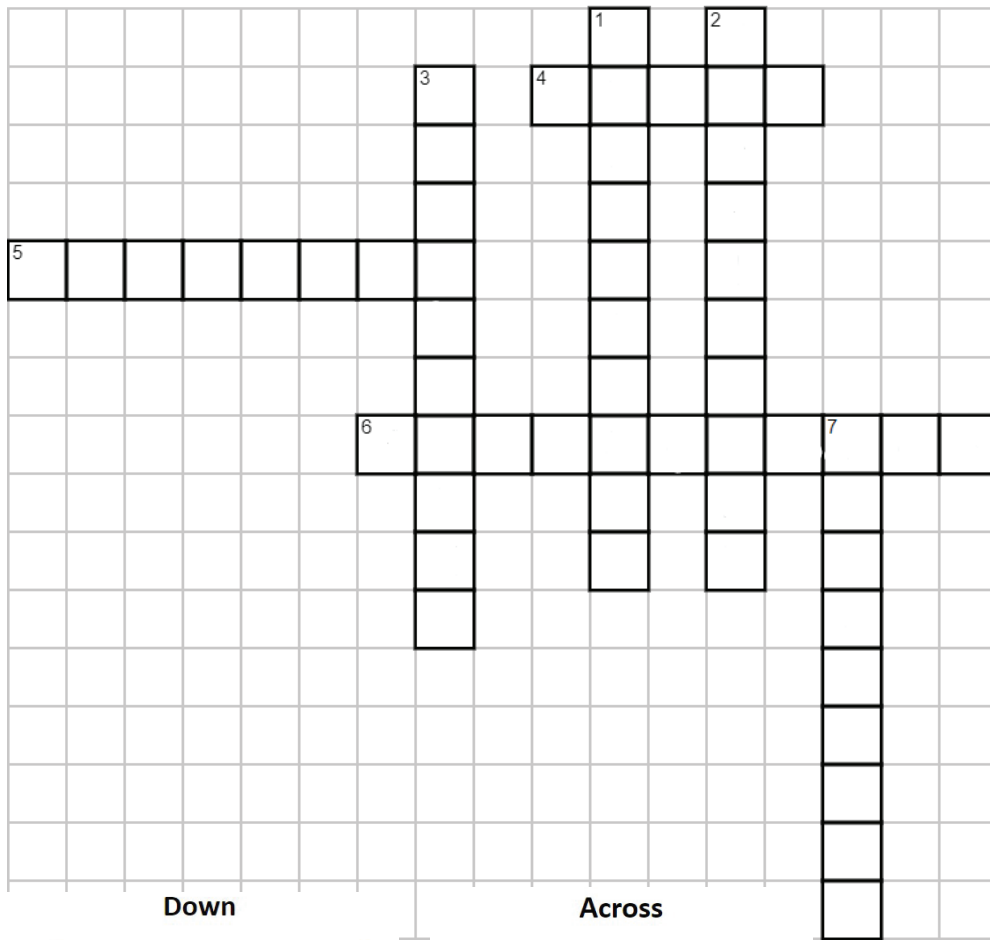
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Geo.', with a stylized, overlapping loop structure above the text.

Geoffrey Ku, Managing Editor

CROSSWORD

The CROSSWORD section is a vibrant and intellectually stimulating part of our magazine, designed to challenge and entertain readers. Dive in and enjoy the rewarding experience of cracking clues and uncovering words, one grid at a time.

Email your submissions to shsidtimes@hotmail.com and follow SHSID | Times on WeChat to participate in our online polls.



- Down**
- 1 2nd paragraph of "Your Dream is Your Harvest We are All Dreamers", synonym: path
 - 2 Where Barbie lives
 - 3 2nd paragraph of "Before the Coffee Gets Cold", synonym: prerequisites
 - 7 Last paragraph "The Potential of Augmented Reality", synonym: possibilities

- Across**
- 4 4th paragraph of "Breaking Down Brat", the font used in brat
 - 5 Title of Joy Tang's artworks
 - 6 5th paragraph "Dreams Have Reflections, But It's Still You", a part of your brain that's responsible for your memory and learning

LETTERS

ON “BOHO BLISS” (SEPT-OCT 2023): CRAFTING YOUR CANVAS OF COLORS, CURIOSITIES, AND CHARACTER

Bohemian evokes a vibe in everything. Its textures, colors, and history are free to navigate, free to slumber upon, and free to harvest. This type of art leaves a tingling sensation that lightly touches every corner of your body. It doesn't swarm into the depths of philosophical thought but rather blesses philosophy with the art, patterns, and designs engraved within. Thus, boho can relate to a form of self-expression, “magnetism lies in its ode to personal stories and the spirits of discovery. It encourages self-expression, transforming living spaces into deeply personal sanctuaries” Amy writes in her article “On Boho Bliss: Crafting Your Canvas of Colors, Curiosities, and Character”. Dreams are a mode of self-expression, in which they hold your beliefs that are special to you only, resulting in dreams being uniquely different. This clicks in synchronization with the will boho blesses one with—the fabrication of harvest amid all student's dreams. It is because boho, or any style, medium, or expression, that allows us to dream. It paves the pathways, the sprouts, and the doors to what is called “new”. This “new” might not seem promising, but it is alas a dream. And so perhaps perpetuating a bit of boho, a bit of cozy frenzy and an antique blaze into your dream would do just the trick—it might be worth it

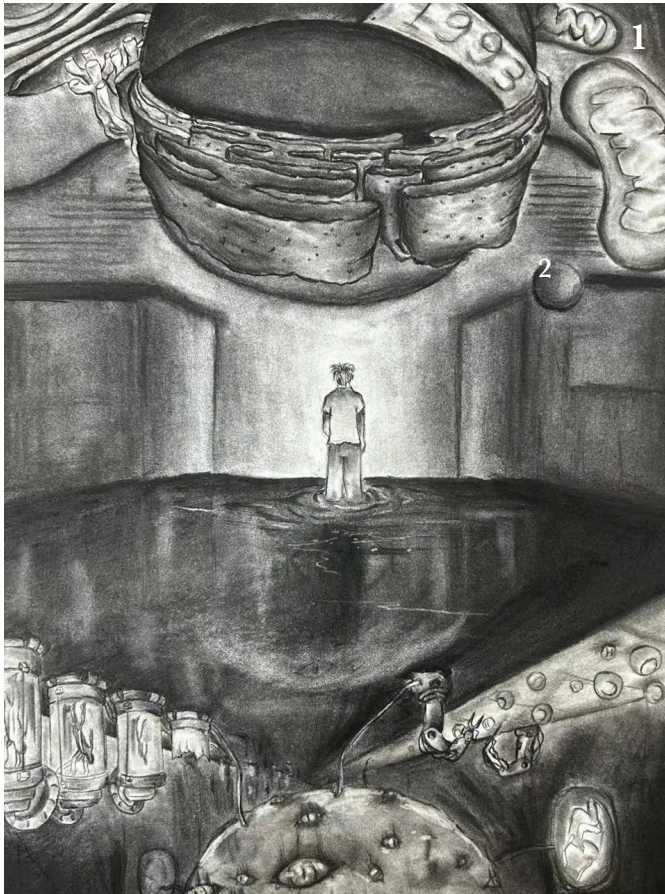
- Ariel Zhang 9(2)

ON “THE ITALIAN OLIVE OIL SAGA” (MAR-APR 2024): THE SCANDALOUS FOOD CASE

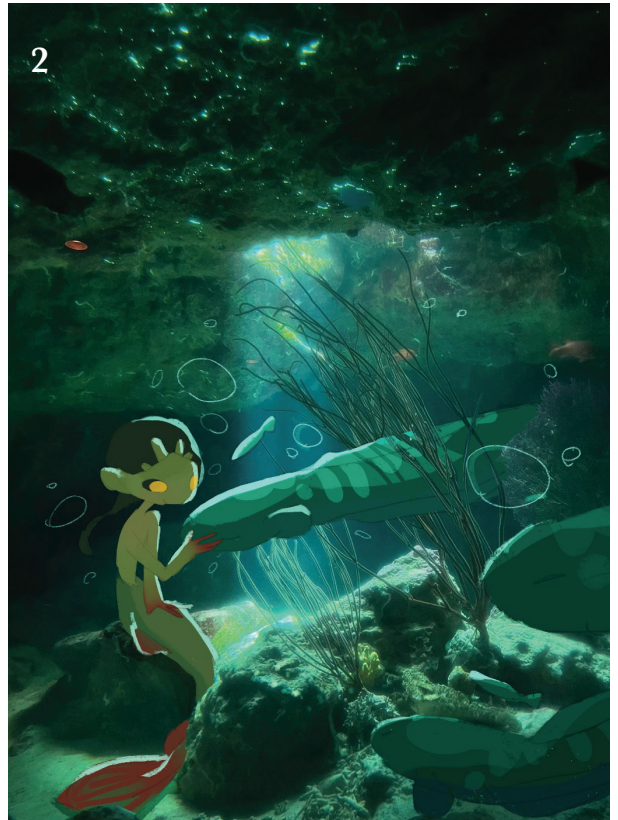
It's a fascinating experience to trace the sources of your dinner, but have you ever questioned the authenticity of its ingredients? Nowadays, restaurants take great pride in publicizing their food sources. Italian olive oil, Northeast rice, and Australian beef have become popular labels in supermarkets and restaurant fronts; yet in his article, Zane Lu documents findings and excavations from a unique combination of law enforcement agencies and academic institutions that reported on Italian olive oil production scandals. Two findings shocked me the most: mafia presence is highly correlated with olive oil production, and a large quantity of Italian olive oil on the market is fraudulent. The revelations from “Operation Mamma Mia” reveal the disturbing nature of adulteration—altering the true composition of a food—in our daily lives. Moreover, Zane's assessment outlines the devastating effects that fake extra virgin olive oil has on stakeholders. Not only does the toxic oil cause health concerns and even death, it is also associated with cruel crime. The article showcases the importance of integrity and standards in all fields, and it explores the unreported side of elegant food labels.

- Aaron Xue 10(7)

ART SUBMISSIONS



1 | The Cell
by Kevin Luo 12(7)



2 | Merchild
by Joy Tang 12(2)

A collection of works featuring a fish-child creature who has escaped the confines of my art. She now swims freely in the real world and my thalassophobic self lives vicariously through her adventures.



3 | Daphne
by Anonymous

Mixed media mosaic



5 | The Professional Mussel Killer
by Sunny Chen 11(2)



4 | Reflection
by Isabella Qian 11(7)

We often contemplate whether we are truly conscious about our own character, emotions, and abilities. “Reflection” explores the themes of self-reflection and perception, questioning our interpretations of ourselves and gaining a greater sense of understanding about our relationships with the world.





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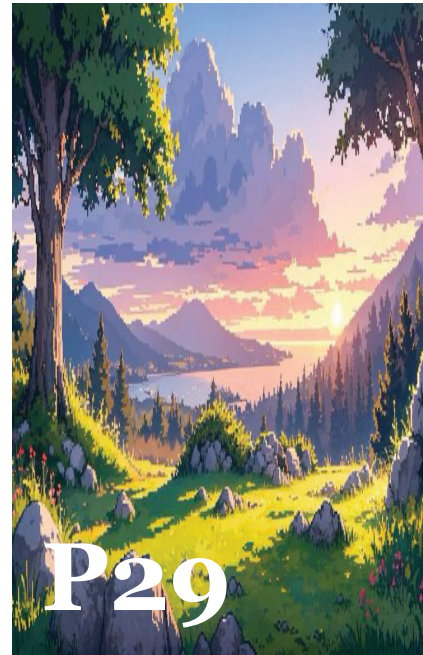
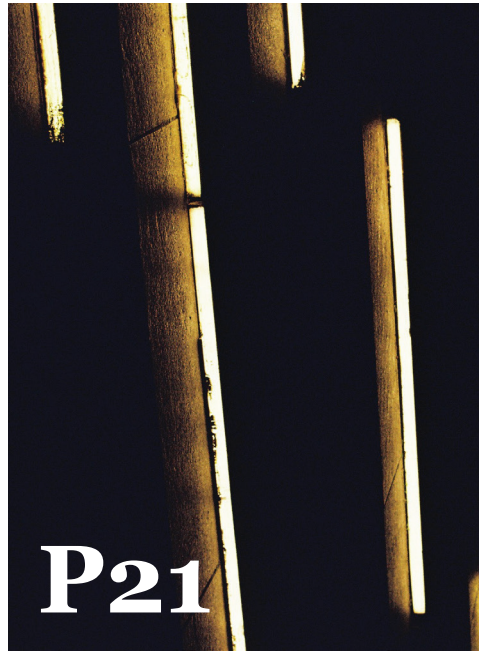
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Before the Coffee Gets Cold

Written by: Owen Kustandi
Photos from: Google



Introduction

Is there a moment in the past that you regret and wish to revisit? Perhaps it was the time you fought with your best friend and never got the chance to properly say sorry, or the time where your father left for good, but you never got to say your final goodbyes. This was all made possible in Kawaguchi's novel, "Before the Coffee Gets Cold".

Before the Coffee Gets Cold

The novel is set in a small Tokyo Cafe. It's based off the idea that if you drank a sip of coffee, you could time travel to either the past or future. There were only two conditions. First, no matter what you do in the period you time travel, the future won't change. In the novel, one character chose to revisit the time before her boyfriend left to America for good. She wanted a second chance to say her goodbyes and make her final plea for her boyfriend to stay. Even though what she said would not change the future, it provided her with closure, knowing that she was able to say everything she wanted to say. The second rule was that one had to return to the present before their coffee got cold- and if they don't, they would be cursed for a lifetime. Kawaguchi takes the common trope of time travelling in books and adds a unique spin to it. By doing so he can convey a beautiful message to all readers: Although we all have memories that we want to revisit, it's important to move on and embrace the challenges life throws in our way.

Bittersweet Dreams

It is with our loved ones when we experience the most memorable moments in our life. While we should cherish those memories that make us laugh and smile, it is equally important for us to come to terms with the memories that left a bitter note on our tongues. After all, life can be bitter, just like coffee, and we need to learn how to face reality- not run away from it.

A dreamcatcher does not solely harvest our happy memories and dreams. It also captures some of our inner fears and

deep dark secrets. The concept of facing fears our dreamcatcher has harvested is well represented in Kawaguchi's novel. In his novel, a tiny café allows characters to travel either to the past or the future to face any anxieties, worries, or regrets they have. The characters' dreams are more than just subconscious wanderings. They offer insights into the characters' innermost desires and personal conflict.

In one chapter, a woman revisits the last argument she had with her sister before the sister got into a car crash. The woman realizes that the sister had loved her a lot and wanted the best for the both of them. In another chapter, a wife revisits the time before her husband got diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and read a letter he had wanted to pass to her. In the letter, the husband tells his wife to leave him if he ever loses his memory about her. This makes the wife break down in tears. And in the most touching chapter of the novel, a soon-to-be mother travels to the future to see if her child will grow healthily. She learns that her child will survive and grow to become a strong woman, although she would not have a mother in her life. Although the mother would not survive after giving birth to her child, she can be rest assured she is giving the "best gift a mother can give". By engaging with these dreams, characters are given an opportunity for self-reflection and personal development, as they become more wholesome people at the end of the novel.



Coffee's Bitterness

Coffee acts as a unique motif in Kawaguchi's novel, as it represents the bitter reality some of us are afraid to face. The novel mentions how coffee "didn't initially appeal to Japanese tastebuds and was certainly not thought of as something one drank for enjoyment". The coffee served at the tiny cafe which allows for time travel is especially known for being bitter and unappetizing to some. Just as how some characters in the novel don't enjoy accepting the reality they are living in, some people also can't appreciate the bitter fruitiness coffee is known for, as its complex overtones may seem overbearing. Coffee in this case is just like a pill of medicine, something hard to swallow.

Furthermore, Kawaguchi takes the concept of time travel in his novel to another level by effectively utilizing the symbol of coffee. Within his novel, characters could travel through time after drinking a cup of hot coffee. The only condition was that they had to return to the present before their coffee gets cold. If characters didn't return to the present in time, they would be cursed and turned into a ghost. Here, Kawaguchi illustrates the concept of "frozen in time", showing the consequences people have when they choose not to move on.



Conclusion

“With the coffee in front of her, she closed her eyes and inhaled deeply. It was her moment of happiness.”

Kawaguchi’s novel “Before the Coffee Gets Cold” highlights the importance of embracing failures and moving on with life. There are certain bittersweet moments in our life that we fear of facing. But it’s important to know that everyone’s lives are not perfect, just like the characters in the novel, and we are all facing different struggles, fears, and conflict that we eventually have to come to terms with. Like coffee it can be sometimes hard to swallow, but we need to learn how to embrace these bittersweet moments as parts of our life. Instead of harping on regrets, we should look towards the future, and look forward to the many other possible dreams our dreamcatcher will harvest!





Barbie

That Terrible Haven

Written by: The Bloomsbury Cat,
"Bloom" magazine team
Photos from: Google

It's been more than a year since Greta Gerwig's blockbuster film *Barbie* entered global theaters, and, aside from wondering why it won only one out of eight Oscar nominations, I've taken the time to look behind its star-studded cast and tracklist to explore the genuine, central thoughts that made it the film it is today. After all, it probably wouldn't have achieved a box office of more than a billion dollars if it weren't for these deeper, covert meanings which resonated with audiences worldwide.

But, of course, I'll give a quick summary first for review (yes, a review, no spoiler alert—it's been more than a year and you still haven't watched it?): *Barbie* begins in the supposed nirvana of Barbieland, where male dolls (Kens) and female dolls (Barbies) live happily and harmoniously in a matriarchal society, with complete disregard to proper shelter, sustenance, employment, and physics. One day, a particular marquee Barbie played by Margot Robbie thinks about death, loses her doll traits, and is told to visit the real world to discover her true identity. Ryan Gosling's Ken tags along with the Barbie, and the two realize that the real world is a direct juxtaposition to Barbieland—it's a patriarchal world where mortality is inevitable. The Ken is inspired and returns to Barbieland to reestablish it as a patriarchy, while the Barbie visits Mattel's headquarters to learn of her origins. At her return, the Kens are enticed to civil war by the Barbies, who then retrieve power over Barbieland, restoring it to its status quo. Gosling's Ken fades back into his everyday role as a menial "Beach Ken" with a faint enlightenment on him being "just Ken", and Robbie's Barbie decides to settle down in the real world as an actual person under the guidance of the Barbie franchise's creator, Ruth Handler.

In the grand scheme of its plot, *Barbie* is, at the end of the day, the harvest from a dreamcatcher for nightmares. It identifies these near-universal nightmares of gender being a factor of widespread crises of social inequity and identity, collects them, then proudly presents them under the theme of a toy. The movie's flashy visuals and upbeat music are, in truth, only there to resound with Mattel's original doll brand for the sake of Barbie fans, if not there to contrast and further reflect the formidable crises of equity and identity among the Barbies and Kens who are played by, behave like, and can thus strike chords within real people.

Barbie is, at the end of the day, the harvest from a dream catcher for nightmares.

For one, Barbie expounds the feared proposition that a society in which genders are at equity cannot exist, not even with frequent reformation towards it. Considering that Barbieland is an appropriate microcosm for the real world on terms of demography, it stands out to me that the Barbies' and Kens' respective efforts for their own sex's rights have never balanced each other out—throughout the entirety of the film, there is not a single moment



in which Barbieland gets anywhere close to a community in which both all have equal rights and opportunities. Yes, the Kens do realize in the end that they are simply "Ken" and not what they like to think of themselves as, but that hardly challenges the fact that Barbieland still ends up as what it originally was, a matriarchy where Kens are the subordinates. Worse, since the fantasy doll world starts off with the Barbie franchise's heavily female-centric ideals, reformation efforts by the initially suppressed Kens likewise aim for establishing strictly androcentric societies as they have never lived in communities with gender equity in the first place. The result? Barbieland's two possible social structures can only be either male- or female-dominant and nothing else.

Why is this scary? I'm not an activist myself, but suggesting that Barbieland's equity dilemma applies to the real world given its realistic demographic representation dismisses the hopes of many potential social reformers as futile. Barbie implies that there will never a single day during which the two sexes are at an equitable balance, and that gender inequity would be inexorable and inevitable for the rest of time. This would be a nightmare, for sure.

In addition, the movie also poses the intimidating conjecture that, given the proposition that all human societies end up being either patriarchal or matriarchal, one of the two sexes will ultimately face crises of identity. Barbie argues that in each of the two types of social structures, the dominant sex has innumerable and completely whimsical demands for the other sex, with the former posing expectations for the latter that may often be contradictory. Ryan Gosling's Ken corroborates this, singing, "what would it take for her [Barbie] to see the man behind the tan and fight for me?" while reflecting on his past as a lowly Beach Ken in matriarchal Barbieland; the Mattel employee played by America Ferrera adds on to this in her monologue on impossible patriarchal expectations for women in androcentric Barbieland, "We have to always be extraordinary, but, somehow, we're always doing wrong...you have to never get old, never be rude...it's too hard, it's too contradictory".



With these demands, Barbie suggests that men in matriarchy like Gosling's Ken and women in patriarchy like Ferrera's Mattel employee have no clue as to gaining proper recognition for who they are. The film thus demonstrates its hypothesis that gender-wide identity crises will always exist, and a certain amount of people will always be stuck in oblivion in wondering who they should be and how they should behave; the demands of a dominant gender group to the other (which are always existent along with the aforementioned social inequities) are "too hard" and "too contradictory" to adhere to, and giving up on doing so would only result in alienation. The identity crises thus exist for one gender group in how it is impossible to live up to the expectations of the other dominant gender group, yet not trying to live up to these expectations would only make everything worse as half of the population would anticipate something completely different. This would be the second nightmare, where some will suffer simply for being born as who they are and not knowing who they should be.

Barbie is not a horror movie, nor is it a dystopian piece or a tragedy. It is a grand bildungsroman tale which brings viewers in on the journey to learn the "true nature" of societal structures regarding gender with the aid of dolls. Such a "nature" has been discovered to be unfavorable, if not toxic, and, much like a dreamcatcher, the film has taken it in to condense it into two nightmares—one of equity and one of identity—for harvest.

I admire Barbie for its near-perfect soundtrack, cast, and set. I also admire Barbie for its craft in taking what was originally an innocuous toy brand and transforming it into a tool for discussing eerie societal issues concerning all people in less than 2 hours of film time. Most importantly, however, I admire Barbie in containing a relatable, nightmarish underside where fears can be examined and taken in like crops while maintaining the impression of a superficial haven with Barbieland. I hope what happened during the Oscars on March 10, 2024 was that the judges freaked out over that underside and decided that the film was too scary to win more than one out of its eight nominations. Yes... that would make sense.

breaking DOWN brat

Written by: Aaron Xue
Photos from: Google, Pinterest

Summer trends tend to come and go quickly, but this one feels different. Gone are the days of Barbie pink, but what exactly is “brat summer”? In the unlikely event that you haven’t come across it yet, you might find the aesthetics of this article a bit confusing. *BRAT* has inspired TikTok dance challenges, social media trends, and a fresh new aesthetic. In fact, I first heard about *BRAT*—British singer Charli XCX’s viral album—from one of my teachers before it really took off. Soon after, my social media feed was inundated with those striking lime green visuals (or “brat green,” if you will) everywhere. Before long, even U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris had embraced *BRAT* as part of her presidential campaign. Soon, this new summer trend had even reached my mom’s ears. So... how did this happen?

Way before the whole Y2K aesthetic revival became popular, Charli XCX was already rocking her signature carefree, retro vibe. In fact, I vividly remember my childhood friend listening to “I Love It” by Icona Pop and Charli, with its catchy lyrics, “I crashed my car into the bridge. I don’t care, I love it!”—a line that’s still stuck in my head even today, ten years later. The shock I felt when hearing those bold lyrics is probably akin to how we all felt when we first saw the simple yet perplexing design of the *BRAT* album cover.



“brat is somewhat messy and imperfect”

Dubbed “anti-design” by design connoisseur Linus Boman on YouTube, *BRAT* is quite the opposite of the ornate, floral album covers often associated with modern pop music. However, it’s not uncommon for artists to embrace minimalistic designs for their publicity. This year, two of the most popular singers released albums with similarly simple covers: Ariana Grande’s *Eternal Sunshine* features two versions—one with a close-up of her face and the other with a photo of her signature high ponytail. Taylor Swift’s *The Tortured Poet’s Department* showcases basic grayscale photos of her poses. Both album covers appear to originate from straightforward photoshoots and utilize simple color schemes. However, *BRAT* takes this movement a step further—featuring just two elements: a bright green background and the grainy, pixelated title, “brat.”

Focusing on the design once more, there are a few things to note. As someone with design experience, I find it fascinating that even minimalistic artworks can be analyzed in depth. The “brat” font is actually Arial, which is considered a copycat version of Helvetica, according to Boman (fun fact: Helvetica is the standard font used for *SHSID | TIMES* article credits). Additionally, Boman notes that the text is heavily distorted, straying from the standard Arial metrics and contributing to its nonchalant vibe. The overall blurry and distorted text may give an impression of carelessness and shoddiness, but it can also be seen as a reflection of human authenticity and originality. Lowercase text also gives the vibe of an informal, blatant message as opposed to the fully capitalized official title that seemingly yells out “BRAT!”. Lastly, the designers behind *BRAT* spent months searching for the perfect shade of green—talk about taking a simple approach to design! One thing to note, however, is that Charli’s absence from the cover does not diminish her recognition; social media has cemented her as the face of “brat summer,” embodying its messy and audacious spirit.



In my opinion, *BRAT*, in a way, is an ingenious spin-off from the Y2K frenzy, reminiscent of early 2000s fashion and technology design norms. Recently, I also stumbled upon Charli’s 2018 electropop hit with Troye Sivan, “1999,” whose lime green, *Matrix*-inspired cover somehow evokes both Y2K and *BRAT* aesthetics. So far, Charli XCX continues to be hailed as a style icon, flaunting her cool, nostalgic yet futuristic fashion sense. As one reporter puts it, *BRAT* is somewhat messy and imperfect. Or as Charli herself puts it, “And at the end of the day, that’s exactly what *BRAT* is all about: me, my flaws...my ego all rolled into one”—and that’s precisely what gives *BRAT* its unique charm.



HARVESTING THE DREAMCATCHER

Written by: Letitia Lai

Illustrated by: Aaron Xue

Let us start then, shall we?

The air was musty inside the room. Despite the wide extent its walls stretched, there was still the unmistakable fog of a particular dreariness that hung, lifeless, over the room's arches and columns. It laced around the numerous podiums sitting silently on the marble floors, and even the artifacts atop the podiums, it seemed to touch with a slight undertone.

The room was only one of many in the Museum. An exhibit, dedicated purely to the peculiar items excavated from the feeble grasps of a dying planet. What it displayed, defined the structures of a story that no living man knew of. And as of the past few centuries, had become the last remnants whispering traces of a past long gone. What remained, hence, were fossils.

Two men were smoking in the exhibit. Sitting on small stools, they crouched, backs bent, heads huddled together, around a podium.

The one on the left was stout; the thick jacket he always wore was outdated by many years, faded with time and, more recently, the chemicals that had come to become common in the air. It had been a gift from someone—whom, he could not place, but it had become his notion that anything he could not remember, did not deserve attention. Its only use as of right now, then, was to accentuate his grotesquely rotund figure. Every ragged breathe he took became magnified through trembles and shivers throughout his body, rendering those who saw him from a distance to fall under the illusion of watching a machine working towards its ruin. It should be noted to those who attempt to engage in any form of conversation with this particular man that he speaks in a similarly ragged manner. There is no need to feel alarmed. He simply talks as such. Years of being a victim of abuse and exploitation does this to a man.



The man to the right stood more on the lean side. A battered cloak draped over his thin shoulders only sufficed in covering his arms. In the face of harsh winds, it served no use. There was no choice for it though; he has been wearing it since his adolescent years, seven years. Since then, he had aged more than time could measure. Scars from working in low-paying factories and backstreet scuffles ran along his hands, intercrossing in a patchwork of canyons yawning over each other. Yet, it was precisely those harsh ridges which provided for his family. Every penny and cent wrenched from unrelenting fingers and hard stares was one more day the man could make sure there was bread on the table, oil for the lamp. It was the more intense labor this taller man did which carved out the rough ridges of scars over his hands, and despite his being younger than his companion, the dim sheen of moonlight that spilled down from the windows of the exhibit cast shrouded both men's faces in a similar demeanor.

This then places an end to the initial introduction of those two characters. However, please keep in mind this narration has been subject to summation. The hardships they have gone through far exceed what can be covered today.

The two men were, as previously stated, huddled around a podium. This was not without cause, though. You see, the specific artifact on the podium was no ordinary item.

Sitting silently on the podium surface was a dreamcatcher. At least, it was what its caption stated. Its weavings of string, that which threaded through the circular structure of wood, had seen better days. The small bells chained with leather had long crusted over with a dark brown rust, and as of right now, laid silently in even spacings around the wooden frame. Even the feathers, which were connected at the tips of the artifact, were dimmed by the sheen of dust that loomed over the entire exhibit. It was a sad little thing, really, but the men were giving it their undivided attention.

It was the taller man who spoke first. "A dreamcatcher, eh? Reckon what it does?"

The stout man breathed out a puff of smoke, "Collects dreams, it does. Been sitting here for ages. Must've gotten a lot of it."

"You sure?"

"For sure. Bet my life on it."

"Yeah, okay."

"..."

"..."

It was a few moments later until the shorter man spoke again.

“Hey, mind that attitude. I didn’t call you here just to sit there.”

“I know.”

“Good. You of all them people should know how valuable my invitation is. They be fightin’ all over for the chance to come with me here.”

“Hey, I get it. Let’s just get it over with. I got places to be.”

“Don’t you turn your mouth on me, kid. Those dreams we’re looking at in this thing,” The stout man nudged his chin towards the dreamcatcher, “are worth more than all the money you’ve got.”

The taller man was silent for a while. “Yeah. I know.” Grunting, he stood up and struck a match, shoving it into a lantern. The glow flickered weakly, its hue dampened by the smoke that had gotten increasingly thicker in the air. The man sat back down.

His companion watched all this silently. Moments later, he snapped out of his daze and cleared his throat; it wasn’t uncommon for his lapses.

“You ready, then?”

The tall man nodded.

“You sure?”

He turned around his head, facing the fatter man. It was the first time he looked at him, he realized. It was only now he saw the wrinkles that streaked his face, becoming all the more accentuated against the struggling shadows of the fire. Those wrinkles connected as the man peered at him.

“You do know what you have to do to get a real good harvest from the dreamcatcher, eh?”

It is here in which some information should be allowed to those who are reading this dialogue. You see, readers, the dreamcatcher—this is recorded in its caption in subscript—catches dreams. This has been established previously. But, know that those dreams vary in intensity. The more extreme the emotions infused in those dreams are, the higher their intensity. In the world of the two men, high intensity dreams were what every person longed for. In the midst of ruin and wreckage in a dying world, emotion, by itself, has become a substance sought after by all. Not quite a form of currency, because it was even more valuable than the silver coins passed under hands.

And what emotions were the most extreme? Pain. Fear. Despair.

Very good.



The taller man pulled his hood lower down his head, plunging his face into darkness. There was a grim atmosphere trembling in the air, so heavy it seemed to weigh physically on both men's shoulders. The candlelight of the lantern grew weaker; the silence in the exhibit echoed against its walls. Rising, the tall man unsheathed his dagger.

"I'll be done at daybreak at the latest. Be ready to harvest the dreams."

"Yeah. And hey," The fat man nodded towards the figure behind him, "We all do what we gotta to survive, yeah? Don't weigh it on yourself."

There was the faintest humorless curve of his lips as the man walked out the exhibit. As he walked out the Museum, the moonlight cast itself over his white scars, and they became crescent moons by themselves.

"What it takes to survive."

And such places the end to the first tales of the Museum. For in every exhibit, there is a story and a world not yet uncovered. It is only a matter of coincidence and luck that you, dear reader, came across one that is, in fact, documented already.

And if it may please you, the title of this particular one is "The Cycle".

june came as an old woman watching



Written by: Victoria
Photos from: Pinterest

as i make my way to the neighborhood pool
 in a high fever. teeth bared & eyes wide-eyed against the
 heat, we meet eyes, she & i.

once, in the dimming light of late-May,
 this is what i asked for:
 plum juice, light through the curtains, the itch
 of tall grass, the itch of
 all hurt going to nest & sweetening the air,
 forgiveness in an iced glass,
 mom humming to the jazz on the radio. this summer
 i want to be sun-kissed & beloved,
 love-struck June spilling into July like
 it is nothing.

this is what she speaks of:
 another summer drowned
 at the bottom of the pool, desert peaches
 clenched in my fists, mouth full of
 wasps, sunburns a dull ache in the back of my throat,
 cicadas a distant wail, each dawn a cruel reminder
 of all those i have left behind.

i ask her why it must be like this. why every summer
 tumbles into nothingness. why dawns come like the heave of a sob.
 why every summer rain must be a weeping child outside my window. why the warbler in the
 back garden never stops singing. why i store
 festered wishes behind my front teeth summer
 after summer
 in spite of everything.

the promises we have made are ever-reaching, & i watch as the heat waves swallow up the
 streets burning with all those unkept.

THE ANTICIPATED GATHERING

Written by: Melinda Dang
Photos from: Google

[Inside a restaurant in Shanghai, two old friends JAKE, MAY, are at a table chattering. Two other seats are empty. Inside the restaurant Millions, decorated in Art Deco style, AI waiters and waitresses serve guests. The year is 2036.]

MAY: The segmented memory is meant to be continued. We all changed, from a bud to a flower winding down.

JAKE: [laughs] I am sure you are at the rising tide of your career, May. How is your life? [enters ALFIE]

ALFIE: Hello there May and Jake.

JAKE: Nice seeing you, Alfie. Are we expecting Kelly soon?

[enters KELLY, wearing a gown with sunglasses]

KELLY: I bet you are! What a sweet reunion!

ALFIE: Is that Kelly? It has been ten years ever since graduation. I barely recognized you, Kelly.

MAY: A decade. A decade ago, who was I?

JAKE: You were an ambitious teen: a pair of hungry, glowing eyes, a boundless heart ready to battle. You promised to be immersed in the frontier science. Whether in a lab or in nature, you promised to unveil the laws of universe. You promised to wake up with a jog in the woods. Those were powerful dreams.

MAY: For god's sake, I've forsaken them.

KELLY: For god's sake, you've forsaken them all!

MAY: All crashed just for cash. I majored in CS. I got a lucrative job as a data analyzer after graduation. I now live under an intensive workload with a fussy boss. You see, dreams are simply fleeting romances.

ALFIE: Sorry to hear that.

MAY: That romantic era died after the nineteenth century. Those bright and optimistic days are over. It is superseded by realism, don't you see? I live in shadowed materialism. Bother it no further, I pray you. Let joy and delight outweigh the woes and blues. Savvy? *[May raises a glass. Others followed]*

MAY: To our gathering!

ALFIE, KELLY, JAKE: To our gathering!

JAKE: We should order now. Excuse me, ordering here!

[enter WAITRESS, an AI robot]

WAITRESS: Good evening. It's a pleasure to be of service to you, I am your AI waitress. Would you like auto-ordering?

ALFIE: Solid. Just nothing too spicy for me.

KELLY: Heard that the Peking Duck is a treat, so bring that in.

MAY: And I prefer a seasonal soup.

JAKE: We are not picky customers, are we? Serve some cold dish for starter, thanks.

WAITRESS: Absolutely! Based on your preferences, here is a list of recommended dishes.

JAKE: Good to go. What do you think?

MAY: Yeah, it works fine. [Others nod]

WAITRESS: Wonderful! The dishes will be ready soon. [exits]

ALFIE: Given the little information we give, the AI's



algorithm to generate suitable dishes is impressive.

KELLY: It also takes into account today's weather, purpose of meal, and recent popular trends in food; Some even say that the AI matches personality with food.

JAKE: That's your area of expertise, Kelly.

KELLY: Well, the last point is pure supposition.

ALFIE: You have been working on tech for these years?
[enter WAITRESS, setting up the table]

WAITRESS: All dishes are served. Hope you enjoy it!

KELLY: Thank you. Well. I am now a tech senior director at a household device company in California. I manage the privatization of data and also supervise the debugging process. Though, Ken and I are planning to start a start-up.

MAY: Being a senior director at age 28? That is mad.

ALFIE: Starting on what kind of company?



KELLY: On a hypothetical basis, this company would provide security to sensitive data as a outsource service.

MAY: This is a good direction. Lucky for you to have a supportive partner like Ken.

JAKE: The arduous journey pays off, Kelly. I am glad for you.

KELLY: Thanks. Gentlemen, did you follow your dream?

JAKE: Partially.

ALFIE: What have you been working on, Jake?

JAKE: Nothing grand. I work for a natural history museum as a staff scientist, and occasionally I give public lectures. It has been this way for years.

ALFIE: Nothing changed much, I suppose.

JAKE: Sure, the specimens preserved in the museum are less changing than us.

ALFIE: As for me, it's almost suffocating. I spent years on this project to grow a special twinning crystal—it has a picky system. The theoretical roadblock is not going anywhere.

JAKE: Friend, what's valuable is what's hard.

ALFIE: I understand. That's why I got to hang on and complete the project. And who knows what happens next, maybe I'll get the paper published, or maybe I'll just stuck with this project for a few more years.

KELLY: At least you are challenged.

MAY: Maybe that is just life. The majority it offers is a steady slope.

KELLY: Be merry, friends. Life is short and food is good. I like this steamed perch.

MAY: That's the right flavor of the perch. It has a familiar taste.

KELLY: You had been here in high school. I only remembered that because May and I ran from school to this restaurant without a taxi. You were too excited after finishing the notorious AP exams.



MAY: I was, of course, quick to move and easily ignited! Damned past! I buried my ambitions. I wonder what went wrong...

ALFIE: Life can be disappointing. How are you always calm, Jake?

JAKE: Just be content. Like I am thankful for this peaceful lifestyle and exposure to natural history.

MAY: I suppose Kelly had the luckiest and smoothest career.

JAKE: And a happy family with Ken.

KELLY: There's no simple comparison between lifestyles. At thirty may fortune seek, at eighty it is too late a week. The future carries infinity.

JAKE: When were we so philosophical, Kelly?

KELLY: When life becomes an eager teacher, wouldn't we become pensive?

ALFIE: Why does life teach some bitterness but others sweetness?

MAY: Who are we to challenge what life teaches?

JAKE: How about just "did you enjoy the food?"

[The four laugh wholeheartedly]

ALFIE: It surprises me that we have such a good appetite. Shall we grab a drink at a nearby café in a little while?

MAY: Sure. Let's just check our bill very quickly.
[Waving hand at WAITRESS]

JAKE: How liberating is it that you don't need to leave tips for an AI waitress?

KELLY: You mustn't feel too optimistic about it before AI takes over your job, Mr. Jake.

MAY: But wouldn't that be a relief? We left all our grief, failure, and frustration, to another entity, an alien.

ALFIE: No, I would experience those myself. To feel, that's worth a lot.

MAY: I've heard that you can get a discount for meals by getting mad at the AI. Surely an AI that flawed can't take over my job.

[enters WAITRESS]

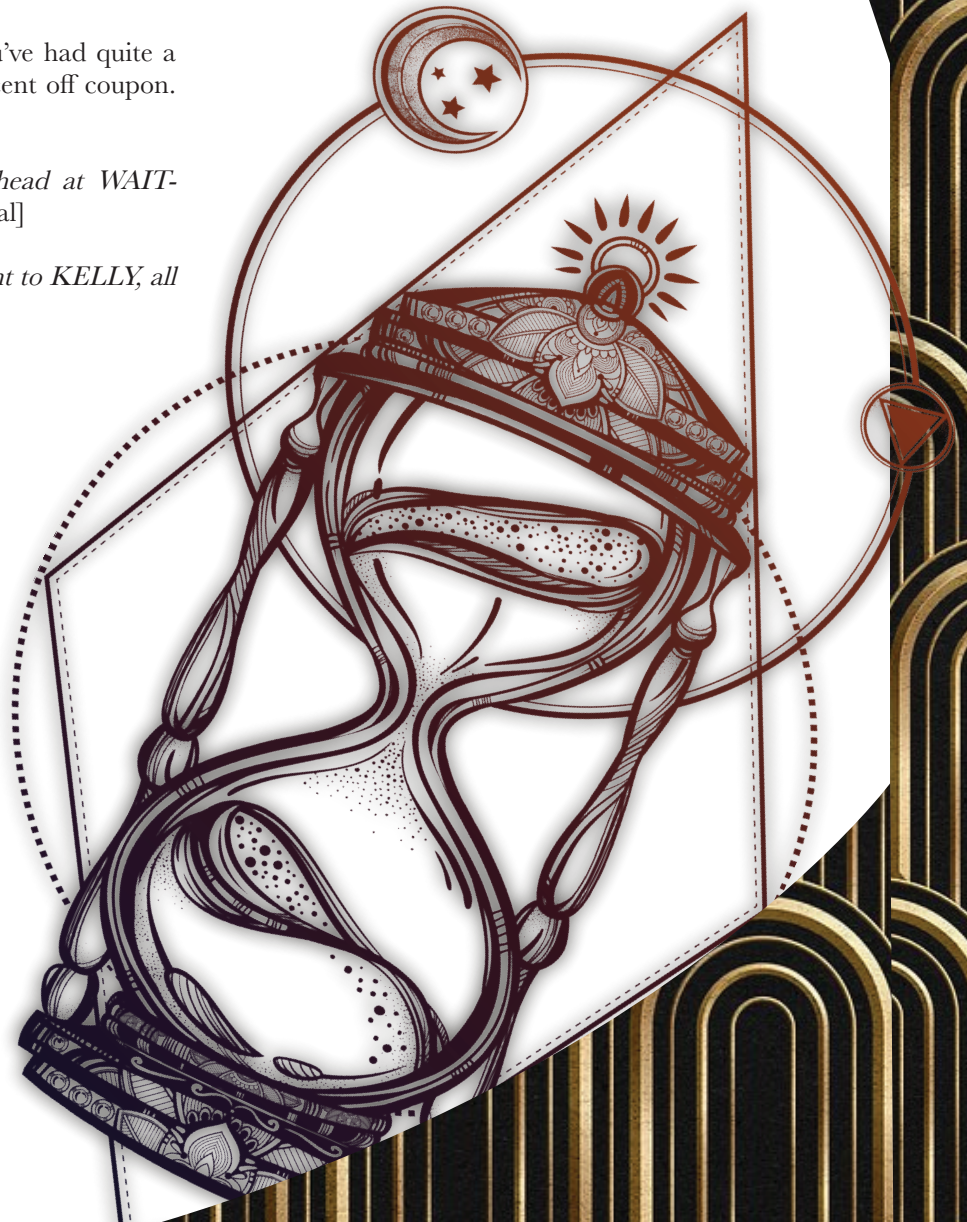
WAITRESS: *[wearing a fake but professional smile]* How are you feeling about tonight's experience at Millions'?

ALFIE: *[pretending]* Disastrous, I say! You served the worst food at the slowest pace and paid no attention to our needs. How are you going to give us remedy?

WAITRESS: Oh dear, it sounds like you've had quite a disappointing experience. Here is a ten percent off coupon. My apologies!

KELLY: *[laughs hard and shakes her head at WAITRESS]* I can't help it. Sorry. *[pays for the meal]*

[Others transfer their portions of payment to KELLY, all exit]



YOUR DREAM IS YOUR HARVEST WE ARE ALL DREAMERS

Written by: Liris Zheng, Ariel Zhang

Illustrated by: Aaron Xue



Dream catchers are what bring us together. In one way, but all possible outcomes. We are separate yet we are a whole. In this very school—our community burst with ones who find different ways to reach their dreams, and through that, they express themselves and define who they are. It is the sprout that bursts in each and every—that differentiates us in the entirety.

Maegan, a sophomore, believes that her life has been tainted with so many sparks which she defines as “anything that remotely tugs on heartstrings would serve as some sort of manifestation of a person’s interest”. For her, her tugs on heartstrings were the books and reading that provoked interest in a pathway, unknown to some or known to others. For Maegan, there was always a general trajectory of the pebbles she would uphold. “I knew I liked expressing anything through many mediums... By seeing a lot of art, music, and literature, I supposed I felt like that was where I’m meant to be.” With the absolute support from her parents, Maegan “cruised” along her way with literature illuminating. The beauty of the study of humanities struck her and stuck with her. From childhood and then on, this dream- this sprout kept up. It belonged to Maegan. It belonged to her not because she was the only one who would be dedicated to it, but because it was what she found clung to her. Being a writer was special, but Maegan phrases such as, “Everyone’s dreams are special; no one’s dream is special.” In one’s eyes, another’s special could be bland, yet because so, everyone is special in their dreams as only they see the only spark inside. This makes one dedicated. Maegan believes dedication “is just a medium of expression, and you’d find life quite frustrating when you don’t have one. Obviously, most, if not all people do have outlets, and I suppose mine are just expressed somewhat artistically.” And this is how there are so many writers out there, in some way shape, or form expressing themselves, in their own way, being dedicated to chasing their own dreams. To her, this is what literature represents—and everyone who has grown interested in literature must see something slightly different that pulls them in so much so. And so this was a dream to be planted, a dream to be grown, a dream waiting to be harvested.

MESSAGE

Students, your dream is your expression. Your dream comes to you when it tugs in devotion. Your dream is your harvest.

Don't fret if your sprout has not sprouted, don't fret if you encounter nightmares, and don't fret if you don't see yourself amid the plain future—what is future when you cannot even find yourself in the present state? Don't fret because all of those were "ifs". These two interviews all describe their pathways to finding their dreams, and none of these two interviews never found them. And so will you. You will find your mode of dedication, your goal, your dream at your pace somewhere in life.

Dreams are a mode of self-expression, in which they hold your beliefs that are special to you only, resulting in dreams being identically different. There are so many ways of choosing

to be who you are, from writing and drawing, to speaking and acting. All of these are dreams, even if they don't seem like it. Your sprout might have been planted so long ago, just about to burst. And you never know. Perhaps we have always thought our paths were paved this way, but it just so happens maybe we end up on that way. So don't be scared.

Dreams are forms of self-reflection. Peering into the pond that is your dream, you see yourself, the reflection of your identity, intertwined with shadows of your past and lights of your future. Just as you have crafted the tapestry of your dreams, so too have they woven themselves into the very fabric of your soul.

Your dream is your harvest.
We are all dreamers.

Dream catchers are thought to protect sleepers from nightmares. To most of us, challenging times can feel like a hazy, unpleasant dream. But to Andrea Yang, a freshman, that blur spurred something wonderful. When Andrea fell sick, she found joy within art. She describes that, "Drawing my family and my friends ... I realized that you don't need to learn how to draw perfectly ... it can be more [of an exploration instead]."

Though it sprouted then, the seeds of the dream have been buried much earlier. "I used to draw a lot when I was small, I used to take a lot of classes, even though that art isn't good at all, it's like using shapes to draw squirrels and stuff. It was a Japanese art style, and I was very bad. I got laughed at a lot by these adults ..."

But even in adversity, there can be unexpected gains, "... I guess it left this impression that you can get better when you get older, you can try again, and it would probably look better than it is now, and that was like a mentality I had, I know that if I kept doing it, it would probably get better and better, even though it was no perfect art, it could only go better from here."

And with the mentality and the initial spark of exploration she furthered her pursuit of drawing. To her, drawing is like "capturing the moments... it's like taking a picture but slower and you appreciate the process and you think about it more."

She continues, "It goes through your brain, onto the paper, and into your brain again, because you observe what you saw and what you see in front of

you. And this is probably what kept me going. This process was – it's very reflective."

And reflective it sure is, that in her pursuit of the dream catcher, she found something deeper: in her art, intertwined with childhood experiences and hopes for the future -- traces of her identity.

"In a way, rather than I drawing my emotions ... I see more "myself" on the canvas than what I ever intended to draw."



THE NIGHTMARE JAR

Written by: Sophia Fang

Photos by: Yuto Nakashima

Fear and insecurity are deeply ingrained aspects of the human psyche, and they become particularly pronounced and impactful during our tumultuous high school years. These feelings can manifest as social anxiety, academic pressure, fear of failure, family issues, or existential dread. As young adults with a developing prefrontal cortex and limited freedom, we often have little ability to cope with these feelings healthily. In the absence of a healthy outlet, these “nightmares” can fester, leading to isolation and a sense of helplessness.

To address this pervasive issue, I sought inspiration from various social experiments online and created the “Read a Nightmare, Leave a Nightmare” project. Designed as a safe space for students to voice their deepest fears, the Nightmare Jar utilizes an anonymous online askbox to let participants submit their insecurities without fear of judgement. In turn, the moderator will allow them to read a submitted “nightmare” and respond. This mutual exchange fosters empathy and understanding, helping students realize they are not alone in their struggles. To understand students’ most common fears and how they would react to anonymous confessions, I took on the role of moderator and collected 8 submissions from a diverse group of students. As many of the reported “nightmares” were quite similar, I combined and distilled the submissions into distinct categories, each voicing a unique perspective. Without further ado, let’s delve into some of the submissions and responses!





Unsurprisingly, one of the most common “nightmares” submitted was centered around students’ fear of academic failure. One submission reads: “I worry that I’m not smart enough to get good grades, disappointing my parents and ruining my future.” This fear is particularly common among high school students in Shanghai, where academics are heavily prioritized, and they face immense pressure to excel academically. For international students specifically, due to the cost of higher education, many feel like a financial burden and have a chip on their shoulders throughout their educational career. The weight of peer pressure and parental expectations can exacerbate these feelings, leading to anxiety and self-doubt. In response, another student offered words of consolation: “You are not alone. My friends and I also feel the same way. Remember, your worth is not defined by your grades. Take breaks, enjoy life, and don’t stress too much about grades.” The response emphasizes the importance of self-worth independent of academic performance, a mindset that many of us fail to internalize but are working towards embracing. It also suggests practical steps like taking breaks and seeking help, which can alleviate some of the pressure.

But grades aren’t the only things students are worried about. One student submitted a “nightmare” about social anxiety, confessing, “When I see others hanging out, I often get FOMO (fear of missing out). I feel as if everybody secretly thinks I’m annoying and nobody likes me. I know it’s irrational, but I can’t stop.” This fear of judgment and rejection can be crippling, making everyday interactions feel daunting and leading to isolation, which only worsens the problem. In response, a peer offered words of reassurance: “Social anxiety is more common than you think. Focus on small steps, like bonding with a friend one conversation at a time. Find activities you enjoy where you can meet people with similar interests and strengthen connections with preexisting friends.” While seemingly irrational, this is a common fear experienced by many high school students. This anxiety likely stems from social media and the hyperconnected nature of our world today. Platforms like WeChat and Instagram present a constant stream of curated, seemingly perfect interactions and experiences that can make anyone feel inadequate by comparison. To eradicate this feeling, the response suggests focusing on oneself instead of others, taking seemingly insignificant yet concrete steps towards building better interpersonal relationships. By normalizing social anxiety and offering incremental steps to overcome it, this response provides a roadmap for managing and eventually overcoming these fears.



The familial relationship was also a major theme of the “nightmares” submitted. One participant wrote: “My parents don’t respect my opinions and often try to make decisions for me. Whenever I finally convince them to let me make my own choices, I feel like my choices always let them down.” As teenagers, we often seek more freedom from our parents than they are willing to grant. This feeling of being undermined and the subsequent fear of disappointing parents can create a cycle of frustration and low self-esteem. In response, a fellow student shared, “I know what it feels like when your parents don’t respect your decisions. Try to communicate openly with them about how this makes you feel. And know that it’s okay to make mistakes – that’s how we learn and grow.” This response emphasizes the importance of communication and patience in bridging the gap between parents’ expectations and the student’s need for autonomy. The advice also extends beyond familial relationships to highlight the role of trial and error in the process of decision-making, revealing how to build trust in one’s abilities.

Lastly, fear of the future also plays a huge role in the minds of the students. Somebody remarked, “I’m scared of what comes after high school. I don’t know what I want to major in, I don’t know what I want to do with my life, and the uncertainty is terrifying.” Taking place in June, the seniors’ graduation filled other students with excited yet nervous energy. The transition from high school to the next phase of life seems to be fraught with uncertainty. This fear can stem from the pressure to have a clear plan for the future and the anxiety of facing the unknown. The response to this “nightmare” offers some comfort: “I am also scared of what comes after high school :D. The future can be scary, but I think it’s okay not to have everything figured out right now. After all, we’re only 1/4 of the way through life! It’s a long journey, and you’re allowed to change your path along the way. Feel free to explore different interests, talk to others, and take things one step at a time.” This response features a student reassuring other students that uncertainty is a normal part of life; in fact, everybody is terrified about what’s to come next, in one way or another. The student encourages exploration and flexibility, which can reduce anxiety about the future.

One of the most powerful aspects of the Nightmare Jar is the realization of overlapping struggles. I, along with many others, found comfort in knowing that our fears were not unique and that others with seemingly

very different, happy lives all shared similar experiences. This sense of solidarity can significantly reduce feelings of isolation. By reading these shared nightmares, students can feel less alone and more understood. The act of responding to a peer’s fear also fosters a sense of connection and empathy. By openly sharing their fears, students learn to express vulnerability, a crucial step in breaking down interpersonal barriers and overcoming personal challenges.

The “Read a Nightmare, Leave a Nightmare” project illustrates the profound impact of empathy and mutual support. By providing a platform for students to voice their fears and receive compassionate responses, the Nightmare Jar helps demystify and destigmatize insecurities. At the end of the day, through collective and individual efforts, students could acknowledge their fears and work to eventually embrace them, shedding nightmares in the dark and welcoming the new light of dawn.

do
you
still
think
of
me?

Dreams Have Reflections, But It's Still You

Written by: Maggie Tang
Photos by: Yuto Nakashima

Picture this. Tomorrow, you've got some type of test: a mid-term, final, or a quiz you've been nervous about. After a while of intense review, it's time to go to bed, and you go beneath your blanket, ready to dive into sweet slumber.



Suddenly, your teacher's angry and disappointed face comes into view. They send you to their office, shouting about your recent performance. As they continue to express their frustration, they show you your test paper with a dreadful score on the very top, scratched with red ink. It's appalling. Your mind's trapped in a sea of anxious thoughts. What are you going to tell your parents? What happened last night? Didn't you review well enough?

Next thing, you're wide awake on your bed, drenched in cold sweat. That was a dream of you failing the test that you're having today. Surely that's not going to happen...right?

The scenario I just presented to you is one that happens in my dreams a lot, and many of my friends. Many have repeatedly told me "I just had a dream that I got a sixty for Chinese" or "I scored seventy in my dream" before. Why do dreams like these even exist? And what does it mean?

First, what are dreams even made of? The basic idea of dreams is that they're projections by dopamine neurons in the forebrain, and the brain uses memories stored in your hippocampus to create possible scenarios or predictions of the future. Your hippocampus, the part of your brain that helps with learning and memory, makes your dreams more vivid and detailed.

So why do we have dreams about academic failures? It's not uncommon. In 2014, researchers investigated this exact case, testing the correlation between students' dreams and test scores. Out of 719 students, 60.4% of them responded that they had dreams of the exam on the night preceding their test, with 78% of the students having bad dreams. However, the actual results of the test showed that students with test-correlated dreams performed better, insisting that the true reason why you have dreams is likely just anxiety. Moreover, it might be because of your anxiety that you experience a cognitive gain the next day. Therefore, looking at the scientific evidence available, there is no clear correlation between your dreams and reality.

Beyond the reflection of your terrible, horrifying dreams, it could just be the stress that's accumulated over time. That's likely a sign that you're putting too much on yourself, and you should just relax. A common approach to this would be to comfort ourselves.

You've likely heard of the phrase "梦是反着的", or "dreams are reversed", which is a nice solution to deal with anxiety. But dreams are an outcome of perspective, and so is anxiety. It's only when you think that you are destined to fail that you have a possibility of screwing up that test.

I think the only possible way to stop your anxiety from taking over you is to consciously make it impossible for bad outcomes to actually happen. This sounds trite, but it is a simple way to combat your annoying dreams.

As I've explained earlier, parts of your dreams are assembled by your memories. Your brain is using your experience to build up a somewhat logical circumstance. That means to a certain extent, your dreams do show a reflection of your recent state and your identity, but it's important to keep clear that whether those dreams are real or not, depends on you. After all, they're just predictions, wild thoughts of what's to come next. They may seem incredibly realistic and strikingly similar to what you've gone through, but remember, that's just your mind playing tricks on you.

Instead, what you do have power over, is what you choose to do instead of worrying about your dreams. We're always going to be thinking of the cloudy, unpredictable future, but what's for certain is what you do now. If you dream that you're struggling on a test, that's probably not the case, but if you choose not to study, then it's more likely you're going to have a hard time. Dreams demonstrate the many outcomes of an event, but you hold the ultimate power over what outcome you get.

Let's continue, broadening the perspective. We're students, so it's easy to get your head clouded with grades and exams. Yes, they're important, but they're never the whole picture. You'll have bad dreams about a job interview, a research paper presentation, or a trip the more you age. Even if you don't believe me now, you'll get more of those dreams over time. Going through them repeatedly, you'll see that they define you, or what's to come.

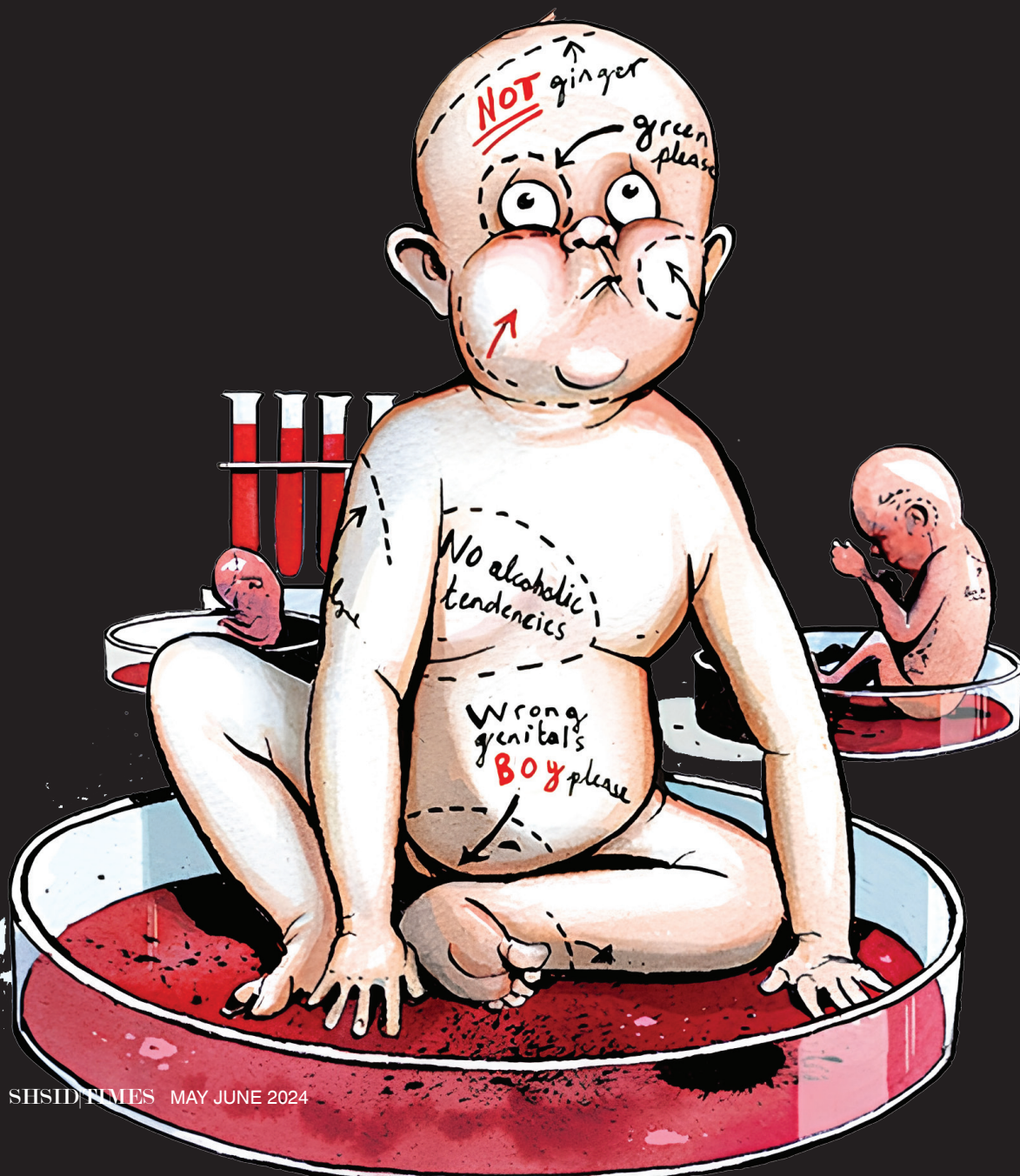
The power to define yourself always depends on you. Of course, when you're conscious.

Catch the "dream" you desire, because when you finally do, that one is one hundred per cent real.

Designer Babies: *The Future of Humanity?*

On November 25, 2018, the first gene-edited babies were born in China, leading to widespread fear in the science world. Jiankui He, the genetic engineer, modified the newborns' genetic makeup when they were a single fertilized egg, consequently rendering the twins, Lulu and Nana, HIV-resistant.

Written by: Celene Chu
Photos from: Google



As a result of this deed, He was detained and the Chinese court sentenced him to three years in prison for “illegal medical practices”. In April 2022, He was released from prison and returned to the lab, aiming to use the gene-editing tool CRISPR to develop a cure for Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD).

When Lulu and Nana were 5 years old, He claimed in an interview that “They are living a normal, peaceful, non-disturbed life,” proving a successful trial of heritable genome editing in humans. However, “designer babies” have been a contentious topic, and many countries have completely outlawed designer babies.

Designer babies are babies whose genetic makeup has been selected or altered, often to include or exclude particular genes to attain specific traits. There are mainly two forms of designer babies.

The first form is in vitro fertilization (IVF) which helps couples with fertility issues to conceive children. IVF involves retrieving an egg from the ovary and manually fertilizing it with a sperm in the lab. Usually used in conjunction with preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), it allows embryos to be screened for a variety of genetic diseases before transferring the embryo back to the uterus, reducing the risk of inherited genetic conditions.

A more controversial form of designer babies involves directly modifying the genome of the baby before birth using engineering techniques such as CRISPR, which is essentially how Lulu and Nana’s genomes were altered. Even the first two countries to use CRISPR in human embryos for research purposes, the UK and China, outlawed conceiving genetically modified embryos.

Genetic engineering in embryos holds promise in various aspects:

1. Eliminate or reduce the risk of genetic disorders and improve the newborns’ overall health outcome. In today’s world, one in ten newborns is affected by genetic diseases, such as sickle cell anemia and Huntington’s disease. Genetic engineering will render newborns resistant to life-threatening genetic diseases and prevent gene-related conditions from being passed down to future generations.
2. Address the inherent inequalities of the “genetic lottery.” Designing babies permits parents to make informed decisions before giving birth to their children, hence allowing them to exert more control over their family composition.
3. Future development of cost-effective treatments. Genetic engineering in embryos can drive significant advancements in genetic research, assisting scientists in developing new treatments and therapies for specific genetic conditions.

On the flip side, the benefits and possibilities of genetic engineering are coupled with numerous concerns:

1. Exacerbate social inequality. Genetic engineering techniques can be restricted to the financially better off. This may incur future discrimination based on genetic makeup (for example genes related to intelligence), widening the gap between the wealthy and the rest of the population.
2. Unintended consequences in the long run. The long-term effects of genetic modification are not fully understood. Risks such mutations, may have negative consequences on future generations via inheritance.
3. Jeopardize individual autonomy. Children are being genetically modified in the state of embryos. Therefore, they are unable to give informed consent to this life-changing process.
4. Potential abuse of creating individuals with specific traits to meet certain ends, leading to exploitation of individuals.
5. Interference in natural construct. This issue lies in the question, “To what extent should humans interfere with their identity determined by nature?” In this sense, genetic engineering may challenge individuality, diversity, and acceptance of imperfections.

Ultimately, creating designer babies is a new topic in the medical field. Along with its great promise of reducing the risk of genetic disorders in newborns, genetic engineering raises several social challenges, such as problems of equity and access, in the long run. Therefore, human society still requires time to address these long-term concerns in order to leverage the technology responsibly and enjoy the benefits it could bring. ■

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The Potential of Augmented Reality:



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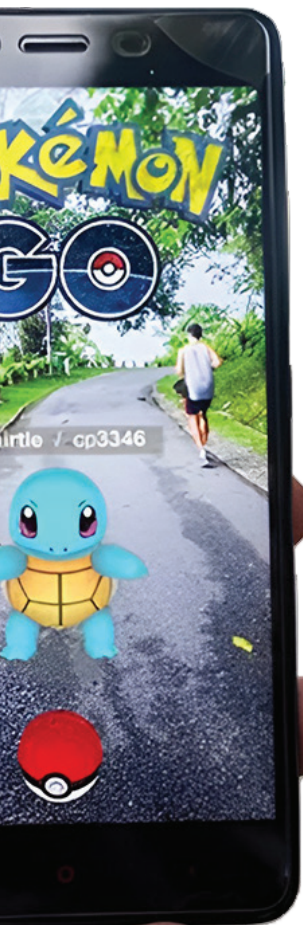
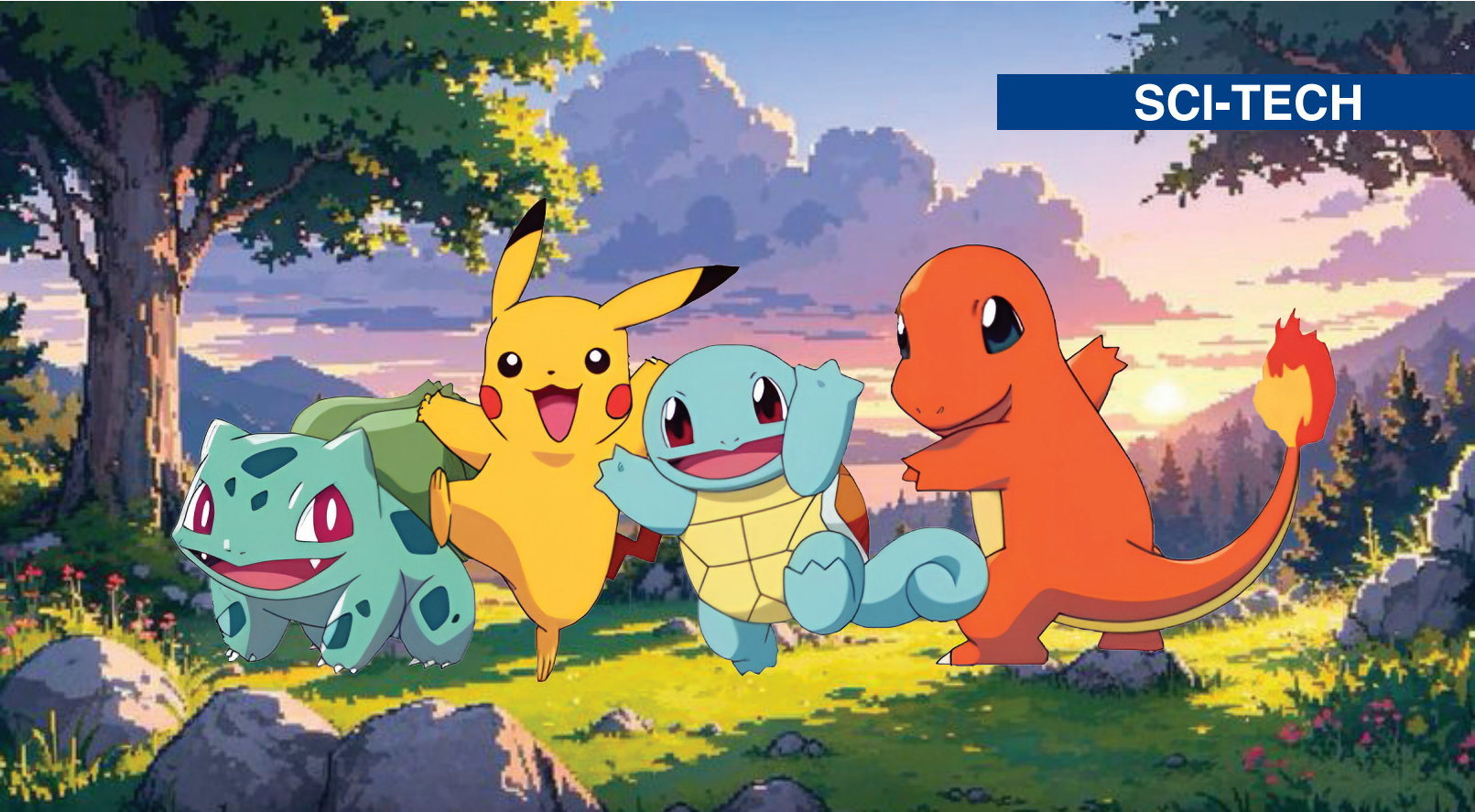
Photos from: Google, Pinterest

Snapchat, Instagram and Pokémon Go. What do these three apps all have in common? While being popular among teenagers, these three apps share a common technology: augmented reality (AR). Not to be confused with virtual reality (VR), the rise of AR has led to many new marketing opportunities for various companies. However, one of the most promising applications of AR is its use to treat those who are visually impaired. As the world gets more technologically advanced, we can look forward to using these new technologies to solve the issues and crises all over the world.

In 2016, a video game took the world by storm. With over 20 million users a day and more time spent on compared to Facebook, Pokémon Go has revolutionized the way we play videogames. The purpose of the game was simple: it was to collect as many Pokémon as you could while walking around an area. What makes Pokémon Go a unique game is its use of AR. Research has shown that new technologies like AR are more appealing to the younger generations. This is because AR “shows the younger demographics that [the] brand is forward thinking and innovative”. It acts to demonstrate the evolving age of technology. With AR, people are more motivated to get out and interact with the world around them.

In the game, players would have to first activate the “AR mode” in the settings function. Afterwards, they would have to use their camera to scan their environment. An animation of tall grass would then appear once the device has detected the environment. Behind the tall grass animation is the Pokémon. Once the Pokémon is within sight, players can attempt to catch the Pokémon. While doing so, players can choose to take pictures of their Pokémon which they can later send to their friends or post on their social media accounts. This way of building a sense of community could have been a potential reason for the increased popularity of Pokémon Go.





Surveys have shown that Pokémon Go players are linked with improved psychological wellbeing. This means Pokémon Go players are believed to have an “increased positive affect, nostalgic reverie... and friendship formation.” In addition, it is believed that Pokémon Go helps people with their social anxiety, by providing a structured environment for social interaction and positive gameplaying experiences. However, more research would be needed to confirm this theory.

In conclusion, the potential of augmented reality (AR) extends far beyond entertainment and gaming, as exemplified by the success of Pokémon Go. While the game has revolutionized how we engage with our surroundings, fostering social connections and enhanc-

ing psychological well-being, AR’s promise doesn’t stop there. From enhancing marketing strategies to offering innovative solutions for the visually impaired, AR is poised to address real-world challenges as technology continues to evolve. As we move forward, the integration of AR into various aspects of life holds the promise of not only transforming our experiences but also solving global issues in ways we have yet to imagine.



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