

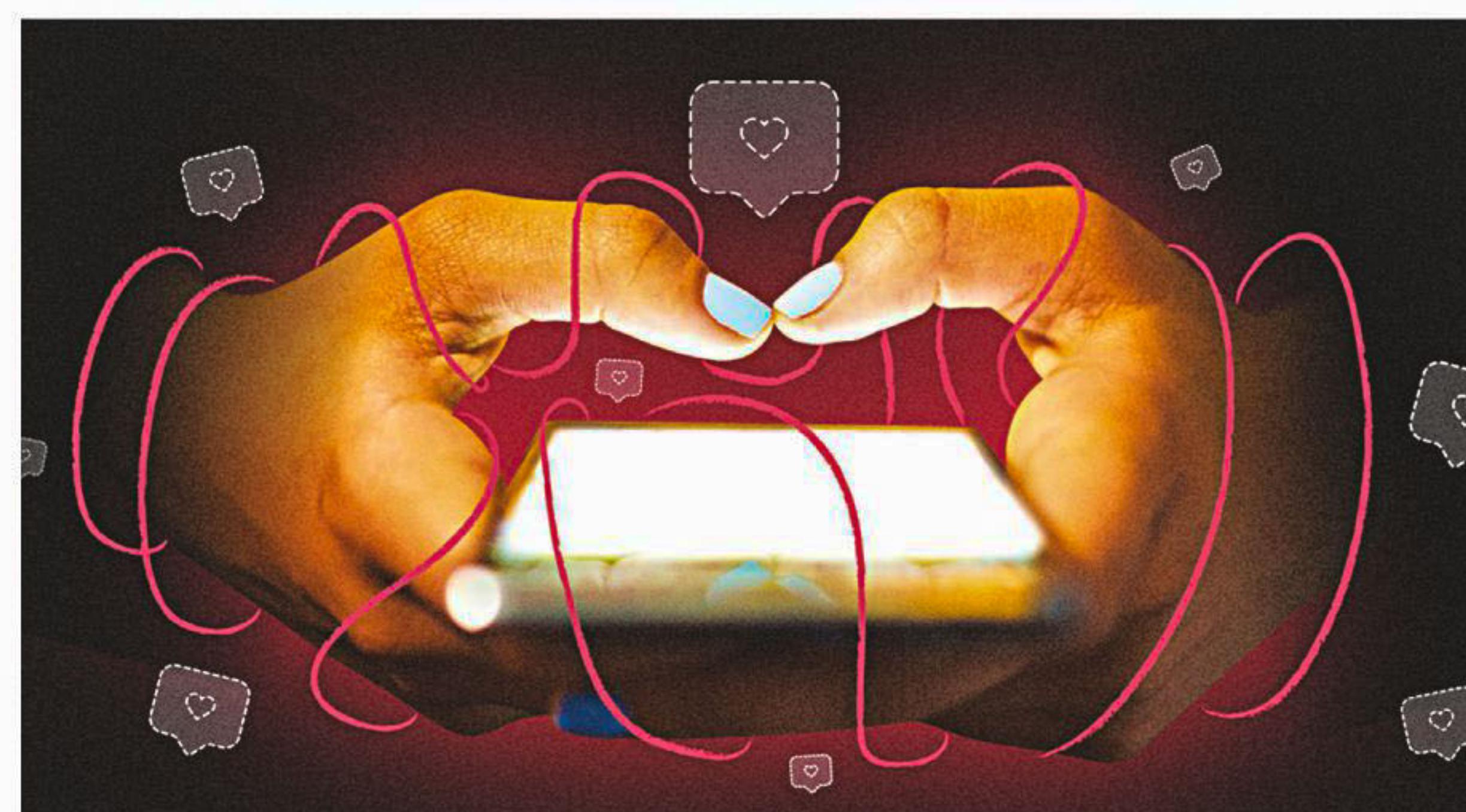
# Does Instagram care about your mental health?

MAYABEE ARANNYA

Bid farewell to Instagram "likes" since the app has recently started testing out the removal of the likes count on posts. With this like removal test already in motion in seven countries, including Canada, Instagram claims to have taken this move in order to create a "less pressurised environment" for its users. Let's take a look at whether this change might be for reasons not disclosed to the public.

A big flaw to this entire plan is that even though the likes count will no longer be available to followers, users can still view the likes on their own posts. Since public likes have already existed for a long time, it's fair to assume that existing users still have an idea of what an "acceptable" amount of likes on posts is to them, and so the comparison of likes factor will not disappear for old users.

The issue is that even though social media in general has been reported to have a negative impact on mental health, no studies show a direct correlation between Instagram likes and mental health, so Instagram can't justify that the like removal alone will have a big positive impact on



users' mental health. There are various other steps that Instagram could have taken to help create less social pressure on the platform but it chose this step - why? The reason most probably lies in the app wanting to change marketing metrics and rake in more ad revenue.

Let's first look at influencer marketing. Instagram influencers have been all the rage in advertising for a while now, but with the like count being removed, things might change.

Users will no longer be more attracted to a post solely based on a larger number of likes, which means it will become increasingly difficult for influencers to attain the same amount of reach. For this reason, brands will invest more money on Instagram paid ads in order to get their posts maximum reach. This could be both good and bad for budding influencers and small businesses. Without the likes, marketers will focus more on aspects such as follower counts and engagement

metrics. New influencers will have a difficult time getting brand deals. However, since likes will probably no longer dictate which posts show up more on the Explore page, small businesses might have a better shot at getting more exposure than they previously had.

Another big reason for the "likes" removal is most probably Instagram trying to promote Instagram Stories, IGTV, and Instagram Shopping. The app will make more revenue on "swipe-ups," sales through Instagram, and click-throughs. Even though Instagram claims this change will generate more "authentic" content, in the end it might be the opposite. There will be a decrease in fake followers and likes through bots, but there is not much of a benefit for regular users.

Instagram has not decided to make this change permanent yet. However, it's safe to say that the platform definitely cares more about your money than your mental health and we're not going back to the age of posting filtered pictures of our dinner anytime soon.

*Mayabee Arannya spends her days oversharing on Facebook. Make her stop at fb.com/mayabee.arannya*

# READING REALLY DIFFICULT LITERATURE

Mrittika Anan Rahman

I doth not understandeth wherefore these texts needeth to beest so difficult. There are many reasons one can be completely clueless in class but as an English Literature major, it can often be because you have little to no idea of what's happening in the overlong, overcomplicated, and overwhelming text you're reading that was written approximately 400 years ago.

## WAIT SO THIS IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING?

In the modernist era, characters are sometimes thinking things and sometimes saying them out loud but the authors won't tell you which is which because what's the fun in that. Here you apply all the logic and reason you possess to figure out whether what you're reading is actually happening or the equivalent of a dream sequence in a Bollywood movie where the actor and actress dance in an exotic location only for one of them to wake up and for you to realise only in their dream could they afford to dance in Switzerland. It's that, but with pretty grim subject matter.

## IS THIS PERSON ALIVE?

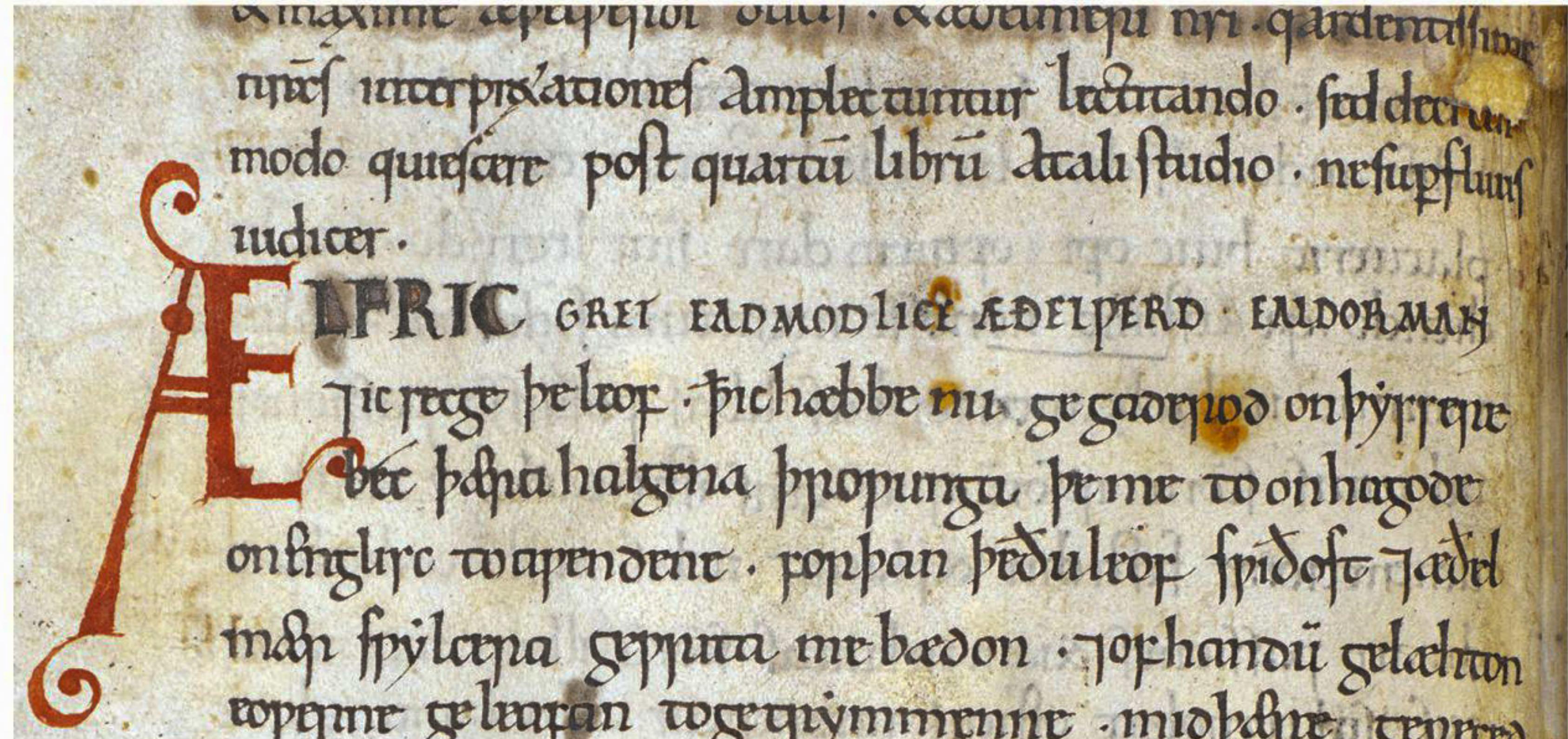
Some texts have so many back and forth jumps in their timeline that if you read the text when you're sleepy you'll wonder why a character who tragically died two chapters ago is talking again at the dinnertable. You then proceed to realise you misinterpreted which timeline you're on. And if you're reading Wuthering Heights then it's Paranormal Activity 8 because now you need to figure out whether you're listening to a ghost or a real, breathing person talk. Most wondrous of luck to thee.

## POEMS POEMS POEMS

Me: I thought all poems were supposed to rhyme?

Poetry Elite: Oh no.

Me: But all poems are at least written from just one person's perspective or they're at least going to tell us when a different person starts talking?



Poetry Elite: Again, no.

Me: Wait, all of the voices speaking do belong to real people and not to abstract concepts such as water or death?

Poetry Elite: You mortal fool.

## WHO'S WHO?

Why are there so many characters? You'd think the author could make whatever point they were trying to make by capping the number of characters at thirty. If you thought your campus cafeteria has a population problem welcome to Chaucer's Canterbury Tales where the prologue has 26 characters, each of whom tell stories with multiple characters in them. Let the odds ever be in your favour if you are reading a Russian text because the names will be long and suspiciously similar sounding as if the author is testing you from their grave.

## HOW WAS THIS SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE?

I am terrified by all the things yond w're socially acceptable longeth ago. People being held against their will? Happens all the time. Women were crazy if they wanted to read, write or exhibit any type of talent? Well of course they were. How dare they? Were you completely logical in believing something as long as you could prove that a great Roman senator said the same thing centuries ago in a completely different society? That's perfect logic.

And the whole thing wouldst beest writ in this simple easy to readeth language. I can't waiteth.

*Mrittika Anan Rahman is a daydreamer trying hard not to run into things while walking. Find her at anan\_rahman7@yahoo.com*