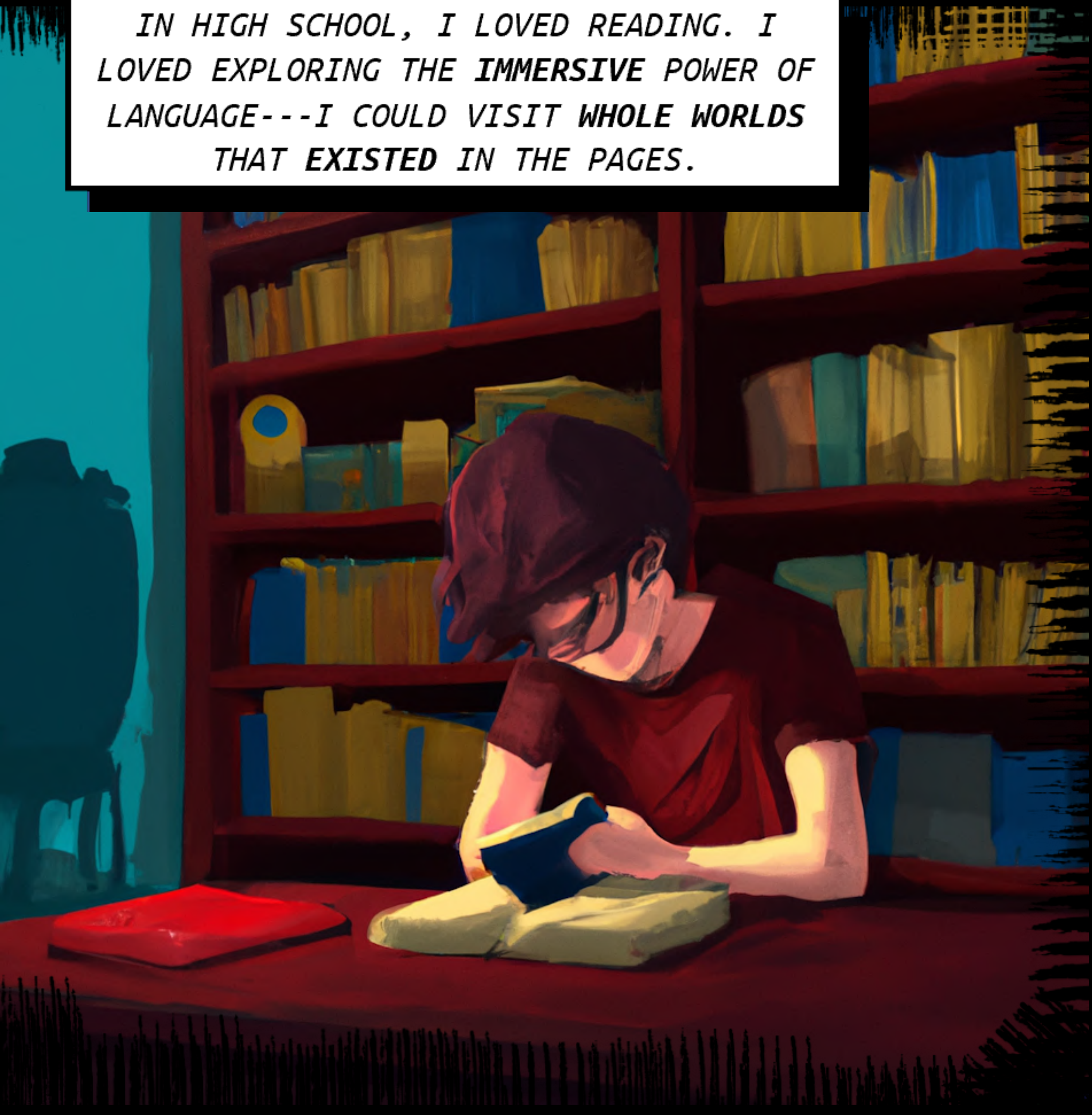
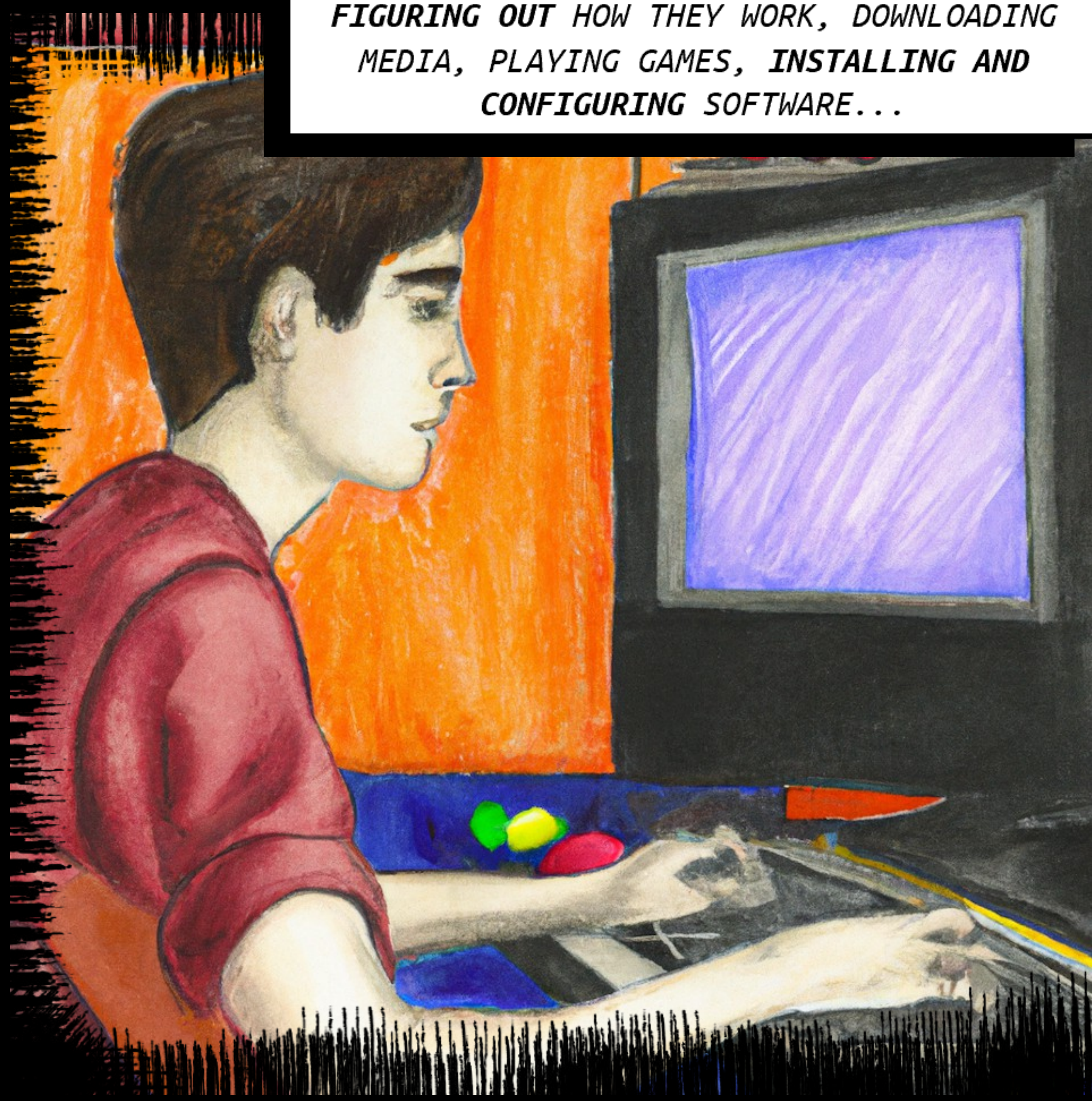


IN HIGH SCHOOL, I LOVED READING. I LOVED EXPLORING THE IMMERSIVE POWER OF LANGUAGE---I COULD VISIT WHOLE WORLDS THAT EXISTED IN THE PAGES.



IN HIGH SCHOOL, I LOVED COMPUTERS--- FIGURING OUT HOW THEY WORK, DOWNLOADING MEDIA, PLAYING GAMES, INSTALLING AND CONFIGURING SOFTWARE...



EVENTUALLY I STARTED WRITING MY OWN STORIES. I WANTED TO TRANSPORT PEOPLE TO PLACES THAT EXISTED INSIDE MY HEAD.



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EVENTUALLY I STARTED LEARNING HOW TO WRITE MY OWN SOFTWARE. I WANTED TO SEE EVERYTHING THE COMPUTER COULD DO.



THEN I STARTED CREATING WORLDS WITH COMPUTERS. THE LINES BETWEEN PROGRAMMING AND CREATIVE WRITING WERE GLITCHING.



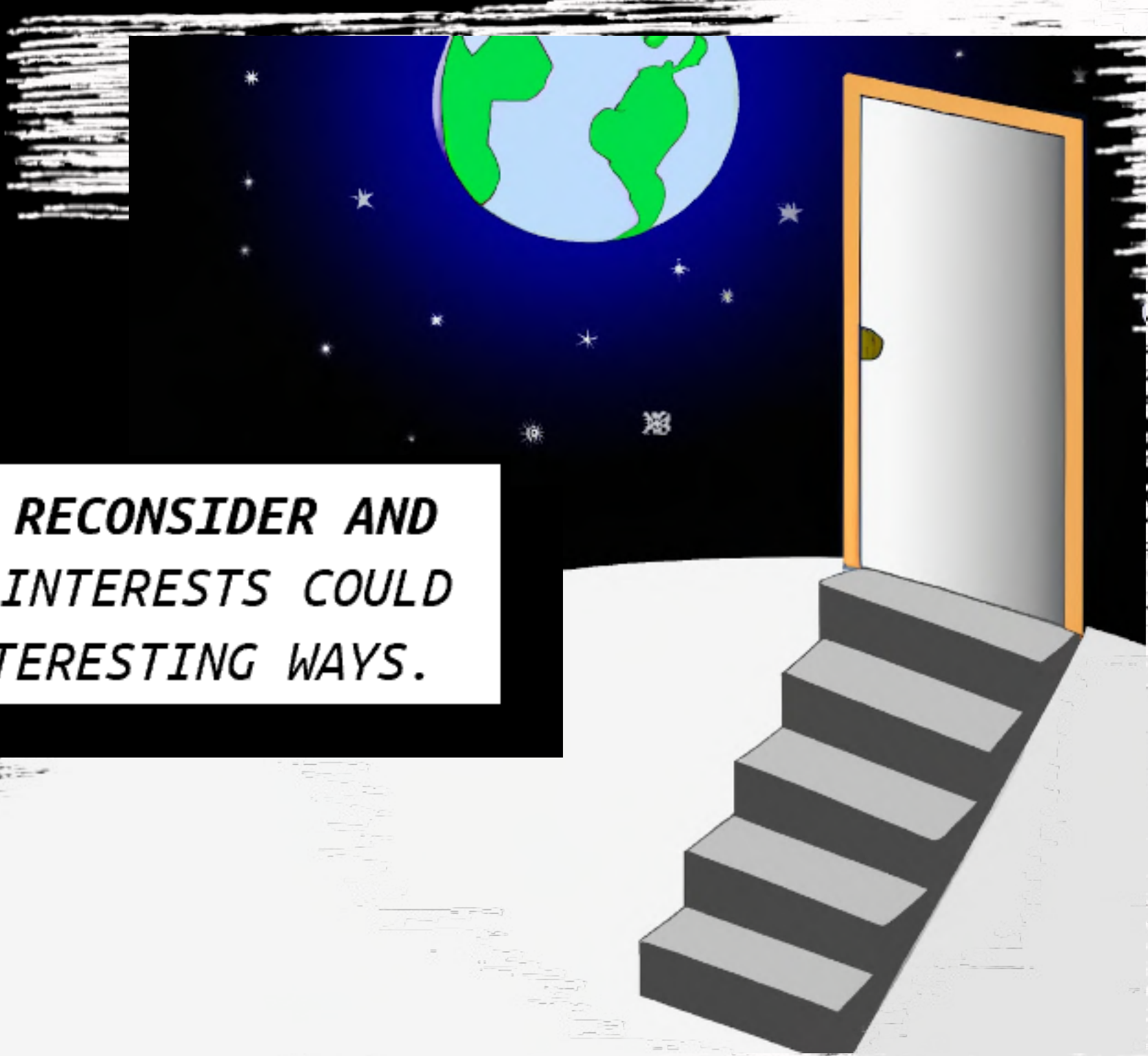
I STARTED COLLEGE, MAJORED IN COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGLISH, BUT STILL MOSTLY THOUGHT OF THEM AS SEPARATE FIELDS.



THEN ONE DAY I STUMBLED ACROSS A VIRTUAL REALITY DEMO ON CAMPUS.

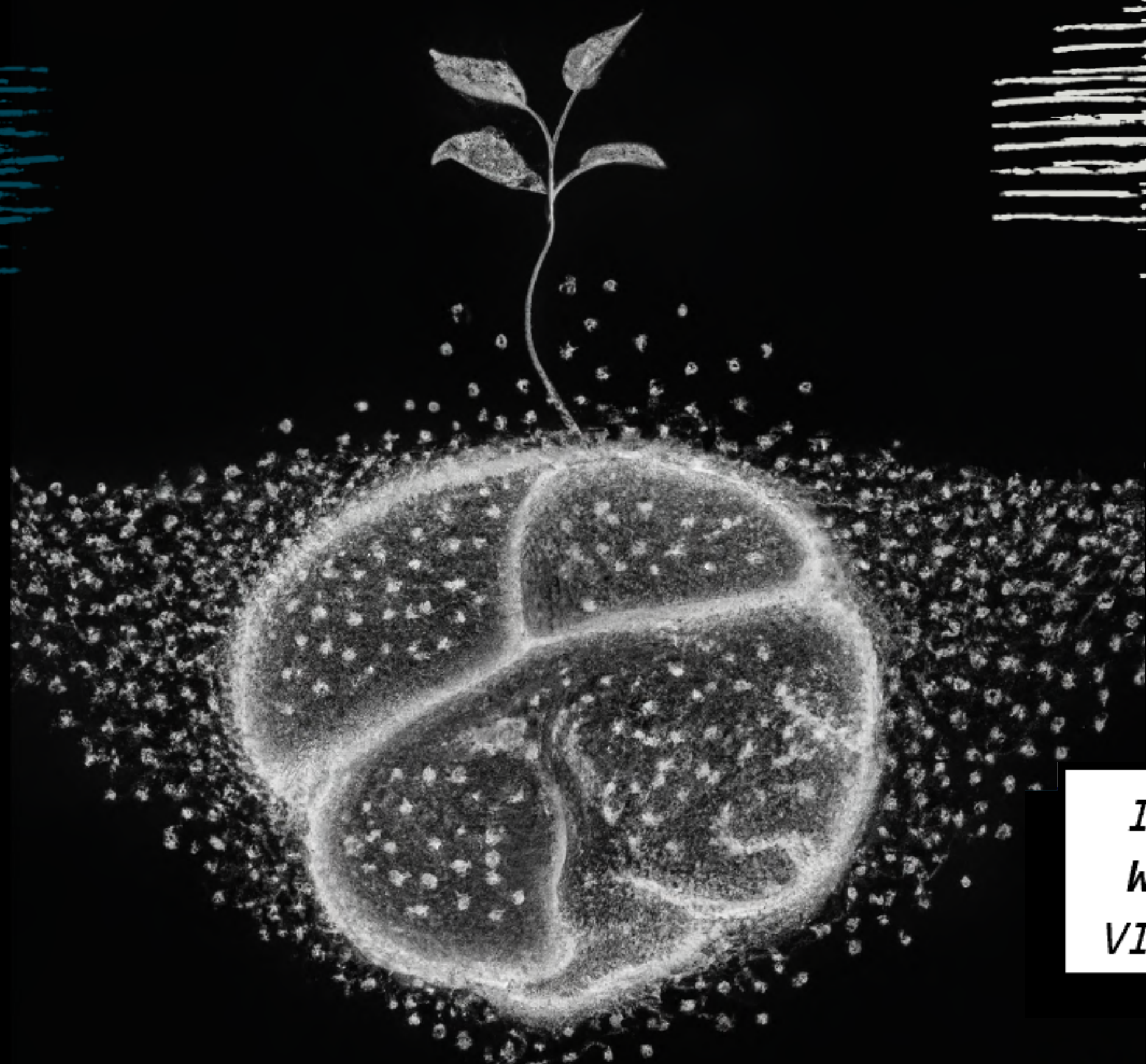


AND I STARTED TO RECONSIDER AND REIMAGINE HOW MY INTERESTS COULD INTERWEAVE IN INTERESTING WAYS.





THE SEED WAS PLANTED.



I IMAGINED THE INFINITE RANGE OF WORLDS AND EXPERIENCES ONE COULD VISIT AND EXPLORE IN A VR HEADSET.



I STARTED BRINGING THE VIRTUAL WORLDS IN MY HEAD TO LIFE---THE VIRTUAL WAS BECOMING REAL.

...AND VR IS RHETORICALLY INTERESTING AS A MEDIUM, RIGHT? BECAUSE OF HOW IT POSITIONS THE USER---THE IMMERSANT---ALWAYS AT THE CENTER OF THE VIRTUAL WORLD, AND LITERALLY BLOCKS OFF THE REAL, THE PHYSICAL WORLD... DO WE WANT TO FEEL LIKE WE ARE REALLY IN A VIRTUAL WORLD COMPLETELY? OR AT ALL?

I REALIZED THERE WAS ANOTHER DIMENSION TO VIRTUAL REALITY THAT FASCINATED ME...ONE ROOTED IN THE HUMANITIES.



AND THEN WE STARTED TALKING ABOUT VR IN MY ENGLISH CLASSES...



HOW AM I EVER GOING TO UNDERSTAND THIS TECHNOLOGY???

I WOULD LOVE TO SPEND TIME STUDYING ALL SIDES OF VR...

MAYBE IN A PHD PROGRAM WITH AN ADVISOR THAT APPROACHES VR WITH A HUMAN-CENTERED PERSPECTIVE! LIKE, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA!



I STARTED READING TONS OF INTERESTING RESEARCH ABOUT PERCEPTUAL AND EMBODIMENT EXPERIMENTS CONDUCTED WITH VR.



LIKE EMBODYING A DIFFERENT AGE/PERSONA AND ACTING ACCORDINGLY.

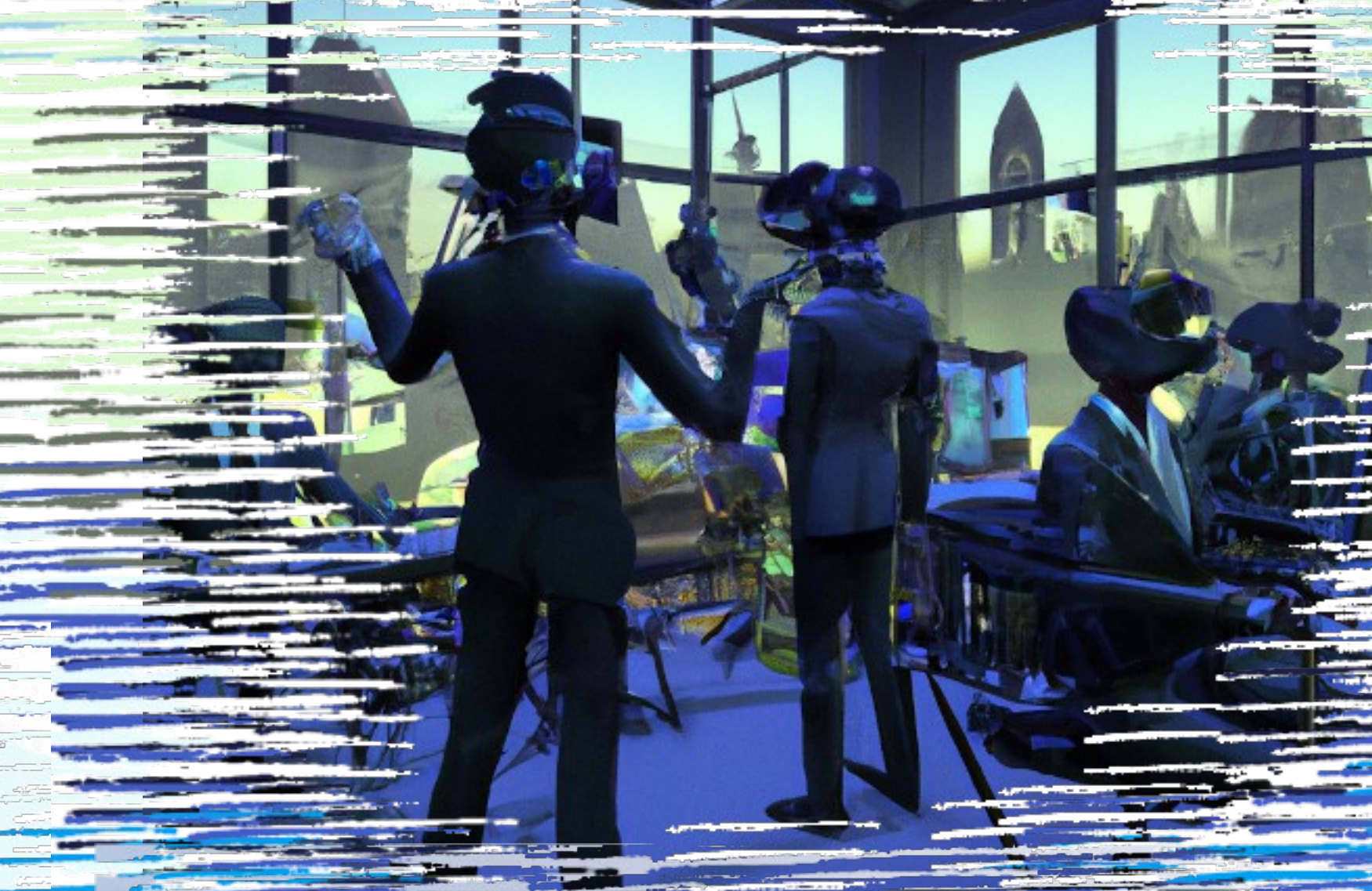


LIKE OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCES.



LIKE CONTROLLING MULTIPLE VIRTUAL LIMBS AT THE SAME TIME.

BUT THEN I STARTED THINKING ABOUT THESE DEVICES BECOMING WIDELY USED, AND WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO OUR IRL SOCIAL INTERACTIONS...



AND IT LOOKED A LITTLE DYSTOPIAN IN MY HEAD...



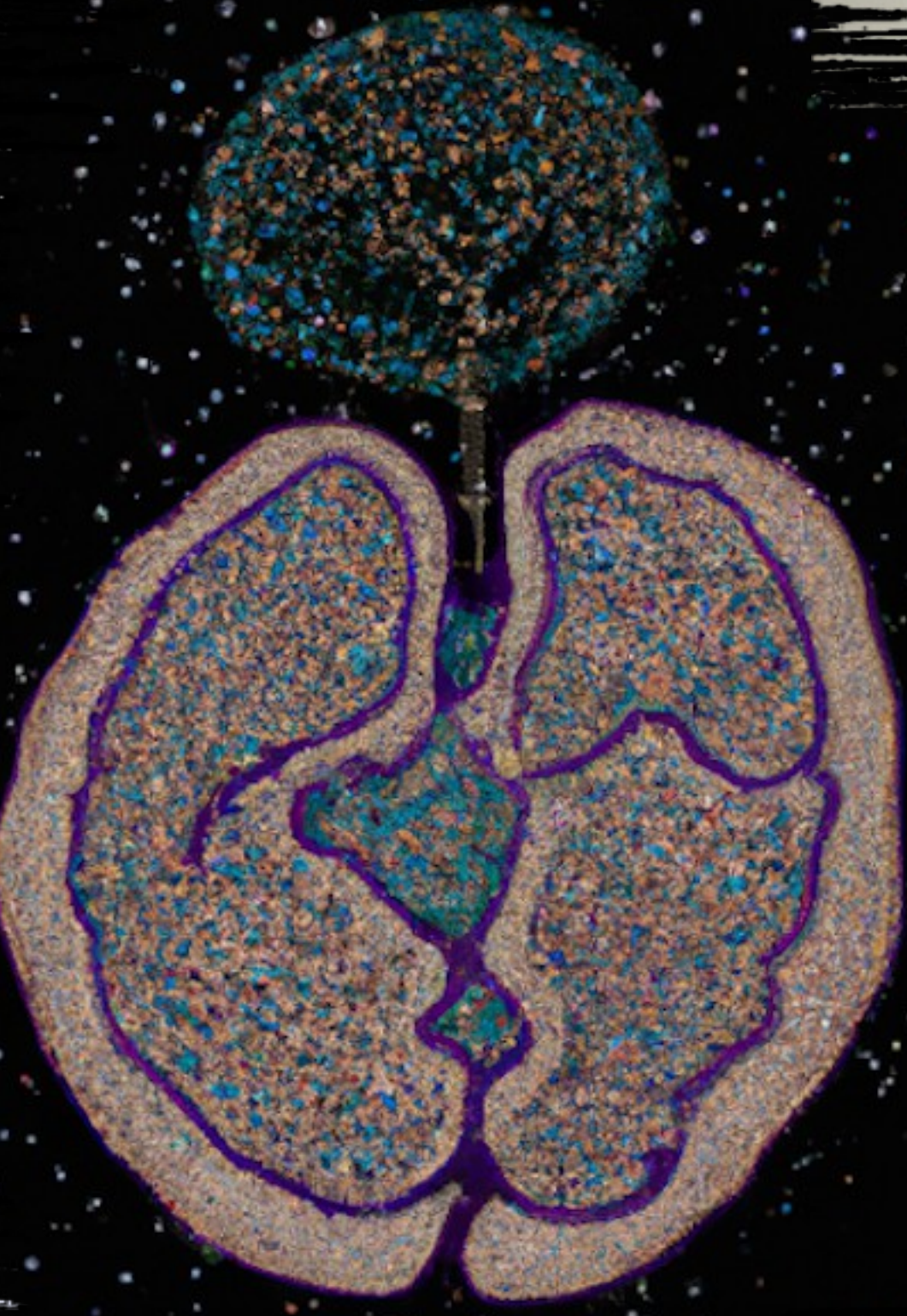
...WOULD PEOPLE TALK TO EACH OTHER ANYMORE?

THE SEED WAS GROWING. I DECIDED TO FOCUS MY PHD STUDIES ON INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES RELATED TO VR, ESPECIALLY ONES CAUSED BY ITS ISOLATING NATURE.



SO FAR, I'VE INVESTIGATED WAYS TO BRING A REAL-WORLD INTERRUPTER INTO A VR USER'S WORLD...

...AND EXPLORED HARDWARE PROTOTYPES TO CONVEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE VR USER'S ACTIVITY TO REAL-WORLD INTERRUPTERS.



...WITH THE GOAL OF CONTRIBUTING TO A FUTURE WHERE REAL AND VIRTUAL WORLDS ARE INTERWOVEN AND PROVIDE HOLISTIC INTERPERSONAL CONNECTION.

I AM WORKING ON MAPPING OUT THE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AND DYNAMICS INVOLVED IN COORDINATING SUCH CROSS-REALITY INTERACTIONS...



I THINK THAT FUTURE WOULD BRING OUT THE BEST POTENTIAL OF VR.

I'M HAPPY TO BE WORKING IN WHAT SEEMS TO ME LIKE THE MOST HUMAN-CENTERED BRANCH OF COMPUTING RESEARCH, WHERE MY INTERESTS IN THE HUMANITIES AND COMPUTERS CAN GROW IN INTERESTING, INTERCONNECTED WAYS.

