

Boiling Frog Syndrome – Part 2

While social media can serve both positive and negative purposes, many users never pause to reflect on *why* they're using it. As humans, we're wired for connection. We seek belonging, shared experiences, and a sense of community. But in the digital age, that search can quietly turn toxic. The analogy of the "boiling frog" is fitting: if a frog is placed in hot water, it jumps out. But if the heat rises gradually, the frog won't realize it's in danger until it's too late. Many of us — influencers and audiences alike — are sitting in that pot, slowly boiling without knowing it.

Eugenia Cooney is a heartbreaking example. Long before her internet fame, Cooney endured years of bullying, starting as early as age six. The harassment eventually forced her to leave school and be homeschooled. In search of belonging, she turned to YouTube, where she found a community and gained massive popularity through her upbeat videos on fashion, makeup, and cosplay.

But as her following grew, so did concern for her health. Cooney's extremely low body weight became a focal point for viewers, many of whom now beg her in the comments to seek help. Despite mounting concern, she continues to insist that she's "fine." The dissonance between her chipper persona and visible decline has become deeply unsettling. It's painfully clear that while she turned to social media to escape bullying, she's only opened herself up to even more scrutiny, and at a much larger scale.

Speculation swirls online about Cooney's living situation, especially her relationship with her mother and whether she might be in a conservatorship like Britney Spears. But the truth of what's happening behind closed doors remains unclear.

It's gut-wrenching to scroll through her posts today. The denial, the frailty, the echo chamber of concerned comments. It is a digital tragedy unfolding in real time. I often find myself wishing platforms would intervene, not out of punishment but protection. It's difficult not to worry about the impact her videos might have on young, impressionable viewers who could internalize her appearance as aspirational. For them, it could be a gateway to disordered thinking or behaviours.

At this point, asking whether Cooney is using social media for good or bad misses the mark. She has been steeping in the boiling pot of online fame for so long that she may no longer recognize the danger. Her illness, shaped in part by early trauma and relentless public exposure, has stunted her ability to engage with the world in healthy, grounded ways.

Further controversy has erupted over her friendship with influencer Jeffree Star, with fans debating whether he is helping or enabling her. While intentions are unclear, what is clear is the public's growing sense of helplessness — many of her viewers have begun to wonder, *how much time does she have left?*

The comment sections of her videos are filled with heartbreaking messages: *"It's just a matter of time,"* and *"How is she still alive?"* These aren't just reactions — they're cries of collective grief for someone who may not fully grasp the extent of her suffering.

Cooney's story is a sobering reminder of the psychological cost of internet fame, and of how quickly admiration can blur into exploitation — all while the water keeps heating up.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NfGuaZBmgj8>

<https://www.dexerto.com/entertainment/jeffree-star-faces-backlash-for-hanging-out-with-eugenia-cooney-2353462/>