

HINDU COLLEGE GAZETTE

JULY - AUGUST 2021

*Case Study On the
Khorl Demolitions*

Pg 9

*How Pettiness
Brought the Art
World Together*

Pg 70

*Psychopathology
in Crime &
Punishment*

Pg 32

*Covid-19: The First
Wave Of Existential
Nihilism*

Pg 41

The Freudian Flub
ANATOMY IS NOT DESTINY
Page 25 / Anupa Paulchaudhuri

HINDU COLLEGE GAZETTE

JULY - AUGUST 2021

ہندو کالج گزٹ हिंदू कॉलेज गज़ैट

ISSUED BY
THE SYMPOSIUM SOCIETY,
HINDU COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

All textual contents of this magazine are the property of The Symposium Society, Hindu College, and should not be recreated, reproduced, or republished in any way. This publication is for educational use only. All opinions are of the authors.

Website: www.hinducollegegazette.com

Instagram: [@HinduCollegeGazette](https://www.instagram.com/HinduCollegeGazette)

Facebook: [Hindu College Gazette](https://www.facebook.com/HinduCollegeGazette)

Telegram: [Hindu College Gazette](https://www.telegram.com/HinduCollegeGazette)

LinkedIn: [Hindu College Gazette](https://www.linkedin.com/HinduCollegeGazette)

Twitter: [@HC_Gazette](https://twitter.com/HC_Gazette)

Subscribe: [HCG Mailing List](https://www.hinducollegegazette.com/HCGMailingList)

Published on October 3, 2021

HINDU COLLEGE GAZETTE

JULY - AUGUST 2021

2. GUEST WRITERS

3. CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

POLITICS AND SOCIETY

Shiuli Sural 5. WE BLEED RED, NOT BLUE

Re-addressing Period Poverty in India

Srijani Datta 9. DOUBLE STANDARDS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION:

A Case Study On The Demolitions At Khor

Abhigya Barthwal 14. THE ECONOMICS OF OLYMPICS:

From Grandiose to Otiose

Anushka Pandey 18. LET'S TALK PORN

Adithya M. 21. THE QUESTION OF WOMEN'S PRIESTHOOD

PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Anupa P. 25. THE FREUDIAN FLUB:

Anatomy is Not Destiny

Abdullah Kazmi 32. READ DOSTOEVSKY'S CRIME AND PUNISHMENT
THROUGH THE LENS OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Ananya Ravi Shankar 37. EMERSON AND TRANSCENDENTALISM

Anupa P, Nakul Raghav, 41. COVID-19::DISTRESS-20

Uttkarsh Chauhan *The First Wave Of Existential Nihilism*

Vaibhav Singh 44. IMMERSE IDOLS, EMBRACE IDEALS

HISTORY AND CULTURE

Sonalika Rani 47. THE OLD FAITHFUL:

Desecularization In The '80s

Melekwe Anthony 52. FALLACIOUS RECTITUDES OF COLONIAL SUPPRESSION:

Jamaica Demands Reparations

Seethalakshmi K S 58. THE FORGOTTEN TALE OF THE MARICHUAPI MASSACRE

Kirti Meena 60. COLONIAL CHRONICLES OF CASTEISM

Samya Verma 66. THE PRIDE AND THE PERIPETEIA OF PARADISE:

A Tale of Two Lyrics

Saesha Pandita 70. ARTISTS ASSEMBLE:

How Pettiness Brought the Art World Together

76 MASTHEAD

77. THE SYMPOSIUM SOCIETY

GUEST WRITERS



Abhigya Barthwal is a first-year Economics student at Hindu College. She is interested in poetry, world politics and the human community around us. She also likes to read independent news.



Ananya Ravi Shankar is a third-year student currently pursuing Bachelor's of Arts in Psychology, Literature and Theatre at Christ (Deemed-to-be University). She originally hails from New Delhi and is actively involved in disseminating awareness as a theatre artist as well as a volunteer.



Kirti Meena is a third year law student at National Law School of India University, Bangalore. She has a keen interest in Modern History, Criminal law and Constitutional law.



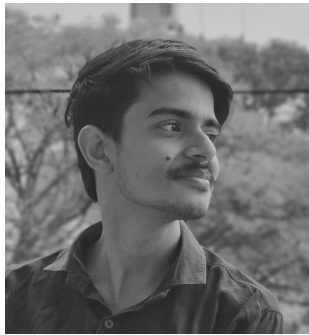
Shiuli Sural is an undergraduate student studying history at Hansraj College, Delhi University. She spends her time reading books and writing articles, and agrees to an iced coffee at any time of the day. She is the founder of A Sanitary Gift, an initiative to spread menstrual health awareness. Her favourite Greek Goddess is Athena.

GUEST WRITERS



Vaibhav Singh loves keeping an eye on current happenings that have the potential to shape and alter our collective future. Since the author comes from Himachal Pradesh, a state endowed with natural beauty, the same freshness defines his work and perspective.

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS



Abdullah Kazmi is an undergraduate student of Psychology and Journalism based in Bangalore. His areas of interests are behavioural health, philosophy, media, culture, history, journalism and sports. In his interludes, he is a content curator and a short-story writer as well.



Melekwe Anthony is a fierce writer with many published works across North America. He recently appeared on the cover of Dark Moon Digest's Issue #44 for his piece titled "Shadows". Melekwe currently writes for Dead Talk Live, USA and Varemeng Network, Netherlands.



Saeesha Pandita is a first-year English student at Hindu College. She takes a keen interest in all things pop culture, and is a Korean-drama fanatic. She loves to learn about the nuances of food and fashion. Always eager to learn new languages, she hopes to speak fluent Korean someday!



POLITICS & SOCIETY

IN THIS SECTION

- Shiuli Sural* 5. WE BLEED RED, NOT BLUE
Re-addressing Period Poverty in India
- Srijani Datta* 9. DOUBLE STANDARDS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION:
A Case Study On The Demolitions At Khor
- Abhigya Barthwal* 14. THE ECONOMICS OF OLYMPICS:
From Grandiose to Otiose
- Anushka Pandey* 18. LET'S TALK PORN
- Adithya M.* 21. THE QUESTION OF WOMEN'S PRIESTHOOD

WE BLEED RED NOT BLUE

Re-addressing Period Poverty in India

BY SHIULI SURAL

Illustration by Erin Lux



People gather during a Period poverty protest opposite Downing Street in Whitehall, led by Free Periods, a group which is asking for free sanitary products for all girls on free school meals. The protest features speeches from among others. (Photo by Victoria Jones/PA Images via Getty Images)

Welcome to 21st century India: Recently, Narendra Modi became the first Prime Minister in India to openly talk about menstruation thereby setting a clear precedent. The glaring delay, and its mute scrutiny on menstrual awareness in the country, need to be examined.



Image via CNN Money

Countless programmes, guidelines, and provisions to ensure menstrual hygiene management and menstrual activism in India have caught the attention of the United Nations. In the same country, according to a 2014 study, 42% women have never seen a sanitary pad, the word “menstruation” is whispered in hushed-up voices, and every advertisement for menstrual products depicts period blood as blue, rather than red. Last year, 70 girl students in Bhuj, Gujarat, were forced by their principal to remove their undergarments to show that they were not menstruating. This is the duality of 21st century India, where paper and practice couldn’t be more different from flesh and blood reality. More than 23% Indian girls drop out of school when they start menstruating.

Period Poverty means inaccessibility to hygienic period products and correct information regarding menstruation and menstrual hygiene. According to the Family Health Survey, 2018, of the approximately 336 million menstruating women in India, only 121 million (roughly 42 percent) women use sanitary napkins, which are both locally and/or commercially produced.

If there is an impediment in the manufacture of these products, women turn to newspapers, old rags, and banana peels. These items are not substitutes for proper period products as they expose the women using them to menstrual infections and diseases like cervical cancer, Reproductive Tract Infections (RTIs), Hepatitis B, various

types of yeast infections, and UTIs. The statistics associated with this are alarming to say the least: 77% of menstruating girls and women reuse old rags, and 88% of women have had to use newspapers, leaves, husk, and sand.

It took India a long, harsh battle of endless protests, surveys, and online petitions to get sanitary pads tax free. Finally, in June, 2018, pads were exempted from the 12 percent tax under GST.

However, this battle is far from over. Materials and inputs like polythene film and glue used to produce sanitary napkins continue to attract a GST rate of 18%, and inputs like release paper and wood pulp attract GST at the rate of 12%. The price of sanitary products has risen (tax or no tax), making it even more difficult for people from the lower end of the economy to purchase these products. Not surprisingly, India’s global rank in healthcare is a dissatisfying 154. Period Poverty still remains a very real issue in India.

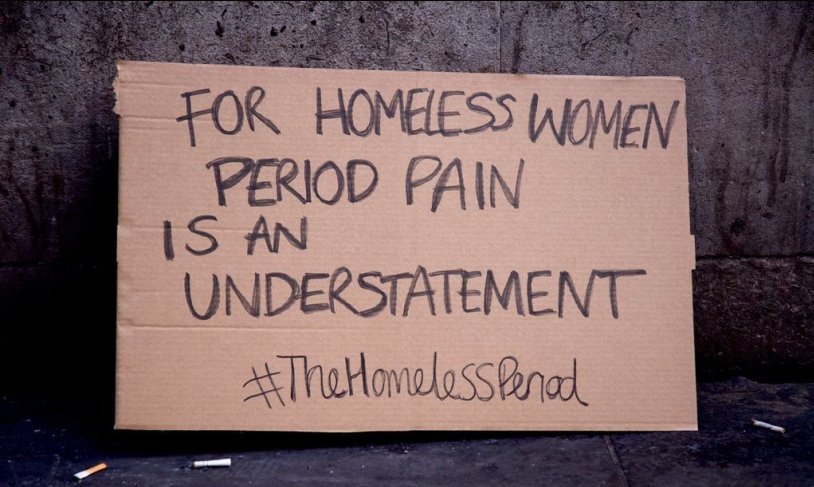
Women and trans men from rural and marginalised areas are worse off as they already have scarce access to healthcare and menstrual hygiene products. Period Poverty is known to have driven women to engage in transactional sex in exchange for period products. The cultural stigma and social shame attached to menstruation belittles women even further. The lack of hygiene, lack of education about menstruation, and lack of supply of hygiene products have affected millions of women and trans-men across countries,



Protesters calling for an end to period poverty.
 Photograph (Alamy Stock Photo)



Protestors at the 'Rally in Red' on King's Parade (Emma Walsh)



Women's groups who staged protests in Paris to reduce the tax welcomed the government's decision. (Sevgi/Sipa/Rex Shutterstock)



time zones, and continents. In India, despite the introduction of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Abhiyaan, the disturbing reality of rural women speaks volumes in itself.

The current world situation has rendered those who menstruate even more helpless. Due to the restrictions placed in lieu of the COVID-19 virus, innumerable menstruators in rural areas do not have rudimentary access to sanitary napkins, tampons, clean water, and several other hygiene products. During the first nationwide lockdown in March 2020, most of these products were non-essential goods, making them even more scarce. Sanitary napkins and tampons still remain essential goods only in Telangana and Karnataka. The intersectionality of this issue with social contradictions like caste and class make it worse for menstruators in India. Trans-men and non-binary people who menstruate have to face double the social stigma.

Period Poverty in India needs to be re-addressed through a multi-sectoral approach. A major factor in the spread of misinformation and myths surrounding periods is that it is considered a taboo. Indian society is dotted with deeply rooted menstrual taboos that shame those who menstruate as dirty. These are manifested in dogmatic social practices like restrictions from cooking and entering the kitchen, entering temples, eating certain foods and sexual intercourse. The economic vulnerability due to the highly priced menstrual supplies is another factor. These products also include expensive medicines for period-related disorders and infections. These two challenges are further aggravated by the harsh reality of lack of knowledge; most girls are unaware about menstruation and proper hygiene practices.

Combating such taboos would require a systemic change in our approach to tackle period poverty. This reality demands quick, lasting and effective solutions. The citizens, NGOs, and the government all have pivotal roles to play. Social media initiatives and menstrual activists have been tirelessly working to bring the topic of menstruation to the table and start a dialogue.

The first strategy needs to be raising awareness among adolescent girls and boys. Proper sex education in school and



accurate and detailed information about menstrual health and hygiene should be provided through educational programmes in schools.

An important step is to reduce and remove the institutionalised misogyny from within the government itself. There needs to be a revision of the list of “essential goods”. A new list needs to include all menstrual hygiene products like tampons, sanitary pads, and even menstrual medication. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women and Child Development, and the

Prime Minister’s office need to take firm steps to ensure uninterrupted supply of hygiene products in vulnerable areas. Government schemes under the National Rural Health Mission, the Menstrual Hygiene Scheme under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and menstrual hygiene management under the Swachh Bharat Mission Guidelines (SBM-G) need to be implemented properly.

There is a dire need to take inspiration from other successful models to end period poverty. In China, for instance, a grassroots menstrual activism movement provided free sanitary pads to ensure that women had access to sanitary products during the pandemic. Last November, Scotland became the first country in the world to make period products free for all. New Zealand has rolled out a remarkable policy of providing free period products to schoolgirls. And in our own Kerala, a few schools have successfully installed sanitary napkin vending machines in toilets.

Menstrual rights are human rights. Those who menstruate (women, trans-men, and non-binary persons) deserve the right to healthy and non-discriminatory sanitation. Ensuring access to, affordability of, and awareness about period products will go a long way in bringing an end to period poverty. Padman Arunachalam Muruganatham and the Oscar-winning film *Period – End of Sentence* are enough inspiration to realise the need to take concrete steps to end period poverty. The hard reality for almost 58% women in India is that they have to survive everyday of their lives without these essential products, something that the privileged ones cannot even fathom sitting in their homes in the city. So, speak up and spread the word. We bleed red, not blue.

DOUBLE STANDARDS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION:

A Case Study On The Demolitions At Khorī

BY SRIJANI DATTA

“Environmentalism without class struggle is just gardening”

~ Chico Mendes



The demolitions which took place in Khorī during June and July of 2021 reinstated my scepticism of the form of environmentalism practised by the Indian judiciary and a section of the so-called environmental activists. On 7th June, 2021, the Supreme Court of India ordered the Haryana Government and the Faridabad Municipal Corporation to remove all encroachments from Khorī basti, an area falling under forest land. These encroachments consist of about 10,000 residential constructions in an area located on the Delhi-Haryana border, falling under the jurisdiction of FMC. The orders were based on a set of cases being heard in the courts since 2010. The Justice bench sought compliance reports from the state government and municipal corporation officials within six weeks.

The labouring poor of Delhi are settled in these bastis. The early settlers had started pouring in from the 1990s. Since Khorī is located in the Aravalli Hills where large scale mining used to take place, therefore the early settlers were mine workers, and eventually those displaced from other slums in Delhi also started settling here. Thus, a large number of mine workers settled in these areas even though, since 2009, mining in these areas has been suspended by the Supreme Court of India. These lands are also protected under the Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA) whereby no construction can take place on any of these forest lands due to the Forest Conservation Act. This means that all surrounding areas which come under PLPA should also be conserved. Instead, what one can see on the map are hotels, commercial establishments, and many other luxurious buildings in close proximity to the basti.

In a report submitted by the Haryana Forest Department to the National Green Tribunal in June of 2020, many cases of violation have been identified

and listed for PLPA lands, including the aforementioned high-end buildings. Thus, the government itself admits that these privately owned buildings are also encroaching on forest land. Even though these particular structures remain unthreatened and untouched, three years ago, in 2018, the Supreme Court had directed the demolition of houses built in Faridabad's 425 acre township in Kant Enclave. This area housed wealthy, influential people and thus the way the judiciary responded to their demands is starkly in contrast to the way in which it is dealing with the inhabitants of the Khorī basti. The construction of the Kant Enclave colony had been given a license by the Haryana Government and the plans were approved by the Department of Town and Country Planning.

Like Kant Enclave, even Khorī residents were "sold" plots of land by a land mafia. According to the residents, the local police were also involved in the sale of those plots. Along with demanding rehabilitation for themselves, the slum-dwellers of Khorī are also seeking an investigation into the matter.

Thus, the Supreme Court directed 50% of the compensation cost to be borne by the DTCP and the other 50% by the developer of the residential houses. Then, why can't something similar be done for residents of Khorī?

Like Kant Enclave, even Khorī residents were "sold" plots of land by a land mafia. According to the residents, the local police were also involved in the sale of those plots. Along with demanding rehabilitation for themselves, the slum-dwellers of Khorī are also seeking an investigation into the matter. The Haryana Police claims to be pursuing the investigation. On the peak of uproarious demands for rehabilitation, the Haryana Government has drawn up a rehabilitation scheme for the residents. On 4th August, the Supreme Court ordered the Haryana government to expedite its decision on the rehabilitation scheme prepared and proposed by the Faridabad Municipal Corporation. Initially the rehabilitation scheme stated that the slum-dwellers would be provided flats for economically weaker sections (EWS) equipped with basic facilities such as electricity, water, and toilets in Dabua Colony and Bapu Nagar Area. But this is where the scheme ends up excluding most of the targeted beneficiaries: three documents are required to access rehabilitation under this scheme. Firstly, the income of applicant families should not exceed Rupees 3 Lakh annually and they should be able to prove this by showing supplementary documents. Secondly, the name of the head of the family should be registered in the voters list of Badkhal assembly constituency of Haryana as of January, 2021. Thirdly, any one member of the family should have an electricity connection issued by the Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam. These flats are also not immediately available, and those who are eligible will be given rupees 2,000 to rent any other house for the coming six months, until the flats are ready.

In the hearing on 4th August, Senior Advocate Sanjay Parikh brought up the point that the authorities were asking for valid electricity connection bills and other identity proofs to provide rehabilitation. The judge bench said that the policy could be challenged once its final.

This policy excludes thousands of Khori residents because of the simple fact that most of them wouldn't be able to produce all of these documents. If the government was concerned about their documentation and assumed that they have the right kind of documents, then the question is- Why hasn't the government made any efforts to check their documents which prove that they own those small plots of land or that they, in fact, have been the residents of that place for a while. The voter ID card, the electricity connection, and also the documents which prove their ownership of land could have been checked before the Supreme Court ordered to displace them and ascertain who the real benefactors/culprits were, who illegally sold off such huge plots of land, duped the poor working class and allowed a 10,000 house settlement to proliferate on forest land. As Manju Menon and Kanchi Kohli from Centre for Policy Research have mentioned, this would probably point in politically inconvenient directions.

If the government can take the pain of processing and verifying documents of so many people for rehabilitation, couldn't it have also ascertained the real culprits, and provided compensation to the Khori residents, like it ensured for Kant Enclave residents. The rehabilitation policy, too, seems too little, too late.

Double standards also exist in the way our government treats miners who cause irreversible damage to land, air, and water; and these residents who have

converted and restored hitherto mined land into habitable land, as has been pointed out by PhD scholar Ishita Chatterjee in her work on Khori. As Ritwick Dutta, an environmental lawyer pointed out, we need to assess whether laws are being applied to everyone equally. According to the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980, "no forest land can be used for non-forest purposes without the prior approval of the Central Government". This means that while forest land can be used for other purposes, the permission of the Central Government is required. In Haryana, in 2020, 395.4 hectare(ha) of forest land was diverted for non-forest purposes – which is nearly 10-times the land involved in Khori Gaon. Contrast this to relatively larger states- Andhra Pradesh diverted 356 ha; Jharkhand, 332 ha; Odisha, 301 ha; Karnataka, 139 ha; and Maharashtra, 39 ha. What is striking is that a lot of times the Ministry allowed diversion of forest land for projects which could have easily been set-up elsewhere. For example- In 2019, 40 ha. of land was granted for an Ayurvedic centre, in 2020 another 40 ha. of land was diverted from Bahu Conservation Reserve so that the premises of the Jammu High Court could be expanded to include judge's houses. According to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Annual Report 2019-20, under the Forest Conservation Act, between January 1 and November 6, 2019 Haryana diverted about 519 ha of forest land for non-forest purposes for a total of 251 projects.

Further, the Compensatory Afforestation Act of 2016 says that a violator has to undertake penal compensatory afforestation in lieu of the extent of area over which non-forestry activities have been carried out without obtaining prior approval of the competent





authority under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Basically, the Compensatory Afforestation Act allows violators to get away with usage of forest land for non-forest purposes who haven't taken prior approval of the government by making payments and conducting tree plantations. Thus, the question is: Why is the benefit of penal compensatory afforestation not available to Khorī Gaon's residents? Especially when every other construction/mining continues unabated in the Aravalli Hills. Government agencies themselves are party to Aravallis' destruction. In Manesar, over 16,000 fully grown trees on 23 ha of forestland were chopped off without permission between 2011 and 2013 to set up police lines, shows a 2018 RTI query filed by Ram Avtar Yadav.

In fact, the police department has been acquiring forest land to build various residential and training complexes on land marked as "forest", without requisite permissions, over the years, alleges Yadav. A police training institute has been set up in Bhondsi village of Gurugram, for which over 4,500 trees were felled, even as the proposal from the police department for permitting the construction lies with the forest department.

Bringing out the double standards in environmental law and the court's handling of cases related to forest land is important to understand why activists have called the demolitions at Khorī unfair. Even if we don't take a stalk of the larger context, the very fact that the Supreme Court ordered the displacement of about 1 lakh people during a pandemic, without ensuring rehabilitation for them raises questions about fairness. The blatant disregard for the poor working class does not end there. After the Apex

Court orders, the residents of Khorī started protesting the demolitions. To suppress the protests, on 14th June the district administration imposed Section 144 in the area, barring the assembly of 4 or more people. 12 people were arrested for organising a protest at Surajkund and attempting to block traffic. They were booked under sections 114 (joining unlawful assembly with deadly weapon), 147 (rioting), 149 (offence in prosecution of common objective), 186 (obstructing public officials from discharging duties), 188 (disobedience of public servant), 269 (spreading contagious disease), 285 (endangerment of human life), and 341 (wrongful restraint) of the IPC. So the Supreme Court can order the displacement and movement of about 1 lakh people in the middle of a pandemic without ensuring rehabilitation for them raises questions about fairness. The blatant disregard for the poor working class does not end there. After the Apex Court orders, the residents of Khorī started protesting the demolitions. To suppress the protests, on 14th June the district administration imposed Section 144 in the area, barring the assembly of 4 or more people. 12 people were arrested for organising a protest at Surajkund and attempting to block traffic. They were booked under sections 114 (joining unlawful assembly with deadly weapon), 147 (rioting), 149 (offence in prosecution of common objective), 186 (obstructing public officials from discharging duties), 188 (disobedience of public servant), 269 (spreading contagious disease), 285 (endangerment of human life), and 341 (wrongful restraint) of the IPC. So the Supreme Court can order the displacement and movement of about 1 lakh people in the middle of a pandemic, but when these residents exercise their right to protest against this eviction they

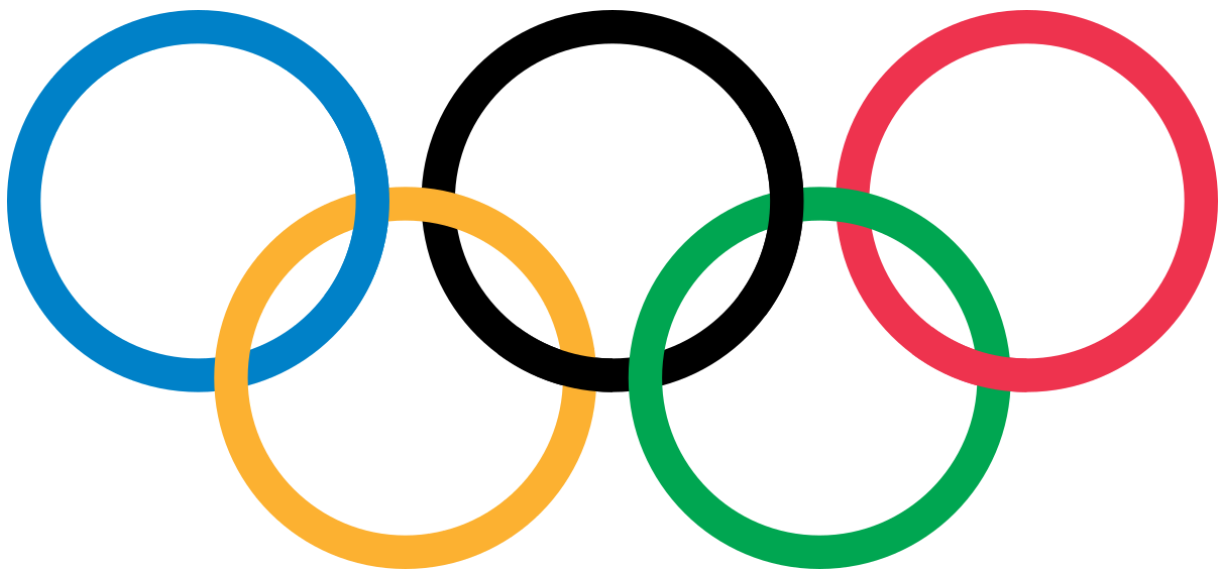


are said to be spreading coronavirus. Many others were detained, and lathi-charged during protests in June and July. Electricity and water supply to the area were also cut, to force the residents to stop protesting and to make them move out of the area.

The Aravallis are an almost 700 kilometres-long mountain range spanning Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi. Most of the Aravalli hills – around 550 kilometres of its length – are in Rajasthan, yet some part of it also falls in some of Haryana's districts such as Gurugram, Mewat, Faridabad, Palwal, Rewari, Bhiwani and Mahendragarh.

Aravallis are an ecologically sensitive zone but have for years borne the brunt of mining activities. The consequences of this mining have been a destruction of aquifers

(which help recharge groundwater) and deforestation. Conserving and restoring these fast depleting forests is essential for the ecological health of the regions, which in-turn also contributes to human health and economic activities. Nevertheless this conservation cannot and should not come at the cost of the marginalised sections of our society, who have the lowest carbon footprint, and have contributed least to the degradation of the forests. Rather courts and people need to take account of the fact that there are mining and construction companies, large farmhouses, banquet halls, and hotels which are contributing the most to pollution of the area and have built their structures by illegally acquiring large swathes of forest land for the gain of a few industrialists.



THE ECONOMICS OF OLYMPICS: From Grandiose to Otiose

BY ABHIGYA BARTHWAL

When a city prepares to host the Olympic Games, its intent is to receive multiple direct financial benefits as well as a slew of other indirect benefits. Once the plans are set in motion, the number of infrastructure projects needed to host the Olympics explode, leaving many cities with facilities costing hundreds of millions of dollars to build, but no way to utilize them once the Games are over.

In his book "The History of Development", Gilbert Rist says that Development takes two different forms: The development that we talk about on paper might not have the anticipated pragmatic outcomes. Development has no significance if it leads to further disparity and division of social classes while widening the gap of social inequality.

He further remarks in 'The Reproduction Of Society' that *'put simply, these practices enable the world system to reproduce itself by expanding the area within its grasp so that it assures the existence of societies*

(or social classes) included within the system and washes its hands of those excluded from it.'

For a country that places a significant impact on "development" as one of its redeeming qualities, the question is whether or not the "development" that a city undergoes in preparation for the Olympic games benefits the citizens of the country. If not, then who gains from it in all actuality?

FALLACIES OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Growth and development, in this context, cannot be used interchangeably and need to be viewed as two independent terms. While growth is more quantitative and short-term, development is qualitative with long-term consequences, implying a considerable improvement in the state of affairs. Building stadiums and redeveloping the geographical area around the city might at first

When we talk about the money a government invests in these infrastructures, we often misidentify the place that it is coming from. It was never the government's money, to begin with, but always something that is taken from its people. Should the people not have any say against this ruination in the name of development then?

seem like a progressive approach to development, but the lives it displaces, and its negative impacts on the environment, far outweigh the benefits posed by a considerable margin.

The infrastructure required for Olympics stadiums is highly specialized and serves little to no purpose once the event is over. The Olympic baseball centre in Athens from the 2004 Olympics, the Maracana Stadium in Rio from the 2016 Olympics, the Volleyball

park in Beijing from the 2008 Olympics, all lie abandoned, forgotten, and decaying. What is rotting now are not just the walls of the stadium or the huge land that it is built on or even the rusting pipes but in fact, the money of the taxpayers that was used to build these stadiums.

When we talk about the money a government invests in these infrastructures, we often misidentify the place that it is coming from. It was never the

government's money, to begin with, but always something that is taken from its people. Should the people not have any say against this ruination in the name of development then?

Not only do the Olympics stadiums lie abandoned, but many of them also leave thousands of people homeless. When the Tokyo Olympics took place recently, many people were evicted from not only the land that these stadiums were supposed to





be built on as well as the surrounding area, and the Tokyo media turned a blind eye altogether to this cruelty. Such incidents gather little to no heed in the mainstream media coverage. Rio has in fact built a wall between the urban area of the city and Mare, a low-income neighbourhood, citing the reason that the wall acts as a sound barrier between the noise coming from the main road to not disturb the urban poor of the city. When you have nothing to eat and no employment to provide for your family, the noise coming from the street becomes the least of your concerns.

INDIA: BON VOYAGE THROUGH TROUBLED WATERS

Delhi found itself in a similar predicament during the 2008 Commonwealth games. India was aware that it would attract international attention and, therefore, in the name of 'modernizing' or living up to global ideals set by other countries

it rushed into organising the Games, tripping on its own feet in the process. A report by Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN) titled Planned Dispossession: Forced Evictions and the 2010 Commonwealth Games stated that 2 Lakh people were rendered homeless due to the infrastructural project carried out for the Commonwealth Games. By evicting more than 2,50,000 people as a direct result of the games, the government cheated the poor while presenting a newly polished Delhi on a golden platter for the world to see. Like a trojan horse, the slums near Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium had their walls repainted from the outside while no effort was made to provide housing to the urban poor of Delhi. Not only were thousands of people evicted, but also only 85 families out of them were rehabilitated. All the while force was used by the state to make the poor comply. There never was any substantial urban planning put in place to rehabilitate the displaced.

India is planning to throw

its hat in the ring and host the 2048 Summer Olympics, something far more infrastructurally demanding than the Commonwealth games. The proposal was made in 2021. India's healthcare system collapsed during the pandemic and the plight of the people of the country was laid bare for the world to see. The pandemic has not created holes in the health care structure but has instead, blown the lid of pre-existing cracks. In the unfortunate case of another global crisis, the government should invest in public health care so that the whole country is not left gasping for breath again, while a stadium stays abandoned because the government could not choose between something as important as providing necessities to all of its citizens or something as futile as constructing a cursory global image for the world applaud. India should focus on providing basic housing facilities and invest more in the healthcare and educational sector before going as far as icing the burning cake of the economy. As the stadiums are being built out

of the pockets of the taxpayers, it is unfair to furnish one part of the city which is in the view of the public eye, while completely neglecting the other, turning a blind eye towards slum dwellings and ignoring the greater long term good that benefits the whole country.

TRENDS OF DEBTS

Most of the countries hosting the Olympics splurge and drown into massive debt. The Beijing Games in 2008 had an original budget of \$20 Billion but the project was completed at \$45 Billion while Amnesty International accused the Beijing government of using forced labour for building many of the venues. While all Olympic projects usually go over budget, the Tokyo Olympics were the most expensive Summer Games ever, with the cost for only postponing the event by a year totalling \$1.6 Billion owing only to the upkeep of the stadiums. According to economist Andrew Gimbalist host countries generate \$6 Billion in revenue, but most of the share is taken by IOC. The International Committee in the 2016 Rio Olympics pocketed 70% of the revenue generated as compared to the 4% it took in Albertville in 1992.

Cities argue that the money invested in infrastructure will have a long-term positive impact on the local economy owing to a ripple effect, where money from tourists will lead to an increase in money supply in the market which will, in turn, lead to more employment, but this theory rarely pans out. So is sustainable development the solution?

After weighing in on the criticism that the IOC received about the Games, the IOC introduced a more “sustainable”

model for the 2021 Tokyo Olympics. One important thing it promised was that games will adapt to the city and whatever venue will be built would be part of an existing developmental plan. But the IOC did not stay true to its words. Habitations of the poor around the railway and the Olympics venues were removed, parks were lit up at night to

Cities argue that the money invested in infrastructure will have a long-term positive impact on the local economy owing to a ripple effect, where money from tourists will lead to an increase in money supply in the market which will, in turn, lead to more employment, but this theory rarely pans out. So is sustainable development the solution?

discourage people from sleeping there, and the Japanese Government denied executing any of this. So “sustainable development” as a brand is futile because no “sustainable” practice is actually incorporated. Sustainability would include, reducing misuse of land, cutting down on environmental damage etc. Sports economist Andrew Gimbalist suggests that there should be no bidding by host

countries for the Olympics as that too requires a lot of funds and leads to futile splurging. He also suggests that one specific country which already has the prerequisite to hosting the games should host the Games every time.

Joseph Campbell once said, “If you want to see what a society believes in, look at what the biggest buildings on the horizon are dedicated to.” Instead of erecting the tallest building in India or athletic complexes that would likely be used only once, the government should invest in decent housing and health care for the country’s urban poor, and then consider sports contests.

Philosopher Foucault adopted the term “discourse” which talked about the production of knowledge, through language and practice. The relationship between power and knowledge, the former he believed was not held by one person, but it is something that is diffused and is all around us, what he meant by that was that other social forces also play a role, a form of what is seen in policymaking. He argued that it is not “subjects” that create a change but the “discourse” that creates the “subject”. Development discourse is achieved when the government talks about aiming to increase economic growth or social welfare, but can these two objectives be achieved together? The unfettered desire to pursue thoughtless economic expansion has resulted in an unbalanced development that has fostered inequality. While there are existing crises in the world, such as poverty, worries about discourse sound abstract. As even development under capitalism is driven by the profit motive, the “power” that capitalism has over development makes it hard to propose an alternate.

Credits: countercurrents

LET'S TALK PORN

BY ANUSHKA PANDEY



Illustration by Anna Parini/The New York Times

Nothing can more efficiently destroy a person, fizzle their mind, evaporate their future, eliminate their potential, or destroy society like pornography. It is so terrible that many do not even recognize it until it is too late, and most refuse to admit it. It is worse than Hitler, worse than AIDS, cancer, or any other epidemic. It is more catastrophic than nuclear holocaust, and it must be stopped.

– Petition filed by Kamlesh Vaswani to the Supreme Court of India

When something as grave as having the potential to destroy futures and society is being talked about, it becomes inevitable to have a debate

on it. We have come a long way in the sphere of availability of porn. Earlier, it used to be extremely difficult to get our hands on a pornographic magazine, let alone an x-rated movie, ironically in the land of the Kamasutra.

But now 'variety' is just a google search away. This rapid increase in the visibility of porn has caused many cultural ripples and shocks, hitting the Indian psyche badly.

After the dreadful Nirbhaya Rape Case when India finally woke up to the existing reality of sexual crimes in India, Vasawani's petition gathered attention towards banning porn as a way to save and protect the 'vulnerable, weak good, innocent, and agencyless' women and children. Is there any clear connection between pornography and actual rape and; given the way in which Indian internet laws are granting more power to the State for surveillance, what would such a ban mean for freedom of expression online? Having asked these questions and talked about freedom of expression, do we also need to keep in mind the real effects of porn? Does it cater to already entrenched patriarchy and misogyny, and if it does, is it okay to put a blanket ban, or should the industry change for the better?

LEGAL ARTIFICES OF PORNOGRAPHY CONSUMPTION IN INDIA

The grey area is so large for pornography related rules that there are times when the apex court is answerless. Sections 67 and 67A of the IT Act prohibit the publication and distribution of obscene and sexually explicit material respectively, but if porn is shared via personal messages between two adults, it is not illegal. Similarly, section 67B forbids all publication, distribution, facilitation, and consumption in any manner of child pornography. The Indecent

Representation of Women law prohibits the indecent representation

of women in any form of publication.

In July 2015, the Supreme Court stated that no one can stop an individual from practicing the right to personal liberty; People can thus watch porn in their private space. But soon afterwards, in order 'to protect morality and decency', two exceptions were imposed whereby freedom of speech and expression were subject to limitations and the Department of Telecommunication banned 857 pornographic websites.

To state simply, in India, you will not be punished for watching porn but will be incarcerated for publishing it for monetary gains or transmitting it. With vague terms as lascivious and obscene, the definition and ambit of which change on a case-by-case basis, porn-related videos and nudity have been blocked in the land of Kamasutra for a long time now. But why? What are the fears involved and what are the reasons given by policy makers for such bans?

One of the main reasons why porn is considered to be harmful is because it 'tends' to increase violence against women, destroy the social fabric, accelerate human trafficking, and encourage child abuse.

Talking of the more genuine fears of human trafficking and child abuse, Indian laws have in recent years become more sensitive regarding consent, and in any case if any human is exploited, coerced, forced, abducted, or abused a case for human trafficking will be made. Many laws are placed and are being scrutinised to take coercive action against child abusers.

Section 66E of the IT Act, for example, on punishment for violation of privacy, explicitly forbids capturing, publishing or transmitting 'the image of a private area of any person without his or her consent'.

Also, does having personal liberty also include watching child porn? Absolutely not, and we do not

argue here for a second that child porn in any form should be legal. The horrors of child sexual abuse stay in the online world in perpetuity forever and cannot be removed. The production and consumption of child pornography should and does qualify for criminalisation. With an amendment in the IT Act of 2008, the Indian lawmakers did the necessary, of making the consumption, production, and possession of child porn illegal.

But will just blocking child pornography eradicate the problem and make children safer? The answer is probably negative, because banning or blocking it reduces its visibility, not its occurrence. What we need is a rigorous monitoring system in place, which identifies the location of the domains from where child pornography is getting uploaded, and furthermore, a strong system of checks to stop this menace once and for all.

FEMINIST PORNOGRAPHY

Pornography is one of the most contentious debates plaguing today's feminist movement. Where pro-porn feminists claim that it is liberating and promotive of sexual freedom, anti-porn feminists in no ways advocate censorship but accentuate the fact that it contains misogyny and shows women in a submissive light. When we talk about feminists view on pornography we have three sections of opinion: the anti-porn, the liberals, and the pro-porn.

The anti-porn feminists opine that since the dawn of history men have used their penises as a weapon to keep women under a state of fear and are now commercialising women through porn, and defining every aspect of their role in the society through it. The liberals believe in freedom of speech, and no censorship. They talk about giving more priority to the idea of choice rather than the content. Liberal feminists often find themselves at opposite difficult ends, where they are caught between the idea of porn as patriarchal and the idea of free speech. Females talking about pleasure are often termed as sluts and prostitutes in the Indian

patriarchal fabric, something that the pro-porn feminists oppose. They staunchly support the idea of 'woman's body, woman's right'.

ARE PORN-RELATED PROBLEMS REAL?

The preamble of the petition quoted at the beginning of the article states that the structure of the community is under threat, which is the very crux of the problem Indian society seems to have with porn. It is not increasing sexual violence against women (with the patriarchal fabric that we have many families don't consider that even a problem), it is definitely not women's security, but infact about controlling female sexuality and maintaining the status quo of "purity" and "virtuousity". If this is why we seek to ban porn in India, or consider it a taboo, we need a serious cultural reset.

But some studies show that excessive consumption of porn makes people more susceptible to problems like erectile dysfunction and broken relationships. To simplify the scientific jargon: our nervous system starts working in a way that it no longer achieves the same level of satisfaction with a real partner as it does while viewing pornography. It is from here that normalization of violence is introduced in sexual intercourse.

Does that establish porn as the sole reason behind sexual violence when the internet access still hovers around 20-25% in positive estimates? If we assume that all of this 25% population is watching porn, we are still left with the rest of the 75% people who have no internet connection. But the latter ratio includes the majority of the areas where sexual violence is prevalent. Talking of the 25%, many are women and many also belong to the category which has limited access to the internet. Also if we take real world examples, and as an argumentation against the false claims between the correlation between porn and violence, we see Japan where violent porn videos and images are largely available, the incidence of rape and sexual violence is very low as compared to the U.S. where violent porn is controlled.

Where India is concerned concretely, it deserves to be noted that while the statistics of rape, sexual assault and violence against women are worrying, some of the highest prevalences are found in areas in the country that have little to

no internet access. Another totally contradicting study shows that availability of porn has infact decreased when it comes to sex related crimes. This is in no way to prove or substantiate my point or to show a causation: its merely a reiteration of the fact that there is no sure causation between sexual violence and porn.

When we discuss the harms and benefits of porn, they should purely be in scientific terms, and not in terms of whether it will destroy the social fabric. This is a topic which won't settle easy, with one side supporting pornography, because it gives sexual independence and relaxation, and access to information on sexuality and reproductive health to people on one hand, but on the other hand research indicates how it shrinks particular parts of brain. Where it provides an important avenue for sexual expression, particularly for women and sexual minorities, it also ends up glorifying certain body types and perpetuates body-image related apprehensions.

CONSENT?

In an industry where consent should be sacrosanct, what is the ground reality? Recently, Mia Khalifa asked to remove her porn videos but was slammed down by reports stating that she should have a taste of her own medicine, and that the 'mistake' she made should stay with her.

But signing up with her consent to enter the porn industry was no mistake, but a choice, a choice that women should be allowed to make. And if she wants to remove the tag of porn-star and disallow the browsing of her porn videos, her choice should be respected.

Not respecting consent is problematic on so many levels. We see that most boys start watching porn right from their teen years, and it forms a very important part of the sexual education that they receive. If the foundation of the porn industry is not based on consent, we end up normalising sexual violence and dominance. In India, the National Family Health Survey states that 83% of married women between the ages of 15 and 49 who have ever suffered sexual abuse cite their current husband as the perpetrator.

SO SHOULD PORN BE BANNED BECAUSE OF THIS?

If our biggest concern is women's security then we need to have a

women's rights centric approach instead of a welfare approach. Every industry comes with its abuses, and accepting that truth does not mean letting the abuse happen, but banning the industry is also not a solution. Banning will be a big mistake with deeply harmful effects on the ability of India's citizens to exercise their right to freedom of expression. If any abuse is reported, the concerned abuser should be charged, and the abused be accorded with complete legal protection.

If logging on to a porn website came with the inherent guarantee that the website only has consensual videos, would the platform not simultaneously be in the best interests of the employers, actors, viewers and society?

We see that women are often fetishised and porn websites hardly empower women but mostly do the opposite, the solution to this is feminist and rights based porn, which is inclusive and safe. Ethical porn is very different, as it respects consent, requires subscription which means the actors are better paid off. Instead of the market of porn that we have now, we need to popularise the porn which is ethical, respects inclusivity, consent and rights.

WAY FORWARD

As a country we believe that only men watch porn, but that is not the case. Women and people belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community are also consuming porn and creating content that is redefining the perceptions of sexuality in India. A more open and inclusive space is being created with regards to what is sex and who all are allowed to do it in a culture where these topics were previously restricted and not talked about.

Coming to children and young people, they do need guidance to deal with pornography and that guidance should come as a form of proper education from parents, schools, and society at large. Why is sex education important? In India, many low-income people, who form a significant part of the population live in clustered places, where children and parents share a single room, and the child is exposed to their parents' secretive sexual activity. The child, develops curiosity, and when not discussed about sex openly in a day to day conversation, develops a negative connotation of it being something hideous, which is absolutely not the case.

THE QUESTION OF WOMEN'S PRIESTHOOD

BY ADITHYA M

*"Within the body is the god/ within the body the temple/within the body all the Jangamas/ within the body the incense, the lamps, and the food-offerings/ within the body the puja-leaves.
After searching so many lands/ I found the nine treasures within my body/ Now there will be no further going and coming/ I swear by Rama."*

~Bhagat Pipa, 15th century Bhakti poet and saint



The Bhakti movement arose against complex ritualism, caste system, and Brahmanical monopoly, and endorsed the idea of an 'egalitarian society'. The movement was individualistic in its essence, and propagated the idea of god residing in one's self, and therefore rejected Brahmanic rituals and Sanskrit. It was a socio-egalitarian movement aimed at social reformation.

In this neoliberal century, the idea of god in one's self is destined to come undone into untruth. It was untrue in erstwhile politico-economic systems as well. This argument can be established through the following question — How can God reside in one's self if the priestly duties are the monopoly of one gender? Women and the LGBTQIA community are debarred from reaching out to the so-called 'self' i.e. accessing higher echelons of contact with divinity. It is ironic that women deities are worshipped inside temples functioning under the norms of Agama Shastra and priestly duties are done by men, but concomitantly women are debarred from this position which can act as a viable option for employment.

In Hinduism, religious scriptures do not disallow women from acquiring priestly positions. A community-oriented awareness approach is needed to end the exclusionary nature of this domain. A first-hand observation ascertains that prohibition comes from two realms: one viewpoint is aligned with the biological process of menstruation where a person on their period is considered impure, and the second is concerned with the male-dominated job sector that proliferates a culture of Brahmanical patriarchy. The former viewpoint associated with prohibition is hitherto busted by disqualifying the utterly unscientific practice with scientific temperament. As for the latter, the world is not constant, and

traditional jobs are not traditional anymore but are adapting to the modern state of affairs. Then why not encourage a role which transgresses gender bias and discrimination and could free up society from these discriminatory practices?

THE TAMIL NADU MODEL OF WOMEN'S PRIESTHOOD

The revolutionary decision of the Tamil Nadu government to appoint women as priests in temples received both welcoming praises and retaliation from the society at large. One facet of this move can be particularly interpreted as a gesture to break the barrier of caste and gender discrimination in the so-called modern society. While the second facet stipulates the creation of a viable option for employment and establishment of equality. Critics construe the action of the government as antagonistic to tantric principles. The one who keenly looks at the opinion of critics might relate it with the opinion of 'protectors of custom' as in the case of Sabarimala temple where women's biology, anatomy, and purity came into question while granting a very basic right to worship. In modern society, the obstacle for women's priesthood is primarily a patriarchal power play that swirls from grassroots to institutional structures of power. The long-overdue appointment of women as priests antagonises the corrupt slant of institutional structures.

In 1971, the DMK government, under Karunanidhi, amended the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments act which gives legal sanction for hereditary appointment of brahmin priests. The amendment aims to annihilate the hereditary appointment of Brahmanical priests that would have led to the opening up of priesthood to Dalits and non-brahmins. However, the progressive amendment was challenged by religious outfits and subsequently nullified by the Supreme Court. The legal tussle continued till 2018, but the aim of the ensuing battle got submerged in a mirage. According to

the 2006 order issued by the DMK government to appoint persons having requisite qualification as archakas in the temple 206 people were given training, and data shows that only two among 206 people could overcome the social prejudice and work as archakas in the temple.

The concept of women's priesthood gained momentum in legal space from 1955 onwards. A notable case in this realm is Raj Kali Kuer vs Ram Rattan Pandey, in this case, the Supreme Court denied the hereditary aspect of priesthood and stated that 'hereditary is not a principle of competence'. The fray in legal space regarding women's priesthood continues till date. The move of the DMK government to give training to women has been criticized from two standpoints. The foremost censure is based on the ideological stance of DMK, where critics are claiming that 'the atheistic DMK has no right to decide the functions of temples'. However, this claim is redundant, because the presumed 'atheistic' Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam strengthened the concept of social justice in Tamil society by initiating measures ranging from the legislation of self-respect marriages following Periyar's ideas to increasing of reservations for SC, ST, and OBC in 1971. The second claim comes from the secularism debate- 'State should not interfere in the affairs of religion'. The Indian judiciary stipulates that the state can interfere when there is a basic violation of human rights. The case of not allowing women as priests is a violation of Articles 14 and 15. The gesture of the DMK government is a model for all states in India to take similar actions. The Kerala government upheld the judgment of the Supreme Court in 2018 that all people regardless of gender can enter Sabarimala. However, this encountered reprisal from the Sangh outfits as well as from several sections of women for breaking the integrity of tradition and ritual purity. In the Sabarimala case, the famous historian Rajan Gurukkal remarked that

there was neither "ritual sanctity nor scientific justification" for the purity-pollution argument. These remarks are reciprocal to the question of women's priesthood where biological impurity and competency came into question. Undeniably, the intersection of caste and gender is blocking the way to priesthood.

WOMEN PRIESTS IN MELAMARUVATHUR TEMPLE

The research paper titled 'Gender and priesthood in the Hindu Traditions' by Vasudha Narayanan discusses women who were trained by brahmin men for conducting domestic rites. It also talks about the Melmaruvathur Adi ParaShakti Temple in Tamil Nadu where women function as priests. In this temple women are not discriminated against based on menstruation; and widows who were discriminated against in Brahmanical societies are encouraged to engage in the ritual practices of the temple. As mentioned in this study by Vasudha Narayanan, the devotees visiting the temple are addressed as 'shakti' insinuating 'divinity in one self'. In later decades women in religious leadership positions grew as a movement transnationally. While priesthood for men remains a cultural norm, we can find exceptions in temples like Melmaruvathur.

In addition to
this, in
Maharashtra,
weddings to
funerals are
conducted by
women
priests.
Nonetheless, it
is limited to
these social
ceremonies
and does not
extend to
temples.

THE WAY AHEAD

The topics of women's priesthood and entry of women into religious spaces remain dominant subjects of debate in the intellectual arena. While progressive laws and policies are being supported by the academia, it does not attract huge support from common citizens. In local areas, these modern policies for women's equality remain subjugated in superstitions. Consequently, there is a need for a community-oriented approach to educate people about their rights because religion and education intersect at a multitude of spheres and thereby influence the growth and development of communities. The Indian city of Pune is becoming an inclusive space for women and men to obtain training for priesthood regardless of caste. The neo proliferation of training centres will challenge the moral bastions and facilitate non hierarchical pluralism. As a nation, we need more Melmaruvathur temples where women can do priestly jobs. The question of women's priesthood is not isolated to the Hindu religion, it extends to Christianity and Islam in a likewise manner. Hence, this is a universal hitch in all world religions. Laws should change and policies should be introduced to end the patriarchal power play to resolve the question of women's priesthood.





PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

IN THIS SECTION

- Anupa P.* 25. THE FREUDIAN FLUB:
Anatomy is Not Destiny
- Abdullah Kazmi* 32. READ DOSTOEVSKY'S CRIME AND PUNISHMENT
THROUGH THE LENS OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
- Ananya Ravi Shankar* 37. *EMERSON AND TRANSCENDALISM*
- Anupa P, Nakul Raghav,
Uttkarsh Chauhan* 41. COVID-19::DISTRESS-20
The First Wave Of Existential Nihilism
- Vaibhav Singh* 44. IMMERSE IDOLS, EMBRACE IDEALS

THE FREUDIAN FLUB: ANATOMY IS NOT DESTINY

BY ANUPA PAULCHAUDHURI



“Women oppose change, react passively, and add nothing of their own”- Freud (1925)

Sigmund Freud has rightly been acclaimed as the father of psychoanalysis, on account of the novelty his work brought to the field of psychology. His work on the Unconscious Mind and its manifestations is worthy of renown even today. However, it is in the basis and method of these theories on personality development, the psycho-sexual stages of development, and the Oedipus complex that we find patterns of biases premised in masculinity and heterosexuality.

Freud asserts that all human beings are, by nature, hedonistic. In his theory of personality development, he explains that there are two innate factors that drive a person's personality- Eros and Thanatos. Eros is the 'surviving instinct' in people that is driven by sexual urges or 'libido' and thus favours productivity and procreation; Thanatos is the 'death instinct' that manifests as aggression and leads the person towards destruction or death, where each one of us is ultimately headed in accordance with the laws of nature. Freud theorised that an individual's personality structure results from a constant battle between these two.

Further, he went on to name three determinants of adult behaviour: id, which represents unconscious, instinctual desires and needs that an individual has which are often irrational and primitive; ego which represents that amoral part of the conscious mind that mediates between the irrational Id and the external real world and makes the person behave in a manner that is practically viable; and superego, which represents the socialised, moral part of one's conscience, influencing the person to do what is socially expected of them. The superego, over time, forms and strives towards achieving an 'ego ideal' which is the culturally idealised version of oneself. The Ego must constantly mediate between Id and Superego to produce results that are somewhat acceptable to both. But if Id prevails over Superego the latter employs punitive measures wherein the person might feel guilt, anger, anxiety, etc. and accordingly act out.

Now, these principles may be conceptually sound but are undoubtedly qualified. Firstly, a lot of what Freud premised in his theory as being of "innate nature", "instinctual", or "natural" was



actually the result of socialisation or social conditioning which was, and still is, strikingly different for men and women. Whilst Freud, on one hand, tries to prove the individuality of the human mind, his claims are contingent on biological essentialism. In reality, neo-Freudians, Feminists, and Queer theorists have emphasized on and proved social constructivism to be the primary causative theory behind sexuality. The modern human being is a cognitive social creature, ruled by conscience and culture. Freud emphasises on a constant battle between primitive bodily urges, premised in heterosexuality, and socialised cognitive demands in determining how each person behaves. However, in reality, human beings are much more than that. We are advanced creatures wherein each person is unique to themselves and our anatomy has little to do with the positions we strive to occupy in society.

In his theory of the five stages of psychosexual development, Freud wrote how in the third or phallic stage (around 3-6 years of age), the child's libido is centered in the genitalia, which is the penis for boys and the clitoris for girls and hence, they become aware of anatomical differences. A male child becomes aware of his phallus and as a result of his close proximity with and adoration for his mother, the Eros creates within him a sexual desire for her. However, on observing the relationship his mother already shares with his father, the id creates feelings of jealousy and animosity towards the father. Irrationally, the boy fears that if his father finds out about these feelings, he would take the mother away from him and cut off his penis (where this desire stems from). This creates in the boy what Freud called castration anxiety. Freud claims that, here, the superego comes into play as the admonitory force and is punitive on the conscience to ensure that the boy does not act on his feelings of desire (for the mother) and aggression (towards the father).

Further, the ego solves this conflict within the boy's mind by inculcating an aim to become just like the father and imitating him in his "masculine" ways, to alleviate his fear of castration. This solution to the Oedipal complex was termed as identification.

In little girls, the Oedipal complex manifests differently. The child has a deep adoration for her mother till she becomes aware, in the phallic stage, that she does not possess a penis and blames her mother for it. She develops a sexual desire for her father as a result of her desire for the penis (which he possesses), for she believes that she is "incomplete" without one. Freud termed this as penis envy, the natural phenomenon in the absence of castration

anxiety in boys. Dejected, she takes on the expected gender role in identification with her mother with the hope that one day she will give birth to a son who will "fulfill" her desire for the penis. Since these desires can never actually be fulfilled, Freud considers women to have inadequate superegos. This Oedipal complex in girls was termed as the Electra complex and is evidently problematic, to say the least. Firstly, according to Freudian theory, psychosexual development in girls revolves around and is determined by the male sexual organ (or lack thereof). He calls the female genitalia (clitoris) a "stunted penis". This, of course, portrays an excessively derogatory image of women: as though they are degenerate creatures, perpetually starved of psychosexual adequacy. Undoubtedly, a misogynistic take.

Additionally, Freud's analysis of the oedipal complexes in children with reference to the role the parents play was also one that was entirely heteronormative in nature. He insists that each child necessarily has two parents, a woman and a man, using this setting to relate it to the "natural" gender role that the child must take up. If it was a boy, he must take on after his father and if it's a girl, she must follow in her mother's footsteps.

Freud used his tripartite personality structure and correlated it to his theory of Oedipal complex to justify how men are morally superior to women. He furthered the phenomenon of castration anxiety versus the lack therein by asserting that because the superego enables boys to resolve their oedipal complex, men have superior morals. They grow up to be creatures driven by logic, morals, and intellect. Thus, they are "naturally" better decision-makers.

On the contrary, since the oedipal complex in girls is never actually resolved, but only deferred, women are lesser beings. They grow up to be driven by their impulses, emotions, and sensitivities, since their superego was less punitive to them in childhood due to the lack of castration anxiety which, according to Freud, would have solved the problem.

Thus, arises the classic sexist view of women as insatiable creatures, not knowing what is right for them. Since she does not possess the ever-longed-for male genitalia, she needs a man to "complete her". Owing to the female reproductive function, Freud believed, women are "naturally" better suited for care and nurturing than men are.

Interestingly, while the phallic stage is common to both the sexes, the Oedipal complex in females alone is brought into question.

Love or desire for one's mother is understa-

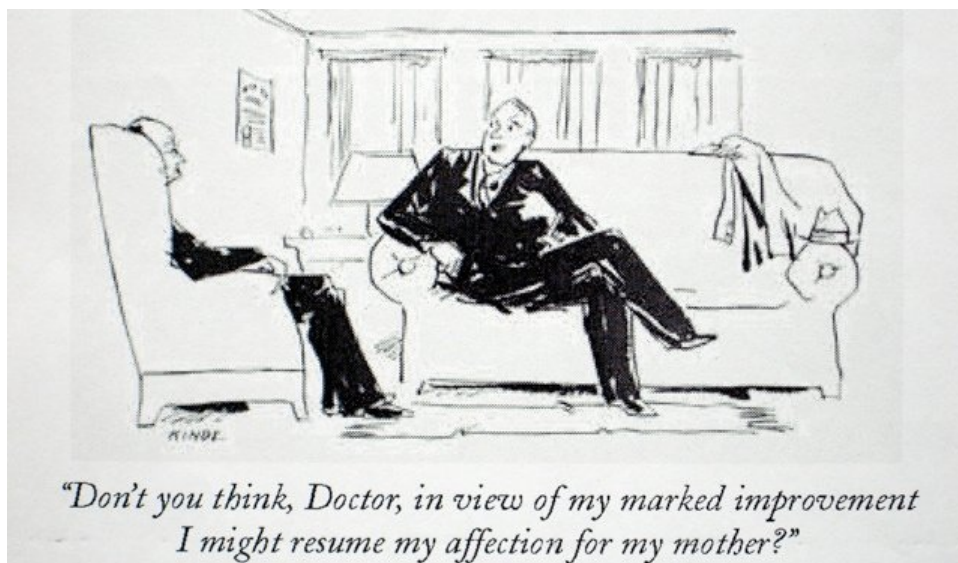
ndably natural, considering the intimacy children share with their birth giver in their formative years. This was maintained in boys. For girls, however, their desire towards their father was the result of 'a lack' of sorts. Thus, in Freud's work, we notice a consistent pattern wherein the male is considered the norm, while females were looked down upon as anomalous. The oedipal complex in males is a natural phenomenon propelled by the existence of the phallus, and the internal conflict is resolved and abolished on account of the castration complex, giving way to identification and erasure of the oedipal desires. For females, such a shattering of the oedipal desire never takes place. In fact, her desire for the father is portrayed as unnatural since it develops only because she lacks a penis. So she transfers her desires from her mother to her father at first, and then onto the desire for a male child. The castration complex ends the oedipal complex in boys but births it in girls. The greater complexity and Freudian obfuscation of the Oedipal complex in females only belatedly came to light.

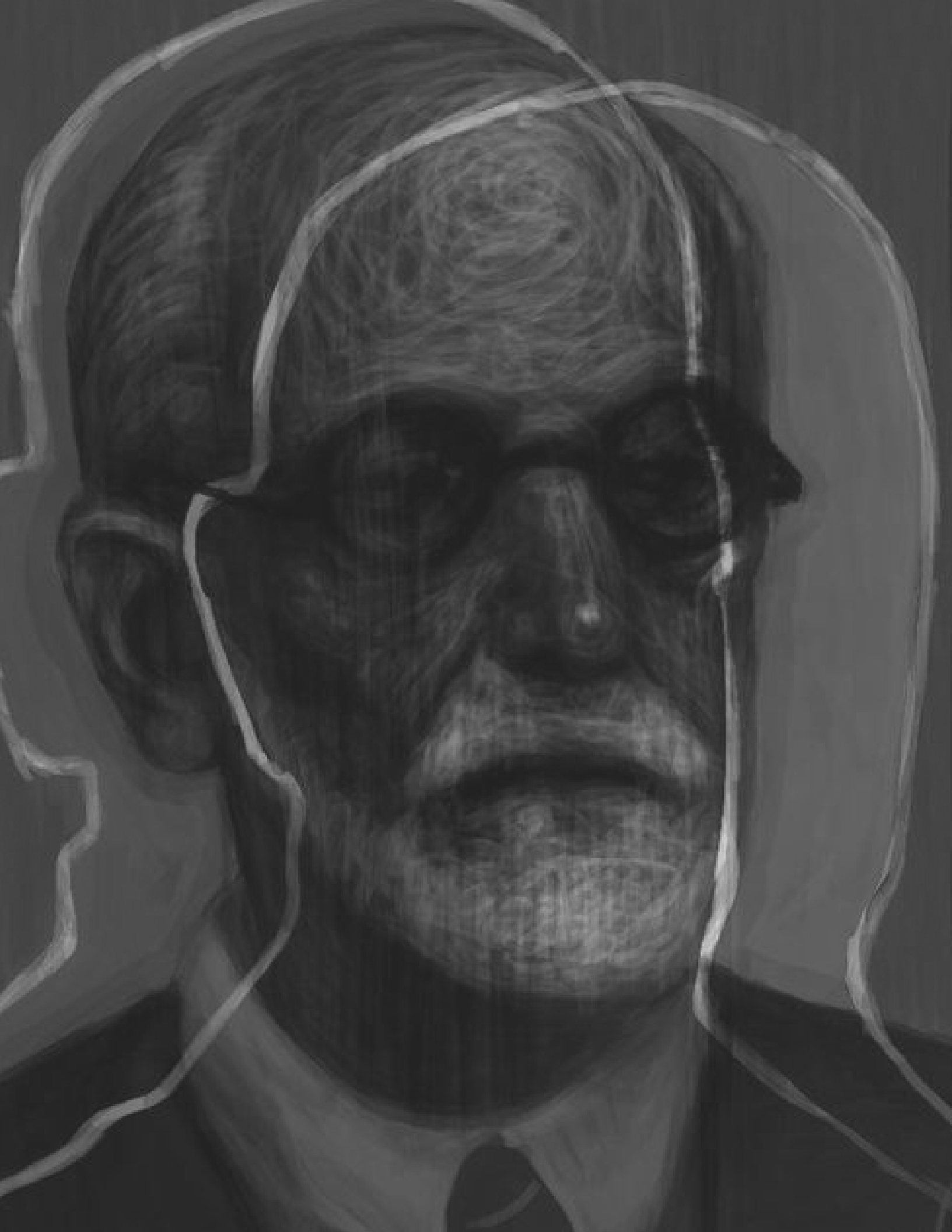
Conclusively, then, castration anxiety accords a psychical relevance to the given sexual difference of the genitalia and it means different things for the two sexes, thereby hinting at biological determinism behind manifestations of masculinity and femininity. An outrageous notion for Feminist literature which has proved that masculine and feminine do not automatically correspond with anatomy or biological sex. In fact, the entire problem surrounding Freudian conceptualisation of female sexuality was that he focused on the sexual difference between males and females and established males as the superior being, claiming biologism. As Simone de Beauvoire points out in her book *The Second Sex* (1949), this male superiority was one that is socially induced and was neither biology nor innate, 'one is not born, but rather becomes a woman', going on to explain the cultural determinism in who a woman "should" be and how she becomes so. Even Betty Friedan, in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), wrote how the Freudian conceptualisation of women and sexuality reflected the patriarchal views of Victorian society. His understanding of female sexuality was derivative from his understanding of

male sexuality and a telling example of this would be his diagnosis of sexual frigidity in women, rightly criticised by Anne Koedt in *The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm* (1970).

In the first instance, Freud described this phenomenon as an "illness" which arose out of the "problem of femininity". In other words, he believed that these sexually frigid women were unable to mould themselves to accept their "natural" feminine role in society and hence, were unable to experience the sexual pleasure exclusive to females which he believed was that of vaginal orgasm, attained exclusively through intercourse with a man. Clearly, this fell in line with not only his theory of biological determinism of femininity as a natural phenomenon in women, but also norms of heterosexuality and his belief of women being defined by their reproductive function. His proposed solution was psychiatric care to help the woman understand her primary reproductive function, which he believed was an intrinsic aspect of femininity and female desire. According to his theory of psychosexual development, in the final or fifth stage (post-puberty), a person's libido is located in the genitals (which becomes the vagina for women) and maximum pleasure can only be achieved through sexual intercourse between a man and a woman, unlike in the Phallic stage where the libido could be satisfied through masturbation only.

Freud failed to view female sexuality and pleasure as a concept unrelated to male sexuality and pleasure. Had he incorporated the requisite cultural and social specificity to his female patients in order to understand femininity in isolation, perhaps he would not have generalised it as this complex and obscure concept that women are supposed to automatically identify with and adhere to. His theory of female libido being transferred from the clitoris to the vagina was both scientifically unfound and sexist. As a result of Freudian studies, the vagina was made a synecdoche for mature and healthy femininity, premised in male dependency. Naturally, feminists in the late 1960s like Anna Koedt had to write extensively on female pleasure being centered in the clitoris which was then made the symbol of liberated, autonomous women.





ndably natural, considering the intimacy children share with their birth giver in their formative years. This was maintained in boys. For girls, however, their desire towards their father was the result of 'a lack' of sorts. Thus, in Freud's work, we notice a consistent pattern wherein the male is considered the norm, while females were looked down upon as anomalous. The oedipal complex in males is a natural phenomenon propelled by the existence of the phallus, and the internal conflict is resolved and abolished on account of the castration complex, giving way to identification and erasure of the oedipal desires. For females, such a shattering of the oedipal desire never takes place. In fact, her desire for the father is portrayed as unnatural since it develops only because she lacks a penis. So she transfers her desires from her mother to her father at first, and then onto the desire for a male child. The castration complex ends the oedipal complex in boys but births it in girls. The greater complexity and Freudian obfuscation of the Oedipal complex in females only belatedly came to light.

Conclusively, then, castration anxiety accords a psychological relevance to the given sexual difference of the genitalia and it means different things for the two sexes, thereby hinting at biological determinism behind manifestations of masculinity and femininity. An outrageous notion for Feminist literature which has proved that masculine and feminine do not automatically correspond with anatomy or biological sex. In fact, the entire problem surrounding Freudian conceptualisation of female sexuality was that he focused on the sexual difference between males and females and established males as the superior being, claiming biologism. As Simone de Beauvoir points out in her book *The Second Sex* (1949), this male superiority was one that is socially induced and was neither biology nor innate, 'one is not born, but rather becomes a woman', going on to explain the cultural determinism in who a woman "should" be and how she becomes so. Even Betty Friedan, in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), wrote how the Freudian conceptualisation of women and sexuality reflected the patriarchal views of Victorian society. His understanding of female sexuality was derivative from his understanding of male sexuality and a telling example of this would be his diagnosis of sexual frigidity in women, rightly criticised by Anne Koedt in *The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm* (1970).

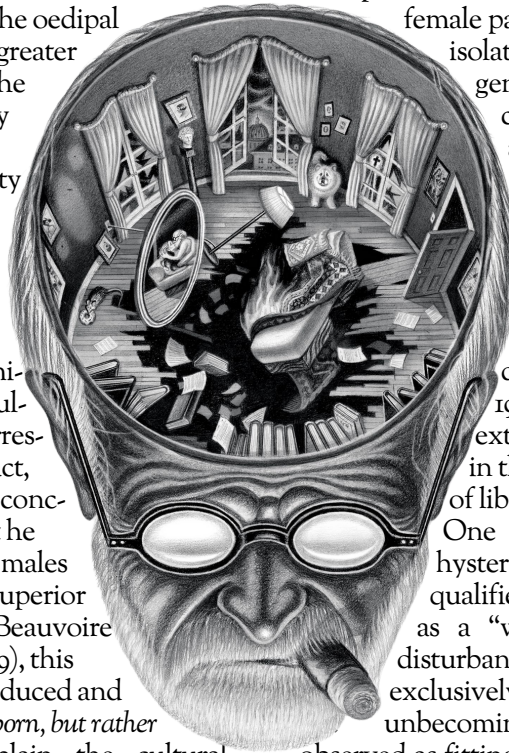
In the first instance, Freud described this phenomenon as an "illness" which arose out of the "problem of femininity". In other words, he believed that these sexually frigid women were unable to mould themselves to accept their "natural" feminine role in society and hence, were unable to experience the sexual pleasure exclusive to females which he believed was that of vaginal orgasm, attained exclusively through intercourse with a man. Clearly, this fell in line with not only his theory of biological determinism of femininity as a natural phenomenon in women, but also

norms of heterosexuality and his belief of women being defined by their reproductive function. His proposed solution was psychiatric care to help the woman understand her primary reproductive function, which he believed was an intrinsic aspect of femininity and female desire. According to his theory of psychosexual development, in the final or fifth stage (post-puberty), a person's libido is located in the genitals (which becomes the vagina for women) and maximum pleasure can only be achieved through sexual intercourse between a man and a woman, unlike in the Phallic stage where the libido could be satisfied through masturbation only.

Freud failed to view female sexuality and pleasure as a concept unrelated to male sexuality and pleasure. Had he incorporated the requisite cultural and social specificity to his female patients in order to understand femininity in isolation, perhaps he would not have generalised it as this complex and obscure concept that women are supposed to automatically identify with and adhere to. His theory of female libido being transferred from the clitoris to the vagina was both scientifically unfound and sexist. As a result of Freudian studies, the vagina was made a synecdoche for mature and healthy femininity, premised in male dependency. Naturally, feminists in the late 1960s like Anna Koedt had to write extensively on female pleasure being centered in the clitoris which was then made the symbol of liberated, autonomous women.

One can also take up Freudian diagnosis of hysteria in women and how that was equally qualified and misleading. Historically constructed as a "woman's disease", feminine disorder, or disturbance in femininity, hysteria has been linked exclusively to women in ways that were scathing and unbecoming. The repertoire of its symptoms were observed as fitting to the female nature, an opinion that was no doubt birthed in the misogyny of the times. As the Victorian physician Edward Tilt wrote, "Mutability is characteristic of hysteria because it is characteristic of women" or the French physician August Fabre who wrote, "all women are hysterical and ... every woman carries with her the seeds of hysteria. Hysteria, before being an illness, is a temperament, and what constitutes the temperament of a woman is rudimentary hysteria."

However, despite propagating such qualified views on hysteria, Freud was on the right path when he concluded that the "illness" was the result of some degree of past trauma (mostly sexual or physical abuse), thereby causing psychological distress which manifested itself in the form of physical abnormalities. What he failed to conceive was recognising traumatic memory as a social or collective response. According to Freudians, the female mind is incapable of overcoming its basal oedipal instincts and hence, is more vulnerable to the hysterics. This, again, is scientifically unfounded. For one, there have been several cases of hysteria



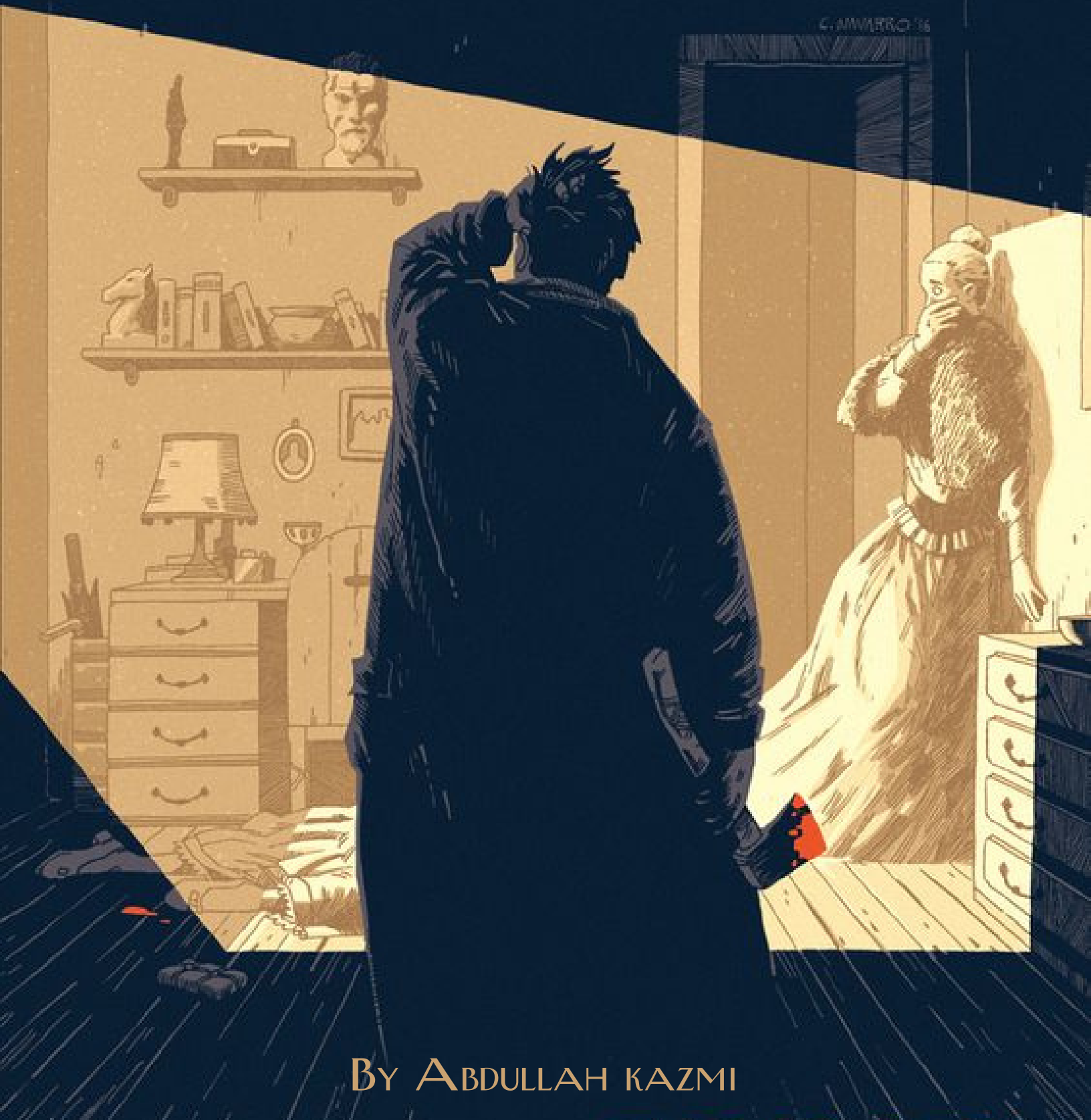
in males that have been documented since the seventeenth century.

The problem is that they were overlooked as “weakness”, or “effeminate”, or “womanish” as though the very existence of culturally “feminine” qualities in men was the symptom of a disease, stemming from the gendered rhetoric in the disease that was enabled by Freud during his early studies. Thus, the discourse around male hysteria, instead of bringing about the realisation that hysteria has been made to represent the worst aspects of femininity, reinforced the belief that it is the disease of the weak and overly sensitive. As a result, the very term ‘hysteria’ gained a social context where to call a man hysterical was considered the lowest of insults, as though stripping him of his very maleness. Doctors, then, started treating male patients of the disease under pseudonyms like ‘neurospasme’ or ‘tarassis’ in France. But let’s come back to Freud in particular. As the pioneering brain behind the treatment of hysteria, his research was not nearly thorough enough. He failed to consider the social and cultural context, wherein norms of heteronormativity, rigid gender roles, and patriarchal ideals dictated the lives of women. Non-conformity to any one of such aspects often became a causative factor behind the anxiety, sexual frigidity, and other “abnormalities” then associated with hysteria.

Many have claimed that it is unfair to critique Freudian theory for not being feminist for psychoanalysis does not require feminism at all, it is based on common human factors that were observed,

recorded and tested. However, Freud’s quest to unearth the “riddle” or “complexity” of femininity was never matched by a similar search for masculinity. Freud seemed to believe that psychoanalytic theory would not need a theory explaining masculinity, as it existed. Resultantly, men and the male perspective became the norm and came to be equated with humanity. Femininity became synonymous with sexual difference and women came about as the “problem” to be explained, always relative to the male perspective. Freud, while justifying his oedipal theories drew references to such happenings in tribes where the young male would kill his father and marry his mother, etc. He did not acknowledge the angle of power dynamics that existed among such tribes in between the males and the aspect of women being viewed as possessions that were to be “owned” or “won”. He had female patients accounting for having been sexually assaulted by their fathers and diagnosed pre-puberty sexual fantasies or desires that they had towards these men, thereby reaching his conclusions of penis envy and the electra complex. However, it was important to factor in child grooming by the parent and how easily impressionable the minds of children are. He considered sexuality to be something innate and intrinsic which is what created a lot of the misgendered rhetoric that exists in his works. However, he did have multiple patients who found his method of the “talk therapy” in psychoanalysis to be cathartic and it went a long way in making the realities of these patients a lot more bearable, at the time.

READ DOSTOEVSKY'S **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT** THROUGH THE LENS OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGY



By ABDULLAH KAZMI

Fyodor Dostoevsky is one of the most revered and celebrated authors that have emerged from the Russian literary scene. Part and parcel of the 19th century

“Golden Era”, writers such as Gogoi, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky himself, and many others were famous for their multi-layered plot, multi-themed texts and creative writing techniques. Such in-depth literary texts with rich content and context helped in shaping the collective consciousness of the time period they were written in and have undoubtedly also stood the test of time.

Staying relevant and important is one of the most important hallmarks of any good literary text. Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* is one such work that has remained relevant over the years. The novel was first published in the literary journal “The Russian Messenger” in twelve monthly instalments during 1866. It was later published as a single volume text. The premise of the novel is based around the character of Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov, a former university student living in extreme poverty in St. Petersburg, Russia, who devises a far-fetched plan of murdering and robbing an elderly pawnbroker Alena Ivanovna.

A genuine work of philosophical fiction, Dostoevsky through his magnum opus tries to draw the attention of the readers towards his understanding of certain pertinent questions plaguing our society such as What makes one draw towards and commit a crime? Is the social setup in itself criminal? What is the larger aim of punishment? What is the basis for suffering? Does a man change? Is there space for repentance? These questions have not moved away from our social discourse, which makes this text relevant in our reading circles even today.

Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, apart from being a philosophical novel, is also a social commentary on the Tsarist Russia of the 19th century. He effectively puts together characters belonging to different classes and the ensuing class conflict. Dostoevsky’s poor are drawn from the erstwhile middle-class who had lost their social status and capital. The writer’s socialist leanings are given voice through the central characters as they highlight the socio-economic divide that had engulfed Russian society.



Illustration by Tom Gauld

In *Raskolnikov*, we have a young student who had studied law at the university and later fell into extreme poverty. He is characterised as a person with little to no friends at the university, who does not wish to revive/revitalise his fledgling career path through ordinary means.

“This was not because he was cowardly and abject, quite the contrary; but for some time past, he had been in an



overstrained irritable condition, verging on hypochondria. He had become so completely absorbed in himself, and isolated from the fellows that he dreaded meeting, not only his landlady but anyone at all. He was crushed by poverty, but the anxieties of his position had of late ceased to weigh upon him. He had given up attending to matters of practical importance; he had lost all desire to do so."

From the beginning, Raskolnikov comes across as a person of interest and intrigue. Dostoevsky brilliantly puts together a character that, apart from being in extreme poverty and facing daily miseries, also suffers from extreme mental anguish, stress, and manifestations of a psychosomatic disorder. As the story progresses, Raskolnikov becomes aware of his fear of carrying out a particular task.

Interestingly, the name Raskolnikov is derived from the Russian word Raskolnik, meaning "schismatic" or "divided," which is very appropriate in itself as Rodion finds himself separated or alienated from human society. Most of the time, Rodion is in a deep state of scepticism and remains unappreciative of his family and friend's efforts in helping him out. He believes that he belongs to a superhuman group and to achieve his higher purposes, he can transgress certain moral standards of society. However, it is only after he murders the elderly pawnbroker and her sister Elizabeth, that we see that Rodion find himself torn by the guilt of the crime, shaken by bouts of delirium, and grappling with the thought of confessing his crime throughout the story. Later, it is his love for Sonya and his belief (of her also being a fellow social transgressor) that helps him transcend his contempt for humanity and finally accept that he is an ordinary human being and not a Napoleonic Superhuman.

Crime and Punishment being a psychological literary work, Dostoevsky's use of interior monologue and stream of consciousness techniques penetrates an element of split personality into his characters. This technique helps the reader understand why a particular character acts in a particular manner. Raskolnikov's mental anguishes, his bouts of delirium, torturous period, nightmares, flashbacks and hallucinations after the crime are just not his own. The in-depth character analysis and the enquiry into the psychoanalytical features of the central character such as his unconscious mind thought repression, the element of split personality (post the occurrence of crime), and detachment from everyone and everything make it a gripping read.

Dostoevsky effectively makes use of the space and the period between the crime

committed and the punishment meted out to Raskolnikov, which also adds up to the growing mental burden and anguish of the reader. This state of emotional attachment is a result of how the character of Raskolnikov develops in the novel. The extremely poor living conditions and health issues in the life of Rodion, coupled with bravely worded correspondence to his family, all reflect a major sense of communication gap and state of helplessness jeopardising Rodion. Dostoevsky through this narrative transportation technique takes the readers on this journey as witnesses to a crime and the turbulent inner workings of a criminal's (Rodion) psyche in 19th century St. Petersburg.

It is interesting to note that around the time this novel was written, the European Society bore witness to the questioning of religion, social structures, morality, societal, and traditional values by philosophers, theologians, poets etc, which led to the dawn of a secular age. It is in this context, that Dostoevsky brings forward a very pertinent question through his magnum opus, "What would become of humanity in a world that has regarded religion as obsolete and that would soon lose its moral centre?"

Sigmund Freud in the 20th century said that "Dreams are often direct manifestations of a person's unconscious mind." Even in the novel,

dreams represent the fullest expression of potentiality. It is one such dream of the mare-beating (an incident from Raskolnikov's childhood) on realising the meaning of which Raskolnikov is shaken to the core.

"My God!" he cries, *"can it really be, that I will take an axe and strike her on the head, smash her skull, that I will slip in the sticky warm blood... with the axe... my God can it be?"*

Dostoevsky introduces this passage about Raskolnikov's dream with a very profound idea that *"in a morbid condition of the brain, dreams often have a singular actuality, a vividness, and extraordinary semblance of reality."* The singular actuality of the dream does come true in the novel, with the murder of the elderly pawnbroker at the hands of Raskolnikov.

Daniel Ross Goodman in his article shares a very interesting observation about how individuals feel swept along by a tide of uncontrollable events. He draws an interesting parallel, between the protagonist Mersault from Albert Camus's Novella *The Stranger* and Raskolnikov. As Mersault fires three extra bullets in the already dead Arab's body, so does Raskolnikov kill Elizabeth after he has already murdered Alena Ivanovna, the elderly pawnbroker. Daniel argues that *"once we get free reign over violence and depravity, there is no telling how far such currents carry us"*. The similar phrasing used by



Illustration by Stanley Wyatt

both the authors in their work “*Man grows used to everything*” (Crime and Punishment) and “*Mother used to say that one gets used to just about everything*” (The Stranger) leaves one reeling over the similarities between the two classic characters and how much Dostoevsky has influenced modernist writers of the last century.

One cannot overlook certain psycho-social features while reading the text. The novel is set in a period when the Russian elite and aristocracy were losing status, economic hold, power, and control. Even Raskolnikov’s pre-meditated murder plan was a form of individualistic revolt against the social order. The development of other important characters is also closely intertwined with the socio-political development of Russian society. Few major characters lose their moral compass as well as their sense of self to alcoholism, greed, stalking, and manipulation. It is through the visuals, realism, hardships, and unbearable misery of his central characters that Dostoevsky can humanise the struggle and extreme poverty in the life of Raskolnikov and other major characters.

The text spans over 500 pages and it is only upon complete reading that one fully comprehends Dostoevsky’s nuanced way of putting forward his central idea. The writer’s terrifying experience with summary justice and the cruel penal system of Tsarist Russia compelled him to write a text that focused not just on the crime and what punishment is meted out, but also on the motives behind the perpetration of a crime. Here, readers become first-hand participants in the psychological tension before and after the crime is committed, and slowly come upon the realisation that the *real punishment is not just from the legal system*

that is directed at Rodion, but it is the constant mental anguish, the glowing indifference, unbearable social order, and the urge to follow in the footsteps of the great Men of History.

“The darker the night, the brighter the stars, The deeper the grief, the closer is God!”

In an unequal, unjust, and exploitative world, where humanity is castigated at every step, the writer is cautious and does not intend to give in to the new secular ideals regarding religion as obsolete. This led to Dostoevsky glorifying the Christian humility and suffering (which Rodion undergoes in prison) as the ideal path towards reformation. Despite putting to use Existential, Freudian, and Marxist voices in the text, Dostoevsky retains his Christian understanding and thought process at the end.

The characteristic features of human rage and adherence to violence are Dostoevsky’s indication of what the world would look like in a God-less and morally depraved world. Today, human greed, aggression, and alienation from society at large have elevated to a different level altogether. Fast forward to the 21st century: a free reign over violence and power has led to a couple of World Wars, constant geopolitical invasions, the oppressed being deprived of human rights, and justification of violence and oppression all of which have become harsh and pertinent reality of our world. In the midst of these developments, Humanity somewhere has lost insight into its thought process and actions. Growing used to a world order that does not have a moral and spiritual balance is the norm of the day: *Man indeed gets used to everything!!* Dostoevsky was right after all.

EMERSON AND TRANSCENDENTALISM

BY ANANYA RAVI SHANKAR

The article draws parallels among numerous works of the famous American author, Ralph Emerson, and the concept of transcendentalism. The direct association is further elucidated with multiple references of other transcendentalist poets of the same era.

Transcendentalism was a literary movement that established and believed that all human beings to be inherently good and pure. It accused societal institutions of corrupting their purity and strongly favored subjective intuition over objective empiricism, thereby establishing individualism, self-reliance, integrity, equality, and optimism. It doesn't believe in dualism, which is a distinct binarism of concepts (such as body and mind, god and humans, etc.), instead emphasizing on the present life and being one with God in his spiritual essence through metamorphosed nature. This idea had its genesis in 19th century America and Ralph Waldo Emerson is considered as the "Father of transcendentalism". He was

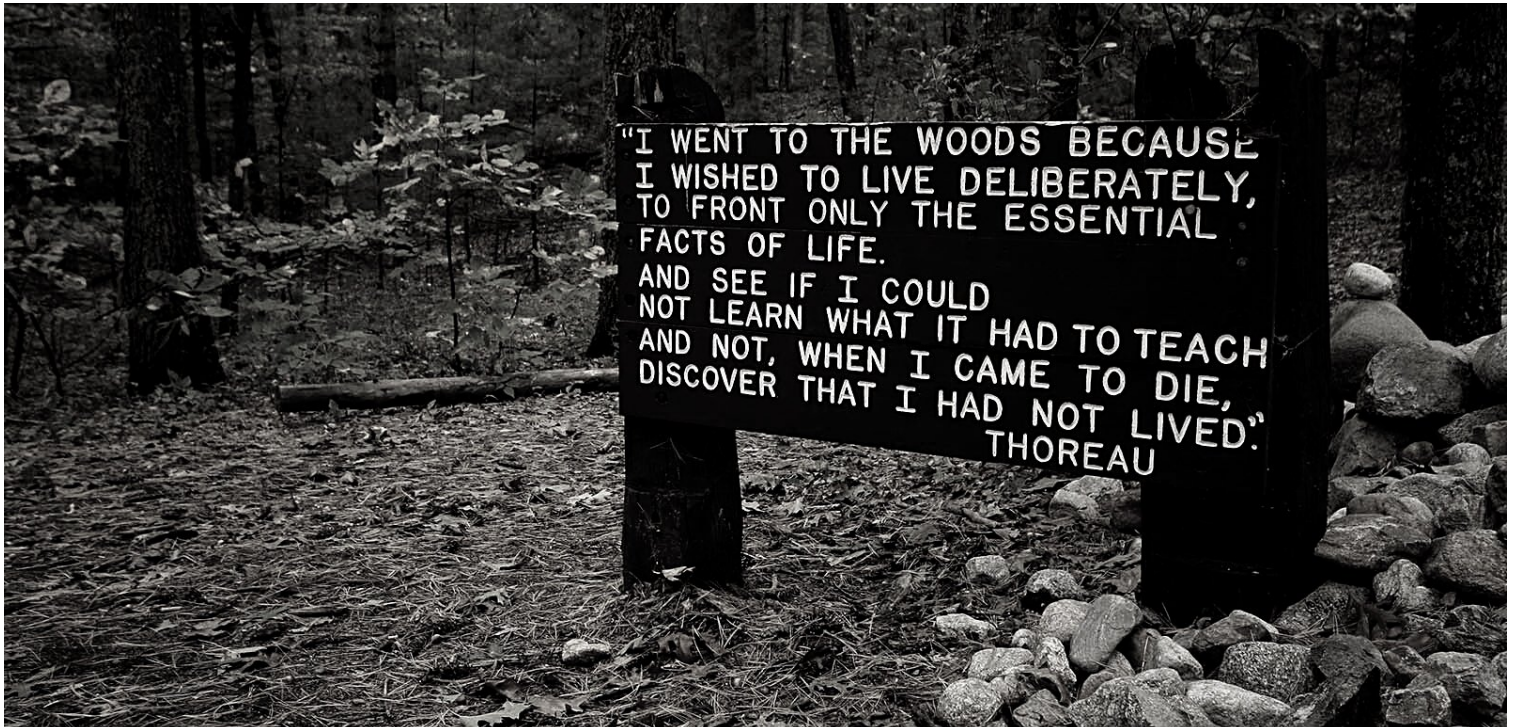
majorly influenced by the Eastern philosophies, especially Indian. The Upanishads and Indian poets such as Kalidasa swayed him to a large extent, all of which was reflected in his later works such as the poem named "Brahma". Many readers like to draw parallels between Emerson's transcendentalism and Buddhism as there is evidence that he did study and get influenced by it.

Buddhism centers itself around enlightenment and a spiritual path of attaining it. Submitting to Buddha is one of the essential pillars of the religion, which Emerson's literary pieces emphasize upon as well. Another link that can be noticed is Zen buddhism emphasis's of letting go of worldly attachments while submitting to Buddha, to be one with the spiritual being. This is equivalent to what Emerson believed to be the purpose of transcendentalism. Several such associations can be interpreted while going through his works. Being the founder of transcendentalism, Emerson wrote all his prose around the same theme and made sure that his works reflected its characteristics.

Beyond the above-mentioned statements, Transcendentalism was the approach that many writers adhered to solely because they believed

that if a person was independent, self-reliant, and capable of following inherent goodness, he was also capable of going 'beyond the threshold' or 'transcending beyond' to be one with the true essence of divinity. Due to this school of thought, ample writers were influenced to believe in an individual's capability of being good and being able to transcend beyond the threshold of the physical senses of this materialistic world (Maya) and being able to dive into a deeper spiritual experience by just listening to their own will and judgments.

This ideology didn't sit well with numerous other authors who opposed the utopian beliefs and abstract values proposed by the transcendentalist movement. Writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Edgar Allan Poe vocalised their despise through several written pieces: be it Melville's famous book "Moby Dick" or Hawthorne's "The Blithedale Romance" (stemming from his dislike of Brook farm communal living experiment). Transcendentalism was argued to be overly optimistic and boundlessly idealistic in addition to being based on abstract concepts and heavy self-reliance.



On the other hand, there were more poets belonging to this period who were transcendentalists than ever before such as Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and Theodore Parker to name a few. Transcendentalists took progressive stands on women's rights, abolition, reform, and education. They criticized the government, organized religion, laws, social institutions, and creeping industrialization. They created an American "state of mind" in which imagination was better than reason, creativity was better than theory, and action was better than contemplation. They also had faith that all would be well because humans could transcend limits and reach astonishing heights.

As a transcendentalist himself, Emerson authored many pieces revolving around the main theme of transcendentalism, which is spirituality. His famous essay "Self-reliance" instructs its readers, to trust their own instincts and judgments to be one with God and nature, without an intermediary. He reimagined God through nature to be something vast, visible, and uncontainable. Emerson implied that everyone learns these basic truths: Envy is equivalent to ignorance; Imitation is suicide and opposite of self-acceptance; And though the universe has an abundance of goodness, people ought to work hard if they wish to inculcate these good things, instead of expecting everything to work of its own accord. Through this essay, Emerson stressed upon all elements of transcendentalism, mainly individualism, and how important it was to "trust thyself".

Haijing Liang elaborates on how Emerson "encourages the readers to free themselves from the constraints of conformity and give themselves back to their nature." By stating that "Nothing can bring you peace but yourself", Emerson emphasized the importance of individualism to reach the highest form of happiness. He focused on seemingly insignificant details to explain how life is "learning and forgetting and learning again". The reflection of these characteristics in his



work match the literary conventions of a literary piece to be categorized under transcendentalism.

Another work of Emerson, named "The Transcendentalist", was a lecture as well as an essay that laid the foundation of the same

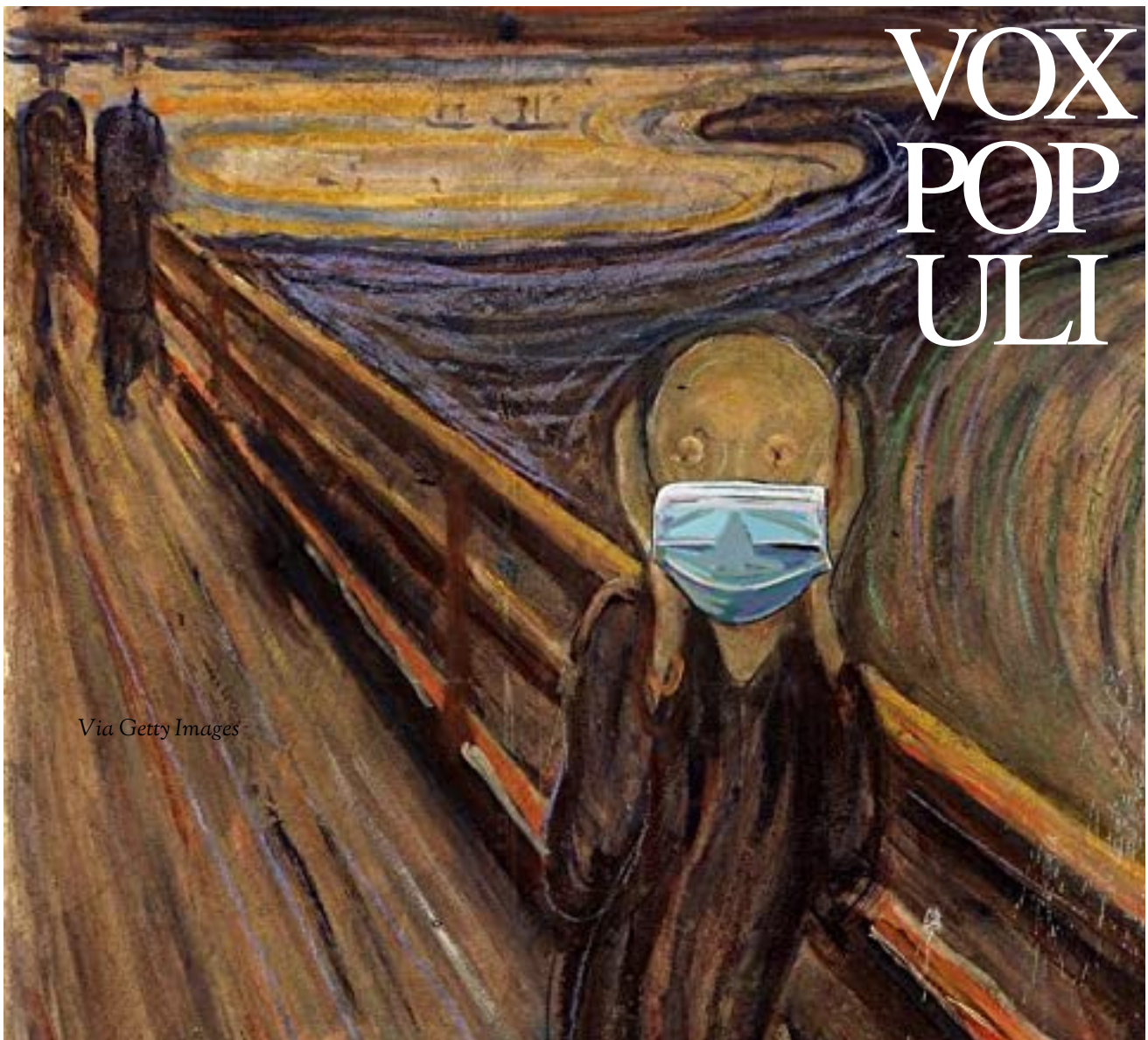


from the corruption of society. He also spoke about the lack of “old idealists” and the link between perception and reality in terms of transcendentalism. Along with this, he also shed light on John Locke and Kant’s debate on the forms of moral imperative and transcendentalism, as well as epistemology’s nature. He starts the essay by describing the transcendentalists and then further divides almost thirty paragraphs essay into three sections, the first indulging in a discussion contrasting materialism and transcendentalism in regards of realism, the second addressing the criticism and history of the movement and in the final section, he addresses the people, whom he believes, follow this movement. The last section also makes an attempt to mention the misunderstandings, between the public and the adherents of transcendentalism, and bridge the gap.

Emerson left an everlasting impact on the society as well as writers such as Henry Thoreau and Margaret Fuller. His death wasn’t the end of the movement, but instead it gave birth to a new generation of transcendentalists. His writings contributed majorly in the growth of American literature, thoughts, culture, and religion. He paved the way for other American writers and knit eastern philosophy with the West in an inspirational way.

philosophical movement. It was delivered at Masonic Temple in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1842. It later found its place in a doctrine called “American Transcendentalism”, written by Emerson himself. Through this essay, Emerson encouraged solitude, for it enables a person to be more in touch with nature and shield them





COVID-19: DISTRESS-20

The First Wave Of Existential Nihilism

With the rise in awareness of the impacts wrought by a globally debilitating pandemic, there is a clamour to address the tide of mental health issues it has brought along. The need to understand one's purpose and reason for existence at a time when most of us find ourselves struggling to remain productive or motivated, is a dire one. We found ourselves questioning the realities and worth of our lives all of which snowballed into a widespread existential crisis among the youth of today.

We asked a few people from varying backgrounds and age groups for their take on mental health, existentialism, and other forms of struggles that they might have faced over the course of this interminable pandemic.

AARYAVART JOSHI

Student, IIT Patna

Well I cannot explain why youth today think negatively about the meaning of life. There have been moments when I have been mentally exhausted but I still found ways to get away from that. This pandemic has surely been cataclysmic but still there are so many ways to battle it out. The youth today are grasped by the fantasy world portrayed by the so called influencers and content creators on social media. They often forget the essence of life, their hobbies, and the things they enjoyed and dreamed about when they were young. I strive for the latter and (hence) smoothly sailed through the pandemic.

Human beings make life so interesting: Do you know that in a universe so full of wonders, they have managed to invent boredom?!

NEHA

Student, Galgotias University

Yes, I sometimes wonder if life is meaningful? We have seen many celebrities, acquaintances, and loved ones dying during this covid period, which makes us or atleast me, think that we all have to die and sometimes suddenly at that! What is the significance of putting all this effort into relations and achievements? I think all these things happened earlier, too, but the pandemic has accelerated our wheel of thoughts. In lockdown, bored in houses, we all have got time to think for ourselves and to know ourselves and our lives. With speculation and introspection, I understand that even though there is always a chance of an abrupt ending, it is still worth the moments, challenges, fun, and all the conundrum we go through. It is just that we get sad or fall in crisis when we want to leave a legacy instead of living our lives to the fullest.

NEERAJ

Student, MERI

We get more aware of mental health issues during pandemic due to hearing news and doctors pointing out the issues pertaining to the feature of isolation of the COVID pandemic. But have we learnt the importance of good mental health and what is good mental health? I was busy with my life without taking a stop and thinking about what I was doing. But COVID gave me time to analyze myself. Wondering about the meaning of everything, ethics, and all the what ifs, is something which helped me gain insight into how to take a step back. Just plan thoroughly, struggle, and enjoy the fruits, whatever they might be, don't waste time thinking about things that will haunt you. Therefore, I always keep myself busy. You know the saying, 'An empty mind is the devil's dwelling.'

SUBOOR SAIFI

Student, Hindu College

To think and to feel is to be human. With plenty of time at my disposal I started thinking a lot. Ever since I have begun trying to deduce the meaning of life and this world, I have realised that I have been dodging reality to fit in with the time frame of humanity. But now I realise that the span of our existence is just a speck of time. To think of leaving an impact is stupid. This world has a lot to offer a lot in all its extravagance, things we can't even fathom by reasoning it with our rudimentary knowledge of self made principles and theories. How stupid it is to complicate things so simple, to write verses in hackneyed jargons about mundane when you can just let it happen, feel. To be still and do nothing, just stop being the wannabe misfit in this perfect system of symmetry and accuracy.

DIKSHIKA GUPTA

Graphic Era

This pandemic has led us to believe that our lives are unpredictable. Not only has it forced us to be confined within four walls, but also led us to question our very existence. I believe existential crisis somehow forces us to make sense of our life and face a terrible question: What is the point of this life if I am doomed to be dead one day? Feelings of isolation and depression make us question our being. Finding answers to something unexplainable, looking for answers we don't want to hear is something which our brain subconsciously processes. This side, I believe, will one day give this crisis the face of an impending mental health disaster.

ANKIT

Student, MMAC

I remember the poem "Keeping Quiet" by Pablo Neruda in which he talks about stopping every activity and just thinking about what we are doing. Isn't Existential Crisis also about taking a step back and asking questions? Questions are always worth asking, but the problem arises when we are desperate for quick answers and reach an early conclusion. Yes, there is a significant rise in Existential Crisis and it is not a good sign. The youth is struggling to make sense of all that is going on, with teens suffering the most. Many of these people can't open up and talk freely with their family. Asking questions is the nature and power of youth but lack of guidance and absence of a calming presence or reassurance is sometimes the reason for the rise in existential crisis. It sometimes leads to severe mental disorders and hampers the development and liveliness of individuals.

RUPARNA CHAKRABORTY

*Student, Ram Lal Anand
College*

In my opinion, there are multiple reasons for the existential crisis being faced by the youth. To begin with, the pandemic. An obvious answer. When times are so unpredictable and a large part of youth, including us, are out of school and are now capable of earning money (or at least want to), it seems like time is running out. We've run out of years and we see our adulthood approaching and suddenly we feel as if we're clueless and we don't know what we're going to do. A lot of pressure ensues. Another reason could be comparison. Now, since digital platforms are growing, people get paid through Instagram too, which is a great opportunity of course. But when we start comparing ourselves to other creators who are successful, we fall into the deep trench of despair. Questioning our self worth based off of the views we get is toxic. We are stuck in a loop of questioning everything. Moreover, our generation is also recognizing, unlearning, and realizing a lot of problematic things that have been followed for centuries now. We question things. We try to change things. Break systems of oppression. All of it definitely takes a toll on our mental health, whether we recognize it or not. We're expanding our horizons and considering doing things that make us happy rather than doing things that are expected out of us because of stereotypes. And that involves risks. I could say we're waking up and realizing what a horrific world we've made this Earth into. And we feel the need to break free from it. At the back of our mind we know our future is shrinking even if we don't mention it all the time. All of these reasons push us into an existential crisis, including me.

SARANYA BATRA

Student, University College London

The ongoing pandemic has brought with it a long list of problems- economic, social, and interpersonal. Probably the most serious issue experienced by every person in this period is the psychological impact of the pandemic. COVID-19 forced individuals to make extreme changes to their daily lifestyle by staying in complete isolation. We are social beings, and therefore, this absence of human interaction accelerated the rates of mental health disorders especially in the youth. The constant worry about the high instability of the future and its consequent impact on their jobs and relationships led them to question the very essence of their being. This existential crisis is a result of the anxiety felt due to these limitations in our freedom and uncertainty.

In a world where we all are trying to unveil the true purpose of our existence, this unforeseen pandemic has deeply stalled the process of self-realization.

NIDHI

Student, CCS University

Existential crisis is about asking about life and its meaning. I think we all have been doing it since our very childhood. We all have an inquisitive and somewhat philosophically curious mind. I don't think there is much of a rise but it is just that existential crisis is visible and gaining popularity, in our jokes and sometimes in our own stories. We all have been more active online than before. I don't think it is a sign of impending mental health cases, instead it can lead to mental health issues. In most of the mental health cases there are causes other than existential crisis, though it may be correlated.

VASUNDHARA

Student, Hindu College

I think the past 2 years have made us realise some things that we could not have on our own. Our generation demands reason for everything, from a simple 'no' when you ask about going out to following a god your family follows, and it's only fair that we question our lives and demand a reason. Because the recent generations are more informed and more aware than ever before we tend to question things more. Not all of this necessarily points towards an impending mental health crisis, though we are more aware of our own mental health conditions than the people who came before us. When a person lives inside all day, with not much to do, I think they will obviously question their worth and the meaning of life.

DEEPANSHU SAINI

Student, Delhi University

I have never experienced it as a crisis per se, but from the past one year I have also been seeing many of my peers mentioning an 'Existential Crisis'. Though whether or not does Life have worth is a basic question to ask, we never get a certain answer. Youth nowadays is fast moving. I have no idea of past generations and how they acted when they were of our age. Youth wants everything quick, and therefore, sitting at home because of the pandemic, without much interaction, is something which has affected all of us. With joys of life interrupted suddenly, we are bound to ask certain questions and try to find an answer within if we can't get it from outside.

*(Compiled by Anupa P, Nakul
Raghav and Uttkarsh Chauhan)*



IMMERSE IDOLS, EMBRACE IDEALS

BY VAIBHAV SINGH

While this title may sound attractive and even attract iconoclasts, this author would like to give a disclaimer that this piece, burdened with the great cause of enlightening the human race, does not in any way appeal to those sentiments. Nonetheless, as some ideas take shape the same shall be presented in your service unadulterated.

I intend to express the extent of power wielded by social media influencers in our everyday lives and remark on the negative impacts brought about by constant exposure to social media. If I dare say so, I would even

like to suggest measures to redeem the human spirit from this onslaught.

Today's era has aptly gained the name of 'Information Age' with billions and trillions of bytes of data moving rapidly from small handheld devices to large mainframes and back. Social media has allowed all of us to unite in this revolution. Nobel laureate Elias Canetti in his book *Crowds and Power* meticulously explains how 'touch' forms one of the most intimate forms of contact for us humans. Any unsolicited touch from a stranger fuels fears in us.

When this intimate perimeter is broken, a crowd starts to form with everyone gradually losing their individuality and thinking under the influence of power that the crowd wields as a whole. Social media seems to have bypassed this very step and created a crowd of millions worldwide who are vulnerable to being swayed easily by the one controlling their collective fancy. Rather than bodily contact, shared intellectual stimulation seems to have brought together many in one experience. The growing use of social media campaigns and the use of analytical tools like Cambridge Analytica points towards how crowds have got a virtual makeover. In the times of Covid-19 which has prevented large gatherings, events have shifted to online crowds.

A crowd, however, remains so only till it doesn't descend into a melee or chaos. An important factor to ensure the stability of the crowd is for it to have a leader or a mobilising agent who wields influence over it (the collective stimulation). This gives the crowd leader immense power over shaping the thought process that the crowd undergoes. While the physical set-up of a crowd has a short shelf life, the same is not true for a virtual crowd. Constant exposure to intellectual stimulation controlled by someone else keeps us in a constant state of mind of that of a crowd. Social media is indeed killing individuality.

While everyone can be a content creator, everyone is not. Only a few, as in a physical set-up, exploit this opportunity to lead the others. This author may here express an Elitist theory worldview but it is difficult to deny the existence of such order. The only consolation to be held is in Vilfredo Pareto's Circulation of Elite Theory allowing for chances of non-Elites entering the Elite club. However, the issue of importance here is that while we all are being made to believe that we are our masters, in reality, we are becoming alienated from ourselves. Our minds are constantly being shaped into particular formats

suiting the needs of the few.

Easy access to the lives of those considered to be successful in their fields allows them to be in the power of shaping public opinion. Rather than pressure groups and citizen bodies, it is a handful who shape our mindset. Donald Trump is an apt example of how these people in positions of considerable influence can mobilise people into crowds. Hate campaigns on social media are another example. In this process, many youngsters often start fancying a few as role models and idols.

This exposes them to the risks of disillusionment and a break of trust.



What the virtual crowd often forgets is that the social media lives of influencers are not representative of their actual lifestyles.

Ellen DeGeneres, a popular icon known for a fun-loving and considerate nature was blasted on social media for being the opposite off-camera, with the show's staff expressing great consternation at the toxic work environment she had wrought. The attempt here is not to malign someone but to show how vulnerable we all have become to collective deception. Indian ace wrestler Sushil Kumar's case is another unfortunate example in this line. His arrest in a gruesome murder case disillusioned many who wanted to emulate him. Many young wrestlers training at Chhatrasal Stadium used to pray before his

image seeking blessings for a successful wrestling career ahead. However, this disillusionment would discourage many from pursuing their dream. All that they had looked up to all their lives, turned out to be a sham. No human is perfect enough to be given the rank and regard of God. Bal Gangadhar Tilak's repudiation of Rukhmabai's case vs Dadaji Bhikaji (1885) with whom she refused to cohabit and solemnise her child marriage, shows how men of such stature, too, fail to be free from their own biases. Notably, Rukhmabai went on to become one of the first practising women doctors in India. Many religious figures convicted of rape, molestation and other heinous crimes still command the allegiance of the crowd that their managers have maintained in their absence with effective PR strategies. Their followers are often ready to go against the law for their sake because they are being controlled and led by someone else just like a herd of sheep.

Employing social media managers by various personalities is in itself a sign of how a non-state bureaucratic setup is controlling our lives. While George Orwell in his classic 1984, saw a state actor doing so using a device called Telescreen and elaborate propaganda machinery, in modern times our electronic devices are enough to shape our life choices from voting behaviour and shopping habits to career choices, etc. Surveillance tools like Pegasus have further laid our lives open and vulnerable to being led on a leash into one giant herd. Humans are not sheep though. Our ingenuity distinguishes us from other life forms. Many religions consider the human species to be the greatest of all to roam on earth. We have always found solutions, survived the darkest of times and we can do so today as well – collectively, with individuality. We can all collectively strive to break away from being a part of the crowd. While the idea may seem contrary to the objective it intends to achieve, it is not. At the level of genus, we all are one and share an equal commitment to ideas of equality, liberty, justice, rights, and common brotherhood. We should mobilise crowd formation around noble, liberating ideas making full use of communication technology. All we need to do to free ourselves from our present predicament is to shift the venue. Let us all move out of crowds eulogising few mortal beings and settle down at places celebrating our collective heritage.



HISTORY & CULTURE

IN THIS SECTION

- Sonalika Rani* 47. THE OLD FAITHFUL:
Desecularization In The '80s
- Melekwe Anthony* 52. FALLACIOUS RECTITUDES OF COLONIAL SUPPRESSION:
Jamaica Demands Reparations
- Seethalakshmi K S* 58. THE FORGOTTEN TALE OF THE MARICHUAPI MASSACRE
- Kirti Meena* 60. COLONIAL CHRONICLES OF CASTEISM
- Samya Verma* 66. THE PRIDE AND THE PERIPETEIA OF PARADISE:
A Tale of Two Lyrics
- Saesha Pandita* 79. ARTISTS ASSEMBLE:
How Pettiness Brought the Art World Together

THE OLD FAITHFUL: DESECULARIZATION IN THE '80S

God is back. He never left us. Neither did religion.

BY SONALIKA RANI

Religious faiths have been embedded in human lives and societies since times immemorial. They have accompanied humanity since the dawn of consciousness. The history of the existence of religious beliefs can be traced back to the birth of human civilization. The claim of their existence in an epoch before recorded history is further concretized with the discovery of terracotta figurines of Mother Goddess from Harappa and seals imprinted with temple records from Mesopotamia. They profoundly shaped the personal lives of individuals even within the privacy of their homes, their conduct, and their relations in public spaces from their very inception. Throughout ancient and medieval times, the workings of the state and the church were closely connected where both influenced and benefitted from each other. On one hand, the laws of the state were made under the heavy influence of religious codes which further reinforced religious beliefs, and on the other hand, rulers often legitimized their rule through this connection.

It was only with the advent of the 'Age of Enlightenment' in the mid 17th century CE in Europe, that the relation between the state and church seemed to change. The Enlightenment was attributed to an influx of science and rationality. It considered 'reason' as its central belief from which all authority and legitimacy flowed. The spread of rationality further paved the way for the development of Secularism and subsequently marked the beginning of the Modern Era. The Modern era was characterized by the rise of mercantilism, capitalism, industrialization, democracy, and most importantly the growth of tolerance as a socio-political belief.

In the Modern Era, scholars like Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx claimed that the modernization of society would bring about a decrease in the influence of religion as they considered religion and modernity to be antagonistic and mutually incompatible. Further, the secularization theory proposed that soon religion would lose social

significance and its place would be taken over by uniform constitutional morality based on ideas of modern liberalism and rationality. They also argued that modernization and secularisation would go hand in hand. This would separate the state and the church and would reduce religion to a mere personal belief to be practiced within the domestic sphere. But, the secularisation process has its own contradictions. It is not uniform across different time zones and fundamentally varies in vehemence.

Shockingly, events did not pan out according to the planned trajectory. Since the 1980s, desecularization has been in vogue. Religion has contradicted the secularists by coexisting with ever-modernizing science. During this time religion re-emerged from the domestic sphere it was once forcefully confined to by the modernization theory, and began reasserting itself in the public and political spheres. In this article, I endeavor to dive into the possible reasons behind this unexpected turn of events.

TRACING THROUGH THE PIECES OF EVIDENCE

Secularism, which compliments the 'Age of Enlightenment', was expected to infiltrate newer societies that were introduced to industrialization and modernization. These societies were expected to have an experience similar to that of 18th century Europe where religion lost its firm hold on public and political conduct. Although varying in intensity, Secularism did manage to play its role until the last decades of the twentieth century when newer ideologies and older cultures began to reassert themselves. To comprehend this unexpected trajectory, we need to investigate a few advancements occurring around the same time.

In the aftermath of the disintegration of the USSR in the 1990s and the subsequent collapse of all Communist challenges to Liberalism, political scientist Francis Fukuyama did not hesitate in drafting obituaries for all known ideologies except Liberalism. He propounded the idea of 'The End of History' in his

essay with the same name, wherein he stated that the fundamental ideological debate had ended, resulting in the demise of the 'history of ideas'. But, from these pages of history who emerged victorious? It is 'Western Liberalism' which was universally desirable because of the free market and competitive political system it offered. While liberal democracy did flourish unprecedentedly, the same era also witnessed multiple shreds of evidence of the revival of different ideologies often emerging from religions. Particularly, the Post-Communist countries and Soviet satellite states have undergone a wave of revivalism in the last three decades. This is primarily the result of the absence of strong pressure by the state to implement 'Atheistic Communism' and regress existing religions, all of which catalyzed religion to enunciate itself and regain its lost position in the public and political sphere.

This period is testified by the attempts of the Catholic Church to 'Re-christianize' France in 1978. The



Islamic Revolution in Iran: Demonstrators hold up a poster of exiled Islamic leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as protests in Tehran grow larger. This anti-Shah demonstration on December 10, 1978, took place near the Shayah monument which was built to commemorate the monarch's rule and power. (Michel Lipchitz for AP)

very next year, Iran witnessed the 'Islamic Revolution' which led to the overthrow of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last ruler of the Pahlavi dynasty. The culminated effect of the Iranian revolution was establishing Iran as the Islamic Republic under the rule of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. But politicized religion was not just an Islamic development. From the 1980s, the evangelical new Christian Right started attracting Americans to reassert Christian values and became increasingly prominent in the USA. The United Kingdom which claimed to be one of the most liberal countries was not bereft of the rising religious sentiments when Salman Rushdie's book 'The Satanic

Verses' was banned as a result of campaigns from the British Muslim communities. Parts of Africa and Asia were also affected by this wave of religious resurgence. There has been a rise of Buddhist religious fundamentalism in Sri Lanka and Burma. Even India witnessed the rise of right-wing religious fundamentalism and politicization of religion. The Indian subcontinent suffered the brunt of separatist demands from the extremist sections of the Sikh community during 1984. Even the Hindu revivalism being

witnessed since 1980's only seems to be growing in its influence and prominence in all areas of life.

Samuel P. Huntington, in his 1996 book, 'Clash of Civilizations', explains that when the USSR along with Communism fell and capitalism prevailed, the virtues of the latter were transmitted through globalization to third world countries. Hence, he argues that there was a transfer of prosperity to these third-world countries, resulting in their economic empowerment. Once these countries had fulfilled their material needs through the virtues of these economic gains, they began to promote their

culture and compare their value system to that of the West. During this process, they claimed that their morality and value system was not inferior to that of the west. This thought of Huntington was exemplified by countries like China, India, and Saudi Arabia asserting their culture, traditions, and religion globally. It was further predicted that once this assertiveness becomes dominant, there would be a clash between the civilizations of different countries and the fault lines for this would be religion. Indeed, at present every local area is heavily invested in advancing its separate religion.



Separatist demands from the extremist sections of the Sikh community to form Khalistan during the 1980s in India.

INTO THE POST-MODERN AND POST-SECULAR

These incidents of religious awakening around the globe are not just a cosmic coincidence, but rather a systematic breakdown of the secularization theory. This revival has also been linked to the advent of the postmodern era. Modernity came with a belief in enlightened thinking, objective truth, and trust in reason and science to solve all problems of life. But once society starts to question these established constructs and reflects skepticism towards the ideas of modernity, progress, objectivity, reason, and the grand narratives, it

moves towards the postmodernity. The postmodern era does not have a fixed initial point but writing and art depicting postmodernism started to creep into popular culture from the 1980s. It is based on a subjective approach.

Postmodernists have always questioned the universal claim of secularism. They find it flawed as it never fits the diverse communities present in different geographical locations. They have tried to explain Revivalism by arguing that when society moves beyond modernity it will also move beyond secularism. Under these circumstances, faith and religion will be rediscovered in the world and the achievements of Science and rationality will have lesser appeal than they once had.

According to the political scientist Gills Kepel, trends towards secularization were reversed around the 1970s when various religious revivals strung up. These revivals were aimed at recovering a sacred foundation for the organization of society, if necessary. Kepel also said that the aforementioned developments along with the new religious movements taking place

in various countries were examples of counter secularism. A similar belief was shared by Postmodern thinker Jose Casanova, who believed that in contemporary societies of the world, religious beliefs and practices were not dying out but in fact increasingly re-entering the public sphere.

A breakthrough in thinking about the relationship between religion and reason came when famous German sociologist Jürgen Habermas delivered his famous speech 'Faith and Knowledge'. Despite being a supporter of the secularist theory of modernity for years, he publicly denied faith in the Enlightenment project. He



Burning of the book 'Satanic Verses' in 1989.

propounded that Enlightenment secularism was incomplete, resulting in religion not disappearing from the public sphere. So, he advised the proponents of the Enlightenment to learn to coexist with it. In this way, Habermas initiated a discussion about post-secularism and the subsequent rise of religion in the postmodern era.

THE GLOBALIZATION REVOLUTION

The incredible expansion of Globalisation across economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions around the globe, indeed makes it a global revolution. Like most other revolutions, this world one too disrupted local traditions by bringing in the global one or the tradition of the dominant country, here the US. This threatened the Identity of people which they derived from their local traditions and religions. Insecurities related to identity were more profound in non-western countries. This forced people to respond by asserting their religious identities and traditions.

Along with this identity crisis, Globalization also proved to be the harbinger of Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism. Both these ideologies advocate unregulated capital markets and believe that these markets deliver efficiency, growth, and widespread prosperity while restricting the government from delivering its promise of the welfare state. Neoconservatism in particular supports a minimal but strong state. It engages in fusing themes associated with traditional or organic conservatism with an acceptance of economic individualism and qualified support for the free market. Neoconservatives have typically sought to restore public order, strengthen 'family' or 'religious' values, and bolster national identity concerning tradition and religion. It's mostly after the rise of the new rights movement in the US that Globalization has carried this ideology to different parts of the world.

THE FAILED SECULARISM: A GLIMPSE INTO THE INDIAN CASE

Religious awakening in different countries surely did not happen in isolation to the reasons affecting faith globally. But, it is equally remarkable to keep in mind the presence and influence of region-specific factors behind religious revivalism which may be unique to that nation but dominantly shaping the resurgence locally. Looking into the case of India, today the right-wing Hindutva fundamentalism can be traced back to the failure of secularism in India. The state that chose to define secularism as 'principled distance' from all religion rather

than abiding by its Western definition of 'equidistance', in practice failed to implement any. This made the distance increasingly ambiguous. Moreover, 'secularism' turned into 'selectivity' when the state indulged in minority appeasement. When speaking for minority rights was ethical but for Kashmiri Pandit was not, when passing of Hindu code bill was acceptable but provisions for providing maintenance to a divorced Muslim woman was not, when exercising incredible control over Hindu temples was secular but minimal control over the Central Waqf board was the suppression of religious freedom then the state was veritably preparing cuisine for majoritarian backlash. This cuisine was finally seasoned and the Hindus saw a chance of reasserting themselves with the rise of BJP and its rallying cry to bring back Hindutva. Since the Ram Rath

Yatra in Ayodhya in 1990, Hindu revivalism in India never looked back.

CONCLUSION

The above-mentioned instances and reasons do give us a fair idea that today's 'Religious Revivalism' is not just a hypothesis but an inevitable reality. Most impacts of the same are yet to be anticipated but the ones that surfaced are not very welcoming either. The growing affinity between the State and the Church, the politicization of religion, and increased priority being given to religious issues rather than welfare needs by the incumbent governments does not favour the citizenry. It has only paved the way for unaccountable and unresponsive governments which are ignorant towards the demands of their own electorate because now they believe that in the end the 'Religious Wand' can always be used to wash away their failures and garner votes. The re-emergence of religion in the public sphere of this global village has also proved to be a major irritant for existing societal harmony. It has reduced tolerance on a whole and has given rise to terrorism on one face and islamophobia on the other facet of the globe. The plight of religious minorities has become all the more deplorable under the clutches of rising cultural nationalism and majoritarianism globally. In light of these impacts, the concerns of American philosopher, Richard Rorty, and others to push religion back to its private sphere do seem viable. But, the larger questions arise here which are yet to be answered by scholars in the coming years. Is this the extreme of 'Religious Resurgence' or are we yet to witness it? Can society go back to the 'Secular' times? What exists beyond 'Post-Secularism'? And most importantly, can this revived faith and tolerance co-exist?

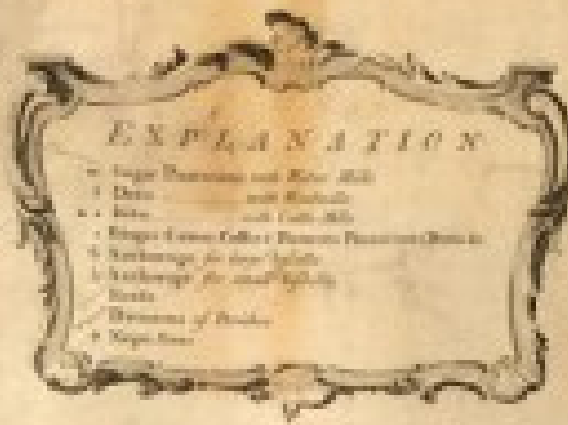


FALLACIOUS RECTITUDES OF COLONIAL SUPPRESSION: JAMAICA DEMANDS REPARATIONS

BY MELEKWE ANTHONY

While saying sorry may be the polite English thing to do when one wrongs another, the golden rule is to not yield any fruits from the British in appeasing a determined Jamaica for the heinous crimes committed against her during the colonial rule.





Since early July, former British colonies across the globe have become enervated by Jamaica's claim to a seven billion pound reparation fund from the United Kingdom for its part in the Atlantic Slave Trade over a hundred years ago. While some seem to be pondering over whether or not Jamaica will succeed, others scarcely know why this reparation is necessary or even coming up now, 58 years after her independence.

THE ANNALS OF TRANS-ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

It all began in 1619, when a Portuguese battleship called the 'Sao Joao Bautista', transporting 395 stolen Africans to Europe, was hijacked by an English pirate ship called 'The White Lion'. The pirates took '20 and odd' of them to Point Comfort of the then British Colony of Virginia. This wasn't the first time that Africans were stolen from their homes in the black of the night, sold by their fellows to the whites or captured as spoils of war, but this was to become the beginning of Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade with America which lasted another 200 years. More. 12.5 million African slaves were captured during the slave trade era and 10.7 million of them were taken to America or, at the time, the United Colonies.

According to Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database at Emory University, it was from provinces like Virginia, Newport, Bristol, and Warren that slaves were transported to other British colonies in the Caribbean like Nevis, Barbados, Antigua, and particularly, Jamaica to cultivate plantations of tobacco, sugar, coffee, and livestock.

Between 1740 and 1807, Jamaica alone supplied 33% of the total population of trafficked slaves to the Americas for the British sugar plantations. Many of these slaves were whipped like horses, shot dead when they stood up to their masters, sometimes in front of their families, to demonstrate that rebellion would not be tolerated. Many of them were bound for days under the rain, died of hunger in the fields, and were even forced to eat the infested spoils of harvest. Plantation owners worked these black



people to death because they were 'cheap property' and also because they just could, with abrasive impunity. Slaves were reared to give birth to more slaves all of whom worked 18 hours a day in the fields, until their emancipation in 1834.

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History accounts that "There were few instances in which slave women were released from field work for extended periods during slavery. Even during the last week before childbirth, pregnant women on average picked three-quarters or more of the amount normal for women." Britain claimed to stop slave trading in all her colonies by 1817, but slave activities didn't stop in Jamaica until 1834.



Slavery on an industrial scale was a major source of the wealth of the British empire (Getty Images)

THE ULTIMATE INSURRECTION

It was during one summer of 1831 that the slaves in Jamaica's North-West region began murmuring about something they called "the business". The colonial enslavers could never find out about this and they swore to protect the secret at all costs. Even when whispers escaped to the masters, some of them would be captured, tortured, and slowly drained of blood, yet they would never speak of it.

It was not until December 27th, 1931, when about 60,000 slaves knew of the plan, that "the business" was finally known. The illiterate fellows of those slaves were gunned down without conscience by soldiers, launching what we know today as the Great Jamaican Slave Revolt. They attacked their slave masters with matches and stones, setting their houses aflame and killing their captors. It took British forces five months to

quench the insurrection and 18 months after, slavery was abolished.

Jamaica got its independence from Great Britain in 1962 and is currently made up of about 2.97 million people who demand reparation for crimes made against their ancestors who, according to the government, were "Stolen; Over three million African people, (swept) away from their homes across the continent and trafficked across Atlantic Ocean as part of the Transatlantic Slave Trade."

THE CONTEMPORARY BALLGAME

The pending question here is why now? Is there a particular reason why Jamaica waited this long? From the side of government supporters, reparation is not a new concept. The Americans did it in 1992 for the interned Japanese Americans during World War 2, with a sum of 1.6 billion dollars. After World War 2, Germany was required to pay Allies US\$23 billion in reparations for its part in the war, Japan paid US\$550 million to the Philippines in the 1950s and the list goes on. But Britain in particular has also made reparations before.

In 1919, Britain compensated families of the victims of the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre in northern Indian city of Amritsar, and in 1933 it spent 40% of its national budget and borrowed a huge loan to compensate slave owners around its colonies when slavery was abolished. England wasn't able to complete these debt payments until 2015.

However, Britain has accepted its fault. In 2006, Prime Minister Tony Blair made an apology for this. The same happened in 2007, when the Mayor of London apologized publicly for the role London played in slave trading but it doesn't seem to have appeased these determined countries who still demand reparation year after year. In India, Jamaica, Nigeria, and across continents, former British colonies point out that when slavery was abolished in 1934, Britain compensated the slave owners and not the slaves.

The reverse is the case in Britain, as citizens from all over the country urge the Queen to ignore payments to Jamaica for over a century of slave trade. A poll recently conducted between 7th and 8th of July revealed that 97% of British citizens refused the Queen from even considering the offer made by Jamaica. One voter said "If our ancestors can not be held responsible for our actions today, then how can we be?"

Another said "There isn't a country on the planet which hasn't been involved in slavery at some point in its existence."

Is this the justification for ignoring Jamaica's claim to

seven billion pounds? If England is convinced that the present government and monarchy can not be held accountable, why apologize in the first place? Will these responses

deter her former colonies from demanding reparations as they have continued to do for over twelve years? The answers all depend on what Jamaica does next.



A monument of Samuel Sharpe, leader of the Baptist War slave rebellion of 1831 (Debbie Ann Powell/Shutterstock)

THE FORGOTTEN TALE OF THE MARICHJHAPI MASSACRE

They were desperate, miserable after being stranded for the second time- first from East Pakistan and then from refugee camps- but they still felt optimistic with the prospects of their new island on which they could build a new home. However, the fate awaiting them was quite contradictory to their dreams and unfortunately much worse than what they had suffered. They were the victims of the blood curdling Marichjhapi Massacre.

But between 14 and 16 May 1979, is one of the worst human rights violations in post-independent India, the West Bengal government forcibly evicted around 10,000 or more from the island. There was rape, murder and poisoning. Bodies were buried in sea. Countless were killed even as some escaped, too afraid to tell the tale. At least 7,000 men, women and children were killed.” states Jyotirmoy Mandal, a refugee and a survivor from Marichjhapi in Deep Halder’s book Blood Island: An Oral History of Marichjhapi Massacre. Unfortunately, for four decades this horrific episode of brutal state violence, one of the worst massacres in independent India’s history, remained obliterated from the collective memory of this nation. This is a story of ironic betrayal by those who avowed to be pro-poor. It is about Jyoti Basu’s left government’s merciless evacuation of the inhabitants of the Marichjhapi island of the Sundarbans.

HOMELESS REFUGEES

India was born as an independent country in 1947 alongside a bloody partition which tore the nation into two halves on communal lines, thus beginning the largest mass migration in human history. While the inflow of refugees from West Pakistan was almost settled within the initial years, the flow of people from the East

continued for a while.

This huge influx of refugees from East Pakistan, which later became Bangladesh, created a crisis of rehabilitation. The early flow of migrants was from the higher strata of the society i.e. upper castes who settled down eventually. However, the Bengali Dalit refugees who came much later due to war, communal riots, and economic crisis, became a liability for the state and posed a huge administrative crisis for the Bengal Government.

The Dandakaranya Development Authority was created by the Central government which covered the states of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra to rehabilitate these refugees. Dandakaranya was supposed to be the home for the hapless refugees but life therein was a hell for many of them with uncultivable land, improper and inadequate amenities, and crumbling infrastructure. Life there turned out to be the literal meaning of ‘Dandakaranya’ in Sanskrit- the jungle of punishment. But the refugees never understood why they were being punished. Consequently, they became desperate to go back to Bengal.

The left party supported their wish to settle back in Bengal and promised to fulfill it if they came into power. However, when they actually formed the government in 1977 under

the leadership of Jyoti Basu, they deliberately retracted from this promise. Disappointed, the refugees started searching for a home in Bengal by themselves which ultimately culminated into the Marichjhapi massacre.

THE UNFULFILLED PROMISE

The exact number of people who finally settled on the island is still vague and unaccounted for, but ranged anywhere between 4,000 and 10,000 Namasudra families. Soon, the island began to prosper on its own with schools, hospitals, and shops. “I saw poverty. I saw hunger. I saw happiness. I saw a dream too,” writes Subrata Patranabis, a photographer who captured Marichjhapi during that time. Life was not easy but they all had something to look forward to: a home.

The government was still adamant about the refugee case. They stated that the refugees were “in unauthorised occupation of Marichjhapi which is a part of the Sundarban Government Reserve Forest violating thereby the Forests Act.” The Government tried to persuade the people of Marichjhapi to leave the island but they did not leave which culminated in an unprecedented response from the government. On January 26 1979, Jyoti Basu announced an economic blockade on the island of Marichjhapi. Two days prior to this, the Government had imposed Section

144 of the CrPC around the island of Marichjhapi.

"Around thirty police launches and two B.S.F streamers had circled Marichjhapi on 26th January, preventing islanders from taking boats out to fetch food, water and other essential from neighbouring islands", recalls Santhosh Sarkar, one of the survivor who became paralytic from police firing. They had to row boats in the dark to fetch water and other essentials from the next island. There was a Calcutta High Court ruling on lifting the ban but that too did not materialise.

On January 31, 1979, 36 people were killed in police firing. There was some outpouring of support from journalists and opposition. Reports about Marichjhapi were published in a few papers like Amrita Bazar Patrika. The government however successfully silenced them and continued with even more vigorous eviction strategies.

Deep Haldar in his book writes, "On May 17, 1979, Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, the then minister of information, declared at Writers' Building that Marichjhapi had been cleared of refugees." The people who had lost their home twice lost it once again. It is believed that a lot of families on the island perished from cholera, starvation, disease, or exhaustion during their arduous journey back to the camps. No one really knows exactly how many people died. According to left leaders, the casualty was even less than 10 while refugees remember that it ran into thousands. It is nearly impossible to verify these numbers after forty years.

THE 'DALIT' FACTOR

"Why were they beaten up, raped and killed for settling in a tract of land so far away from Calcutta, with no real estate value? If the settlers had been Brahmins, Kayasthas, or Baidyas, there would have been no such action." says Dalit activist Manoranjan Byapari.

How different would the reaction be from the rest of the nation if the violence was perpetuated against some other section of people? In India it seems that massacres would be

remembered only if the killed are from the privileged class or from upper caste, but definitely not if the victims are Dalits. This explains why there were no proper investigations on the carnage. There was not any considerable investigation, neither were serious voices raised in the parliament and not many really talked about it for four long decades. The utter silence over such a heart-

"..Some people fought for the refugees, but they were too few in number. It was a failure, not only of the legal system but of a generation-my generation- then in their twenties and thirties. We destroyed Marichjhapi-all of us."

wrenching issue, in one way or the other implies towards some sort of social acceptance towards the oppression of dalits.

Very few people actually remember about Marichjhapi, much less talk or write about it. Since the ruling government was on the guilty side, most people conveniently stayed silent or were silenced. There were rare attempts by some writers to

document what exactly happened over there. Some academic works related to this were done by a few scholars and others produced fictionalised accounts of the fall of Marichjhapi like Shaktipada Rajguru's novel Dandak Theke Marichjhapi and Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide.

THE HISTORICAL INJUSTICE

Four decades have gone by in obliterating the truth about what actually happened to the Sundarbans island and its people. Yet the records on the number of people killed oscillate between thousands and less than ten. This huge discrepancy between official records and independent sources demonstrates how inadequate and irresponsible was the handling of such a disheartening tragedy. Anyone who is looking for answers on what happened on the Marichjhapi island in 1979 finds nothing but a multitude of unanswered questions. Those who were accountable responded with silence then and they remain silent today as well.

The left has been out of power for a longtime now. The victims are yet to receive justice. This story occasionally gets a voice at the time of elections. There were promises made by the TMC leaders regarding a judicial probe into this during the electoral campaigns. But these promises too were no different than those made before them, i.e., unfulfilled. For the leaders from both the left and right wings, it's all about power and politics, and not about the plight of thousands of refugees who left behind everything. India has been independent since 1947 but even after seven decades we are still seeking redemption for the scars left by partition.

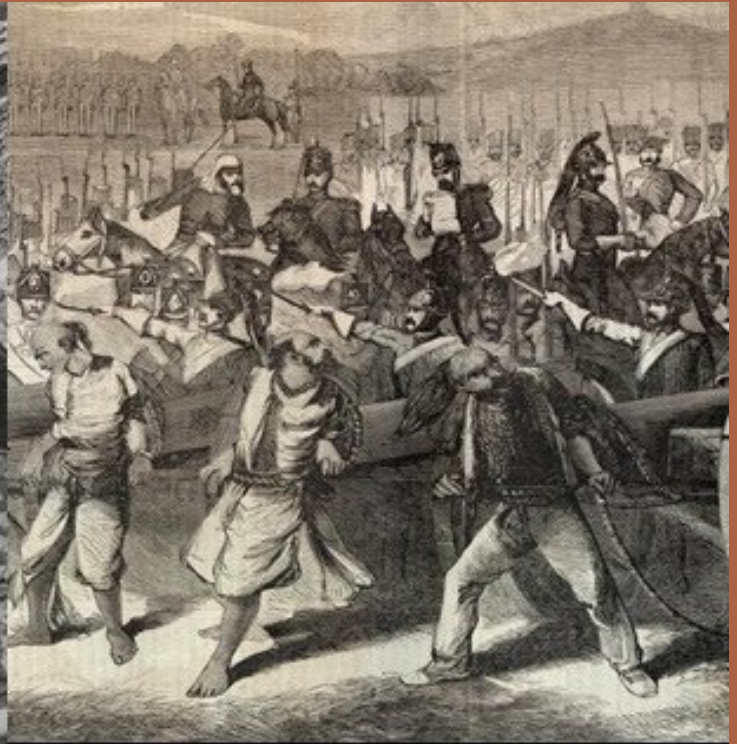
Sakya Sen, the lawyer who fought for the refugees in the court, said *"..Some people fought for the refugees, but they were too few in number. It was a failure, not only of the legal system but of a generation-my generation- then in their twenties and thirties. We destroyed Marichjhapi-all of us."*

COLONIAL CHRONICLES OF CASTEISM

BY KIRTI MEENA

The colonisers and the nationalist redefined and strengthened the notion of caste. The first section of the article looks at the origin of the concept of caste. The second section ascertains how the Britishers engaged with the same. The final section deals with the views of Jyotirao Phule vis-à-vis other nationalists of the nineteenth century.

This article gives a detailed account of the concept and evolution of caste as a colonial issue with reference to jati and varna, the colonial response, the nationalist response, the reformist response and the consequences. It understands the multitude of opinions that existed about the definition and manifestation of caste in the years leading up to the Nationalist Movement.



During the early eighteenth century, the Britishers came to the Indian subcontinent as a group of traders who worked in the English East India Company. Motivated by entrepreneurship, they wanted to make maximum profit in the subcontinent. The policies of the Britishers were, therefore, more

in furtherance of their aim to maximise profit and not particularly intended at establishing a government. However, this profit-making attitude of the Britishers did not last for long because in the nineteenth century they conquered a few territories and began to expand their empire. With the expansion of the colonised

territory in the subcontinent they felt that they were destined to lead the world and uplift the lower races.

By the nineteenth century, the Britishers began with their 'noble' mission of 'civilizing the savage' in the subcontinent also. An improvement programme was rolled out throughout the country using which the Britishers started meddling into various aspects of the life of the colonised people. One of the domains, under the improvement project, was the Caste of the colonised people which got the attention of the colonists during the mid-nineteenth century. Since this interference was being perpetrated by a completely foreign authority that was a stranger to intersectionality and society, caste was obviously redefined and reinterpreted in the course of intervention.

I. ORIGIN OF CASTE IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

One of the characteristic features of Indian society is the omnipresent social disparity in terms of unequal access to various resources along the caste line. The theoretical foundation of these disparities can be traced back to the Vedic corpus which espoused division of society on the basis of *varna*. *Varna* divided the society into four broad hierarchical groups - *brahman* (priest), *kshatriya* (warrior aristocrat), *vaishya* (cultivator and trader) and *shudra* - on the basis of the occupation. The notions of purity and pollution were strictly adhered to by these groups. *Varna* ascribed a ritual status to each category and only the first three *varna* could perform

Vedic rituals. Performance of Vedic rituals was associated with prestige and religious elitism of the 'pure'.

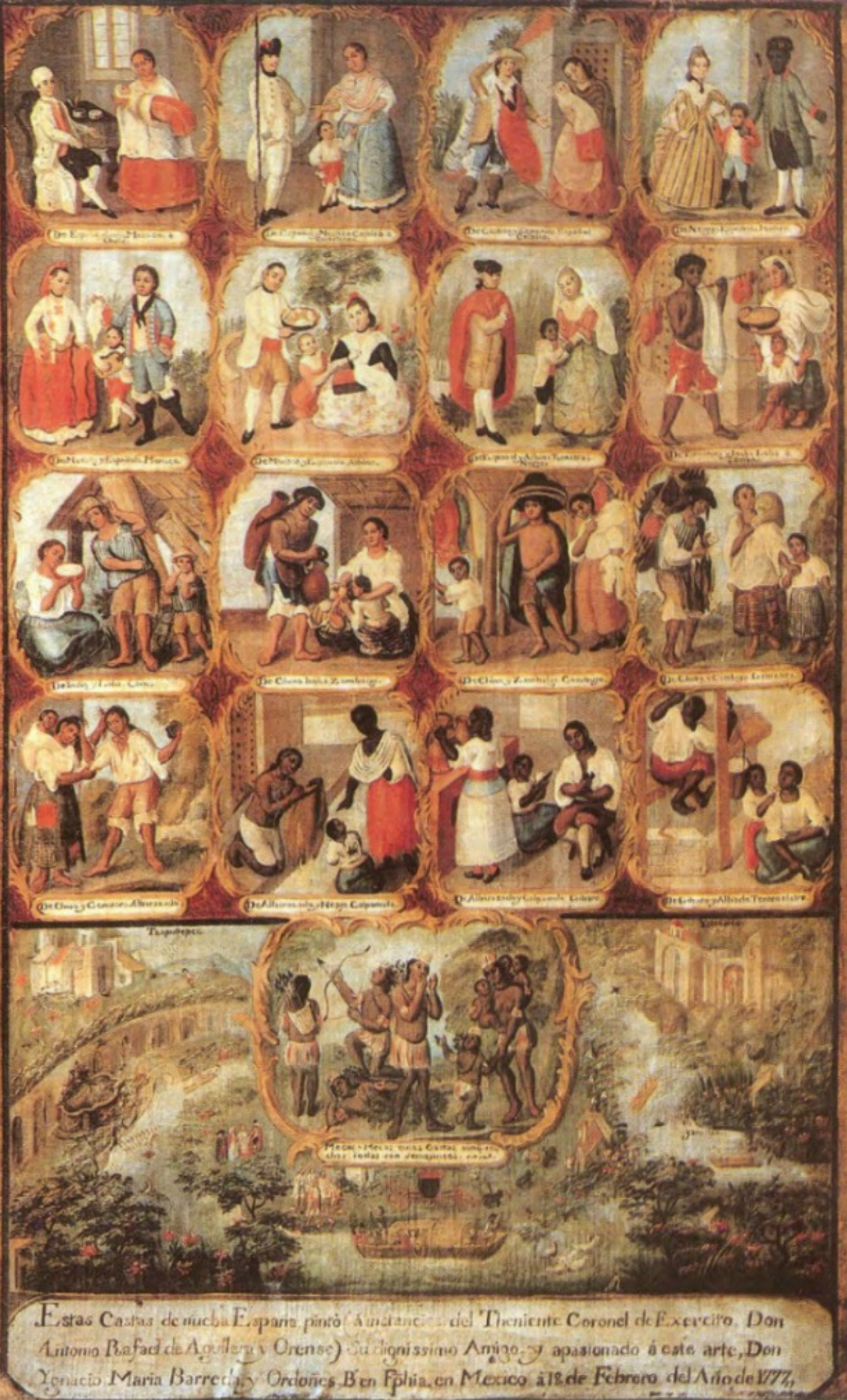
In later years, the concept of *jati* emerged which overlapped with *varna* in certain aspects. *Jati* was hereditary and determined by birth in a specific group. *Jati* governs the group within which an individual can marry or the rules related to inheritance of the property. These practices ensure that the status quo of *jatis* is maintained and hierarchy is not altered. There are numerous *jatis* on the basis of the occupation of a group of people but *varna* was limited to only four occupations. *Jati* can be visualised across the Indian subcontinent as a functional unit unlike *varna* statuses which were not uniformly observed.

Caste evolved by the intermeshing of *varna* and *jati* concepts. Once caste has been attributed to an individual, it becomes an indispensable part of their identity. Even if one converts from Hindu religion to a religion which does not have caste as an innate feature, like Christianity, the caste of the person would still accompany them. At the same time, caste permits flexibility and emergence of new castes from a group of professionals, forest dwellers, or religious sects. Thus, caste was less frozen or rigid system than *jati* or *varna*.

II. CASTE DURING COLONIAL REGIME

In the eighteenth century, the colonists were cognisant of the presence of caste in the Indian





subcontinent. But they did not actively engage with caste during this time as they were preoccupied with maximising revenue. Any intervention in the then prevalent caste system would have had a direct impact on the village economy. Further, the colonists were engrossed with landholdings, property, and revenue collection in villages.

In the late eighteenth century, Lord Colin Mackenzie was preparing a repository of knowledge about southern India. But Lord Mackenzie's data had very limited information about the caste histories or caste groups. In his record, caste featured through pictorial depiction of various costumes prevalent in the kingdoms which gave more weightage to the political position of a person rather than the caste. In this sense, occupation of an individual was used interchangeably with the caste of the person. From this data, it can be inferred that there were no rigid caste boundaries or well-defined caste categories. Especially, when Lord Mackenzie was not collecting the data from the perspective of furthering land revenue. The colonists were modernising various concepts, practices etc. of the Indian subcontinent which they found obsolete and impedimentary to their 'noble' mission of 'civilising' their subjects. However, they did not do anything to alter the caste system which they knew was something which did not fit in within their modernity mould. One of the plausible reasons for such an attitude can be that they did not want to do something which might threaten their rule in the subcontinent. Moreover, the caste system had divided the people and people could not be encouraged to stand united - by forgetting their caste identity - against the colonists.

The colonists had over-simplified the term caste as with the term 'tradition'. Without delving deeper into the concept of caste, they concluded that it was synonymous with the occupation performed by an individual. For instance, in the early nineteenth century, the colonial officials labelled the thugs as one of the hereditary Indian castes due to their superficial understanding of caste. They

were oblivious to the fact that in some areas thugs belong to warrior caste such as Sodhis or Rajput. The colonists went as far as to conclude that an individual belonging to a caste performs culturally assumed occupation only and no other occupation. This conclusion does not hold water as not all Rajputs were warriors or landlords and not all Brahmans were priests.

Around the early nineteenth century, the Britishers had already begun to identify caste in the subcontinent and it thus started appearing in policy debates. Debate ensued on the adoption of multi-caste jury for trials. The orientalist argued that only the native 'respectable castes' should be allowed to be a part of the jury. The term 'respectable castes' encompassed all the four varnas excluding untouchables and tribals. The exclusion of the last two categories was based upon a fallacious assumption of their 'unenlightened' cognitive facilities whereby they lack the moral facilities to adjudicate upon any matter. The orientalist were giving a rationale broadly based upon the notion of purity and pollution but in a sugar coated language. The orientalist who championed the egalitarian principles were in fact justifying Brahmanical supremacy on the grounds of the benefits of the same and promoting an oppressive hierarchy. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the native subjects were tired and extremely frustrated with the oppressive colonial rule. The Sepoy mutiny of 1857 only acted as fuel to the fire. Thus, a mass-scale protest against the colonial rule was launched and the 'first war of Independence' fought between the natives and the colonisers. The most immediate ramification of the war was the takeover of the charge from the East India Company by the British Parliament.

Once the control was vested in the Parliament, the administrators were keenly interested in understanding the composition of native population. It was understood that information about the composition could be an effective tool for better administration of the subcontinent as well as for extracting additional



Hindoo Musician
H H L 607



Hindoo Musician
H H L 607

revenue. Further, by this time, the colonists had already borne the brunt of the Sepoy rebellion which occurred due to the oblivious attitude of the colonisers towards the caste and religious sentiments of the army men. Thus, the colonists were persuaded to expand and formalise their networks of control and surveillance.

In 1871-1872, the grand project of census was set in motion which became the foundation stone for forging the pre-eminence of caste in contemporary times society. Census was the fundamental tool for collating facts about the Indian society and economy and a peculiar aspect of it was administrator's stubborn resolve to constitute caste as the fundamental feature for population count. Paradoxically, there was hardly any consensus about what exactly was caste. The census employed differing patterns for determining caste. Thus, the concept of caste was moulded on whatever the colonists made of caste based on their understanding as an outsider to the caste system.

Census played an institutional role in giving fixed labels and ranks to various groups on the notion of caste. It helped in raising caste consciousness and ignited a feeling of fraternity amongst caste groups.

Relative social position of various groups was fixed through the census. Census gave a clear picture in terms of total number of people belonging to a caste in a local area and thus, facilitated the formation of caste association. The caste associations played an instrumental role in shifting a lower-caste group to a higher caste group. Consequently, due to the census, many lower caste people got an opportunity to climb up the social hierarchy ladder and found a means to acquire a new identity.

III. JYOTIRAO PHULE VERSUS THE NATIONALISTS: TWO CONTRASTING VIEWS ON CASTE

Jyotirao Phule was one of the radical reformists in the nineteenth century who advocated for expunging of the caste system. Phule himself belonged to the *Mali* community which was ranked lowly in the caste hierarchy. Thus, he had a first-hand experience of the rampant discrimination prevalent in the society and the unequal access to resources for the lower caste people. Known to the oppressions and inequality, Phule was critical about the benefit and wealth amassed by the upper caste at the cost of the lower caste.

On the other hand, the nationalists were a group of upper caste, upper class, Hindu men who espoused the caste system. The

nationalists were a group of people that was anti-colonial in its approach, and advocated anything and everything opposite to what the colonists were saying. The nationalists were confronted with the colonialist criticism of caste as an impediment to a modern society. They retorted by justifying caste as an immanent feature of the Indian society and caste is something which distinguishes the Indian subcontinent from rest of the world. The nationalist made several arguments for justifying the compatibility of caste system with the notion of modernity. The position of nationalists needs to be contextualised in the background from which they belonged. The entire caste scheme was beneficial to the nationalist interest and were beneficiaries of the system. Thus, they did not want to do away with the caste system and were constantly pushing for its retention and continuation.

Phule was aware of the manifestation of the system in terms of oppression, survival and access to resources. Thus, he wanted the caste system to be obliterated and advocated to address the oppression for a fresh start.

CONCLUSION

To the colonialists, caste became an inconvenience and oppressive

The implication of these interpretations of caste by the colonialists, nationalists and reformists had wide ranging consequences. Caste as a concept was reinforced and used as consciousness. While the Indian society did not have watertight separation of castes and sub-castes, census worked up to compartmentalise and label the otherwise dynamic and relative concept of caste.

societal arrangement. To portray themselves as fulfilling the promise of better civilisation, they argued the incompatibility of caste with modernisation. At the same time, caste and interference was seen by them as a threat to their administration. It ended up being a convenient method in census which led to increased solidarity within a caste group. The nationalists were apprehensive of colonial comments and vision on caste. They responded by understanding caste as part of what made the country exceptional. Because of the identity they belonged to, they were less aware of the privileges and oppressions that are attached to caste.

The implication of these interpretations of caste by the colonialists, nationalists and reformists had wide ranging consequences. Caste as a concept was reinforced and used as consciousness. While the Indian society did not have watertight separation of castes and sub-castes, census worked up to compartmentalise and label the otherwise dynamic and relative concept of caste. The concept was understood as limited to an occupational division. At the same time, caste became a raging debate against modernity for those who knew that caste was more than occupation.

THE PRIDE AND THE PERIPETEIA OF PARADISE:

A T a l e O f T w o L y r i c s

BY SAMYA VERMA



From the sardonic symmetries of Hozier's 'Take Me To Church', to the tongue in cheek antagonisms of Lil Nas' 'Montero', a paradise of fallacies meets its demise at the hands of two cultural watersheds, one decade apart.

To the cis-het gaze, performative sexuality is an end in itself, an attempt at appeasement, a fête of sensual satiation. But the moment it becomes a means to an end, a war cry demanding that shackles of centuries be shattered, is when 'traditionalism' and parochiality are brandished so aggressively. As sexual autonomy burgeons beyond bounds, barriers are burdened upon it to stop the revolution. Those in doubt may behold a moment the backlash faced by Lil Nas in the wake of a fiercely queer performance at the BET awards, 2021.

"Y'all hate yourselves so much. Y'all live your lives trying your best to appease straight ppl. Y'all are uncomfortable with what I do because y'all are afraid they will be uncomfortable with you. I love who I am and whatever I decide to do, (I) get there."

- On criticism for his performance at BET awards.

The specter of a lyric from 2013 hangs starkly here: Hozier's 'Take Me To Church' was another such challenge to Catholic sacrament, that subverted the idea of 'sin'. While the Irish musician's haunting voice builds angst into the narrative, the lyrics connive a mordacious glorification of the Church institution's obsession

with heteronormativity. A simultaneous montage of queer love facing violent persecution takes centerstage, and the hypocrisy inherent to Western theology's systemized attack on the very human sentiment of love is exposed.

"The only Heaven I'll be sent to//Is when I'm alone with you//I was born sick, but I love it//Command me to be well..."

-Take Me To Church

The audio-visual appeal of 'Montero', on the other hand, lies in its audacity. If 'Take Me To Church' is an elegiac tragedy, then Lil Nas' art is the crescendo of rebellion that follows. It heralds a watershed movement in queer counterculture, calling on the

persecuted to declaim the alienation that has fallen into their lot.

Lounging in the Garden of Eden (an apt metaphor for a 'prudent' society riddled with conservatism), the singer gets seduced by a doppelganger serpent. Might as well, because he can no longer flee his own truth afterwards. Maybe the original sin all along, in the eyes of the Church Institution, was the 'temptation to love'. Lil Nas' radical repudiation of religiously sanctioned homophobia has rightly earned him the epithet of the proverbial Antichrist from some sections of the press.

The Black and White visuals of 'Take Me To Church' paint a grim picture of homophobia. The decade old cinematography and eerie beat attest to a time when Pride was still a snapshot into a long history of oppression. 'Montero', however, looks ahead to a rainbow future with its psychedelic colours and visuals. It is loud, cantankerous, and intended to shock those viewers who are complacent with the debilitating hierarchy of the politics of sexuality. It thaws down thought slavery to mindless traditions, and deliberately discomfits the biblical archetypes of 'propriety' fed into the society's mass conscious.



"In life, we hide the parts of ourselves we don't want the world to see. We lock them away, we tell them, 'No.' We banish them. But here, we don't. Welcome to Montero."

- Lil Nas

If Hozier poetized queer persecution in his homeland, then Lil Nas is vehemently reclaiming a space for queer black bodies. Poles apart in their experiences, the two lyrics find a common ground in their challenge to the very biblical idea of 'perfection'. Their musical rebellion clashes against the sensibilities of Western theology personified as a perfectly symmetrical heaven that demands submission before societal sensibilities of the 'right' and the 'wrong'. There is a paradox inherent to the sa-





rdonic spectacles woven so delicately in Hozier and Lil Nas' crooning voices: themes of Western art are incorporated in a manner that they end up self-destructing.

History be my witness: outmoded archetypes must degenerate, giving way to greater autonomy for the individual. There come eras in history so annihilative in their ethos that all corrals of "conventionality" get swept away in the throes of progression. We must pause a moment and ponder upon the fallacies inherent to the Western cis-het gaze that has long exercised an insidious hegemony over the Eastern subconscious and subverted all culturalism inclined to sexual autonomy.

Paradisiacal peripeteias notwithstanding, the two lyrics should also make us question if Indians have mistakenly adopted another culture's roots as their own. Case in point: the tales of Bhagiratha, a devotee of lord Shiva, often hesitate to mention that he was born of two mothers. This story is a strong testament to the acceptance of queer love in Indian culture. What is the reason for its commonplace retraction then?

Why is there persistent shame over narratives that were passed down by word of mouth for centuries? The answer is that we have been looking for shards of ourselves in a ruthlessly suppressive colonial past.

Our roots and root problems are foreign enough to be outcast//Cast out of ourselves, strangers to ourselves//We rule the day in others' judgement.

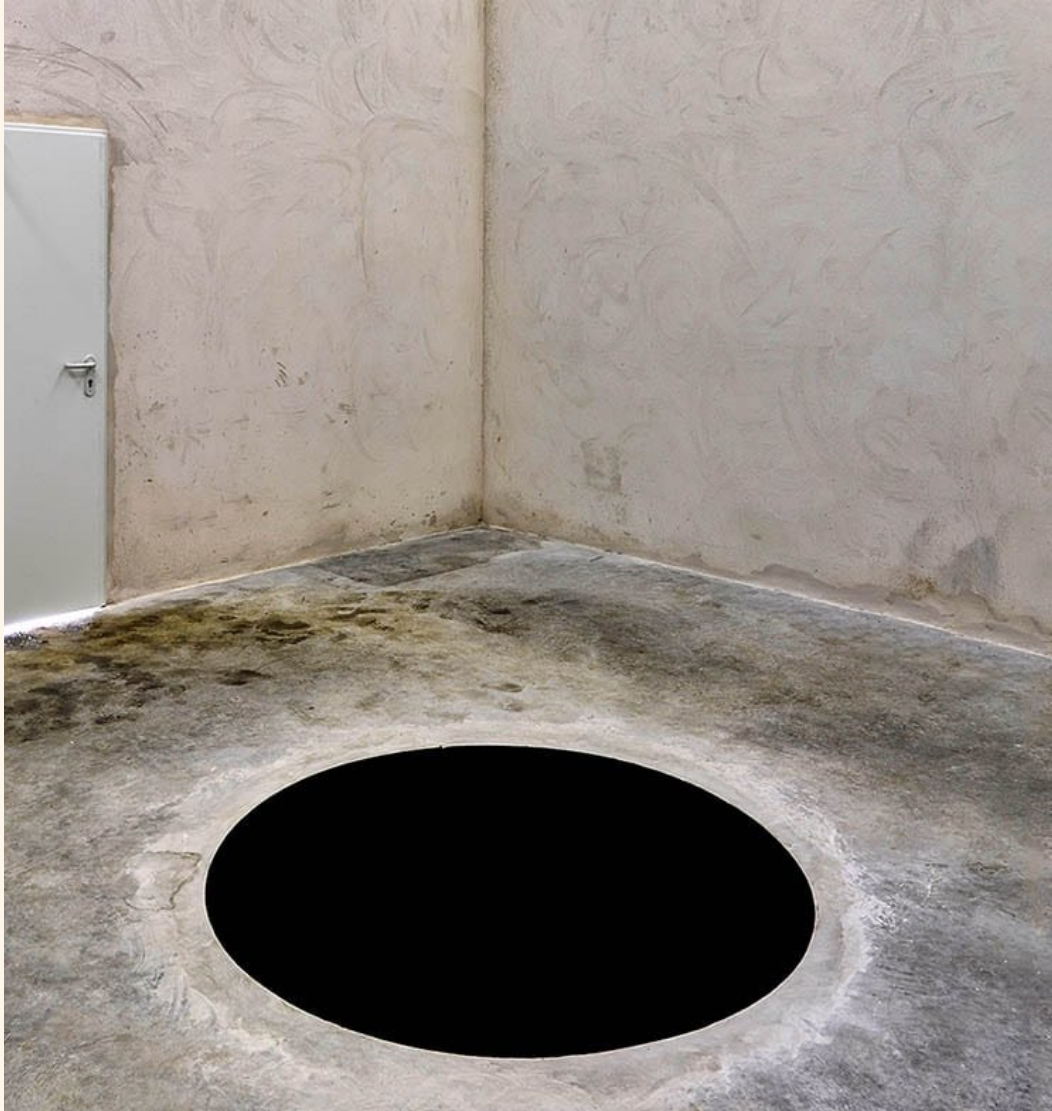
Colonialism has bequeathed us some painful disjunctions from our long history of celebrating love in all its shades. The rigid Victorian morals imposed upon the country soon created a taboo out of queer love. Colonial era laws unabashedly demonized it. A societal homecoming would perhaps be rediscovering our long-lost values and reclaiming our roots as Lil Nas is reclaiming his sexuality from cis-het fetishization and perceptions of 'morality'.

The two lyrics are two cultural watersheds, two artistic victories over the theological conservatism that binds our post-colonial world in shackles. 'Picket-fence' propriety or the 'log kya kahenge?' culture perishes before the queer strength and solidarity that they embody. Here's to hoping for more such era-defining moments in the world of art!

ARTISTS ASSEMBLE:

How Pettiness Brought the Art World Together

BY SAEESHA PANDITA



Anish Kapoor, *Descent into Limbo*, 1992. Artist's website.

By reading this article you confirm that you are not Anish Kapoor, you are in no way affiliated to Anish Kapoor, you are not reading this article on behalf of Anish Kapoor or an associate of Anish Kapoor. To the best of your knowledge, information and belief this article will not make its way into the hands of Anish Kapoor.

Remember those slogan t-shirts that said 'I'll stop wearing black when they invent a darker color'? Thanks to the (eerily rapid) advancement in technology and Britain's Surrey NanoSystems, a darker variant of black actually exists. Vantablack is one of the darkest substances known to humankind, absorbing up to 99.965% of visible light.

But here's the catch: as much as your mother is sick of you rotating your achromatic outfits every seven days of the week in wait for a darker color, you can't really wear Vantablack. Or even use it, for that matter.

The inception of Vantablack was met with the excitement of artists around the globe. Albeit toxic and made for scientific and military use, Vantablack was a new material to play and experiment with. The material with thermal properties was intended to be used in aerospace and optics sectors, and could only be applied in special temperatures with post-application processing, until it was made into a spray that was easier to apply. Artists saw opportunities to create phenomenal art with this substance. It meant legacy; as artist Christian Furr remarked, "All the best artists have had a thing for pure black – Turner, Manet, Goya. This black is like dynamite in the art world..." Thus, it was no surprise that it enchanted artists, big and small alike.

Call it the evil eye, or black magic, but by vice of one unfortunate, controversial deal, the prospect of creators shading their work with the brand-new feat of science was snatched away. Art world's most hated, China-suing, light-and-color-stealing elitist Anish Kapoor bought the sole rights to the color.

Creator of Chicago's famed public sculpture 'Cloud Gate', dubbed as 'The



Image via Stuart Semple

Bean' locally, Anish Kapoor is an Indian-born British sculptor who specialises in installation and conceptual art that mostly take biomorphic forms with sheer vibrance. His work reflects his affinity for blood, female anatomy, and the notion of nothingness.

It seems as if the void is a recurring theme in his work – a leitmotif, if you will. His interest in negative spaces is reflected in his works like the Marysas, his 150 metre long sculpture, which comprises three steel rings joined by a massive red PVC membrane. The Greek myth of Satyr posed as the inspiration for the sculpture which was on show at London's Tate Modern Gallery in 2003, commissioned by Unilever. Another one of his works on the void that will make you fall for it (quite literally) is his 1992 piece Descent Into Limbo. It made news in 2018 when a man in his 60s fell into the eight feet deep black



Semple's "pinkest pink" is a reflective powdered pigment that repels light to effect a powerful fluorescence

hole inside a concrete cube built in the gardens of Serralves art museum in Porto, Portugal. The hole, which is guarded by an actual guard and warning signs, has its interiors painted with a patented high-tech ultra-black paint that absorbs light to make it look bottomless. Oh and, thank goodness, the man was treated in a hospital, and the artist was treated to no lawsuit.

In retrospect, this piece made in a Vantablack-less world does prove Kapoor's fascination with Vantablack. As an article in *Wired* aptly points out, for an artist obsessed with the properties of chromatic surfaces, one can see why he might aggressively pursue a material so black that it makes spheres look like cartoon holes.

So naturally, when the material was created by Surrey NanoSystems. Kapoor was one of those who requested to purchase it. Ben Jensen, chief technical officer at Surrey NanoSystems, was quoted saying, "His (Kapoor's) life's work had revolved around light reflection and voids. Because we didn't have the bandwidth to work with more than one—we decided Anish would be perfect."

For a community that thrives on camaraderie, and amicable exchange of inspiration and ideas, Kapoor's pursuit of exclusivity was met with intense backlash from the artists. "When I first heard that Anish had the exclusive rights to the blackest black I was really disappointed," artist

Stuart Semple told The Creators Project. "I was desperate to have a play with it in my work and I knew lots of other artists who wanted to use it too. It just seemed really mean-spirited and against the spirit of generosity that most artists who make and share their work are driven by. I thought a good comment would be if I made a paint that was available to everyone but excluded him from using it. That way he can have a taste of his own medicine!"

But wait. Let's go back a little, and talk about another key player of the story: Stuart Semple.

When black came to signify three things: macabre, the void, and the deep-rooted elitism in the art world, it was Semple who, with a gutsy retort, organised art enthusiasts and anyone who would listen in this fight against Kapoor to #sharetheblack. For someone who had been formulating pigments for years, the fact that the artistic fraternity was barred from using Vantablack opened up the door to a whole new world of possibilities.

However, one must note that the 'ban' on using Vantablack is not a literal ban, but a matter of Kapoor owning an exclusive license to the substance. Also, it is definitely not the first time that someone has trademarked a color, case in point the Tiffany Blue, a light medium eggshell blue color famously associated with the jewellery company, Tiffany & Co. The bespoke colour speaks for the brand's identity of vibrance and luxury in a delightful manner. The company reached out to Pantone to standardize this colour in order that it may be instantly recognizable by consumers.

It took an audience member's question in a Denver Art Museum talk with Semple, where he deemed Vantablack as his favourite color and lamented about his inability to use it, to come up with... *drumrolls* Pinkest Pink! By the grace of the

art world needing a silly comeback, an ultra-fluorescent pink paint called 'Pinkest Pink' went on sale on Stuart Semple's website CultureHustle at £3.99 for 50 grams of the material. "The pink already chucks out bucket loads of light but then we made it water-soluble so it can be used as a paint and that took it up a notch," explains the artist about the color's development. "Basically, now it pretty much glows. Whilst Anish's (paint) absorbs nearly all light, mine reflects it, kind of the antithesis of what he is doing."

Semple's pigment carried this predictable legal warning "By adding this product to your cart you confirm that you are not Anish Kapoor, you are in no way affiliated to Anish Kapoor, you are not purchasing this item on behalf of Anish Kapoor or an associate of Anish Kapoor. To the best of your knowledge, information, and belief this paint will not make its way into the hands of Anish Kapoor." And of course, this was signed with #savetheblack.

Soon after, Semple was inundated with orders for the pigment. The colour had taken the art world by storm, with everyone wanting to get their hands on it. The ones who bought it were posting their art made with the reflective pink on Instagram with the #sharetheblack hashtag. Indeed, great minds Pink alike.

And then...Kapoor rose to the bait. Having acquired the Pinkest Pink somehow, he dipped his middle finger into it, tastefully captured his rosy-tipped finger, and posted it on Instagram captioned 'Up yours. #pink'. With over 7,300 likes, the comment section of the 2016 post is colored with comments like 'You're a petulant child. Grow up, Kapoor', 'Giving the whole art community access to superior supplies seems like a much better business strategy than keeping it all to yourself', and uncountable 'Okay bean boy' comments.

This prompted Stuart Semple, who



turns no profit from his pigments, to launch an investigation into finding out who leaked the pigment to Kapoor. At the same time, to settle the score, he launched two new pigments. Diamond Dust, a glitter made from glass so that the painting is still visible after its application, was the first from the

duo. Being one of the most reflective glitter pigments in the world, it gleamed as much as Vantablack did not. As it was made of glass, if someone stuck their finger inside it it would hurt quite a bit. So that was Semple's way of saying "shove your finger in this, [redacted curse word], see what happens."

With the help of a thousand artists worldwide, the second pigment he released was none other than a worthy contender to Vantablack– Black 2.0. Semple calls it “the most pigmented, flattest, matt-est, black acrylic paint in the world.” While Vantablack was toxic, could only be applied at high temperatures, and potentially explosive, Black 2.0 was a breath of fresh air. It was cherry-scented, completely safe, and easily accessible. Anish Kapoor is the only person who can use Vantablack, and the only person who can not use Black 2.0.

Choosing not to re-engage in this saga anymore, Anish Kapoor went on to release a single piece of work doused in Vantablack, a \$95,000 watch called the Sequential One S110 Evo Vantablack. The watch came from the Swiss maker MCT, and was, of course, a limited-edition timepiece. However, Kapoor did make a claim to Buzzfeed that he will be suing Semple for using his name to gain clout and sell more paints. Unfortunately for this article, the fun, courtroom drama-esque manoeuvres were cut short by no lawsuit being filed against Semple.

Time proved testament to the fact that Kapoor could not only annoy the whole artists’ community, but his neighbours back in London too. It feels as if Anish misread the biblical verse ‘Love thy neighbour’ as ‘Rob thy neighbour of the sun’s light’. The residents had launched a petition against Kapoor, saying that a planned extension, an extra floor, to his studio will block “our precious light & view, a valuable thing in our crowded city.” Semple offered his support to the neighbours’ plea by releasing two color-changing rainbow paints: Phaze and Shift. (By now, I hope you and I have reached a point in our lives where we know that a Semple paint launch means absolutely no access to the paint for Kapoor.) The rainbow paints made with a special ‘living, more expensive than gold’

substance served as the “final blow in the ‘Anish Kapoor art war’” following which, Stuart wrote to Lisson Gallery (the snitches who bought the paint for Kapoor) talking about Kapoor’s procurement of his Pinkest Pink. In a rather jocular letter, Semple wrote, “I would appreciate it if 1. Your gallery would say sorry for giving my PINK to Mr. Kapoor, 2. Mr. Kapoor would give me my pink back. I don’t want him to have it, and 3. He will write 100 times ‘I will be nice. I will share my colors’ and post the same on his Instagram.”

Still not laying the matter to rest, Stuart Semple also organised a Bean-kissing-event for Anish Kapoor’s birthday, calling people on Facebook to wear their pinkest pink lipsticks (or wearing his PINK paint mixed with a little vaseline) and kissing the public sculpture. *He added to the Facebook event invite, “Sometimes people act like rotters because they aren’t getting enough love. And I know we can fix that... together! So, to celebrate Anish’s 64th birthday, we are going to show him ALL the love.*

See you there! Love Stuart”

With a long, long Semple X Kapoor feud-sized sigh, we now come to the end of this modern art history chronicle. I do not know if this could make for a good Tom and Jerry storyline, or just exist in the books as an artists’ uproar for kids to make memes about in 2050, but it does show that it takes one common mega-rich enemy to unite everyone into collectively* expanding their creative potentialities in order that they may take jabs at wicked pangs of elitism.

How gaslight dark, gatekeep, guy boss of Kapoor!

My reaction to such a fiasco is best summed up by this Tumblr user in their comment, “I’m not sure which is more beautiful: that shade of pink or that SHADE!”

*except Anish Kapoor.

HINDU COLLEGE GAZETTE

JULY - AUGUST 2021 • VOLUME 1 ISSUE 5

Published by The Symposium Society - Hindu College, University of Delhi

PUBLISHER Amirah Sajad

HEAD OF OPERATIONS Himanshu Mahor

EDITOR IN CHIEF Samya Verma

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Adithya M., Anupa P., Aryan Pandey, Manvi, Meenakshi Senan, Shreya Shukla, Yashovardhan Singh

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Aman Majumdar

EDITORIAL SUPPORT STAFF

Anushka Pandey, Anima Singh, Aftar Ahmed, Avni Goel, Devadeth K. Reji, Gauri Srivastava, Ishi Chauhan, Nakul Raghav, Sonalika Rani

STAFF WRITERS

Adithya M, Aftar Ahmed, Anupa Paulchaudhuri, Anushka Pandey, Aryan Pandey, Deavadeth K Reji, Gauri Srivastava, Ishi Chauhan, Meenakshi Senan, Nandini Giri, Neha Yada, Seethalakshmi KS, Shreya Shukla, Sonalika Rani, Sriyani Datta, Suboor Saifi, Uttkarsh Chauhan, Vibhuti Pathak, Yashovardhan Singh

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Aftar Ahmed, Amirah Sajad, Samya Verma, Nakul Raghav, Devaketh K Reji, Neha Yadav, Vibhuti Pathak

WEBSITE COORDINATORS

Aftar Ahmed, Nakul Raghav, Vibhuti Pathak

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Arjun Tandon, Abdullah Kazmi, Saeesha Pandita, Melekwe Anthony

COLUMNISTS

Abhinav Bhardwaj, Ananya Bhardwaj, Kunal Panda, Nikhil Jois K. S., Preet Sharma

EMERITUS EDITORIAL BOARD

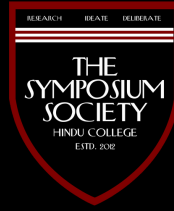
Amitoj Singh Kalsi, Akshaya Singh, Prateek Pankaj

A NOTE TO READERS

The views expressed in articles are the authors' and not necessarily those of Hindu College Gazette or The Symposium Society, Hindu College.

SUBMISSIONS

Hindu College Gazette accepts opinion editorials, long-forms, and illustrations at a rolling basis. We encourage prospective authors to follow HCG's "Submission Guidelines" before sending submissions. Submissions can be emailed at hinducollegegazette@gmail.com.



ISSUING BODY: THE SYMPOSIUM SOCIETY HINDU COLLEGE

The Symposium Society, Hindu College, through a myriad of activities, provides a robust platform to students for deliberation, public policy analysis, research, writing and magazine production. We believe in cultivating a profound sense of humanistic enquiry in all our members. Being one of its kind in the varsity; every year, the society nurtures inquisitive minds and trains them into socially conscious and empathetic thinkers, whilst equipping them with important skills such as critical thinking, public speaking, leadership and research.

Apart from promoting deliberation and research, the society also plays an important role in the college politics by bridging the gap between the parliament and the student body, thereby facilitating disciplined political engagement within the college space. The society does this by conducting the Annual Prime Ministerial Debate, Live PM Interviews and Hindu Darbar.

Furthermore, the society promotes independent student journalism through its bimonthly publication- Hindu College Gazette. Though a team of highly dedicated staff writers regularly deliberate and curate content for the magazine, the publication also reviews and publishes opinions and analyses from prolific scholars from all over the country.

SUBMIT YOUR FEEDBACK FOR THIS ISSUE

Fill [this](#) feedback form.

WRITE FOR US AS A GUEST WRITER

Check our Guest Submissions Policy at the website [here](#).

Send submissions at hinducollegegazette@gmail.com

FOR COLLABORATIONS, INQUIRIES & FEEDBACK

symposium.amirah@gmail.com

SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR IN CHIEF

symposium.samya@gmail.com

CONTACT US

The Symposium Society, Hindu College
+7006374008 | hinducollegegazette@gmail.com

Hindu College Gazette is issued by The Symposium Society
Hindu College, Sudhir Bose Marg, University Enclave, Delhi, 110007

WWW.HINDUCOLLEGEGAZETTE.COM