

# POP IT UP





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**MATA SUNDRI COLLEGE**

**UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**



## Previous Prize Winners

The following were given prizes by the Head of the Department and other faculty members, in recognition of their hard work and consistency:



Prizes presented to Naindeep Kaur Kapoor and Ashima Puri by Ms. Avantika Pokhriyal and Mrs. Manisha Mathur respectively.



Prizes presented to Erwiena Kaur and Sunidhi Sood by Mrs. Kiranjeet Sethi and Ms. Shweta Duseja respectively.



Prizes presented to Yogita Malhotra and Tanveer Rihal by Ms. Menka Ahlawat and Mrs. Kiranjeet Sethi respectively.



Poems being recited by Varsha Nair and Sunidhi Sood respectively.

The other prize winners were:

- Harjas Singh
- Prashansa Luthra

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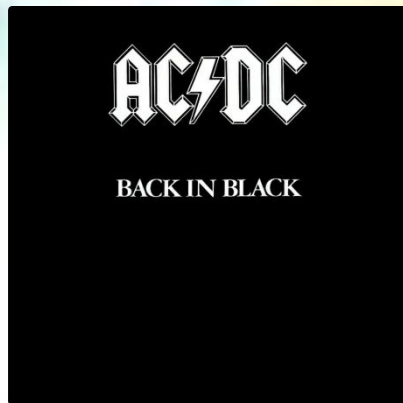
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## All About The Tunes

### Music

What occurs to your mind when you hear this five letter word? Of course, it is a form of art, but when the same question is asked to the youth of today, music becomes equivalent to escape, something which takes them to a whole different world, a world full of dreams and imagination. Over the years music has had an effect on people which eventually makes them crave for more. The definition of music differs for each in this population of billions across the earth, but the purpose of music, for centuries and even now, remains the same- **to spread happiness.**



*~AC/DC-A popular Australian band in the 1970s~*



*~Coldplay- A popular pop band~*

Through the years, music has taken various forms to entertain its listeners. With each having his/her own predilections, music is bound to be touched by the creative brain of humans. Wander around the world and you'll get to know how people have categorized music- while some may prefer Hip-Hop, others would say that they are more into Gospel, and some would be inclined to Electro-Pop or EDM. Different people, different preferences! The questions thus arise, how did these forms come into being? Who started the trend? How can one identify with a particular style, so on and so forth.

To know more about the background of music, it is important to learn about some of its popular genres which created or are continuing to create a wave of wide appeal amongst the laypeople. Music today comprises of multiple types like: Hip-Hop, Jazz, Rock, Folk, R&B, Electronic Dance, Pop, Reggae and lately, Rap.

### Jazz

**Jazz** was one of the very first genres to find a huge and vast fan base of millions around the world. It originated in African-American regions of New Orleans, United States, around the late 19<sup>th</sup>- 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The foundation of Jazz is deeply rooted within the West- African

communities and the black history of the US. Media and scholars of that time hardly gave any attention to this form of music and focused on ‘white’ jazz musicians instead. However, technology played a great role in popularizing Jazz. Through sources like radio shows etc., the racial barriers were broken and the genre was given the appreciation it deserved. **John Coltrane** (1926-1967) was the pioneer of this genre. He played instruments like Soprano and Alto Saxophone, and added a touch of spirituality with his soothing Blues. Holder of prestigious awards like the **Pulitzer Prize** in 2007, his famous albums includes *Coltrane's sound* (1964), and *Coltrane plays the Blues* (1962), and *my Favourite Things* (1960).



*Soprano Saxophone*



*Alto Saxophone*

**Mary Lou Williams** (1910-1981), who was also an African-American, was a successor of Coltrane. Being a musician of extreme talent and creativity, she helped in developing the genre by covering nearly all the subgenres of Jazz, like- Classical, Hard Bop, Gospel, Swing, Free Jazz, etc. She started her career at the young age of 12, and by 19, had joined Andy Kirk's band in Oklahoma, providing the audience with some of her greatest hits like '*Walkin and Singin*', '*TwinKlin*', '*Cloudy*' etc. Her career flourished throughout the 1970s, getting her numerous awards which include **Grammy** in 1971. One more influential personality in Jazz was **Louis Daniel Armstrong** (1901-1971). He rose to prominence in 1920s and continued till 1960s. He was one of the first musicians to '**crass-over**' in America, which was racially divided. Armstrong had 19 '**top 10**' records, including *Stardust*, *What a wonderful world*, *Dream a little dream of me*, *You rascal you*, etc. In 1964, Armstrong beat The Beatles for the top position of in **Billboard Hot 100** chart with his single *Hello Dolly!*, giving him the US record of being 'the oldest artist to have a number one song at the age of 63'.

## Hip-Hop





Although **Hip-Hop** is closely associated with R&B and Rap, there is a big difference between them. Hip-Hop takes its roots from Jamaican Reggae and Dance hall music, which was popular in the late 1960s. This music has stylistic elements of rapping, break dancing and 'dj-ing' or 'beat boxing'. Hip Hop as a musical genre gained recognition during the 90s. **Sugar Hill Gang's** 1979 song *Rapper's Delight*, is regarded to be the first Hip-Hop record to gain widespread popularity in the mainstream market. It was after 1980s that Hip-Hop developed more complex styles, spreading beyond the boundaries of the US. The period between the mid-1980s and early 1990s was known as **Golden Age Hip-Hop**. Noted artists in this age were **Juice Crew, Beastie Boys, Kool G Rap, Slick Brick**, etc.

Gangsta rap was a sub-genre of Hip Hop which focused on violent lifestyles and faint conditions of African-American youth during the mid-20s. **Tupac Amaru Shakur** (1971-1996) had one of the most legendary careers in the Hip Hop music, selling more than 75 million records worldwide, making him one of the 'bestselling music artist of all time'! In 2005, **Rolling Stones'** magazine named him at No.86 of the '100 immortal artist of all time' behind **Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, and John Lennon**. Hip-Hop has become a culture for the youth today, becoming a medium for voicing messages which need to reach out to a large audience. Despite avid criticism, Hip-Hop being subjected to avid criticism, Hip Hop has emerged to be the most widely admired genre of music by youth all over.



### **Rhythm & Blues (R&B)**

**R&B**, also known as **Rhythm and Blues**, is another celebrated music genre which includes elements of Hip-Hop, Pop, and Funk etc. This form originated in late 1940s as a part of African-American music culture. **Jump blues** was the actual name of this genre which later changed to R&B, an umbrella term. This music genre is often associated with hip/hop, but the former includes singing and soul, which is mostly missing in Hip-Hop since it has hard beats. R&B contributed to the development of another form of music, **Rock & Roll**, and in many of its subgenres, like- **Contemporary R&B, Smooth Jazz** and **Neo Soul**. Earlier known as **Race Record**, Billboard magazine named it as 'rhythm and blues' in 1949. Music journalist Jerry Wexler found that the record companies issuing black popular music considered the term 'race music' to be demeaning and was deemed to be offensive in the post war world. R&B was strongly influenced by Jazz and Black Gospel music. The mainstream sound of R&B relied more upon rhythm than hardcore feel, unlike Hip-Hop. At the end of 20<sup>th</sup> Century, R&B brought its attention to the solo artists rather than groups.





~ *The Script*-A popular R&B Band~

**Mariah Carey** (1969) became one of the most prominent artists of R&B. The songstress proved her potential with songs like *Vision of love* (1990) from her self-titled debut album, which began a chain of successful albums for her. She has also been an avid lyricist who included themes like racism, spirituality, love and elevation. She has been recipient of several honours including a **Grammy** in 1991 for ‘Best New Artist’, **World Music Awards** ‘Bestselling Female Artist of the Millennium’, etc. **Marvin Gaye** (1939-1984) was another R&B singer who got wide fame due to his soulful singing. His string of hit songs included *Ain't that peculiar*, *How sweet it is*, and *I Heard it through the Grapevine*, etc. He was majorly known for producing his own albums and addressing certain crucial themes. His vocal range varies in a single song due to his powerful chords. He had the ability to take up any genre and make it his own, which made him the most versatile singer of his time. He has been posthumously bestowed with awards like **Grammy** Lifetime Achievement Award, **Rock and roll's** Hall of Fame etc.

### Pop

The current favourite genre of music today is undoubtedly **Pop** music. Originating from both the US as well as UK in mid-1950s, Pop music is often characterized by music which is 'catchy' or 'loved by the mainstream audience'. It has several subgenres like **Art Pop**, **Bubblegum Pop**, **Dance Pop**, **Teen Pop**, etc. Pop music mostly focuses on appealing to its audience. The availability of Internet has revolutionized the pop music culture allowing pop music lovers to discover pop songs from Non-Western countries, such as Japan and South Korea which have a Pop music industry devoted to western style pop, with groups like BTS, EXO, BIGBANG, TWICE, BLACKPINK which have recently started garnering attention from all over the world.



~*BTS or Beyond The Scene*~

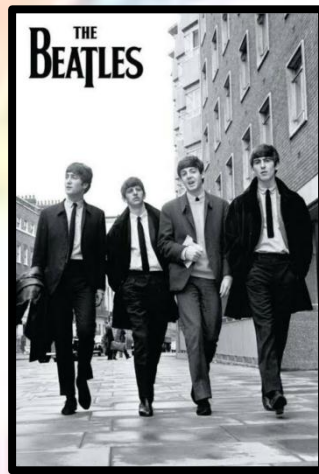


~*BlackPink*~

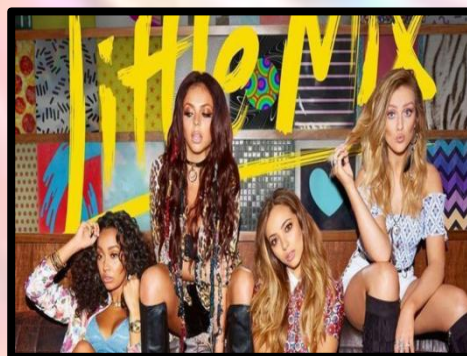


~ *EXO*~


One reason behind this genre's tremendous popularity is its combination of rhythms which are 'dance-oriented and melodic'. Today, one may find many Pop solo artists or groups, but there are some who have set a benchmark with their music. One of such artists was **The Beatles**- a British boy-band formed in Liverpool in 1960, consisting of 4 members- **John Lennon, George Harrison, Ringo Starr and Paul McCartney**. They were the most widely known and influential band of that era. Apart from embracing pop, they also encompassed 1950s rock& roll and expanded their style to a broad variety of pop music. Some of their hit albums include *Rubber Soul* (1965), *Revolver* (1966), *St. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967), *Abbey Road* (1969), etc. They have received seven **Grammy** awards and were included into **Rock&Roll's** Hall of Fame in 1988. They are the 'Bestselling Band in History', selling more than 800 million copies as of 2013.



Some of the top pop artists are **Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, Madonna, Pink Floyd, Whitney Houston, Lionel Richie, Celine Dion, Bruno Mars, Rihanna, Taylor Swift, Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, Britney Spears, Demi Lovato**, etc.







Pop music is a field where there's a lot of young and attractive talent. These people have to showcase the best of their capabilities in order to appeal to the mainstream audience. Artists strive for excellence in this heavy competition, thus, producing phenomenal work.

With the forever increasing popularity of different genres, music has always remained the biggest domain of entertainment. Being the most impressive expression of cultures around the world, music also instils a bigger frame of traditionalism. It is overwhelming to see the extent to which music culture has influenced generations.

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-Jyoti Negi,  
Second year.

**The Politics of Popular Anger:**  
**Examined Through the Angry Young Man Trope**  
**of 1970s Bollywood**

Cinema then isn't actually what it is taken to be: an impermanent tryst with make-believe, regurgitated with a diet of popcorn and ice creams, its succulence lasting only till the lights are turned on. Somewhere along the regurgitation, there is assimilation, affirmation and actualisation also.

—Nikhath Kazmi, *Ire in the Soul*

This paper focuses on the Angry Young Man of 1970s Bollywood in order to examine the politics of popular imagination and how it channelizes its anger and desire for mobilization against the status quo through such cinematic figures. This is done by exploring the social, political and cultural forces which helped bring the phenomenon of the Angry Young Man into existence as well as the limits to which the rebelliousness of the figure is allowed license before it is curbed.

The term 'Angry Young Man', initially used by the press officer George Fearon to disparage the playwright John Osborne for his play *Look Back in Anger* (1956), quickly gained currency in contemporary media as the play became more popular, and came to stand for a youth-oriented, anti-establishment movement in 1950s England. In the play, the historical moment that frames Jimmy Porter's anger is the decline of the British Empire post-World War II, the effects of which were being felt by the British at every level. The loss of most of its colonies post-WWII, primarily India, subordination by the U.S. in world politics, the



emergence of consumerism and American popular culture, and the perceived threat of an imminent nuclear attack, were factors which contributed variously to a general mood of nostalgia for the glorious national past, as well as anger at conservative political leaders, culture and art which was felt to be uncritical and complacent. Porter represented a generation of young people who had benefitted from the 1944 Education Act which helped economically disadvantaged students gain university education, but actually resulted in trauma and severe disillusionment with their fraudulent alma maters. Though he does not espouse an ideology overtly, critics have gleaned an 'instinctive leftness' from Porter's fulminations, characteristic of the 'Angry Young Men' of the society, primarily comprising students, left-leaning political leaders, Marxist critics and intellectuals. Aleks Sierz attributes to this type of drama, which assumed for its audience mostly left-liberal lower-middle/working class youth, the production of a masculine identity which 'glamorized' a politics of negativity and 'provided a role model' to cope with drastic social upheaval.<sup>1</sup>

The sobriquet 'angry young man' has proliferated across genres, cultures and decades and been referred to in the titles of many subsequent works; it typically signifies a (masculine) subjectivity deeply dissatisfied with the status quo, one that favours rebellion over inaction or subscription to fate. In the context of Bollywood films, the 1970s are popularly known as the decade of the Angry Young Man, a trend started by the 1973 movie written by Salim-Javed, *Zanjeer*. Amitabh Bachchan, who had already been working for some years in 'Middle Class' cinema, playing similar, brooding, interior-oriented roles (*Anand*, 1971 *Namak Haram*, 1973), would achieve overnight stardom as Vijaya, the 'angry young man', his character for the next two decades in scores of popular movies. This image of his has since overshadowed

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<sup>1</sup> Crucially, though the genre of drama associated with Angry Young Man was named 'kitchen-sink' drama, women characters or issues were seldom centre-stage in these plays; in fact, the gender-dynamic remained skewed in favour of a masculinity which derived security from the disparagement of women, homosexuals and the foreign Other.

similar roles he had been playing in cinema which was not so commercially viable. Madhava Prasad has the following to say regarding the same:

The difference between Mukherjee's films and those that built up Bachchan as a star persona was that in the former, the star represented only an infusion of additional value into a narrative which retained its primacy. (In a film like *Abhiman*, the conflicting trajectories of narrative and spectacle were sought to be resolved through the narrativization of the star figure.) In the Salim-Javed led project, however, the star remained a semantic excess of the narrative process, available for future exploitation.

(141)

In other words, the narrative becomes out of focus in the popular Angry Young Man movies in favour of the star himself, whose real-life attributes become a reflection on the image he portrays on screen. Bachchan's elite familial and political affiliations helped legitimize him as a hero in the eyes of the middle class, and his image as a part of the proletariat, fighting oppression on screen, warmed him up to the working class, as well as youthful revolutionaries of the time. Do we see such adulation as mindless lapping up of the larger-than-life make-believe celebrity image, a form of totalitarianism that Walter Benjamin cautions against in his essay *Work of Art in the age of Mechanical Reproduction*? Or do we see this, following Prasad, as a democratic process in which the masses elect their own sovereign (signalling a crisis of legitimacy of the Indian state, of its inability in having been able to make a true shift to a republic where every citizen would be a participatory citizen)—and demanding of the actor in his real life and even in his movies certain forms of behaviour which can make-or-break the career of the film-star, the coffers of the director, and so on? A more detailed examination is necessary before we can reach an answer.



The basic formula of these angry young man movies would be as follows: the working class hero becomes the victim of a (usually) rich villain, an injury he must avenge after a spectacular rise to success and power based on individual efforts (and which may often entail transgressing the law himself). Since the rhetoric of vengeance in these movies is couched in a language of social justice and class consciousness, and works to relate the personal struggle of the hero to his broader circumstances, the villain can be read as a symbol of, or at least associated with, the corrupt socio-political regime, that systematically keeps honest and deserving men, such as the hero, at a disadvantage. The hero's vigilante action against this villain, even as he sacrifices his life in the process, then becomes his challenge to the dominant regime, a fantasy with which the average cinema-going audience, could identify.

There are broad similarities we can trace between Osbourne's angry young man and Bachchan's. Both foreground disillusionment with their respective socio-political systems (if only through a personal vendetta with the villain in the latter's case), both speak for the interests of the lower-middle class/ working class and both became a cultural mouthpiece for a generation of desperate, incensed young people who saw in them a 'role model', a 'super hero', a 'saviour'. (Kazmi 31)

The historical background that has been pointed to by various film scholars as framing the anger of Bachchan's persona is the social turmoil of the 1970s. The contradictions and conflicts which had characterized the functioning of the newly independent Indian state became starker in this decade, and a variety of civil rights movements for gender, class and caste equality were mobilized. The weaknesses of a variety of democratic institutions such as the bureaucracy, the media, the judiciary, political parties became foregrounded in their political partisanship, leading to a lack of credibility and frustration among the people. A Bollywood film scholar comments, "Growing up in Bombay in that period, meeting both the


black-market folk and the white-market folk, I can testify that Vijay's frustration and despair were real and genuine." (Banker 59).

The political malaise and mass mobilization affected mainstream cinema in as much as it started to feel the pressures of depicting gritty, realistic social scenarios, and its old, feudal romances of the 1960s started to lose their popular sway. However, it wasn't just that popular cinema woke up to play its conscientious part in the socio-political struggle, something that must make us cognizant of the myriad forces at work in the workings of the popular. Popular cinema found a 'demand' and fulfilled it. This fulfilment should also be considered in the context of the state patronage to alternate institutions such as the Film Institute and the Film Finance Corporation which threatened, if not to displace, but to eat away into the concessions and privileges that popular cinema received from the state in order to deal in 'socially relevant' topics. Mainstream cinema both found something to exploit in the political excess of the urban and rural uprisings against the state but it had to simultaneously toe the line so as to keep the state appeased.

We should therefore turn to an examination of the films themselves to see how this line is toed. As mentioned before, the Angry Young Man films followed a set formula, which can be described as comprising the same basic tropes as a fairy tale: despite obstacles, good wins over evil in the end.

The magic of the so-called make-believe always seems to work, despite the fact that the average viewer is astute, choosy and hard to please. Psychologist Sudhir Kakkar points out that cinema is a 'collective fantasy, a group day-dream, in contrast to the individualised fantasy incorporated in a work of literature, a painting or the so-called art film by an auteur director, in which the balance between imagination and reality,





the intermixture of fantasy and experience is infinitely more complex.’ Cinema then becomes a prism that ‘reflects dominant psychological concerns’, not only at the conscious levels, but specially the hidden unconscious concerns of the millions of men and women who frequent cinema. (Kazmi 23)

Popular cinema might reveal these psychological concerns, but how does it posit a solution to them? The language in which the anger and desire for justice are couched in the films is indeed broadly social; there are strong hints about the corrupt ruling party and its inefficacies, the frustration of the common man, his/her grinding poverty and inability to succeed in a system biased from the start against certain sections of the society. But if we examine movies such as *Deewar*, *Trishul*, etc this struggle is dramatized through individual rivalry: the physical bashing of and victory over of a single villain, unaccompanied apparently by any necessity to overthrow the system, to change the government or the economic system. The overnight, unrealistic rise to success of Amitabh's characters in these films—as a real estate dealer in *Trishul*, an English spouting, urbane smuggler in *Deewar* and *Adalat*—is based on a logic of meritocracy and individual hard work (even if in the criminal realm) which refuses to question broader structural inequalities that would hinder such easy mobility for most of the working class audience members. Perhaps this is in part a contingency of the form of the popular text, which must always follow a recognizable plot and accommodate novelties within that; hence the physical bashing up of a recognizably villainous antagonist, who is the system personified, and not a manifesto about overhauling repressive structures. However, the conservatism of these films cannot be attributed wholly to the form; it is reflected, too, in the closures of the films where the law subsumes the erring—though heroic—angry young man into its fold. The movie may have been a scathing critique of the loopholes, corruption, inefficacy characterizing the legal system; hence, criminality becomes a dominant metaphor during these period for rebellion and dis-identification—but before the curtain is down, the super ego must chastise the libidinal fantasies of the Id and contain it within a respectable order, thereby restoring social order.



There is another way in which the anger articulated in the films of this time shaped by the conservative politics of this time: it is allowed only to working class male characters, played by male actors like Amitabh. Hema Malini too played the role of the angry, vengeful woman at this time (*Lal Patthar* (1971), *Seeta aur Geeta* (1975)) but was neither valorised or glamorized for the same.

## Conclusion

The popular is a fraught space where dominant ideologies are both created and subverted; it is a flux that cannot be pinned down as an either/or, and what is necessary is a keen examination of every specific instance before one uncritically dismisses it or celebrates it. In this paper, by examining the politics of representation of the Angry Young Man with respect to class and gender, as well as the relationship of this genre of movies with official and unofficial state-censorship, which can be named subterranean censorship, I have tried to demonstrate that popular movies can be radical with respect to one issue but be internally riven with their own orthodoxies. This makes it important that the potential of the popular be utilized before it circumvents its own radicalness.

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-Ms. Menka Ahlawat.



## A conversation with DEVDUTT PATTANAİK

He is a mythologist-author-illustrator.



**1) According to you, mythology, in one form or the other, is present in the world of not just the believers but even of the atheists. Could you kindly elaborate on this idea?**

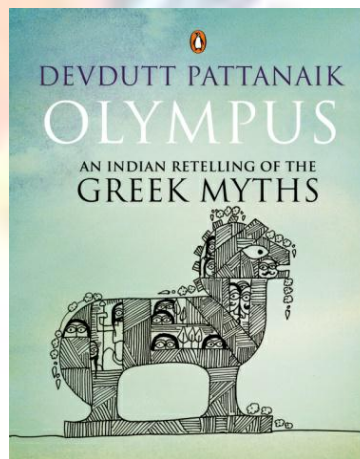
What separates humans from animals- imagination! We can imagine a world without us. We can imagine a different world around us. We alone, of all living creatures, seek meaning in our lives, a purpose. We wonder what happens after death. For this, we need a story to frame our existence. This story born of imagination gives structure to our imagination. This story is shared with peers and passed on from generation to generation and serves as glue to a community. This story is what the Greeks called mythos, from which comes the word myth. This story can have many gods (polytheistic mythology), one God (monotheistic mythology) and no god (atheistic mythology). It is the nature of myth that the one inhabiting it insists it is true: and so religions (monotheistic mythologies) insist their story is true; atheists also insist their story is true; and polytheists also insist their story is true. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, monotheists called their own narrative religion and the polytheistic narrative myth. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, atheists classify both monotheist and polytheist narratives as myth. But the atheist lives in a myth without gods, but he does assume justice, equality and rights to be some kind of natural phenomena shaping human morality. But justice, equality and rights are artificial constructs, just like gods, something we believe in, and make true with faith – hence stories, or myths, that make human life meaningful.

**2) You are quite the prolific writer with 30 books to your credit. How do you find the time to research and write? More importantly, do you see yourself as a writer first or as a mythologist?**

There is always time for the curious. I see myself as a mythologist. I communicate my thoughts through writing, illustrations, lectures, workshops, performances, podcasts and TV shows.

**3) You are one of the most popular figures in India, today, when it comes to bringing mythology back to the masses, especially the urban populace. But you do not seem to be writing a lot of mythological fiction which is quite popular, currently. Is that a conscious decision?**

I prefer non-fiction and commentaries to fiction. I have written one fiction book: the Pregnant King. I hope to write another next year. Writing fiction is very different from non-fiction. I have written a short story for Tehelka: Is he Fresh? And my children's books by Puffin (Fun in Devlok, The Girl who Chose, Pashu) are all fiction, one can say.



**4) You worked in the field of medicine for over a decade but finally decided to follow your passion- Indian mythologies. Ours readers would love to know more about your undying love for this subject. Did any particular event during your childhood propel you in this direction?**

I worked in pharma and healthcare industry for 15 years. During these years, mythology was a weekend hobby. Over time the hobby became a passion and I was being paid for my lectures. Finally since 2008, I could support myself financially only doing mythology and so, this became a full time vocation. The transformation happened organically and was totally unplanned. Opportunities came and I grabbed them.

**5) A lot of young people in universities read mythology, if at all, in English, which often does not have linguist equivalents to classical concepts (say for instance, *dharma*). Do you see this as a challenge or as a necessary compromise? How would you wish to address this gap?**

Mythology has no language. Literature has a language. We need to distinguish mythology (content/idea) from literature (form). Mythology manifests as stories (oral and textual), symbols and rituals. Only oral and textual traditions can be seen as literature where language plays a key role. But what about images? What about



rituals? What is the language of a yantra, an icon, or a namaskara? We give language too much importance. Yes, it has its value and Indian languages are potent vehicles of Indian mythology but they do not restrict the idea; they simply transmit it.

**6) Our myths celebrate and embrace ideas of gender fluidity, be it in the form of the androgynous or the queer identity (Shikhandi in the *Mahabharata*). How and why is it that Indians at present shrink from their mythological heritage, preferring to term these alternative identities as an ill effect of Western influence?**

The third gender (transgender or homosexual) is an essential feature of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain mythology. Of course, they were not mainstream. They were marginalized. But their existence was acknowledged. Science as we know it today came from Europe and was strongly based on Christian bias. And so gender was seen as binary, and sexuality were classified as normal and abnormal. We accepted whatever the West taught us as truth. It gave a language to deal with our own discomfort with the third gender. We must not forget that the Buddha did not let pandakas (homosexuals) become members of his Sangha. So discrimination existed even before British. British legitimized this discrimination. Our constitution and courts continue to perpetrate it.

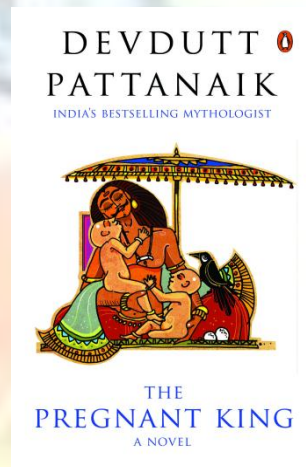
**7) How do myths vary from one geographical region to another across the Indian sub-continent?**

In North India, Ganesha is married and Kartikeya is single. In South India, Ganesha is single and Kartikeya has two wives. Very different. In the North, Ram and Krishna are very popular, but in the South, greater value is placed on Vishnu and his other avatars also, like Trivikrama and Narasimha. Odissa worships Jagannath who is avatar (Krishna) and avatari (Vishnu) and in rituals gives birth to Ram and Krishna thus taking the role of the female divine. This makes no sense to non-Odia Hindus. North Indians are clueless about Ayyappa and Aiyandar, the sons of Shiva and Vishnu-Mohini.

**8) Mythology in India is linked with religious belief in a way that the two are indistinguishable at times. In such a scenario, how can one cultivate in the students an appreciation for the equally rich mythological world of other religions?**

Lookout for the story that underlies any religion. The idea of God who sends messages to humanity via prophets, is a story. The idea of God who lets a virgin bear his son is also a story. The idea of a world where men and women are unequal is a story, as is the idea of world where men and women are equal. Typically, these worlds of inequality or equality are said to have existed either in the past, or will appear in the future. The idea of revolutions, or artificial intelligence, ushering in

happiness and justice is also a story. The idea that life has no meaning is also a story. The idea that life can be made meaningful by serving a guru, or society, is also a story. Many stories out there. No story. No humanity.



**9) The erotic aspect of our mythical (as well as classical) literature is not usually given due appreciation. We tend to gloss over the beauty of the *shringara rasa*. For our students (who study Kalidasa's *Abhigyan Sakuntalam*), will you briefly delineate the place of this particular *rasa* in the ancient Indian society?**

If you study Bollywood film songs carefully you will realize the erotic may not have been seen, but it was always heard. Or it was shown in coded form. Like the ancient *ganikas* and *devadasis*, Indians have worshipped their Bollywood goddesses, whose body throbs on the silver screen, whose voice is filled with longing and passion. Over time, we have made Bollywood drop their pants too. *Rasa* is rich in Bollywood. We do not care for plot and character. What we seek is our senses to be flooded with emotions – drama, melodrama, comedy, tragedy, erotica, valour, prayer, wisdom, love, hate. This is *rasa*, not as overt as in classical poetry, but very much there. Like Bharata's heroes, Bollywood heroes are infallible. Unlike Greek heroes, they do not go through any emotional or intellectual transformation. So to be honest, *rasa* continues to thrive in India, in the folk and popular traditions, without the self-consciousness of classical traditions.

**10) The dicing episode in *Mahabharata* is rife with various irresolvable conflicts. Would you like to shed some light on the tension between human agency and fate therein?**

There is nothing like fate in *Mahabharata*. It is only about human agency. How we sometimes let our passions overcome our good sense. Yudhishtira cannot control himself and loses himself and all that he owns, in a game. He cannot pull back. It's like young people who cannot break free from the cellphone. It is like selfie suicides. And then there is the legal angle – can we wager relationships (*Draupadi*) as we wager property (*Indraprastha*)? I see nothing transcendental in these stories. Just basic human conflicts between what we do with what we have and how we imagine ourselves.



**11) Arjun is usually represented as the hero of the epic because of the privileging of a martial ethos in the modern readings of the epic. Who do you think are some of the most undervalued characters of this tale?**

Actually, that is a 21<sup>st</sup> century invention, because we need a hero to tell a story. His value has also risen as Krishna chooses him as companion and recipient of Gita. But Arjuna plays really no significant role in the Mahabharata other than winning Draupadi's hand in marriage and sharing her with brothers. In the war, Bhima kills all the Kauravas. And Arjuna is able to kill Bhima and Karna only because Krishna enables him with various strategies and guile. Perhaps we find him more glamorous than the brawny Bhima or the gambler Yudhishtira who eventually reaches heaven.

**12) Would you like to discuss your upcoming projects with our readers?**

I am currently designing my Mahabharata for children: The Boys who Fought. It's fun.

**13) What is your dream project?**

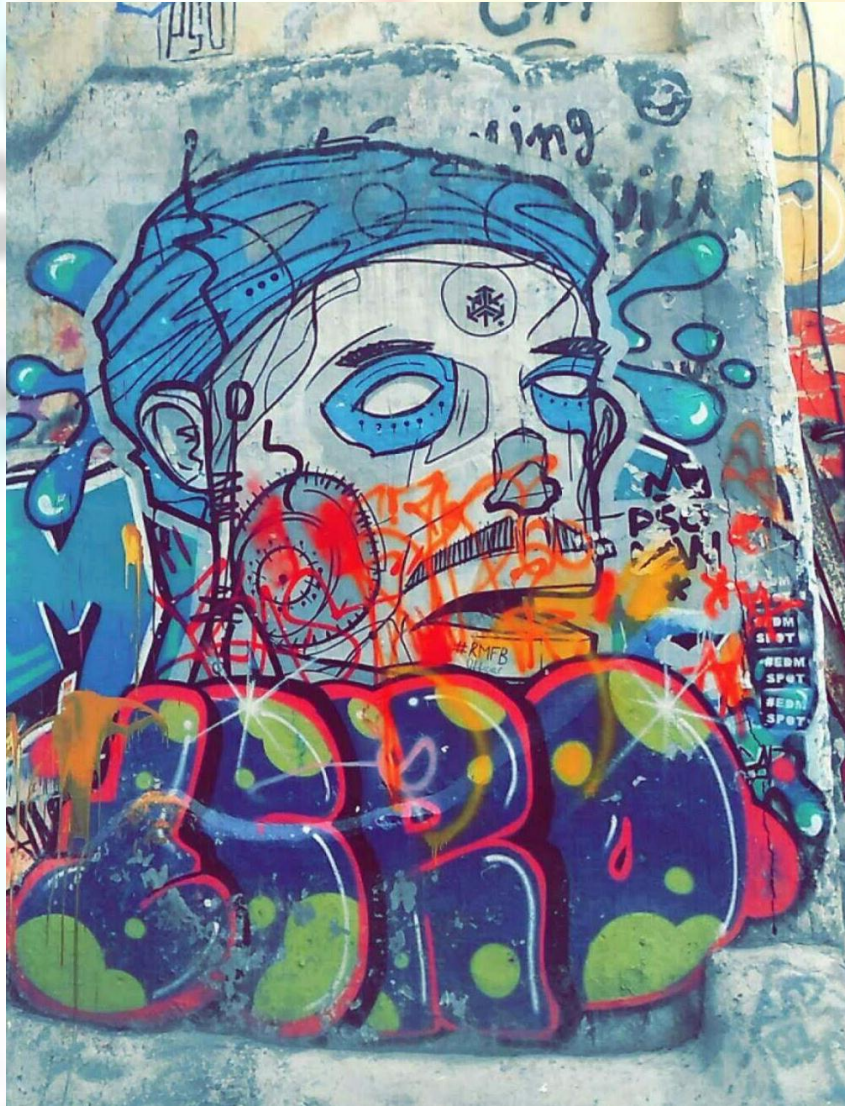
All my books and writings are dreams that have manifested themselves.

(As interviewed by Ms. Avantika Pokhriyal, via mail.)



**The Tears of the Silenced**

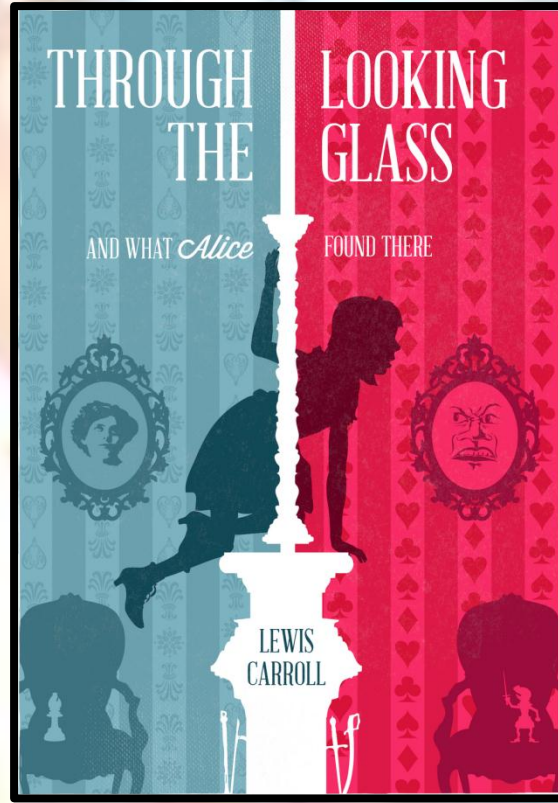




-Sunidhi Sood,  
Second year.

## Through The Looking-Glass, And What Alice Found There

A Book Review



*Through the Looking- Glass, and What Alice Found There* is a novel written by English mathematician **Charles Lutwidge Dodgson** under the pseudonym **Lewis Carroll** in 1871 as a sequel to the first one in this two-book fantasy novel series, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Like the first Alice book, *Looking-Glass* is a brilliantly plotted, wonderfully inventive “nonsense” story, full of humour, riddles and rhymes. The two books were revolutionary: while most children’s novels had been written to educate and instruct, Carroll’s two books were produced firmly to amuse. His facility at word play, logic and fantasy is vividly reflected in this novel. Carroll's obsession with little girls was often a topic of debate, as can be seen in the books where the protagonist Alice is a seven year old girl, and landed him the title of a paedophile too. With next to no interest in the adult world and how it functioned, Carroll took to writing in the genre of Children's Fiction instead.

The novel comprises of 12 episodes, detailed upon the fantastical adventures of a little girl called *Alice*- named after a young girl, **Alice Liddell**, a much adored friend of Carroll to whom I he also dedicated the book, the fictional child protagonist living in the mid-Victorian era. Her journey down the outlandish mirror-glass house comes out as an alternative world where Carroll has wittily showcased the concepts of mirror imagery, the fleetness of time,



and portrayal of the mirror world as a game of chess where the gullible protagonist has to cross all the blocks of the chess to become the Queen. Carroll's use of nursery rhymes' characters like 'Tweedledum and Tweedledee', 'Lion and the Unicorn', 'Humpty Dumpty' etc. categorizes his novel under the Children's Literature or Juvenile's Literature and also displays his childlike view of the world.


The first few episodes emphasize Alice's invisibility suggesting her Godlike power over the Looking-Glass land, which also suggests that the whole world exists only as a part of her imagination. The chessboard works as a tool to weave the narrative of the mirrored world. She becomes a chess piece herself by the authorial hand of Carroll in the later chapters. The author's representation of Looking-Glass world's creatures and their encounter with Alice imitates the attitude of the English imperialist explorers of Carroll's time, who intruded on foreign lands with preconceived notions about language, manners, and the way the world works. The concepts of mirror-world, somewhere or the other, puzzles yet fascinates both Alice and the readers.

The character of Tweedle brothers introduces the readers to the theme of **inversion** which is constantly exploited throughout the chapter. The episode with the sleeping Red King reflects upon the main idea of the novel as it questions the existence of Alice within the glass-world and the possibility of her being a mere figment of the Red King's dream. The event opens many implications and allows the readers to interpret the novel from their perspective. The substantial theme of **naming** is repeatedly seen in the novel during Alice's visit to The Woods and her encounter with Humpty Dumpty.

Carroll's active use of wordplay allows the readers to have an alternate view of what language is and how it functions, thus letting the reader be not only a passive entity, but also a participant in the imaginative world along with the protagonist.

The inclusion of the highly nonsensical poem *Jabberwocky* about the killing of a creature named the 'Jabberwock' by the author is of great significance. Its playful, whimsical language has given English nonsense words and neologisms such as "galumphing" and "chortle". The vast majority of the words in the poem are clever inventions of its author. Critics have been raving about Carroll for decades. The way he manages to make his fantastical stories work on both at a child's and an adult's level is highly admirable. His stories and poems are funny and eccentric, but they're also complicated, dark, and bitter. Children are entertained by the comic and fantasy aspect, but as adults we see these layers of complexity emerge the more we read the work.

Critics have often been of the view that the character of White Knight, who acts as a friend to Alice and is the only character with whom Alice feels comfortable with, is none other than the fictional manifestation of Carroll himself. Her leaving the White Knight to pursue her journey of becoming the queen is symbolic of real life Alice leaving Carroll to step into the adult life.



The ending chapters of the novel, where Carroll has entitled the chapters as “Queen Alice”; “Shaking”; “Waking”; and lastly, “Which dreamed I?” shows that the author has inverted the whole idea of the story by ostensibly drawing out the universal reality from the fantasy world of Alice. Once she becomes a queen, the chess game is completed and the façade comes to an end. Alice realizes that the whole implausible journey was only a ‘moment’, and Carroll reflects upon the idea- *“Life, what is it but a dream?”*...

-Yogita Malhotra,

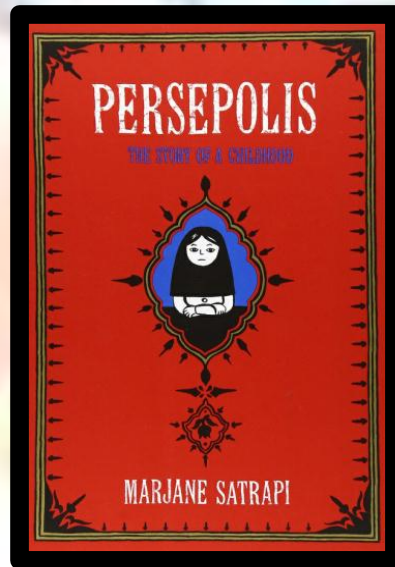
Third year.



## Persepolis

~The story of a childhood~

A Book Review



**Title:** Persepolis

**Author:** Marjane Satrapi

**Publisher:** L'Association, Pantheon Books

**Price:** Rs.432 (On Amazon)

**Genre:** Autobiographical Comic

A humorous and haunting memoir of a young Iranian girl Marji, *Persepolis*, an autobiography by Marjane Satrapi, is a highly remarkable story that presents to its readers the horrors of the turbulent years of Iran through the eyes of an innocent witness. The novel is filled with happiness, grief, and moments of childhood in a world where all children are forced to grow up prematurely. The narrative proceeds in a comic strip format, with stark and stunning images.

The novel is set in Tehran during the Iranian Revolution of 1979, describing the events that led to the downfall of the American backed dictator known as the Shah of Iran, leading to the rise of the religious hardliners who establish the oppressive Islamic Republic. Satrapi describes how she used to attend a French co-educational secular school, but such schools were outlawed by the Islamic Republic as Western influences. Students were segregated along gender lines, women's rights receded faster than the polar ice caps, women were forced to wear veils against their will, and family members were executed simply because they were suspected to be spies. The events unfold one after the other in the novel, confusing the child and it's through her incomplete understanding that the readers get an insight into the history of Iran.

With a long history of invasions and conquests, Marji's father tries to explain the little child about the various rules under which Iran had submitted itself to. ***“Twenty five hundred years of tyranny and submission,” as my father said, “First our own emperors, then the Arab invasion from the West followed by the Mongolian invasion from the East and finally modern imperialism.”***



~A line by Marji from the book~

The novel is infused with the imagery of violence, death, and rebellion. Satrapi manages to communicate these hardcore themes to her readers even though the format of the text is that of a comic strip. On why she chose this style of writing, Satrapi says in an interview, *“Comics gave me an enormous possibility to talk about a subject that was very serious in another way....How is it possible to talk about another story talking about the same region and the same thing and still make it different?”*

Satrapi uses this genre to inject levity to the otherwise dark narrative. The childlike manner of the storytelling that Satrapi adopts is to portray Marji's innocence in that horrifying world. The use of the graphic novel format thus allows for a better understanding and a clearer interpretation of events due to the combination of text and illustration. However, while the novel does fall under the category of 'Graphic Novel', there happens to be some very noticeable differences between the two. While the more traditional art form of comic illustration focuses on vivid colour, distinct character definition, and fine details, Satrapi chose instead to omit differentiation in her style in any way other than was necessary to distinguish characters from one another. In terms of their clothing, the characters are garbed in all-black or all-white, she avoids specifying time, place, or individually on any one person in her narrative illustration. Thus anyone could be any of these characters, could sympathize with their personal history, and could easily find any one or all of Satrapi's experiences relatable on some level. In this way, she sets herself apart from the "Hero narrative" of comics dating as far back as the medieval tapestries telling of glorious kings and conquest. Satrapi's portrayal of herself is clearly not as a glory-seeking heroine, but instead simply as a person who experienced life and wishes to retell her story for the sake of those who have no voice.

The novel engages the reader in the journey of Marji from a child to an adolescent and through her transition gives us the overview of Iran. She idolizes those who were imprisoned by the Shah, fascinated by their tales of torture, and bonds with her Uncle Anoosh, only to see the new regime imprison and eventually kill him. Thanks to the Iran-Iraq war, neighbours' homes are



bombed, playmates are killed, and parties are forbidden. Satrapi's parents, who once lived in luxury despite their politics, struggle to educate their daughter. Iron Maiden, Nikes and Michael Jackson become precious symbols of freedom, and eventually Satrapi's rebellious streak puts her in danger, as even educated women are threatened with beatings for improper attire. Despite the grimness, Satrapi never lapses into sensationalism or sentimentality. Skilfully presenting a child's view of war and her own shifting ideals, she also shows quotidian life in Tehran and her family's pride and love for their country despite the tumultuous times.

Satrapi's narrative is interesting, and it offers an involving and deep insight into a society one doesn't know much about. A fictional story inspired by her ordeals, *Persepolis* shows us the danger of letting the opinions of very few dictate the behaviour of many. On top of that is the fact that everyone has a story, and not everyone in a country is exactly the same. Thus, one can't help but feel that the real tragedy was not of the protagonist, but of the tens of thousands of other young women of her age whose parents couldn't afford to send them off abroad. Also, it is the tragedy of those hundreds of thousands of political prisoners executed and the young men sent to fight in a pointless war against Iraq.

Marjane Satrapi says that "This isn't a social, political, or historical statement, but a story from the point of view of a human". It is a beautiful, moving memoir that enlightens the readers about the situation and turbulence that stirred the whole country, and through the life journey of one individual, exhibits the difficult conditions of many of its residents.

-Sunidhi Sood,

Second year.

## Popular Places in Kolkata

'I visited Kolkata during my summer vacation in the year 2015. In spite of a lot of construction work taking place all around the city, I managed to enjoy the beauty of this amazing city of West Bengal. I had the company of a guide who took me to all the mesmerising places of the city and explained to me the importance of each.'

**Kolkata** was formerly known as '*Calcutta*'. It is a megacity and is often considered as a hub of talent. It has a number of beautiful places to visit. It is one of the most highly populated cities in the country.



(Mahatma Gandhi Road, central Kolkata)

The city draws the attention of various tourists due to its aesthetic, cultural, social and historical value. It is famous for its beauty, culture, food, literature and movies. Who doesn't know about the famous 'Bengal Renaissance'? Bengal Renaissance was a cultural, social, intellectual and artistic movement in Bengal region during the British rule, from the 19th century to early 20th century. It can be said to have started with Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) and ended with Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). Nineteenth century Bengal was a unique blend of religious and social reformers, literary giants, patriotic orators and scientists, all merging to form the image of a renaissance. '*Renaissance*' is a French word which means, 're-birth or re-awakening'. Bengal Renaissance brought forth a series of changes in art and literature. It led to the proliferation of modern Bengali literature and fostered an engagement with rationalism and nationalism. Indian Writing in English first emerged during this phase, initially it was about imitation but also about re-imagining Indian experiences.



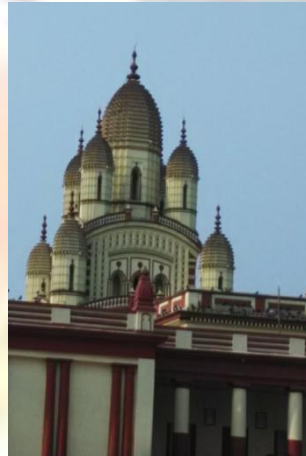
(Chowringhee Road, Kolkata)

There are a number of places which one should definitely visit in Kolkata. The city has an ample variety of museums, parks, bridges, and holy places. If one is short of time, the



following 10 places would all alone help the person come closer and become familiar with the 'City of Joy' i.e. Kolkata.

### 1. Dakshineswar Kali Temple



Kolkata is famous for its spirituality. The 'Dakshineswar Temple' was built in 1855 by Rani Rashmoni (who is considered as the founder of this temple), a devout worshipper of the Goddess Kali. Our history reveals that she once had a dream in which the goddess asked her to construct a temple on the banks of Ganges river and install her idol there. It is situated at the north of Belur Math in Kolkata. The construction of this temple was started in the year 1847 and it took eight years to complete it. This temple is dedicated to Kali and it is one of the largest and most spacious temples in Kolkata.

A very famous spiritual leader, Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1836-1886) is associated with this temple (which is another reason for the popularity of this temple). He was a key figure in revival of Hinduism in Bengal at a time when intense spiritual crisis was gripping the province. This temple was the place, where he had worshipped Goddess Kali.



Kalighat kali temple



Another important temple of Goddess Kali which is situated in Kolkata is- '*Kalighat Kali Temple*'. It is said that the former name of the city i.e. 'Calcutta' was derived from the word '*kalighat*'. The greatest significance of this temple is that it is one of the 51 *shakti peetha*. *The Shakti Peethas are significant shrines and pilgrimage destinations which came into existence as Lord Vishnu had cut the body of Goddess Sati into 52 parts using his Sudarshana Chakra.*



There are many different stories about the construction of this temple. Many temples of Goddess Kali are seen in Kolkata since the Bengali community as a whole is a devotee of this deity.

The history of the temple tells us that different parts of the body of *Sati* (Lord Shiva's consort) fell on the earth in the course of her self-sacrifice. Legend has it that the right toe of *Sati* fell here and eventually leading to the erection of this temple.

Both these temples of Goddess Kali i.e. '*Dakshineswar and Kalighat Kali Temple*' are visited by thousands of devotees, throughout the year, who come all the way from in and around the country.

Kolkata, from the very beginning, has a good transportation system. The metro services too were initially started in the City of Joy. These two temples are easily accessible due to such developed transportation system in Kolkata. Therefore, one should surely visit these temples.

## **2. Howrah Bridge**



'Howrah Bridge' situated on the Hooghly River is the essence of Kolkata. It is often considered as an iconic landmark of the City of Joy. It took around 7 years to build this bridge and it has a length of 1528 feet and a width of 62 feet.



This bridge plays an important role as the gateway to Kolkata, it connects the City to various places which includes the important railway stations of the city.

The bridge is well-known for its architecture, it does not employ any kind of nuts or bolts in it. Researches show that it is the fourth busiest bridge across the globe.

It attracts the tourists because of an ample number of reasons, one is the way it is designed. The beautifully lit bridge makes for a wonderful sight at night. In short, it has become a famous tourist spot in the course of time.



In Kolkata, bridges form an important link between different places. I also visited other bridges like- Vivekananda setu, Nivedita setu and Vidyasagar setu all of which are very famous because of their location, vehicle holding capacity and of course, their architectural beauty.

### 3. Science City



(E M bypass Road, Kolkata)



The *Science City* of Kolkata is one of the most important tourist places in India. It was inaugurated on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1997. It is considered as one of the finest and largest science museums in the world and it provides an opportunity to study science in an interesting way. It was inaugurated to popularise science.

It is the largest science centre across the Indian subcontinent and an iconic institute which combines education with entertainment to provide a very interactive way of learning things. It has many different instruments which may not be found in any other science centre. The best part is that the entry does not cost much. The ticket rates are very nominal.

The science city has two phases, which were unveiled by different people who contributed a lot for its construction. The *Space Theater* is an important part of the science city, many shows are held here during the day time. There is also a Dynamic Hall which makes us familiar with the different topics of science. The Evolution Park is a theme park which shows the development and the evolution of life and also gives information about the extinct species. The Science City also displays different aquatic animals and it has numerous aquariums.



#### **4. Kolkata Zoo & Zoological garden**





Every creature on this earth is inter-dependent on for its survival and for maintaining a balance in our ecosystem. Various conservation techniques have been adopted by the environmentalists. Creating zoo and zoological gardens helps us conserve our flora and fauna. It helps in balancing the population of animal species.

In the same way, the Zoological garden of KOLKATA situated in Alipore, conserves and provides shelter to various carnivorous and herbivorous animals like Bengal tiger, Lion, Leopard, Jaguar, Himalayan black bear, Black buck, one horned rhinoceros, Indian elephant, and Zebra.



## 5. Victoria Memorial Hall



*Victoria Memorial* was built between the years 1906-1921 and it was conceptualized by George Curzon, who was the Viceroy of India then.

The motto behind its construction was to memorialize Queen Victoria. It is a huge monument made of white marble. It has been converted into a museum and a popular tourist place in the City of Joy. It was solely dedicated to Queen Victoria. The statue in the memorial stands as a reminiscence of the British Raj in the Indian subcontinent. It stands out due to its aesthetic value. The museum makes us familiar with the social, political situations in the Victorian era. There is a garden which gives you an insight into the past.



The memorial was designed in a revivalist style. This style of British architecture was employed along with the Egyptian, Venetian and Mughal styles. The memorial has a number of galleries which include the Royal gallery, the Sculpture gallery and others.

In short, it houses a remarkable collection of paintings, artifacts, weapons, textiles, coins and stamps. It also maintains few possessions of the Queen like her writing desk and chair and scrapbooks.

## 6. Mother's Wax Museum



'*Mother's Wax Museum*' is a very famous place of visit in Kolkata. It's a must visit, situated in a very posh locality near Salt Lake. This museum was planned in the city to make it more tourist-oriented. It stands opposite to the very famous *Eco Park*.



It has big hall where idols of famous personalities are exhibited. All these wax figures were made by Susanta Ray, a wax sculptor. It gives the golden opportunity to get close to the wax figures of heroes like Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan. One can find here the statues of the likes of Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Pranab Mukherjee, Mithun Chakraborty, Kapil Dev, Sourav Ganguly, Lata Mangeshkar, Kishore Kumar and a lot many other personalities. The museum was not very popular earlier but lately it has become a sought after place of visit.



There are more than 19 statues in the museum. The ticket price is affordable (Rs.150perperson). One is also provided professional photographer if asked for.

The ambience is so good that people wouldn't mind spending a little more for it.

## 7. Millennium Park



*Millennium Park* was inaugurated in December, 1999 in the City of Joy and it was an open park for the residents but due to its beauty it has become successful in attracting people from different cities and nations and now it has become a tourist spot.



The park has a very nominal entry-fee. This park which runs parallel to the Hooghly River is considered as Kolkata's 1<sup>st</sup> theme park. The greenery of the park and the presence of amusing rides have made it popular with both children and adults.

## 8. Birla Planetarium



Birla Planetarium of Kolkata is the second largest planetarium in Asia. It was set up by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 1963. There are only three planetaria present in India. This particular planetarium is also known as '*Tara Mandal*'.

Each day, various programs are held in the planetarium in different regional languages. It imparts knowledge about the solar system and its evolution to the visitors.



(A model of Birla Planetarium)

## 9. Eco Tourism Park





Our population is growing at an alarming rate. We are extremely dependent on natural resources, so much so that it's leading to the exploitation of these resources. The Government adopts various policies to promote eco-tourism which bring money and also save the cities from getting damaged. This was the reason behind setting up of an ecopark in Kolkata. This park has become a picnic spot , people go there and spend a good time with their family. The park has a number of theme based areas which include Tropical Tree Garden, Herb Garden, Fruits Garden, Mask Garden etc. These eco-parks help create a balance in our environment.



(Eco Tourism Park-night view)

## 10. Mother's House



Kolkata is a hub of holy places and Mother's House is one among those.

Mother Teresa (1910-1997) is a well-known figure to all. She is known for her selfless services to humanity. She was a Roman Catholic nun who spent the most of her life-time in India. She established the Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata in the year 1950 to help the sick, orphaned and dying people in the City. She won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1979. Her body is buried inside this house where she lived for years and served the human race.

A small museum has also been constructed in this house. People tend to visit this place for its peacefulness.



These are the tenmost popular places in the great city of Kolkata which everyone should be aware of and not leave unvisited in their life time.

-Nupur Jamwal,  
Second year.



Wonder woman



-Jasmeet Kaur,

Third year.

Joker



-Shruti Gupta,  
First year.



**FUNNY BOY**  
**- BY SHYAM SELVADURAI**

**(In continuation)**

**Chapter 7:**

**THE HOLLOWNESS OF HAVING EVERYTHING.**

We left the place I loved, and lived the most beautiful years of my life. That was the best we could do, the best but the most painful. It is funny how we sometimes have to link both the best and the most painful, and still settle for that option. But was it an option or a necessity?

It wasn't difficult for me to find a reason at nights to cry, the place my house was situated in was a reason enough for me to wet my pillows, but on other nights, it was my sarong getting wet, kissing with my mouth wide open, touching his lips with my tongue, looking for his tongue inside his mouth with my hands on his hips, which give way to the curves that I want to relish in. It was a sexual, spiritual and mental connection, like a journey to heaven which not all of us are allowed to have. And this time, I am the one initiating it. I turned him over and placed my hands over his stomach, so soft and fragile, as if it wanted to feel my touch. With my chest strongly pressed to his back, I could feel his hips in between my legs and I am not afraid or ashamed of it, maybe because it was all a dream, a dream that can never be a reality, for now I was far, far away from Shehan.

We came to Canada in order to be safe and feel less discriminated but I think it is in our fate to undergo such bias and torture. We left Sri Lanka because of the Sinhala - Tamil tensions and violence, but here also we get terrorised when it comes to black and whites. But what digs deep is the separation from Shehan. He made me love and accept the places on my body I ignored the most. I still remember the back garden and the kitchen porch where my cousins and I- the only boy among the girls- would play games which either included imitating adults' domestic functions, or the enactment of some well loved fairy story, where I always wanted to be the heroine. The place where I was forbidden to play such roles, and teased as the "girlie boy" and "a funny one", still made me nostalgic, wanting to go back there once again.

We got everything that we wanted, to be alive and be together, but still there was hollowness inside our chests. My pain was something that even I could not describe, because it is better left undisturbed and unrecorded. The academy I never wanted to join was now a place I can never abandon or leave. I longed for those moments of my first encounter with Shehan, the place he kissed me for the first time. I remembered my home and my garage as the place I felt myself for the first time when I felt my body uniting with his, coming in sync and getting a bond that still is not broken. That day I wanted to abandon him, but I hate myself for that now. If I had known I would not be able to touch him again, then I would have never pushed him away. It was a sin for me then, and it's a sin for me now, but this time, I want to commit that sin again. I am okay being a sinner, at least in my dreams.

**Chapter 8:**

**PRESENT STILL SUNKEN DEEP INSIDE THE PAST.**

We will always remember our home, *ammaji* and *appaji*, Radha aunty, and most of all Shehan. But life moved on, we started considering this place as our own, even if it can never be. I am 25 now, and *amma* and *appa* were forcing me to marry a girl of their choice, but I dared not tell them the truth. We were now more open to new things, but a sin was still a sin. I circumvented it as long as I could but they got me married at the age of 28. In 2003, I wanted to get back to Shehan, to go to Sri Lanka and tell him about my fantasies of him and the fact that I still want him in my life, but deep down, I knew it could not be so, and the fact that he probably would have moved on with his life made me abandon the thought there and then. Each encounter with my wife made me hungrier for his touch. She used to smile at me for no reason, and it always reminded me of him. I tried to touch her the way I touched him, but I didn't feel any pleasure from that touch, the way I did with Shehan.

So I avoided her as much as I could, and even though she never said a word against it, I could clearly see it in her gentle eyes, the longing for a family, for a child, the longing that every married woman feels, to be loved.

Now whenever she comes near me at night for a loving and healing touch, all I smell is the faint scent of Lifebuoy soap, with a hint of Shehan's fragrance coming right at me, as if he is somewhere inside of me.

I touch her, imagining her to be Shehan, with his beautiful curves and adoring look. It seems to be easier this way.

We live as strangers under the same roof, tied by a forced bond that is meant to unite us, make us one. But I dared not tell *amma* and *appa* the truth, because they would never listen. Still deep inside them knowing the fact that I am different, I can see that in their eyes that try to avoid me as much as they can, and the voice that asks as little as it can.

I still try not to think about it, about him. Maybe I don't have to come to terms with reality for now, but I have to someday, because now even if I wanted to, I cannot turn back time to when we were together. My future now belongs with her, not *him*. The least I could do for her is move on.

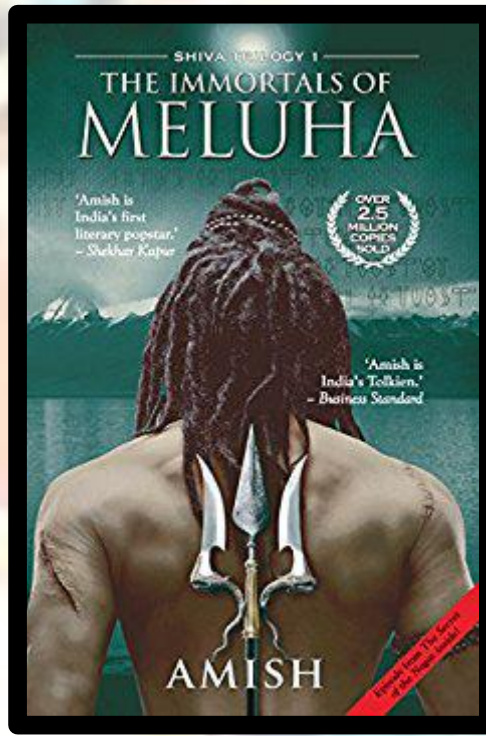
It doesn't feel much different here, for we still go through the discrimination we experienced back there, but the only difference is that this time we don't have a place to go back to, and no shoulder for me to cry on.

-Jasleen Kaur,

Third year.



## HAR HAR MAHADEV (All of us are Mahadevs)



**Title:** The Immortals of Meluha

**Author:** Amish Tripathi

**Publisher:** Westland ltd

**Price:** Rs. 295

**Genre:** Mythological Fiction

Amish Tripathi's trilogy on Lord Shiva consists of three books: *The Immortals of Meluha*, *The Secret of the Nagas*, and the much anticipated finale, *The Oath of the Vayuputras*.

The story of the Shiva trilogy is based on the concept that all Gods were once human beings; it was their deeds in their human life that made them gods. The author makes this argument as the premise of this book that Shiva was a man and that there are no magical gods. Mythology has always been popular with the masses. There have been several adaptations and retellings of *the Ramayana* and *the Mahabharata*.

Shiva! The *Mahadev*. The God of Gods. The Destroyer of Evil. The Passionate lover. All-powerful, and incorruptible. A man who rose to become godlike because of his karma.

The first book, *The Immortals of Meluha*, starts with a 21 year old Shiva who is a tribe leader. He migrates to Meluha, along with his tribe, in search of safety and shelter. Meluha empire is ruled by Suryavanshis who claim to be the descendants of Lord Rama. The Suryavanshis face devastating attacks from the Chandravanshis who are supported by the Nagas. The Nagas are a neglected race of deformed humans with astonishing martial skills. The Suryavanshis believed that their saviour would appear. When young Shiva developed a blue throat, they are

convinced that Shiva is indeed the Lord *Neelkanth*. Shiva refuses to believe that he is divine but everyone else completely trusts in his divine power and in his ability to save the Suryavanshis. It is in this unlikeliest of situations that he meets the beautiful Suryavanshi Princess Sati and falls in love with her at first sight. It is further demystified in the next series of the Shiva trilogy, *The Secret of the Nagas*.

Amish Tripathi's Shiva trilogy interprets the rich mythological heritage of ancient India, blending fiction with historical fact. This trilogy draws the readers into the world of myths, mythology and beliefs in a way that leaves them enchanted. The language is unembellished and it portrays characters in human form. It has vivid imagery. Some of the things that make these books stand out are the attempts made by the author to logically explain the sacred in terms of the secular thereby making it more accessible. As a person who is intrigued by ancient Indian mythology, I was certainly carried away by the author's expertise in utilizing small mythological kernels and factoids and weaving a story using them. Secondly, the story is linear and fast paced, from the very beginning. The reader is introduced to an ancient world, the plot twists and the pace gets the readers racing along smoothly. It's gripping and emotionally moving. The author proves himself to be an effective storyteller.

*The Immortals of Meluha* is 439 pages long. It is divided into twenty-six chapters with a glossary of the Sanskrit/Hindi terminology. Narration is in the third-person, via Shiva, Kritika, Daksha, Kanakhala, Nandi, Brahaspati, Sati and a few others.

-Nitika Chopra,  
First year.



Red Hood of Arkham Knight version



-Shruti Gupta,  
First year.

## Where is beauty ?

Is it in the rips of your jeans,

Or the shirt under her burka?

Does your makeup make you beautiful,

Or is it your inner beauty that's powerful?

Trying to be unique, but doing the same,

Always competing for the infamous game.

Climbing the ladder just to get ahead,

Gaining nothing, but mere social fame?

Blending yourself with the trends,

Becoming a totally different person.

Wasting away time hiding your 'flaws'.

Just to look appealing to your friends?

Afraid of facing the real world,

You dwell in the land of fantasy.

Hiding behind that fake image

You created online to hide your insecurity.

Search inside yourself for love first,

It has to start somewhere.

You have to love yourself

before Others even start to care.

-Jasmine Kaur,

Third year.



## Why Everyone Loves Game of Thrones?

*Game of Thrones*, the HBO television series, created by David Benioff and D. B. Weiss, based on George R.R. Martin's fantasy novels, aired for the first time in 2011, has now become one of the most talked about television programs. The show fetched even more fans to the already popular tale, given by the five novels. With the seventh season being recently aired, the die-hard fans of GoT, as the show is popularly known, love to grab any opportunity in conversations to bring up the show. The show is admired by all because of the following reasons:

### 1. Preternatural creatures:

The show is full of amazing and breathtaking creatures. It is set in a fictional fantasy world which includes shape-shifters, zombies (called white-walkers), dragons, children of the forest— who created the world of Westeros, and the Night King— with an army of the dead to conquer the world at his disposal. The unravelling of the plot becomes even more interesting with the inclusion of *deus ex machina* where The God of Light resurrects dead people and The Three Eyed Raven can see what happened in the past and what is happening in the present around the world.

### 2. A tale of mystery and suspense:

Game of Thrones is much more than a typical fantasy drama. This medieval fiction show has many layers, cores, and emotions which is why it becomes very intriguing. The story of good against evil with the inclusion of trickery and diabolic maneuvering highlight the dark undertone of the narrative which is carried forward by the complex web of shifting alliances being formed to sustain oneself.

Martin is famous for killing off everyone's favourite characters and sending his stories racing into pits of bleak uncertainty just when one thinks everything might turn out alright. The show doesn't deviate from that trajectory and the show-makers decide to kill the most important characters. One can never know for sure what will happen next. It keeps one on the edge of her seat. Every minor incident speaks something crucial about the story. Blink an eye and you might miss the next important detail of the story that you could have been waiting for.

### 3. Well-etched characters:

As the story progresses, the characters progress along with it. No particular character is accentuated, everyone plays a crucial role in the series. None of the villains are shown to be pure evil. At different instances, they depict kind and gentle emotions. In a contrast, good leaders are often shown taking actions that are questionable and unsettling. This highlights how everyone acts in accordance with what in their opinion is correct. No one is entirely wrong or right, nor can everything be categorized in shades of black and white. The presence of different hues is what makes every episode equally engaging.

The show aptly highlights the society's perception towards people with disabilities. A very clever, hence insightful Tyrion Lannister (played by Peter Dinklage) uses his wit to the best of his abilities and comes across as one of the best strategists. However, ignoring his

accomplishments, his father constantly demeans him because he is a dwarf and later plots to kill him deceptively. At certain instances, Tyrion uses wordplay injecting sarcasm and humour into the narrative, which he carries forward intelligently, while simultaneously being perseverant and compassionate. He upholds high morals and chooses to rise above, while accepting his flaws. In his own words,

“Never forget what you are, the rest of the world will not. Wear it like armor and it can never be used to hurt you.”

The way his resilience teaches us to be irrepressible, is why everyone looks at him with the highest esteem. Calling him ‘the imp’, his rivals’ attempt to demean him fail when the fans merrily interpret that he’s the ‘the important one’.

Another prominent character is Theon Greyjoy (played by Alfie Allen). He was captured and thereafter, severely tortured into submission by his opponent. From being starved, mutilated, castrated, whipped to being subjected to psychological trauma- the most horrendous tortures were inflicted upon him. This ultimately led to him forgetting who he really was and he accepts the identity assigned to him by his master- a pet named Reek. Eventually, he escapes from the clutches of his sadistic master but never really recovers from the horrors that were afflicted upon him, until much later when his sister restores his faith in himself.

While the story becomes a tale of revenge for some, it becomes a quest for personal liberation for others.

#### 4. Parallels with the real world:

What is also captivating is how in its own fictional ways, the show represents the problems and the sufferings of the real world. Game of Thrones is an epic struggle for power which excludes any kind of noble ventures or heroic pursuits. In a quest to accomplish personal motives, entire cities are burnt leading to anarchy; family members fight against one another, horrible things happen to good people for no reason and heroism often goes unrewarded. Martin has rightly stated,

"The true horrors of human history derive not from orcs and dark lords, but from ourselves."

The few occasions where injustice does get punished, is when it happens accidentally. Fair maidens are not saved, protagonists are slaughtered at random and the idea of war, despite being a heart-wrenching one is glorified by most of the characters. From reckless decisions being taken compulsively to ignorance of the poor, from war to infamy, from slavery to prostitution, one can see every form of important issues of today’s world being dealt with in GoT. Sometimes the episodes are gruesome, violent or simply repelling to watch but this aspect of the series, being true to the humiliation and the distressing state of its characters is the reason that makes it one of the most talked about series.

The continent of Essos comprises of the seven kingdoms of Westeros, the ruler of which is supposed to preside over the Iron Throne. The books state that the monarch sitting on the Iron Throne will have to tread carefully, lest he gets injured by the the iron swords that the throne is made of. The enormous power that this position bestows on the ruler is what encourages every monarch to try everything that he can to maintain his authority, which often includes putting peace and order at stake. This also symbolises the need to make morally correct utilitarian decisions that sometimes may take precedence over one’s personal gains.

#### 5. Feminism:



Women are shown as powerful and assertive characters. Arya Stark (played by Maisie Williams), from being a helpless little princess in the woods grows into a merciless fighter and an expert in changing identities. Similar is the case with Cersei Lannister (played by Lena Headey) and Sansa Stark (played by Sophie Turner) who from acquiescing to others' orders and surviving in the male dominated society, grow up to become the Queen of the Seven Kingdoms and the acting Queen of the North respectively. Women in the Westeros aren't traditionally given any privileges, yet some of them find their place by fighting the authoritative forces and by showcasing why they cannot be ignored. They have bold voices and choose to be not hushed away.

Daenerys Targaryen (played by Emilia Clarke), the Mother of Dragons, built an entire empire out of the ashes of her dead husband's pyre, exhibiting extraordinary valour.

#### 6. Participation of the masses:

GoT connects people from all around the globe, who come forward to analyse and predict what might happen next. Formation of fan-theories in itself is a stimulating exercise, especially for those who have already read the books and are now speculating the outcome of the televised adaptation. Numerous online stores like Amazon, Myntra etc. are also reaping commercial rewards because of the rising demands of GoT merchandise which gives away the idea of how influential a TV series can become.

#### 7. The controversies:

Game of Thrones is also famous for its unapologetic showcasing of spine-chilling war scenes, romantic relations between siblings, nudity and sexual violence. While some believe that it is irrelevant to the story, others are of the opinion that it normalises the hitherto tabooed idea of incest. In conclusion, *Game of Thrones* truly exhibits the recent diversification of television content which can be attributed to its massive success around the world.

-Sonali,

First year.

## The Mandela Effect

The Mandela effect is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating theories that has come to light in the past few years, thanks to the growing reach of the internet. The Mandela effect is a phenomenon of false memory where a large number of people vividly remember an event to have taken place in a certain way, while in reality that event wouldn't have happened the way people remember it to have taken place, at all! The oldest example of the event is the memory regarding the death of Nelson Mandela. That is also where it gets its name from. Though the former president of South Africa died on 5th December, 2013, a large group of people remember him dying way before that. When the information of his death hit the news channels, people were left extremely confused because they felt that he had died long ago during his imprisonment.

Since the recognition of the first event, many other examples have come out and shocked people. Remember the classic cartoon show called "The Looney Toons Show"? Interestingly, that's not what the name of the show is. It has always been "The Looney Tunes Show". The show that we vividly remember as having a certain name is not even called that. It has never been "The Looney Toons Show" but always "The Looney Tunes Show". If that doesn't swirl your brains enough, let's hit you with another example. The animated character of Mickey Mouse used to wear suspenders, didn't he? No, he didn't! Mickey Mouse never wore suspenders. No matter how clearly you think you remember him having two straps around his body, the reality is that he never wore them. Let's take the example of a famous dialogue from one of the most popular fairy tales, Snow White. We all know the story of this beautiful princess envied by an evil witch and in her envy trying to kill her. We all, also remember the witch standing in front of the mirror and asking it: "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest one of all?". We can't possibly go wrong with this one, can we? Apparently, we all have become the victims of another false memory because she never said this. Instead of saying, "Mirror, mirror on the wall...", she said, "Magic mirror on the wall...".

On the 30th of August, 2016, a You-Tuber and a conspiracy theory enthusiast, Shane Dawson uploaded a video titled, "The Mandela Effect" in which he talked about how the Mandela effect had left him completely baffled. He talked about a shift in the name of a popular American cartoon show called "The Berenstain Bears" from "The Berenstein Bears". Dawson also put forward the example of the popular TV show "Sea and the City" which aired from 1998 to 2004. A lot of people, including Dawson, remember the show as "Sea in the City". There's also a debate revolving around the name of the chocolate KitKat which we all are familiar with. Some people believe that the name of the chocolate has a hyphen in between the two syllables (Kit-Kat) while some think otherwise.

Ideally we should all be able to remember a character like Mickey Mouse or a dialogue from our favourite Disney movie accurately, considering we grew up watching these. Is it our memory tricking us or is something else going on? Conspiracy theorists believe the Mandela Effect to be the best evidence of time travel. It is believed that these 'false memories' are our alternate memories from an alternate universe which we used to be a part of. It is believed that somehow our past was changed by someone travelling back in time,



which would have altered the present time line, pretty much as explained in the movie "Back to the Future" (1985) or as portrayed in the popular TV show "The Flash". If someone travelled back in time in our reality, certain events would change and we would be switched into a different reality, an alternate universe. The time traveller doesn't have to be from our present, but may be from a thousand years into the future where the technology has reached a whole new level.

The idea of time travel and parallel universes may seem a little too far-fetched but it has always been fascinating. With new examples of the Mandela effect coming into view, maybe we would find one instance big enough to widen our horizon of applied physics and question the constantly changing nature of things. Until then, these incidents would serve as incredible examples of some of the most bizarre phenomena that may always remain unexplained.

-Manjot Kaur,

First Year.

## Curse Of Modernisation

Strained his eyes as far as he could see  
Alas! What he desired, he was not destined to feel  
Hid his pain, the heart sobbed silently  
The stressed mind, the torn soul, craved for him so desperately  
The wind stroked him gently  
Torn grey curtains, the patched window panes also felt his misery.  
Everything around him cried with melancholy  
He was waiting, waiting for the one he would never meet  
Now, he shares his days and nights with them,  
With the mute lifeless objects  
His sole companions.  
His friend stood far away in that modern land  
With eyes sparkling with glee to see  
Modernisation at its peak  
Where memories are so dim and weak.  
'Scintillating' is life among those modern gadgets, he claims!  
Stuffed with luxury and painted with ease  
So blind became he  
Bewitched by the spell of those modern gadgets  
Sigh! Sigh! he does not remember me  
A fool, isn't he?  
Materialistic pleasure entices him more  
He says they give him ease  
Alas! Poor boy!  
He does not yet realise that they would never bring him peace.  
Now the death bed is near  
Pale face, numb fingers and aching head  
His soul still weeps,  
It weeps for the one driven away by the "CURSE OF MODERNISATION".

-Laghima,

First year.



## Death and Violence in Young Adult Fiction.

Young Adult Fiction, the term was formulated keeping in mind the readers of the age group that falls between childhood and adulthood. The 1920s, it has been said, was the first when it became clear that young were a separate generation.

The first types of books written for this age group were romances and teenage love stories. The trend changed, the 1990s which was also called 'The First Golden Age of Young Adult Fiction' by Michael Cart witnessed the publication of books like J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* (1997). *The Chronicles of Narnia*, written by C.S. Lewis, was first published in 1950 but it rose to popularity in the early 21st century when it was adapted into movies.


Lately, we have seen a rise in consumption of violence and death by the young adults. Be it books, T.V series or games - suicide, murder and rapes have become popular. Earlier the books focused on the issues faced by a person during his transition from childhood to adulthood, but soon it took to darkness and violence.

The inevitable and universal aspect of death has somehow made it a popular topic for these books, but these deaths have become much darker and complex with the passage of time. Deaths, no doubt, were always a part of books. In the beginning these deaths were light and outside the text, usually the protagonist coped with the death of a family member or some close friend. Then, the writers started focusing not only on the aftermath of a death, but also the trauma of being a witness to them. As in the case of *The Outsiders* (1967) by S.E. Hinton, in which the 14-year-old Ponyboy sees his best friend Johnny die in a hospital. He also sees Dally, a member of his gang, being shot by the police. In recent years, these novels have become more about suicides, rapes, murders and kidnapping which not only leave the protagonist to suffer but also put them in a moral dilemma.

At an *Emerging Writer's Festival*, the young adults' literature was praised for exploring such complex topics but whether children's literature and young adult fiction are ready for such violent themes is still being debated.

Death has become the heart and soul of young adult novels. "It's not surprising that young adult is always dealing with transformations whether it be realistic or supernatural.", author and publisher Lizzie Skurnick said. She added, "They love *The Hunger Games* not because it's real in that what happens, but the emotions there are real.", and it's relatable. John Green's *The Fault in our Stars* (2012), where the incurably ill lead characters convey the fear and pain of dying. The female protagonist's struggle to accept her mortality and the guilt of leaving her loved ones to cope with her death; everything is real. The world has become violent and depression among youth is a reality. Which is to be considered 'the cause' and which 'the effect', the condition of the real world or the fictional world, needs a lot of debate.

Committing suicide and causing one's own death is not just a mere escape from life, it has a lot of struggle beneath it, one such book came out in 2007, *13 Reasons Why* by Jay



Asher where the protagonist Hannah Baker takes her own life and reveals the thirteen reasons or persons which drove her towards taking such a drastic step.

One bright side of these dark novels is that the representation of death can help the reader who has never faced any such loss of a loved one, to understand the feelings involved in such tragic life events and for those who have been through such crisis, reading such relatable experiences can often be a source of consolation.

The controversy is, not the discussion of death, but the honest and direct portrayal of death in young adults' novels. Death is inevitable. If born, one ought to die. This is the truth of our very existence. It is impossible for us to escape the suffering of death, then why make its representation a disputed topic of discussion.

-Priyam Puri,

Second year.



## Popular Food Trends in India

As I sit here writing this article, my mind wanders and I cannot help but imagine the taste of the renowned delicacies I am supposed to write about. My mouth waters as I start to pen down my thoughts on food. All the research on food has made me hungry and I hope my article makes the readers hungry too.

The food industry has expanded enormously and vibrantly in the past few years and popular food trends are now a biggie! Who could imagine that one day we would be able to eat all these exotic and deliciously satisfying combinations that would delight our taste buds in the most amazing ways?

The Northerners are sharing their recipes with the Southerners and vice-versa. The same game is being played by the Easterners and Westerners as well. Global cuisines are 'in' and social media has had a huge role to play here. Our Maggie has been replaced by Lasagna and Chapati by Pita bread. The modus operandi is available on youtube, several TV channels and books. This exchange has cut across all class differences and hence, is not just limited to one particular sect.

Here are some of the popular food trends of 2017:

- **Waffles**

Originating in Belgium and travelling through the restaurants of France, Germany and Denmark, waffles have now taken Indian kitchens by a storm. Every cafe and restaurant in India is serving its own rendition of this dish. Be it chicken and waffles, bubble waffles, waffle pops, waffle burgers or waffle sundaes, each variation of it is delicious in its own way.



- **Vegan diets**

Veganism is a way of eating that refrains from inflicting any harm to animals. It implies no consumption of anything related to dairy or meat, much like vegetarianism. It takes us closer to nature while reminding us of the goodness of fresh fruits and vegetables. Though the term 'vegan' was coined in 1944 by Donald Watson in England, the uproar that it created has mainly been recent, considering which, many vegan cafes have sprouted in India such as Paradigm Shift in Bengaluru, Vegane R in Chennai and Terrassen Cafe in Hyderabad. Looking at the eagerness of people who want try this kind of a diet, more and more vegan friendly products have emerged in the market. Also, its benefits to our health have led several people to prefer uncooked food over food clad with oils and spices.

- **Momos**

Nobody can resist these small dough balls served with the chilliest curries available, especially knowing that it can be served in a gazillion different ways. The variance lies not just in its fillings, but also in its preparation and the kind of sauces and curry that it is served with. This offering of Tibetan cuisine, which is often confused with the Dim Sums from China, has become especially popular in recent years and hence has now found its way to every nook and corner of our cities. They are easy on the pocket, are scintillating and a plate of this amazing dish is enough to fill one up.



- **Tacos**

This Mexican staple is slowly but surely gaining popularity. Opening up of Taco Bell, an American fast food chain and a few others made this delicacy easily accessible. They are available in both hard and soft shells and are made of corn flour and tortillas with the choicest of fillings. Tacos are messy but too delectable to be resisted. Now-a-days ice cream tacos are famous too. The waffle cone is made in the shape of a taco shell and you can have it filled with your favourite scoops of deliciousness.



- **Unicorn food**

This trend was initiated by Starbucks which decided to sell Unicorn frappuccinos, a colourful kaleidoscope of a drink. The term 'unicorn' basically refers to a food item that is jazzed up with dye- usually pastels, and cute accessories like a small horn or sprinkles with a mountain of marshmallows. One can find cupcakes, cakes, milkshakes and even toasts for unicorn food. It easily adds vibrant colours to one's otherwise monotonous day. And when it tastes so appetizing, who wouldn't want to recall those lively and carefree childhood days?





- **Black food**

Another trend that has taken everyone by surprise is the charcoal, ash and squid ink infused goth food. The black-obsession has engulfed everyone's souls. Black desserts have stirred a storm in the markets and young and middle-aged alike, are going crazy over it. The Indian public is enjoying goth ice cream, goth grilled cheese sandwiches, black macarons, goth tikkas, blackbeard martinis, black sushi rolls and what not! Who said black couldn't be associated with heaven?



- **Boozy ice creams**

Boozy ice creams or alcohol infused ice creams have made people smile for reasons more than one. If the idea of eating alcohol wasn't great enough already, it also has an ample number of flavours available to delight us, a pint of which is enough to get one tipsy. Some ice cream bars have started making their own variations of boozy ice creams and a few other treats.



Food industry, with every passing year introduces a new trend to excite our taste buds. Some trends die out in a month or so, while others gain more popularity over time. Weird or not, black and white or colourful, full of sugar or turning-cheeks-red spicy, people are ready to welcome all sorts of delicacies available.

-Sarovi Kaur Kochar,

Second year.

## Reasons why the Netflix series of *13 Reasons Why* is better than the Book.

Every once-in-a-while, a new show or a movie based on a popular fan fiction comes up and the audiences start booing it down mercilessly. Although avid readers rejoice the details expressed in words, one cannot for long remain oblivious to how televised adaptations open up new facets of a narrative that cannot be depicted on a page. It intricately depicts each important facet of the tale while capturing attention where it is due and hence it can be rightly said that **televised adaptations** are slowly gaining momentum. While alterations in the storyline sometimes become necessary in order to make it sensational, critics now believe that it isn't 'taking away', and it instead 'adds' to the story in ways more than one.

Jay Asher's book, *Thirteen Reasons Why*, published in 2007, was written in a conversational style but the show, adding elements of psychological trauma made it all the more enthralling. It is a tale of how the reckless actions of a few high school students lead to a girl, the protagonist to commit suicide. It also talks about the impact that her death has, on each of their lives.

Clay Jenson (played by Dylan Minnett), a sweet boy, who was liked by almost everyone, reached home one day to receive a package mailed to him by his friend Hannah Baker (played by Katherine Langford), who had committed suicide for some reasons unknown to anyone, yet. But unknown, only for a few fleeting moments! Each tape had in it, a reason as to why she did what she did and thereon, the narrative moves back and forth between Clay's thoughts and Hannah's actions.

While Clay spends major time on the screen listening to the tape and Hannah acts in the background, the focus is on the actions of their friends, which is what keeps the viewer glued to the screen at all times.

### **1. Vivid details:**

13 tapes leading to 13 episodes! Each gives us a detailed account of what happened. The book seems unjustly short as it misses out on the background to the character of Justin Foley (played by Brandon Flynn). In the book, he has a brief role and although Hannah makes it clear that he was the beginning of an end, she is unable to clarify her stand and so, the readers form a negative opinion of him. The books just talked about how Justin circulated Hannah's private pictures in the class and how he was a silent witness to the rape of Jessica. However, it is the show that succeeds in giving to the audience, a 360 degree profound view of his character which explicates how he had demons of his own to battle with since his single drunkard mom had thrown him out of her house. This ultimately leads us to sympathise with him while we try to understand the rationale behind his actions.

### **2. Provides an insight into everyone's perceptions:**

The story is not just about Hannah or Clay, we also see what other people on the tape feel about what happened, how their lives were affected by it and whether they felt guilty or not.



This makes the show an emotional rollercoaster ride. Alex (played by Miles Heizer) did not have any friends at the end. Also, he wanted to bring the authorities' attention to Bryce, but he couldn't do so, alone. So, he started to harm himself while on the other hand Courtney Crimsen (played by Michele Selene Ang) was adamant about Hannah telling lies for attention. She tried to convince everyone that there was no truth in Hannah's story because she wanted to hide her homosexuality, something that Hannah had clearly pointed to, in her tapes.

### **3. Realistic love story:**

In the book, Clay and Hannah spent minimum time together and at her death, he seems sympathetic but in the show, they have meaningful conversations, have nicknames for each other, and even share a dance. It is the show that highlights how Clay really wanted to help Hannah but couldn't since he didn't know how to. He misjudges Hannah at several instances, something that he regrets once he finally knows what actually happened. This brings our attention to how because of one's own insecurities, one is sometimes rendered unhelpful to others.

### **4. The most important tape:**

Tape 12 was about Bryce raping Hannah. Her description of this scene with Bryce isn't given much attention to, in the novel and it seems that Hannah just acquiesced to Bryce's actions. However, the show doesn't just imply rape but shows one. It is after watching it that the audience really sees the psychological condition of Hannah and a new perspective is gained, as a result of which, Hannah is sympathised with. Jessica (played by Alisha Boe) had dealt with her victimhood in an altogether different way earlier and we cannot for once decide, who is in a better state.

An issue that is aptly brought to light here is how despite being a repeated criminal offender, Bryce didn't get caught. He raped two of his classmates and still roamed free. There could be various reasons for it— his rich parents or his friends being scared of turning against him or their unwillingness to get caught up in court proceedings. Whatever it was, it led to him thinking that he could get away with anything at all.

### **5. Sensitizing the viewers:**

The show doesn't hold back from depicting issues like rape, bullying and suicide. It does not sugar-coat the real life situations which had to be truly presented for them to evoke and stimulate our senses. Hannah's suicide scene was played in explicit detail and is amongst the most gut-wrenching scenes. One had to necessarily 'see' the social isolation and the effect thereof on Hannah's self-image to 'understand' it.

Friendships are a central element of *13 Reasons Why*. We see how Tyler (played by Devin Druid) deals with the loss of the girl he loved, while also being bullied and ostracized by his peers. He's shunned away and none of his so-called friends knew the intensity of hurt they were causing to him. While Hannah gave up and Alex had suicidal tendencies, Tyler in the next season is probably up to no good as season one ended with him looking at a lot of ammunition in his room. Everyone's life is interconnected intricately and hence everyone's actions have a deep impact on others. This is why psychologists often say that peers may either break or make a person. Most of the times, teenagers are regarded as reckless by their parents, aren't taken seriously by elders and hence are not left with a lot of options to turn to,

in their hour of crisis which leads to them having to talk to their friends, the result of which could either be beautiful or catastrophic.

The show, taking parents and teachers into consideration attempted to make them empathise with teenagers as what happened could have been easily avoided if all of the high school goers had someone kind to talk to.

## **6. Role of elders:**

The book doesn't really pay attention to the relationship between children and their parents. The show, on the other hand, emphasises on that. Hannah's mom was shown to be insistent on finding out the reason behind her daughter's death while her father had put on a veil of tranquillity beneath which lay a suppressed desire for justice. Clay's parents, from the very first scene, were depicted as busy working professionals who became over-concerned about him after Hannah's death. Where Alex's father was totally indifferent to Hannah's demise, Zach's mother was too vain to think there was no way her son could have been involved in any case, however by stealing her 'notes of encouragements' given to her by her classmates, Zach had taken away her little moments of happiness in the school.

The role of Mr. Porter (played by Derek Luke) as the student counsellor was very important and his actions could have greatly changed the narrative had he been compassionate as his job required him to be. He was rather cold to Hannah and did not probe deeply into the matter until he at the end, was told that the thirteenth tape was indeed about him. Whether it was simply lack of interest or sheer dereliction of duty is debatable. But we all know that he had to do something, which he did not.


## **7. Justice:**

No one got punished for the crimes they committed in the book. Yet, Tony gave the tapes to Hannah's parents in the TV series, after which Hannah's parents sued the school giving Jessica the much-needed courage to report the crime committed against her as well. So, justice in a sense did get served! After displaying an account of such horrid scenes, it was important to give the audience a closure and reinstate their faith in judicial probing.

Asher's book has been criticized for the poor characterization of Hannah Baker; an aspect of the work that many critics felt was heavily improved upon in the television adaptation. The wide perspective that we get through the show opens up Hannah's character. She then comes across as an understanding person to Courtney and a helpful friend to Jessica. The book unjustly had limited her character to being just a victim. She tries to be happy in the show while in the book she gave up fast. All the actors have been very successful in bringing out the personality that the writer intended. It was later revealed that their set of shooting had a group of psychologists to aid them. Justin Prentice went on to admit that no one wanted to take up the role of Bryce as it was so disturbing.

The media's power to affect people, was the primary motivation behind showing Hannah's death as it was believed that in its ugliness and brutality, it would better serve as a deterrent to people who might be considering suicide themselves. However, several suicide-prevention experts contradict such assertions by warning about the contagion effect, where the explicit treatment of suicide in media glamorizes it and leads to a related increase in suicide attempts.





The intricacies of cinematography, visual appeal, art of acting- all add up to the storyline greatly and hence crafts a masterpiece that widens the horizons of one's mind following which, we take cognizance of what we might have earlier overlooked. TV shows and movies have undergone tremendous changes in the past few decades and are finally unveiling themselves in the 21st century in the most remarkable ways. Though the art of writing is no less, we must duly recognise performative domain as well, since the psyche of certain characters can be best portrayed on the screen alone.

-Shruti Gupta,  
First year.

*Unveiling the Spring*



-Sunidhi Sood,  
Second year.



## **JANE AUSTEN in Popular Fiction.**

Jane Austen(1775-1817) is undoubtedly one of the most widely read authors, known primarily for her five major novels - *Pride and Prejudice*(1813), *Emma*(1815), *Persuasion*(1818), *Sense and Sensibility*(1811), and *Northanger Abbey*(1818).

Social commentary, free indirect speech and irony has made her one of the most influential and revered novelists of all times. The main themes of her novels are marriage and romance. The pursuit of true love, which passes through a period of denial, heartbreak, and suffering, stood victorious in the end.

Different writers and critics have differing opinion about Austen as a writer. Writer Emily Bronte felt that Austen's novels lacked emotions. Ian Watt argues that Austen's novels "have little appeal to those who believe thought inferior to feeling." Virginia Woolf said about her that she was "a mistress of much deeper emotions than appears on the surface. She stimulates us to supply what is not there."

Despite varying opinions on her writing, Austen is a much sought after novelist and is often represented in popular culture through adaptations and retellings. She is especially popular among young women aged between teenage and middle age. In pop culture, Austen's novels and her personal life have been adapted into book illustrations , dramatisations, Hollywood films , television ,professional theatre ,etc. Here's a list of the movie adaptations of Jane Austen's novels-

1. *Pride and Prejudice* (1940),(2003),(2004),(2005),(2016)
2. *Sense and Sensibility* (1995)
3. *Persuasion* (1995)
4. *Clueless* (1995)
5. *Emma* (1996)
6. *Mansfield Park* (1999)
7. *Kandukondain Kandukondain* (2000)
8. *Northanger Abbey* (2007)
9. *Becoming Jane* (2007)
10. *Aisha* (2010)
11. *From Prada to Nada* (2011)
12. *Love and Friendship* (2016)

Books and scripts that use the general storyline of Austen's novels but change or otherwise modernise the story also became popular at the end of the 20th century. *Clueless*

(1995), American movie director Amy Heckerling's updated version of *Emma* became a cultural phenomena and begot its own TV. series. Two centuries after her death, Austen's works still inform popular culture and cosplay.

A recurring complaint of the critics concerns the 'harlequinization' of Austen on the silver screen that tends to cheapen and dumb down Austen for mass audience. It has been noted that in Austen's own lifetime her work was popular, and seen as low culture, was lumped together with 'popular fiction' books that were seen as the forerunners of the Harlequin romances.

After her inclusion in the canon, Austen has become a form of cultural capital. She has become a very powerful brand that has both high cultural connotations and mass appeal. The most lucrative market for Jane Austen films today is the United States and not the United Kingdom.

Austen's books often feature match-making parents and this adds to their appeal in India. Appeal of Austen stories in modern India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh is due to the theme of love marriages. The heroine marries the man with whom she falls in love and struggles to get her parents' consent in the process. This makes it highly popular among women from middle class Indian families, the vast majority of whom ,marry unknown men arranged by their parents.

In India, *Sense and Sensibility* has turned into the Tamil language film *Kandukondain Kandukondain*(2000) and the Hindi language soap opera “Kumkum Bhagya”(2014). *Emma* was adapted as the film *Aisha* (2010) and *Pride and Prejudice* into the film *Bride and Prejudice* (2004).



(A poster of the movie *Bride and Prejudice*, directed by Gurinder Chadha)

Austen was unknown in Japan until the Meiji Restoration of 1867 opened Japan up to Western influence. The first Japanese critic and writer Natsume Soseki in his 1907 book *A Theory of Literature* wrote, “Anyone who is unable to appreciate Austen will be unable to understand the beauty of realism.” At the time of his death in 1916, he was writing a novel



*Meanwood* (Light and Darkness), which reset *Pride and Prejudice* in Taisho era Japan. Austen was first translated into Japanese in 1926, when Nogami Toyoichiro and his wife translated *Pride and Prejudice*.

Austen came to widespread notice in Turkey in the late 1960s when Nihal Yeginobali started translating Austen. She became popular in Korea when Korea was a Japanese colony. The South Korean writer Park Wansuh wrote two novels influenced by *Pride and Prejudice*- *A Faltering Afternoon* (1977) and *Pride and Fantasy* (1980) both set in South Korea. The character of Elizabeth Bennett with her stubborn sense of self became popular in South Korea during the rule of General Park, as a reaction to his attempts to crush individualism. In 2014, the highest rated T-series here was “Ongwa Pyungeon”, a resettling of *Pride and Prejudice* in modern South Korea. The Iranians and the Chinese too were influenced by her books but she wasn't favoured by the socio-political conditions prevalent there.

The 200th anniversary of *Pride and Prejudice* was marked in 2016 by the publication of dozens of her books. A huge statue of Colin Firth as Mr. Darcy was erected as a tribute to BBC's adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (1995). Also there were Jane Austen gatherings and events across England and America.

#### A first for television



Sumptuous sets at the Alexandra Palace studios were created despite a very tight budget for the BBC's first television adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. BBC Television Service, 22 May 1938, 21.25.

#### Jane Austen at the BBC - a celebration in film TV and radio

##### A first for radio




Colin Firth as Mr. Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*, BBC ONE, 24 September 1995, 21.00.

Austen's style of writing is concise, witty and ironic. Her novels come under the genre of comedy: all end with at least one marriage. The universal themes of love, marriage, power and status, the preoccupation of characters with finding happiness make her books connect with the common people. Narrowness of subject matter and predictability make her books highly popular.

Moreover, real and ever-relevant themes render her writings evergreen and timeless.

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-Varsha Anil Nair,

Second Year.



## Cartoons.

Political cartoons or editorial cartoons are drawings that comment on contemporary situations. While they are often accused to be promoting the cartoonist's opinion, it throws light on varied aspects of a particular situation and help the public form its own stance on the same. They can be very informative and amusing if one understands the issues that it talks about.

Benjamin Franklin's "Join or Die", which depicts a snake whose severed parts represents the Colonies, is acknowledged as the first political cartoon in America.



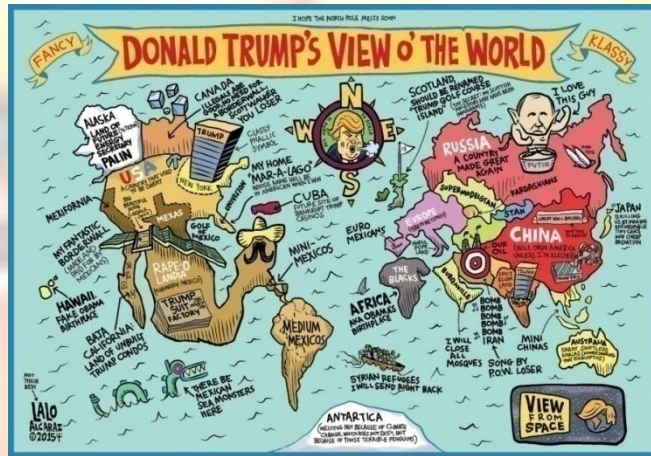
Popular culture is generally framed by the ideology that is either believed in by the masses, or stood against, by the same. The pandemonium created on a geo-political level is cherished most by artists who combine their skill with their opinion and create cartoons that not only are humorous but also draw attention to what may be offensive or disrespectful to express in words.

Following are witty political cartoons that highlight what is happening around the world today:

A country that was allegedly always segregationist was perhaps on a path of atonement when Mr. Barack Obama, from the marginalized section, came to power. His attitude towards Iran, immigrants and his liberal policies fetched much debate and so does the stance taken by Mr. Donald Trump, who is adamantly working to revert all the decisions taken by his predecessor. The following aptly depict the agony of the group that still questions how Mr. Trump came to power and hence, are scrutinising his e-mails and meetings with Russian envoys.







Moving against all sanctions imposed by the United Nations, Kim Jong-un's regime daringly tests one bomb after another and sends missiles over the composed, yet scared Japan.



While Rohingyas from Myanmar make headlines every day, the exodus in South Sudan catches the attention of few.

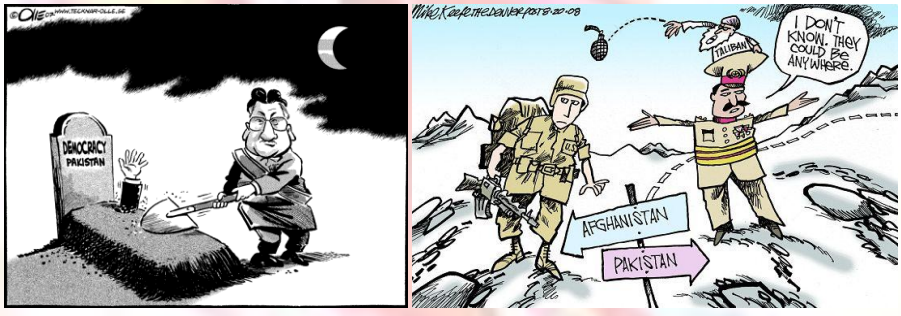




Who would dare to ask India, if it would be willing to accept asylum-seeking Rohingyas if they weren't Muslims? Who would ask Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi why her actions against Rohingyas aren't very nobel?



On one hand are the political leaders, business houses and artists of Pakistan, who aspire to initiate talks with their Indian counterparts, but are cruelly silenced by the ones that hold guns. Patients from across the border apply for medical visa to meet their Indian doctors and India condescendingly, accepts the same.



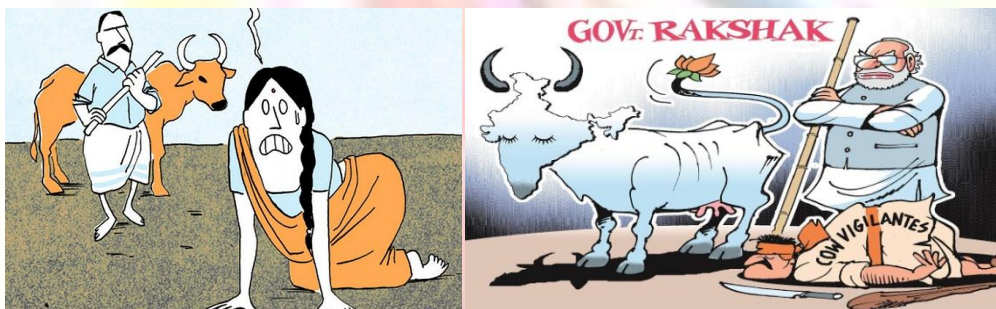




On the other, are Indians who will first pay crores to get Fawad Khan and Mahira Khan to Bollywood and then spend another set of crores to retaliate insurgents at the border.

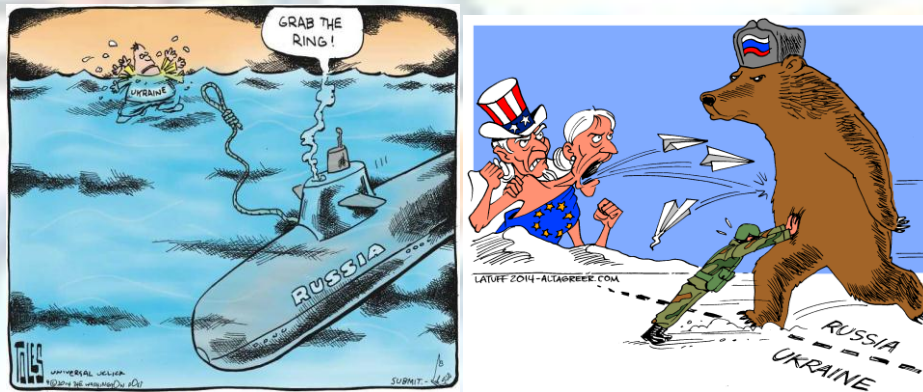


The number of crimes and atrocities committed against women in India remain the same, if not more, as compared to before and after 2014. Yet, the Narendra Modi government appears to be more focused on saving cows.

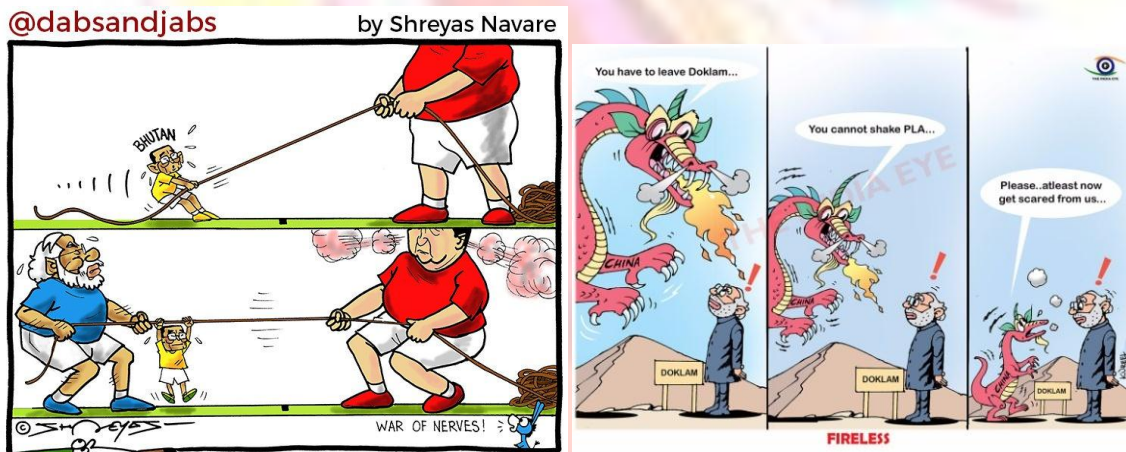




Russian annexation of Crimea and further military intervention in Ukraine has fetched global criticism in the form of stringent sanctions and yet, Russia continues the fight.



The Doklam standoff between China and India, on land which is also claimed by Bhutan, saw a dramatic series of events that lasted for more than two months. It ended when China communicated its intention to withdraw troops and India did so, first.



Now the world awaits the result of German elections which will depict the fate of the country, which welcomed asylum-seekers from Syria and North Africa when more than half the world had shut its door.



These are little colourful pictures that contain minimum words and have maximum connotations. It shows how unorthodox opinion is often ridiculed and leaders, who express solidarity with the less privileged sect, are less favoured.


It makes use of satire, irony and hyperbole to emphasise on what people might be overlooking. With time, the world has witnessed the silencing of public dissent. However, it has also been a spectator to those who have used art dextrously to bring forth their opinion to the table which testifies the immense influence that funny caricatures can have on people.

( All the photos that are used here have been taken from Google pictures.)

-Prashansa Luthra,

Second year.





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