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BIS INSIDER

*A student run magazine reflecting on our time at
the IB at the Bombay International School*

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

FEATURE: IDEAS OF SUCCESS

BLOGS & POLITICS

POETRY & CREATIVE WRITING

PHOTOGRAPHY & ARTWORK

CAS & STUDENT ACTIVITIES

**LIFTING UP STUDENT
VOICES**

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Samaa, Alina, Isha and Aadyah

Dear Grade 11 and 12,

The friends we make in BIS are known to be the friends that last us a lifetime. This past year has been a tumultuous rollercoaster of ups and downs. Online school has caused a lot of us to not be fully immersed in the BIS experience. This magazine aims to create a common space for us to share what we've been up to as a commemoration to our years together in the IB programme.

Therefore, we are proud to announce the first edition of the BIS Insider, a student-led quarterly magazine that empowers students to be bold, to take space, and to voice their opinions. We hope that this will foster a sense of community centered on the BIS ethos for our grades and that it will be a chance to connect better in an online space.

We hope you enjoy!

Samaa, Alina, Isha and Aadyah



IDEAS OF SUCCESS

By Nayantara Chandrasekhar

When we're only four years old, our teachers and relatives begin to ask us, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" At the time, the question is rich with possibility and glittering with the excitement that the future holds. "Astronaut!" "Teacher!" "Doctor!" "Writer!" By the time we're seventeen, the question comes with layers upon layers of stress, self-doubt, and the occasional curse upon the capitalist economy that demands productivity to keep us from failure.

But how does one truly define failure? Or, rather, how does one define success? In high school, it's easy to feel like our entire lives revolve around getting into university. To some extent, they do. If we want to go to Harvard or Wellesley or Oxford or St Andrews, we need that perfect IB 45 and our eight different extracurriculars. We need internships and summer programs so that we can make ourselves seem accomplished to some middle-aged white man who sits in an office to evaluate our worth. And ultimately, where we go to university can impact the trajectory of our career, the quality of our life, and the rest of our future.

Suddenly, the word 'future' doesn't just glitter with possibility. It weighs us down with immense pressure. Because with the choices we make now, we're supposed to define the rest of our lives when we've barely even started them. For me, that's the scariest part of high school. I'm not particularly intimidated by IAs and TOK essays or graded homework assignments and EEs - it's the idea that my future is balanced precariously on my high school success. That if I don't get that perfect 45 and a perfect ACT score and recommendation letters, the idea of my 'future' that I've constructed immediately begins to crumble into pieces.

But that brings me to something that I've been questioning for a long time: what is success? And how do I measure my worth?

It would be easy for me to sit here and write about how grades do not determine my worth, but that would be unhelpful - and would make me a hypocrite. Because, like many of you, I measure my worth in productivity. I label my days as "good" and "bad" based on how much work I get done; I prioritise the hours that I study over spending time with my friends, and I tend to count the number of things that are on my resume every day, trying to figure out what else I'll be able to add before November this year.

But this is the system we live in. I can sit here and criticise it, blame my problems on capitalism or America. Or I can find a way to navigate it, measuring my worth not just through my resume - although I don't discount its significance either.

So, what is success?

I had a drama teacher a few years ago who made us all answer the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Our answers ranged from engineer to writer to UN Secretary. But once we had finished, she looked at us for a long moment and said, "None of you said 'happy'."

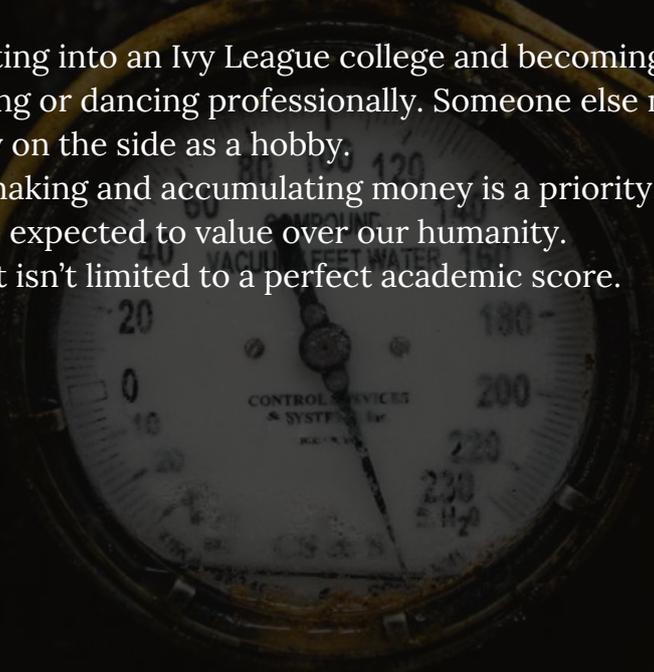
Her words hung in the air that day, and they have stayed with me since. I personally don't believe that happiness lies in throwing my life away and living in a cottage in the woods, nor do I think it lies in throwing my humanity away to make billions on Wall Street. To me, success is fulfilment. And that looks different for everyone.

Success is something that is difficult to quantify, because it's always comparative. Your average grades, your percentile, your net worth - they're all compared to your peers to evaluate whether or not you're worth investing in. But why shouldn't you define success for yourself?

Maybe for one person, success is getting into an Ivy League college and becoming a doctor or lawyer. For another, it may be acting or dancing professionally. Someone else may go into a corporate job, and write poetry on the side as a hobby.

The fact is, in the system we live in, making and accumulating money is a priority. But it's also not something that we should be expected to value over our humanity.

Success, to me, is happiness. And that isn't limited to a perfect academic score.





BLOGS & POLITICS

TECH TIMES

NFTs: Valuable Art or a screenshottable JPEG?

by Vedant Krishnan

It is impossible to be living in 2022 and not have heard the term NFT. But what is an NFT? NFTs or Non-Fungible tokens are a unique piece of digital art which can be bought or sold using the crypto currency Ethereum. What makes them so special? It's their uniqueness which is a result of the technology that these tokens run on. It's called the blockchain. The blockchain is an extremely complicated database that plays a crucial role in maintaining a secure record of the transactions that take place.

As any upcoming form of technology would, NFTs have their opposers as well as their supporters. A common belief amongst these supporters is that physical artworks like the Mona Lisa or Starry Night are priceless paintings, and use this to justify the ridiculous price tags on certain NFTs. With the transition to the digital world as well as the introduction of the Metaverse, these supporters believe that the prices of NFTs will continue to skyrocket as a result of the high demand and hence are a great investment. This, coupled with the use of the blockchain technology, ensures that only one owner can exist at a time, increasing the security of their investment.

However, the opposers to NFTs are equally as passionate about the topic as it's supporters. A significant problem that NFTs have is that they have no real value and no reason to be as expensive as they are. Expensive paintings for example are 100s of years old and can't be reproduced since their creators are no longer alive. This means that each piece of art that that artist has created is now an extremely scarce good since nothing of that style can ever be made again, never mind the same piece of art. NFTs, however, aren't like that. They are scarce goods for the sole purpose of being scarce goods. People produce a limited number of NFTs not because it is greatly time consuming but purely to keep it limited so that their work has value.

The main problem with NFTs is that whether you own it or you are looking at a screenshot you see the exact same thing. Looking at a picture of an artwork on the internet is vastly different from seeing it in person. However, with NFTs there is no difference, resulting in no intrinsic value. The minute that more people start realising this, the faster the prices of these NFTs will fall. Since the only real reason people buy NFTs is for monetary gain, they will start selling theirs, causing a crash in prices of all NFTs as a result of an excess of supply and a serious lack of demand.

Even if NFTs can be used extensively in the metaverse whenever they comes out, it still doesn't justify the price tag on some of these NFTs. Nobody knows what that experience is going to be like. As more and more people jump on the bandwagon, there will be temporary increases in the prices of NFTs. However, a crash in the prices of NFTs is inevitable. It could take weeks or it could take months but it is going to happen.

Why Putin cares so much about Russia

by Aditya Agarwal

With almost 200,000 Russian troops propped up at the Russia Ukraine border, US President Joe Biden has declared that they have intelligence confirming a Russian attack on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv. This is just a week after the US, UK and several other countries withdrew most of their diplomats from their embassies in Kyiv.

In addition, there has been heavy artillery by pro-Russian separatists in the Donbas region on the eastern border further tensing the conflict.

Backstory:

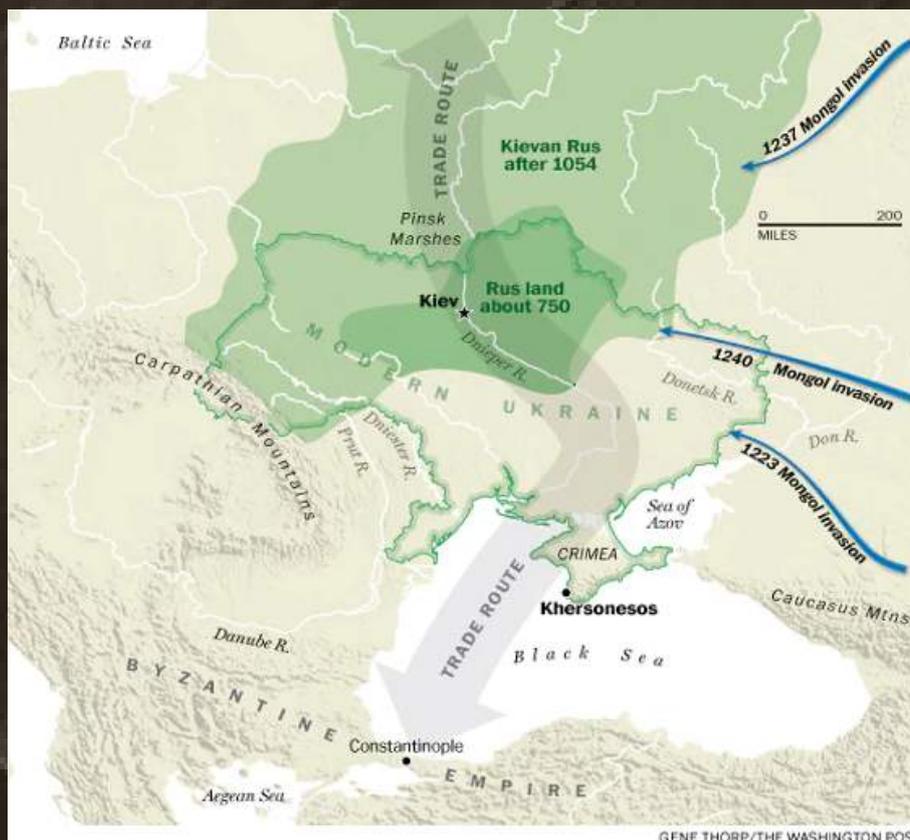
In November 2021, Russia started quietly building up its troops against the Ukraine border. Soon after, it presented a huge list of unreasonable demands towards NATO. They essentially demanded an end to all NATO expansion and that they withdraw all its troops from Eastern Europe – basically all former Soviet territory. And lastly, they demanded that the US stop protecting any of their Eastern European allies in case of an escalation. For context, this goes against the basic core principle of NATO which is that an attack against one is an attack against all, no matter which country. Putin essentially implied that if these demands were not met, he would invade Ukraine.

(Sidenote: A military escalation followed by a list of unreasonable demands with the leverage of a threat of war – sounds familiar?)

So, the question stands –

Why is Putin so interested in Ukraine?

To understand why, we have to go back to the start of the Russian empire in the 8th century. It was called the Kievan Rus and started in Eastern Europe. (Kiev ~ Kyiv)



From this map we can see that northern Ukraine was really the inception of Russia. Safe to say that Ukraine is a very key part of Russian history and identity. This empire kept growing eastward through the centuries, until after World War 2 when it got control many of its Eastern European satellite states at its peak. So, when the Union fell and many of these states declared independence, Russia was almost left as a shadow of its former self. Especially in the eyes of Vladimir Putin, who was a KGB officer rising rapidly through the ranks at the time. In a speech of his from 2005, he said that the fall of the Soviet Union was “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century”, leaving “tens of millions of fellow Russians beyond the fringes of Russian territory”.

All of this gets far worse when all these former Soviet republics start adopting western ideologies and start joining groups like NATO and the EU which work against Russia. Ukraine was the gem of all this – the closest to the former Empire. So, when it elected a westward facing president in 2014, and more than half its population favours joining NATO and the EU, it really rubs salt in the wounds.

In his mind, these Soviet countries are all one people (which there is some truth to. For example, the Soviet leader during the fall of the union – Mikhail Gorbachev, was half Ukrainian.

Some of these countries did have socio-cultural ties that didn't automatically erase themselves when the Union fell)

So, Putin's end goal seems to be to salvage whatever possible of this “greatest catastrophe”. This is very strongly reflected in an essay he wrote in 2021 called “On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians”, in which he argues that Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians are one people, all part of the triune Russian nation (basically an imperial ideology saying they're all one people, similar to England, Scotland, and Wales in the UK).

He denies the existence of Ukraine as an independent state due to the large number of ethnic Russians living in it and openly questions the legitimacy of Ukraine's contemporary borders. According to him, the modern-day Ukraine occupies historically Russian lands, and is a product of external forces and of administrative and political decisions made during the Soviet Union.

He blames the current crisis on foreign entities and anti-Russian conspiracies and states that the current Ukrainian government is driven by Western plots against Russia.

He ends the essay on this note:

The incumbent authorities in Ukraine like to refer to Western experience, seeing it as a model to follow. Just have a look at how Austria and Germany, the USA and Canada live next to each other. Close in ethnic composition, culture, in fact sharing one language, they remain sovereign states with their own interests, with their own foreign policy. But this does not prevent them from the closest integration or allied relations. They have very conditional, transparent borders. And when crossing them the citizens feel at home. They create families, study, work, do business. Incidentally, so do millions of those born in Ukraine who now live in Russia. We see them as our own close people.

Despite the fact that whatever he's doing right now is wrong, this actually sort of makes sense. (Imagine if Pakistan and China tried to influence Kashmir into its own nation, and then tried to use it to militarily intimidate India, we'd be reasonably pissed. And our leader would also definitely use it to gain brownie points back home every chance he got – oh wait) Again, however compelling, this doesn't justify annexing a part of a sovereign nation and propping up lakhs of troops on the borders.

What is happening with the “shelling”

On Friday, Russia-backed separatists, who control parts of Ukraine's east, claimed that Ukraine's military was about to attack, and ordered women and children to evacuate. Extensive coverage on Russian state media portrayed Russian minorities as fleeing a tyrannical Ukrainian military, and President Biden called such incidents ploys fabricated as pretext for a Russian invasion.

The Kremlin has long asserted that Ukraine's government persecutes ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking citizens. The charge, backed by lurid and false tales of anti-Russian violence, served as justification in 2014 for Russia's annexation of Crimea and its invasion of eastern Ukraine.

The recent resurgence of such language, now voiced directly by Mr. Putin, indicates what analysts and Western governments say may again be a prelude to invasion.

There is a chance that this aggression is an act to show Putin's power on the world stage; a way to deter any NATO or EU membership by Ukraine.

There are some good reasons as to why he wouldn't want to start an all-out war with Ukraine. Apart from the upfront cost, Ukraine also has a very good army that is heavily backed by the West and huge territory that would be hard to actually take control of.

In addition, it would basically realise NATO's worst fears and give them a new purpose. NATO, created to curb the rise of the Soviet Union as a nuclear superpower, hasn't had much purpose since the fall of the Soviet Union in the 90's, but this fires it right back up.

This is in addition to the barrage of sanctions and trade restrictions that will surely ensue, further hurting their economy. Due to the fact that this entire situation is so volatile and the course of actions is developed by just a few people, it is very hard to predict an invasion.

Ukraine has served as the main buffer zone between Russia and Europe since the 1990's. Aside from the security threat, a major escalation there would most likely trigger a humanitarian refugee crisis for the rest of the continent, in addition to possibly triggering another wave of covid, considering the spread of the Spanish flu we saw during World War 1. Considering this, the reaction of other states has been far too muted, with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky going so far as to accuse the West of “appeasement” with Russia. While some countries have threatened sanctions if Russia proceeds, there have been none enacted yet to deter the invasions. Hopefully, the enormous cost and the risk of this backfiring on Putin's popularity back home is enough of a deterrent to stop this invasion.

101 and counting...

by Akshay Lavakare



Lewis Hamilton was a man on a mission during the Sao Paulo GP weekend. After being disqualified from qualifying due to a DRS infringement (in which he stuck his Mercedes on pole) and starting last in the sprint race, he pulled off a brilliant comeback to finish 5th in a matter of only 24 laps. He would still have to incur a 5 place grid drop for the final race and start tenth, but nobody ruled out the chance of his 101st win, considering his pace and magnificent overtaking during the sprint race.

Valtteri Bottas started from pole after winning his second sprint race in a row, with championship leader Max Verstappen sharing the front row with him. Verstappen and Bottas got off the line evenly with similar reaction times, but Verstappen was faster through the second phase of the start, making a move down the inside of the Finn. It was a really good start for Lando Norris who went around the outside of his former teammate Carlos Sainz before picking up a puncture which saw him go all the way down to last. Hamilton, meanwhile, had a quiet start, only picking up 2 positions. Over the next few laps though, Hamilton made his way up to 3rd place after some fairly simple moves on slower cars before finally being let past by his teammate. The Red Bulls had pulled a 3.5 second gap but an early safety car due to some debris on the track bunched up the field. After the safety car restart, Verstappen led Perez who had Hamilton right up his gearbox in a close third place. On lap 18, with the superior straight line speed of the Mercedes, Hamilton danced his way around the outside of Perez at turn 1 but Perez got him back immediately at turn 4 in what was a display of excellent overtaking skill.

On lap 19, however, Hamilton did not face any problem whatsoever and got past Perez with ease. The rest of the first stint remained relatively even between the top 2 of Verstappen and Hamilton. Verstappen came into the pits 3 laps before Hamilton to get an undercut on him but was surprised to be closer to Hamilton than the first round of pit stops. He had it all to do with more than half of the race to go and 3 lap older tyres. On lap 31, loose debris on the track resulted in a virtual safety car, with all cars having to reduce their speed until the debris gets cleared. Perez lost position to Bottas who gained a cheap pit stop and got lucky.

Hamilton began creeping his way up into Verstappen's DRS range until on lap 45 he was just about in it- gaining him another 20 Km/h extra speed down the straights. Verstappen managed to hold him off until lap 48 when tensions almost boiled over. Hamilton was aided by DRS on the run down to turn 4 and was wheel to wheel with Verstappen by the time they approached the braking zone. Verstappen forced Hamilton a bit wide and ran out of road himself. Mercedes appealed this to the stewards who said that there was no investigation necessary. After 10 more laps of stellar defensive driving, Verstappen was put under pressure again on the straight before turn 4, where he started weaving to break Hamilton's slipstream. It was effective in the short run as Hamilton failed to get past. Verstappen, did however, receive a black and white flag for dangerous driving.

On the very next lap, on the run down to the same turn, it was third time lucky for Hamilton who was in front of Verstappen even before the corner. It was plain sailing for him till the end of the race as he crossed the chequered flag to win for the third time in Brazil, and for the 101st time in his career.

The lap 48 incident was yet another questionable decision by the FIA, where they said there was no investigation necessary. It would have been a bit too harsh to give Verstappen a penalty for running Hamilton wide. However, a warning or a black and white flag would have been appropriate. What was also disappointing was that the FIA did not have access to onboard the onboard camera of Verstappen's car, which could have played a key role in the decision making process. Furthermore, had Verstappen received a black and white flag, he would have been more cautious and probably not woven down the straight to break Hamilton's slipstream.

The FIA stewards, this season, have either given a penalty or not, whether or not the incident in question was deserving of one. Their inconsistencies and very evident underuse of the black and white flag (that serves as a warning for a minor incident) has not only led to some questionable decisions, but also disappointment of the fans.

Verstappen still holds a 14 point lead over Hamilton in the championship, but it is hard to say for sure who is at an advantage. Hamilton's Mercedes looks rapid down the straights and Verstappen's Red Bull looks faster in the corners. The Losail international circuit at Qatar has many medium to low speed corners aside from a 1 Km main straight so I believe that Red Bull will have the upper hand there. The next track, Saudi Arabia, will almost certainly be a Mercedes track due to its high speed corners and long straights (assuming it is built and ready to race at). Abu Dhabi is difficult to call as it contains a mix of the Mercedes and Red Bull car's strengths.

Red Bull have a lot to worry about regarding Hamilton's straight line speed (yes, just him and not Bottas). There is a high chance that the new engine was turned up to a high power mode since Mercedes took the penalty to have a greater advantage in a straight line speed for the remaining races. Red Bull technical director Adrian Newey went to the stewards to discuss Hamilton's straight line speed, because he believes something fishy is going on. Red Bull doesn't have much evidence as of now to protest the Mercedes engine but everyone expects them to in the near future.

Points wise, it is advantage Verstappen. Assuming the two championship protagonists finish 1st and 2nd at the remaining three races, Hamilton will have to win all three to have a shot at the title while Verstappen only needs to win one. The drivers have very much got their elbows out and will not hesitate to crash their rivals out to win, according to Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff.

We can speculate all we want. Can Hamilton pull off a spectacular comeback with his new engine? Or will Verstappen march towards his first world championship? Only time will tell.

Real-life Mermaids?

by Amrita Ganeriwalla

While not really mermaids, the Samah-Bajau people are a tribe of people who have evolved to live on and under water.

I read an article about the Bajaus last week and I found their ability to live in water very fascinating.

To provide some background about them: the Samah-Bajau are a tribe living in Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia. They have been called “Sea Nomads” or “Sea Gypsies” because they live in the water, only coming to land for trade or for refuge during storms. They live in houseboats called Lepas.

The Bajau people spend an average of 5 hours a day underwater and can dive down to depths of more than 220 feet. They can stay submerged 60 feet underwater and hold their breaths for up to 13 minutes, without any diving equipment. This feat is particularly amazing because the average human can only do this for about a minute. The only piece of equipment the Bajaus wear is wooden goggles when they go diving. While fishing, they use nets and handmade spear guns to catch their prey.

So, what allows them to live like this?

Turns out it's their spleens.

A study conducted compared the spleens of the Bajau people to the Saluan people, who live near the Bajaus but lead a farming lifestyle. The Bajau people were found to have spleens 50% larger than them. One of the functions of the spleen is to control the amount of blood in our body. The spleen contracts when people dive, releasing a store of oxygenated red blood cells into the blood stream. The Bajau people, who are said to have larger spleens, will have a larger red blood cell reserve, which means that they will have more oxygen and thus, will be able to stay underwater for long.

Many tribespeople also artificially puncture their eardrums to deal with the pressure underwater. They usually do this when they are at a young age. Their vision has also improved over time, helping them find treasures like pearls, dried fish, and sea cucumbers, which they trade on land.

Another interesting fact is that Bajau people who haven't gone diving previously are also born with bigger spleens. So, this means that this characteristic is passed down to the offspring from their parents. Whichever person doesn't have an enlarged spleen ends up dying underwater, thus performing natural selection.



However, several factors adversely affect the lifestyle of the Bajau people. The global fish trade has disrupted their ecosystem. In addition, the trees which they use to make their boats are currently endangered. They are subject to harsh weather conditions and attacks by pirates. Most of them also live below the poverty level. Government programs are providing them with aid and benefits that make living life on land more practical. So today, a lot of Bajau people are opting to living on land instead.

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Paper fabric on foundations of sand

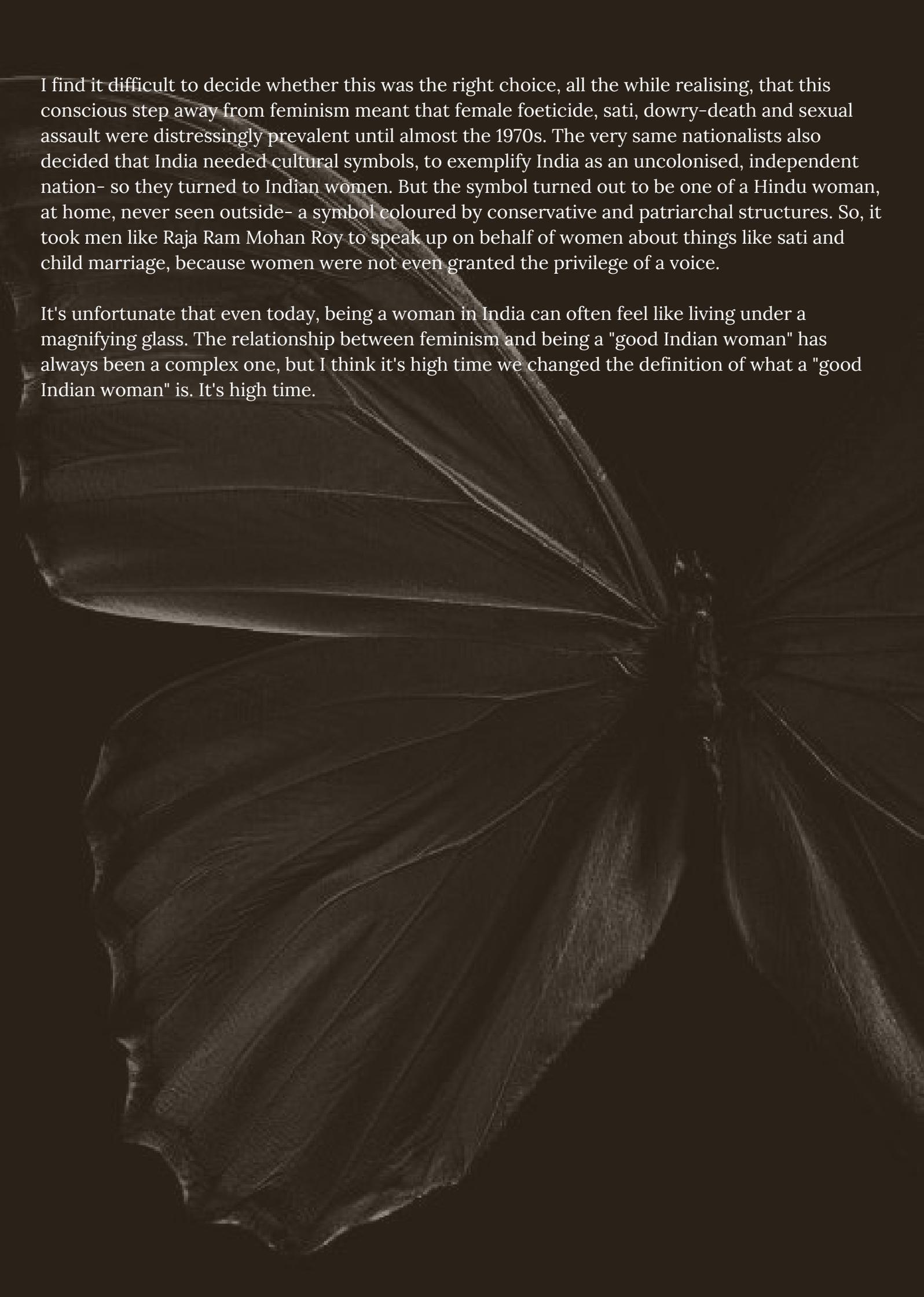
by Alina Vaidya Mahadevan

I've been battling with the idea of patriotism for a while. The pivotal period that makes me inexplicably proud to be Indian, is that of the freedom struggle. The sepoy mutiny, non-cooperation movement, and the sentiment of non-violence, that we maintained throughout a period of plight. Our freedom fighters are the closest representation of what India is to me. But, if I ask most people today who Begum Hazrat Mahal is, or who Aruna Asaf Ali is, it's unfortunate that many will simply read these names and miss out on the chance of experiencing the greatest patriotism there is. Because Begum Hazrat Mahal is the reason we can still visit temples and mosques, and Aruna Asaf Ali was the heart and soul of the Quit India movement. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Rani of Jhansi, Kasturba Gandhi, Annie Besant... the list goes on and on.

But there's one woman that I came across the other day, whose name and work has left an indelible mark not just on me, but on Indian feminist history as a whole. It was just another Monday evening: with some Simon and Garfunkel playing in the background, ever too sour lemonade in hand, I sat down to read an article, prepared for a 5 minute leisure read. Instead, I must have mulled over the piece until the drink in my hand had completely evaporated. And I haven't been able to stop thinking about it ever since. Mithan Lam, the first Indian female high court lawyer, and her mother, Herabai Tata, shattered a seemingly indestructible glass ceiling.

Suffrage in India was a prevailing controversy- should women's rights be given precedence over the independence struggle? Several freedom fighters and patriots pressurized Lam and Tata to delay their fight for women's rights. But, the question that Lam and Tata never stopped asking, a question that forms the basis of the feminist movement in India, a question that has been bothering me for weeks- are we really 'free', if the oppressor-oppressed relationship still exists? Lam dedicated her life to imparting knowledge to new generations of women, reinforcing the hope that the rising number of female lawyers might just instigate political and social reform in a country utterly lopsided when it came to power. "Attempt to reform without the cooperation of women," they declared, "and you are simply raising a paper fabric on foundations of sand." And that "paper fabric" meant that independence didn't destroy hierarchy. It simply left India with a brittle understanding of freedom, because the destruction of Britain's power had diverted attention away from every other form of subjugation.

My goal is not to be ignorant of the men that played key roles in lifting India out of the colonial rule of the British, but is simply to recognise that there is much about that period that remains unknown and unacknowledged. The most touted Indian nationalists decided that advocating female rights did not take priority in comparison to attaining independence.



I find it difficult to decide whether this was the right choice, all the while realising, that this conscious step away from feminism meant that female foeticide, sati, dowry-death and sexual assault were distressingly prevalent until almost the 1970s. The very same nationalists also decided that India needed cultural symbols, to exemplify India as an uncolonised, independent nation- so they turned to Indian women. But the symbol turned out to be one of a Hindu woman, at home, never seen outside- a symbol coloured by conservative and patriarchal structures. So, it took men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy to speak up on behalf of women about things like sati and child marriage, because women were not even granted the privilege of a voice.

It's unfortunate that even today, being a woman in India can often feel like living under a magnifying glass. The relationship between feminism and being a "good Indian woman" has always been a complex one, but I think it's high time we changed the definition of what a "good Indian woman" is. It's high time.

POETRY & CREATIVE WRITING



The darkness in me? The darkness is me

-anonymous

the night wraps around her like a lover. caressing her and whispering sweet nothings into her ear. taunting her demons to come out and play with its own, she always gave in. because if they were occupied they would leave her alone. and she would give her soul to have a few hours of silence, so she closes her eyes and navigates towards the soft knocking at the back of her mind. it's rhythm frustrates her and she rushes to open the door. and then the familiar process occurs. her hand is held, kissed, loved and then she's pulled into the room. and she's locked inside. she looks around and smiles at the quiet, as long as she could stay oblivious as to what they were doing outside she would be fine.

she would be okay. it's been hours. this is the longest she's been allowed to stay in the room. suddenly theres knocking on the door. loud. frantic. she rushes to open it and is immediately pulled out. confused she opens her eyes and freezes. she's faced with a man in uniform. she looks down. handcuffs, she sees red. on her skin. her clothes. she see nothing. her eyes blur. she closes them and feels a tear trickling down. rushing back to the door at the back of her mind she pounds on it. screaming for the demon to come back out. screaming for it to explain. what did it do, what. did. she. do. she claws at the door until it opens. she stares back at an image of herself.

Benzene & Poetry, A Finished Product of Knowledge?

by TOK2

Ms Sharija and Ms Priyamvada asked TOK 2 to make a creative presentation about the discovery of Benzene and the poem "Kubla Khan" as finished products of knowledge. Here is what they came up with.

Raag and Viraat

He had a dream
But it wasn't about cream
He saw a snake coil up
And form rings
Cha-ching!
He put his theory to the test
It really was the best
He published it in an article
They were all about the carbon particles
It was almost as if he swung his wand
And they formed a single and double bond
This solved many scientific theories
And scientists were finally not dreary
It was used in many different ways
And it definitely got prais

Kahaan and Samaa

Products of knowledge are a set of terms,
People use to get their facts confirmed,
A body of knowledge derived from evidence,
Can prove anything, from ants to elephants.

Poetry is a realm, whose
boundaries cascade beyond any limits
It seeks but a muse, it
broadens like brushstrokes, and narrows like needles.

In daffodil meadows you will see
Paths untrodden, roads not taken
Metaphors, repetition, personification, imagery, a simile
These ideas form the foundation.

It is a thread that ties
the writer to the reader, the homeland to the soldier, the past to
the future
The thread is timeless, the thread is omnipresent
It revels in its perceived variance

Benzene is a finished product of knowledge,
Scientists study it, post college,
It has applications in the real world and a fixed structure,
It doesn't allow certain pipes to rupture,
Benzene Is very useful as it has numerous known functions,
It helps your car stop at extremely busy junctions.

That's why benzene is a product of information,
It's provable, useful and an asset to transportation.

Tanisha, Vani and Zahra

This one is for the ones with the TOKing system
Poem, benzene and the product system
When we compare sciences, we be thinkin' up
Got evidence that be backin' up
And they read, they check, they might gotta edit
They ask and get the right kind of help
they share, they change, they might rearrange
they always source articles, and never sound strange
they do multiple experiments, trials to prove them, then
When they make conclusions, think of counterclaims, aims
That's the kind of papers they are lookin' for
And yes you'll get ideas if you're dreaming on
I said, excuse me it can't be right or wrong
I mean my, my, my, my, it's like really nice
I mean, it's like anything can suffice It's like so subjective, and
ever changing, oh
Yes we did, yes we did Somebody please explain knowledge like
this
We are TOKknowers, we get how it's done
Both are forms of knowledge, and learning is fun

Akshay and Vaidehi

When we talk about benzene
Let's not go into frenzies
We know our work is fruitful
When its concise and useful
So let's not be sad let's not cry
This is data we apply
This model did come into clutch
Because it explained so much
We know its reliable too
Because it is peer reviewed
This success was good and fated
because results can be replicated
This poem is reads so so well
“Or a vision in a dream. a fragment” was a poem as well
We know Kubla Khan’s complete and best
Because he had forgotten the rest.
We know the poems good and done
When the publisher approves it for everyone.

Which Came First, the Chicken or the Egg?

by Samaa Burte Nadkarni

The lock is broken and covered with a layer of rust. Good. That makes my job a lot easier.

Swinging the door open, I step into a quiet, still living room. The afternoon sun pools lazily on the hardwood floor, lighting up shards of mirrored glass that litter the space. As I pad carefully across the room, I catch my image in a piece of glass scattered away from the others. I smile at my reflection. It glares back at me.

I heave a sigh and make my way to the kitchen. I have to remember that I can't get sentimental about these things. So I choose to ignore broken picture frames, drops of blood near the door and sometimes even the suffocating whiffs of rotting flesh. It's the survival of the fittest. Or is it the richest? It means the same thing now anyway. There is no food in the kitchen, only a bottle of orange juice. Putting it in my backpack, I try my luck in other rooms.

The first room is a child's room; yellow and blue with posters lining the walls. On the desk sits a copy of "There Will Come Soft Rains" by Ray Bradbury. I stifle a laugh at the irony. Next to it is a piece of paper that reads "DEBATE SPEECH; WHICH CAME FIRST, THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG." I'd had the same debate in school, and I was so convinced that it had to be the egg.

The second room belongs to the parents. I see a half-eaten sandwich on the table next to a pile of newspapers. Finally!

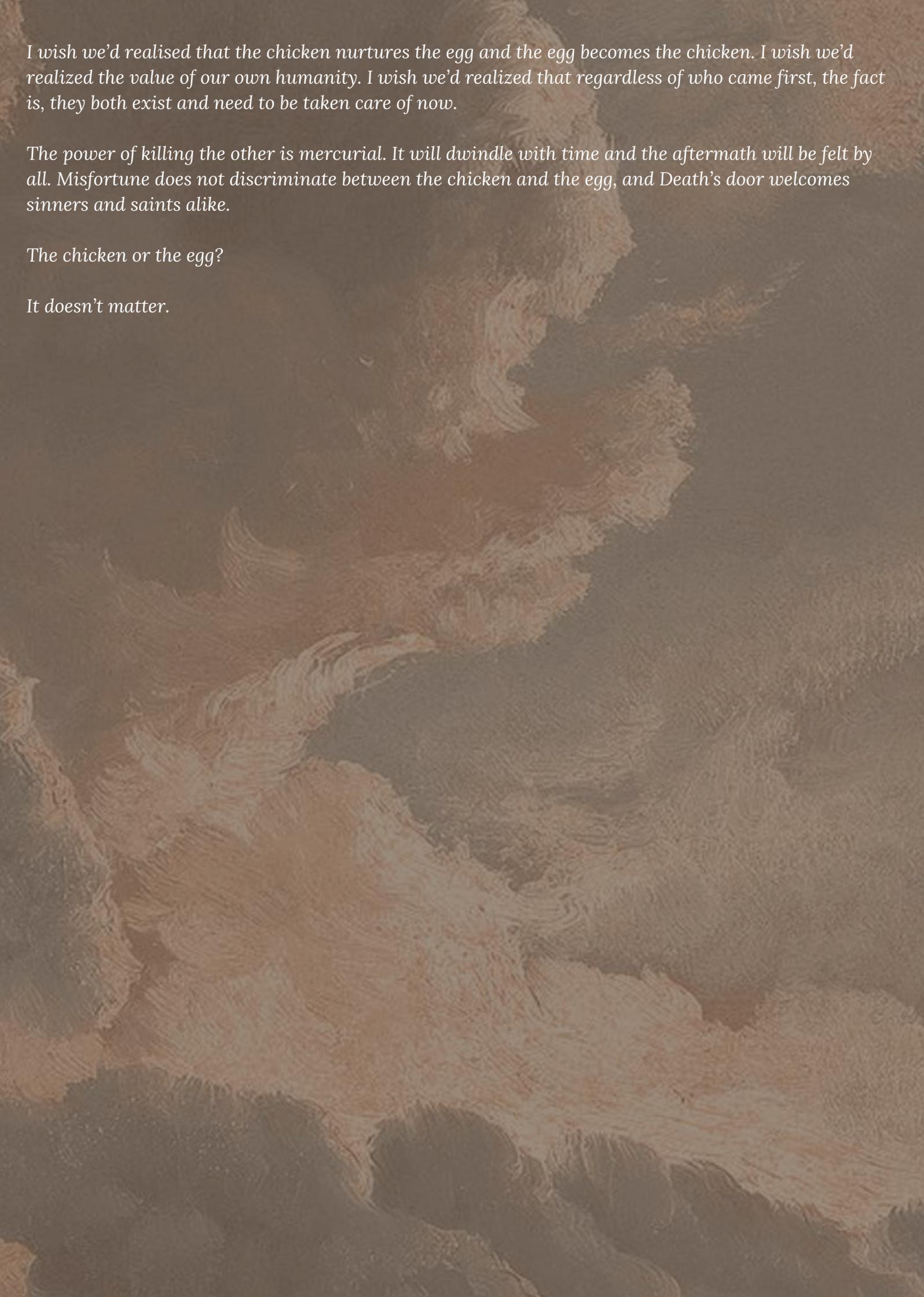
I don't bother to leave some for later, hunger has been my singular thought for the past two days. I wash it down with some orange juice; only two sips, I'm not desperate enough to not have stores for the next day. I turn my attention to the newspaper, eyeing the headline: "JERUSALEM WAR ENDS IN HUMANITARIAN DISASTER."

"It's reassuring to know I'm living in a dystopian novel," I say to absolutely no one at all.

Even my bleak attempt at humour doesn't drown out the memories of the last two weeks; Death. Bombs. Destruction. All three again.

Which came first, the Muslim or the Jew? Which came first, the chicken or the egg? The birthright or the humanity? The chicken or the egg?

Does it even matter?



I wish we'd realised that the chicken nurtures the egg and the egg becomes the chicken. I wish we'd realized the value of our own humanity. I wish we'd realized that regardless of who came first, the fact is, they both exist and need to be taken care of now.

The power of killing the other is mercurial. It will dwindle with time and the aftermath will be felt by all. Misfortune does not discriminate between the chicken and the egg, and Death's door welcomes sinners and saints alike.

The chicken or the egg?

It doesn't matter.

It Does Not Rain In Heaven

by Aadyah Vadapalli

I watched as she leaned back into couch after springing up at the sound of the first drops of rain.

A lazy contented smile spread on her face as she closed her eyes, book lying forgotten on her chest.

Why does she love the rain?

I couldn't help but smile fondly at her as I remembered the day we met.

It was, in true cliched form, a rainy day and I was trying to capture photos in the rain for an assignment. I had grabbed my camera and an umbrella and run out the door, hoping to make the most of this short shower.

It was then that I saw her. She was dancing in the rain in the small park across the street. The trees formed a canopy of dappled weak light and her hair flung molten mercury droplets as she twirled.

The joy on her face left me helpless. I had never seen such pure emotion and I had to make sure that I was not dreaming. So, I predictably took a few photos of her, with her face turned up to greet the rain, with a lone ray of sunshine gracing her forehead, a halo of sorts.

She quite literally took my breath away, for she was living.

She quickly noticed me, seeing as I was the only other person around, everyone else had scurried home away from the cold showers.

I lowered my camera slowly, still enthralled, as she skipped over.

"I love the rain", was the first thing she said to me. I, with a little less poise, blurted out, "You are gorgeous."

Thankfully, she simply smiled and took my hand, coaxing me to put the umbrella down, the camera safe underneath it, and lead me to dance with her. There was no music, but we danced. And there was something charged in that moment. It felt as if we were being watched by lightning, and there was unnatural grace in the leaves as they fell down with the rain. We were just two girls dancing, rather awkwardly, in the rain, but it felt like something greater than myself, as if I was making a promise to protect in that moment.

Why does she love the rain?

Following the natural progression of such a moment, I got her number, we went on dates, and she moved in with me, near the spot of our dance.

We were together as the days grew darker, and as the rain fell heavier, no longer a caress, but a threat.

We were together as the house somehow grew quieter and as the streets grew emptier.

We were together as my memory failed and she faded away, and she never answered my question.

No matter, I already had my answer.

She loved the rain because it did not rain in heaven and she was my angel.

PHOTOGRAPHY & ARTWORK



Vani Sahjwani



I took this picture at home one day when I saw my cousin playing with a random light in my room and I couldn't stop myself from whipping out my camera to shoot the way the light reflected on his face. The combination of the saturated LED light against the darkness of my room reminded me of something larger than life, therefore, with the use of photoshop editing I created a surrealistic image that reminded me of curiosity and a thirst for knowledge within younger children. I use this photo to remind myself to have a childlike mentality that isn't afraid to keep questioning everything.

Vani Sahjwani



This picture reminds me of the concept of marxism we learnt in English. Being on the road is such a different experience for people from different classes. It portrays what I love the most and what I hate the most about Mumbai; I love the way there are so many different people from so many different backgrounds who are united by using the same road which makes Mumbai one of the most free cities in the world but it also makes me question how destiny works. Some people are born into privileged households, which allow walking on the road to be fun and seen as art (street fashion, photography) whereas, walking on the road is an activity for some who have no home to go to.

Siddhant Ghosh



Blanket of Stars - Taken in the dead of night, the image captures a dizzying landscape from the base of a mountain - indicated by the prominent star trails. The reflection of starlight off the snow adds depth to an image taken in -4C.

Janani Balaji



This piece was made for the anniversary of the song “Alluring Secret ~Black Vow~” and represents themes of divinity and love! It’s a song that’s been one of my favourites for years!

Zahra Malbari



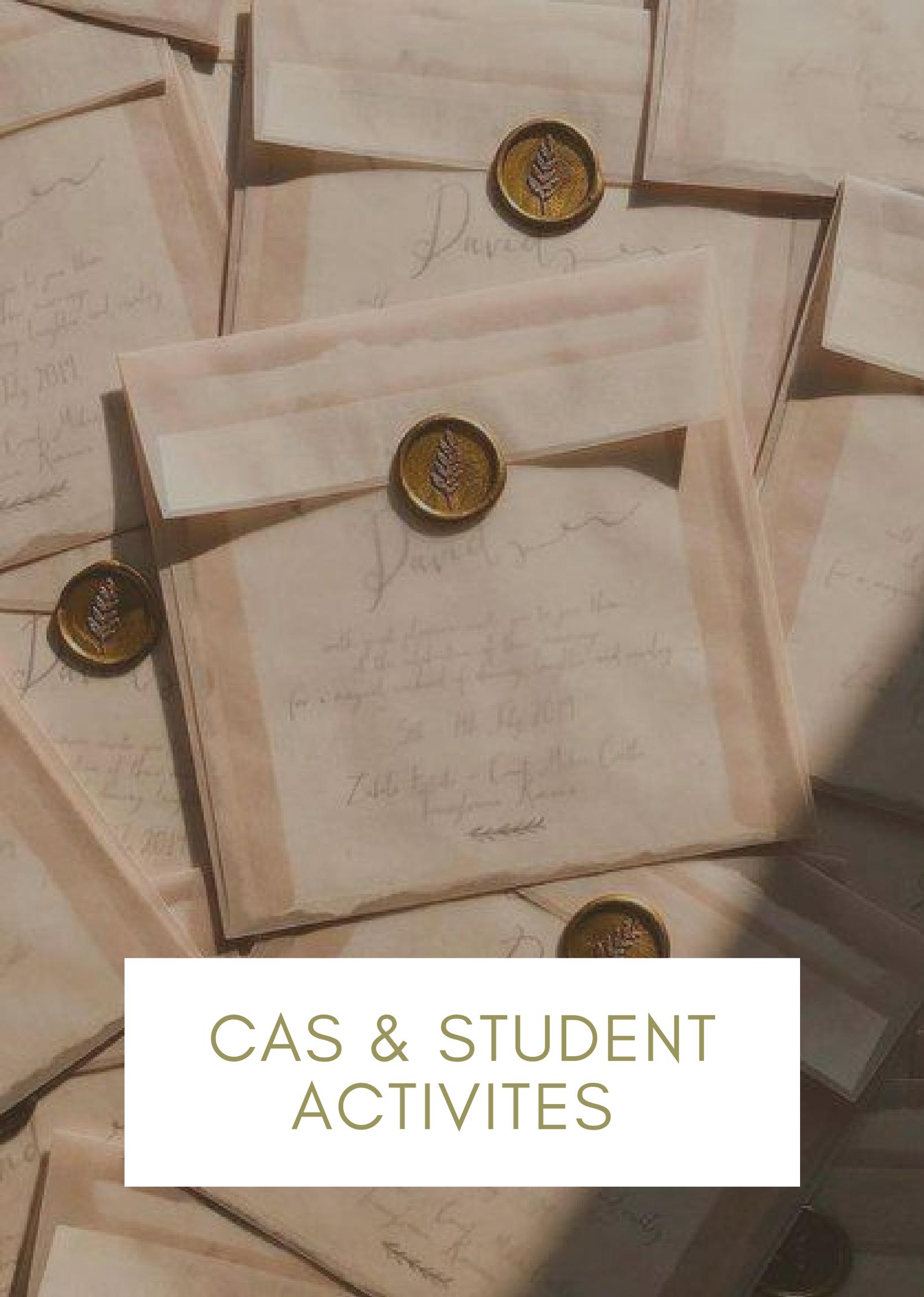
This series of black and white sketches drawn in pen allowed for free flowing, careless and imperfect art that didn't strive to have symmetry or logical shading but just aimed to be more realistic.

Krishha Jain



Venom: This is a fanart of the Marvel Character Venom. I drew it using Clip Studio Paint, using techniques such as rendering making it a digital painting. I hope you like it!

Purple girl: Here, I wanted to show the power and the grace that the character holds. I also wanted to use purple as it signifies royalty and power, making the character seem omnipotent and elegant.



CAS & STUDENT ACTIVITES

Vyayam se Vikas

Ilishaa's CAS project

Can you give us an introduction into what your project is and what problem you are hoping to address?

My project “Vyayam Se Vikas” aims to help underprivileged children transcend the limitations imposed on them due to the pandemic by using the power of physical activity. Thus, I came up with the solution of providing free online zoom dance classes for these children in order to help them alleviate these problems. So, I founded “Vyayam Se Vikas”, a platform that raises funds and provides free online physical activity classes for these children.

What inspired your CAS project?

My initiative “Vyayam se Vikas” with project Akshar of Chitnavis Trust, Nagpur was founded and inspired by my personal takeaway of using the power of physical activity to alleviate problems such as exhaustion, distraction, anxiety and aggression, issues that were also faced by children during the many lockdowns and limitations due to Covid-19. Since exercise benefited me so much in my teenage years (by making me harness my vulnerabilities and turn them into strengths), I decided to pass on this useful lesson to disadvantaged children. It helped them resolve the problems they faced during the lockdown and also helped them become more focused and productive.

What have you learnt while working on it?

I learnt the importance of how simple activities can help uplift the community and improve the lives of many. Many times when we think of ways to help the community, we think of elaborate large-scale solutions, but the one takeaway for me was that the simple act of exercise can help resolve so many problems and therefore improve so many lives.

What is something you struggled with in the execution of your project?

Since I was a child trying to get a project working in an institute full of adults, I struggled with the organisation of the project. I also struggled with the communication aspect, of ensuring that the organisation I worked with completely understood the essence of my project.

What has been the impact of your project so far?

We have provided free online classes for a year for children in project “Akshar” of Chitnavis Centre. I have an enrolment of 40+ kids, and aim to expand this project out to many more children in government schools.

Link for youtube channel :

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgCJzkTO7DULqxsahCKDBvA>

Ek Sapna

Amanya's CAS project

Can you give us an introduction into what your project is and what problem you are hoping to address?

My project is called Ek Sapna and it's main goal is to spread awareness about digital literacy and help bridge the digital gender gap that exists in India. For example, currently in India around 65% of women are digitally literate compared to 82% of men and only 20% of rural women have debit or credit cards, compared to 64% of men.

What inspired your CAS project?

A few weeks into our lockdown, my house helper named 'Sapna Didi' needed help in transferring money to someone. I taught her how to use Google Pay and I couldn't be happier when she used it herself! This made me realize that there are so many women just like Sapna Didi who can achieve their 'Sapnas' (dreams) of becoming digitally literate with no reliance on others for their financial transactions. Moreover, during the pandemic, going to shops to recharge phones and pay bills should be avoided as much as possible, and through technology they can do all of the above and more, just in a matter of minutes. Thus, to help out, I conducted several workshops online and offline and have taught Google Pay to women from multiple NGOs such as Aftertaste, Manpasand and Disha Foundation so they can become more digitally and financially literate.

What have you learnt while working on it?

While working on Ek Sapna, I've learned that a lot of these women have no idea what digital wallets are and what they can do with them such as paying electricity bills, highlighting the importance of digital literacy in today's day and age. Moreover, I also hosted a fundraiser in 2021 that raised money to buy phones for the women and children from the NGO's- 'Aftertaste' and 'Oscar Foundation'. While distributing the phones, the children's parents recounted how the pandemic greatly affected their learning as they couldn't go to online school for months at a stretch due to lack of devices. All this information pushed me to work even harder and find new ways to help these women and children digitally. This is why I've recently launched a youtube channel with Google Pay tutorials in Hindi so that more women around India can learn how to use Google pay and make their lives a little easier.

What is something you struggled with in the execution of your project?

The online workshops were definitely harder to execute than offline as the women faced a lot of internet issues and demonstrating the use of the app digitally was also a challenge. However, the women graciously listened and their willingness to learn was truly heartwarming.

What has been the impact of your project so far?

On the 26th of January, I was awarded the Just Rights Kids Awards by Pratyek Organization for being the Most Promising Candidate of Child Defender Rights of 2022. The organisation awarded me 10,000 in prize money which I have allocated towards the financial assistance in the quality education of two students. I hope to build Ek Sapna further this year with the main aim of helping children's education as well as empowering women in India to become more digitally literate!



FITNESS



DANCE

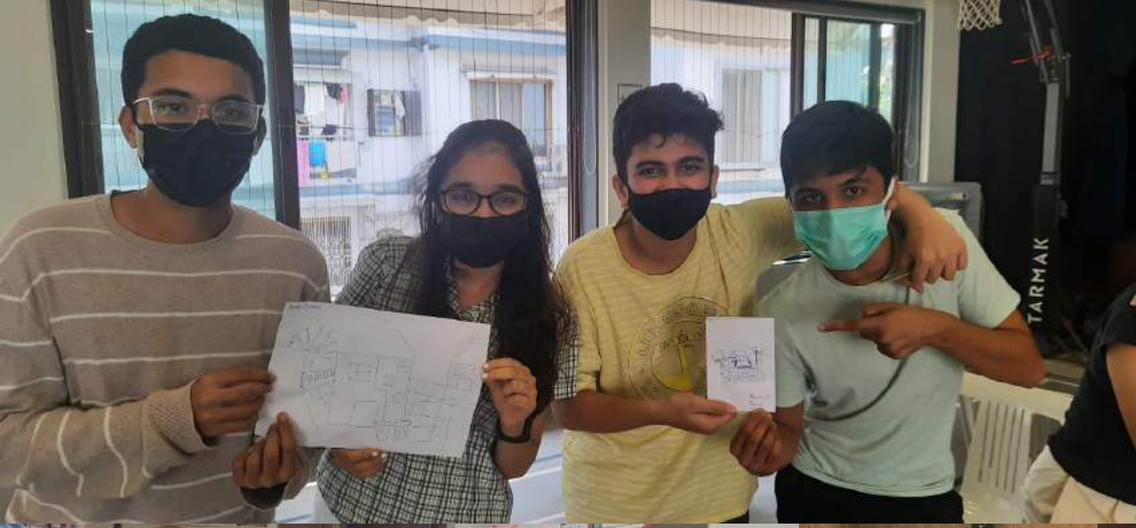


DRAMA

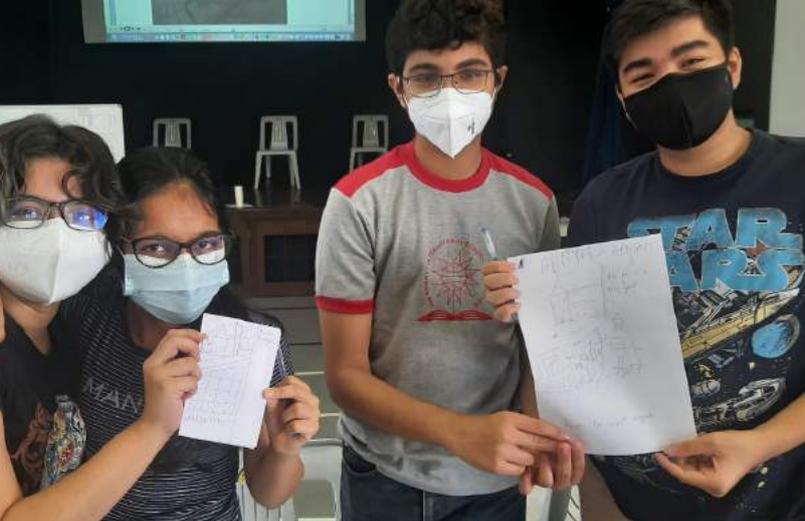
Grade 11 was divided into three groups. Each group had three sessions with their respective teachers'. one group learned the choreography to two songs as well as learned some salsa and bachata. The other, did a engaging session where they used dance to give a fun twist to fitness. The last group learned about improv and its rules through a series of acting games.



in-person CAS!



non-instructional day!





SOURCES

<https://in.pinterest.com/pin/2674081020444784/>

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<https://in.pinterest.com/pin/353180795786557738/>

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