



Literary and Debating Committee
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The Lost Stories
NLU ASSAM

The Lost Stories

Nluja

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Letter from the Chief Patron

I am beyond delighted to present to the readers the second edition of 'The Lost Stories, NLUJAA', the literary magazine of National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam, compiled by the Literary and Debating Committee NLUJAA, in which the aspiring writers of several universities across India have contributed.

It brings me immense pleasure to see that in law schools where the discussions about internships, placements, research papers, and moot court competitions take up most of the students' time, creativity has not lost its touch. The magazine seeks to provide a platform for students through which they can express themselves through creative writing and art.

I congratulate the Editorial Board and all the contributors of this magazine and hope that the reach of this magazine grows with every subsequent issue.

*- Prof. (Dr.) V.K. Ahuja
Vice Chancellor, NLU Assam*

Letter from the Patron

I am very pleased to see the second edition of 'The Lost Stories', the literary magazine, brought out by the Literary and Debating Committee, NLUJAA. Law school is teeming with opinions. It is our belief that these opinions must have a forum for responsible expression, a forum that helps us broaden our thinking and horizons on a variety of relevant issues. We feel that such a forum is sorely missing in our university. Moreover, we allow this lack of space for expression to give rise to less civilized forms of debate and exchange of opinion, which add little or nothing to any kind of campus-wide consensus or understanding on any issue.

I hope this literary magazine will grow further, and reach new heights, in the days to come. I heartily congratulate all the contributors and the editorial team of this magazine.

*-Dr. Indranoshee Das, ACS
Registrar, NLU Assam*

Note from the faculty advisor

“Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man”. Francis Bacon

I believe that The Lost Stories magazine can help facilitate the development of creativity in each and encourage the habit of reading and critical thinking too. Best wishes for this 2nd edition and for all future endeavors.

Ms. Aparajita Dutta Hazarika is an Assistant Professor, Department of English, National Law University and Judicial Academy, Amingaon, Assam, India. She has published articles, short fiction, and poetry in the Melange by The Sentinel and other newspapers. She is a member of the North East Writers' Forum, NEWF, Assam.

Note from the Editorial Board

We from the editorial board of the student literary magazine 'The Lost Stories' under the aegis of the Literary & Debating Committee of NLUJA, Assam feel that it is our responsibility to provide a platform where the best student literary works could be made available for wide consumption to contribute our small part and give our contributors a chance to make their contribution, towards the development of literature and human civilization. With this conviction, we bring to you, the 2nd edition of our literary magazine.

Our Magazine aims to provide patronage to the non-academic literary talent of students to develop their ability to express themselves and understand expressions of others and provide them with a platform for exhibiting their writing and other literary skills, Afterall it's worth understanding and enjoying the human literary expressions, the betterment of which is the core of all academic pursuits.

It's been a pleasure for us to be able to bring together some great pieces of literature by students of (different/law) disciplines and we hope this edition proves to be a great read.

Foreword

'The purpose of literature is to turn blood into ink' - T.S. Eliot

It gives me immense pleasure to learn that the second issue of 'The Lost Stories, NLUJAA' a literary students' magazine of the National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam is going to be published very soon. Publication of a magazine in the life of an educational institution is significant one because of two reasons: first, it provides youngsters with a platform to exploit their creative ideas and critical thinking in any area of art and literature that they do not have space in featuring on bigger forums. This account of their visions, perceptions, and understanding may stand as a testament to the evolution and progression of society. Secondly, this venture would remain a long-cherished memory for those who are getting involved in the process either by contributing any write-up or investing time in such a creative task. Besides, this endeavour may further help augment their efficacy in maintaining public relations and active social life.

Hope the magazine would be able to instill creative zeal in the student fraternity of the University so that they can continue to shine and make their presence felt across the nation. I also wish to convey my best wishes to the members of the editorial committee and all stakeholders including the contributors. I wish to see the magazine published with fine content and contours this time and further.

- Dr. Dhrubajyoti Das
Associate Professor
Department of English
Cotton University, Guwahati

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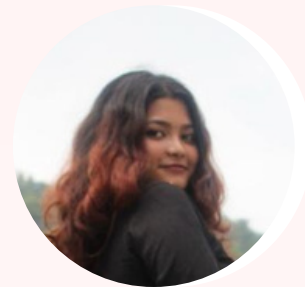
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Anushka Nigam

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Aashi Jain



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Cover Photo by



Agniva Das

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A tryst with law

Written by Manan Lalwani Yogini
Student, Lords Universal College of Law, Mumbai University

*Its meaning can never
be truly deciphered,
Its unfathomable depth can never
be truly measured...*

*For those who are ignorant,
it's just a piece of paper,
they think they live
in a realm,
beyond its omnipotent power,
deciding their own rules
as they traverse this planet,
their footsteps often leaving
behind,
a dark trail,
of blood and screams,
of tormented innocents;
they walk on this path
with speed and aggression,
bearing lofty ideals,
only to come crashing,
to a sad and lonely end.*

*For those who truly abide,
its the chain that binds
the society,
to a life of ethics
and morality,
telling the people
'what' they can do,
and what they cannot do;*

*with the 'why's' being learned
through generations of experience
and often tragic mistakes.*

*For a cold and insensitive
arbiter,
it's a set of rules
set in stone,
never to be altered
and adjusted with,
with forgiveness and repentance
being lame excuses,
while poverty and
bad circumstances,
are completely ignored;
but the rich are always
given leeway,
to slither away,
from a nice little loophole,
aided by a team
of carefully selected liars.*

*For a considerate and understanding
justice,
it is soft clay model,
needing reshaping from
time to time,
to bring it up-to-date;*

*it is a tool for giving power
to the weak,
and downtrodden,
allowing them to knock
on the doors of justice,
for whom the statute
was actually made for....*

*For those living
in a controlled society,
it's a guillotine above
their tensed heads,
waiting to slaughter
at the slightest of err
and objection;
Life,
which was supposed to be,
a utopian fantasy,
soon turned into a
dystopian nightmare,
they could never wake
up from;
The subjects are mere
guinea pigs,
for those in control
who live in peace,
in farcical monuments
called people's parliaments,
to be located
in forbidden cities.*

*For those living
in a democracy,
it lies behind a
thin and fragile glass wall,
open for scrutiny
by all and sundry,
with even the weakest
having the power,
to make a difference,
shattering the wall
to abandon the old
and bring in the new,
if it is better
in their view;
The calm of an iron fist,
is swapped with the uncertainty
and chaos,
of peoples rule,
giving many an opportunity
to shape their wildest dreams
into beautiful realities.*

Call of the sea: Lost paradise

Written by Kanchan Lavania
Assistant Professor of Law, VIPS College, GGSIPU Delhi

*I'm losing myself my vitality
I'm losing my children, my family
My daughters Ganga Jamuna Kaveris' beauty
Has been ruptured by peoples' insensitivity
people who looked for the divine in them are now a cause for the casualties*

*My sons, the trees, the shrubs & herbs,
who were gorgeous green flashbulbs
Are now pale and losing breath, are brutally murdered, my friends*

*My wife, "Breeze" of love & peace
Has become fiery, dusty, and mourning weed
The evil enemy 'cyclone'
now visits frequently to my shores*

*My friends- birds, tigers, and elephants
Wake up to a bad dream amidst so-called saints
Who takes them away for play
But kill them, sell and make money*

*No one is left now in my home
There were some humble tribals for sure
But they are forcibly evicted as thieves in forests
Doubting the most faithful servant of my nest*

*I hear of policies and programmes
Waiting with hope for the revival of health of all
Is there something called as justice?
If so, please return my beautiful paradise.*

Home without you

Written by Leelavathi P.
Graduate, School of Excellence in Law,
Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University, Tamil Nadu

*If these walls could talk,
They'd still wail over your death,
The throbbing silence in their ears,
Stripped of your energy and emotions,
They now stare blank and pallid at me,
Your photos don't delight them,
The new paints don't cheer them,
Their sorrows run deeper than the cracks on their faces,
Plainly and painfully they stare at me,
Seated down beside your empty favourite chair,
Sipping cold tea from a lonely cup
Your absence has hurt us deep,
Deeper than the wounds that time could heal,
Deeper than any paints and moments could cover
And as I stare at these blank walls, and they at me,
We wail in silence for all that we lost
Home without you is a hell,
Just another bleak reminder of the lost happy life.*

Alight

Written by Nandita Yadav
Student, National Law University, Delhi

*. With hope in her eyes, she walked that night,
Little did she know
The three shadows would crush her might,
Pushing her soul where there was no light;
From that day to the day she died,
Her life was full of fright;
Ephialtes was the consequence of the spite,
The incubus, litotes as it may be hight;
None could she tell her plight,
To whom could her tale be cite;
Let befall upon them, what deserve the krait,
Soon the whole nation cried;
Falling from the sky like a broken-line kite,
Hugging herself in a closed room so tight;
The eyes that sparkled and were bright,
Shed tears of blood all day, all night;
The young's ordeal saw no end despite,
The predicament had to requite;
The fiend did not give up the slight,
The once dazzling eyes last saw the alight;
A story of justice denied,
A story of her plucky fyte;
The black has to be turned white,
The misdeed has to be done aright.*

Catharsis

Written by Divyanshi Shukla
Student, National Law Institute University, Bhopal

*I have seen the prettiest of faces,
enticed with scarlet eyes
with beauty ineffable
being neglected
when fell prey to
senility curse.*

*I have seen the mightiest
of structures and grandeur indefinable,
with heavenly magnificence
being vandalized perversely*

*I have seen the haughtiest
of men with pride inexplicable,
boasting about their
pompous audacity;
craving for catharsis
to drain away all of it.*

*I have seen the gloomiest
of nights, covering itself
with facade of dead silence;
giving way to the brightest
of the days.*

*This, my dear, is life
Where your predictions
and imaginations end, it begins!*

FIRDAUS

/Firdaus (Arabic): 'paradise' /

Written by Navya Benny
Working with Live Law

I have only seen my Abbu smile thrice.

Once, when I was 11, I asked my Abbu

When the last time was that he was truly happy,

For my young self was disappointed that no matter what I did

The frown that was etched on his face never disappeared.

We were sitting on our porch that day, he in his armchair, and I squat on the floor near his feet

He seemed lost in thought as he stared ahead

And had a ghost of a smile lingering on his lips as he replied

"When I was a boy around your age, and I met a girl who had wandered into my garden

And we played together till the Sun came down".

And he got up from his chair and walked outside, as if in a trance

While I was left alone again in the huge white house

With deafening silences and a bunch of lifeless objects made of plastic and ceramic

To keep me company.

When I was 16 and had my heart broken for the first time

Abbu, ever the man of few words, never offered me comfort or solace.

Instead, he asked me not to pine for a love that was never mine, and to get a dream instead.

"That's rather hypocritical, don't you think?" I retorted in my fury,

"Coming from a man who has never had a dream,

and would rather spend his whole life cooped up in this stifling house,

not once sparing his own child a thought, and tending to his figs and ferns all day".

Abbu blinked. Once. Twice.

"I do have a dream. I dream of my Firdaus.

My Firdaus, where the scent of jasmines invades my senses at night

My Firdaus, where the Sun's rays greet me first in the morn.

My Firdaus, where I lay beside the one with the long raven hair, and kohl-rimmed eyes"

"I do have a dream. I dream of my Firdaus.
 My Firdaus, where the scent of jasmynes invades my senses at night
 My Firdaus, where the Sun's rays greet me first in the morn.
 My Firdaus, where I lay beside the one with the long raven hair, and kohl-rimmed eyes
 My Firdaus, where my heart is at peace knowing it has lived a life of love"
 And I saw his eyes turning moist staring outside the window,
 And his lips curve in an involuntary smile
 I have come back now to the place that I had detested during my childhood
 Where I had felt chained by my solitude.
 And I see the man who had raised me in his own unique way,
 And had been the only other living creature in this gloomy place, now laying frail on
 his bed,
 Still looking out the window to his precious garden.
 My footsteps seemed to have woken him from his reverie
 For he looked at me and gave me the most brilliant smile that was directed at me for the
 first time in his life
 And all the webs of worry that had creased his forehead had disappeared.
 He seemed to have to been waiting for me
 For he lifted his hand, and pointed out the window
 "My Firdaus". I stared at him. "My Firdaus", he repeated again, more anxiously.
 "He has asked me to convey a message to you. That when he is gone, he wishes to be
 buried in his 'Firdaus'. He said you would understand".
 I looked at my Abbu again, whose life seemed to be ebbing out in front of my eyes,
 But whose face still held a wide, albeit tired smile, as he looked at me expectantly.
 "Yes, yes, I understand", I nod towards the doctor
 And Abbu smiles even wider at that and lowers his hand, as he reclines on his bed.
 I sit under the shade of the old Oak tree in my garden, sipping my steaming hot cup of
 tea
 The scent of the jasmine flowers that had bloomed last night still lingers in the air.
 As the first rays of the morning Sun caress my face,
 I look at the ground before me, where the mud is still a little damp
 And the house doesn't seem so lonely anymore, as I talk to my parents –
 My Mother, with the long raven black hair and kohl-rimmed eyes who remains a
 remnant of my early childhood memory
 And my Father, who has lived a life of love, and whom I understand better in his death.

Savage!

Written by Karthik Shiva B.
Assistant Professor of Law, VIT School of Law, Vellore Institute of Technology

*You call me savage,
By the standards your modern age,
Nature knows that you pillage,
And the forests, that you ravage,
You steal our lands,
Only to build factories for million-dollar brands,
You pollute the streams,
Only for beauty creams,
Let fishes and birds die,
Only for your colouring dye,
With your costly cars and cosy suits,
You always take and seldom give,
You take our trees,
All that's left is artificial breeze,
You mine the forest manor,
Calling yourselves barons with honour,
If there is anything left to take,
Take my life, for God's sake,
You give us newer disease,
That never seem to cease,
You give us strife,
That always end in the knife,
You give us a global pyre,
Why do we need a bonfire?*

*You give us flooding streams and seas,
Now we have running water at homes with ease,
You destroy the serene and calm,
With your murky and greasy palms,
Yet you call me 'uncivilized',
If this is what you consider 'civil',
Which is nothing but pure evil,
If this is what all it means,
Living in urban jungles without greens,
If this is all you can manage,
I deem it 'modern bondage',
I am better-off being called a Savage!*

At my own pace, in my own time

Written by Soumya Sharma
Student, UPES Dehradun

Having spent a lot of time 'alone' in the lockdown, within the four walls of the room, I have had become habitual of being on my own. I love the company I give to myself.

But whenever somebody would talk about 'traveling alone', I would wonder; Wonder that what really would a person do? Nobody around to share the excitement with. None to share food with and never a wholesome glance at the one you love. Little did I know, that time would reveal the answer to my what's in a very refined manner.

It was a Saturday in December. My college on this day provides a bus service of traveling anywhere in the city of love, Dehradun. I had planned to go shopping. Where? At the Sarojini of Doon Valley, known as the Paltan Bazaar. I had shopped like crazy there! Bought so many sweaters and all things wintry.

It was also the time that I was choosing things on my own for purchasing and I literally felt the freedom and understood it even more. It would be very basic and usual for a person of my age in this generation.

For me, it wasn't. After getting done with my shopping, I came back to the bus an hour before. Though I was tired, the scenic views Dehradun offers at all sides excited me.

I kept my shopping bags in the bus and stood beside the parked bus on the road. Left or right? Where should I go?

Should I really go? As I thought this, I saw the driver of the bus, standing at a distance and walking back and forth.

He had been doing this for quite a few hours! Doesn't he get bored? Walking on his own, at the same place and pace for continuous hours. How? But the how was smaller than my 'wow'. And his act gave me courage and confidence.

It wasn't the kind of intrepid that quoted, 'if he can, why can't you?' but
it was the kind of 'it is going to be fun.'

And so, I took the road less travelled by me. Left it was. The direction of
the left eventually showed me all directions of righteousness.

If you ask me, 'what did I do whilst walking alone?' a part of me would
convey to you about each and everything! At the same time, a part of me
would say that 'I just walked'.

Walked over and on what? I didn't use google maps. The road was
straight. The road was steep and hilly. Covered with huge trees around.
Trees that through their sound of the leaves reminded now and then
that they are present, they are watching.

I just didn't stop walking. Kms how many, I don't know and honestly, I
don't even care to know because it wasn't the units of measurement
getting covered but units of courage and freedom being done so.

This blog is not my journal. Even though I wish to write everything that
happened and occurred in that walk, I won't because a few things are
very explicitly to be mentioned in the journal only. Just closer to self.

But whatsoever, whatever I am jotting here is all with heart.
Limited and pondered over much. I watched people around. Walking
slow and fast.

I watched domestic animals around. Finding food and company slow
and fast. I watched nature around. Being at its own pace and time. I
watched it all.

And came upon a very tiny way through. It was tiny but it was dense.
Dense enough that suddenly I got accompanied by a dog.

Dogs scare me and vice versa :p

But this time, I didn't shout when the dog came near.
Maybe because I realized that there isn't anybody to save me and so I
kept quiet with warmth in my eyes but little fear in my heart. Maybe
that dog knew that it was safe ahead or maybe it was himself
discovering the way for the first time.

Whatever, I walked ahead.

1 step, 2 steps, 3 steps....and the destination, not planned of but destined about came! My heart felt happy. I really felt awesome! It was a beautiful view. Filled with mountains, trees and humans.

Too many houses altogether could be seen. And the grandiose mountains! And the soothing flora!

I was at the 'up, above the world so high' point from where a part of Dehradun was visible. The beautiful, majestic city that has since day one made me feel just 'happy and warm'.

I gazed at the view for quite some time with my newest friend looking as awestruck as me. Maybe I didn't just had the top view of the city but also of the fear I had accomplished that came with my confrontation with this four-legged animal.

Minutes passed and I walked back. Capturing the view not only in my camera but also in my heart.

I was very far away from the bus and it was time that I go back. Didn't want to but had to.

Whilst walking back I felt certain emotions that I contemplated sooner than ever. I walked in a city where none knew me. Randomly.

This was the freedom that I tasted and felt obsessed with. I had no fear of being recognized and asked about my destination.

I was free. I didn't have to walk as per the mood of anybody else. If I had wanted to stop and merely look at the woman sweeping the ground, I did!

If I had wanted to walk fast because I wanted to catch with the speed of the clouds, I did! I felt no obligation. I felt no worries.

When they say to walk when your heart feels heavy, they are right. But I would say that walk even when you are feeling the opposite.

Just walk merely. We are so keen with keeping check about where are we headed, with whom and how that we tend to miss out on how beautiful it is to 'just be' and 'aimless'.

It was just 1.5 hours of my 'me' time and I wish to make it the shortest of the times that I had walked or travelled alone.
Every second was worthy! Every glance was beautiful!

Every pause was life-enhancing! Coming back, I and the driver both got seated at our respective seats.
Him leading people closer towards their destination and me leading myself towards the world of my creation.

A tell tale of a law student

Written by Meera Bharti S.
Student, Tamil Nadu National Law University, Tiruchirappalli

It was the end of January 2020. I was out with my friend on an art venture; that's when I heard about the virus first. I didn't know its name back then, none of the villagers did either. A week after, I read about it in The Hindu. Within months, the virus picked up its speed, spreading its roots into the nooks and corners of this world. Never have I ever imagined, not even in my wildest dreams, that I would not be able to experience the things that I always took for granted for years to come; Hurrying to attend the first hour, slipping in right before the Professor calls your name, sighing a sigh of relief that you'd made it on time to class; Answering questions in the first half of the class just to sleep the second half off, never did I imagine that I would be mesmerizing all these simple memories as glimpses of the past while clicking on different links to change from one class to another online. Shortly before the nationwide lockdown, we, students, brazenly protested against the University to shut its doors and let us pack our bags already. Being a law student, advocating for human rights and safety for all was a prerogative. But truth be told, we all had an ulterior motive, hush... none of us wanted to sit for mid-sems. Hey, it was not just us who were unprepared; the whole of India was – for the tough tides to come. Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2), commonly known as COVID-19 had become the man of the hour by this time.

It's been more than two years since the rendezvous. Things seem to have changed but at the same time, it doesn't seem like it. Same old Online Classes except for the heightened sense of hyperactivity. Adapting to this new normal has only increased the mental as well as physical health issues and overall stress on the part of the student community. Carefree sleepovers to study trips and playing with your friends to playing a good joke and hugging goodbyes are all gone for the

good. Or that's how we've come to see this new normal. However, sometimes, it just gets too much to cope with. As a consequence, we either fight with the ones we hold dear to our heart or just cram in at the last minute to get the work done before 11:59 P.M. only to submit it at 12:00 A.M. And I end up thinking with regret filled in eyes – sigh, if only I could reverse back to a minute earlier. If only I could change time. How I wish I could!

The words “unprecedented”, “new normal” and “mental health” have been used to the point they have exhausted their usefulness in describing the COVID-19 Pandemic. For us, students, who had to stay home to continue their studies online from mid-March 2020, however, these words hold true as the access to classroom instruction, peer groups, teacher-mentors, and academic support were abruptly made unavailable, and for many of us remain disrupted. Mostly because there is no leeway to catch up with your bestie on a roadside stall late in the evening with a *paani poori* at hand or running behind a professor after the bell to get that one last-minute doubt solved or asking your roommate to feed you just because you forgot that the deadline was tonight. No more of that. At least for those of us who have not seen the gates since the protest; Sometimes, one loses grip over things, for me it was time. Though I'm a senior now, I still see myself as a junior. And when you can't go back, you can only worry about the best way to move forward. Again a reminder from your brain about the inevitable reality, you have so much work to do yet you have the luxury to get lost in your imagination, how dare you! Even though I know I should probably be working on the class report that is due in 2 days, I start thinking about the Greek myth – Sisyphus.

One question that keeps on playing in my mind is that – was Sisyphus really happy with the way his life was predetermined? While it is virtually impossible to find a semblance of happiness yet philosopher Albert Camus says Sisyphus must have been happy and content. He states, "his work is set, his boulder is the same, he wakes up every day with familiar sores and strains and knows what his day is going to look like, and pushing the same boulder up gets easier every day." Similar to Sisyphus' life, we all have our own boulders to push and our own series of mountains to climb.

But unlike Sisyphus, sometimes we have too many boulders to push and the boulders come crashing down even before we reach the top. But we still try to go about our lives hoping that we get what we aspire for, after all, as *The Alchemist* says when you want something all the universe conspires in helping you achieve it.

Most of us, at least I for one, looked on the brighter side and believed that this spring could turn a new leaf to my hopelessness of life. With the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) statement on discontinuation of the issue of orders and guidelines under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 for COVID-19 containment measures alongside the withdrawal of the notification issued on November 18, 2021, by the State Government of Tamil Nadu on imposing COVID-19 restrictions under the Tamil Nadu Public Health Act, 1939 bubbled new rays of hope only to get our hearts crushed in the end. From having been informed that we will get back to offline classes this semester to no for sure, the next semester – we have come a long way.

The plight of online education and E-learning may seem welcoming but it's just a mirage. Beguiling! That's what it is. Say what? Students who can study, can study anywhere? I've heard it and have had enough of it! It may be true back when people pursued *Vanvas*, not today! Without the proper atmosphere, guidance, and resources a student's spark may never be kindled or worse, never be ignited. But, guess what? Getting our university to understand this status quo and that our futures are at stake here has been... well, difficult. It's like the work of Sisyphus. Every time the boulder is up the mountain, with the threat of a new wave, it comes crashing down the mountain of all our efforts and hopes. And history often tends to repeat itself. And the final result? I'm still home sweet home, no biggie. We couldn't seal the deal with numerous mails or batch representations and various requests. But, as Churchill once said, "If you are going through hell, keep going". It is what it is. Nothing can come undone on its own, except if you stumble across a time machine just across your street. That possibly is not going to happen, so all that is left is to pluck, gather or harvest the day, in other words, *Carpe Diem!* But how to do that with all this mind-boggling pressure is the million-dollar question. Should we all just wait till the pandemic just disappears one fine day? *Jee Boom Ba*, can you do that for me

An April day of awakening

Written by Julia Anna
Student, School of Law, Christ (Deemed to be) University, Bangalore

It was a warm sunny day in April. I finally got a week to myself without moots, campus events, exams, and the sweat I'd endured through it all. Law school's Gender Studies Committee had decided to host an Open Forum at 4 pm that day. Staunch feminism running in my blood, I knew that this was something I couldn't skip. Moreover, being a former committee member, I knew that the open forum was going to be a cathartic experience for whoever chose to attend. I was eager to listen to stories, share some of my own, smile at the ones who needed reassurance, and also feel part of a group that had feelings that resonated with my own. At 3.40 pm, I sped my way into Room 407 on the fourth floor, where the forum was being held. I exchanged pleasantries with a few committee members. There was a palpable energy in the closed room where everyone could spend the next couple of hours proudly showcasing their feminist ideologies, gender identities, and sexual orientation without being judged for it. At 4 pm, the event commenced.

It opened with a beautiful rendition of poetry by a batchmate, followed by some more poetry read among the circle in the forum. It shifted to sharing short stories of everyone's personal lives. A short, smart, and sturdy girl started with hers where her mother had difficulty in understanding the concept of having a gender spectrum. She elaborated on how slowly and steadily she changed her mother's thoughts at the age of fifty. I joined the forum in clapping my hands for a thunderous applause. The next person moved out of their seat to address the gathering. At that moment, my friend who was just on her way back from my criminal law professor's cabin softly entered the room. I asked her if the professor was still at his cabin, and upon knowing that he was, I took her along and went to the fifth floor to meet him. I was hoping to slyly ask him how much he had marked us on our test that was conducted the previous day.

If there was one teacher whom I was absolutely awed by in my law school journey, that was him. At the age of over 55, the knowledge, memory, ability to freely engage with students, and friendly attitude in class were qualities I considered beyond appreciable. With a broad smile, he welcomed us into his cabin and asked us to sit so that he could check our test papers in our presence. We went over the right and wrong, I made a rough calculation in my head of how much I might score. He put the paper away by tucking it into the bundle. My friend and I casually began talking about academics, the legal career, the professor's own journey into academia, his children, our classmates, religion, and many more unrelated things we never planned to discuss. Time was flying and it was 6.15 pm when two other teachers entered the cabin. We realized that one of them taught our class Intellectual Property Rights Law so we were happy to see another familiar face in the cabin. The other was a man who seemed to be in his thirties, wearing a yellow shirt that was a contrasting yellow from my IPR teacher's dark yellow saree.

All three of them started talking rapidly in their regional language and also mocked and laughed at each other like 6th graders. My friend and I realized how close they all were-probably even closer than she and I. They started to discuss what they had for lunch that day. The sir in the yellow shirt declared that at noon, he had the tastiest meal of rice along with pappadam. Pappadam/papad is a crunchy side dish to a Kerala meal of rice and curries. My criminal law professor shot a statement that pappadam is best avoided these days as store-bought pappadam has chemicals in it to cut costs in production. The yellow-shirt teacher proudly said that his pappadams were not store-bought but were made by his mother-in-law. My criminal law teacher exclaimed and said that if that is the case then his mother-in-law should teach him to make pappadam so that he can make them regularly and bring him some. In reply, he said, "Women from good families do not make their husbands enter the kitchen, let alone cook". My friend and I exchanged rolled eyes and the look of disbelief in her eyes was mirrored in mine. He continued to say proudly that when he is at his wife's house, his mother-in-law treats him royally by making it loud and clear that he

cannot do kitchen work at her house. All three teachers happily laughed in agreement to it. The two of us sitting there did not know how to react. For the admiration that we have of them, we did not want to rob them of their fun and joy and bring in our philosophy, as much as we should have.

Clearly wanting to leave, the two of us rose from our chairs and asked our teacher for permission to leave. He then casually asked us why was it that we stayed back in campus post classes. We replied that we were attending an Open Forum where feminist issues were discussed. He asked us with almost a look of disbelief, "Are you all feminists?". My awe for him somewhere just fell. I replied by saying that we are feminists and the whole world is feminist in the 21st century. He asked me what feminism is and replied that it is equality of all genders, sexes, and sexual orientations. The teacher in the yellow shirt said that that was what feminism was, but is not anymore. He tried to indicate towards misuse of feminism. My friend and I retorted saying that just the same morning we had learned Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, taught by the same man standing in front of us. He had also made it clear to us that misuse of the Section exists. So I asked him if such misuse directly means that the Section in itself should be repealed. He could agree with me I could see. He asked me once again what feminism was and I gave the same reply. He gave me a look of approval saying that I was on the right track. For a man of his age, I could pardon the initial disapproval he gave me. He did not dismiss my explanation of my definition, so that was good. Nevertheless, my thoughts travelled as to how much concession I could give for a teacher of law, in not having a definite opinion on feminism. Law schools teach gender equality on a daily basis while discussing gender-minority laws, constitutional provisions, positive discrimination, reasonable classification, and many more. Despite the same, what we heard at the cabin, was difficult to take. We knew he was confused about the notion. Although he intends no harm, being confused is almost as bad as being against it, because silence helps nobody.

Surabhi

Written by Navya Benny
Working with Live Law

When she was in the 6th grade, her Science textbook had a lesson on symbiotic relationships. Such relations could exist where both species benefit out of the same, where one benefits and the other remains neutral, or the existence of one upon the other would prove to have an adverse effect upon the latter. Never had she imagined when her father informed her of her marriage being arranged with a young banker who, according to her father was ‘an intelligent young man’, and how she ‘should be glad that such a prestigious family’ had sought her out to be the bride to their son, that she would be entering into a commensal, (or maybe parasitic?) relation with her husband. The chanting of mantras by the priest reached her ears. “Your older brother mentioned that you dance”, her husband spoke to her for the first time, once they entered the privacy of their room, after the hullabaloo of the wedding and the reception that followed.

Her tired face cracked into a dazzling smile and her eyes shone as she nodded, “Oh yes! I took lessons in Bharathanatyam ever since I was four. It has always been my passion, and I have performed on various stages as well. I..”. “Stop, stop”, her husband interrupted her. “I just asked so I could let you know that you shouldn’t be harboring dreams of performing before a crowd or anyone else for that matter, again. It’s not something that is encouraged in our family for married women. You are the eldest daughter-in-law of this house and you have to uphold our values”.

The Chilankas she had safely packed into her suitcase now seemed like an added weight she had carried all the way from her home, just to be left rusting in their shared cupboard. Her son was now at the front, seated alongside the priest and repeating the mantras after him. Always the dutiful son he had been proud of.

She was reclining on the armchair in their room, gently rubbing the soft swell on her belly, lovingly. How she wished her little one would come soon. She couldn't wait to sing all the lullabies she had picked up from her mother. She would teach him or her to sing, as well.

“Her”... although she would love her baby unconditionally, she harboured a tiny hope in her heart that it would be a girl, a little ‘gudiya’, and maybe, just maybe, her Chilankas could finally be salvaged from rusting away.

“Oh! You're sitting here and daydreaming again, eh? Maa was looking for you. She has some treats apparently that she wants to give you to increase the chances of it being a boy. Now come on, we haven't got all day. We need you to eat healthy and stay fit for our warrior”, her husband told her as he extended his hand towards her with a small smile he always seemed to have etched on his face ever since he got the news of her pregnancy. Having mastered the art of masking her emotions by now, she took his hand with her own warm smile and walked beside her now attentive husband. She looked on as the funeral pyre was being readied. Somewhere inside, a female strangled voice was heard, “Papa..”, and completely broke down in uncontrollable sobs. God did decide to give her a little gudiya rani after all. Her two children were her pride and joy. She lived for them – to see their little laughs, to listen to their easy banter, to take part in their little frolicks...

“Ow! Ow!! Bhaiya pushed me”, came the little girl running inside the house. “No, I did not! She just fell. I had nothing to do with it!”

Just as she got ready to take the little crying girl in her arms and comfort her, her husband had swooped in and was already rocking the child in his arms, “Oh, my little Princess! Let me see that boo-boo. Ooh. That's quite a nasty one. Don't worry princess, Papa will clean you up and give you a little kissie on your boo-boo and you will feel better, alright?”

Also, Dev, apologize to your sister now, I saw you trip her, and what did I tell you about liars, Devansh?”, he asked gravely. “I’m sorry, Papa. I should not have done that. I’m sorry, Priya”, Dev said looking down guiltily. “Now that’s a good boy”, her husband said ruffling Dev’s hair. “Come, let’s both go get Priya cleaned up, and after that, the three of us can go for a movie”. “Yaay! You’re the BEST, Papa!” “We love you the MOST, Papa!”, cried the little children as they hung on tight to the man. “I love you two monkeys so much, too, the apples of my eye!”

And all the while, she remained rooted at her spot watching the scene with a bittersweet smile. As the funeral pyre was lit and she watched the flames rise, and the smoke go up, she felt herself floating away with the vapours from the pyre – faceless, nameless, formless ... as she had been for all this while. For what would be her identity, now that the person she had relied on as a safe haven and come to depend on her whole life, was no more?

A few weeks later, she felt it was finally time to come out of her shell. Granted, the giant tree under whose shade she had sheltered herself all these years, was no more. But maybe now she would learn to be more independent and rely upon herself? Yes, yes, she would do just that, she decided on an impulse. She had to find out the procedures and apply for the widow’s pension anyway. She soon found herself seated in front of a nice-looking young man, who greeted her with a warm smile. “Hello, I need you to tell me about the Widow Pension”. “Oh, no problem, Ma’am. Please take a seat”, the young fellow gestured to the empty seat in front of him. “Oh, thank you”, she said as she timidly sat down. “So, may I know your good name, Ma’am?”, the young man asked. Her name? What was her name? It seemed such a long time since anyone had called her by her name. To her children, she was always ‘Maa’, to her husband... well, her husband never really addressed her by her name. If at all a situation arose whereby he had to address her, he would just refer to her as ‘the Missus’.

Should she tell the young man that her name was ‘the Missus’? Or ‘Mrs. Satyajit’? Or as ‘Dev’s and Priya’s Mother’ as their school teachers once referred to her as. The young man seemed to be waiting for her answer with an expectant look on his face. “I..”, she started. “There you are, Maa. Priya told me you had come here. Maa, you should have just told me and I would have taken care of all this and if you did want to go yourself, I could have brought you here. Now go sit in the car, Maa. I’ll handle this, it’ll be much too difficult for you to handle it yourself since you are not aware about any of this. Go, and I’ll call you if anything comes up where you’re needed or you specifically need to listen to something”, her son Dev told her as he came in.

She slowly rose from her seat giving her son a slightly pained smile and took small steps towards the door.

Once she reached the car, she paused for a moment before pulling the door to sit inside. “Surabhi... my name is Surabhi”, she mumbled the name that now seemed foreign on her lips. Just then a wind blew, rustling the tiny wisps of hair that had escaped her tight bun. And at that moment, she felt in sync with the wind – faceless, formless, nameless... She closed her eyes and remembered the lines her grandmother had once told her,

“Pita Rakshathi Kaumare
Bharthru Rakshathi Yauvane
Putro Rakshathi Vardhaky
Na Sthree Swaathanthryam Arhathi”.

Hope - A masterpiece

Written by Prerna Roy
Department of Law, Calcutta University

*“Jeene ke liye socha hi nahi dard samhalne hoonge
Muskurayein to muskurane ke karz utarne honge”*

Someone tuned in to the radio, a distant voice trailed by. It was pale, gloomy, or just quiet and calm. The night sky was aglow with a pale crescent moon in infinity.

I was all alone in my room. I felt like I was suffocating. There was someone scrapping my heart from inside. There was a constant bang on my head. I could hear someone whisper inside my head, “Just do it”. I ran to my mother's room and opened her cupboard. I knew what I was searching for. I grabbed the red saree. I knew how to drape this 6 yards of sheer elegance. The saree hugged me effortlessly. I painted my pink tender lips with a red lipstick. I looked perfect just as perfect as Behram's last leaf masterpiece. I added a red bindi on my forehead. I was staring at my reflection in the mirror. It gave me some kind of a relief that in this whole house there is someone who knew me.

I kept staring at my reflection. I could not stop admiring every curve of my body just how poets admire their poetry. Words will fall short to explain how I felt at that very moment. I could feel the wind gushing inside me, applauding for my achievement.

Suddenly I could hear someone opening the door. The sound of someone inserting the key to the door was clearly audible. The fear was distinctly visible on my face. The terror was very evident, I knew the consequences.

I tried to rub off the lipstick and remove the saree. Probably I was too late. The doors opened wide. I could clearly sense the aftermath of my parents seeing their only son in an all-feminine attire - a saree.

I was always scolded for watching cooking shows rather than boxing championships. I was looked down upon when I told my parents that I want to join dance classes and not cricket classes.

When they entered the room I could feel the chills of terror wrapped around a blanket of anger and silence. It was no jigsaw puzzle for them to understand that I was dressing up as a "woman". I stood there ashamed of doing what made me happy. I was wrapped in a saree but still felt naked. I could not utter a word in my defence.

"YOU ARE A SHAME TO OUR FAMILY"

"HOW CAN A CHAKKA BE MY SON"

"MARAD HOKE AURAT JAISA SAREE PEHENKE LOG HASAYEGA"

"I am sorry" - I said in a trembling voice. I tried explaining them how I feel about my body how my mind feels caged how my body perceives things differently. All in vain. I wanted to cry, I wanted to shout but all I did was to stand still like a stone and get my body inked in bruises of black and blue.

I had injuries all over my face. Amidst all this, I lost my smile, my identity, myself. I was locked in my room for 3 days no food no water nothing but what was more painful was this double or maybe multifaced people of this society. They have so many different shades to the character and they portray specific characteristic traits in specific situations. They can change faces in seconds and hide under masks for years.

My parents kicked me out of their house when they knew I would not change. Trust me I tried, I tried my best but I felt trapped in that body. It felt like I was holding a cold gush of mist in my lungs for as long as possible. I could picture the cold permeating my entire being. I imagined my blood-slowing organs frosting over in delicate flowers.

I was all alone in this world of 7.9 billion people, 15 international and 10 Indian NGOs who apparently stood beside people like me, people from the queer community.

Today also I am all alone but now I am happy. I meet new faces every day and wish well for them. Next time when your car is waiting in the signal your eyes might meet mine when I knock into your car window and say *"AE BABU DE NA, BHAGWAN TERA BHALA KAREGA"*. The car suddenly stopped with a jerk. Amrita dozed off while coming back from the airport. She woke up due to the sudden tug. She was sweating heavily might have seen some bad dream.

Amrita was returning from Bombay where she was recently crowned the Miss Transqueen of India. She will now represent India in the Miss International Queen. She was thinking about her victory, her struggles, rejections, and acceptance when she heard someone in a red saree coming towards her car clapping and saying "Ae Babu Dae Na"
The car started moving. Their eyes met. So similar and yet so different. So many questions, hopes, desires all went unaddressed. The driver switched on the radio and it started playing,
"Tere masum sawaloon se pareshaan hoon main, hairan hoon main"

Everyone should win or at least get a chance to win. People amidst all horizons, who were born on their first day years ago or who realized their true selves much later. Victory for one doesn't essentially mean defeat for others, sometimes the achievement is for all.
So whenever we remove our glasses in an attempt to clean it we hope to see a better clearer world where the hope of victory exists in all beings clinging on to them just like a sun-dried maple leaf which hangs to the branches. A fragile connection but it stays.

Stars fell apart

● ————— Written by Shivam Verma
Student, Indraprastha University, New Delhi

It's been 3 years holding a void in my heart, maybe that shallowness and void are going to hurt forever but it is said that time heals every pain, but what if it hurts to leave a light on for nobody. Every night I still have panic attacks, the sky that I always looked at with bright twinkling stars is all dull and black which haunts me with tears in my eyes and pain in my chest. I close my eyes to feel better but it makes me vulnerable and worse to see you in my dreams if this is the only place, I could see you, I would sleep forever and I wish if there is life after death, I will love you till eternity. People say that everything happens for a reason, few things in life are unseen that's why we close our eyes, if I would have foreseen that coming, I would ask for my life because you were the most precious and beautiful thing that I could ever ask for. I read somewhere that only love and death will change all things, I never understood the gravity of this line till I fall in love and got separated for life. I always wonder how life works, the person you spend your daily life with, and, just within the snap of a finger, you see them vanish into thin air. What happened to her (Rashmi), was I responsible for her death, was I not capable to protect her, maybe by writing it down I could get the answer that I want to dig out.

In her memories, I just want to say in some world we will meet again where even death cannot separate us. - Manik

Chapter 1

I was walking down the road; I heard a voice coming out of an arena word sounded like some magic coming out of that arena. I stopped there as if a part of me I've never seen before got incited. I went inside the arena and there was she standing in the middle singing in a monotonous way, listening to her voice it felt as if I found lost pieces of my soul.

I sat there in the corner and watched her sing, could see her hairs coming across her face as if they were protecting her from an evil eye. I asked the manager about the event and he replied that it will be held for another week. I jotted the timing of the event and I took the road back to my hostel thinking on the way about her, imagining her in my life and questions running down my head, whether I could make a move to initiate a conversation, time passed in seconds thinking about her and I reached my station. This was a very different feeling; music has always been a very precious part of my life, seeing her singing I couldn't ask for more, she looked as if I spiritually made her come that day. I went back to my room and took a short nap and then went out with my friends to a nearby chai shop but I was all thinking about her every moment. It was late at night I knew I had to be there before time, I took off and went to my room checking every clothes that possibly could go wrong and after juggling with my inferiority complex to look good. I took a deep breath to control my overthinking and went to sleep.

Chapter 2

I woke up the next morning and heard the rain tapping my room window as if nature was my alarm for that day. I opened my window it was such a pleasant morning but asking god immediately why it has to rain today only but I knew I knew that there will be clear skies after pouring rain. I went for a shower and put the best of me out in front of the mirror. I gazed out of the window and the rain had stopped as if God wanted it to happen my way. I went out of my hostel and there was the petrichor that felt so good and positive. I started believing that these all were omens and the universe is behind my back. I took my bike and took the street to north A- 23 road and after 15 minutes of driving, I reached the arena. I entered the orchard birds of strings and took a seat in the corner. I sat there just like a kid waiting for the show to begin and there comes the manager, sir I am sorry to say this but the event is canceled and the show won't be held anymore by the singer Rashmi. Sorry I didn't hear you!! Sir the show is canceled. I could understand what does it mean but I was like why, what happened.

The lead singer has taken off we won't be organizing till she comes back but we do have night shows by another band. The manager took off and I said how hurtful it is when you thought something to be there and it just ends even before starting. I didn't want to leave that arena so I sat there for a couple of minutes and I decided to go back. It was a kind of feeling that you met someone you liked that person and you wanted to know more but things don't go that way. I took my bike and went back to the hostel.

Chapter 3

Days passed I still couldn't get over so I decided to move on by thinking about it a good night. It was the summer break and my friends decided to go for a trek in Bir Billing. We decided to go and leave for the adventure in 2 days. The day came and we left for 10 day's journey from New Delhi. I was pretty excited about activities like paragliding from a sleepy little town to enjoy the soul-stirring views of the sunset. After the overnight journey, we all reached Bir in the morning. After exploring the local markets and the town we headed to trek for Billing. We finally reached the destination after getting stumped by the roaring waterfall to the beautiful sunset. There was the best night of my life, me and my friends having dinner alongside a bonfire. I heard a similar monotonous voice coming from a distance as if the voice of nature was calling me. I followed the voice maybe I knew who it was but just wanted to believe my eyes and there was she holding a ukulele sitting in front of my eyes, I was beckoned with that sort of magnetic pull to walk deeper and deeper into her beauty. She came along with her group of friends and I asked one of her friends to join and she nodded. In a couple of minutes, my friends came over and we all over were flawed by her magical voice.

She asked anyone to join her, here comes my friend Anshumaan, Manik sings well! I heard her saying my name for the first time, Manik you want the instrument, or do you want me to play the chorus? I said yes and thinking in my head about what song should I sing and I looked at the view and how perfect it was and I did not even think twice and I started the song,

I found a love for me,
Oh, darling, just dive right in follow my lead
Well I found a girl, beautiful and sweet
Oh, I never knew you were someone waiting for me!!

I looked at her I saw her smiling and the time passed by exchanging the soulful vibes. We went to our respective camps for a nap, though I knew how can I sleep so I went out for a walk. I sat under the sky and looked at the stars and someone asked me do u have a lighter, I turned back and I stood straight and without saying anything I started searching for a lighter and I gave it to her (Rashmi). She lighted her cig and gave back the lighter. You sang well Rashmi, your voice is soulful, I said to her. So do you Manik. We chatted for a good hour then she asks me do u want to go for a walk? I excitedly said yes! The night was more alive because of her and looked up and said in my mind we are both under the same starry sky, where I once thought you were just a good one-day dream to forget.

Chapter 4

After a few minutes of walk, we exchanged a lot about ourselves and cracked a few jokes as if we had both known each other for so long. I was never a stable guy, I would always look for happiness or that void inside me was looking for something meaningful. I was glad that I had three more days so that I can be around her. The next morning we woke up we had plans like a treasure hunt and a few more games. We were divided into teams consisting of two members each. I do want to get paired with Rashmi, so I took the step ahead and went to her to ask if she wanted to pair with me and she said yes in a giggly way putting various thoughts in my mind. Time passed and we all got tired so went to our camps for rest and after a short nap of an hour or two, we decided to cook together. I was with my group and she was with her but we looked out for each other, eyes looking for each other silently and I started reading her eyes.

After we were finished with everything, I get a call from her up for a walk? I just took off towards her camp waiting for her to come. We started walking and talking about our lives and how naught I am and she says I am no less, she suddenly pushes me to the ground, I didn't see that coming I stood up to chase her and finally caught her. We sat side by side facing the valley and looking at the view. I looked at her and brought our hands close to each other, I held her for the first time and it felt so precious and, in that excitement, I expressed my feelings to her that I wish to hold her hand till the dawn of my life. She smiled and giggled again and said nothing but slowly rested her head on my shoulders. I looked in her eyes closed, as she had much to say but she hides it all behind her glittering face. We were two strangers and how things escalated too fast I had no answers by then. We spent more few minutes sitting together in silence and we looked at each other staring into each other eye's there was our first kiss that bound two souls in a second. I wanted to make this night more special for her I had a ring on my finger that brings good luck and I wanted to give it to her. A night with the valley in front and a sky filled with bright stars. I took the ring off my finger and in that hesitation, it fell. She stood up to pick and I went to follow her she looked behind me and as if she was about to say something and I saw next rather I close my eyes than seeing her tumbling and I saw her there slipping In front of my eyes into the valley, hearing her screaming. I lost my feet under the ground I didn't know what happened, I panicking ran to Call for help.

After waiting for an hour, I came to know that I had lost her. I pray I could hold her and never let her go. I wanted to speak my story about I saw you and I wanted to know her story. It was the first and the last when we closed our eyes for our final kiss, and then I am alive but still, I breathed my last with her. I still pray in my head wishing that I were dead: but then I get scared thinking, "what if you aren't there on the other side"

We, the hypocrites

● ————— Written by Leelavathi P.
Graduate, School of Excellence in Law,
The Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University, Chennai

We Indians, love complaining. We love it so much so that it has become a habit, a habit so common that we don't find it unusual at all. From young age, I've noticed that wherever middle-aged aunts gathered they gossiped and discussed each other households' affairs; while uncles held long discourses on state of affairs of the country with great passion. They'd start off with simple hello and end up lamenting the poor state of economy or governance. My dad was a vehement and active member of one such great debate society that gathered in our small portico everyday to thrash the government, political parties, institutions, and the social systems. Though I didn't understand much of what they spoke then, one thing was beyond question. The government is the worst establishment ever. Except for the government itself, almost everybody had a good idea on how effectively should the society be governed. The law and justice system were also not spared less. Laws are often loathed for the many loopholes drilled in it, through which the affluent and influential people slip through while it churns out petty criminals and common people with their iron fists. These ideas though not properly understood then, influenced my formative stage so much that I was soon set on changing laws to create a better world. I decided I could do it only through learning law and pursued in the graduation. Two years into law schools then I realised there really aren't many loopholes in the law. Those are valid grounds provided in our statute books to ensure that no innocent is punished. As the popular adage goes, "A thousand criminals may escape but not one innocent should be punished." The legal maxim, *Summum Jus Summa Injuria* also conveys the same meaning that the extreme justice is extreme injustice. However, someone should be responsible for all this bad state. If the institutions are right and just, then it's the people, those with the authority and money who bend the laws to suit their fancies.

Then suddenly one day something happened that questioned my perspective. My dad was driving me home from railway station when a police officer stopped us and demanded why my dad isn't wearing a helmet. My dad pulled out his office identity card and displayed it to him. The police officer mumbled something under his breath but let us pass. This small act made me reflect on all those times when I and my friends tried to escape the rigid scrutiny of rules. From running red lights, driving without licenses to crossing queues. We've all done it. We've all bent the rules to the extent of our strength and capacity. This is also the reason why many revolutions have failed to stay true to their goals. People, regardless of their station, are always on the lookout for the easy way, the profitable way. Passing the blame on institutions, governments or on powerful people doesn't absolve us of our responsibility. After all, what are institutions but us.

Take care of yourself

Written by *Lakshika Ratnu*
Student, NMIMS Mumbai

“Mental Health”, we have heard and read a lot of stories, poems, articles on it.

Unfortunately, our generation grew up from saving our lives and thoughts in "saved posts" on Instagram to venting out to not our parents, but diaries. We sure did a blunder understanding the difference between living and non-living.

But guess what? When it happens to all, it happens to none. So just remind yourself that you're not alone, and you never will be. All the smiling faces around you are struggling to not crumble. For some, life is one-sided love, a broken family, low salary, complexes, bad friendships, and for some, it is their thoughts. The thing YOU should never forget is, to not give up when it's the best option you see when living is no more as fun as you thought it would be, as a child, when you feel like a failure with an 85% against a 95%, don't give up.

Seeing you laugh, breathe, live, gives someone what this world thrives on, hope. It will never matter where you are, but how you feel. Next time you find yourself sitting in a closed room, think about the happiness you felt when you looked out of the window, the wind rushed and that smile, gosh, feel it.

Ironically, your greatest battle will be with yourself and it will be up to you, either to let yourself down or emerge victorious. The judge, the audience, the participant in the end, all will reside within one, You. The end of us, will not be an end of the misery we always wanted, but a beginning of one for a lot more.

You need to pass that very moment where you find yourself so alone and yet surrounded by just negative thoughts when breathing no longer is soothing but noisy. Let go of that, and choose happiness and positivity over them, every single time. Don't stop choosing them until they're the only option you are left with. It will get difficult, but the view from the top will be the most beautiful one,

and at the end of the day, it will all be worth it.

I am not asking you to get drenched in the rain to enjoy the sunshine but just believe, the grey clouds lashed down not only on you but eventually, you will get through this too.

So, I need you to go, stand in front of the mirror and congratulate yourself, for surviving another virtual day successfully and not giving up. I hope this pandemic taught us a lot of things to be grateful for. After all, We ARE the generation so we MAKE it what it needs to be.

Mushrooming unicorns: Should you also jump on the entrepreneurial bandwagon?

Written by Suraj TN
Student, Faculty of Law, SRMIST Chennai

Apart from this, several external factors such as increased government involvement with schemes have encouraged people to come up with innovative ideas. Several leading international Venture Capital firms have also chipped in with massive investments into Indian startups.

This startup boom in the country will keep getting bigger and bigger with increased support from the government and investments from big players in the field of venture capitalism. Even shows such as “Shark Tank India” which took the country by storm (and also became famous for the memes made on it) will certainly help in kindling the fire of entrepreneurship within the minds of people.

Now, this begs another question- should you also consider becoming an entrepreneur? Well, to answer this question, one must first look at what a person requires to be a successful entrepreneur. No doubt one must be passionate and hardworking. No doubt one must also have an idea which can successfully be turned into a startup that can generate profits. However, a perusal of the most commonly displayed characteristics by some of India’s most enterprising and successful entrepreneurs indicates that there are additional traits that are necessary to be successful in this space. One must be proactive. Not only that, it is necessary to keep challenging the status quo, i.e., to keep questioning things. Not questioning things restricts the scope for innovation, thereby restricting the chances to float a successful startup. Another very important trait that is visible in successful entrepreneurs is that one must be ready to work in an atmosphere that might not be experienced before. An individual must be ready to enter uncharted territory, for failing to do so might eventually lead to all previous work being undone. Failure must not deter the person either as it is inevitable. No doubt all of this needs incredible courage and character.

Lastly, one thing that star entrepreneurs will tell you is that one must accept that certain things will not make successful startups. Aspiring entrepreneurs must realise that whatever they are passionate about, might sometimes not be ideal to base a startup on. For example, if a person is extremely interested in designing handbags, they might be better off by not starting a handbag startup as there are thousands of others already in the market. An entrepreneur will be extremely successful even in such a competitive space if they have a “Unique Selling Proposition”, but in the absence of one, it is better to look at other alternatives in which they are equally passionate. Therefore, every idea will not be successful without a Unique Selling Proposition. This is, quite unfortunately, not realized by many until it is too late. Similarly, there might be instances where what a person is interested in might not be demanded by the general public. What is the point in starting a business on something that the public does not even want? Hence, entrepreneurs must realise that everything will not make a successful startup.

IF A PERSON WANTS TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR BUT DOES NOT HAVE AN IDEA?

Finding the right idea for a startup is closely related to accepting that not every idea will be successful. A person has to come up with an idea for which people are willing to pay money. How is this possible? This is possible by identifying a solution for a problem. A.K.A. known as a “pain point”, that people are facing.

If an aspiring entrepreneur needs an idea for a startup, then they should identify a problem or a pain point that people are facing, and must also identify a solution for the same. People must also be willing to pay for the solution. For example, one of the world’s most successful startups, Amazon, solves a major problem that people are facing. It solves the problem/ pain point of having to go outside to buy things. Amazon provides a solution for this by providing people with an interface from which they can directly purchase the same products that they get offline, from the comfort of their homes.

Hence, if you aspire to be an entrepreneur and do not have an idea, then find a pain point and a solution for it. This solution will be your idea.

Again, make sure that there are little to no people solving the same problem. It is also important that even after conceiving an idea, you must keep questioning things so that you can chisel your idea in such a manner that it becomes much more valuable, and that you can also get new ideas in the process.

FUNDING?

This is the tricky part. Many people who have brilliant ideas do not have access to funds. This makes it impossible for them to float a startup. It is important to note that once a startup does start raking in numbers, it can approach investors for funding. For the initial stage, people need to rely on their funds to get going. Such persons can either save some money and float their startup or approach incubators. However, the incubators must not get a huge stake in the equity of the company in exchange for the amount of money that they give. This is to ensure that when funds are required in the future, it does not get difficult to cede equity to the potential investors. In addition, there are several schemes for startup funding. Some are being run by the union government, while some are being run by the state governments.

SHOULD YOU JUMP ON THE BANDWAGON??

If you have an idea if you are passionate about making a positive change in the society by taking risks, and if you are ready to hustle even when things do not seem to be going your way, then why not? However, you must not do it simply because many others are doing it. Just because entrepreneurship is trending and being an entrepreneur makes one look cooler, you must not jump on the bandwagon. If you have a passion for your idea and the field in which you want to start a startup, then do it. If not, then it is better to stay away, as it will eventually become a chore. Also, make sure that you have a good team, and if you do not have a good team with good chemistry, then your startup can go the Bharatpe route.

However, there is no denying that the time is ripe for entrepreneurship. Venture Capitalists are ready to invest and the outlook regarding floating startups that work on innovative ideas has never been more positive. Therefore, if one is ready to take the plunge, then they surely should, as in entrepreneurship, the sky is the limit.

Ethical issues encountered by forensic psychologist in modern era

Written by *Raunak Shukla*
Student, Amity University, Mumbai

Forensic scientist plays an important role in criminal justice system. Their major job is to link science with law in order to establish a fact or truth. But what is the duty of forensic scientist and what values they need to uphold while giving their professional opinion is what determines the effectiveness of their profession. Courts of law heavily rely upon the opinion of forensic psychologist and other forensic scientist when they are reaching to a conclusion and hence it becomes quintessential to make sure that all the ethical standards are adhered to in strictest possible manner. It is very important to follow ethical behaviour in any profession especially in Forensic science because it helps the judge to identify the real truth and do justice. Thus, it is quite possible that the forensic scientist or psychologist try to abuse his knowledge in favour of one party and sway away with the real truth. This is where ethics have a huge role to play. There are number of ethical issues that a forensic psychologist face in his daily professional work. He or she not only has to deal with issues pertaining to the capacity of the accused who is being put to trial, but also to make sure that there is no discrimination or any personal feeling getting attached. Here are some of the ethical issues that every forensic expert has to face while dealing with multitude of clients.

1) Wrong professional credentials – Many a times educational degree of forensic psychologist is misrepresented, such as quoting yourself a Ph.D. when in fact you are still completing your studies. Some psychologist quote wrong work experience which tends to misguide the person who needs to form an informed decision on the basis of what he or she says. This happens when a psychologist tries to create a delusional environment in which he is trying to glorify his work rather than being practice and sticking to his task.

Since these issues are generally overlooked offenders often are not punished and thus lead to unethical practice which must be discouraged.

2) Contrast in Interpretation and testimony in person – Another ethical dilemma that forensic psychologist face is not able to back their analytical data with what they have testified in an investigative environment. These forensic psychologists sometimes include their biases and use very scientific words which become very easy to misinterpret in a court of law. This is the reason why many a times courts are not bound to fully rely on forensic experts especially forensic psychologist because somewhere down the line they have their own personal bias which tend to hinder the entire testimony.

3) Conflict of Interest – After all professionals are human beings who have their own political, social and financial interest attached to every work they perform. In such a case many a times forensic psychologist does not withdraw and move ahead with their job which is completely unethical. Personal interest does not always seem to be harmful but in cases where stakes are high even a small likelihood of bias or personal interest can hamper the whole opinion of a professional.

4) Disclosing all the sources – Psychologist while formulating their opinion must disclose their sources It is important because it helps the person understands how the professional reached to its conclusions. Many a times opinions of the Forensic are not documented with authentic sources which puts the whole inference in doubt. By not coming out with full disclosure you are giving an impression about favoring any single person when in fact you had no intention to do that.

6) Financial Gain attached – The issue of payment is the most contested and most debatable issue. Sometimes psychologist receive contingency fee which is very unethical and must be stopped. This may lead to compromising the honesty of the psychologist. The payment which one receives must be in the form of retainer fee. In many court cases, lawyers use this tactic in order to question the credibility of the forensic psychologist opinion which leads to a botched-up case. Thus it is advisable to keep the money at bay and at an arm's length that to.

7) Being objective – Many a times forensic psychologist's opinion lack objectivity which doubt puts their judgement in doubt. In a court of law sometimes a witness's statement can be the deciding factor and thus in medical examination cases where opinion of forensic expert is called in, it is expected that he or she would be neutral and not peruse their own interest.

Conclusion

Forensic experts have the power to influence courts of law because of their sheer knowledge. It is very important for all the forensic psychologist to not exploit their clients and the ones who are given to them under their supervision. In some case, forensic psychologist are important players when it comes to protecting their clients from unwarranted slanders and criticism. They are the ones who must make sure that their clients have full and informed consent when it comes to testifying in the court of law. Confidentiality is the backbone of every client and psychologist relationship. This confidentiality must be maintained at any cost, no matter how bad the situation becomes unless a competent authority forces them to break that confidential truth. Sometimes forensic psychologists are accused of putting genetic and racial symbols when it comes to their research and sample collection. This must be avoided at any cost. Thus, need of the hour is to have a well-defined professional code of conduct which must be enforced in its true spirit and which allows all the forensic psychologist to perform their duty with utmost care and diligence.

The deceit of political language

Written by *Ishita Singh*
Student, NALSAR University of Law

Orwell wrote in 1946, Political speech and writing is the defence of the indefensible. But, it is rather sad that it is true today too. How else will the officials justify Farmers' Protests named as a Khalistani agenda? For, if it were not for the convoluted debased English Language, an unequivocal and truthful explanation would have brought down several world governments. Today, when opposition attacks the government, the government objects by attacking their character rather than the argument. This essay will trace the debasement of politics and the English language in the contemporary world.

Politics because of language

Politics is for the elite. In the early times, Nobles and the Kings engaged themselves in politics supposedly for the people. Yet, the average person remained in the dark about the agendas that affect them the most. The times have changed, but has the situation for them changed? Politics still distances itself from the undistinguished people. Politics requires elitist education in elite languages such as English. But, these cultures do not take a bottom-up approach to the social situations they regulate. English is at the precipice of elitism, even when used to alienate people from their affairs. English elites legislated colonised countries such as India, South Korea, South Africa. They made exploitative laws for colonised people in intricate and absurd elitist language. Yet everyone wanted to learn these languages to grow close to their colonisers. The people who had the means to learn the language acquired it. While those who were not able to afford that continued to be mesmerised by it. This trend continues even today. If the legislative language is not complicated with redundant words, people will know about the exploitation. It is to quote how political personalities said on National television that the Farmers' Protests are due to the alleged misinformation amongst the farmers, not actual dissatisfaction.

Covert exploitation of citizens has increased from colonial times to the supposed democratisation. It is how Farmers' protests began. It is not just a manifestation of the resentment against the Bill, rather the deeply-embroiled feelings of contempt against the oppression of the capitalistic and profit-motivated figures for many years.

Largest Democracy

Contemporary manifestations of these phenomena are all around us if Orwell is not to object to the use of the word phenomena. It will be harder to point at political situations where the language is not for propagating these motives. The government passed the RTI Amendment Bill, 2020, as changes were 'necessary' to the supposedly pre-existing law. However, no one noted that these changes rendered the 2011 anti-corruption protests void, other than people well-versed with wordy absurdities. According to politicians, unnecessarily conscious and unnecessarily political youth mark the era. But these youth still miss out on the changes by legislatures in over-complicated fluff that hides its true intentions. It is what Orwell identified almost a century ago. It is the deliberate usage of unclear words to prevent any so-called backlash. CAA protests best exemplify it. Citizens protested because of the relatively explicit law - all religions other than Muslim will be considered citizens who came on or before 2014. It is not to argue that the protests against CAA are objectionable but why politicians use absurd language to continue their despotic rule. If the Data Protection Bill had directly given — the State would deem any data as critical and take complete control of it. And, what is critical, is decided by the government on no notified rounds. Then it is to question whether the process of passage of the Bill would have been that facile? Political writing in this way benefits the parties in condoning themselves and getting the public to atone them for their sins. Hence, addressing every protest is necessarily political. The governments, however, paint these peaceful protests as unnecessary because they demand accountability and clarity for wordy promises.

Are we democratic?

In the recent past, India has fallen way behind in being democratic. Yet, she masquerades herself as the largest democracy in the world. These figures continuously ignore any indexes or reports that reinforce reality. They are away from the public eye except for a few newspapers mentions for the elite few. Orwell exemplifies this in his book Nineteen eighty-four. It shows how crime, astrology, sports, and empty-headed news reports fill up the newspapers. He gave that the most dangerous regimes are not the overt dictatorial ones rather the supposed democratic ones that give citizens the illusion of freedom (Orwell). The injection of laws such as the Citizenship Amendment Bill, Draft IT rules, Data Protection Bill represent covert exploitation by wordy legislations. Criticisms by the newspapers and elite are not accessible to local members of the population due to illiteracy. And those who are literate are distracted by the deliberate diversions in the newspapers like empty-headed news etc.

Making peaceful protests unpeaceful

When politically-conscious go against exploitative laws and take the ground to protest, they are jailed, beaten up even by iron rods (For example - Shaheen Baugh). Peaceful protests turn unpeaceful by the interference of the State. These brutal interventions caused public unrest making protests which were non-violent to be unpeaceful. And now, the State justifies its brutality by blaming it on the violence. It is circular logic. The State creates chaos. It is analogous to the circular reasoning of Orwell of the drunkard. Except for the fact that blame here is on the State. The controversy of the Red fort incident portrays it. Farmers who participated in the incident were considered representative of the whole Farmers' protests. The farmers who were protesting peacefully for their rights were deemed awry and anti-national. Media propaganda is today at its highest that uses political language to confuse the public about the events. Adding a question mark in speculative articles absolves them of any legal onus. It is the root of increasing day-to-day intentional misinformation amongst the public that creates a lapse between the wrongdoings by the political figures and public awareness of these wrongdoings.

Conclusion

Political writing is to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable” (Orwell’s *Politics And The English Language* (1946)). This quote encapsulates the continuing devolution of the intention of political language. English is used to justify acts that would have been difficult without the absurdities of political writing. From farmer protests to data protection bills and others evidentiate the contemporary prevalence of this aspect. Language is degrading along with politics as a cause and an effect and vice-versa. Political gibberish colonises people, spreads misinformation in public about recent events, and overall helps escape liability of the morally reprehensible acts undertaken by politics and those associated with it. The contemporary examples justify Orwell’s observation of the debasement of language and politics and their relationship that is damaging society. Hence, there is an urgent need to recognise this phenomenon and make political figures accountable for promises and clear about legislations.

Challenges associated with live streaming of court proceeding

Written by *Deepika Dave*
Student, LLM, Veer Narmad South Gujarat University

With the growth of social media and smartphones, real-time streaming has become an alternative method of mass communication. This new medium is not only changing the way we receive information but also challenging conventional journalism through citizen journalism. Live streaming is a medium which allows anyone to be both a reporter and a broadcaster all at once. The benefits of live streaming extend beyond saving money and gaining popularity because it also serves as an accurate source of information for citizens allowing them to obtain facts without being influenced by vested interests.

Live streaming of Court proceedings is a new practice that has been adopted by some countries in the world. In a democracy, it may be viewed as one of many ways to enhance transparency and accountability in judicial processes. This is especially useful in cases where media conglomerates only provide limited access, such as presenting a one-sided view of a story. Live streaming eliminates this problem because it provides anyone with internet, full access to hearings and trials in real-time as they are happening. Although the overall purpose of live streaming or broadcasting court proceedings online is to improve the public's access to justice, it also raises potential threats to judicial independence and impartiality.

The public nature of these hearings may make judges hesitant to rule against law enforcement agencies or the general public for fear of retribution from them. Judges will not be able to freely oppose the government on live proceedings due to the risk of political ramifications, which might impede them from rendering fair and unbiased judgements. Judges acting in certain ways may gain popularity from the public, so they may sway their decisions

depending on if it is popular with the public or not. It may also encourage judges to give harsher sentences or otherwise influence their decision in order to appease public opinion

Judges may also be subjected to public scrutiny at all times and in their most private moments, judges might feel apprehensive about deciding cases in a way that would contradict popular opinion. They could be subjected to strict impartiality and independence standards. Another negative consequences of live streaming of court proceedings are that there would be less discretionary power for Judges during live broadcasting because they always have an audience in mind when making decisions. The only way for them not to show bias is by using opinions from experts instead of their own thoughts on the facts of each case. Discretionary power helps to ensure that justice is served according to what is deemed appropriate by a judge in a particular situation. The use of discretionary power in judicial decisions is a key part of how fair the courts are, as it allows judges to make rulings that best fit the situation presented in each case. Judges would feel hesitant in using the discretionary power during live broadcast of the case.

In conclusion, live streaming of court proceedings would have a profound impact on the independence and impartiality of judges. Judges are entrusted with immense powers and are an integral part of the justice system. The independence and impartiality of judges are crucial to preserving rule of law in any democracy, especially given the importance of their role in safeguarding rights of accused persons. Their perception by society is important for them to perform their role effectively; be it making judgments in cases or passing sentence on criminals convicted by courts. Live streaming of court proceedings can compromise the independence and impartiality of judges, and their views may get influenced due to public perception or political pressure.

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The Lost Stories
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