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LitScape

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

WORLD PEACE

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LITSCAPE

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LitScape

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

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Editors' Note

The second issue of LitScape pays homage to the courageous Malala Yousafzai on the account of her 20th birthday on the 12th of July, 2017, otherwise known as Malala Day. This issue is a repository of creative pieces contributed by students from various disciplines on the theme of world peace. Each article has portrayed an aspect of the complexities surrounding the notion of harmony.

The writers have used different forms such as poetry, commentary, epistles and photographs to express their views on peace. The poems feature tropes like imagery, metaphors and symbolism, the essay draws parallels between the abstract idea of peace the real life experiences of a particular community while the letter offers an alternative perspective to war and peace.

This issue also comprises a feature article that traces the journey of Malala Yousafzai from a suppressed Muslim girl under the Taliban regime to an assertive individual who has become a world renowned figure for trying to implement peace. LitScape chose this theme, keeping in mind its relevance in contemporary times and to create a forum where the youth can voice their opinions on the significance of peace in society.

**SHRUTI MISHRA
SHEELALIPI SAHANA
DIPSHIKHA SINHA**



Flowers and Thorns

Love is like a flower,
Which blossoms in the spring.
Like the rare thornbird,
Who sits among the thorns but
continues to sing.
It has no boundaries,
It cannot be controlled.
It is a mighty ocean,
In which we all have to roll.
Love is an infectious disease,
Spreading from person to person;
It is an epidemic
Causing hatred and treason.
Love blossoms everywhere,
In every corner of the world.
It is a part of the system
Of every living being— so I've been
told.
A mother loves her children,
And children their toys.
But what happens to this love,
When their lives are destroyed?
What happens when a meadow,
Is painted with blood.
When a mother sees her soldier,
Lying dead in the mud?
Why do we kill each other?
Why do we fight?
Is violence the only way
To do the wrong and the right?

As butchers hack at meat,
And chop it to pieces.
Humans kill their brothers,
And deepen the dreaded creases.
The earth is a sphere,
All places are bound.
But where is the place,
Where we agree on a common
ground?
Christ looks down on us,
And Buddha grieves;
Their beloved children,
Have become beastly thieves.
Thieves! Oh yes, and the cruelest
butchers,
Who steal and murder peace with
bullets.
Why can they not co-exist when
Even the Cullens could befriend the
Quiletes?
Can't we live together,
And not fight and kill?
For there is a thornbird who sings as
she dies,
And teaches us the skill
Of sacrifice of the highest order,
Of a living a life that has some
worth.
Oh God, show us the way,
To the peaceful place you called
earth.

Agrini Bhattacharya
1 BBAH D



A loud sound,
A few gunshots, one or two;
A cry. The pain of killing someone.
And then,
Then there were none.

A playful cheer turned to wail;
A fallen angel, a fallen child,
The streets, coloured red—
Stained with the love that bled.

Shattered glass glistened, as the sun, it shone—
Crystal blood, fallen souls,
The skies glowed red as dawn approached,
To pay tribute to the fallen soldiers.

Moonlight bled through frozen eyes,
For today, several had lost their lives,
A father lost a son, a wife her husband,
A child lost his father, a sister a brother.

For this day will be remembered;
The day innocence bowed down to agony—
The day hatred sold love for ruthless murder,
The day that will be etched in history, forever.

‘Twas early morn—
Dew drops gazed at the sun,
A few gunshots—
A painful wail, yet so frail.

Footsteps thumping, bleeding, on dry grass—
Peace, it was stolen;
And then,
Then there were none.

The souls that took their last breath,
Before the world taught them to walk.
The souls that forgot to live,
Before they ever learnt to love.
The souls that walked by borders with guns,
Before they saw their daughter's grin—
Don't let their lives go in vain,
Let us fight together, fight the pain.
Fight for peace, the answers lie within!

THEN THERE WERE NONE

SHWETA SUNIL
1 PSYH



Where Roses Bloom

BY MIRIKA RAYAPROLU

1 JOUH

Lilly, we are looking for a world
where little girls can stand in front of the
mirror
and cast bold gazes at the women staring
back at them.

We are searching for that world
where men and women don't need to
walk the streets with candles
melting and stinging their fingertips
to stand up for something
that means every breath to them.

Lilly, we are scanning every inch of this
planet
for a world,
where white roses can be planted
into every gun,
into every fingertip,
into every mouth.

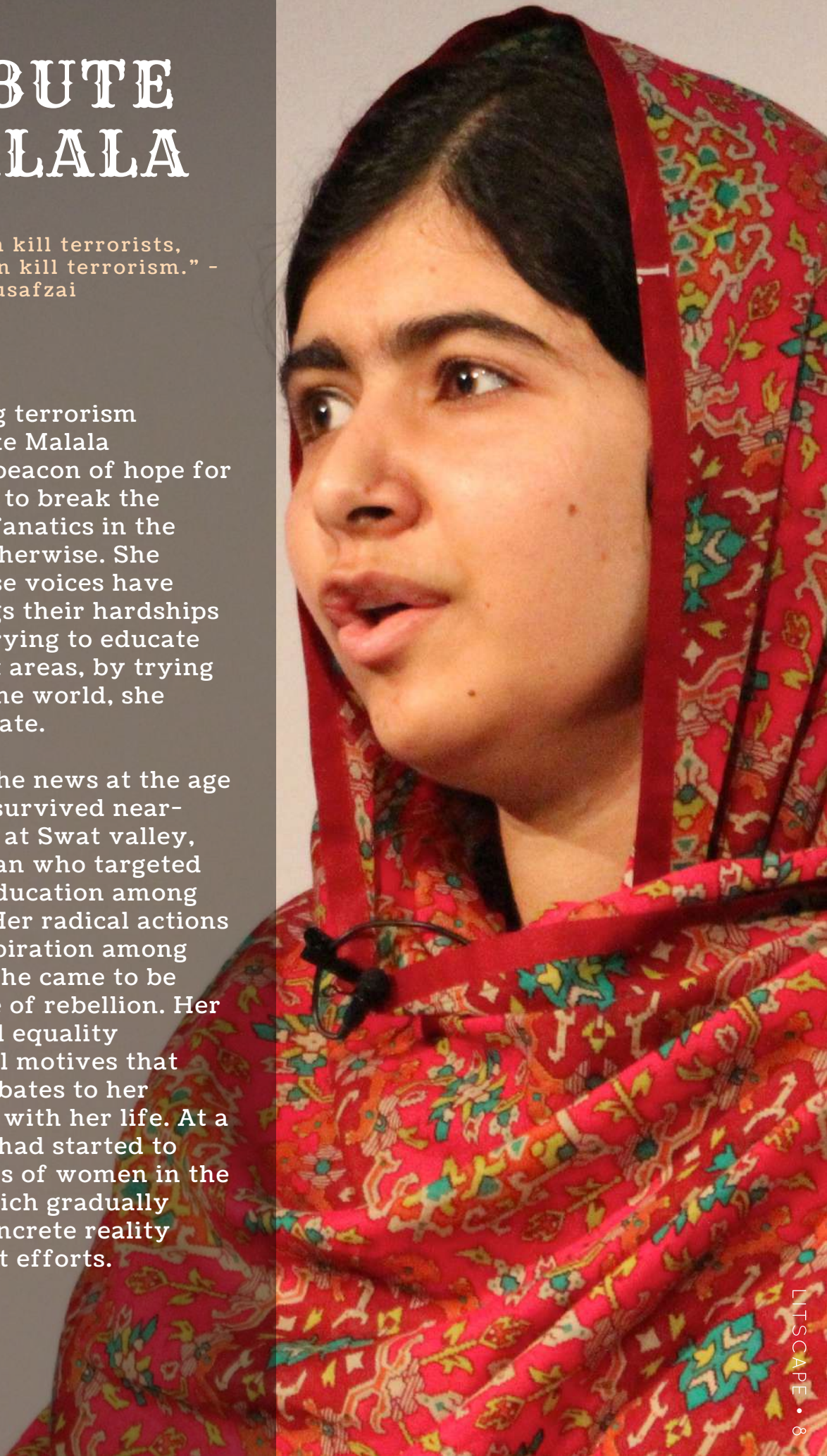
We are looking for that world
where love isn't expressed through
flowers or chocolates,
where love isn't expressed
over a glass of Chateau Lafite,
but where love is expressed through
poetry,
through smiles
and is seen deep in the hearts
of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders.
Where kindness is thrown around like
confetti
and where girls and boys can look at
doughnuts
as ecstasy and alacrity
and not as 50 push-ups and sit-ups.
Lilly,
Little do we know
that we need to stop looking for this world
where daisies and roses grow in the stead
of weeds
and spreading positivity isn't just a
metaphor.
Little do we know,
that we need to create this world.

A TRIBUTE TO MALALA

"With guns you can kill terrorists,
with education you can kill terrorism." -
Malala Yousafzai

In the wake of surging terrorism worldwide, an icon like Malala Yousafzai becomes a beacon of hope for the masses struggling to break the shackles imposed by fanatics in the name of religion or otherwise. She speaks for those whose voices have been stifled and brings their hardships to the forefront. By trying to educate young girls in conflict areas, by trying to instil harmony in the world, she becomes peace incarnate.

Yousafzai came into the news at the age of fifteen for having survived near-fatal gunshot wounds at Swat valley, Pakistan by the Taliban who targeted her for propagating education among the girls of the area. Her radical actions created a wave of inspiration among people worldwide as she came to be recognised as the face of rebellion. Her struggle for peace and equality transcended her social motives that went beyond mere debates to her fighting for the cause with her life. At a young age, Yousafzai had started to advocate for the rights of women in the field of education, which gradually materialised into a concrete reality through her persistent efforts.





Under the oppressive regime of the Taliban, ten-year-old Malala begins began to blog, in January 2009, for BBC Urdu, under the pen name of “Gul Makai”, providing details of the harsh realities of her life in Swat Valley. In October 2009, The New York Times released a small documentary, featuring her and her father, as they fought for girls’ education under such stressful circumstances.

For her dedication and perseverance, she was awarded the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize. On 12 July 2015, her 18th birthday, Yousafzai established a school in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, near the Syrian border, for refugees. The school, funded by the non-profit Malala Fund, offers education and training to girls aged 14 to 18 years. Yousafzai calls on world leaders to invest in “books, not bullets”. Every year, she celebrates her birthday, known as Malala Day, by performing acts of kindness; this year she spent it with refugee girls living in conflict areas in the Middle East. Seminars, conferences and other ceremonies were held across Pakistan wherein scholars participated to pay tribute to Malala.



A WAR FOUGHT IN SECRET

JAYADITYA VITTAL

The word “Peace”, especially in the context of today’s world, cannot be viewed in isolation from its binary cognate, war. For most of us, “War” conjures up images of pitched, conventional, battle. The Middle East, perhaps, bursting with dust storms that blow over millions of soldiers and civilians locked in explosive combat.

Someone paying attention closer home might think of the Taliban hiding out in mountain villages, or even, perhaps, of Maoist warfare in huge swathes of India. The historian remembers the sword-and-crossbow, and later, the

musket-and-cannon, determining the sway of one ruler or another; the fantasy enthusiast often does much the same, but with an army of ogres or a giant or two, for variety.

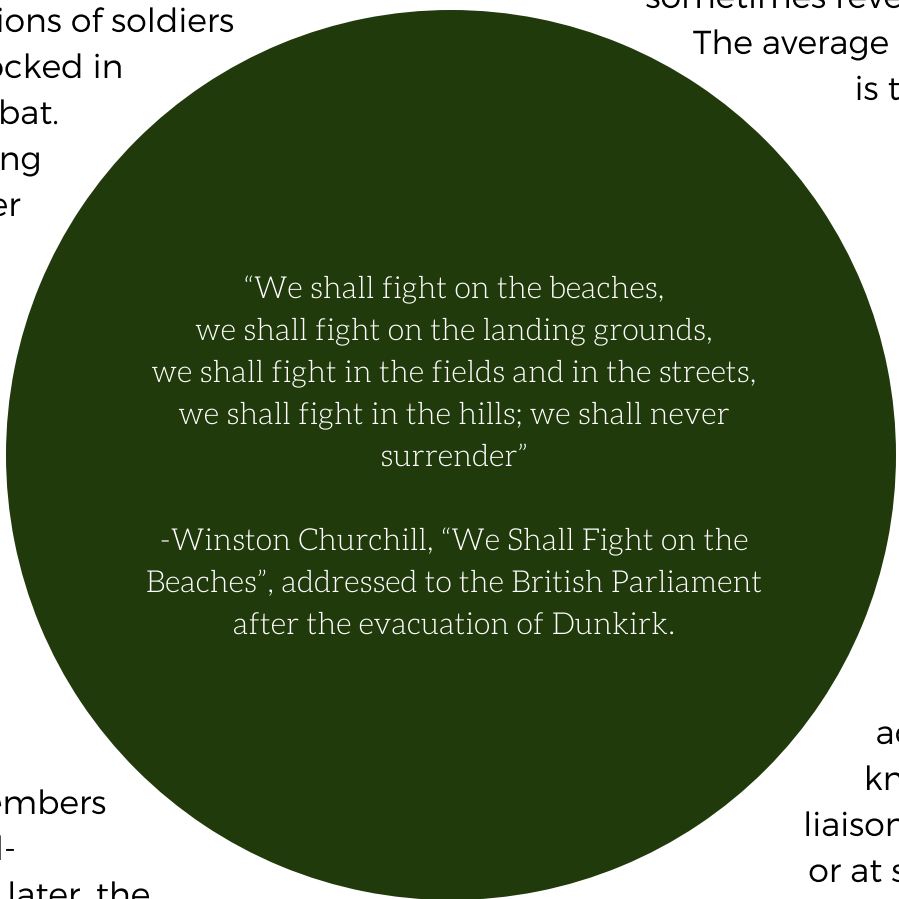
There is, however, a far more subversive battle going on, on the streets and at the traffic signals. It is a war of cultures, and those haplessly caught in its crossfire are often unaware of the fact that they are the recipients of ideological ballistics. India’s transgender community - commonly called the Hijra community - is undergoing a period of rapid change.

For the past two hundred years or so they have remained unique, secretive and rigidly traditional, and almost nothing has managed to dislodge them from the unenviable niche that they have carved for themselves as an oft-reviled, sometimes revered, subculture.

The average Hijra stereotype is the one that has been carved from people’s experience of kothis - uncastrated initiates— begging aggressively at traffic signals on trains and on the footpath.

The more adventurous soul knows them from liaisons at the brothel or at soliciting points, and a very small number know them as friends, employers, writers, or lovers. They are a full-fledged culture, with their own system of lineage, their own mythology, and their own history, both attested and apocryphal.

However, this entire narrative is threatened and in danger of extinction, because it is inextricably tied up with a history of sex-work and a culture that has potential— like most cultures— to become abusive and self-affirming. To say that Hijras have always engaged in



“We shall fight on the beaches,
we shall fight on the landing grounds,
we shall fight in the fields and in the streets,
we shall fight in the hills; we shall never
surrender”

-Winston Churchill, “We Shall Fight on the
Beaches”, addressed to the British Parliament
after the evacuation of Dunkirk.

sex-work is as unfair as saying that women have always been prostitutes; however, a disproportionate number of the community's individuals have partaken in the "oldest profession in the world". Song and dance, often considered just as bad as prostitution and often overlapping with it, have also been their traditional fortes.

In a startling hangover from colonial Victorianism, both governments and society continue to look down on sex workers, and many assume, unfairly, that the only way to "uplift" the community is to "save" it from prostitution. While most transgenders certainly would like to be uplifted, it may not be in quite the way that mainstream society expects.

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There is, however, a far more subversive battle going on, on the streets and at the traffic signals. It is a war of cultures, and those haplessly caught in its crossfire are often unaware of the fact that they are the recipients of ideological ballistics. India's transgender community - commonly called the Hijra community - is undergoing a period of rapid change. For the past two hundred years or so they have remained unique, secretive and rigidly traditional, and almost nothing has managed to dislodge them from the unenviable niche that they have carved for themselves as an oft-reviled, sometimes revered, subculture.

For the past two hundred years or so they have remained unique, secretive and rigidly traditional, and almost nothing has managed to dislodge them from the unenviable niche that they have carved for themselves as an oft-reviled, sometimes revered, subculture. The average Hijra stereotype is the one that has been carved from people's experience of kothis - uncastrated initiates— begging aggressively at traffic signals, on trains and on the footpath. The more adventurous soul knows them from liaisons at the brothel or at soliciting points, and a very small number know them as friends, employers, writers, or lovers. They are a full-fledged culture, with their own system of lineage, their own mythology, and their own history, both attested and apocryphal.

However, this entire narrative is threatened and in danger of extinction, because it is inextricably tied up with a history of sex-work and a culture that has potential— like most cultures— to become abusive and self-affirming. To say that Hijras have always engaged in sex-work is as unfair as saying that women have always been prostitutes; however, a disproportionate number of the community's individuals have partaken in the “oldest profession in the world”. Song and dance, often considered just as bad as prostitution and often overlapping with it, have also been their traditional fortes. In a startling hangover from colonial Victorianism, both governments and society continue to look down on sex workers, and many assume, unfairly, that the only way to “uplift” the community is to “save” it from prostitution. While most transgenders certainly would like to be uplifted, it may not be in quite the way that mainstream society expects.

Many do not want to leave prostitution; instead they should like for it to be legalized, and to have better facilities (and less discrimination). The people helping them - mostly governmental bodies, and the occasional NGO - tend to adopt a paternalistic attitude that presumes that any objections raised by the community itself are mere labour pains, on the way to rebirth.


This much-vaunted rebirth, however, is not one that is necessarily benevolent. It follows a trajectory that has overtaken subaltern cultures all over the world. In much the same way that the Native Americans had to redefine their

culture in the absence of the bison, the Hijra has begun to wonder about the future of sex-work. In the South of India, where the badhayee tradition (of calling transgenders home to bless the occasion with song and dance) was never very strong, a fine musical tradition has already died out. Entire households that were once repositories of classical music have now gone completely dry, and their members remember no trace of an artistic tradition. How long before the same happens to mythologies, and alternate narratives that stand the threat of losing their relevance? Allowing Hijra culture to survive is not necessarily equivalent to endorsing sex-work; it is simply a matter of respecting a culture founded on vastly different principles that, nonetheless, needs a toehold in the world beyond the hamams of the red-light areas.

A popular joke, (incorrectly) attributed to John Cleese, remarks (quite correctly) that “Greece is collapsing, the Iranians are getting aggressive, and Rome is in disarray. Welcome back to 430 BC”. Without trivializing the collective trauma of the rest of the world and its overt wars, then, let us refrain from driving our own subcultures to the barricades. Having resolved not to surrender, they are fighting in Parliament, the Courts, and Academia. How long will it be until successive philosophical Dunkirks take the battle to the beaches, and the hills, and the streets?

UNCANNY

SANJANA RADHAKRISHNA



We humans are uncanny souls indeed. Only in the wake of desolation do we realise that prayers are not tainted with religious atrocities. They are but ways to reconnect with kindred souls. No

whispered words will suffice for any massacre but we still join hands, bend our knees, and raise our heads. To pray. Be it a theist or an atheist, people suddenly forgo their grave beliefs and supplicate for peace. Why? Do we not remember then the biases that we so graciously uphold and the discrimination that we so righteously embrace? Ah, everything disappears under the gaze of a bigger threat, doesn't it? We suddenly realize that we're all humans and fraternity emerges through the gaps of our fingers as we hold onto brotherly love, but this solidarity is temporary. We simply shield our eyes from the things we do not wish to see. So now, let us take a moment and pray. Not for Beirut, not for Japan, not for Paris. Let's cry for the human inside of us, for he is shrinking. Let us pray, for he will disappear soon if this continues. He will drag away humanity without a sound into a world devoid of demolition, terror, and love. And we humans are uncanny souls indeed – we will just close our eyes and pretend we didn't see.

A LETTER TO WAR

**OVERLOOKED YET TANGIBLE NOTION
IN THE PAGES OF HISTORY BOOKS AND
HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS**

14/07/17

War

Whoever has the most money,
Whoever has the greatest need for money,
Insecure regimes, everywhere and anywhere

Subject: a proclamation, a realization, an apology

Dear war,

We hate all this noise, it is blinding. We hate all the bigotry, it is deafening. We hate all this propaganda, it is very disturbing. We hate all these deaths, they are very inconvenient. Most of all, we hate all your lies. You are a monster that destroys everything in its path without a second thought, killing children, killing dreams, destroying homes... and I can go on and on the way CNN, the greatest entertainer of our times does, without making a valid point. But I would like to praise you today through this letter, rather than try to convince you (in vain) how awful you are.

The human race can be very frustrating at times. All of humankind is against you and yet, it not only fosters but celebrates your continued existence. You have always been a need and you are after all, very good for the economy, not to mention the entertainment industry. You probably already know that entire governments and MNC's owe you almost all their fortune. However, I like to think that all of mankind owes you its legacy. You are an important part of their evolution. Though humans are flawed, they are brilliant. To achieve perfection, self-destruction is vital and only when they reach the brink of oblivion will they advance and emerge renewed. That being said, I hope that they don't take things too far. But as the Cold War showed us, they do have the sense to realize when things do go too far. So you see, you in fact facilitate logic and reason. I believe the moment when Kennedy and Khrushchev decided to not use arms was not only important for human evolution but also my own evolution. Of course they fought many other smaller wars to vent out their anger and frustration but at least the world was spared another world war and a possible post nuclear-war apocalyptic world.

At last, I realise that in my end will be my beginning and I owe that to you. Thus, I would also like to apologise to you for allowing history to judge you so harshly. However, to be honest, it has judged me too. I hope we can revisit our respective positions in the new world order that will soon come to pass and get ready for the future that shall bring some expected surprises.

Yours sincerely,
Peace

P.S. I urge you to keep religion and capitalism close by; they are good friends.

- Ayushi Goel



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2. Uncanny

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3. Malala Yousafzai (Contents Page)

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4. A Tribute to Malala

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