

PROFUSE

ISSUE 5, FEBRUARY 2020

PINNACLE



A COLLECTANEA BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES



PROFUSE PINNACLE

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EDITORIAL

They are reborn into the light and seek nothing less than to conquer the loftiest of peaks. The journey thus far has been a long and winding one, equally exhilarating and treacherous, and it is time for its much-awaited culmination. Eyes fixed on the summit, they wait with bated breath for the fog to clear.

The literary society of the Department of Professional Studies, PROFUSE, is proud to present the fifth edition of its annual collectanea. Spurred on by the breath of new life, these pages are a reflection of our diverse ideas, emotions, and opinions, and express our willingness to strive for greatness.

"PROFUSE" is an amalgamation of "pro", both short for "professional" and a prefix to express favour or support, and "fuse", the coming together of distinct elements to spawn a whole greater than the sum of its parts. The word itself conveys the desire to thrive amidst a cornucopia of enriching experiences, and for an existence brimming with life. True to its name, the PROFUSE team and the fruit of our labour – the collectanea – are both forums for a vibrant and unapologetic celebration of a multitude of voices that ultimately sing in unison.

Stories of unparalleled greatness have always shaped the ideals of power and success in society, and have in turn been moulded by the values that we hold in high regard. With the theme of our fifth edition, "Pinnacle", we invite you to join us at the vantage point and take a closer look into the makings of an epitome.

As we revel in the glory of the pinnacle, we present to you – our brainchild, our muse –
PROFUSE.

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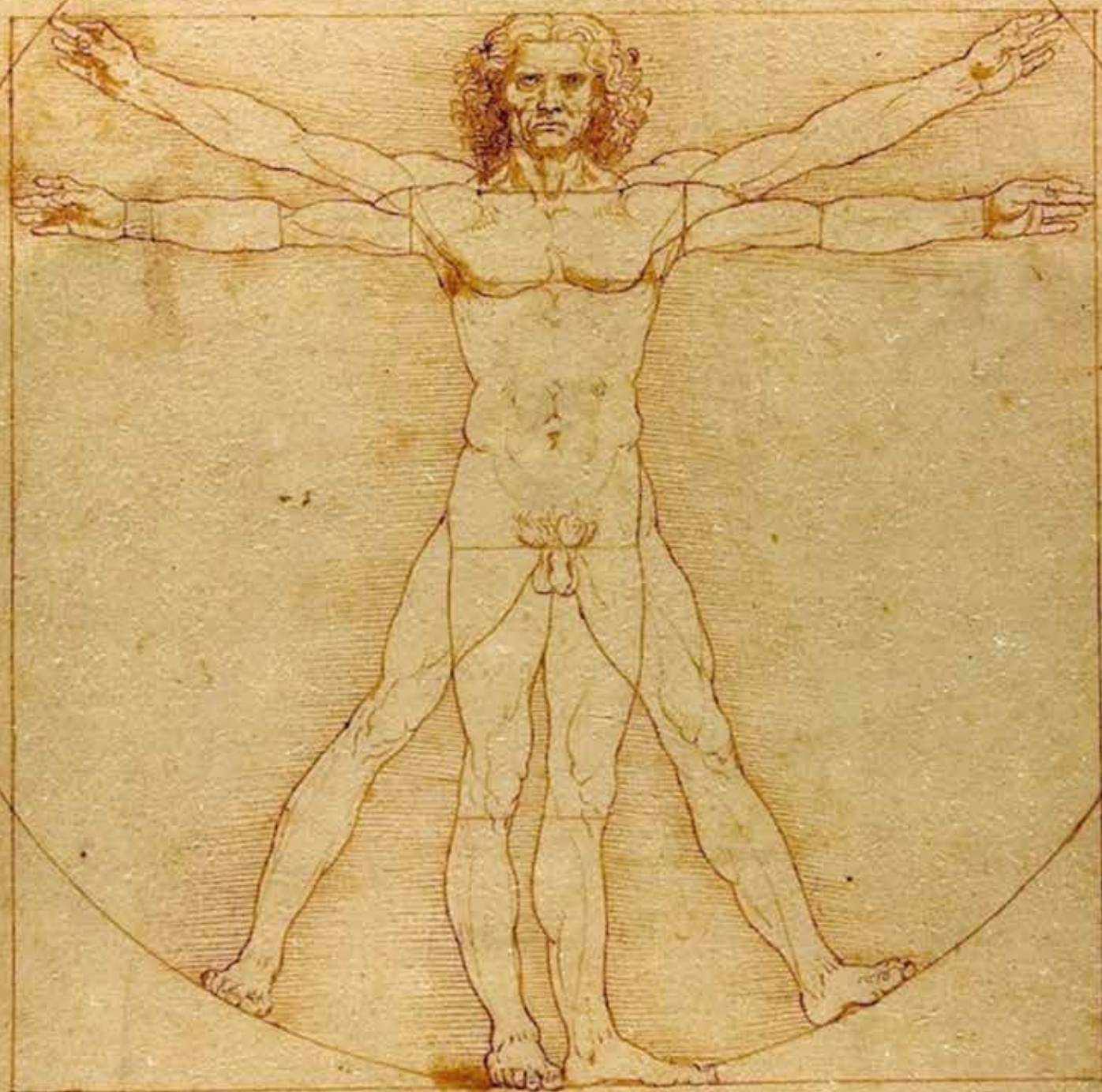
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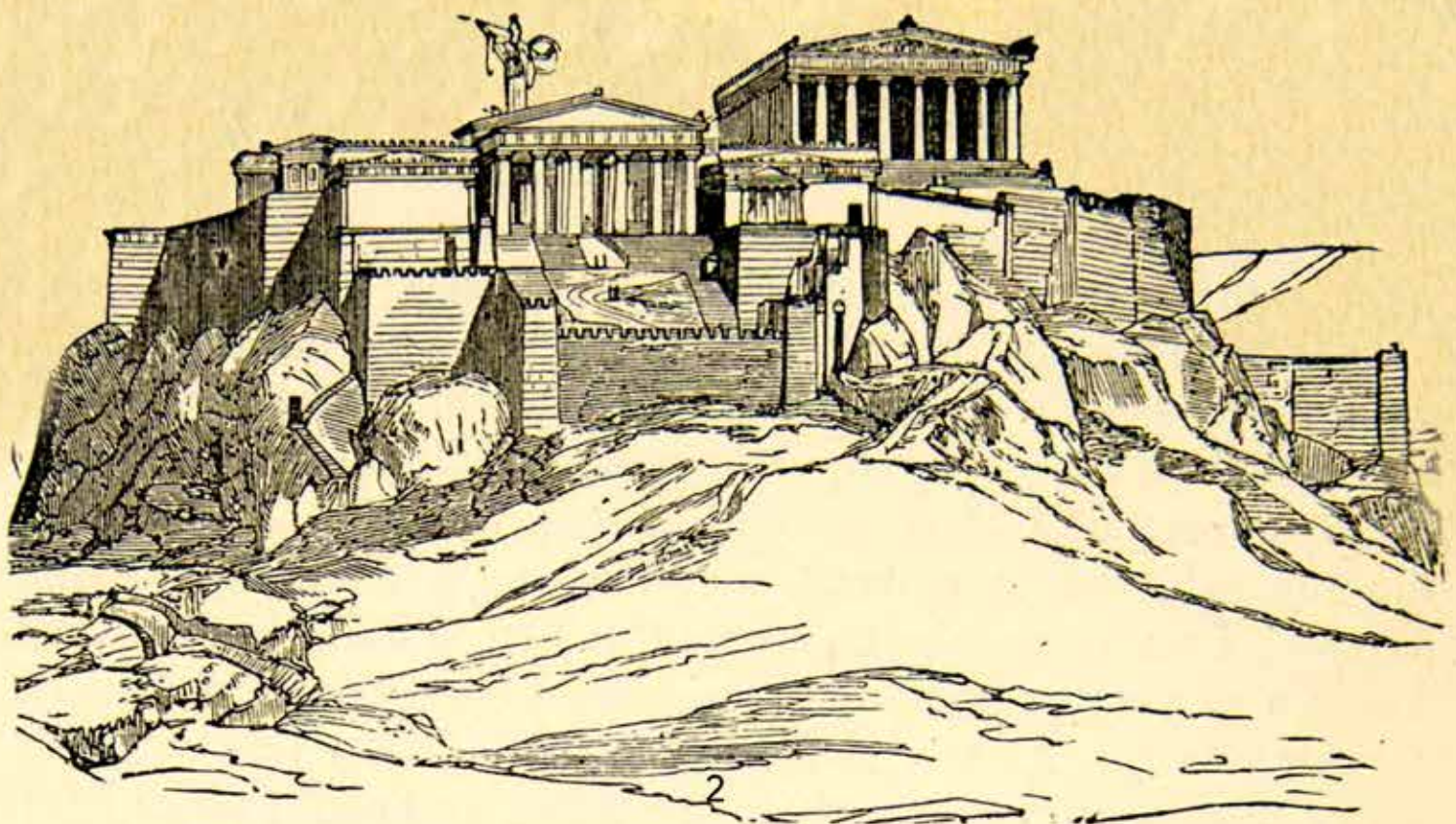
Cover Story

A Method to this Madness

Subhiksha Kannan

Athens, 335 BC. A flock of chiton-clad youths are in the Lyceum, walking side-by-side with Aristotle who is passionately asserting that happiness in life is a function of one's virtues. To him, every object and every human has a preordained purpose in the world and man's sole path to living a truly good and enriching life is to honour it. He argues that human beings, as rational animals, must not limit themselves by pursuing ends as narrow as material wealth, honour, or bodily needs, however tantalising they may be. Instead, they must seek to attain the highest state of welfare and flourishing, earned after a life lived virtuously. The meaning of life, Aristotle tells us, is eudaimonia – the highest good.

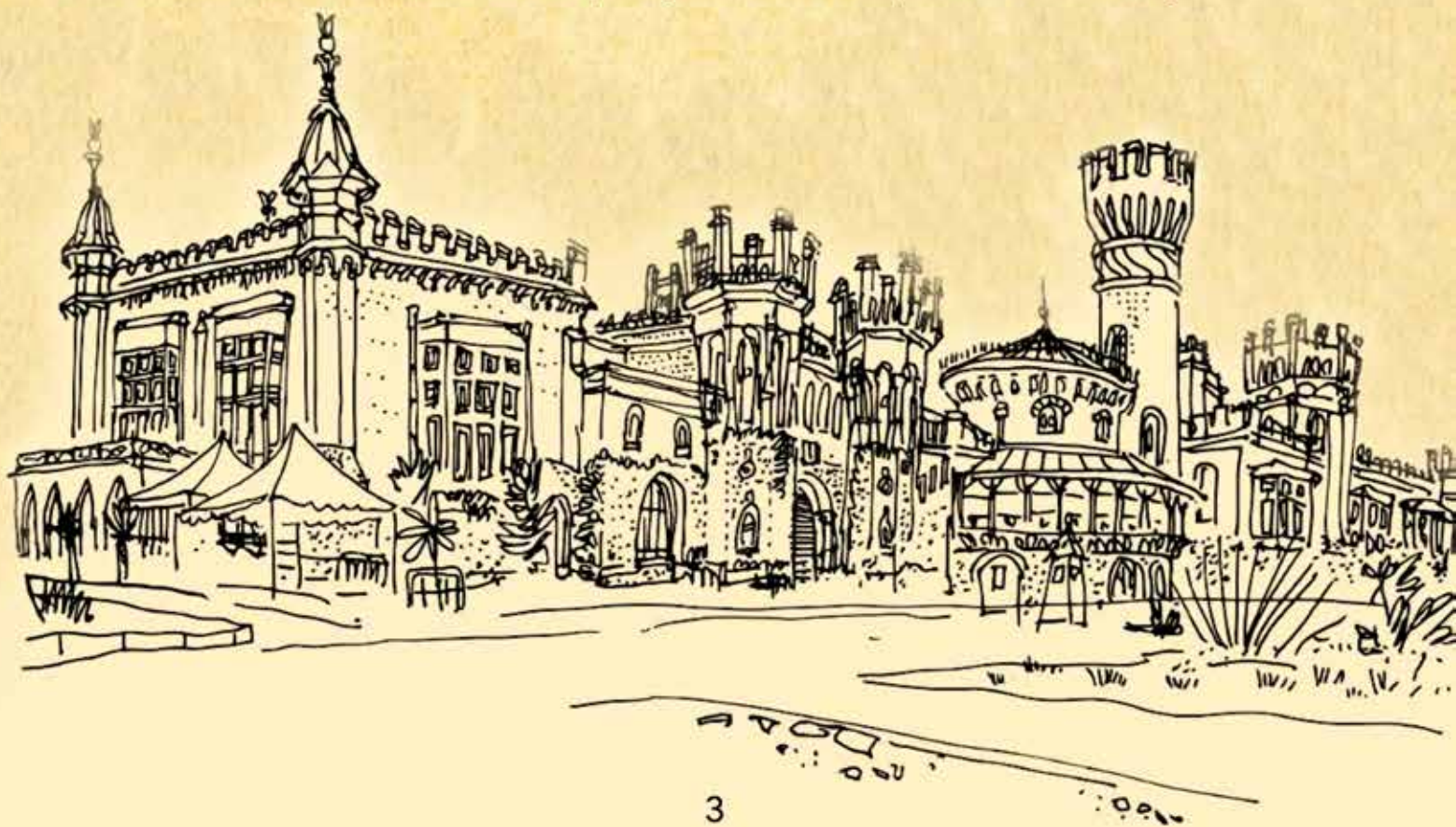
France, 1945. The world is still reeling from the devastation of the Second World War and hope is a commodity in short supply. In his 1942 essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Albert Camus claims that every person identifies with Sisyphus, the Greek mythological character who was punished for his sins by the gods and doomed to an eternity in which he must roll a massive boulder up a hill and reach the summit, only for it to come rolling back down. He implores the reader to imagine Sisyphus as happy about his fate. Just two years later, Simone de Beauvoir publishes her first philosophical essay *Pyrrhus and Cineas*, and asks us to project our troubles onto a different character from Greek mythology – King Pyrrhus, who sought nothing short of world domination. After charting out a life of conquest after conquest, Pyrrhus plans to finally rest. "Why go through all this trouble only to rest at the end, if you could just rest now?" asks his advisor Cineas. Both Camus and Beauvoir, and most other existentialists of the time, argued that life is essentially meaningless and the crux of the human condition was in trying to find order in the absurd. Camus proposed that anything we give value to becomes valuable; even a life of misery can be meaningful if one assigns worth to it. Beauvoir concluded that our ends derive value merely by being our ends. For we, like Pyrrhus, take up task after task, ranging from menial to magnificent, to sustain and enrich our lives, and find meaning simply by valuing the work we do.



Bangalore, 2020. It's past midnight in the middle of the week, and I'm hunched over an assorted mess of books, a laptop, my phone, and half-eaten snacks, trying to make sense of a syllabus that was designed keeping in mind a far more alert reader. This is the third all-nighter I've pulled in a row. All my deadlines and commitments have coalesced into a monstrous quagmire into which I am slowly, but surely, sinking. The clock on my desk continues ticking resolutely. I am suddenly aware of my fatigue, and by extension, of my mortality. I think it a good idea to take stock of my life thus far and realise that I don't have an answer to a question as old as the human condition itself – what is the meaning of life and what is my ultimate purpose in it? It's now 3 AM. Before this line of thought could actually transform into a productive spiritual awakening, I decide I've had enough, call it a day, and go to sleep.

It's 5:30 AM and my alarm rings. I get ready for college, enter class, and the first thing that greets me is a five-step pyramid drawn on the board. It's Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. It seems as though the universe is hellbent on forcing an epiphany out of me. With a sense of resignation, I take my seat.

For the entirety of his professional life, Abraham Maslow focused his work on finding the answer to nothing short of the purpose of human life. The answer, he found, could be represented in an ordinary, unassuming triangle divided into five parts, each one comprising a different level of human needs: Basic physiological needs, safety and security needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation. Unaware of the extent to which his idea of the pinnacle of human life would continue to capture the imagination of those in the fields of positive psychology, marketing, human resource management and literature, he wrote in 1943: "What a man can be, he must be. This need we may call self-actualization. This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming."



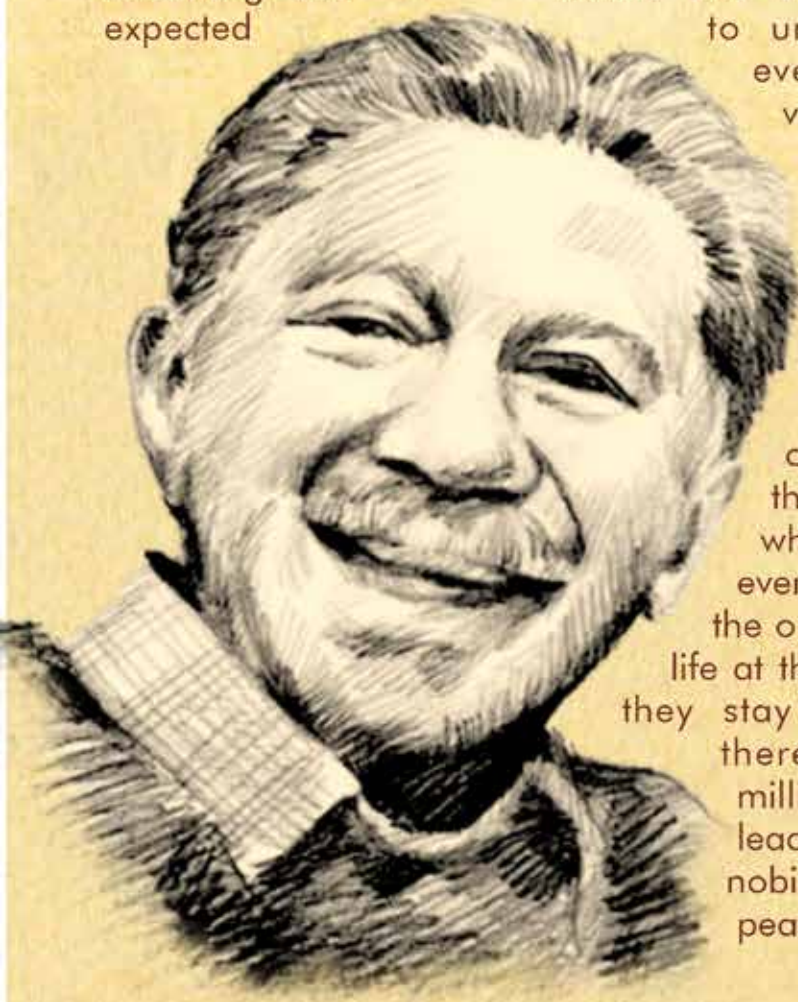
Easier said than done, Maslow.

We lead our lives on a blue rock that revolves around a burning star till one day, we drop dead. Understandably, we are obsessed with finding meaning in the mundane, in evaluating ourselves against societal standards and in taking actions that would put us on the right (and fastest) track to snag the pointy chunk of Maslow's scintillating triangle before we become incapable of doing so. But there are more important questions that must be answered before we take a crack at the biggest one – Who decides what is and isn't the pinnacle? And whom do these ideals benefit?

Several studies show that millennials value happiness, independence, and balance over material wealth in both their personal and professional lives. The generations before were expected to follow a rigid, formulaic approach to life, marked by milestones such as marriage, owning a house, a stable job, and accumulating a small fortune to leave for one's children. The distinct factors influencing lives at that time such as lower disposable incomes and life expectancies fed into the type of achievements that were valued then. But it is unfair to hold the younger generations to the ideals of success set by a generation which could never have imagined the onslaught of novel anxieties that we are exposed to today. In a world that is threatened by a heightening climate crisis, invasive technology, economic slowdown, fascist regimes, and disease (to name a few), we are left to search for a pinnacle that accommodates our fears – one that is often more flexible but gratifying.

Maslow's drawing is essentially a checklist of needs that must be satisfied before reaching the zenith. Like characters in a video game, we are expected to unlock the levels one by one and eventually become the best possible

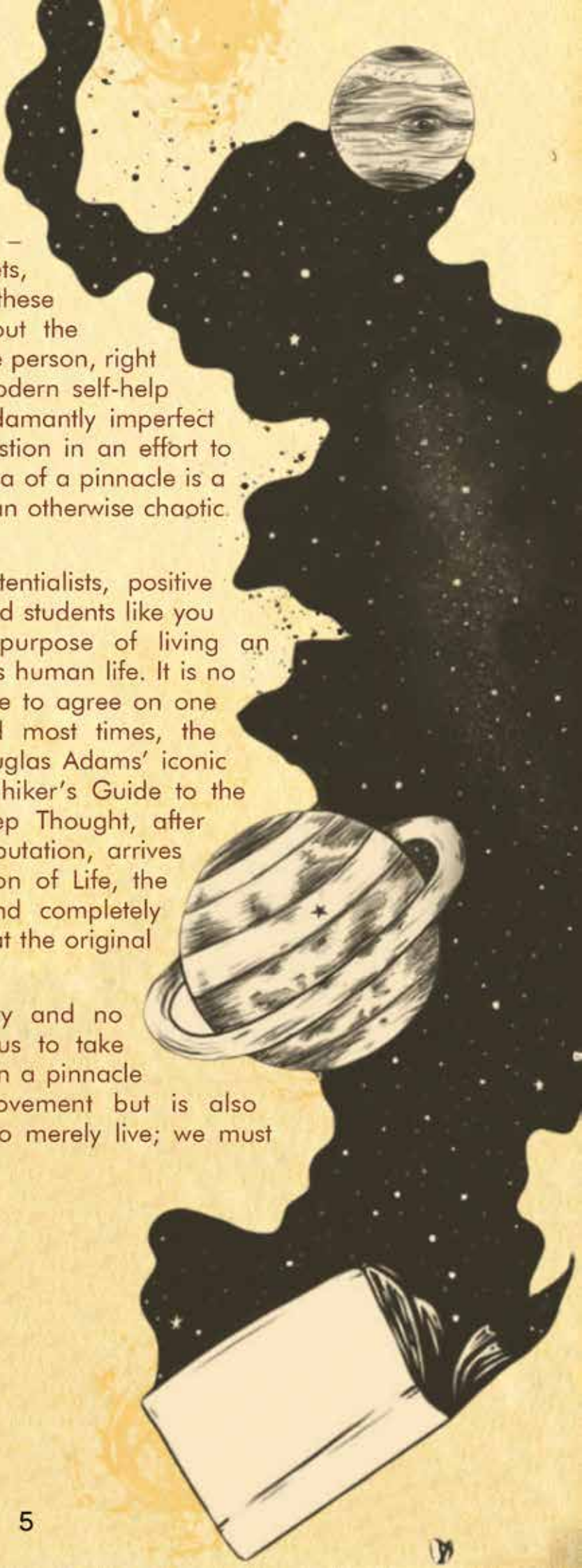
version of ourselves. But reality is nowhere as systematic or just as that triangle would have us believe. Social privilege and power dynamics dictate the degree to which different groups of people have access to the resources and opportunities that would enable them to satisfy their needs. The one who benefits from the status quo is the one who makes the rules of the game while a vast majority struggle to ascend even the first level of the pyramid. This lets the ones in power paint a picture of an ideal life at the pinnacle, which in turns ensures that they stay on top, unchallenged. We must, therefore, question those in power – millionaires, celebrities, politicians, religious leaders – and the standards of success, nobility or wisdom which places them at the peak.



We understand the world around us largely because we are capable of comprehending the concept of perfection. Ground-breaking theories across disciplines are based on assumptions of perfect conditions – undisturbed vacuums, efficient markets, and rational behaviour – but ironically, these standards are unattainable. Throughout the eventful history of mankind, every single person, right from the Buddha to the authors of modern self-help books, has attempted to break the adamantly imperfect human life down to one essential question in an effort to understand how to live it better. The idea of a pinnacle is a North Star of sorts, giving direction to an otherwise chaotic existence.

Ancient Greek philosophers, the existentialists, positive psychologists, artists, and sleep-deprived students like you and I have all tried to find the purpose of living an excruciatingly painful but equally joyous human life. It is no surprise that humans haven't been able to agree on one answer (we're spoilt for choice) and most times, the question itself makes no sense. In Douglas Adams' iconic comic science fiction series, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, a supercomputer named Deep Thought, after seven-and-a-half billion years of computation, arrives at the Answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything. It's 42. And completely meaningless because no one knew what the original question even was.

The point is that ideals are arbitrary and no standard is set in stone. It's up to us to take advantage of that and use it to envision a pinnacle that not only encourages self-improvement but is also equitable. After all, it is not enough to merely live; we must flourish.





Dua Jawed



unasked questions

Parvathi V S

Let me tell you the story of a girl.
She lived in a small village,
located in the peripheries of freedom.
She cooked for her family,
without raising any questions.
She cleaned her home
without any questions.
She took care of her family
without any question.
She willingly gave up her education
without any question.
She stayed away from "unfamiliar" men
without any question.
Then, she married a stranger
without any question.

She avoided conflict.
She kept the peace intact.
No one cared
about the war she fought
with herself.
She fought a war,
blinded by the visions
to which she was confined.
She was restricted to the knowledge
she was provided with,
In a world which felt tinier
than the red bindi she wore.

Arundathi Roy would have asked,
"Where would she have fallen, the deliberately silenced or
the preferably unheard?"
I shall take your leave
with this question.



WRETCHES AND KINGS

Pragatheeshwaran



A wise eunuch once said, 'Power resides where men believe it resides'. A closer appraisal of this mystifying quote reveals a harsher truth, that power is but an illusion, and that kings are, and have always been, wretches. The endless pursuit for attaining the greatest degree of power and supremacy is almost always a self-defeating path. This can be illustrated by taking a closer look at some of the iconic figures in popular media who proved that being in the pinnacle of power is nothing but smoke and mirrors.

Let us begin with the tragic tale of power brewing madness, the story of Daenerys of the House Targaryen, the First of Her Name, The Unburnt, Queen of the Andals.... (you get the gist). Underneath the titles and dragons, however, hides a past filled with oppression and a thirst for vengeance that ultimately pushed the young queen's quest for the Iron Throne onto a different path - one that leads to a maddening obsession for power. Pushed to reclaim the throne that rightfully belonged to her family, somewhere between facing her abusive brother and flying dragons, she lost her way. Securing the throne became her purpose and her identity, her sole driving force and fixation. Ultimately, she becomes consumed by her obsession and power, paying no heed to her advisers' warnings, and transforms into the very person she always detested - a mad queen. Drunk with power and hatred, she wreaks havoc on the kingdom she so desperately wanted to rule. Her idealistic perception of a perfect world is distorted by her thirst for power. In the end, she meets her demise at the very place she battled to claim, the Iron Throne, ruling for all but a single moment that contained an eternity of demented craze.

Daenerys is prototypical of power corrupting even the most righteous of souls. This brings us to the mighty and courageous, yet ambitious and weak-willed Macbeth, the honourable Thane of Glamis. An atypical Shakespearean antagonist, Macbeth falls prey to the temptation of power and ambition. Plagued by his fears and misguided by his immoral wife, he seizes the throne by sword and blood. And yet, even after possessing the power that he so desperately lusted after, he is never at peace with his choices. Much like a bully secretly dreads the day his victims may step up to him, Macbeth is constantly driven to nagging thoughts of guilt and lived in fear of those he had wronged. There are many contrasting traits that speak volumes about Macbeth's complexity. He is brave and heroic, yet meek and afraid. He is kind and affectionate, yet treacherous and tyrannical. Indeed, it was his ambition and thirst for power that overpowered all his positive tendencies and brought to life the adverse ones. Those in the pinnacle of power, thus, are again proved to never really having any degree of control over it.

A contrasting path that ultimately leads to the same taste of drunken power is the compelling ideology of the homicidal Thanos. Hellbent on bringing balance to the universe, he manages to wipe out half the world's population with a snap of his stone-clad fingers. He propagates such sacrifice as imperative for the 'greater good', a spine

chilling phrase used by other genocidal leaders to defend their mindless slaughter, be it Grindelwald in the Harry Potter saga, or Adolf Hitler in his quest to eradicate the Jews.

Thanos, surprisingly, garnered a surprising amount of supporters for his moral argument. His motivations are maniacal but rational, his crimes heinous but defensible. Bringing balance to the world is a noble quest, but killing countless innocent souls in the process? Not so much. He represents a different kind of power, one that is employed with the right intention but in the wrong manner. He is, undoubtedly, one of the most intriguing and compelling comic book antagonists to date, despite the time travel claptrap that Endgame managed to cook up.

Any discussion of power-crazed egomaniacs would be incomplete without a mention of He Who Must Not Be Named, otherwise known as Lord Voldemort. Tom Riddle's story provides an interesting perspective into the illusions of power and supremacy. As a student at Hogwarts, Tom begins harbouring feelings of superiority and amasses a crowd of loyal followers. From the get-go, he understood just how he could use his extraordinary talents and the well-known fact that he was the heir of Slytherin to leverage his status and charisma. Voldemort's ideology was derived from and, in turn, fed into the notion of blood purism, an allegory for racism. This emboldens and pushes him to destroy all those who are different from him. Among the characters mentioned, Voldemort is the only one who can be described as 'evil'. His unparalleled abilities and power only fuel his taste for violence and murder. Interestingly, his greatest fear was death itself. His notion of power started and ended with his quest for immortality. He was prepared to do anything to stave off death, including ripping his own soul apart. He was obsessed with anything that led or blockaded his path to immortality, be it the Horcruxes, the Hallows or Harry Potter, the one chosen to destroy him. Voldemort, through his obsession, literally and symbolically, destroys himself. Each step he takes to attain immortality leaves him two steps behind. His downfall was inevitable and brought about by none other than himself. His thirst for power was insatiable, for he could always get one step closer to the peak. To the pinnacle. To immortality.

Power is indeed a curious thing. Perhaps those who never sought it are the ones who are best suited to yield it. The race to capture one more ounce of power has been proved again and again to be a fruitless, self-defeating endeavour. The concept of finality is paradoxical. There is no true end to any set of stairs, for one can always construct another one. Similarly, there is no pinnacle of power, for the desire to capture it is insatiable. Perhaps power doesn't exist in gauntlets, thrones or swords, but resides instead in the ability to be content with the present. Then again, maybe power doesn't exist at all.

To be a Christite

Starting your day even before the sun rises
Gushing through the crowded lanes of SG Palya
Desperately clearing a path,
To make it to class for attendance.
Sleeping, rambling, gossiping
Are our favourite friends even
Amidst the treacherous deadlines
And our fast-paced lives.

But there is calm in this chaos
With those who make a difference,
They are not just friends
but family, in every sense.

It's never too late to appreciate those
Who lift you up, make you smile
Speak up for you, enlighten you.
After all, life's too short
To be wasted in mourning.
After all, these days won't come back
Soon, they will just be memories
For you to sit back and reminisce.

Instead, stand up now, face the world,
Don't hide away.
Why waste a day? There is nothing to fear.
We're all imperfect in our little ways

That's what Christ is -
An emotion
To be experienced rather than said.

Geenu George



Mahak Batra

BICYCLE

The word 'Expatriate' has a seemingly negative connotation in my mind,
Maybe something to do with how 'ex' implies we have left something behind.
Oceans are to be crossed before familiar sands,
Seasons don't seem to change in this foreign land.

I remember the day I looked out of the peephole into my corridor,
And saw new neighbours moving in next door,
They were a Sudani family who outnumbered us eight to four,
They too, like us, had ventured past their shore.

Aunty, who had so quickly become related to us that we called her Aunty
Would light the bukhoor every evening,
The smoke of which would fill our corridor and leave a lingering scent of ash when
the fire died out
It seemed as though the scent wasn't afraid to claim the air it rightfully owned.

One evening, fifteen-year-old Ahmed came knocking on our door
to show us his new possession,
And thus began the harmonious combination,
Of Ahmed, the bicycle and I!

The skid marks on the marble floor of our corridor -
A corridor we now shared,
A corridor so long - a task to walk across,
A corridor, air-conditioned to beat the summer heat,
A corridor which always smelled like the souk,
And a corridor which seemed newly suffocating
because of all the wear and tear I had received -
hums a cheerful tale of races, fights and
platonic nights that Ahmed and I shared.

The caretaker with his gentle scuffing always asked us to keep our voices down,
But before he would leave, he would shoot a glance that implied
For you, different terms and conditions apply now,
Probably twelve years is too young to realize the dynamics of the diaspora.
In retrospect, it was a simple formula:
The building belonged to neither of us
But it was more of his than it could ever be mine.

I wonder what Ahmed says when he's asked where he's from now.
Does he too have a colonial hangover that he has to justify?
Does he too pause for a second to judge the man doing the asking?
Does he too quickly take a bite of air?
I'm from the south, but I was born in the north,
But I grew up across the sea, in the Middle East?
And now that my tender conflict is known,
Does it make me a scintillating candidate for the iron throne?



Shravani Garmella

Making a Mary Sue

Divya Himatsingka

The term Mary Sue – used to describe a female character written so perfectly that she seems to have no flaws – first found meaning in Star Trek fanfiction, wherein the protagonist, Mary Sue, was the youngest lieutenant on the fleet, at only fifteen and a half years old. Since then, the term has been used to describe unrealistic characters with no apparent flaws and a stellar track record. Originally reserved for those women who were exceptionally gifted at almost everything under the sun, it is now also used to describe those that seem perfect and have little to none character development for the duration of the story – a flat character. While a Mary Sue may be the pinnacle of what an inherently “good” character represents, one stands to wonder whether such representation holds a mirror to what we are like in reality – unapologetically flawed human beings.

Female protagonists, in particular, have a history of being cast as the Mary Sue type. The perfect heroine will bake for fun and end up saving the universe, all in a day’s work, and all with a smile on her face. While some argue that such a character represents the unrealistic standards of society for what a woman is expected to be, others are of the opinion that one person’s Mary Sue may very well be another’s female superhero. Take Wonder Woman, for example. An iconic powerhouse of truth and triumph, Wonder Woman is beautiful, smart, and nothing if not powerful. She is the very epitome of all that is good. She fights for justice, and rallies for peace. As a superhero, it isn’t far-fetched to believe that Wonder Woman is really that perfect. It is also quite possible that after a slew of victimized females, a strong, “can do no wrong” woman is a strange concept for some to fathom. The critics of the Mary Sue believe that it is the writers within whom the responsibility of writing a well-developed, realistic female characters vests. By portraying a character with tangible flaws, the authors do justice to the character, making it a well-rounded one that the readers or viewers can actually identify with. A flawless character, while utopian in imagination, may not resonate with the audience that it is originally created for. On one hand is this critique of the Mary Sue type, while on the other, is the exploration of whether such criticism could very well be read as double standards when it comes to female protagonists. Mary Sues could be interpreted as young women finding their voice and coming to terms with their power – something that is quite commonplace when it comes to male protagonists and has been gaining a footing in recent times for women characters as well.

It would be incorrect, however, to state that powerful, flawless female characters have only found recognition in current fiction. It would also be wrong to typecast them as Mary Sues because the term cannot be looked at from a singular perspective. Not only does it signify an all-powerful protagonist, but it can also be used to describe a good, pure heroine who redeems the other characters of the story with her inherent goodness.

Jane Eyre, the titular character of the classic penned by Charlotte Bronte, is, in many ways, one of the first Mary Sues. That doesn't necessarily make it a bad thing, because despite being a character universally recognized as "good," she is in no way a boring or flat character. The Mary Sue type, which has been criticized for being a vessel for author wish-fulfilment, finds an emotional and powerful host in Jane Eyre. She is the perfect heroine who, despite her horrible childhood, is a pure, emotional healer for the hero, Mr Rochester. Though a majority of the book is about their love and how it falls to shambles because of his secrets and lies, the novel also serves as an exploration of Jane's life and resilience. Right from the beginning, Jane recognizes that the way she is treated by her stepmother and step-siblings is unfair, and their cruel treatment only highlights her strength of spirit. Every time Jane is persecuted by those around her, we observe just how resilient she is, which is commendable, considering the time period in which the novel is set. She is never portrayed as someone who bites back or as someone who is cruel in return to those responsible for her hardships; she may very well be the epitome of noble suffering. She has a tumultuous love affair with Mr Rochester, who takes a reluctant liking to her, despite her notable "plainness." Though she falls madly in love with him, she is apprehensive about marrying him, a fear which is greatly amplified when she learns of the fact that Mr Rochester is, in fact, already wed to a woman, who is locked up in his house due to her madness. She breaks off her marriage to him, an act of quiet rebellion, and Saint John Rivers enters the picture – he may very well be Jane's male counterpart when it comes to noble suffering, but there is something strangely unlikeable about him, with his proud self-righteousness. He seems, on the surface, a perfect match for Jane, but this is a romance novel of sorts after all, and she goes back to Mr Rochester, who is now blind and has lost an arm in a raging fire. Jane Eyre ends with her taking care of him; they are both happy, and she helps restore his vision in parts, effectively being one of the reasons he recovers – both physically and mentally – and therein lies the beauty of her character. She is his true redeemer, perhaps the very definition of a Mary Sue, but the novel, lest we forget, is titled after her. She does not exist simply to complement him or fulfil the narrative of his story. Jane Eyre is unflinchingly all about her, and just her. She is proud, defiant and unapologetically herself, and that is how you write a great Mary Sue – possibly one of the greatest ever written.

While on one hand is Charlotte Bronte's masterpiece about the sensible, strong Jane Eyre, her sister, Emily Bronte, wrote *Wuthering Heights* – a novel about Catherine Earnshaw, a woman unlike Jane if there ever was one. Catherine is headstrong but not for the right reasons. She is an unpleasant character, and yet, one can't help but feel sorry for her as she descends into an unfortunate fate spun by her own poor decisions. She is by no means a Mary Sue. Her flaws, in fact, are apparent, highlighted by the author in a poignant fashion, at first in Catherine's wildness, and later, in her hysteria and depression. She is a superbly written female protagonist, and may very well be the opposite of everything Jane Eyre stands for. She consistently makes poor decisions, and her pride finds an outlet in bitter words and a petty nature, but she does have a soft spot for the true love of her life, Heathcliff, who is no less savage than her. It is a match made in hell, one may say, and the readers never expect a happy ending for the two. In this

tale of bittersweet tragedy set on the wild moors, Emily Bronte spins an iconic character in the form of Cathy Earnshaw, whose choices impact the lives of future generations and have a role to play in the misery of many. Catherine is unlikeable but unmistakably real, flaws and all. She marries the wrong man, a man who loves her dearly but can never be what Heathcliff is to her, and she never tries to hide it. She dies of this sorrow, but not before giving birth to a girl who is unwillingly thrust into the mess her mother left behind. Heathcliff and Cathy remain unlikeable characters until the bitter end and there is no redemption for them – they die miserable deaths. She doesn't heal him and they don't make each other better. Their story, however, lives on in the pages of *Wuthering Heights*. Catherine, especially, is considered to be one of the most fierce female characters ever written, who marches to the beat of her own drum and is a force to be reckoned with. She is the opposite of the generic Mary Sue, and she shines in her way. While many refer to Heathcliff as the anti-hero, Catherine, too, fits the description. She is unconventional, but a great character nonetheless.

There is no set pattern to follow to ensure that the character comes across as the best ever written. While a Mary Sue may be the pinnacle of inherent goodness, it would be wrong to discredit all the others who are equally commendable in their own way. It isn't all that rare to find three-dimensional female characters in popular culture and even in Victorian Romantic literature, as in the Bronte sisters' novels. If there's anything we know, is that there is no formula for constructing the perfect woman character. You may have a Jane Eyre who is strong in silent resilience, or even a Catherine Earnshaw, who is wild and takes pride in her selfishness, but you can argue that both are equally important in their own right. There is no standard for the perfect female character, and that is what explores the real complexity of one. There is no ceiling to the wonders creators can do with their characters and even if there is one, we are far from breaking it. The greatest way to do them justice, however, is to give them a chance to shine on paper or on screen. She may be a Mary Sue or an anti-hero, but she is the heroine of her own story – and that's something everyone can get behind.



Vibhor Sachdeo

I wear a mask.
It's a lot of things,
But it's not even an inkling of me.

They say that it makes me pretty
And of course, I must be pretty,
So I wear it.

They say I need to be quiet, obedient,
Only then will the people accept me
Only then, can I find a husband.

They say I must wear jeans,
T-shirts, shorts and dresses,
Only then will I be worthy
Of their friendship, their attention.

They tell me I need to be thin
Anything else, and I'll be a misfit.
They say I must listen to certain songs
To fit in with the crowd.

They told me to laugh more,
To agree with whatever they said
To be frivolous,
To be a part of the throng.

They said to me,
"You need to drink, party"
It's what will make me cool
And being cool will make me popular.

D
E
S
K
A
N



DON'T SKEW

So I wear my mask,
A mask crafted to make
Sure I fit the mould.
A mask in accordance with
Everything they say.

I wear my mask, for I am afraid
Of being rejected,
Afraid to be divergent,
Confined to their rules.

I will be what they say
What they want me to be
I will not step out of line
For that would automatically mean
That I am an outcast.
No longer wanted, no longer liked.

This is how you make me run,
Day in and day out.

Do you want a different perspective,
Maybe a better perspective?

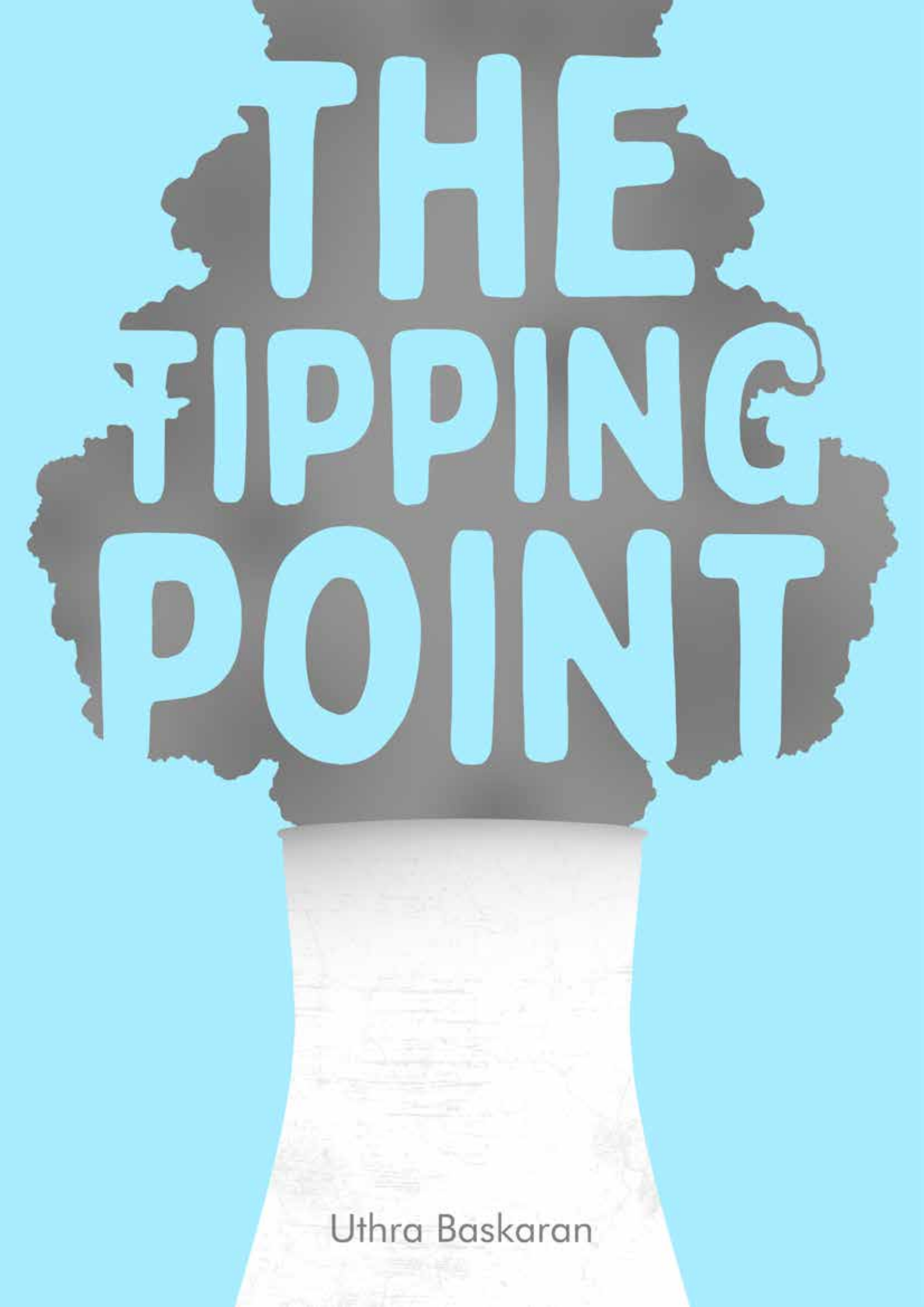
Stop telling me who to be.
For I like me, and I want to be me.
Quit making your rules,
Your trends, your standards.

Turn around; look at what you've created
This is not the world I want to be in
And I am not alone in this.

I will tear off my mask,
I will smash your stereotypes.
I will take no more of your consent.
I will pay no heed to your disapproval.

I might walk alone, but I'll walk as me.

Uthra Baskaran



THE TIPPING POINT

Uthra Baskaran

Climate change has become a buzzword in recent years but it is neither a novel nor a sudden phenomenon. From the first World Climate Conference in 1979, to 2020 being called the 'super year', it looks like our home is holding its breath, waiting for us to make the checkmate. The United Nations took matters into its own hands to bring together all the countries in an attempt to stop, or at least delay the inevitable; inevitable only because we have set course on a highway, full-throttle, intent on burning the planet down. The UN put forward the Montreal Protocol, the Kyoto Protocol, and most recently, the historical Paris Agreement in 2016, setting up starting points with an aim to reach a bigger goal.

Technology has taken over the steering wheel of human life, and with it, alarming details on the accelerated destruction of the planet has been brought into light. But history has shown us that facts alone do not make a difference. It was well known that the ozone layer was depleting, and that humans would soon run out of fossil fuels if they were used at the same pace. What the public did not know was the fact that even a couple degrees of warming would lead to dire consequences. Scientists in the 80s were forced to describe the ozone crisis in a language that would connect with the general public so it could incite action. They coined the term "hole in the Ozone layer." Sensing a threat to their health after the ill-effects of a hole in the ozone layer were widely publicised, common people took action to reduce their usage of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

Even now, in a time wherein information is widely accessible and inexpensive, a large portion of the public believe climate change to be an elaborate ruse. They are influenced by several powerful groups stubbornly denying climate change. One of these famous deniers is none other than the supreme leader of the second most polluting country in the world - President Donald Trump. Early on in his presidency, and even throughout his campaigns, he repeatedly referred to climate change as a hoax, and framed it as an attempt made by the opposition to cut jobs in the traditional energy sector in the US. Trump has gone so far as to withdraw the US from the Paris Agreement. Beloved actor and a UN Messenger of Peace, Leonardo DiCaprio, told the world, "Climate change is real. It is happening right now. We need to support leaders around the world who do not speak for the big polluters or the big corporations, but who speak for all of humanity. If you do not believe in climate change, you do not believe in facts... And therefore, in my humble opinion, should not be allowed to hold public office."

There are big players pulling the strings in this climate emergency, and they are the same ones holding global leaders in their power to lobby for laws that favour their environmentally destructive yet highly lucrative businesses. Large corporations and oil companies get away with indiscriminate pollution and environmental destruction simply by lobbying with political leaders. This is the case in the US as well, where a law on carbon tax has not yet been passed in the parliament thanks to oil corporations (like the Koch Industries) paying large sums to the representatives of the people to support their cause, which would be, in the simplest terms, amassing wealth. They've also brought scientists with impressive credentials onto their side, and this added denial has caused even more public confusion. In the words of Greta Thunberg, 2019's Person of the Year, "We are in the beginning of a mass destruction and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth, how dare you!"

But things don't seem search by well-known tions like NASA and spreading awareness gency. The last few momentum building change, especially in governments that knowledge it. Now, safely say that we part of the rebuttal.

Following the change you want to new circumstance of versus children has Thunberg taking the her frank words that reality, the younger about the future, are calling for hasty action against the climate crisis. Ayakha Melithafa, a teen activist from South Africa, said, "We, as a society, have a chance now to change things." But this chance has an expiry, and that day will soon be here.

In this age of globalization, it is no longer enough for us, as individuals, to change our ways. For the longest time, the calls for action have been directed towards us - slogans calling for a greener planet by virtue of us planting trees, abiding by the 3 R's, reducing carbon emissions by carpooling and so on. While that is no less important, the major chunk of this responsibility must now be shifted onto the industrial superpowers, and the governments and political leaders that aid them.

completely desolate. Re- and trusted organisa- the UN helped in and tackling the emer- years have seen some to fight climate reasoning against the have refused to ac- in 2020, we can have quashed a large

words, 'be the see in the world', a climate change begun. With Greta world by storm with describe our grim generation, troubled

The liability is highly disproportionate where a sense of guilt is instilled into the common people. They are made to feel remorseful about their lifestyles. Yes, change from the lowest level, change within each and every one of us is necessary, but it is unfair to assign blame onto those who suffer more due to the climate crisis than are responsible for it.

A decade of tumult, starting with strong denial and ending with high public concern and support, has come to an end. Antonio Guterres, the Secretary General of the UN, said, "As we enter the New Year, I want to share a message with our greatest hope: the world's young people. The world needs you to keep speaking out, applying pressure and pushing boundaries to have us protect our planet and help improve the lives of its people". It is our last chance to rebuild what has been lost. The leaders in the forefront of this, clutching onto this chance, are indeed, the youth. Children from all over the world have come together, with a common goal – to save the generation and the generations of our beloved blue planet.

Climate change has been even when the issues. Temperatures are at an hand, and on the recording abnormally levels are rising, and already been lost to droughts and changes in precipitation patterns are becoming common. Amazonian and Australian fires, we are



denied, time and again, faced have escalated. all-time high on one other, there are places cold temperatures. Sea some islands have them. Off-season es in precipitation patterns are becoming common, and like the Australian fires, we are

From 'climate change', the term and the situation developed into 'climate crisis'; and has now become a 'climate emergency'. What more does it need to become for us to truly understand the weight of what we've done? 2020 is the make-or-break year when we'll finally know which way the future is swaying towards. After decades of research and warning signs, years of both activism and denial, we seemed to have reached the pinnacle.

We're at the tip of an iceberg. We can either slip into the deep, or step out onto firm ice (which, I hear, is hard to come across these days). It's in our hands. The whole world is holding its breath. Where to now?

It is the rush of feelings, which comes
Like a giant roaring wave of the sea
And then softly touches your soul
The way the water touches the feet.

It causes butterflies in the stomach
And exciting, haphazard thoughts
The chills run through your body
And you can be sure you have a crush!

When feelings go past this phase and uphill
Belief, trust and assurance, you'll be building
Love is to find security and compassion
Which eradicates any scope of insecurity
and suspicion.

When his eyes communicate warmth
And you realise that it's all you need;
You can live in them forever, as with one look,
The burden of your heart is released.

Love is when your constant search ends,
The search for support, for balance,
You reach an emotional equilibrium,
Complemented by dedication and passion.

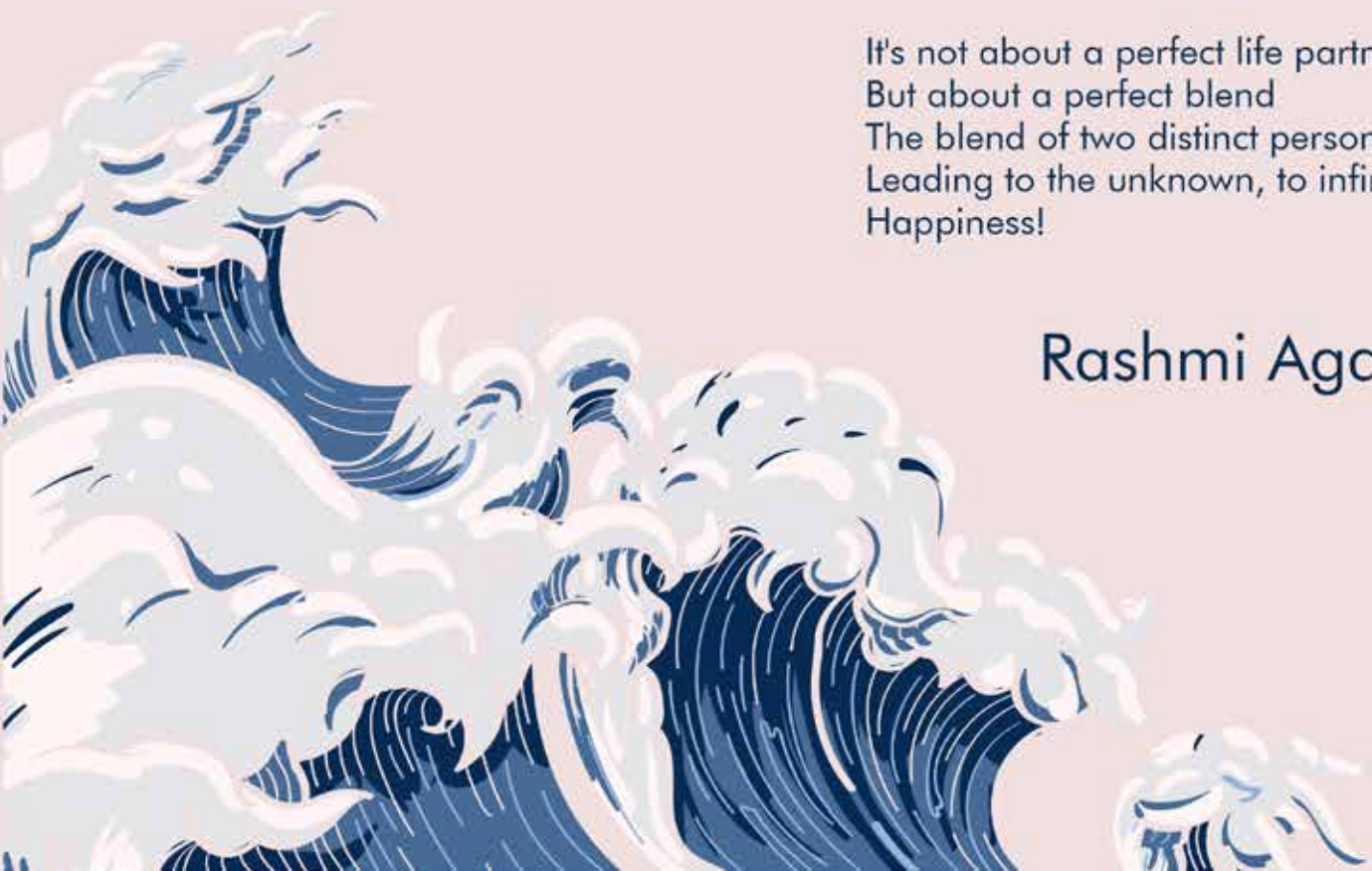
It is an expression of nature,
How night illuminates the moon,
What the moon is to the sea,
The relation between the sea and the
seashore.

Mere awareness of its existence
Fills the heart with ecstasy,
The actual realisation in our lives
Is sure to leave us hypnotized!

It's not about a perfect life partner
But about a perfect blend
The blend of two distinct personalities
Leading to the unknown, to infinite
Happiness!

Rashmi Agarwal

LOVE



OF GRACE AND GRIT

Prof. Gautham Sethuraman



Legend has it that Henry Tudor became Henry VII, the first king of a new dynasty, as Lord Stanley picked up the crown that fell from Richard's head and placed it on Tudor's head.

Roger Federer won his first major at the 2003 Wimbledon when he was 22. He ascended to the top in 2004, a year that saw him become the first player to win three grand slams since Mats Wilander in 1988. The next three years marked his ruthless preeminence. Between 2004 and 2007, he won 11 major tournaments (out of 16) and over 10 titles every year on average.

It is said that a man can care without appearing to. In his prime, Federer's game was a celebration in melody. He seemed to be on a serene stroll, orchestrating timeless compositions as he floated around the court, with one fluid movement leading to another, ferrying his opponents to their doom. He turned attritional combat into something sublimely beautiful.

Federer's ability to transcend the mundane made fans and pundits suspend their lives to surrender to his game. However, there was an air of predictability about Roger Federer's era of hegemony. Records for him were merely a matter of 'when'. There was an unarticulated awareness among fans and experts alike that records would arrive anyway.

As the game evolved, so did its vocabulary. Power supplanted versatility; stamina replaced trickery. The new era seemed to be tailor-made for the likes of Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic, whose chest and lungs were forged by weights and honed by treadmills.

Barring the two majors he won in 2009, Federer won just two more between 2009

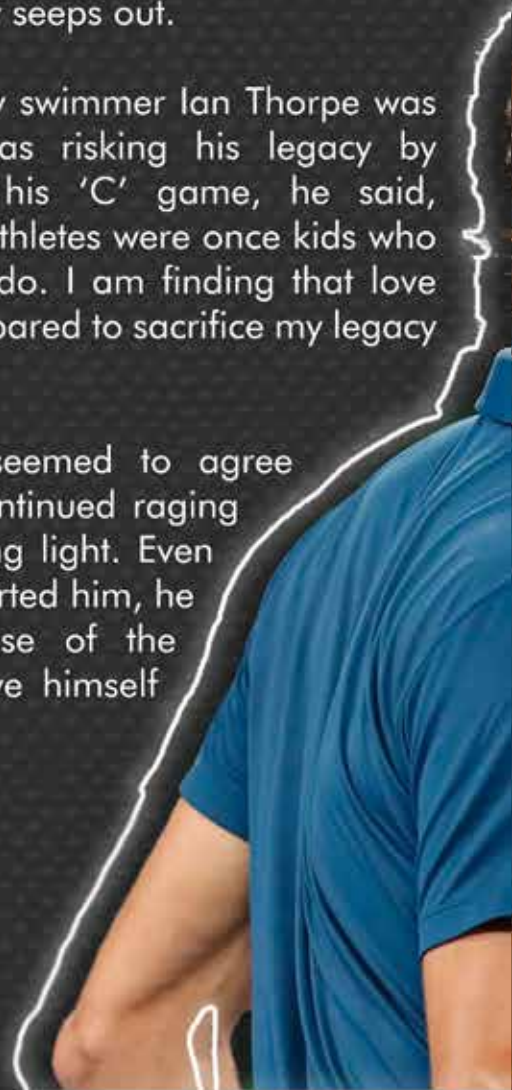
and 2015. This seemed to be the new normal, one where Federer couldn't summon his skills on command like he once used to, one where his own legs mutinied against him and his hands betrayed him quite often. His game was scarcely embarrassing even if it was not overly impressive.

In a bruising sport, Federer still managed to offer a contrast. But in the fusion of styles that is typical to the tennis court, it was only Federer who walked in there with a paintbrush.

This wasn't supposed to happen. Men like Federer aren't supposed to look anything less than great. This is why this was disorienting for some - a superhero was being exposed as vincible. Some held the view that it's cruel to measure an athlete against his prime. The most pragmatic of them all shrugged it off as 'inevitable' - even if the mind refuses to concede, the game eventually seeps out.

When legendary swimmer Ian Thorpe was asked if he was risking his legacy by performing at his 'C' game, he said, "People forget athletes were once kids who love what they do. I am finding that love again. I am prepared to sacrifice my legacy for that love."

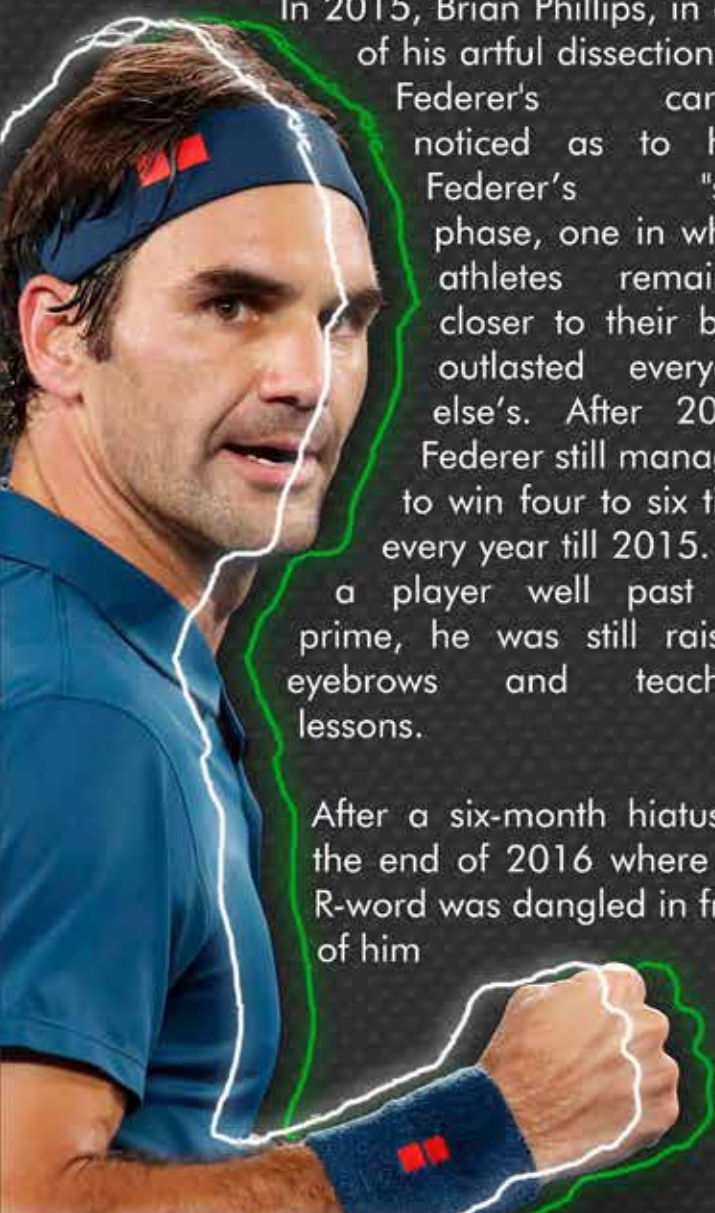
Federer, who seemed to agree with Thorpe, continued raging against the dying light. Even when form deserted him, he returned because of the promise he gave himself to try, endure.



It's why, when the 33-year-old Roger Federer was pressed about what gave him the strength to beat Gaël Monfils after overcoming a two-set deficit and two match points in the quarterfinal of the 2014 US Open, Federer was miffed. "What do you mean?" he retorted. "Well, to answer your first question, I'm Roger Federer. And also, I'm Roger Federer."

The reporter must have gone home with a note.

Veterans are rarely afforded the same latitude younger players are. Slowing reflexes and disobeying feet are casually weaved into the conversation and failures get described in tenses. Every unforced error and miscued return is considered to be a signal sent out by the march of time.



In 2015, Brian Phillips, in one of his artful dissections of Federer's career, noticed as to how Federer's "still" phase, one in which athletes remained closer to their best, outlasted everyone else's. After 2008, Federer still managed to win four to six titles every year till 2015. For a player well past his prime, he was still raising eyebrows and teaching lessons.

After a six-month hiatus at the end of 2016 where the R-word was dangled in front of him

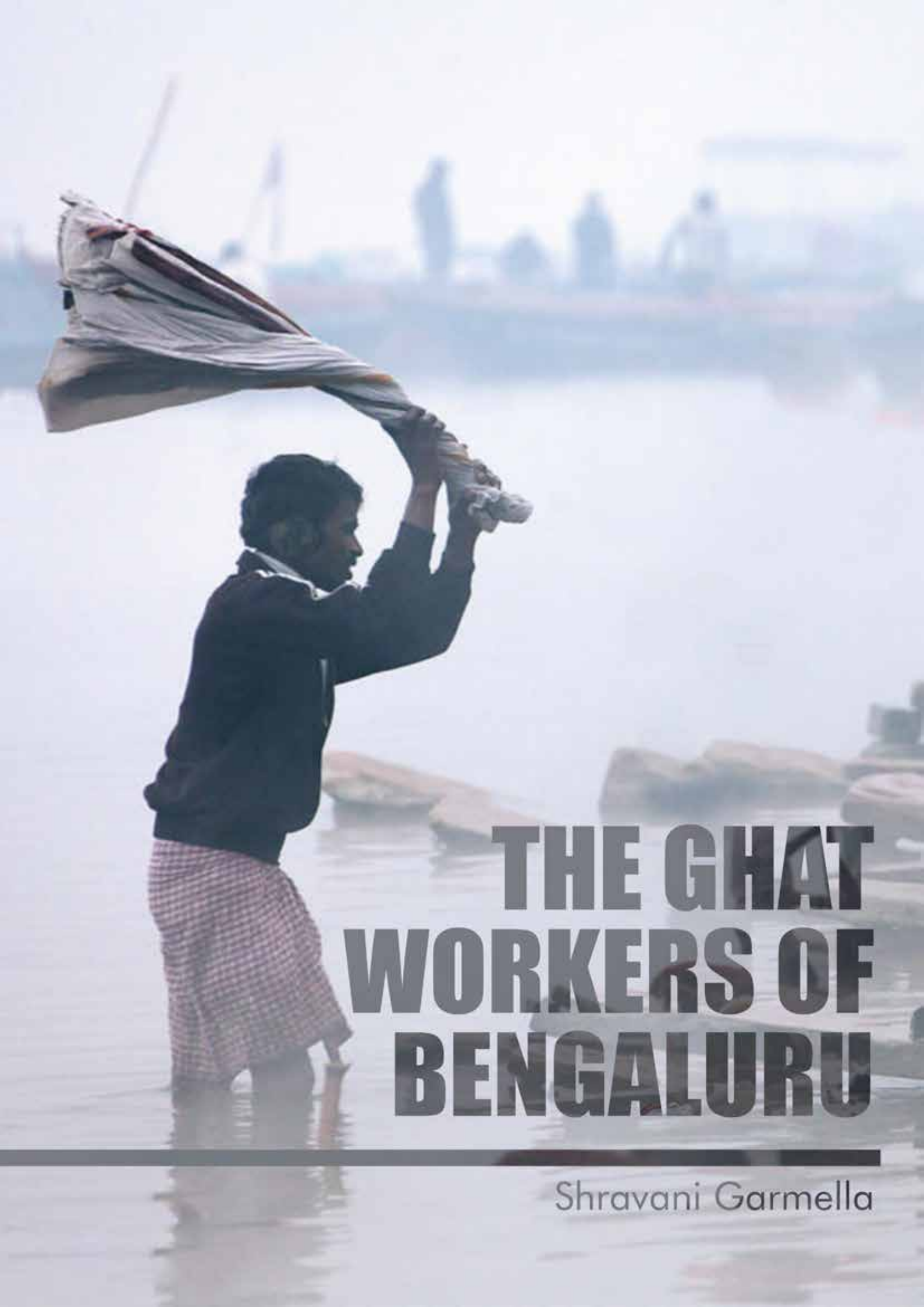
several times, Federer returned to court in 2017 with new vigour. He overcame his long-time rival Nadal at the Australian Open final, his first major since 2012. No. 18, a peak that seemed too steep, had been conquered. An eighth Wimbledon title awaited him in London later that year. The then 36-year-old veteran skipped clay season and ended the year clinching two of the three majors he entered.

Federer, his face lined with time and fatigue, ended 2017 with a win percentage of 91, his best since 2006, losing just five matches all year. This was surreal because 2016 concluded with the question as to how long the oldest men's singles champion could continue cherry-picking tournaments and stay fresh in the head and legs. It was a resilient response by a man confronted by his mortality, reminded that his skills, like others', fade too.

Grit and valour aren't adjectives people usually associate with Federer for often, there is a lazy analysis employed when it comes understanding to geniuses' work ethic. Perhaps they so exemplify flamboyance and effortlessness that it is easier to see them as painters rather than sculptors. This narrative, however, demeans the sweat involved in perfecting their game and diminishes the essence of the sport itself. Greatness is also about finding a way to battle when in the trenches, and here was an athlete whose limitations we had just dissected, showing us what was still possible.

It's why the most favourite memory of Federer in recent times arrived at the Rod Laver arena last month. Federer, in pursuit of his 21st major, went up against a 28-year-old Tennys Sandgren. He saved seven match points in a dramatic three-and-a-half-hour duel to advance into the semifinal.

Because he is Roger Federer.

A man in a dark sweater and a checkered lungi stands waist-deep in a river, holding a large, striped cloth aloft with both hands. The background is a hazy city skyline across the water. The title 'THE GHAT WORKERS OF BENGALURU' is overlaid in large, bold, dark letters on the right side of the image.

THE GHAT WORKERS OF BENGALURU

Shravani Garmella

Hidden amidst the quaint houses and the relatively quieter streets of Basavanagudi, the Dhobi Ghats of Bengaluru are invisible to the unsuspecting passer-by. While on a visit there with my teammates for a college assignment, I found myself navigating huge vats of water surrounded by lines of clothing hanging ten feet in the air. We stood in the midst of a myriad of colours and sights - an apt metaphor for the demographic consumed within the community of Ghat workers. The Ghats and the houses built around them are nothing short of family heirlooms that hold in them a sense of camaraderie and a bond which is unexplainable.



The Dhobis of Karnataka belong to the Madiwala caste which is said to have been founded by the war hero Madiwala Machideva. In recent times, the members of the Madiwala caste have garnered support for their plea to be included in the official Scheduled Castes list. Representation in all fronts is crucial for the advancement of a marginalised sector such as this one, and the flag-bearers of the community ensure it is done with great valour.

Just a few steps away from this hub of the vibrant business is the mighty Bull Temple looking over the area with glamour and poise. While walking on the streets adjacent to the temple, my teammates and I run into Govind Anna. With a hint of recognition in his eyes, he approaches us with timid steps and recalls the time when he would visit one of our team member's house for collecting clothes. It is astonishing how vividly he recalls minute details - the chipped wall scribbles, the coercing voice of a mother, and the flat number, 119B. "I have been doing this business for fifty years and I am sixty-six years old now. This work is what I'm known for. It is as much part of me as the house I grew up in. I never had a choice nor did it occur to me to do anything else," says Govind Anna.

Halfway through this interaction, he warmly invites us into his house. On a prime piece of real estate overlooking the washing area, Govind Anna and his daughter, Geeta, with a humble mixture of innocence and pride, show us the new washing machine they have bought with their savings. "We used to start washing clothes from 4 AM and would be drained of energy after a few hours. Each machine costs Rs. 65,000 and we are fortunate to have very little electricity fluxes. Now we can wash at least seventy items of clothing besides the ones we wash by hand." Business is booming for this family of four and now they are contemplating expanding into other sectors.



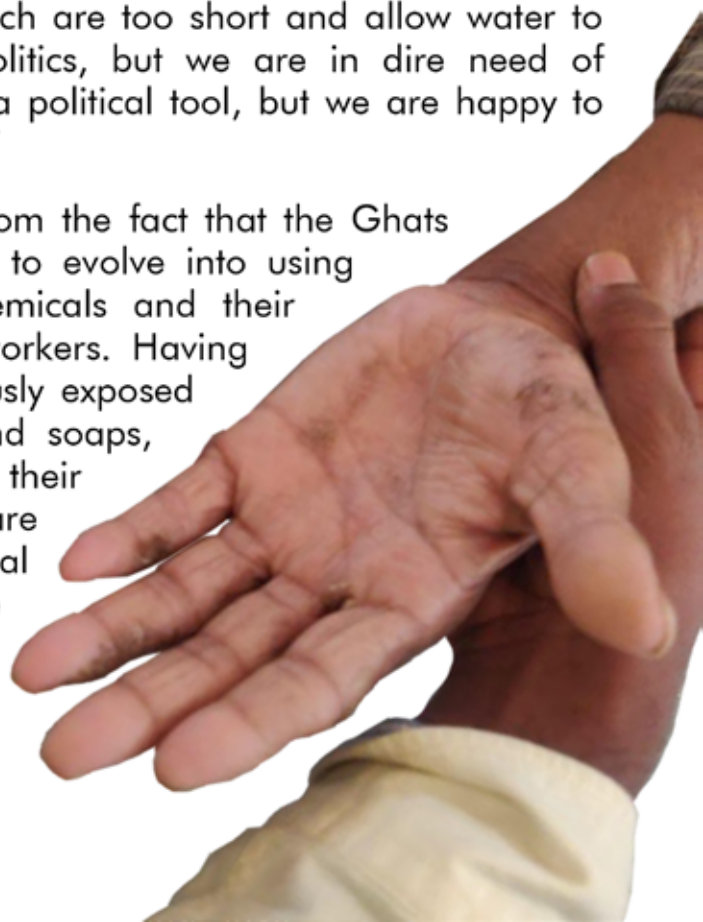
Geeta is held in high regard by her neighbours. Even though she married before completing her 10th grade, she is one of the first women from the community to diversify into another line of business. Geeta rents clothes out for weddings and manages a team of catering staff. She makes home visits and acquires the bulk of her customers during the wedding season. She takes immense pride in her Scooty and boasts about being a better rider than most of her male counterparts. "This is my guilty pleasure", she adds jokingly.

Geeta's younger son, Mani, goes to a private school and she attributes this to the government officials' refusal to admit students from the Madiwala community into public sector schools. This has directly

led to parents having to opt for schools that charge higher fees, leading to further financial pressure for the families. "It is a double-edged sword. On one hand, I am extremely happy that my son goes to a good school with other boys who all treat him like their best friend but on the other, certain demands made by the school are at times out of our budget."

About a kilometre away from where we began, Geeta shows us the hub of the Ghats. In a more formalised setting, we see a front office where we meet Mr Kalan, the head of the establishment. Housing huge machines for washing and drying, his office is starkly different from what one would expect a manager's office to look like. "I was able to study only up to the 12th standard but that is far ahead of what my brothers were allowed to do. It has been a struggle to set up the machines in this area. The BBMP refuses to lend support to us unless there is a massive outcry. They provide our workers with ineffective gloves which are too short and allow water to seep in. We don't want representation in politics, but we are in dire need of representation in education. Caste is used as a political tool, but we are happy to serve both the upper as well as the lower caste."

The loudest cries from the community stem from the fact that the Ghats workers have not been aided in their efforts to evolve into using mechanized methods. The inhalation of chemicals and their contact with skin have taken a toll on the workers. Having found no substitute, the workers are continuously exposed to the chemicals present in washing bars and soaps, which causes lesions and burns to the skin with their prolonged use. They also impair vision and are responsible for a myriad of lung diseases. Several workers that we interacted with brushed these concerns off as being side-effects of duty. Their lack of agency coupled with an ineffective system that ignores their woes has normalised their suffering.

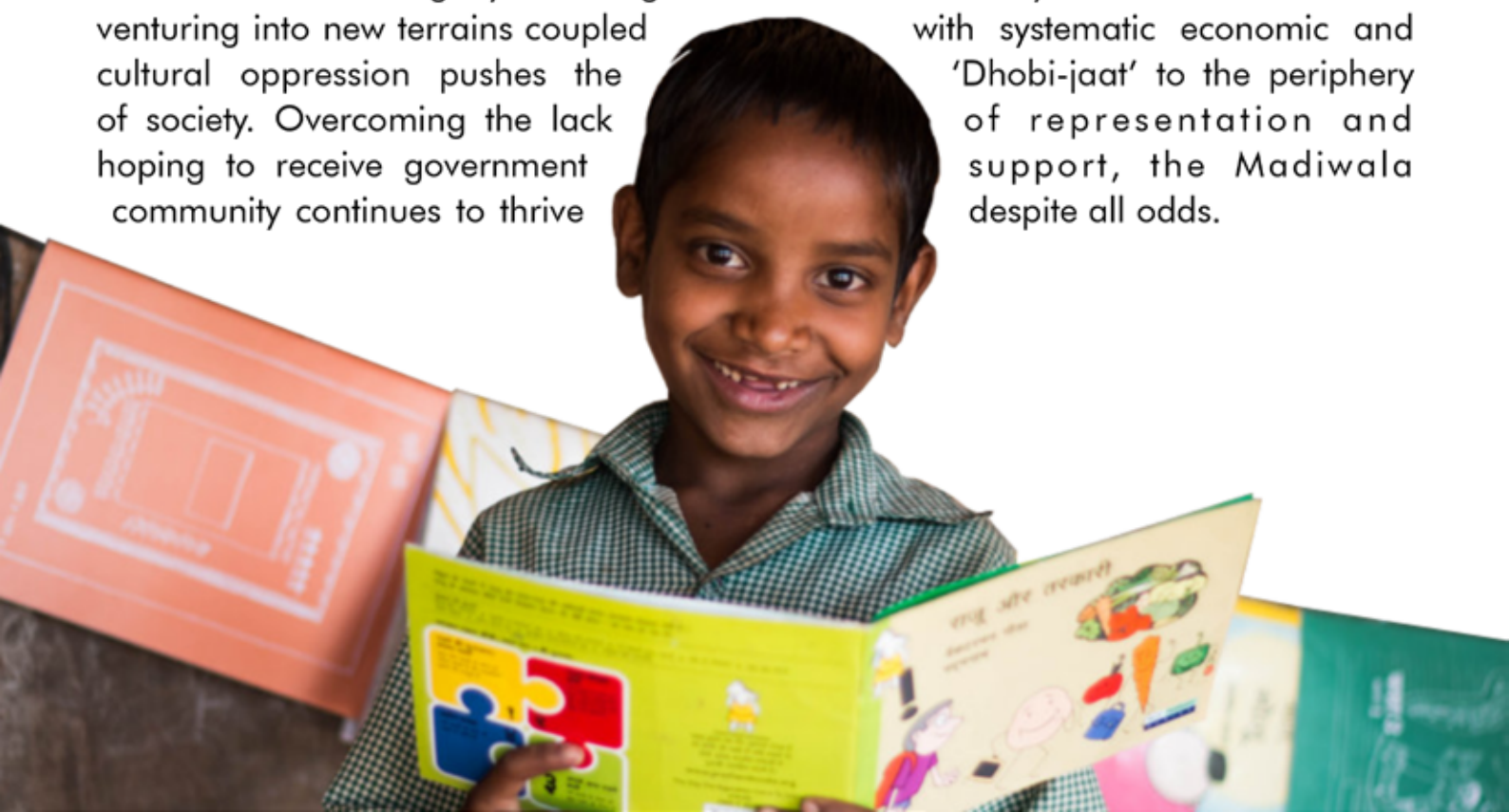


"Education is not everything but it is a distinctive factor in our world. It opens up multiple opportunities. If our caste were recognized, our children would get a place in reputed institutions. Currently, with our limited resources, they are unable to compete on general merit." says Kalan. The grounding belief held by most community members is that education is the only answer to all their woes. While there is some honesty to this, severe competition has crumpled many efforts at evolving.

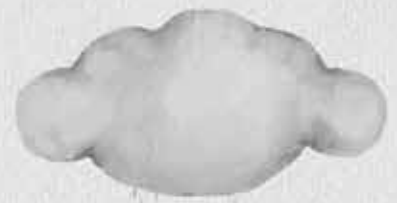
On our visit to the ironing den, I notice a huge portrait of the warrior Madiwala hung on the wall, adorned with flower garlands. The community members don't view their work as labour or exploitation; rather, they use it as an identifier. They have romanticised their efforts and have successfully bought into the Marxist notion, "Work hard and you will succeed."

Hiding behind the towering lines of identical black pants, we encounter 'Amma.' With a glittering smile, she tells us that she can't remember her age but she must be over sixty. "I never washed a single cloth until I got married. I would run around all day, loaf around recklessly. I got to spend very little time with my husband before he passed away. I was left behind with two children and no means to sustain us. For ten years, I worked sixteen-hour days until my sons could earn for themselves. I don't need to work now but I like doing it. I don't know what else to do. I don't have much energy to do a lot these days. But the damage has been done. I have severe health issues from the chemicals. I wish it was as easy as they showed on television," she adds teasingly.

The Dhobi Ghats of Bengaluru have reached their pinnacle of development in terms of technological progress, which has been ineffective and too slow to come, and the stakeholders are eagerly awaiting a revolutionary shift. But the inertia of venturing into new terrains coupled with systematic economic and cultural oppression pushes the 'Dhobi-jaat' to the periphery of society. Overcoming the lack of representation and hoping to receive government support, the Madiwala community continues to thrive despite all odds.



The Discovery



In a class of seventy, you're bound to find people of all kinds
Different tastes, mind-boggling perspectives
all blended to induce an endearing state of mind.
As everyone else stood up and shared a few talents they possess,
My mind slowly began to digress.
With every minute after that session,
there were many thoughts scurrying around my head.
One-by-one I began listing out qualities within me with sheer dread.

An introvert who had absolutely no belief in her own abilities,
a girl who lost track of her own mental necessities.
Watching my buddies delve deeper into the ocean of discovery and
awakening was a true delight.
I did all of this sitting in a corner
as I let my inhibitions coax my heart's desires into a silly old fight.
Fear was all I knew;
time and again I'd find myself in a broken boat trying to swim through.

But then one day a certain somebody came along.
With an endearing smile and a gleeful shine in his eyes,
he helped me break down the shackles I held onto for too long.
I need you to write something for me, he said, it's for a fest.
As I heard him break down the details for me,
I found fear lurking in the deep ends of my head.
He noticed I was paralysed with doubt.
The fact that the world would read my words made me wish I could run away
As far as I can. As long as I can.
But he held my hand and gave me a reassuring nod.
His enthusiastic and caring demeanour calmed my nerves.
I went ahead and poured out my heart,
When I finished, all that was visible to me was the joy I felt through this art
Exhilarating, liberating and joyful I felt

My doubts took a backseat, I watched as they knelt.

I found my passion and they were in words
They expressed all that was within me and beyond
My beloved, I'm glad you came along.
You helped me fly like a free bird
and gave me the calibre to write my song

Shreeka Shravya







She woke up to the
Early rays of the
Rising sun,
Unaware of the joy
They radiated.
Reminiscing about times
That cajoled her back to sleep,
She pulled herself together
For a deep slumber
For today was another battle
Of blood and of soul.

She sought company
In the folds of the dark,
Oblivious to the moon that smiled at her.
Even as she let her defences down,
The lustrous battalion held its guard
To protect the queen of the night -
The only one who admired the blanket of black
While the world praised the silver crescent.
Perhaps she was just as dark,
And perhaps the world just craved her light.

She wept and whimpered
When she awoke to another sunrise.
The warmth of the rays tingled her limbs.
She laughed till she could breathe no more,
She talked till her mind blacked out,
She thumped and clapped
As the banter grew boisterous.
Yet her heart danced
To the rhythm of a corpse;
It left her cold and numb
But not heartless,
Unlike those who watched her bleed.

Queen of the Night

Gayathri Prabhakaran



Dua Jawed

The Pinnacle Of The Gen Z Tunes

B. Sai Subikshaa

In the past decade, we have experienced some of the best and most iconic music. We are the generation that not only grooved to Michael Jackson and the Macarena, but also the one that jammed to Party Rock Anthem and made Gangnam Style go viral. "When I think of the music in the 80s and 90s, the music was really fresh, new and energetic but not quite corporatized yet," said music producer Terry Gross, commenting on the massive boom in the music industry during the early 2000s.

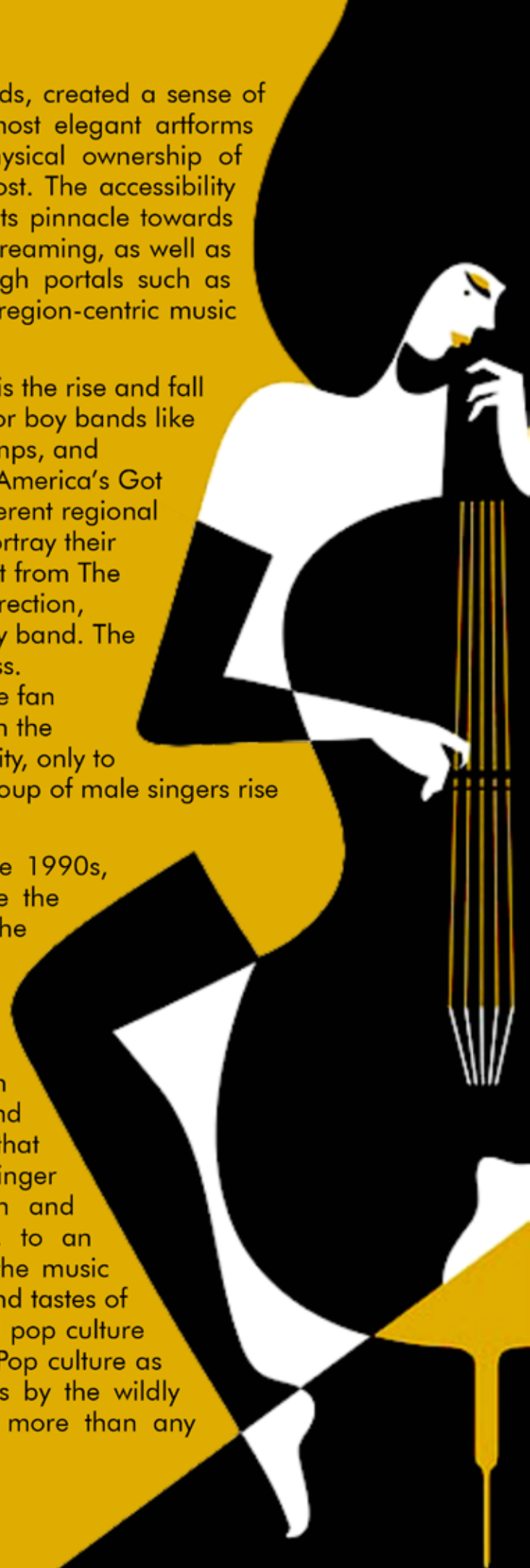
At the turn of the century, the year 2000 brought with it a phenomenal change in the music industry, within our sub-continent and in the world at large. The pinnacle of music is largely defined by the top trending songs that crown the charts; charts like the Billboard, UK Singles, and the Rolling Stones to name a few. To understand the music that defined our time, it is also essential to understand how access to music has been simplified over the decades, leading us to into an advanced era. Amongst the new trend of "music portals", devices that enabled people to listen to music on the go, the crowd favourite in the 80s was the Sony Walkman. Portable music didn't exist in human history till the Sony Walkman introduced it, and music hasn't been the same since.

However, these man made miracle devices soon went out of fashion when music was made accessible through internet portals on mobile phones, especially with developers coming up with specific music applications such as Spotify and iTunes. It is also fair to state that music had a higher value in the pre-digitalisation era when people shelled a lot out of their pockets to own their favourite tracks in the form of cassettes, vinyl records, or even limited edition CDs.

The ownership of these, especially vinyl records, created a sense of pride and entitlement. Music was one the most elegant artforms back in the day owing to the fact that physical ownership of cassettes and records came with a status boost. The accessibility to music has greatly increased and touched its pinnacle towards the late 2010s, with the unlimited and easy streaming, as well as download of online and offline music through portals such as YouTube, Spotify, Amazon music and various region-centric music apps.

Another trend that peaked in the past decade is the rise and fall of boy bands. Backstreet Boys set a platform for boy bands like One Direction, 5 Seconds of Summer, The Vamps, and Maroon 5. Reality TV shows like The X Factor, America's Got Talent and American Idol, along with their different regional variants, provided a stage for youngsters to portray their talents and make a name for themselves. Right from The Jackson 5 to The Beatles to NSYNC to One Direction, each decade has had their very own iconic boy band. The versatility of the boy bands, however, is timeless. Millennials have proven this by forming a large fan base for bands from the 60s and 70s. Through the years, many such bands have risen to popularity, only to break up after a few years; and then a new group of male singers rise to continue the cycle.

However, the most popular boy bands of the 1990s, Backstreet Boys and NSYNC, helped change the music industry during their time, altering the way our culture views pop music, and male artists. Another noteworthy artist of the decade is Taylor Swift, who redefined pop music, producing chart-topping albums almost every year since her debut. Her often controversial lyrics propelled her to fame and gained her an incredibly loyal fanbase that appreciated the courage it took for a young singer like herself to openly talk about her pain and intimate experiences in an expressive way, to an audience of millions. Different pinnacles in the music industry display various shifts in preferences and tastes of the music consumers. How did a westernized pop culture take a revolutionary turn to integrate Korean Pop culture as one of the most globally viral trends? Songs by the wildly popular band BTS have topped the charts more than any regional musician ever could.



The K-Pop culture can be traced back to 1885 when an American missionary school started teaching British and American folk music at Korean schools. These songs were also popularly called as “channgas.” During the Japanese War, “channgas” were created to give voice to the oppression of the Koreans under the Japanese. The first K-Pop album was produced in 1925 by Park Chae Soon and Lee Ryu-suk. It was called “Yi Pungjin Sewol” and contained a collection of Japanese songs that were translated to Korean. The first Korean song to be written by a Korean was “Nakhwayasu”, sung by Lee Jung-Suk in 1929. After the Korean War, the predominant presence of the US troops influenced an intervention into the traditional culture of westernization. During the 80s, ballads were popular and they were nothing similar to the modern-day K-Pop music.

In fact, modern K-Pop didn't exist till 1992 when Seo Taiji and Boys released The Nan Arayo. Needless to say, their fan base was multiplying by the minute and reached the pinnacle point in 2012 with PSY's releasing “Gangnam Style”. Gangnam Style stayed on the top of charts for months. The K-Pop fandom didn't stop at this. Then there were the up and coming bands like Bangtan Boys (BTS), Red Velvet and Twice, who attracted enthusiasts not just from the East, but around the globe. There is refreshing diversity in the types of music produced by K-Pop bands – BTS has a classic “bad boy” style, Red Velvet's style is bolder, eye-catching chic, while Twice has a bubbly, cute, and bright concept. With different styles come different types of music.

The past decade has been revolutionary in defining how music is perceived worldwide, with the rise of viral music trends, new formats, and new genres and sub-genres that came to be, encouraged by the ease of music accessibility. The music that defined our generation has also helped us connect with others and define ourselves as individuals with a refined taste for this medium of art.





Eyes

They say that when words fail, our eyes reveal it all -
Every victory, every wound, every rise, and every fall.
You can try your best to conceal your true feelings as much as
you'd like
But your eyes? They pay no heed to any of your qualms
they are loud and clear like a child on a bike.
What would it take for those precious pearls to be on your side
once in a while?
They exhibit every single ounce of pain in your heart,
unapologetically reflect the limitless spring of love you've held
onto from the very start.

They burn to ashes in moments of unruly anger,
shine like the brightest stars in the sky in times of joy.
Eyes are a portal to the world thriving within your very soul.
They are not mere toys.
Feelings can be hidden, words may not suffice,
the true sentiments that prance in the hallways of your heart
are out in the open -
even of a person with a temperament that's coy.

It certainly isn't as simple as it seems,
to read through someone's eyes like a snippet of poetry that
sounds nothing short of a dream.
Only someone who truly cares can get past the guards of sti-
fling concealment who are constantly on pry.

There are quite a few individuals who can look past the joyous
façade and find their way to those shrill cries.

In a world like ours, you may feel the need to hide it all. You
may assume one little hint of your inner self would lead to
your fall.

But trust me, sometimes it is necessary to let down your guard
once in a while.
When you find people who cherish you and look out for you,
you can pick up your hammer and break down the confines -
one by one, tile by tile.

Shreeka Shravya



THE PRIME OF FASHION

Anoushka Bhaumik

Everything in the world is subject to change, and fashion holds no exception. In fact, fads change faster in fashion than Bollywood heroines change costumes in songs.

A new trend emerges before the other can even reach its peak, and this is easily facilitated with the established fast fashion industry we have now. History lies testament to this change and although it all rotates in circles, nothing is constant in fashion. Well, almost nothing. Through the years there are some pieces that have become absolute necessities. Classics of sorts. They have made their homes in people's hearts and refuse to leave. They have achieved their prime, and now there is no downfall.

A little black dress is the first thing that comes to my mind when I think of such an article of clothing. I don't know if Coco Chanel knew the classic it would become when she introduced it, but it can't be refuted to be an absolute gift to our wardrobes. Right from its early 1920 designs, it was intended to be long-lasting, versatile, affordable and accessible to the widest market and meant to suit everybody with its neutral tone. It is something that can be easily dressed up for a party, completely jazzed up for a special event or dressed down with a simple jacket for running errands. It's the comfortable option, the elegant option, the last-minute option, the playing-it-safe option and always-going-to-work-for-everybody option. Fashion can be a risky business, but a little black dress will never fail you.

Another classic that we just cannot escape is a crisp white shirt. It is always a fresh and sophisticated choice. Although it was seen as a choice only for the wealthy when it was introduced, its usage by Hollywood stars in the forties have made it quite a popular choice. The simplicity and versatility of the white shirt makes it a fool proof option. It is perfect for work - paired with tailored pants or a sleek pencil skirt, a good option with jeans for a day out and can even be paired with long skirts and lehengas for festivals or wedding parties. The best part? It goes with almost any colour that you pair it with. It can brighten any tired look and if styled the right way, take the entire look up by multiple notches without much effort. When in doubt, a white shirt will always come handy.

While on the topic of a white shirt, something it can often be seen clubbed with is a good pair of denim jeans – another classic. Denim jeans have become a sort of a staple in all our wardrobes and more like daily routine.





And although, it is mostly seen as an everyday-laid back look, used mainly to run errands or for a day at a mall, if paired with the right blouse and the right accessories, it can easily be dressed up for more special events – for days you don't have energy to look all that special. Denim jeans – with the indefinite variety and fits that it now comes in – is an option that caters to all and truly brings all our wardrobes together.

The last item of clothing on this evergreen list of mine, has to be a saree. This piece of garment is believed to have originated in the Indus Valley as early as 2800 BC and has lasted through every era since. In my eyes, sarees are six yards of utter bliss. They come in all prints and all materials and suit every person that carries one. In fact, a different and special kind of saree can be found in every corner of India. To me – a saree is a long piece of cloth embodying elegance, versatility and timelessness. No

matter the occasion, one can never go wrong with an appropriate saree. And there is no one way to wear it- the traditional, normal way always works; but one can just add a belt or a jacket, wrap the *pallu* around their neck or change the draping to spice things up.

There may be items that have made their homes in our wardrobes for a while now, but none pass the test of time as these four in my opinion. We live in an era of fast fashion where racks are given a new look every week. We live in an era of unsustainable, ever changing wardrobes burning their tiny (and sometimes not so tiny) holes in our pockets. And through this all these are pieces that have endured the various changes that fashion sees and have made their comfortable and quite permanent space in the list of classics. They cannot be replaced or overthrown, the only wait is to see what other item adds its name to this list and reaches its pinnacle with the passing of time.



STAINLESS

Akshatha Udupa

The eerie whistle hung in the air, slowly creating a vacuum in the house. Sally clutched the railing, slowly inching downwards, her heart in her throat. Her gut throbbed, warning her, telling her not to go any further. But she had to. She had to know if Anne was okay, if she was hurt.

Before long, the ground floor of the house was just a step below. Her nerves screamed at her to go back, to leave the home as soon as she could, but her mind had only one thought: Anne. So, she gingerly set her foot on the ground.

The whistle was shaking her bones, breaking them with the blunt force of terror. Nevertheless, she moved ahead, hands shaking and breath drawn. Her feet stopped moving as she neared the wall separating the kitchen from the hall.

Her hands instantly reached the wall. She could hear the sound of someone whistling merrily. Though the tune the whistle followed was a joyous one, it exuded nothing but dread. Sally's breathing began to race, turning shallower by the second. She gulped hard, trying to gather any courage she had left. Finally, she peeked into the kitchen.

Everything looked fine, save for a strange woman washing her hands thoroughly at the sink. Anne was missing. The disquiet in Sally didn't pipe down.

At the sink, Sally saw the woman hum contentedly, having finished her cleaning. The woman wiped her hands with a paper towel, which had an odd colour scheme of red and white once she was done with them. Sally could feel the satisfaction rolling off of the woman as she opened the door to the cabin below and reach for the dustbin. Anne's head rolled out of it.

Annie's face was white, an expression of unadulterated terror plastered onto her it permanently. Her mouth was twisted, her eyes wide and her eyebrows furrowed. Sally's breath stopped.

"Ah," the woman tutted. "You stay right there, sweetie," the killer told the severed head, gently with a satisfied smile, as she stuffed Anne's head back into the cabin.



All the muscles froze in Sally's body as the air seemed to thin around her. She turned back and slid down the wall, the sight of Anne's head imprinted onto her brain. She drew a deep breath, trying to get air into her lungs, trying to get her mind to work. Her body seemed incapable of movement as she realised what had happened and what was most likely to happen.

"Sally?" A voice called out softly. Sally lifted her head, her eyes red and her nose streaming, and froze. The woman was standing above her, looking at her kindly.

"Honey, weren't you supposed to be out today?" The woman sighed, her expression turned sad. "Aw, honey. If I had known you were here, I would have dealt with you before." The woman looked pityingly at Sally. "It's okay, though. You can still join Anne."

The muscles in Sally's neck were taut as she stared at the woman. She opened her mouth, to ask, to question, to implore but she felt the cold bite of a knife at her throat before she could move. A thin line of pain danced on her neck and rubies appeared. The woman drew her hand away, a thread of red on her knife.

Sally realised what had happened as blood gushed out of her. She grabbed at her throat trying to staunch the blood flow, but in vain. As she slid down the wall, sliding because of her own blood, she saw the woman look annoyed.

"Dear," the woman sighed, aggravated. "You should have come before I scrubbed the place. Now I have to clean again!"



PINNACLE



Not everybody's pinnacle is the same,
Everybody treads their own path of life
Some want money, some want fame,
But it is hard work and effort with which our mind must thrive.

A point where you think you have peaked
May not actually be it
For you still have dreams to be heaped
And a life ahead, which will be even more lit!

The sky is not the limit;
After every challenge comes another
You must stay in your spirit, for the summit
May differ, from one time to another.

On the way, you may get lost in the crowd
Due to reasons that aren't in your control
But this is what should make you proud
This will be the lesson with a major role.

Your happiness is your true pinnacle
Sometimes you may be lost in your ego, pride and fame
Even then, you will work miracles,
In every form, career, and personal flame!

Akhil Venugopal



THE CINEMATIC CLIMB

Shreeka Shravya

Movies – one word that has a multitude of universes brimming within it. The magic of movies is mesmerizing. It can make you laugh, cry, dance, contemplate and experience emotions like no other medium can.

As the years have gone by, the movie industry has seen immense change in terms of the development in genres, picturization, concepts, visuals and whatnot. With the widespread use of social media, the audience is no longer a mere spectator. They have begun to evolve into a well-versed lot that knows what they exactly want. So when a movie clicks with the audience, filmmakers often consider this to be a golden opportunity. If the audience has thoroughly enjoyed a movie, why not capitalize on this and expand the universe to carry the legacy forward?

Moreover, audiences across the world have begun to take an immense interest in movies. With every new chapter being added to this massive book of audio-visual wonder, viewers have now started taking notice of every little intricacy of these films over the years. Such is the amount of attention movie franchises have garnered in recent times. What does a movie franchise essentially mean? By definition, it refers to a collection of related films in succession that share the same fictional universe or are marketed as a series.

A movie franchise is an intriguing yet sought after form of storytelling. These franchises have their fair share of advantages and disadvantages to both the makers and the audience.

Through a franchise, the audience gets to witness the journey of the movie characters from the very scratch. The audience follows every moment of growth, every incident of disappointment and every emotion that the character goes through. The audience grows along with these characters. With every movie depicting a new phase in the characters' lives, the audience becomes even more invested in what this new stage of life has to offer to both the character's development and the entire storytelling experience as a whole.

For filmmakers, a successful movie franchise translates to a guaranteed constant source of revenue that isn't just limited to the movies. A successful movie franchise opens a window for an even more popular range of best-selling books, apparel, merchandise, and whatnot.

But on the flip side, this form of storytelling also has a disadvantageous tinge to it. For starters, these franchises follow a certain pattern. Every consecutive film must follow a certain chronology. To understand the current film, one would have to watch the previous movies to be able to grasp the premise of the current instalment.

Often, irrespective of the stellar storyline, breathtaking visuals, and power performances, a franchise may not strike a chord with the audience if they feel that the movie is repetitive and monotonous in terms of the general overview or simply because the audience isn't able to resonate and engage with the plotline.

Several factors such as the ones mentioned above lead to a franchise plunging into the



depths of failure. The viewers have become a lot more informed than they were in the past few years. In the past year, several movie franchises took the world by a storm and set path-breaking records that have left us all in awe.

There is a lot that filmmakers must take into consideration while treading forward onto the next steps of the journey. They must put forth a story that leaves the audience starstruck and keeps them hooked to the very end. It also requires them to step into the shoes of the audience and gain a deeper insight into what the audience is looking for.

One glimpse into the most popular movie franchises in the world is all that is needed to be able to see the course these franchises have taken over the past few years. While some people cannot stop showering these movies with a truckload of praise and love, there exists a section of the fandom that seems to take their thoughts in another direction.

The wizarding world is a mystical haven we've all dreamt of living in at some point in our lives. The Harry Potter franchise is easily one of the world's leading and most loved franchises.

Right from the Golden Trios camaraderie, to the tender cocoon of care that Hagrid built around Harry and the unfathomable fear rushing through our veins at every mention of Voldemort - every moment of this fictional magnum opus continues to win hearts of adults and kids alike.

The Deathly Hallows Saga was a befitting end to an era of magic and wizardry that etched a place in our hearts. The fans were nostalgic, emotional and content with the destination that this adventure had reached. There came an announcement

that took the fans by a sweet surprise. The Makers were taking the wizardry marvels of Harry Potter to the next level with a new play and movie in the works.

It was announced that Harry Potter and the Cursed Child – A play that picks up right from the proceedings of the Deathly Hallows. The story follows a grown-up Harry Potter who now heads the Department of Magical Law Enforcement at the Ministry of Magic and his son who is all set to join Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The story goes on to trace Albus's journey as he attempts to find his foot at Hogwarts and live up to the long-standing legacy of his family and his namesakes Albus Dumbledore and Severus Snape.

The play received accolades from reviewers and audiences across the world with people helming it to be as magical and spell bounding as its immensely successful predecessors, but every coin has two sides to it. Certain sections of the fandom were quite apprehensive about the story and didn't seem too happy with it. The loopholes within the storyline sent out waves of disappointment across the fandom.

The over usage of the time turner storyline, Cedric Diggory's unexpected and overdramatized return transformation into the death eater, Harry's changed demeanour which happens to be miles apart from his previous portrayals, the unimaginable speed at which the Polyjuice Potion was created are a few instances that left a shrapnel of disappointment in the hearts and minds of the audience. While a multitude of people went on to shower heaps of praises onto this production, the story to an extent, missed out on its aim by a tiny margin and wasn't able to entirely uphold the long-standing legacy left behind by the Harry Potter Series.

The Marvel Cinematic Universe is yet another series that continues to amaze audiences across all age groups. Every movie released under the Marvel Umbrella has a unique storyline of its own. The very idea of a shared universe where each movie subtly forms a linked narrative was initially unheard of in Hollywood. The larger than life VFX, powerful character and humane character arcs, breath-taking super powers and gripping plots makes this series a hit.

Irrespective of how well-received these movies were in the past, the makers are often left with the surmounting pressure of coming up with something that isn't repetitive and strikes a chord with the audience. Bringing these superhero marvels (no pun intended) onto the screen and bringing Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's narratives to life in a bigger and better way is something that the MCU has always been known for.

Right from the prefatory emergence of the flirtatious iron-clad Megamind in 2008 to the very recent Spider-Man far from home, which saw Peter Parker step onto the mantle and grows into a powerful force, the marvel movies have been well appreciated. Each release resurrects new energy and anticipation into the franchise and this lease of electrifying anticipation rubs off its aura on the audiences.

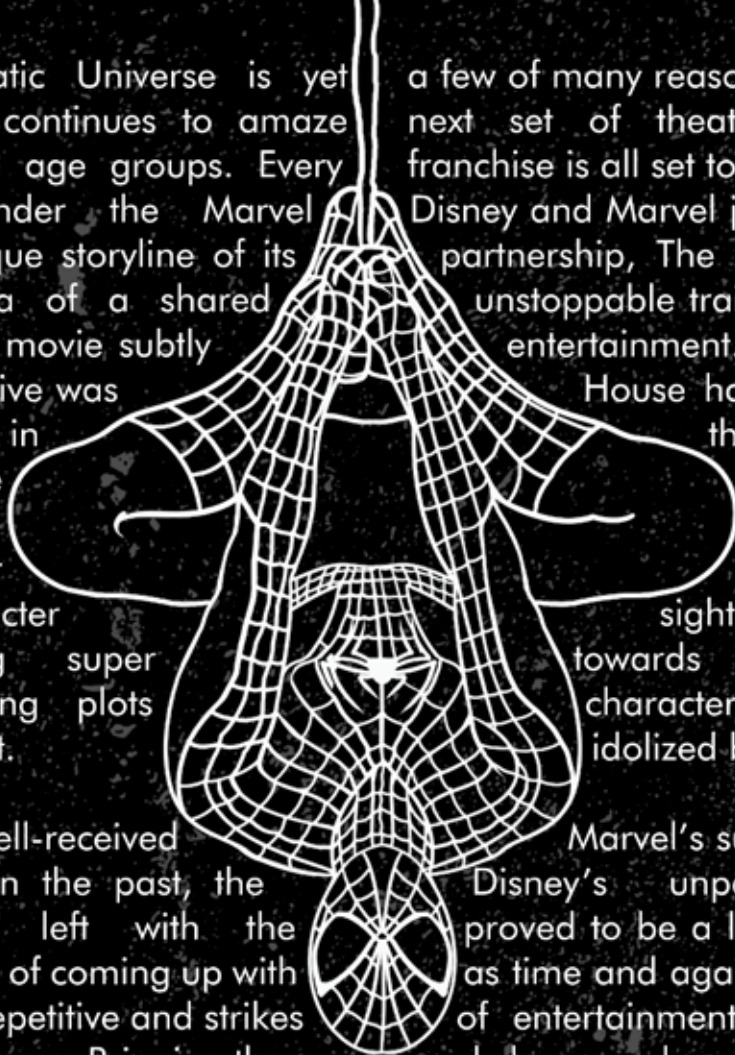
With a new phase that's all set to commence, the MCU's prospects look very promising. This new phase is expected to surpass the success and glory garnered by its predecessors. Dynamic star casts, new adaptations, and highly advanced technology in terms of visual effects are just

a few of many reasons to watch out for the next set of theatrical adventures this franchise is all set to take us on. Ever since Disney and Marvel joined hands to form a partnership, The MCU has become an unstoppable trailblazer in the world of entertainment. The Magical Media House has been considered as the ultimate master when it comes to the art of movie franchises. Disney's sights have always been set towards creating stories and characters that are loved and idolized by every generation.

Marvel's superhero expertise and Disney's unparalleled experience proved to be a lethal combination that as time and again raised the standards of entertainment. Disney went ahead and leveraged on the success of this fictional stalwart. Within no time, the Marvel Disney duo let out a triumphant roar that left the world in awe. In a refreshing and much-awaited movie, Disney took Marvel to the television screens, online streaming platforms and ended up releasing multiple merchandise lines.

With the introduction of Disney Plus, Marvel is all set to assist Disney in laying the foundation for this very innovative and awaited platform. With Marvel series' such as Hawkeye, The Falcon and The Winter Soldier, Loki, WandaVision, Moon Knight, Ms. Marvel, She-Hulk and What If...? in the process of being released on the platform, Disney+ is a force to be reckoned with.

If Disney's ship continues to sail in the right direction, it is believed that Disney+ could end up competing neck to neck with Netflix in terms of the content it has to offer. Just a day after its launch in the USA, Canada, and the Netherlands, the platform



garnered a whopping 10 million subscribers.

With Disney taking over Marvel, it signifies that Disney is now in a position to include earnings from Marvel-based theme park attractions as a part of their revenue. These attraction include exhibits such as Thor: Treasures of Asgard, that displays Asgardian relics and transports guests to Odin's throne room, where they are greeted by Thor, the Avengers Training Initiative, a theme park attraction where Black Widow and Hawkeye "assemble a group of young recruits to see if they have what it takes to be an Avenger and several other attractions.

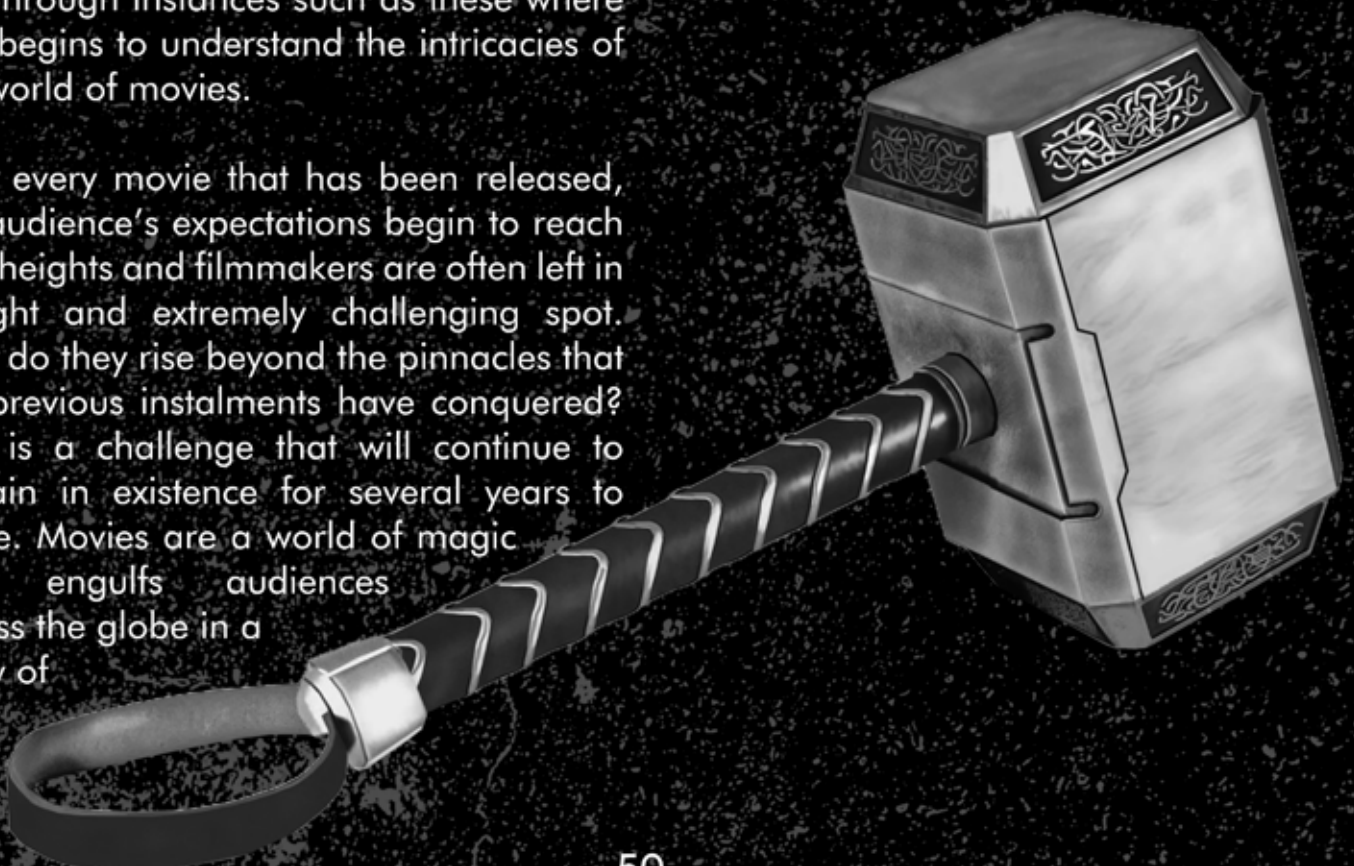
Owing to the terms of this partnership, Disney is also able to reap the benefits of merchandise sales which features a variety of items which include clothing, accessories, toys, utilities, stationery, etc.

Through this association, Disney has discovered yet another vault of treasure.

It is through instances such as these where one begins to understand the intricacies of the world of movies.

With every movie that has been released, the audience's expectations begin to reach new heights and filmmakers are often left in a tight and extremely challenging spot. How do they rise beyond the pinnacles that the previous instalments have conquered? This is a challenge that will continue to remain in existence for several years to come. Movies are a world of magic that engulfs audiences across the globe in a flurry of

emotions. Over the years it has been observed that not every venture automatically spells out success – To reach the pinnacles of unmatched quality and uniqueness, one must learn from their shortcomings and use it as the fire to forge the sword of victory and appreciation.



Six Days

One feeling shared
Two people, the perfect pair
Three words, not yet spoken
Four chambers, never to be broken
Five fingers holding five,
They never felt more alive.
Six days, that's all it took.

That's all it took - six days!
And in different ways,
He gave her an infinity
Within those sparsely numbered days.
She left him with a smile
Which he carried with him wherever he wandered.



The Cost of a Hoodoo

Ahead of a late evening match against the illustrious 3-peat Lakers team, Jay Williams, former NBA player and who is currently well on his way to a promising career as an analyst, had set his mind on one thing - hitting the Staples Centre at 3 p.m., practising his hardest and making 400 shots to prove a point to himself that he could beat the reigning champs, the Los Angeles Lakers. Upon reaching the Staples Center, however, he was surprised to hear the sound of dribbling, courtesy of a man drenched in sweat. Williams proceeded to work on his game for an hour and a half and while taking a breath, could still hear a figure practising in-game scenario plays. Williams continues to observe him and an hour and a half later, the man stops. Later that night, the 'miracle worker' scored 40 points against Williams' team. Restless and eager to make sense of what happened, Williams asked the man why he had been in the gym for that long. An enigmatic Kobe Bean Bryant responded, "Because I saw you come in. I wanted you to know it doesn't matter how hard you work. I'm willing to work harder than you. You inspire me to be better."

Such is the tale of numerous apex conquerors throughout humankind; stories of broken bones, spilt blood, poured sweat, shed tears - all to reach the culmination of personhood. Understanding these stories and learning what it takes to be the best serves not only as guiding principles but also proves that The Pinnacle exists. It isn't merely a myth, it is scalable.

Blaise Pascal once said that "All the good maxims have been written. It only remains to put them into practice". The fact is that too many people have done too much for us to remain just starry-eyed and in awe. It is high time we dust our backs off and get to work.

So, what does it take to reach the highest point? That is a question better answered by exploring rather than investigating, as so many stories of greats have a focal point - that enlightenment is an internal concept.

Do determination and resoluteness form an integral tool to scale the unscalable? It would certainly seem so if you were to delve into the fascinating read, "An Iron Will" by Orison Swett Marden. In it, he probes the reader by stating that a person without self-reliance and an iron will is the plaything of chance, the puppet of his environment, the slave of circumstances. Are not doubts the greatest of enemies? The secret of Jeanne d'Arc's success was not alone in the rare decision of character, but in her seeing of visions which spurred her to self-confidence - confidence in her divine mission.

Upon receiving command of the British fleet, a title and a statue at Trafalgar Square, what became a keynote of Horatio Nelson's character was when he remarked, "When I don't know whether to fight or not, I always fight" (perhaps not the most appropriate advice at this moment, but I digress). Be it the tales of Horatius and the

Tuscans, Leonidas and Xerxes, Themistocles and the Persians or the battles of Caesar, it was always an iron will that prevailed.

"What would you do if you were besieged in a place entirely destitute of provisions?" asked the examiner to a young cadet. "If there were anything to eat in the enemy's camp, I should not be concerned," the cadet responded. In the midst of the French Revolution, when authorities were aghast, in came a man who said, "I know a young officer who can quell this mob." Napoleon Bonaparte was sent for; he came, he subjugated the mob, he overthrew the authorities, he ruled France, and then conquered Europe.

An equally important trait is to stay curious and not yield to the lull of ignorance. "It's what you learn after you know it all that counts", said John Wooden. I would go further to say that it's not how much you know, but what you know and what you can think of in time that can make a difference in the 21st Century. It is intriguing how, as a society, we value monotony in the migration of knowledge but find variety in the transfer of information.

Perhaps it is a means to stifle individuality so as to maintain the status quo for the 'greater good', but history gives us examples of why that premise is flawed and gives an even stronger reason to question and learn. Curiosity did kill the cat, but satisfaction brought it back.

What else could prove to serve as climbing tools for success? One word: Uniqueness. Admittedly a cliché but its presence can prove to be underrated. Edward Everett, one of history's most remarkable orators, spoke for two hours with 13,000 words at a soldier's funeral. After him, the 16th president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, spoke just 270 words for two minutes. And yet, in his speech he included the words 'government of the people, by the people, for the people' which came to be known as the Gettysburg Address, one of history's most famous speeches.

Amongst millions of talented musicians, comedians, artists, and actors, a person's celebrity status is not the only factor that makes them unique but it's also their inherent talent. Trevor Noah, the host of The Daily Show, was nervous to get on stage to be followed by the legendary comedian Dave Chappelle. Chappelle advised him, "Why are you nervous? The audience isn't here because we're funny. They're here because we're interesting". Tact, the ability to raise your eyebrow and not the roof, can prove to be a valuable asset.

What it all comes down to, of course, is the curious case of sacrifice. The idea that to receive, you must first give; the trade-off between the short and the long-term. One must be willing to let go of one rock to hold on to another while climbing a summit. To look at glory miles away one must give up the muses of the now. As Emerson once said, "The years teach much which the days never know".

While looking at some strange disfigured tall structures among the landscape of the Rockies, a son asked his father what they were. The father explained, "They're called hoodoos. They're columns or pinnacles of weathered rock. Judging by your look, you don't seem to like them". The son seemed perplexed. "They're not meant to look good nor are they easy to climb. The climb is never as attractive as some people make it out to be, but there's a certain beauty about them once you reach the top" said the father, who was also a mountaineer, while looking down to where his now amputated leg rested. He looked at his son's worried face and whispered in his ear words resembling a Tolstoyan saying, "Do not fret, for the kingdom of grit is within you."



Evenings like these

Are sure to leave you mesmerised
The red glow from sunset skies
While the birds feebly harmonise

Chilly, flower-scented air
That brushes through your hair
The dim lantern light
That gives a foggy sight

Bougainvillea all around
The softness of the ambience is profound
A star-studded night sky
Looking down as I write, saying hi?



Rashmi Agarwal

TO REACH, OR TO BREACH?

Yash Agarwal

Lengthy hours of travail, unrelenting grit, and an assiduous spirit – it is with these that one finally reaches a desired point of unprecedented success – a pinnacle. With an aura of euphoria and sense of achievement, this point appears to be the culmination of an arduous journey and the threshold of excellence. The boon of the pinnacle is that it is an endless reservoir of whatever it is that one seeks, and its bane is the momentousness of that boon – which announces its presence much after giving effect to itself. The inevitable fate of staying at a pinnacle is to thereafter lessen to dust, gradually, but certainly.

A pinnacle is indeed a reward, but one with a paradisiacal blindfold. No doubt that the achievement of this pinnacle is inherently rewarding, one must also bear in mind that it cannot bear fruit eternally. A pinnacle is not an ultimate state of perfection, for any state is only perfect in the ways it has not yet been tested. It is no different from any other peak – which has only one outcome – a downhill dwindle, which seems contrary to the very characteristic of a pinnacle. This is so because stagnation, even at a peak, is an inhibitor of enhancement, and thereafter begins the all-pervasive action of time – erosion. This pedestal of victory, not long after it is achieved, transforms to symbolize all that its achiever broke out of. Not only is this pedestal a gestalt of travail, grit, and grit, but also a reflection shortcomings that remain unchiselled. If these shortcomings are an echoing “No,” to advancement, then a pinnacle is a resounding “Not further.”

The pinnacle that once lay a distance beyond the abilities of its achiever subsequently demarcates the boundaries of his potential. Viewed differently, this attractive blend of resources is itself a source of novel avenues of growth, for it can serve as a deft guide on the path ahead. That which is understood to represent the culmination of a remarkably challenging journey, truly stands for the beginning of another.



It is this point that is often chosen as a worthy one to represent the most sublime or the most superior state, and rightly so – transiently. Transiently, in victorious recognition of the formidable journey leading to that point, and in optimistic anticipation of the continuous improvement that lies ahead – marked by innumerable such ‘pinnacles’ – that can be explored only when one endeavours to breach the one attained and go beyond it.

This mammoth task is far more difficult to comprehend than to perform. When one begins his uphill journey towards success, more often than not, he is driven by a pressing desire to rise and move into a situation of greater fulfilment – the pinnacle. This is fairly simple, and the determination to take on a tiresome journey is but an offshoot of the resolve to move ahead. However, once this pinnacle is reached, its long-standing desire coupled with the immense struggle put into reaching it makes it virtually impossible for one to visualize himself leaving it behind, and embarking once again upon a journey seemingly more rugged, more tiresome, and more demanding than the previous. However, it is crucial for one to see through this momentarily rewarding bubble and take cognisance of its temperance and of the plentiful troves of opportunity that lie ahead.

The pinnacle does not remain one eternally, and thus, voluntarily or otherwise, it is imperative that one moves forward, on a greater journey. A pinnacle grandiosely summarises the journey towards it. It is perfect as a milestone, but pernicious as a destination. In the journey of constant improvement and progress lies the quintessence of a pinnacle. It is this journey of transformation that is the pinnacle, if there is one. It is this incessant journey of growth that is the ultimate destination, if there must be one; and it lies at the answer of a simple question - to reach the pinnacle, or to breach the pinnacle.



THE REALITY

Prof. Jossy Peter

Oh my dear mother! Is it fine that I don't merge with the ocean? For I fear that I shall die there, my identity lost, the glory no longer mine, leaving behind my companions along the way.

Bidding goodbye my mother is such a hard task! I was known by all, liked by many; even those who confronted me still loved me from their heart.

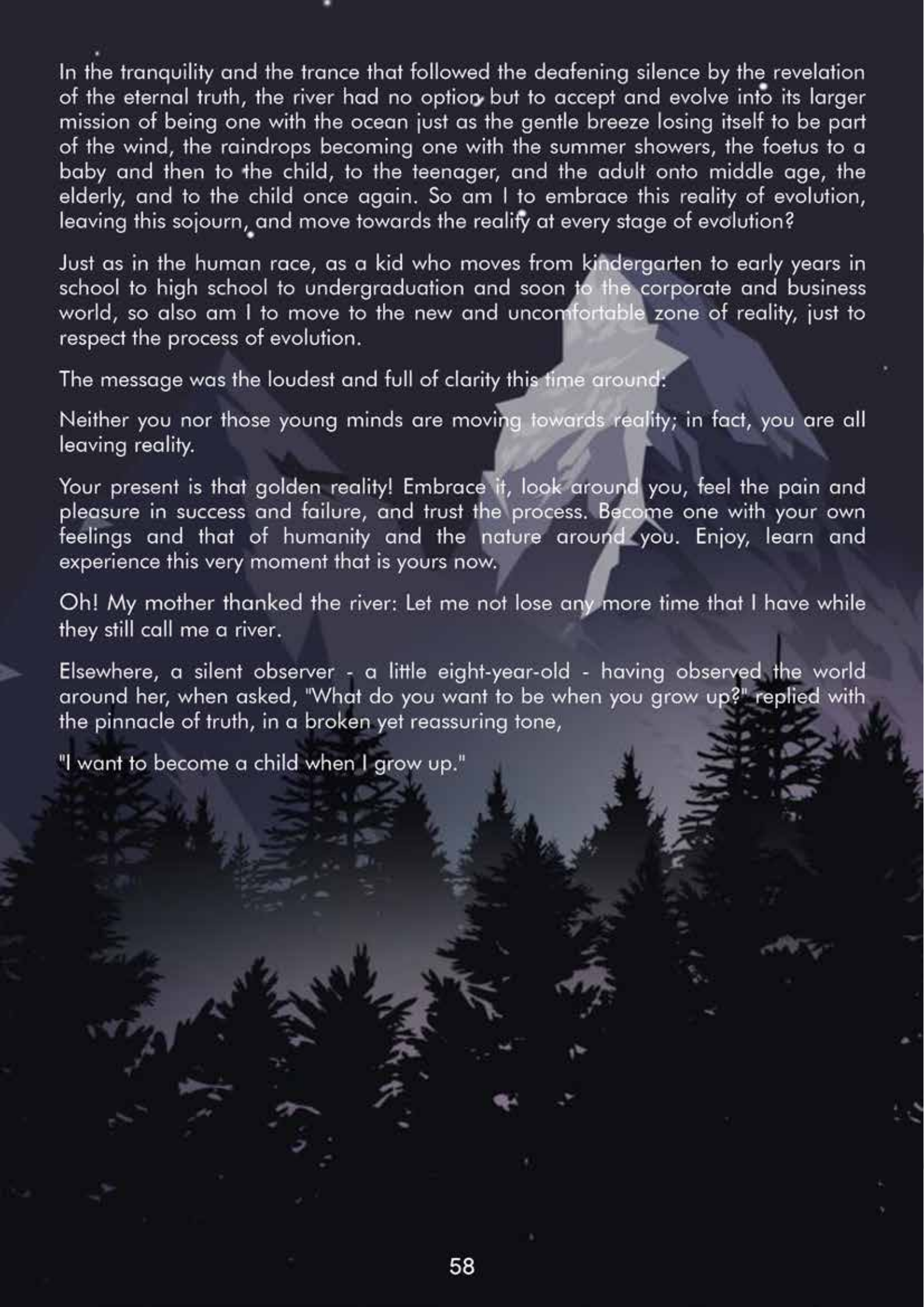
Those who used me for their prosperity stood with me for their success; visited me frequently for their satisfaction and now...

As the river that graced the plains and the valleys, traversing and cutting through rocks and forests, breathing life into the lifeless, I feel my destiny would steal my present glory, my aura and persona, my self-respect, my self-esteem, and my very existence! Oh, I dread to think beyond! Oh my mother, save me from this final step of my journey if you can!

I am aghast, destroyed, devastated and the infructuous state of my senses have been alerted. The golden words seemed to resonate in my ears, emanating from the deepest anguish of my unfulfilled journey, and they sounded like this:

How could you make a wish that will only be a wish? Do you fear facing the reality lying ahead of you? Aren't you expected to allow nature to follow its path and timeline?

Are you powerful enough to change the direction of the wind, the course of the tides, the dance of the waves, the darkness of the caves, the expanse of the skies, the distance to the stars, the depth of the ocean, the fragrance of the flowers, the kindness of the dog, the brightness of the sun, the unconditional love of a mother, the vision of the eagle, the unselfishness of the honeybee toiling to bring sweetness for others, the clean water defiling itself to make others clean, the fire that comes out pure while burning the dirt, the shot arrow, the spent time, the spoken words, the sprouted seed, the growing plant, the withered leaves, the morning dew, the setting sun, the calm before the storm, the accepted social norms, the broken kite, the crushed sugarcane, the split milk, the previous day, the last meal, the lost opportunity, the missed target, the image in the mirror, the drops of shed tears, and should I go on, my dear child? echoed the golden voice, reverberating ever so loudly and clearly for the river to summate the meaning of the said and the unsaid, the seen and the unseen, the heard and the unheard, yet felt as clear as the unbroken promise of the breath of human life.



In the tranquility and the trance that followed the deafening silence by the revelation of the eternal truth, the river had no option but to accept and evolve into its larger mission of being one with the ocean just as the gentle breeze losing itself to be part of the wind, the raindrops becoming one with the summer showers, the foetus to a baby and then to the child, to the teenager, and the adult onto middle age, the elderly, and to the child once again. So am I to embrace this reality of evolution, leaving this sojourn, and move towards the reality at every stage of evolution?

Just as in the human race, as a kid who moves from kindergarten to early years in school to high school to undergraduation and soon to the corporate and business world, so also am I to move to the new and uncomfortable zone of reality, just to respect the process of evolution.

The message was the loudest and full of clarity this time around:

Neither you nor those young minds are moving towards reality; in fact, you are all leaving reality.

Your present is that golden reality! Embrace it, look around you, feel the pain and pleasure in success and failure, and trust the process. Become one with your own feelings and that of humanity and the nature around you. Enjoy, learn and experience this very moment that is yours now.

Oh! My mother thanked the river: Let me not lose any more time that I have while they still call me a river.

Elsewhere, a silent observer - a little eight-year-old - having observed the world around her, when asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" replied with the pinnacle of truth, in a broken yet reassuring tone,

"I want to become a child when I grow up."

InQuizitive

Compiled by Aswin Cheerath Anilkumar

1) In death note e25, one of the protagonists L dries the anti hero Light Yagami's feet after both were caught in heavy downpour for a while. Shortly after, in the same episode, L dies due to a scheme set up by Light in collusion with a shinigami. This was a subtle reference to something from the world of mythology. Which rather famous instance/characters were L and Light imitating in this sequence?

2) Christian Griepenkerl was a German painter and professor at X. He also became famous posthumously for having made the following verdict about the sample drawing of a provisionally admitted candidate : "Sample drawing unsatisfactory. Too few heads." And in 1908, his verdict was even clearer: "Not admitted." Who was this candidate?

3) The Curse Mark is the jujutsu that were one of the most frequently-used technique of Orochimaru, which he usually gave to his most powerful and unique followers. To apply a cursed mark, Orochimaru needed to bite his intended target. As he had sharp fangs and an extendible neck, this was a relatively simple task. The mark then appeared on the body of the victim near the point of application, and they subsequently lost consciousness. What recent unveiling, at the receiving end of multiple jokes and memes was compared to the curse mark of Orochimaru?



4) The latest trailer for Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker will not be shown in cinemas or on TV. Instead it will use a novel marketing technique which was previously followed by Avengers: Infinity War and Endgame and also by Marshmello for a live concert earlier this year. This platform has over 250 million users and has had unforeseeable amounts of growth since its 2017 launch. Which platform?

5) The Vought V 173 was designed during the Second World War and was a near vertical take-off and landing military aircraft with a flat, disc-like body. Only one example was ever built and it flew in 1942. Its last flight was in 1947 when the project was cancelled. Due to its distinctive appearance, the aircraft had an appetite for quirky names, one of which was based specifically on its excessively flat body. What sweet nickname did it gather?

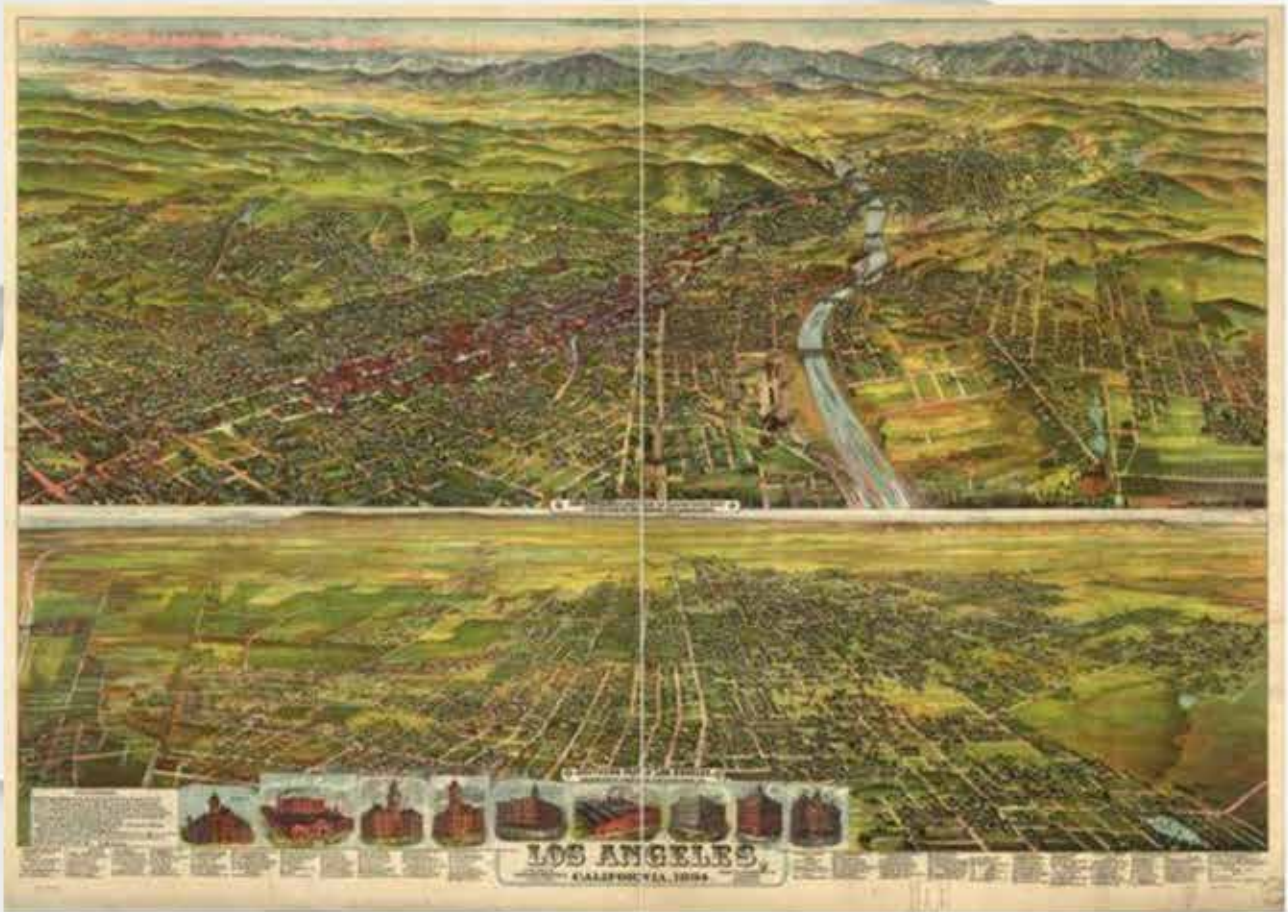


6) Sometime earlier this decade, Mathrubhumi (a popular Malayalam daily) ran a column titled Dhaka Mumbai Dream Express. The columnist who was travelling through some select cities in the subcontinent (8 to be exact) commented on the progress and prospects of a certain journey which ultimately fulfilled its purpose. What was the column was about?

7) Users of the newest instalment of this product were quick to notice that an entity from Italy were missing in the product but were replaced with a generic name and features. This largely had to do with licensing issues as a rival Japanese conglomerate had already procured the exclusive license for said entity leaving the American company helpless. Which entity was missing and what was it replaced with?

8) During the first world war, Rev. David Railton of the Imperial War Graves Commission spotted a grave marked with cross which bore the pencil written legend "An unknown British soldier". He later suggested the creation of a symbolic burial of an unknown warrior which later took the form of a national monument in the UK called 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier'. It has counterparts in many countries like the La Tombe Du Soldat Inconnu in France. What is the Indian counterpart known as?

9) X were large, multi-decked sailing ships first used by the Spanish as armed cargo carriers and later adopted by other European states from the 16th to 18th centuries during the age of sail and were the principal fleet units drafted for use as warships until the Anglo-Dutch Wars of the mid-1600s. Shekel or sheqel is an ancient Near Eastern unit of weight. It was a currency in ancient Israel under the Maccabees and in ancient Carthage. This also where the name of the currency of Israel comes from. Y was the Greek term for Shekels. Cnut the Great, also known as Canute, whose father was Sweyn Forkbeard, was King of Denmark, England and Norway. However his legacy was lost soon after the Norman conquest of 1066. His name inspired the term Z. What do these three entities collectively serve as the inspiration for?



10) Maps like the one in the above image were known by many names like panoramic maps, bird's eye views, aero views, perspective maps. Each of those names refers to a type of map that wasn't photographic and might not be drawn to scale, but still showed a view of a particular city or area from above, at an oblique angle. The artists producing these maps were known to use a particular 19th century invention to get the perspective that they wanted. Which invention, hugely popular back then did the artists use so as to elevate their drawings?

- Answers
- 1) Jesus washing the feet of his disciples
 - 2) Adolf Hitler
 - 3) iPhone 11 Pro camera
 - 4) Fortnite
 - 5) The Flying Pancake
 - 6) India's World Cup campaign in 2011
 - 7) Juventus replaced by Piemonte Calcio
 - 8) Amar Javan Jyoti
 - 9) Gallion, Sickle, Knut currencies in the Harry Potter Universe.
 - 10) Hot Air Balloon

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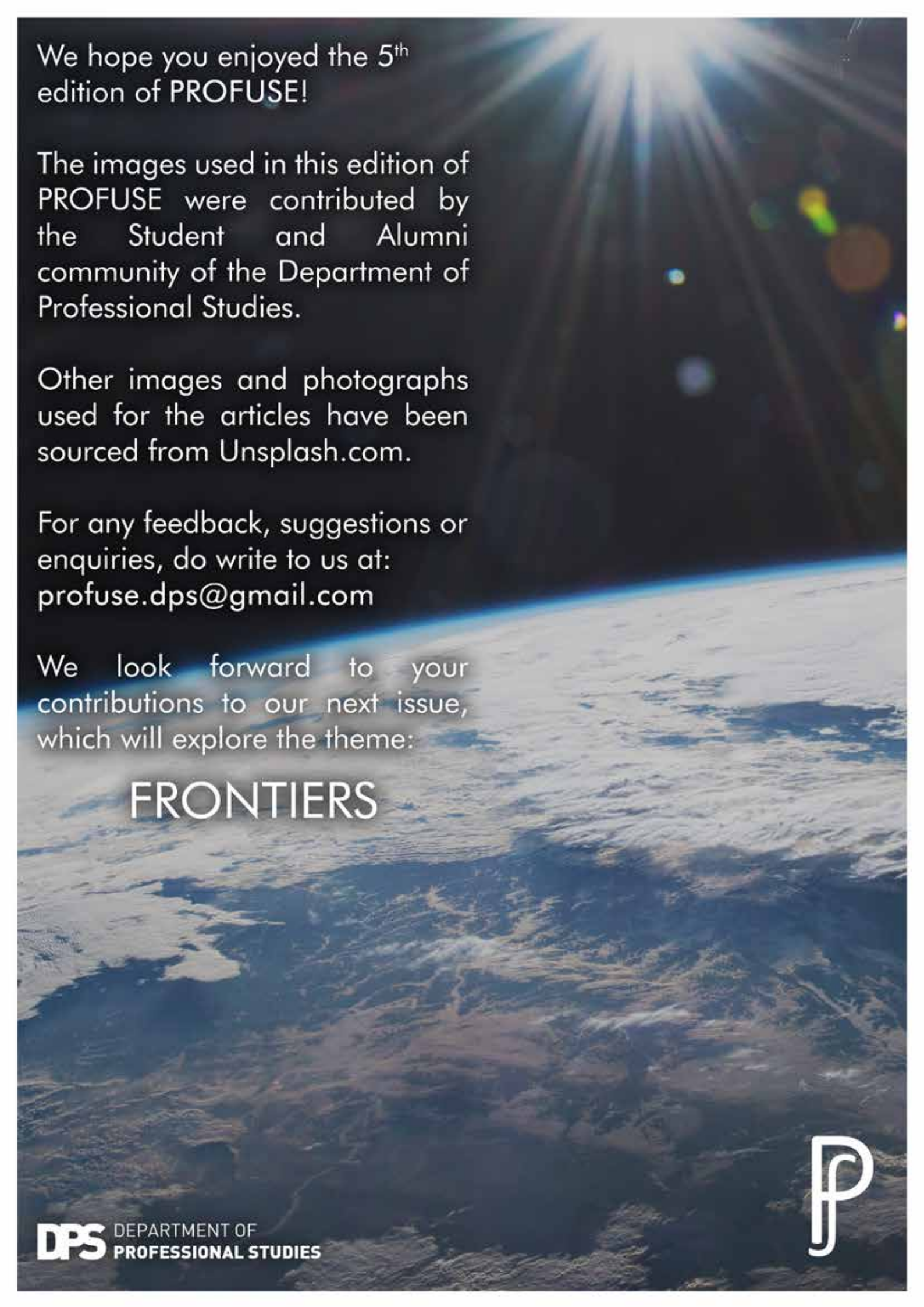


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We hope you enjoyed the 5th edition of PROFUSE!

The images used in this edition of PROFUSE were contributed by the Student and Alumni community of the Department of Professional Studies.

Other images and photographs used for the articles have been sourced from Unsplash.com.

For any feedback, suggestions or enquiries, do write to us at: profuse.dps@gmail.com

We look forward to your contributions to our next issue, which will explore the theme:

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