

Perspectives

*(Selections in Prose, Poetry and Drama for
Students of General English
of BA, BSc and BCom Courses)*

Text compiled by

Department of English

NMKRV College for Women



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Preface

The tremendous historical and political changes in India and all over the world have contributed enormously to the way literature is understood today. Literary studies in India, at present, draws from the diverse experiences of the historically marginalized communities of Africa, America, Australia and Latin America along with India. Women writing from all over the world voicing concern over women-centric issues and espousing egalitarian and progressive ideologies too have begun to be recognized as significant to the understanding of literature.

The department of English at NMKRV Degree College (Autonomous) has always tried to maintain an intellectual vitality to the approach of literary studies and has been fundamentally equipped to reorganize and revise its methods and tools of analysis. It has also endeavored to alter its perceptions and perspectives to suit the altering nature of literary studies.

The department is also guided by the strong conviction that all students, including students of the General English Course need to be exposed to the changing world. This text has been produced with the above vision and conviction in mind.

The Department thanks all the authors who have magnanimously given their consent to use their pieces.

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Department of English
NMKRV College for Women (Autonomous)

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The Photograph

- S. Diwakar

Please look at this photograph. The couple sitting here are newlyweds. From the ornaments they are wearing, I suspect that at least one of them is quite rich. First, focus your attention on the young bride. It is well known that at the beginning of the 20th century, girls used to be married off quite early. My guess is that the girl in the photograph is probably fourteen or fifteen years old. The outline of the young breasts behind the *pallu* of her sari appears to confirm my guess. Round face. Slightly swollen eyes beneath thick brows. The *bulaku* that hangs from the tip of her nose almost touches her lower lip, so it is difficult to make out whether those lips are smiling or grave. The shadowy chin makes her cheeks look full. Elaborate ornaments conceal the parting of her hair and her forehead; jewels seem to have replaced her ears.

Speaking of ornaments, guess how many necklaces she's wearing? I have tried to count them a number of times and this is what I figure : the necklace hugging her throat must be at least three fingers wide, then there are the four looping across her shoulders and seven more hang loose, down to her waist. I guess I don't have to elaborate on the precious stones set in these gold necklaces : pearls, corals - and very expensive ones at that. Then there are armlets, waist chains, the thick *kadaga*

and bangles on her slender wrists. The rings on her fingers are linked to the bangles with chains. Look at her feet with the fat *gejjes* (thick bells) on the anklets, and the toe-rings. Four rings on four toes! They look massive! With her arms resting on her thighs and her legs clasped tight, it looks like someone has forced her to sit next to the man, her husband. Well, enough of this photograph.

The man and woman are my grandparents, and this photograph hangs in my ancestral house in Bhuvanagiri. The photographer was Velappan, a Tamil who had come from Bangalore to Bhuvanagiri around 1923. My grandfather was Lakshminarayanayya. My grandmother, Kamamma, was the daughter of Jodidar Shamanna of Gangavara. Shamanna came from an affluent family that owned lands and property. He probably had good reasons for marrying his only daughter to this poor Lakshminarayanayya of Bhuvanagiri. Well, let's not bother with that story now.

What if Kamamma was born of a rich family? Once she was married, her husband was her god. Lakshminarayanayya was both arrogant and short-tempered. Do you see the window in the background, just behind the seated couple? Maybe those iron bars have a story to tell about Kamamma's marriage.

Going by my mother's version of the story, when she was about seven or eight her father, Lakshminarayanayya, had a mistress in Sulibelep. After a couple of months, the news reached his home. Even the maids were gossiping about it. Kamamma was hurt. Incapable of making a scene, she fasted and gave up sleeping together. One day Lakshminarayanayya was in the backyard gathering flowers for his morning *pooja*. Kamamma picked up an axe and began chopping wood and

stacking it in a corner. She, who had not touched an axe in her life, let alone chopped wood, tied her *seragu* to her waist, hitched up her sari and went heroically at it. The woodpile rose almost as tall as a full-grown man! Imagine the shy, crouching girl huddled next to her husband in the photograph silently chopping wood with powerful strokes. Lakshminarayanayya stood spellbound, his heart in his stomach. That was it. She resumed her normal life, smiles and all. Lakshminarayanayya never ever went back to Sulibelep and Kamamma never picked up an axe again.

After I had heard this story from my mother, I looked at the photograph again. My grandmother's eyes seemed to be saying something else now. What was it, I wondered: "Look at the ornaments on my body?" "Look how cunning this guy next to me is?" "I'm not as naive as you seem to think?"

Reading a photograph is an art, like reading a poem or a story. I have tried to read this photograph rather closely. I expect you would want to study it too. If your reading differs from mine and the image reveals something else to you, please don't forget to tell me about it.

Translated from the Kannada by Vidya Murthy,
K.S. Srinivasa Murthy and TLM

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Where I Come From is Like This

- Paula Gunn Allen

Modern American Indian* women, like their non-Indian sisters, are deeply engaged in the struggle to redefine themselves. In their struggle they must reconcile traditional tribal definitions of women with industrial and postindustrial non-Indian definitions. Yet while these definitions seem to be more or less mutually exclusive, Indian women must somehow harmonize and integrate both in their own lives.

An American Indian woman is primarily defined by her tribal identity. In her eyes, her destiny is necessarily that of her people, and her sense of herself as a woman is first and foremost prescribed by her tribe. The definitions of woman's roles are as diverse as tribal cultures in the Americas. In some she is devalued, in others she wields considerable power. In some she is a familial/clan adjunct, in some she is as close to autonomous as her economic circumstances and psychological traits permit. But in no tribal definitions is she perceived in the same way as are women in western industrial and postindustrial cultures.

* In Contemporary speech, *Native American* is frequently used instead of *American Indian*.

In the west, few images of women form part of the cultural mythos, and these are largely sexually charged. Among Christians, the madonna is the female prototype, and she is portrayed as essentially passive: her contribution is simply that of birthing. Little else is attributed to her and she certainly possesses few of the characteristics that are attributed to mythic figures among Indian tribes. This image is countered (rather than balanced) by the witch-goddess/whore characteristics designed to reinforce cultural beliefs about women, as well as western adversarial and dualistic perceptions of reality.

The tribes see women variously, but they do not question the power of femininity. Sometimes they see women as fearful, sometimes peaceful, sometimes omnipotent and omniscient, but they never portray women as mindless, helpless, simple, or oppressed. And while the women in a given tribe, clan, or band may be all these things, the individual woman is provided with a variety of images of women from the interconnected supernatural; natural, and social worlds she lives in.

As a half-breed American Indian woman, I cast about in my mind for negative images of Indian women, and I find none that are directed to Indian women alone. The negative images I do have are of Indians in general and in fact are more often of males than of females. All these images come to me from non-Indian sources, and they are always balanced by a positive image. My ideas of womanhood, passed on largely by my mother and grandmothers, Laguna Pueblo women, are about practicality, strength, reasonableness, intelligence, wit, and competence. I also remember vividly the women who came to my father's store, the women who held me and sang to me,

the women at Feast Day, at Grab Days,* the women in the kitchen of my Cubero home, the women I grew up with; none of them appeared weak or helpless, none of them presented herself tentatively. I remember a certain reserve on those lovely brown faces; I remember the direct gaze of eyes framed by bright-colored shawls draped over their heads and cascading down their backs. I remember the clean cotton dresses and carefully pressed hand-embroidered aprons they always wore; I remember laughter and good food, especially the sweet bread and the oven bread they gave us. Nowhere in my mind is there a foolish woman, a dumb woman, a vain woman, or a plastic woman, though the Indian women I have known have shown a wide range of personal style and demeanor.

My memory includes the Navajo woman who was badly beaten by her Sioux husband; but I also remember that my grandmother abandoned her Sioux husband long ago. I recall the stories about the Laguna woman beaten regularly by her husband in the presence of her children so that the children would not believe in the strength and power of femininity. And I remember the women who drank, who got into fights with other women and with the men, and who often won those battles. I have memories of tired women, partying women, stubborn women, sullen women, amicable women, selfish women, shy women, and aggressive women. Most of all I remember the women who laugh and scold and sit uncomplaining in the long sun on feast days and who cook

* A Laguna ritual in which women throw food and small items, such as pieces of cloth, to those attending.

wonderful food on wood stoves, in beehive mud ovens, and over open fires outdoors.

Among the images of women that come to me from various tribes as well as my own are White Buffalo Woman, who came to the Lakota long ago and brought them the religion of the Sacred Pipe which they still practice; Tinotzin the goddess who came to Juan Diego to remind him that she still walked the hills of her people and sent him with her message, her demand and her proof to the Catholic bishop in the city nearby. And from Laguna I take the images of Yellow Woman, Coyote Woman, Grandmother Spider (Spider Old Woman), who brought the light, who gave us weaving and medicine, who gave us life. Among the Keres she is known as Thought Woman who created us all and who keeps us in creation even now. I remember Iyatiku, Earth Woman, Corn Woman, who guides and counsels the people to peace and who welcomes us home when we cast off this coil of flesh as huskers cast off the leaves that wrap the corn. I remember Iyatiku's sister, Sun Woman, who held metals and cattle, pigs and sheep, highways and engines and so many things in her bundle, who went away to the east saying that one day she would return....

My mother told me stories all the time, though I often did not recognize them as that. My mother told me stories about cooking and childbearing; she told me stories about menstruation and pregnancy; she told me stories about gods and heros, about fairies and elves, about goddesses and spirits; she told me stories about the land and the sky, about cats and dogs, about snakes and spiders; she told me stories about climbing trees and exploring the mesas; she told me stories

about going to dances and getting married; she told me stories about dressing and undressing, about sleeping and waking; she told me stories about herself, about her mother, about her grandmother. She told me stories about grieving and laughing, about thinking and doing; she told me stories about school and about people; about darning and mending; she told me stories about turquoise and about gold; she told me European stories and Laguna stories; she told me Catholic stories and Presbyterian stories; she told me city stories and country stories; she told me political stories and religious stories. She told me stories about living and stories about dying. And in all of those stories she told me who I was, who I was supposed to be, whom I came from, and who would follow me. In this way she taught me the meaning of the words she said, that all life is a circle and everything has a place within it. That's what she said and what she showed me in the things she did and the way she lives.

Of course, through my formal, white, Christian education, I discovered that other people had stories of their own - about women, about Indians, about fact, about reality - and I was amazed by a number of startling suppositions that others made about tribal customs and beliefs. According to the un-Indian, non-Indian view, for instance, Indians barred menstruating women from ceremonies and indeed segregated them from the rest of the people, consigning them to some space specially designed for them. This showed that Indians considered menstruating women unclean and not fit to enjoy the company of decent (nonmenstruating) people, that is, men. I was surprised and confused to hear this because my mother had taught me that white people had strange attitudes toward

menstruation: they thought something was bad about it, that it meant you were sick, cursed, sinful and weak and that you had to be very careful during that time. She taught me that menstruation was a normal occurrence, that I could go swimming or hiking or whatever else I wanted to do during my period. She actively scorned women who took to their beds, who were incapacitated by cramps, who "got the blues."

As I struggled to reconcile these very contradictory interpretations of American Indians' traditional beliefs concerning menstruation, I realized that the menstrual taboos were about power, not about sin or filth. My conclusion was later borne out by some tribes' own explanations, which, as you may well imagine, came as quite a relief to me.

The truth of the matter as many Indians see it is that women who are at the peak of their fecundity are believed to possess power that throws male power totally out of kilter. They emit such force that, in their presence, any male-owned or dominated ritual or sacred object cannot do its usual task. For instance, the Lakota say that a menstruating woman anywhere near a yuwipi man, who is a special sort of psychic, spirit-empowered healer, for a day or so before he is to do his ceremony will effectively disempower him. Conversely, among many if not most tribes, important ceremonies cannot be held without the presence of women. Sometimes the ritual woman who empowers the ceremony must be unmarried and virginal so that the power she channels is unalloyed, unweakened by sexual arousal and penetration by a male. Other ceremonies require tumescent women, others the presence of mature women who have borne children, and still others depend for

empowerment on postmenopausal women. Women may be segregated from the company of the whole band or village on certain occasions, but on certain occasions men are also segregated. In short, each ritual depends on a certain balance of power, and the positions of women within the phases of womanhood are used by tribal people to empower certain rites. This does not derive from a male-dominant view; it is not a ritual observance imposed on women by men. It derives from a tribal view of reality that distinguishes tribal people from feudal and industrial people.

I remember my mother moving furniture all over the house when she wanted it changed. She didn't wait for my father to come home and help-she just went ahead and moved the piano, a huge upright from the old days, the couch, the refrigerator. Nobody had told her she was too weak to do such things. In imitation of her, I would delight in loading trucks at my father's store with cases of pop or fifty-pound sacks of flour. Even when I was quite small I could do it, and it gave me a belief in my own physical strength that advancing middle age can't quite erase. My mother used to tell me about the Acoma Pueblo women she had seen as a child carrying huge ollas (water pots) on their heads as they wound their way up the tortuous stairwell carved into the face of the "Sky City" mesa, a feat I tried to imitate with books and tin buckets. ("Sky City is the term used by the Chamber of Commerce for the mother village of Acoma, which is situated atop a high sandstone table mountain.) I was never very successful, but even the attempt reminded me that I was supposed to be strong and balanced to be a proper girl.

Of course, my mother's Laguna people are Keres Indian, reputed to be the last extreme mother-right people on earth. So it is no wonder that I got notably nonwhite notions about the natural strength and prowess of women. Indeed, it is only when I am trying to get non-Indian approval, recognition, or acknowledgement that my "weak sister" emotional and intellectual ploys get the better of my tribal woman's good sense. At such times I forget that I just moved the piano or just wrote a competent paper or just completed a financial transaction satisfactorily or have supported myself and my children for most of my adult life.

Learning the Western Way

- Helena Norberg

Even if you know, it's better to ask another.

Ladakhi saying

No one could deny the value of real education, that is, the widening and enrichment of knowledge. But today education has become something quite different. It isolates children from their culture and from nature, training them instead to become narrow specialists in a Westernized urban environment. This process is particularly striking in Ladakh, where modern schooling acts almost as a blindfold, preventing children from seeing the context in which they live. They leave school unable to use their own resources, unable to function in their own world.

With the exception of religious training in the monasteries, the traditional culture had no separate process called "education." Education was the product of an intimate relationship with the community and its environment. Children learned from grandparents, family, and friends. Helping with the sowing, for instance, they would learn that on one side of the village it was a little warmer; on the other side a little colder. From their own experience children would come to distinguish between different strains of barley and

the specific growing conditions each strain preferred. They learned to recognize even the tiniest wild plant and how to use it, and how to pick out a particular animal on a faraway mountain slope. They learned about connections, process, and change, about the intricate web of fluctuating relationships in the natural world around them.

For generation after generation, Ladakhis grew up learning how to provide themselves with clothing and shelter; how to make shoes out of yak skin and robes from the wool of sheep; how to build houses out of mud and stone. Education was location-specific and nurtured an intimate relationship with the living world. It gave children an intuitive awareness that allowed them, as they grew older, to use resources in an effective and sustainable way.

None of that knowledge is provided in the modern school. Children are trained to become specialists in a technological, rather than an ecological, society. School is a place to forget traditional skills and, worse, to look down on them.

Western education first came to Ladakhi villages in the 1970s. Today there are about two hundred schools. The basic curriculum is a poor imitation of that taught in other parts of India, which itself is an imitation of British education. There is almost nothing Ladakhi about it. Once, while visiting a classroom in Leh, I saw a drawing in a textbook of a child's bedroom that could have been in London or New York. It showed a pile of neatly folded handkerchiefs on a four-poster bed and gave instructions as to which drawer of the vanity unit to keep them in. Equally absurd and inappropriate were the example in Sonam's younger sister's schoolbooks. Once, for homework, she was supposed to figure out the angle of

incidence that The Leaning Tower of Pisa makes with the ground. Another time she was struggling with an English translation of the *Iliad*.

Most of the skills Ladakhi children learn in school will never be of real use to them. They receive a poor version of an education appropriate for a New Yorker. They learn out of books written by people who have never set foot in Ladakh, who know nothing about growing barley at 12,000 feet or about making houses out of sun-dried bricks.

In every corner of the world today, the process called “education” is based on the same assumptions and the same Eurocentric model. The focus is on faraway facts and figures, a universal knowledge. The books propagate information that is meant to be appropriate for the entire planet. But since only a kind of knowledge that is far removed from specific ecosystems and cultures can be universally applicable, what children learn is essentially synthetic, divorced from the living context. If they go on to higher education, they may learn about building houses, but these houses will be of concrete and steel, the universal box. So too, if they study agriculture, they will learn about industrial farming: chemical fertilizers and pesticides, large machinery and hybrid seeds. The Western educational system is making us all poorer by teaching people around the world to use the same resources, ignoring those of their own environment. In this way education is creating artificial scarcity and inducing competition.

One of the clearest examples of this process in Ladakh is the way in which the yak and its local hybrids are being replaced by the Jersey cow. The yak is important in the traditional economy. It is an animal perfectly adapted to the local

environment, actually preferring to stay high up in the vicinity of the glaciers, at about 16,000 feet or more. It covers vast distances, climbing up and down vertical slopes to graze, thriving on the sparse vegetation that grows in this difficult terrain. Its long hair protects against the cold, and despite its enormous size, it can balance with remarkable grace on a ragged rock face. The yak provides fuel, meat and labour, and hair from which blankets are woven. The female also gives a limited amount of very rich milk, an average of three liters a day.

According to the modern way of looking at things, the yak is “inefficient.” Agricultural experts who have received a Western education tend to be scornful of it. “The *drimo* [female yak] gives only three liters of milk a day”, they say, “What we need is Jersey cows—they give thirty liters a day.” The experts’ training does not allow them to see the broader cultural, economic, and ecological implications of their recommendations. The yak, as it grazed, was gathering together energy from vast distances—energy that, in addition to fuel, was ultimately being used by people in the form of food, clothing and labor. The Jersey cow, by contrast, cannot even walk up 16,000 feet, let alone survive there. She has to stay down at 10,000 or 11,000 feet, where people live, and has to have a special shelter. She has to be stall fed on specially cultivated fodder.

Modern education not only ignores local resources, but, worse still, makes Ladakhi children think of themselves and their culture as inferior. They are robbed of their self-esteem. Everything in school promotes the Western model and, as a direct consequence, makes them ashamed of their own traditions.

In 1986, school children were asked to imagine Ladakh in the year 2000. A little girl wrote “Before 1974, Ladakh was not known to the world. People were uncivilized. There was a smile on every face. They don’t need money. Whatever they had was enough for them.” In an other essay a child wrote “They do sing their own songs like they feel disgrace, but they sing English and Hindi songs with great interest. ... But in these days we find that maximum people and persons didn’t wear our own dress, like feeling disgrace.”

Education pulls people away from agriculture into the city, where they become dependent on the money economy. In traditional Ladakh there was no such thing as unemployment. But in the modern sector there is now intense competition for a very limited number of paying jobs, principally in the government. As a result, unemployment is already a serious problem.

Modern education has brought obvious benefits, like improvements in the rate of literacy and numeracy. It has also enabled the Ladakhis to be more informed about the forces at play in the world outside. In so doing, however, it has divided Ladakhis from each other and the land and put them on the lowest rung of the global economic ladder.

The Kannada English Combat

- D.R. Nagaraj

Rangaswamy is an old friend of mine. A boyhood pal, in fact. He has not studied much. He has passed his secondary school and works in a private company in the Chikpet area in Bangalore. He has three young children and is educating them in an English medium school with great difficulty, raising loans now and then. Since he is deeply interested in social and political issues, we argue over dozens of issues every time we meet. Rangaswamy, who comes from a backward caste, is always contemplating ways of uplifting his lot.

This was the gist of an argument he put forward on depressed castes and English when we met the other day: People from backward castes should send their children only to English medium schools. Knowledge of English forms the basis of economic progress and social dominance of upper castes. So, English is inevitable for the emancipation of the lowest of lower castes. Those who argue in favour of Kannada medium of instruction either do not have a clear understanding of social upliftment or take such a view knowing fully well the consequences of lower castes staying tied to Kannada.

This is not a new argument. One powerful faction of the Shudra movement has always taken this line. For example, this

was the argument of one of Karnataka's influential leaders, the late Basavalingappa. Several leaders of Shudra and other lower castes have articulated the same sentiments in either more sophisticated or cruder forms. In fact, this is not only reflected in intellectual positions taken by political movements, but is a visible reality in every small town and village in Karnataka. English is today a great hope and a dream.

Last week, I had been to one of the taluk centres in Bangalore district. A typical small town with narrow roads and heaps of garbage everywhere. But two things there drew my attention: every road in the town had a small eatery and every second street had an English medium school. Bangalore too has a rash of these.

What kind of English medium schools are these? Schools in the town I had been to were being run in small, old houses. They didn't even look like schools. Those buildings could just as well have been arrack shops, brothels, seedy hotels or places to play cards in stealth.

But the poorest of families want to send their children only to these English medium schools. There is a huge rush to admit children here because English is believed to be the highway to great future. English schools are projecting themselves as beacons of hope for the Dalit-Bahujan people everywhere. Our love of English is so blinding that there is hardly any room for an objective discussion on the issue.

Since when has the English language begun to seem like a magician who can conjure up a great future? A look back at 150 years of our history throws some light on how such a belief has come to be. Ram Manohar Lohia identifies three principal characteristics of the upper class in India: they own property,

are from upper castes and have access to English. This means that one of the key reasons for the supremacy of upper class is the English language. So, lower castes are rushing to acquire English, believing that the language carries some kind of an innate power. They believe that it can cast a magic spell that can transport them to a new heaven.

If you look at it from one point of view, there is some truth in this belief. The historical relationship between Muslims and English is one illustration of the link between social mobility and political power. The animosity between the British and Muslims reached a flashpoint after the revolt of 1857. This was a classic expression of the hostility between the Muslim community and the western world, which continues to this day. An important fallout of the 1857 revolt was that the Muslims, as a community, came to look upon not only western culture but also the English language with suspicion and contempt. The Hindu upper class, which identified itself with the colonial powers and the language they spoke, climbed the bureaucratic ladder with great ease and alacrity. The upper classes and the castes in India have historically been the first to learn the language of power and use it for their upward mobility. This was true of Sanskrit, Persian and many other languages.

The Muslim community fell into a deep abyss because of their contempt for English. Muslims who had been influential during the Mughal rule nearly disappeared from all the colonial bureaucratic structures. One can see this concern reflected in the writings and speeches of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, an important reformer. He tried to draw Muslims to English learning by establishing Aligarh University. English was the

language that bestowed power in the new dispensation through the pen, pen. Sir Syed says repeatedly that the pen is mightier than the sword. Muslims who wanted to end the colonial power through the sword disappeared from the circle of power. The upper class Hindus who picked up the pen and wrote English gained prominence in the colonial hierarchical structures.

Sir Syed, who recognized that the new culture had brought with it a new power structure, tried to bridge the gap between Muslims and English. This was observed keenly by backward and Dalit leaders through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and they drew their own lessons from it. They came to believe that English alone was the route to their social, cultural and political progress. So, all over India, middle-class leaders of movements from these sections zealously clung to English. They said that upper castes gained mobility because of English and insisted that it be made accessible to them. The entire country swiftly embraced an education system geared to produce clerks. This experience guides Shudra and Dalit sections' arguments in favour of English to this day. This is behind my friend Rangaswamy's persistent faith in English.

I should tell you about my other friend Shivashankar. He has studied business management in the prestigious Harvard University and now holds a big job in a private company in Bangalore. He earns fifteen times the salary of Rangaswamy. The three of us get together once in a way in the evenings. Shivashankar comes from a highly respected Tamil Iyer family in Bangalore. He is a sophisticated man with an interest in literature, music and culture. He keenly looks through my latest acquisition of English books every time he comes home. He gets so absorbed in them that he forgets even the glass in his hand.

But it is my collection of Kannada books that inspire my other friend Rangaswamy. He reads every page of Kannada literary journals as if they were bearers of some ultimate truth. He discusses them passionately.

Whatever be the other differences, there is one similarity between the high-flying Shivashankar and the humble Rangaswamy. Both are worshippers of the English language. But Shivashankar's sophisticated arguments come loaded with concern for the nation and not just for his own family and friends. He describes how English is gaining prominence in the era of science and technology in non-English speaking nations like Japan, Korea, Thailand, Germany and Russia. Rangaswamy nods in agreement.

While Rangaswamy puts forward a Shudra theory of social upliftment in favour of English, Shivasankar's arguments are transnational.

The pro-English position of these two people, who have nothing else in common, explains to me the rush for English schools. We need to think objectively as to who really is the final beneficiary of our English-centric system of education. This is my understanding of the whole issue. Establishing a singular and universally accepted notion of social progress as well as the route to be taken to achieve it is an important method by which upper classes in any society establish their supremacy. Those below them accept and tread this route. The rules that bind those who walk this path are accepted by all classes of people. Those who lose their way lag behind in the marathon continue to participate in it with dedication with the hope that they may someday reach the finishing line. This is the game of social acceptance and dominance. Those who

lose never realize that the rules are designed to make them lose.

It may be decades before we see that a similar game is being played on this question of English language, the rules of which have been designed by the powerful upper classes in this country. More importantly, English-centric education is working against rural society, which even includes their upper classes. A majority of schools in villages do not have a system in place to teach English. Most teachers there are helpless because they do not know English themselves. Only prestigious schools in cities have the infrastructure to teach and learn English. An ordinary child has no access to these schools. The ultimate beneficiaries in the present power structure are the upper class people.

But none of these arguments of mine are acceptable to Rangaswamy. He is insistent that medium of instruction has to be English, even if it is bad English. Whatever he does Rangaswamy's son can never learn in a prestigious school in yelahanka. Shivasankar's son is learning in a prestigious school in yelahanka. This is the fundamental rule of the game.

But there is no point in stubbornly arguing today that Kannada alone should be the medium of instruction. We need a new policy that blends the natural benefits of learning in Kannada and the social mobility that English brings to us. We need a system that teaches good English alongside Kannada.

If not, my friend Rangaswamy's children and children from our villages will forever lag far behind those big schools in big cities.

Saint Francis of Assisi

- Andrew Linzey

When [St. Francis] considered the primordial source of all things, he was filled with even more abundant piety, calling creatures no matter how small, by the name of brother and sister because he knew they had the same source as himself.¹

At first sight, the life of Saint Francis of Assisi presents us with a paradox. On the one hand, Francis is one of the most popular and venerated saints within Christendom. His love and care for creation have become legendary. When Pope John Paul II in 1980 declared Francis Patron Saint of Ecology, he was doing nothing less than acknowledging the universal appeal of his powerful creation-friendly example. Yet, on the other hand, the Christian tradition which canonized him, and which now venerates, lauds and champions him, is the same tradition which - not without justification - has itself been charged with a distinct lack of care for creation, even to the point of being directly responsible for current environmental crises. Understanding this paradox may provide the key both to the life of St. Francis and its contemporary eco-relevance.

Although soon swallowed up in legend, basic details of Francis' life are still recoverable. He was born in 1181 or 1182

in Assisi, the son of a wealthy cloth merchant, Peter Bernardone. As a young man, Francis obtained a reputation as a profligate and a squanderer. In 1204, he was ill for a prolonged period, which put an end to his military career. A series of encounters and experiences then drastically changed his life. At the end of 1204 or early 1205, Francis apparently received his first visionary experience. During that same year, he was brought face to face with poverty and suffering through chance encounters with paupers. But it was his meeting with a leper, the most despised and feared of all medieval outcasts, which apparently changed his life.

Much to his father's chagrin, he renounced his early military and commercial ambitions, sold his possessions, and embraced a life of poverty. Charged with having brought humiliation on his father's house, he was brought before the episcopal tribunal in 1206, but Bishop Guido II of Assisi befriended him. At San Damiano in about 1206, Francis experienced his famous vision in which a voice called upon him to rebuild the Church. From 1206 to 1208, he restored the chapels of San Pietro and Santa Maria degli Angeli at the Pontiuuncular while living as a hermit. Around 1209-10 Francis compiled his Rule and sought papal approval. Eager to secure reform of the Church, Pope Innocent III granted Francis an audience and subsequently authorized Francis and his followers as an itinerant preaching order within the Catholic Church. 'The friars' zeal for the proclamation of the Gospel, their highly acclaimed ministry of preaching, their rejection of material possession in imitation of Jesus Christ and their itinerant lifestyle recommended them to Innocent III. The community grew and expanded over the following ten years and became an

instrument of papal reform of the Church culminating in the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.

From the start, we can see that Francis' work was a licensed reform experiment within the Catholic Church. Although Francis was impeccably loyal to the Church, and especially to the papacy which endorsed him, his unusual status granted him free rein to preach the Gospel in all its radical simplicity as he saw it. It is said that Francis' life was decisively transformed when he attended Mass at the Portiuncular in February 1208 and heard 'the Gospel passage in which the apostles were commissioned to preach.' From the standpoint of ecological theology, there are four aspects of his ministry which deserve particular attention.

The first concerns *simplicity*. As we have seen, Francis caused scandal by his rejection of his father's wealth and by dressing in a threadbare tunic and sandals. This was not affectation. It was an attempt to imitate Jesus in his identification with the poor and outcast. In doing so, Francis lived the notion deeply rooted in the Gospels that material wealth is a handicap to spiritual progress. Unlike most other Christians of his day - including it must be said bishops and priests - who saw no difficulty in the accumulation of riches, Francis saw simplicity of life as a moral requirement of the Gospel. Accordingly, his Rule forbade his friars from eating luxurious food, wearing expensive garments or accumulating money. Simplicity required living as the poorest of the poor and sharing all things in common.

The second concerns *kinship*. Francis took literally the claim that the Gospel should be preached to 'all creation.' As the above lines from his biographer, St Bonaventure, show,

Francis celebrated the kinship of all creatures created by the same God and whose Gospel of love extended to the smallest thing, both animate and inanimate, within creation. Fellow creatures are our 'brothers' and 'sisters'. Although such a notion of kinship or cosmic fellowship is implicit in the Gospels, and arguably required by a doctrine of God the Creator, Francis' high regard for creation was - in terms of conventional theology - highly eccentric. Medieval theology saw sharp distinctions between humans and animals and was deeply dualistic in its thinking, making contrasts (as most of the tradition has done) between things earthly and things spiritual. Francis' sense of friendship and kinship with other creatures, while wholly orthodox, was nevertheless deeply counter-cultural.

The third concerns *generosity*. Francis did not just perceive an ontological bond between all creatures by virtue of their common Creator, he sought to manifest that unity through acts of moral generosity. 'He overflowed with the spirit of charity', writes early biographer Thomas of Celano, 'pitying not only men who were suffering need, but even the dumb brutes, reptiles, birds and other creatures without sensation.' The key to understanding Francis at this point is to be found in his profound sense that humans were called to imitate Christ, hence they were to reflect a Christlike generosity even and especially to the least of all. Innumerable stories of Francis testify to his filial relations with other creatures. He loved even the worm not solely because it reminded him of the saying that 'I am a worm and no man', but primarily because - as Celano put it - 'he glowed with exceeding love... wherefore he used to pick them up in the way and put them in a safe place, that they might not be crushed by the feet of the passers-by.'

In order to appreciate the radicality of this approach, one has only to contrast it with the thought of Francis' near contemporary, St Thomas Aquinas. For St Thomas, there was an absolute distinction between animals and humans, and humans could have 'no fellowship' with animals because they were non-rational. Although both were canonized saints and celebrated figures within the Catholic Church, the difference between them is almost total. While Francis accepted that humans had dominion over animals, he interpreted this power Christologically, that is, in terms of service. As Paul Santmire notes, the saint displayed 'a concrete Christocentric devotion [to others] of radical proportions... He became the Christlike servant of nature.'

The fourth concerns *celebration*. Again in contrast to wholly instrumentalist views of creation as simply here for our use, Francis saw the world of creation as a place of celebration. He took seriously those verses in the Psalms which speak of creatures praising their Creator and saw in all things, even inanimate ones, a response to the love of God. His famous 'Canticle to Brother Sun' is a tremendous theophany of creation in praise of its Creator. Normally viewed as unconscious matter, he sees the sun, moon, wind, water, and fire as part of the divine cosmic consciousness. As one commentator observes, 'for Francis, what we refer to as "dumb nature" is far from dumb; it is eloquent in singing and testifying to the beauty of its Creator.'

The theological significance of Francis' life may be understood as a prefiguring of that state of peaceableness within creation which will finally be accomplished at the end of time. Such eschatological consciousness was prevalent in Francis' time

and, as several writers suggest, the saint's anticipation of the immanent consummation of the Kingdom of God led him to live those laws of the coming kingdom-poverty, humility, selfless love, obedience-in this world. As Roger Sorrell explains, 'there is no doubt that Francis shared his hagiographers' conceptions [that]...creatures' responses to him demonstrated their respect for God's servant and the beginning of the restoration of harmony between God, humanity, and the rest of creation.' The accounts of Celano and Bonaventure lend strong support to this view.

For example, Celano believed that when Francis was submitted to Brother Fire and was not injured, 'he had returned [the fire] to primitive innocence [*ad innocentiam primam*], for whom, when he wished it, cruel things were made gentle'. Bonaventure similarly reports, 'so it was that by God's divine power the brute beasts felt drawn towards him and inanimate creation obeyed his will. It seemed as if he had returned to the state of primeval innocence, he was so good, so holy'. If such an eschatological motivation is accepted, Francis' writing and ministry, far from being romantic rhetoric or eccentric practice, is a manifestation in time and space of God's eternal purpose.

Perhaps inevitably, Francis' example has been eclipsed by the centuries of Christian thought and practice which followed. The sharply contrasting approach of St Thomas - in many ways the founding father of modern Roman Catholicism - has been vastly more influential and has ushered in centuries of neglect of, and even callousness towards, the non-human world. Francis is remembered and honoured, and even lip service is paid to his example, and yet he has had little effect on the development of scholastic theology. It must be said that many Christians,

even and especially Franciscans, play down the eco-and animal-friendly dimensions to his ministry.

But there are some signs that increasing dissatisfaction with the instrumentalist and utilitarian attitudes to creation embodied in historical theology are encouraging church people and theologians to re-examine the tradition and rediscover genuine but neglected creation-friendly elements within it - and not least of all, Francis himself. 'St Francis is before us as an example of unalterable meekness and sincere love with regard to irrational beings who make up part of creation', maintained Pope John Paul II in his sermon at Assisi on 12 March 1982. 'We too are called to a similar attitude', he continued, 'Created in the image of God, we must make him present among creatures "as intelligent and noble masters and guardian of nature and not as heedless exploiters and destroyers."'

Snake

- D H Lawrence

A snake came to my water-trough
On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,
To drink there.

In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark carob-
tree
I came down the steps with my pitcher
And must wait, must stand and wait, for there he was at the
trough before me.

He reached down from a fissure in the earth-wall in the gloom
And trailed his yellow-brown slackness soft-bellied down, over
the edge of the stone trough
And rested his throat upon the stone bottom,
And where the water had dripped from the tap, in a small
clearness,
He sipped with his straight mouth,
Softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack long body,
Silently.

Someone was before me at my water-trough,
And I, like a second comer, waiting.

He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do,
And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do,
And flickered his two-forked tongue from his lips, and mused
a moment,
And stooped and drank a little more,
Being earth-brown, earth-golden from the burning bowels of
the earth
On the day of Sicilian July, with Etna smoking.
The voice of my education said to me
He must be killed,
For in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, the gold are
venomous.

And voices in me said, If you were a man
You would take a stick and break him now, and finish him off.

But must I confess how I liked him,
How glad I was he had come like a guest in quiet, to drink at
my water-trough
And depart peaceful, pacified, and thankless,
Into the burning bowels of this earth?

Was it cowardice, that I dared not kill him? Was it perversity,
that I longed to talk to him? Was it humility, to feel so honoured?
I felt so honoured.

And yet those voices:

If you were not afraid, you would kill him!

And truly I was afraid, I was most afraid, But even so, honoured
still more

That he should seek my hospitality

From out the dark door of the secret earth.

He drank enough

And lifted his head, dreamily, as one who has drunken,

And flickered his tongue like a forked night on the air, so black,

Seeming to lick his lips,

And looked around like a god, unseeing, into the air.

And slowly turned his head,

And slowly, very slowly, as if thrice a dream,

Proceeded to draw his slow length curving round

And climb again the broken bank of my wall-face.

And as he put his head into that dreadful hole,

And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his shoulders, and
entered farther,

A sort of horror, a sort of protest against his withdrawing into
that horrid black hole,

Deliberately going into the blackness, and slowly drawing
himself after,

Overcame me now his back was turned.

I looked round, I put down my pitcher,

I picked up a clumsy log

And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter.

I think it did not hit him,

But suddenly that part of him that was left behind convulsed
in undignified haste.

Writhed like lightning, and was gone

Into the black hole, the earth-lipped fissure in the wall-front,

At which, in the intense still noon, I stared with fascination.

And immediately I regretted it.

I thought how paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act!

I despised myself and the voices of my accursed human
education.

And I thought of the albatross

And I wished he would come back, my snake.

For he seemed to me again like a king,

Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,

Now due to be crowned again.

And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords

Of life.

And I have something to expiate:

A pettiness.

Taormina, 1923

The World Is Too Much With Us

- William Wordsworth

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

The Tables Turned

- William Wordsworth

Up! up! my friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
 Our minds and hearts to bless—
 Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
 Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
 May teach you more of man,
 Of moral evil and of good,
 Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
 Our meddling intellect
 Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
 We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
 Close up those barren leaves;
 Come forth, and bring with you a heart
 That watches and receives.

Lady or the Tiger?

- Frank Stockton

In the very olden time there lived a semi-barbaric king, whose ideas, though somewhat polished and sharpened by the progressiveness of distant Latin neighbors, were still large, florid, and untrammelled, as became the half of him which was barbaric. He was a man of exuberant fancy, and, withal, of an authority so irresistible that, at his will, he turned his varied fancies into facts. He was greatly given to self-communing, and, when he and himself agreed upon anything, the thing was done. When every member of his domestic and political systems moved smoothly in its appointed course, his nature was bland and genial; but, whenever there was a little hitch, and some of his orbs got out of their orbits, he was blander and more genial still, for nothing pleased him so much as to make the crooked straight and crush down uneven places.

Among the borrowed notions by which his barbarism had become semified was that of the public arena, in which, by exhibitions of manly and beastly valor, the minds of his subjects were refined and cultured.

But even here the exuberant and barbaric fancy asserted itself. The arena of the king was built, not to give the people an opportunity of hearing the rhapsodies of dying gladiators,

nor to enable them to view the inevitable conclusion of a conflict between religious opinions and hungry jaws, but for purposes far better adapted to widen and develop the mental energies of the people. This vast amphitheater, with its encircling galleries, its mysterious vaults, and its unseen passages, was an agent of poetic justice, in which crime was punished, or virtue rewarded, by the decrees of an impartial and incorruptible chance.

When a subject was accused of a crime of sufficient importance to interest the king, public notice was given, that on an appointed day, the fate of the accused person would be decided in the king's arena, a structure which well deserved its name, for, although its form and plan were borrowed from afar, its purpose emanated solely from the brain of this man, who, every barleycorn a king, knew no tradition to which he owed more allegiance than pleased his fancy, and who ingrafted on every adopted form of human thought and action the rich growth of his barbaric idealism.

When all the people had assembled in the galleries, and the king, surrounded by his court, sat high up on his throne of royal state on one side of the arena, he gave a signal, a door beneath him opened, and the accused subject stepped out into the amphitheater. Directly opposite him, on the other side of the enclosed space, were two doors, exactly alike and side by side. It was the duty and the privilege of the person on trial to walk directly to these doors and open one of them. He could open either door he pleased; he was subject to no guidance or influence but that of the aforementioned impartial and incorruptible chance. If he opened one, there came out of it a hungry tiger, the fiercest and most cruel that could be

procured, which immediately sprang upon him and tore him to pieces as a punishment for his guilt. The moment that the case of the criminal was thus decided, doleful iron bells were clanged, great wails went up from the hired mourners posted on the outer rim of the arena, and the vast audience, with bowed heads and downcast hearts, wended slowly their homeward way, mourning greatly that one so young and fair, or so old and respected, should have merited so dire a fate.

But, if the accused person opened the other door, there came forth from it a lady, the most suitable to his years and station that his majesty could select among his fair subjects, and to this lady he was immediately married, as a reward of his innocence. It mattered not that he might already possess a wife and family, or that his affections might be engaged upon an object of his own selection; the king allowed no such subordinate arrangements to interfere with his great scheme of retribution and reward. The exercises, as in the other instance, took place immediately, and in the arena. Another door opened beneath the king, and a priest, followed by a band of choristers, and dancing maidens blowing joyous airs on golden horns and treading an epithalamic measure, advanced to where the pair stood, side by side, and the wedding was promptly and cheerily solemnized. Then the gay brass bells rang forth their merry peals, the people shouted glad hurrahs, and the innocent man, preceded by children strewing flowers on his path, led his bride to his home.

This was the king's semi-barbaric method of administering justice. Its perfect fairness is obvious. The criminal could not know out of which door would come the lady; he opened either he pleased, without having the slightest idea whether, in the

next instant, he was to be devoured or married. On some occasions the tiger came out of one door, and on some out of the other. The decisions of this tribunal were not only fair, they were positively determinate: the accused person was instantly punished if he found himself guilty, and, if innocent, he was rewarded on the spot, whether he liked it or not. There was no escape from the judgments of the king's arena.

The institution was a very popular one. When the people gathered together on one of the great trial days, they never knew whether they were to witness a bloody slaughter or a hilarious wedding. This element of uncertainty lent an interest to the occasion which it could not otherwise have attained. Thus, the masses were entertained and pleased, and the thinking part of the community could bring no charge of unfairness against this plan, for did not the accused person have the whole matter in his own hands?

This semi-barbaric king had a daughter as blooming as his most florid fancies, and with a soul as fervent and imperious as his own. As is usual in such cases, she was the apple of his eye, and was loved by him above all humanity. Among his courtiers was a young man of that fineness of blood and lowness of station common to the conventional heroes of romance who love royal maidens. This royal maiden was well satisfied with her lover, for he was handsome and brave to a degree unsurpassed in all this kingdom, and she loved him with an ardor that had enough of barbarism in it to make it exceedingly warm and strong. This love affair moved on happily for many months, until one day the king happened to discover its existence. He did not hesitate nor waver in regard to his duty in the premises. The youth was immediately cast into prison,

and a day was appointed for his trial in the king's arena. This, of course, was an especially important occasion, and his majesty, as well as all the people, was greatly interested in the workings and development of this trial. Never before had such a case occurred; never before had a subject dared to love the daughter of the king. In after years such things became commonplace enough, but then they were in no slight degree novel and startling.

The tiger-cages of the kingdom were searched for the most savage and relentless beasts, from which the fiercest monster might be selected for the arena; and the ranks of maiden youth and beauty throughout the land were carefully surveyed by competent judges in order that the young man might have a fitting bride in case fate did not determine for him a different destiny. Of course, everybody knew that the deed with which the accused was charged had been done. He had loved the princess, and neither he, she, nor any one else, thought of denying the fact; but the king would not think of allowing any fact of this kind to interfere with the workings of the tribunal, in which he took such great delight and satisfaction. No matter how the affair turned out, the youth would be disposed of, and the king would take an aesthetic pleasure in watching the course of events, which would determine whether or not the young man had done wrong in allowing himself to love the princess.

The appointed day arrived. From far and near the people gathered, and thronged the great galleries of the arena, and crowds, unable to gain admittance, massed themselves against its outside walls. The king and his court were in their places, opposite the twin doors, those fateful portals, so terrible in their similarity.

All was ready. The signal was given. A door beneath the royal party opened, and the lover of the princess walked into the arena. Tall, beautiful, fair, his appearance was greeted with a low hum of admiration and anxiety. Half the audience had not known so grand a youth had lived among them. No wonder the princess loved him! What a terrible thing for him to be there!

As the youth advanced into the arena he turned, as the custom was, to bow to the king, but he did not think at all of that royal personage. His eyes were fixed upon the princess, who sat to the right of her father. Had it not been for the moiety of barbarism in her nature it is probable that lady would not have been there, but her intense and fervid soul would not allow her to be absent on an occasion in which she was so terribly interested. From the moment that the decree had gone forth that her lover should decide his fate in the king's arena, she had thought of nothing, night or day, but this great event and the various subjects connected with it. Possessed of more power, influence, and force of character than any one who had ever before been interested in such a case, she had done what no other person had done - she had possessed herself of the secret of the doors. She knew in which of the two rooms, that lay behind those doors, stood the cage of the tiger, with its open front, and in which waited the lady. Through these thick doors, heavily curtained with skins on the inside, it was impossible that any noise or suggestion should come from within to the person who should approach to raise the latch of one of them. But gold, and the power of a woman's will, had brought the secret to the princess.

And not only did she know in which room stood the lady

ready to emerge, all blushing and radiant, should her door be opened, but she knew who the lady was. It was one of the fairest and loveliest of the damsels of the court who had been selected as the reward of the accused youth, should he be proved innocent of the crime of aspiring to one so far above him; and the princess hated her. Often had she seen, or imagined that she had seen, this fair creature throwing glances of admiration upon the person of her lover, and sometimes she thought these glances were perceived, and even returned. Now and then she had seen them talking together; it was but for a moment or two, but much can be said in a brief space; it may have been on most unimportant topics, but how could she know that? The girl was lovely, but she had dared to raise her eyes to the loved one of the princess; and, with all the intensity of the savage blood transmitted to her through long lines of wholly barbaric ancestors, she hated the woman who blushed and trembled behind that silent door.

When her lover turned and looked at her, and his eye met hers as she sat there, paler and whiter than any one in the vast ocean of anxious faces about her, he saw, by that power of quick perception which is given to those whose souls are one, that she knew behind which door crouched the tiger, and behind which stood the lady. He had expected her to know it. He understood her nature, and his soul was assured that she would never rest until she had made plain to herself this thing, hidden to all other lookers-on, even to the king. The only hope for the youth in which there was any element of certainty was based upon the success of the princess in discovering this mystery; and the moment he looked upon her, he saw she had succeeded, as in his soul he knew she would succeed.

Then it was that his quick and anxious glance asked the question: "Which?" It was as plain to her as if he shouted it from where he stood. There was not an instant to be lost. The question was asked in a flash; it must be answered in another.

Her right arm lay on the cushioned parapet before her. She raised her hand, and made a slight, quick movement toward the right. No one but her lover saw her. Every eye but his was fixed on the man in the arena.

He turned, and with a firm and rapid step he walked across the empty space. Every heart stopped beating, every breath was held, every eye was fixed immovably upon that man. Without the slightest hesitation, he went to the door on the right, and opened it.

Now, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady?

The more we reflect upon this question, the harder it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart which leads us through devious mazes of passion, out of which it is difficult to find our way. Think of it, fair reader, not as if the decision of the question depended upon yourself, but upon that hot-blooded, semi-barbaric princess, her soul at a white heat beneath the combined fires of despair and jealousy. She had lost him, but who should have him?

How often, in her waking hours and in her dreams, had she started in wild horror, and covered her face with her hands as she thought of her lover opening the door on the other side of which waited the cruel fangs of the tiger!

But how much oftener had she seen him at the other door! How in her grievous reveries had she gnashed her teeth, and

torn her hair, when she saw his start of rapturous delight as he opened the door of the lady! How her soul had burned in agony when she had seen him rush to meet that woman, with her flushing cheek and sparkling eye of triumph; when she had seen him lead her forth, his whole frame kindled with the joy of recovered life; when she had heard the glad shouts from the multitude, and the wild ringing of the happy bells; when she had seen the priest, with his joyous followers, advance to the couple, and make them man and wife before her very eyes; and when she had seen them walk away together upon their path of flowers, followed by the tremendous shouts of the hilarious multitude, in which her one despairing shriek was lost and drowned!

Would it not be better for him to die at once, and go to wait for her in the blessed regions of semi-barbaric futurity?

And yet, that awful tiger, those shrieks, that blood!

Her decision had been indicated in an instant, but it had been made after days and nights of anguished deliberation. She had known she would be asked, she had decided what she would answer, and, without the slightest hesitation, she had moved her hand to the right.

The question of her decision is one not to be lightly considered, and it is not for me to presume to set myself up as the one person able to answer it. And so I leave it with all of you: Which came out of the opened door - the lady, or the tiger?

Who Was He?

- Ismat Chughtai

When nature resorts to cruel jokes she makes a laughing stock of Mister Man. Thakur Singh Harnam had never in his wildest dreams thought that he would be face with such an enormous test. First God took a long time in giving him children, then He gave him two sons at the same time. Actually, his wife bore him only one son, but how one became two is a strange tale.

When the Thakurayan was married and came to the Thakur's house, she was only fifteen. A unique example of Rajasthani beauty. Thakur Sahib was twelve years older than her, an only child, sole heir to the family's fortune. His father had died, his aged mother yearned to play with a grandson, but all her prayers and offerings came to nought; the Thakurayan did not bear a child. The mother tried to get a second wife for her son, but the Thakur flatly refused; he wouldn't dream of bringing another wife to compete with the Thakurayan.

Twenty years passed, then God took pity on them. Preparations for the child's arrival began with ceremonial splendour. The number of kurtas and diapers Mataji had made were enough for four babies. A room was specially decorated

for it, with light blue walls and stars on the ceiling. The curtains were of foamy lace and the white cradle had legs adorned with gold and silver ornamentation. Tiny bells had been attached to the cradle so that they would start tinkling when the baby stirred. The bells had been arranged in such a way that they played the seven surs when they stirred and the music they mad was like a heavenly melody. All kinds of toys had also been placed everywhere in the room. Mataji busied herself with the baby's room as if she were a little girl playing with a doll's house. On a table to one side a baby Krishna had been set up with a row of tiny lamps in front of him, and instead of oil wicks, elongated half-inch bulbs had been installed in the lamps.

The Thakurayan was unwell. Mataji would crush tamarind pods and make sweet and sour purees for her. The tamarind tree from where the pods came grew in Rahmat Mai's small courtyard. Every day she filled a basket with ripe tamarinds and brought it over. Her daughter was also expecting. Her husband had been killed in the riots and Thakur Sahib had given her refuge in the compound of his house. Rahmat Mai was hard of hearing. Her ill-fated daughter, Sughra, would lie on a mat all day, her face turned away from the world, weeping constantly. Her health deteriorated with each passing day.

The minute Thakur Sahib's beloved son was born, the sound of wailing emanated from the corner of the bungalow. Sughra had died a few minutes after giving birth to her child. There had not been enough time to send for a midwife; the baby had arrived suddenly. Rahmat Bai, being blind, didn't know what to do, how to cut off the umbilical cord properly, and she wouldn't let the sweeperess touch the baby. Taking

the child in her lap she went straight to the Thakur Sahib. He was already quite anxious on account of his wife's labour.

"Take her to the lady doctor, she'll cut off the cord properly, we don't want anything to happen to the child!" He quickly dispatched Rahmat Mai inside. Mataji didn't like the idea of Mai going in at a time like this, but before she could stop her she was already in the room. The nurse took the baby, wrapped it in a towel and put it on a table, because at that very moment, as soon as Mai stepped into the room, Thakur Sahib's beautiful son arrived into the world. When the nurse cut off the baby's cord, she also cut off Mai's grandson's. What chubby little babies they were! The lady doctor bathed Thakur Sahib's son, dressed him in a white frock, then wrapped him up and deposited him in his grandmother's lap. Mataji's eyes filled with tears. She immediately took off her ten-tola bracelets, put them on the lady doctor's wrists, and began cooing and fussing over the baby. Thakur Sahib stood nearby, smiling.

The nurse whispered something to the lady doctor. She frowned and went inside quickly. The Thakurayan had the baby lying by her side, smiling contentedly. For a moment the lady doctor was stunned into silence.

And nature laughed out loud, because immediately afterwards a storm of confusion arose and fell upon the entire household. The Thakurayan kept saying that the child the nurse has placed in her lap was her son.

But Mataji insisted that the baby the lady doctor had deposited in her lap and for which she had given her two ten-tola bracelets and over whom she had fussed and cooed, was her grandson. How did all this come about? The lady doctor swore that she could say with complete certainty that the baby

she had handed over to Mataji was Thakur Sahib's son, but the nurse said she clearly remembered wrapping Thakur Sahib's baby in a pink towel, whereas Mai's grandson was in a turquoise one.

"What! Will I not recognise my own son?" Thakurayan didn't want to get involved in the controversy about pink and turquoise towels. The baby in her lap had clearly taken after its father, with the exception of the chin which was hers.

But to Thakur Sahib, both babies appeared to resemble pieces of meat.

Suddenly everyone was silenced. Rahmat Mai sat leaning against a pillar, her unseeing eyes filled with tears. People had come from the masjid to bury her daughter - how could she claim her grandson? She couldn't even remember who she was, buried under the weight of her grief as she tried coping with the devastating burden of a young daughter's death.

When Thakurayan saw Mai's grandson she was stunned and then, God knows why, she began weeping and wept ceaselessly. Why were people deceiving her, Mataji is right, the baby in her lap is *her* son. Yet, when the nurse tried to pick up the baby lying next to her she became agitated.

Everyone became extremely nervous. It seemed Thakurayan was about to have a fit. She put her arms around both babies and was adamant that she had delivered twins, that people around her were creating a fuss for no reason.

The next day the truth would become evident. Can one's own child be hidden from one's eyes? After all, the call of one's own blood counts for something. But the moment one child was taken from her side, Thakurayan would change her mind.

Her condition worsened and a senior doctor had to be called in. Soon the news spread in the entire neighbourhood that the babies had been mixed up, and from the neighbourhood the news travelled to the city. People began gossiping. All kinds of talk ensued. Someone said that Rahmat Mai was a wicked woman, she had started this quarrel deliberately so that her grandson would live a life of luxury while Thakur Sahib's poor son would become a beggar. Oh, what a great sin was about to be committed! A Hindu's child would be raised in a Muslim home! Tradition was about to suffer a great blow. This was the view of one group of people.

The other group was of the opinion that Thakur Sahib had deliberately tried to create this mix-up, using this ploy to take control of a Muslim boy.

Many discussions followed, tensions developed in several neighbourhoods, a Hindu boy slapped a Muslim boy.

Well, a few knives were used, blood began to flow. The police was sent for and the riots were contained. Afterwards it was discovered that the person the Hindu boy had slapped was actually not a Muslim, he was a Hindu.

All lies, the group invested in rioting exclaimed. And the riots escalated. Meetings and assemblies involving both groups began taking place. Delegates appeared before the senior officer. Superintendent Sahib arrived quickly with his sergeants.

"Send both babies to the government hospital until an agreement is reached."

"No. Why should I send my only child to the charity hospital?" Thakur Sahib said obstinately.

But the question was, which child was his? Thakurayan had become weak with weeping. She would clasp one child to her breast but her heart would be drawn to the other. She had said that she would raise hell if anyone dared to touch either child. The police did not have the courage to take custody of either one. Refusing to go along with the Thakurayan at this time was the same as killing her. It was feared she would go mad.

Actually, everyone was stumped by all this. God had blessed the family with a child after years, but now its birth could not be celebrated properly and there was bloodshed because of him. Thakur Sahib was dismayed and troubled and felt quite helpless.

People advised, "Let the babies grow a little. In a week or two, their features will become more developed and recognition will come more easily."

Rahmat Mai sat in the doorway and wept uncontrollably. She begged that her grandson be handed over to her so that she could go to her old village, Peeli Bhait, and place the child in the lap of some merciful woman who was not blind. This way the poor orphan would have a chance to be looked after. He was everything to her now, her only daughter's only offspring.

And when the truth was explained to the old woman, she became hysterical. Finally, exasperated and angry, Thakur Sahib said, "Give the child to the wretched woman, our sins will be atoned."

The question was, which child?

"I'm blind and can't make out anything, and you who

have eyes have also become blind,” Rahmat Mai muttered. “But if you want to torment an old woman, that’s another matter.”

After much bickering it was decided which one of the babies belonged to the old woman, but at that very instant Mataji noticed a resemblance in him to her own husband, the boy’s grandfather, that is. She started beating her chest.

This convinced Rahmat Mai that they were trying to fool her. She wept so bitterly that everyone who heard her felt their hearts would break.

With much apprehension, a decision was made in favour of the other child, but Rahmat Mai had barely made it to the courtyard with the baby in her arms when Thakurayan clamped her teeth and started foaming at the mouth.

Just think : the baby being carried away by Rahmat Mai is actually her son. Can anyone guarantee that the problem has been solved, the right decision made?

After a great deal of thought Thakur Sahib tried to explain the matter to Mai.

“You can’t raise the child yourself, you’ll give it to someone else. Let me raise it. You continue with your life the way you did before, and live here. He will always be here for you to see.” Thakur Sahib knew that both boys would remain with him but actually his child was lost. How could he know him with complete conviction? How would these doubts be erased? He continued, “And, of course, when the children are older they will be recognized easily. How can habits and traits be hidden forever?”

Mai listened quietly, then said : “Thakur Sahib, let me be frank. The child will be raised in your home, he will follow your faith. How can that be? How will I face my Creator on the Day of Judgement? I will have turned the child of a believer into an infidel. My soul will know no peace. And the senior maulvi sahib says we should think of the community. My reputation will be tarnished. For God’s sake, give me my child.”

“Even if I wanted to give you your child, I can’t. Of course, if you can recognize your grandson I’ll be eternally grateful. My problem is the same as yours. People are pressuring me as well. They think I’m deliberately trying to gobble up a Muslim child.”

“And they’re telling me that I’m putting on this act out of greed for your money; that I’m fooling you.”

But there was a storm brewing in the city. Reports were spreading through the newspapers.

And spreading alongside was fire.

Islam is in danger!

The Hindu faith is being polluted!

Slogans were being raised. Political parties had taken over the issue from the religious groups. Meetings followed, funds were collected, and soon the parties were flinging dirt at each other.

“Cruelty and injustice being meted out to the minorities!”

“It was not enough to divide the country, now agents are being left behind in every house.”

“They’re castrating children, just like the Nazis.”

“All this mischief is the doing of the Naxalites.”

“A terrible blow to democracy!”

“China is involved in this, they’re attempting to disrupt our system.”

“The CIA is sabotaging us!”

“The leaders should resign!”

And then the parties began to clash with each other on this question.

They began to break up.

The ministries began to flounder.

In the meantime people provoked Rahmat Mai and this turned her into the wrath of God. She was hard of hearing, had little strength left in her legs and arms, and so she immediately resorted to violent ranting and raving, so much so that Thakur Sahib would become extremely agitated and quickly offer both boys to her.

But when she couldn’t be certain she was getting her own grandchild, she would bang her head on the door in anger and frustration.

“For God’s sake, for the Prophet’s sake, please give me my grandson,” she implored and people would feel their hearts melting.

Sometimes they would get distracted by some other burning issue, and forgetting the predicament surrounding the Hindu and Muslim babies, would become embroiled in clashes over something else. That was when Rahmat Mai recited prayers and blew blessings over both children. Allah

understands all checks and balances. Surely the blessings would be entered in her grandson’s account; God willing, there would be no misappropriation.

As for the Thakurayan, she too would forget everything and become just a mother. There was enough space in her loving heart for more than two children.

But Mataji was the one in real distress. Actually, she was ready to shower her love on both babies but she hadn’t yet placed her grandson at the feet of her Bhagwan. How could she? Where was her grandson?

And Thakur took out a rupee coin from his pocket and tossed it to get an answer, but couldn’t find the satisfaction and certainty he sought. At one time he heeded the result of the toss and handed over one of the babies to Mai, but who could say that this was not his son? He was ready to trust the result of a blood test, this would certainly solve the puzzle. He was waiting for the children to grow since the very thought of a blood test for such little mites caused Thakurayan to become extremely agitated. In reality, everyone blamed her. What kind of a mother was she that she couldn’t recognize her own child? A cow or a goat, a bitch, even a cat, can recognize its young. A mother knows somehow, but Thakurayan was a strange woman.

At first Mataji scolded her daughter-in-law, but when she wailed and wept and swore that she tried very hard and still could not tell, then she too was convinced that there was little hope of finding out which child was whose, and for now it was enough that one of the two was their very own.

In the meantime regional elections had commenced in

the city. Various groups were hurling mud at each other and the issue of the two babies was raised once again. Whenever a candidate stood up and expounded on his achievements, he invariably dragged the tragic story of the babies into his discourse. He expressed his opinion about the destruction that had been caused by the mix-up, and vehemently declared that if he won the national elections such appalling mix-ups would never be allowed to happen because he was ready to shed his blood for his people.

* * *

Their opponents were not to be left behind. They praised Thakur Sahib's patriotism, his far-sightedness, commending how cleverly he had gained possession of a child from the opposite camp. If such vigilance spread in the entire nation, all the country's problems would disappear.

This statement caused havoc among the Muslims. If Muslim children continued to be stolen in this fashion, then very soon there would be no one left to take the name of Islam. One political delegation after another began making trips to pressure the government. The moment either party lost its momentum, despite extensive bhajan singing and processions, the question of the mix-up of the babies was immediately brought up. Suddenly people would be energised and start attending meetings and processions in full force.

The time came for the children to undergo blood tests. All night Thakurayan tossed and turned in bed. Who knows which child she would get and which one Rahmat Mai would take away. The maternal feelings that had been yearning for years had embraced both boys. Again and again she got up to

look at the babies. They had both become chubby, their complexions were fair, both had small, regular features, one was a Rajput, the other a Pathan ! Once their forefathers must have been leaves of the same tree. Perhaps when they were a little older one would be able to tell, right now they were like china dolls. They slept at the same time, awoke at the same time and were fed at the same time; because of this they were like twins. How could she choose between them?

When Thakur Sahib explained what the blood test entailed, she raised a hue and cry. "Hai ! Do you think I'm going to let you draw blood from my precious ones? Tell the doctor to check their pulse and give his decision."

What illness, big or small, is there that a doctor cannot diagnose sooner or later, but is there anyone who can determine a person's religion or faith by checking his pulse? There was no way to convince Thakurayan of this. In any case, the doctors said it was not as if the blood tests would yield conclusive results since a father and son's blood type does not have to be the same. The Thakurayan did not understand any of this and she kept insisting that a doctor who cannot arrive at a judgement by checking the pulse is indeed a quack - throw him out of the house ! She took both boys to her room and locked the door from inside.

Her behaviour gave rise to even more colourful gossip.

"Actually, the father of Thakurayan's baby is not Thakur Sahib and that's why she is reluctant to agree to a blood test."

Human beings are essentially carnivorous. Now its forbidden to eat human flesh, so they let their mouths water and seek satisfaction by causing pain. When they're not satisfied

with killing and destroying, they drill holes in the heart and mind and try to fill them with acid.

This bit of gossip rattled Thakur Sahib. The joy of having a son had already been crushed, now a filthy doubt raised its cobra-like head in his heart. He cast his glance about fearfully. Who could be Thakurayan's lover? Right then he wanted to kill all three of them and then shoot himself in the heart.

As for Rahmat Mai, she was determined to collect her reward in heaven. When she brought over a maulvi to recite azaan in the boy's ear, both Mataji and Thakurayan called out "Ram, Ram!" After a great deal of going back and forth it was decided that the azaan be recited in the ears of both boys for now. It wouldn't harm them to hear Allah's name. After the maulvi did so and charged one-and-a-quarter rupees for each boy, walking away with a total of two and-a-half, Mataji ignored Rahmat Mai's protestations and quickly sprinkled sacred Ganga water on the children and offered arti for them.

It wasn't long before Rahmat Mai began hankering for something else. The boy should be circumcised now because once he was older it would cause him much more pain.

But Thakurayan would not hear anything about knife or scalpel as far as the children were concerned. She declared bluntly that if Rahmat Mai touched her son she would slit her neck.

The children were saved, but the situation caused quite a commotion and a few necks were indeed slit. The matter became serious, emotions rose high and some people torched Rahmat Mai's dwelling. She gathered her belongings and took shelter in the bungalow. How could the opponents stay quiet

about this? For some people looting and rioting is a means of livelihood. They looted what was useful while the junk that remained was burnt.

During this time some of the political parties were engaged in a fierce tussle. It doesn't take much to arouse people against the government. They are already sick of high prices, unemployment and lack of housing. At the slightest pretext strikes occur and barricades are put in place. Then, sectarian violence begins and, forgetting strikes and barricades, people start blaming members of these sects. The killing of poor, helpless people in these skirmishes has a salutary effect on the question of population growth. But the matter of these two boys became extremely grave. Rahmat Mai's dwelling was burnt to the ground and in response an attempt was made to torch Thakur Sahib's bungalow, although the small house in which Rahmat Mai had been living had also belonged to Thakur Sahib. But who wants to squander one's reasoning where revenge is concerned.

A large crowd of Muslims gathered in front of Thakur Sahib's house. Slogans were being raised. A second crowd of Hindus arrived in response to this and set up positions. Rahmat Mai began reciting ayats that she barely remembered and Thakurayan picked up the two boys and went upstairs. Gun in hand, Thakur Sahib took a position on the staircase. The servants began shutting all the windows.

Outside the two parties had entrenched themselves on opposing sides.

"Rahmat Mai should be released from forced imprisonment and her grandson should be handed over to her!" the Muslims demanded.

“Rahmat Mai and her grandson should be punished for the crime of polluting the house of a thakur,” the Hindus responded.

“Long live Rahmat Mai!”

“Death to Rahmat Mai!”

Luckily Rahmat Mai was hard of hearing and could only hear the noise made by the crowds, which she had also heard shortly before the death of her son-in-law.

After raising slogans the rival parties started throwing stones at each other, and then out came the knives and switchblades.

Thakur Sahib was on the phone. God knows where the police was. The gate was about to break.

Thakur Sahib suddenly appeared on the veranda. He fired shots one after another in the air. The rioters became flustered and immediately took off.

“Brothers, wait, listen! Listen to me!” Thakur Sahib shouted. The crowd became still. He cast a perfunctory gaze over the crowd. People dress in such a way these days that it’s difficult to tell who is Hindu and who Muslim! Most of the rioters were wearing grimy shorts and undersized trousers, some were in dhotis and loincloths, and a few in kurta-pyjamas.

People started shouting again.

“Release Rhamat Mai ! Return the child!”

“Rahmat Mai is a witch, the child is unclean! Throw them both out!”

“All right, yes, I hear you, I promise that if you all return tomorrow morning, I’ll go along with whatever decision you make. Okay?”

For a while a commotion ensued, people began handing out opinions, but Thakur Sahib couldn’t make out what they were saying, because just then the police jeeps made a noisy appearance. They started firing as soon as they arrived, as if they were upset that the rioters were showing signs of coming to some kind of an agreement. The area cleared instantly. Thakur Sahib presented all the facts to the police and thanked them for arriving on time.

“Thakur Sahib, you’re playing with fire, please end this joke. We’ll take Rahmat Mai and her grandson into our safekeeping and...”

Thakur Sahib lowered his head thoughtfully. Yes, indeed, it was time to decide. It wouldn’t do to continue like this.

“This is interfering with public peace. It’s a fire that can assume extremely dangerous proportions.”

“Yes, sir, I understand. Don’t worry, whatever you say will be done.”

“Well, let’s postpone it for today. Rahmat Mai is not feeling well, and the kids have just fallen asleep. If we wake them up now they’ll be very uncomfortable. And I also have to explain everything to Thakurayan.”

“Will she understand?”

“Why won’t she? A decision will have to be made one day.”

After the police officer had left he remained outside, strolled in the garden for a while. The lawn was strewn with

stones that had been thrown at the house. He avoided them and kept walking.

Then he went inside. A zero power blue light was on in the children's bedroom. Blue room, blue curtains - it looked like a unique corner in a part of heaven where two tiny angels were sleeping peacefully. In the white crib the two boys lay close to each other. Thakurayan had been insisting that they should get another bed, the boys were growing and might hurt each other if they slept on the same one.

He broke into a smile. "They're Hindu and Muslim, after all, if they don't kick and punch each other they won't be able to digest their food."

He was looking at the children closely as though asking, "Who are you?" As if they would speak up and answer him.

At first Thakurayan was very angry. But when she realized that there was no alternative, she put one child on each knee and wept all night. Rahmat Mai was the only person who snored peacefully, content that her grandson had been found. Everyone else was tossing and turning restlessly.

The next morning everyone looked washed out. Thakurayan's eyes were swollen.

Then came the time to make a decision. A darbar was organized, people gathered to see the show. The police had made excellent arrangements. Thakur Sahib was sitting in the veranda. Thakurayan bathed the two boys and hugged them, dressed them in kurtas, put kajal in their eyes, applied dabs of colour to their foreheads and the soles of their feet to ward off the evil eye, then opened the taps of her eyes.

"Rahmat Mai, pick up your grandson."

"Hunh?" Rahmat Mai coughed. "Why don't you hand him to me, Bahuji."

"I won't even give away their dirty diapers with my own hands," the Rajputni roared.

"Hurry up, Mai, people are waiting outside."

"They can wait, God damn them!" she groaned quietly, then, her knees cracking, muttering something, admonishing someone, she got up, picked up one of the babies and started walking to the door.

"Ai, Mai, listen, wait!"

"Why?" she croaked.

"You've recognized him?" Thakurayan asked in a lifeless voice.

"Yes, yes, of course, why wouldn't I recognize him, he's my grandson, isn't he?" She walked out quickly. Thakurayan's heart was slowly wrenched from her. She looked at the boy in the crib as if he were a stranger, as she had seen him for the first time. She picked him up in her lap, but her lap remained empty.

When Rahmat Mai came out she informed the people gathered there that she was thankful to God she had found her grandson. Everyone, happy at last, went home. She gazed at the departing crowd proudly, then looked down the baby in her lap and halted on the steps. For a while she peered at him with her dim-sighted eyes, then suddenly turned back as if she had forgotten something.

"No, Bahuji, I don't recognize this miserable creature."

And Mai deposited the baby in Thakurayan's lap.

Shylock's Speech

Excerpt from *Merchant of Venice*

- William Shakespeare

To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else,
it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and
hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses,
mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my
bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine
enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath
not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs,
dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with
the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject
to the same diseases, healed by the same means,
warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as
a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed?
if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison
us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not
revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will

resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian,
what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian
wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by
Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you
teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I
will better the instruction.

Women and Formal and Informal Science

Have you ever talked to your grandmother to find out home remedies for small cures? Do you think they are a source of information? Share your experiences with the class if you have benefited from their experiences.

The farmers, home makers, artisans and healers include many 'informal' scientists and technologists. Their representation in the total pool of knowledge experts scouted by Honey Bee Network is quite small. This is not because they are less creative but because of the lack of women field staff and volunteers, who could scout women knowledge experts and 'scientists' and 'technologists'.

Sita Ben, a healer from Dangs forests in south Gujarat was honoured at the Honey Bee annual function a couple of years ago by the award of SRISTI Samman for her knowledge as well as her spirit of service. She was one of the very few (and in that village the only one) expert woman herbal healers in that region in the tribal district of Dangs, Gujarat. She had learned it from her brother and had developed considerable reputation in solving problems of people in the nearby region. At the award function she was exposed to a lot of attention, adulation, crowd and noise. When she went back, she got

slightly disoriented. As soon as The Honey Bee network and SRISTI learned about it, they took her to a local clinic and she had to be treated for a few weeks for this psychological stress.

She has recovered and resumed normal functions now of collecting fire wood from the forest, dispensing medicines to the needy, and collecting other forest products. The question is how to coordinate the two worlds of knowledge and acknowledgement? The subtlety of a tribal culture was absent perhaps in the function. The organizers were perhaps too loud and seemed less authentic. It created a stress. May be this is an extreme case. But building bridges between formal and informal science and technology would require paying attention to such subtleties. Even empowerment of such knowledge-rich, economically poor, isolated and expert women required much greater sensitivity than had been shown by us.

Can women only cope and not create? Why are there so few women innovators?

Here we would like to share with our readers some of the findings of our empirical research. The Honey Bee network has been very self critically reflecting on the fact that the share of women innovators and traditional knowledge holders in our database of over fifteen thousand innovations and traditional knowledge mobilized by National Innovation Foundation (NIF) directly and through Honey Bee network has not been more than five per cent. This certainly reflects more on our incapacity and inadequacy than any innate inability of women to innovate. This was the case despite incorporating the resolve of women, 'if given some space to stand, they would move the world', in SRISTI's logo.

Given the cultural context, a girl was taught from an early age to adapt, adjust and accommodate, since she was supposed to go to 'another' house after marriage. The general thrust towards compliance and conformity so deeply embedded in our culture was particularly underlined in the case of women. The women tended to be very creative in coping with stresses of various kinds. Historically, they were not given technologies of daily use, they did not have wherewithal to transcend the constraints. The everyday technologies used by women seemed to have had much lesser technological innovations, thanks to the neglect by men artisans and scientific minds. Thus, we felt that there indeed were fewer innovations attempted by women, given the cultural, political and economic constraints under which they worked.

But then we also knew all along that no two women cooked the same recipe or dish alike. The stamp of personality of a lady was almost always imprinted on the way a dish was cooked. And this happened every time she cooked that particular dish. This indicated enormous degree of creativity, far higher than evident in any other human activity. Male farmers, or artisans or technologists would not be able to claim so much uniqueness in any human endeavour. Why did we miss it then so much?

We used several explanations: that we had much lesser number of lady researchers who were willing to go from village to village looking for odd balls, the women experimenters and inventors; the male researchers had difficulty in approaching women in the villages particularly in the absence of the men folk at home; the biases of the researchers; and men often dissuaded field workers from looking for new ideas from women, since after all they (the men) knew all! And these

seemed to become less and less acceptable as time passed. But our pedagogies seemed to have internalized various constraints rather than transcending them. Were we not behaving like the subject of inquiry ourselves, we were coping rather than being creative? Very slowly, as this realization dawned, our methods started becoming more creative.

We started having Shodh Yatras involving walk through a number of villages for eight to ten days⁶ The idea was to honour the innovators and traditional knowledge experts at their door step and share the experiences of innovators walking with us. Our hope was and is, that society would become innovative once inertia was overcome through presentation of real life examples of those who had done so in their neighborhood as well as in far way regions. During these Yatras, we also organized contests among women to cook recipes that had at least some uncultivated ingredients. The contests threw up women's innovations as well as outstanding traditional knowledge in utilizing lesser known biodiversity and meet nutritional and food requirements in normal times but particularly in stress periods like droughts and floods. We have now a large collection of such recipes, many of which can put the best chef to shame in their ingenuity and taste. For instance, we came across a delicious vegetable cooked out of leaves of Euphorbia in a recent Shodh Yatra. Who would imagine that the few leaves that this cactus bears could be put to such delicious use⁷? It is a different matter that while this plant may be neglected in India, it is a rich source of anti cancer drugs abroad.

The biodiversity contest among young children also brought out several such uses. When we organized biodiversity contests among school children it was found that girl children

knew more than boys in primary classes but as they moved to classes six or seven, they knew half as much as boys did, apparently because their freedom to move about outside the home was curtailed, and also their responsibility to look after younger kids increased. Discrimination in learning opportunities vis-à-vis boys began early for Indian girls.

While we pursued this and several other approaches including organizing specific meetings of only women experimenters, we adjusted to the fact that in most Shodh Yatras participation of women in various villages was much lower than men and often negligible in some villages. This time in summer of 2001, in Alwar district, Rajasthan we decided that it was time to change. Right from the first, in two villages, Bhikampur and Surajgadh, we decided to try out some thing different. We would start interactions by showing the multimedia multi-language data base on innovations which always attracted a very high attention. Invariably in every meeting there would be only men and children. After showing a few innovations, we stopped and insisted that unless women were invited to the meeting, we were not going to show any further. We were told that women were busy, that they had gone out (if it was afternoon time), and that the men would tell them whatever they saw. But we remained adamant and were pleasantly surprised that the approach worked in every single case during the recent Shodh Yatra. We not only could share with women what we knew but also learn from them a great deal about their own concerns, and creative approaches for solving their problems, through more of the first than of the latter. This was very inspiring but also very embarrassing. Why had we adapted to the absence of women even in a single meeting during previous seven Shodh Yatras?

There is no doubt that women excel in certain fields of knowledge domains in which they have greater familiarity and control. Whether it is the seed selection or storage in agriculture, child care or women's own health problems, the knowledge of women is indeed far superior and extensive compared to that of men.

The attributes of different grains or other foods which make experimentation with different recipes for processing these foods possible are known to women. But, the germplasm descriptors used in the national and international gene banks around the world do not still include the columns for recording the characterization done by women innovators as well as community members. It is ignored that increasing share of processed food in consumer baskets would require newer and newer innovations in this sector. The indigenous knowledge of women if catalogued systematically could have expanded the scientific and technological options enormously. This should happen even if gene banks are headed by male scientists, as is the case in most countries including India. Likewise, selection criteria of local germplasm and varieties by male farmer breeders are also not recorded. The biases against people's knowledge are deep and institutional. The women's knowledge tends to get neglected far more than the men's local knowledge.

In a recent study of knowledge systems of old women, who had lived for a hundred or more years in Gujarat, SRISTI has begun documentation of the unique insights such women have gained over the years about environment, biodiversity, nature and life in general. Several lessons have already emerged from this study, perhaps the first of its kind. Nathi ben of Mentaal village knew about a particular plant used for animal

care. However, she could not recognize it due to her weak eyesight. When about 20 women and men were shown various plants, only one could identify this particular plant for the purpose for which Nathi ben had experimented it. This lady had also learnt it from Nathi ben years ago when she used to go with her for collecting fodder and cutting grass in the nearby regions. The erosion of this knowledge would have been complete if we had not stumbled upon at least one person who could continue the knowledge chain. It is quite obvious that such knowledge, developed decades ago or sometimes centuries ago and continued by a few women (or for that matter, men), would get lost if it was not documented with due credit to the traditional knowledge holders. In the case of 100 years old women, the risk of such knowledge being lost very soon is very real all over the country and in fact in the world. Local biodiversity, particularly agro biodiversity was monitored annually and managed by local communities through an informal institution. Mulee ben described how on the day of Sharad Poornima, a large variety of cultivated and uncultivated vegetables were collected, cooked and offered to God before eating. Such an institution exists in different parts of the country. The one who would have maximum number of vegetables, particularly uncultivated ones, would obviously take a lot of pride and would be talked about in the community. The knowledge of diversity, its uses, institutions for its conservation are aspects of knowledge systems about which women may have unique insights.

There were occasions when certain vegetables were important for social occasions but not liked by the male members of the family. Gana ben and Nathi ben explained how they have to cook such vegetables when their husbands

were away. The famine and stress foods were extremely important for survival in hard times. Modern science might benefit a great deal from knowledge of such foods which many women who had survived through the famine of 1900 still recalled from their childhood. Which food processing tools should be made from which wood so that the weight was less was also a valuable insight. How much of impact should be made on paddy ears so that while beating the same, only the chaff got separated and the grain did not get damaged was found out in a very interesting manner. Shambu ben of Surendranagar district explained, if the beating stick made of 'rayan' wood could be lifted with two little fingers of the left hand, then the weight was considered appropriate. Nathiben asked the researchers to name a grain, which required maximum labour and energy to process after harvest. And when nobody could reply, she mentioned a minor millet called 'bunty' which was the most difficult to process and very nutritive.

There are a large number of other insights emerging from this study being pursued with the help of male researchers. Honey Bee Network had failed to scout more than five per cent of women innovators and outstanding traditional knowledge holders out of more than 10000 innovations and traditional knowledge examples in the database. New methods, perspectives and institutional arrangements have to be evolved to overcome the historical bias.

National Innovation Foundation (NIF) has instituted special prizes for innovations by and for women. But so far it has not been able to accomplish much in terms of tapping women's creativity in informal science and technology. NIF is determined to overcome this barrier and achieve a balance in

our search process. The question would still remain as to whether the scientific establishments can come forward, build bridges and add value to the local knowledge, particularly of women, and thus improve their livelihood prospects, help conserve nature, biodiversity and associated knowledge system with appropriate sharing of benefits. A MOU has been signed between NIF and National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow, to accomplish this tough task. A similar effort is going on with ICAR and other institutions. Soon a major blemish on Indian science of having neglected local knowledge, especially that of women, might be overcome. How soon it will be, is an open question.

In conclusion, a major question that we need to answer is how to integrate more women in the study and pursuit of science. In other words, can we feminize science? Here are some suggestions that we offer.

Policy and Institutional Alternatives for 'Feminizing Science'

So long as tending children remains the mother's responsibility in our society, we have to create space in our institutions for relieving this stress on women professionals through high quality child care system affiliated to each institution. Likewise various facilities, which would make their participation in professional institutions possible, must be provided on a priority basis. However, there are certain specific interventions required for feminizing science:

- a) Flexible timing and part time work have to become the rule rather than the exception for those women scientists, who desire such arrangements.

- b) The use of Information Technology is necessary in networking women scientists, mentoring young scientists to help them cope with multiple roles, providing them high quality peer reference groups and enabling them to work from home wherever feasible.
- c) The fact that science grows through interaction and group work, the collegial culture and social attitudes must change, enabling women to take up complex problems, requiring team work, and experiments at odd hours. Each professional society must be required to report in their annual conference the efforts it has made to involve women scientists in challenging research programs, and not just at membership level but also at leadership level.
- d) The socialization of women scientists will have to be with male senior scientists for some time due to historical biases. The senior male scientists need to be made sensitive of their responsibility to create a more congenial atmosphere for new entrants as well as for middle rung scientists.
- e) Travelling is an important means through which women scientists can move, learn and build contacts, which become so useful in the profession. Special travel grants to women scientists might help in the matter.
- f) It is not just the involvement of women, which is needed for feminizing science; it is the incorporation of feminine qualities in male institutions and mindset, which is necessary. Expression of emotions, seeing inter-connections, use of intuition and not being apologetic

about it, and allowing family responsibilities to figure among reasons for changing priorities are some steps.

We do not think that making science more caring, compassionate and concerned with the interests of the underprivileged will require involvement of only women scientists. But we do feel that their involvement might make it more effortless and also more 'natural' to science institutions.

Weighing Justice with a Jury of her 'Peers'

- Editor: Sari Botton

I was the foreperson for a grand jury, joined by a little over a dozen other county residents. Our task was to review a slew of cases — over three hundred — and figure out whether or not they should go to trial. The district attorney, a jovial, dark-haired, white man, slick-talked in the manner of a politician or used car salesman. He was always polite, but there was something discomfiting about him just beneath the surface, like he could stab you in the chest with a smile. He warned us to complete our cases quickly or else jury duty would spill over into another week.

None of us wanted to stay the day, much less over a week. We promised to go through the cases quickly and efficiently.

What exactly is a jury of your peers? In this particular experience, it was mostly white men. Conservative, evangelical, Republican. The men dressed like grownup versions of my students: fancier versions of khaki shorts, polo shirts, baseball caps, tinted sunglasses, and shorter hair. Some were businessmen, others were laborers. Every last one of them mansplained, espousing universal truths with their arms crossed or their hands casually clasped, talking over each other and over the women unless I interjected — which I did, often.

The women were housewives, clerical workers, and retired schoolteachers. They sat uneasily among men, mostly silent among the cacophony of smug male voices.

My group was probably more racially mixed than most for the area. In addition to the white men, there was a smattering of white women, and two other Black women besides myself. I don't recall there being any non-Black people of color.

* * *

Day One. The Justice Center is a jail, no matter what they want to call it. And it felt that way, even as we sat in a newish conference room with tiered gray desks, gray walls, and gray carpet, like one of the classrooms in a business school. The air conditioning was, thankfully, turned up high against the late summer heat. I sat in the middle seat of the front row, a reluctant teacher's pet. The district attorney and a legal secretary faced us, briefing us on the day's cases.

The first few hours were a sort of orientation. We began our term as a grand jury by being shown pictures of people addicted to meth. Up until that point I knew very little about the drug and had no idea that the countryside — the idyllic part of the state known as The Plains — was riddled with meth addiction. But it makes sense. What are poor, underemployed, and unemployed folks to do with few resources and even less compassion? I stared at the side-by-side view of mugshots, taking in the progression of sad but relatively healthy faces that morphed into ghoulish bulging eyes, graying skin, sunken cheeks, pockmarks, and missing teeth.

We then got the cases. Police officers, all men and mostly white, came in and presented them to us. They were all tall

men, firm and serious. They had buzz cuts and bald heads and swung their arms wide when they walked. When the Black officers came in I made eye contact with them. They never looked away, but there was no recognition there either. All of the police officers spoke to us in clipped, somber tones, but laughed with the Justice Center staff like old buddies sharing inside jokes. They recounted the facts of each case starkly, succinctly. The accused was pulled over for running a red light. The officer smelled weed. They searched the car and found a blunt and a portable meth lab — a Sprite bottle filled with fertilizer, battery acid, pseudoephedrine, and other ingredients used to make the drug that keeps you up for days and makes you look like an extra in *The Walking Dead*. The police officer noted that part of their crackdown on drug offenders is making the most of traffic stops. If someone has a busted taillight or runs a red light, it's also likely that they have drugs in the car. If you talk to them long enough, they'll break.

When the policeman said this I heard a small click as a forgotten memory slid into place. Now it all made sense. I remembered being stopped around the corner from my house a few months earlier. I remembered it was a good morning. I had an appointment at a weight loss clinic, the latest attempt in my efforts to take off the thirty pounds I gained after grad school, and I was feeling good about my choices. I made a left out of my complex and a right on the next street. I glided by row after row of cookie-cutter suburban homes. Soon after, I heard sirens behind me. I pulled over to let the cop car pass but, to my surprise, it stopped a few feet behind me. I gathered my license and registration and tried to still my beating heart as the police officer stomped out of the car toward me, red-faced and sweaty.

“Do you know why I pulled you over?” His voice was loud and brusque as his eyes darted around the cab of my car.

“No, sir.” My voice was small. I had no idea. Was I speeding? He asked for my license and registration and I handed them over.

“Did you know you ran that stop sign back there?” His stubby fingers jabbed the air with incredulity. “This is a nice neighborhood. You can’t just disregard stop signs.”

“I’m sorry. I had no idea I...” I stammered.

He interrupted me. “What are you doing in this neighborhood?” He was scanning my ID as he asked.

“I live here. Around the corner.” Some of my fear dissipated. I could see what he was doing. What he was trying to get at. What was I doing, what was a random Black woman doing, in a predominantly white area, apparently running stop signs with reckless abandon?

He looked skeptical. “Well, where are you going?”

I panicked. Shit, where was I going? I said the first thing that came to mind. “I’m going to work.”

He wanted to know where I worked and what I did and who I did it with. When I told him I was a professor at the university his disbelief was only eclipsed by his dismissal.

“Why are you heading this way if you’re going to work? You’re headed in the wrong direction.” He spat the words out and his beady eyes scanned the interior of my car once again.

I finally remembered about the weight loss clinic and said as much. He went away to run my plates and came back, cooled

down, and with a ticket in his hand. He advised me to “be more careful” and sent me on my way. I drove away with my hands shaking, choking down a familiar rage.

Now, as officers droned on about cases, I was still thinking about how close I had come to being arrested myself. I pushed that out of my mind to learn about another defendant, who was accused of breaking into a pharmacy and clearing the place out of Sudafed. We heard about several more folks, arrested for passing off checks or writing their own prescriptions for Xanax and Vicodin. The cases piled on. Almost all the cases were non-violent drug offenses. My fellow jurors sighed and clucked their tongues in weary sympathy and vocal judgment when yet another young person was caught with meth in their car, or stole copper wire from an abandoned house, or passed off bad checks to finance a drug habit.

When Black people were involved, as victims, perpetrators, and in a few cases both, the discussions carried on coldly, with plenty of victim-blaming. And there was extra concern for the “facts” and “procedure.” I tried to use my feeble power as foreperson to rebuke this thinly-veiled racism. I asked questions, steered conversations. I was successful, mostly.

Just when I was about to explode from the monotony, we got a reprieve. “Take an hour — no more — for lunch,” the D.A. said congenially. We all scattered without a word, worried that he’d change his mind.

During my lunch break I went to my car, drove to a nearby parking lot, and wept. I wanted to drive home and get under the covers and stay there for the rest of my life. I called a friend. “They picked me for jury duty,” I said, my voice cracking. She started to groan in sympathy but stopped. I could hear the

worry in her voice; she had never heard me so upset. I could tell she wondered why someone like me, so normally stoic, detached even, was freaking out. I got my voice under control and told her, “I’m fine,” and hurried off the phone.

I wondered why I was having such a dramatic reaction to a commonplace thing like jury duty. Previously, I’d thought of it like voting — just something you did as a part of citizenship. I think I never realized how physically sickening it might be to play a part in the carceral state, condemning people to jail for petty crimes of poverty and despair. And there’s something else — something about not being able to control my movements and my own time brought out a deep, almost irrational, sense of claustrophobia, reminding me how unfit I might be for confining circumstances like the military, motherhood, or marriage.

Day Two. The second day was hard. There were dozens more meth cases and we agreed to indict the accused for offenses like drug possession or trafficking. But we also heard cases about violent crimes.

That day three Black women came forward as survivors of sexual assault. When the women faced me I wore a mask of benign concern. But when each woman spoke I held my breath and clasped my hands in front of me hard, so I wouldn’t scream. The first woman was a university student who was raped by a so-called friend. This young man, a popular figure on campus, had taunted and stalked the survivor, trying to strongarm her into dropping her case.

She did.

She sat before us nicely coiffed, tears ruining her tasteful

makeup. She sobbed, saying she wanted her life back, that she just wanted to finish her degree and just move on. All of my fellow jurors cried and shook their heads. “What a shame,” they said. “What a shame.”

She was the perfect victim, a proper respectable Negro. But she was still a victim. The D.A. gently asked if she was sure she wanted to drop the case. The young woman was resolute: “Yes.” We gave her our tearful goodbyes and good lucks. I was a bit taken aback at the care and concern shown to this woman.

In the next two cases, though, the dismissal of the women’s concerns was as palpable as an open wound. One woman was working class and young, no older than 21, just as the previous woman had been. She had already been married for three or four years to a much older man, who was violent and possessive. She wore a long denim skirt and short bobbed wig that made her look older than her years. She spoke in a low, dispassionate monotone about the soon-to-be ex-husband who attacked her because she had started seeing another man — someone who may or may not have been a drug dealer — during their separation. Her husband broke into her trailer, took a knife from the kitchen, held her at knifepoint, and raped her. My fellow jurors could not believe this. They asked intimate, probing questions, questions that were startling and gratuitous and inappropriate.

“When did he stab you?” “Where did he stab you?” “How many times did he stab you?”

Their tone was accusatory, as if this woman had stabbed herself. When she responded, her voice was even, neutral, as if she were describing an entirely reasonable thing to a particularly slow audience.

I looked at this young woman who stared down at her dark brown hands as she spoke. All that she had gone through, and now she had to sit, defiantly composed, in a room of (mostly) unforgiving strangers. While her testimony was hard to hear, the questions my fellow jurors asked of her were even harder. When she left the room, the textbook misogynoir continued to rear its head. “Why didn’t she just run out?” “She looks way older than she says she is.” Even some of the women who had been reticent finally spoke up to echo the men’s disregard for the woman’s case.

This was a clear-cut case that needed to go to trial. There were mounds of evidence and the victim was firm about wanting her abuser to be held accountable for what he did to her. Why was she on trial? It was as if I was in an after-school special about racism and patriarchy and everyone had gotten the script but me, or a nightmare I had to find a way out of.

The third woman was treated the same way. When we got to her — a former university student assaulted by a friend, an athlete, during a party — I knew what to do: cut the men off at the pass. Steer the discussion towards our duty. Ask the simple but hard questions:

“Do we think that wrongdoing could have occurred? Yes or no?”

Remind my peers that it was not our job to prosecute, but to make a judgment about whether or not we had enough reason for this case to come to trial.

I was stern, kind, deliberate.

I looked to the women to do the right thing. In both cases, we (the women swaying the men) turned the tide.

We asked, “What about her life?” “How will she carry on?” “What about the other women in his life, whom he can hurt?”

The men finally conceded.

I should have felt satisfied, or even hopeful, but at the end of the day I just felt exhausted.

* * *

Day Three. On the third day we toured the jail located on the right side of the Justice Center. I wanted to opt out and say, “No, I have no interest in ‘touring’ a jail.” But I stayed quiet.

There was really not much separating our jury room and the jail. We filed our way down a series of long hallways and locked rooms to the other side of the building and made it there in a few minutes. We were shown where people are held and booked. We walked through concrete-walled corridors and were shown common areas and individual cells. We walked into the kitchen, where inmates stood about washing dishes and wiping down surfaces. They took no notice of us jurors, even as some of my peers got up close to them like kids pressing their faces up against the glass at an aquarium. When we walked into the laundry room there were two Black women stuffing sheets into dryers.

My mouth automatically smiled when I saw another Black woman, but this was all wrong. My smile was crooked, lopsided, and rueful. The woman stared back at me blankly at first, then defiantly, rejecting my pity, my empathy, or whatever else I had to give. Then she turned her back, returning to her fitted sheets.

Later in the afternoon, we heard a case of a family cookout gone wrong. According to the police, a fight over a love triangle broke out at a gathering at an apartment complex a couple miles from my house. Two people ended up hurt, one stabbed pretty badly. One of the witnesses for the prosecution was being held in the Justice Center. He was brought in with his wrists and ankles shackled, wearing a white jumpsuit and a bemused expression. There was very little space on his body, that I could see anyway, that was not tattooed. Even his light brown face sported a series of teardrops near his eyes.

He spoke slowly, thoughtfully, recounting his version of events. My fellow jurors were mesmerized both by his polite and deliberate slow drawl and the gold teeth in his mouth. He was tall, handsome, and strapping; perhaps in another life he could have been a football player for their favorite team. The D.A. asked him if he would be willing to testify in the case if it went to trial. He said yes and added, "I'll be in here just for a little bit longer. Just 18 months."

* * *

Day Four. The feeling of panic did not dissipate as the week dragged on. Instead, my anxiety and dis-ease expanded without ceasing. My heart raced every time I entered the Justice Center and I fought the urge to run out of the building several times a day. Lunchtime was my only reprieve. That week whatever diet I was on was abandoned without apology. Normally, I felt guilty about eating my feelings and tried to rationalize my way out of it. This week I embraced food's soothing, numbing power.

Later, I tried to eat more food and the same thing happened. The food felt like it was hitting a wall and going nowhere. After jury duty I would find out that I had a bad stomach infection. My doctor would tell me to take it easy and that it would have become an ulcer if I had waited any longer to see her.

I have a history of stomach violence fueled by anxiety. Often, when I travel, I have "traveler's stomach," especially if I'm running late. The year before jury duty I got my gallbladder removed because it was horribly inflamed. These psychosomatic illnesses crop up when I'm stressed, overwhelmed, or feeling defeated. That week I felt all three.

* * *

Day Five. I woke up with a tiny piece of hope, small enough to put in my pocket or zip up in my purse for safekeeping. This was, hopefully, the last day of jury duty. At the Justice Center, we were quiet and uncomplaining, like kids hoping the teacher would let us out of class early. After a week of working at breakneck speed we had seen hundreds of mostly small cases and a few big ones. So many of the crimes involved Black people or poor rural whites. Most of the offenses were for petty crimes concerning drugs: poor folk busted for small amounts of weed and meth, folks whose lives were wrecked and ravaged by poverty, abuse, and judicial indifference.

At the end of the day, I said goodbye to my fellow jurors but did not linger, though many of them came up to me and thanked me for my service. Months later I would occasionally run into some of the women of the jury — at the supermarket

or at the mall — and we'd grimace and say, "We made it!" as we rushed past each other in the aisles. What I never said to them was how angry, hurt, and ashamed I felt and still feel about that week, and how I'm not entirely sure I'm entitled to those feelings. After all, I simply served on a grand jury; I wasn't on trial. But still, I feel traumatized, and have less respect for our system because I know what happens when a jury of one's peers get together. For people of color and women and the poor, there is nothing close to justice.

Ode to Clothes

- Pablo Neruda

Every morning you wait,
clothes, over a chair,
to fill yourself with
my vanity, my love,
my hope, my body.
Barely
risen from sleep,
I relinquish the water,
enter your sleeves,
my legs look for
the hollows of your legs,
and so embraced
by your indefatigable faithfulness
I rise, to tread the grass,
enter poetry,
consider through the windows,
the things,
the men, the women,
the deeds and the fights

go on forming me,
 go on making me face things
 working my hands,
 opening my eyes,
 using my mouth,
 and so,
 clothes,
 I too go forming you,
 extending your elbows,
 snapping your threads,
 and so your life expands
 in the image of my life.
 In the wind
 you billow and snap
 as if you were my soul,
 at bad times
 you cling
 to my bones,
 vacant, for the night,
 darkness, sleep
 populate with their phantoms
 your wings and mine.
 I wonder
 if one day
 a bullet
 from the enemy
 will leave you stained with my blood

and then
 you will die with me
 or one day
 not quite
 so dramatic
 but simple,
 you will fall ill,
 clothes,
 with me,
 grow old
 with me, with my body
 and joined
 we will enter
 the earth.
 Because of this
 each day
 I greet you
 with reverence and then
 you embrace me and I forget you,
 because we are one
 and we will go on
 facing the wind, in the night,
 the streets or the fight,
 a single body,
 one day, one day, some day, still.

Ode to Broken Things

- Pablo Neruda

Things get broken
at home
like they were pushed
by an invisible, deliberate smasher.
It's not my hands
or yours
It wasn't the girls
with their hard fingernails
or the motion of the planet.
It wasn't anything or anybody
It wasn't the wind
It wasn't the orange-colored noontime
Or night over the earth
It wasn't even the nose or the elbow
Or the hips getting bigger
or the ankle
or the air.
The plate broke, the lamp fell
All the flower pots tumbled over

one by one. That pot
which overflowed with scarlet
in the middle of October,
it got tired from all the violets
and another empty one
rolled round and round and round
all through winter
until it was only the powder
of a flowerpot,
a broken memory, shining dust.
And that clock
whose sound
was
the voice of our lives,
the secret
thread of our weeks,
which released
one by one, so many hours
for honey and silence
for so many births and jobs,
that clock also
fell
and its delicate blue guts
vibrated
among the broken glass
its wide heart
unsprung.

Life goes on grinding up
 glass, wearing out clothes
 making fragments
 breaking down
 forms
 and what lasts through time
 is like an island on a ship in the sea,
 perishable
 surrounded by dangerous fragility
 by merciless waters and threats.
 Let's put all our treasures together
 -- the clocks, plates, cups cracked by the cold --
 into a sack and carry them
 to the sea
 and let our possessions sink
 into one alarming breaker
 that sounds like a river.
 May whatever breaks
 be reconstructed by the sea
 with the long labor of its tides.
 So many useless things
 which nobody broke
 but which got broken anyway.

Ode to Age

- Pablo Neruda

I don't believe in age.
 All old people carry in their eyes, a child,
 and children, at times observe us with the eyes of wise ancients.
 Shall we measure life in meters or kilometers or months?
 How far since you were born?
 How long must you wander until like all men
 instead of walking on its surface we rest below the earth?
 To the man, to the woman who utilized their energies,
 goodness, strength, anger, love, tenderness,
 to those who truly alive flowered, and in their sensuality
 matured,
 let us not apply the measure of a time that may be something
 else,
 a mineral mantle, a solar bird, a flower, something, maybe, but
 not a measure.
 Time, metal or bird, long petiolate flower,
 stretch through man's life, shower him with blossoms
 and with bright water or with hidden sun.

I proclaim you road, not shroud, a pristine ladder with treads of
 air,
 a suit lovingly renewed through springtimes around the world.
 Now, time, I roll you up, I deposit you in my bait box
 and I am off to fish with your long line the fishes of the dawn!

Translated from Spanish by Margaret Sayers Peden

Blowin' in the Wind

- Bob Dylan

How many roads must a man walk down
 Before you call him a man?
 Yes, 'n' how many seas must a white dove sail
 Before she sleeps in the sand?
 Yes, 'n' how many times must the cannon balls fly
 Before they're forever banned?
 The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
 The answer is blowin' in the wind.

How many times must a man look up
 Before he can see the sky?
 Yes, 'n' how many ears must one man have
 Before he can hear people cry?
 Yes, 'n' how many deaths will it take till he knows
 That too many people have died?
 The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
 The answer is blowin' in the wind.

How many years can a mountain exist
 Before it's washed to the sea?

Yes, 'n' how many years can some people exist
Before they're allowed to be free?
Yes, 'n' how many times can a man turn his head,
Pretending he just doesn't see?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
The answer is blowin' in the wind.

Popular Paints of Prejudice

- Tannishtha Chatterji

Recently I walked out of a comedy show because in the name of “roasting”, I was being targeted for my skin tone. I had gone there to promote my film, but the jibes were prejudiced, and neither original nor funny. To begin with, the atmosphere of the “comedy” had already been vitiated by a flood of rape jokes. All in all I had a visceral reaction and felt suffocated by the goings on. Even after I got back home, I was deeply troubled and wondered about the role of mass culture in a democracy and who the “masses” are.

I don't believe in censorship, but then I do wonder about how free should free speech be? Is free speech just about defending the right to offend? Offend, yes, but we must ask to what end the offence and who benefits from it. In a complex democracy like India, these are basic questions that everyone should ask.

One day I was reading a survey about a premier educational institute in India and it reminded me of a famous quote from Charlotte Bronte: “Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilised by education: they grow there, firm as weeds among stones.” The survey concludes that only

some-not all-prejudices could be eradicated by education and discussions because most become a part of our identity and being. When people are deeply connected to certain ideas right from their childhood, through all forms of popular culture, education alone cannot change those influences.

When I walked out of the popular comedy show, I did not expect to make it to the national headlines. But my personal act became a public stance because many people related to the problem of 'colourism' in India. As consumers and producers of mass culture, we must bear some responsibility for and show some understanding of how we end reinforcing prejudice. In our popular comedy shows, we see men dressed as women, body-shaming jokes, rape jokes....mostly jokes steeped in gender, class and caste biases. The ready argument offered is "Well, people find all this funny!"

A man dressed as a women, speaking in a squeaky voice, is funny. People are ridiculed in these shows and made fun of by saying things like "Oh you look like a low-class servant." This is offensive, but again, I must ask, to what end? Comedy in India is scared of making fun of powerful institutions. It has lost its sense of humour. Often I am told that contrary to my expectations of satire, which is a more sophisticated form, this is called "relief humour", appealing to the masses. Blaming this vacuity on the "masses" is lazy and elitist. It also fails to make a distinction between joking and bullying.

In the show that I walked out of, they laughed at my complexion. Also that particular episode was a Bollywood villain special. In celebrating villains, the comedians were constantly cracking rape jokes. When I walked out and voiced my concerns to the organisers, I realised I was completely

illegible to them. I was try to tell them, "Please do something funny. Rape or colourism is not funny." Their only reply was "But we told you it's a roast and these are just jokes. Please don't take it seriously. We did not mean to insult you." Others said, "Come on, if we take everything so seriously, we will have no humour left." All I am saying is that the very privilege, which allows systematic marginalisation of people in this country, also disallows you to even hear me, forget about understanding me!

Popular culture in India has made issues such as caste, gender, rape and colourism a joke, among many such problematic ideas. And it is so deeply ingrained right from our childhood that many fail to see anything wrong with it. A friend of mine told me that her six-year-old son watches a popular mythological show on TV. He is glued to it because all his friends in school watch it as well. So he will watch it, no matter what. Apparently, all the goons in the show are dark-skinned. In the south Indian film industry, most leading actresses are cast from north India even when they don't speak the southern languages. The reason is obvious : obsession with the fair, northern complexion.

Fairness creams are popular across India and many Bollywood stars endorse them. There are ads in which some dark girl gets rejected at a job interview and then, after using a fairness cream, miraculously regains her confidence and lands the job as well. The message : fair skin not only brings beauty but also jobs. Our education, hard work and talent get upstaged by fair skin.

Most matrimonial ads in India have specifications of caste and skin complexion, especially when it comes to "Brides wanted." The whole idea of fair or dark clearly has roots in

our caste biases. And maybe the idea that lighter skin is superior comes from both our colonial hangover and our still quite resilient caste system. Even though men too face discrimination for their complexion, it is nothing compared to the social pressure on women.

“Bure nazar waale, tera muh kaala (The evil-eyed one will get a black face)”, is found written on the back of many trucks. In parts of eastern India, the darker skin tone is referred to as “moila” (dirty). When I pointed this out to a friend, he reminded me that even English families have “black” sheep.

Stereotyping through various modes of popular culture is the most dangerous tool for the propagation and perpetuation of deep rooted prejudices. When I began working in the Indian film industry. I was told that I would easily fit into a slot because of my complexion. And, indeed, every character offered to me was of tribal or rural origin. Urbanites with money and access to education have lighter skin tones and poorer people in the villages have darker skin tones - this stereotypical binary is deeply ingrained in us. There have been many times when I was playing an urban, educated character and makeup artists would tell me, “Why don’t we make you two shades lighter, because this is an urban character. She speaks English and is educated.” It is exhausting to even think that in 2017 I have to address such basic prejudices and write about it. The list of prejudices-about ‘dark’, ‘woman’, ‘English’, ‘Hindi’, ‘Muslim’...-championed through stereotyping in popular representations across the world is long.

Every now and then, I am also told it is about demand and supply. That popular culture is created for people who consume these popular notions. What can be done if that is what people want to watch? Last summer we saw the release of

a phenomenal Marathi film, *Sairat*, which proved this notion to be just a lazy excuse. Taking on caste politics and honour killing, the film became a huge blockbuster, and even crossed over with subtitles to a non-Marathi-speaking audience.

On the face of it, it is a regular Romeo-Juliet narrative. Rich upper caste girl meets poor lower caste boy, they fall in love and the upper caste family opposes it. The lovers elope, but social pressures don’t allow their love story to end the way the audience has been gently and powerfully led into wanting. It had all the elements of Bollywood film-making. Great song-and-dance sequences, high-speed shots, a cute hero who played cricket well and was a topper in class-ticking every box of ‘real Bollywood hero’. Except he was not macho. The girl, on the other hand, drove a tractor and did things that are not traditionally feminine in images of popular culture. It took all the elements of Bollywood and turned all the stereotyping on its head. It broke gender biases in the way it was cast and the way the characters and scenes were written. It spoke effortlessly about the ills of caste politics without being didactic. It dealt with complex issues without trivialising them. And it was a blockbuster.

Once I was shooting in Santiniketan, the place where Rabindranath Tagore had established his “ideal university”. On one of my break days, I took a cycle-rickshaw tour around the museums and art galleries in the university area. The rickshaw-puller, a Class 5 dropout, told me everything about Tagore’s poetry, the phase in his life where he took a break from writing to paint and how that contributed to his later poems, his friendship with W.B. Yeats... How did the dropout know all this? Was he an exception? The answer is simple in Santiniketan, it’s popular culture.

So, what the “masses” like does not necessarily have to be wrong, stupid and irresponsible. The dumbing-down of popular culture by its creators and blaming it on the so-called lowest common denominator is sinister in its elitist, regressive and lazy stance. Mass culture plays a key role in shaping many aspects of society and it can bring about change and innovation in thinking. A widely used example is Upton Sinclair’s novel *The Jungle*, which sparked a food revolution in America.

In India, Bollywood and cricket are the dominant forms of popular culture. The music we listen to, the TV programmes we watch, our festival celebrations, fashion icons and trends, and even tourist destinations, are all guided by the popular films. Many countries want to subsidise Bollywood shoots because showcasing their country through Bollywood films brightens the prospects of tourism in those places—the influence of mass culture in shaping people’s tastes and opinions is that deep.

In many ways, mass culture helps the young people understand and construct their identities. It is not only about entertainment. It is about mass identity, education and our notions of a just democratic society where we stop mainstreaming any form of discrimination. Should mass culture then have certain standards and responsibility? Rape is brutal, so is it alright to crack rape jokes? Where most people are dark-skinned and many kids face self-esteem issues because of colourism, should skin colour be ridiculed? Any form of power comes with a great amount of responsibility, else it can get abusive. Popular culture is no different.

(The writer is an actress.)

David Hartman’s Impossible Dream

Everybody who knew young David Hartman thought he was riding for a fall. Even his own family realized that the time to call a halt to Dave’s impossible plans was that September 1968 - the night before he first went off to college. The four Hartmans were lingering at the dinner table in their Havertown, USA, home when David, who is blind, broached an old subject with new intensity. “Father,” he said, “tell me honestly. Do you think I can be a doctor?”

Fred Hartman, a bank officer and a very practical man, stalled before replying. It was one thing not to pamper Dave, quite another to let him go on building up for a tragic let-down. What medical college would accept a blind student? The time had come to set David straight. But, wondered the father, how to set David straight? But, wondered the father, how could he give a flat no to a boy like Dave? How could he clamp a ceiling on his dreams? And so, Fred Hartman finally said, “A doctor, son? Well you’ll never unless you try, will you?”

Both he and David grinned. For this was the same response he had always made to David’s “Can I do?” queries—ever since the boy, born with defective lenses, had gone completely blind at the age of eight. “Dad” Dave had asked at the age of ten, “Can I play baseball?”

"Well, let's try it and see," his father suggested, and together they worked out a way. Mr Hartman rolled the ball along the ground to Dave, who learned to bat and catch it by the whistling sound it made through the grass.

Realm of Possibility?

That had begun the family's determined effort to help David become as independent as possible. At times, panicked by darkness, the little boy would cry out, "Mama, I can't stand it!". Then Idamae Hartman, the softest member of the team would rock him gently in her arms and croon, "I know, I know," until he found he could stand it after all. But his mother also joined the others in making David share household chores; and tired though she was when she came home from her job as a cashier, she read to him nearly every night to stimulate his imagination.

It was Dave's sister Barbara, however, who steeled herself to be his toughest taskmaster. Even the time he'd left his braille watch upstairs and asked her to retrieve it, she'd said "Get it yourself. What do you think—that somebody's always going to be around to wait on you?"

So David grew up considering blindness no tragedy—just an exasperating bother—and feeling he could do anything he set his mind to. Then at 13, he announced that he was going to be a doctor and, unable to see the rueful headshakes that greeted this childish proclamation, he began preparing for his career. He insisted on leaving the local blind school, and enrolled at Havertown's high school. He got good marks, won a place on wrestling team, and was elected vice-president of the student council.

Still, as impressive as his accomplishments were, they had always fallen into the realm of possibility. But David's ambition to become a doctor, a psychiatrist, was not in that realm, his family believed. So, after seeing him off to college, the Hartmans felt they had not been frank enough with Dave, and they were afraid he was heading for grief.

At college, Hartman's faculty advisers tried to reason with him. "Why not settle for something more within your capabilities, like history or psychology?" suggested biology professor Ralph Cavaliere.

Sensing that this key teacher was about to refuse to allow him in his class, David launched into his most persuasive argument. "Look, I'm no different from anybody else! It's true I can't see, but everybody has some kind of disability. I believe the ones who are the most handicapped are those who don't want to do anything special or challenging with their lives. I want to be a psychiatrist because I happen to believe I'll make a good one—especially in helping rehabilitate people with problems similar to my own. So I want to go medical college and I'm counting on people like you to get me ready!". From that moment on, Cavalier was David's staunch ally.

On His Way

Handsome and well-built, the young blind man strode briskly around campus with only an occasional searching thrust of his white metal cane. In his second year, Dave kept happening to meet bright, lissome, green-eyed Cheryl Walker. For months he wondered why he was so lucky. Later, after they had become serious about each other, Cheri confessed to him: "I'd see you and run to get in your path—then hope I didn't sound out of breath when I said, 'Fancy seeing you again'."

In the spring of 1972, David was winding up four years at college with top marks. So far, so good. Ready for the big try, he had applied to top ten medical colleges.

By early April, eight had turned him down. Then, on the afternoon of April 27, a ninth rejection came from a medical college he had counted on the most, and Dave was crushed. He and Cheri both broke down and wept. It was all over, they believed.

But at the one institution Dave had not heard from - Temple University School of Medicine, in Philadelphia - Dr M Prince Brigham, assistant dean in charge of admissions and student affairs, was putting Dave's case most forcefully to fellow admission-board members. "If we were on the Olympics committee," he said, "and a one-legged man came along who was hopping the 100-meter dash in ten seconds. I think we'd have to let him run. By the same token, since David Hartman is already doing impossible things. I think we should see how far he can go."

The other board members agreed. Soon after, Dave received a call from his mother. "There's a letter here I think you'll want to hear." Her voice broke, and his sister Barbara came on the line. "You've done it," she cried. "You've been accepted by Temple!" And a few weeks later, when David graduated with the highest honours, the whole student body and faculty stood up to cheer him as he marched for his diploma. He was on his way.

Struggling for Others

Yet it was a very tense David who enrolled at Temple the following autumn. The talking stage was over. He had asked for the heat, the pressure and immediately he began to get it.

Even anatomy, an introductory course, held special problems for him. By plunging his rubber-gloved hands into the cadavers, Dave could easily feel the location and shape of the large organs. But to identify smaller, more elusive things like nerve plexuses, he had to use his bare hands. This involved him in a race to learn all he could before his fingers became numb from the formaldehyde preservative in laboratory specimens.

Incomparably more difficult was histology, the study of microscopic tissue structures. In this course, Dave had to depend on his teacher's and classmate's descriptions of what they saw through the microscope-and on feeling his way through a maze of raised braille-like drawings that this professor prepared for him.

Meanwhile, David began organizing the massive home library he'd need to get through dozens of other formidable courses. Like virtually all of America's 5000 blind college students-and more than half the blind-school population-he relied primarily on Recording for the Blind, Incorporated (RFB), to provide free tapes of textbooks. RFB's volunteers taped some 30 volumes for David.

"All for me?" an incredulous Dave asked. Not at all, he was told. The material would also go into RFB's master type library in New York where it would wait to help other blind medical students, if and when there should be more in the future.

Grave Doubts

In the spring of his first year in medical college, Dave and Cheri were married. Their honeymoon summer was fairly

relaxed, but scarcely had Dave begun his second year when he found himself hopelessly swamped. To try to keep up with six lectures a day, he was taping them in toto on one recorder, then, at home, he would replay them and dictate summaries into a second machine. But this system was taking him two hours for every one-hour lecture—a total of 12 hours of homework every day!

It wasn't long before a distraught Hartman, jittery from lack of sleep, called on Dean Brigham. Together they found a solution. From then on, David took notes in class like any other student—except that he whispered them into a tape recorder.

As David started his critical third year working at Temple university Hospital with real patients, real lives, there were still those who had grave doubts about his chances of getting through college. He couldn't read X-rays, for example; he couldn't examine the ear, eye or mouth without the help of a colleague; he couldn't see the colour of skin rashes and had to depend on the descriptions of a nurse or the patients themselves.

But Hartman had abilities that made up for such shortcomings. With his keen hearing he was especially skillful using a stethoscope. With his highly developed sense of touch, he could feel out subtle abnormalities in the chest and abdomen. Most important, he was an excellent listener.

Observed Dr John Martin who was in charge of teaching physical diagnosis: "If given the chance to talk about themselves, patients are often very good judges of what's wrong with them. David Hartman, who makes up for his lack of sight by hearing more from each patient, dramatically demonstrates the value of this ancient truth." (David seemed to prove this by getting

the highest marks in his class on the final exam in physical diagnosis.)

"Super-Normal"

By the end of his final year, David had made believers of all his doubters - except himself. With most of his academic trials behind him, he was seized with feelings of his inadequacy for the job ahead. Everything he'd done so far had been under strict supervision. But soon, he'd had be on his own! One night, he poured out his feelings of unreadiness to a fellow student.

"Dave," said the other senior, gripping his shoulder, "I can see like an eagle. But you know something? I feel just as scared as you do!"

On May 27, 1976, David Hartman received his medical degree. In his view, he had proved the most important thing: that he was no different from anyone else.

There were those, however, who challenged this appraisal. Many professors at Temple had come to agree with Dr Martin, who declared, "Hartman's not normal - he's super-normal."

One evening a few weeks after graduation, Recording for the Blind celebrated two significant events - its 25th anniversary and the landmark entry into medicine of its most ambitious protege. In presenting the founder's award to David, RFB president John Castles praised him "for exhibiting a triumph of human spirit." The citation concluded: "With the example of David Hartman before us, we feel renewed faith in the infinite possibilities of all people."

These eloquent words brought a standing ovation for David. But in brief response, it was some simple words from the past that David voiced for the consideration of struggles against obstacles everywhere. "My Dad was right," he said.

"You'll never know unless you try."

The Verdict

- Maithreyi Pushpa

Respected Master Sahib,

Pranaam!

You may have heard the news already; if you haven't you probably will, before my letter reaches you three days from now. The results of the elections were announced today.

How did all this happen?

I feel as stunned today as I did that other day, the day I had won. I had never imagined that I could be elected to the post of the Pradhan. How had I managed to get so many votes? There had been groupism, party politics. And so much opposition. And yet....

I understood only when I saw all the women of the village animated by the same sense of euphoria, the tumult of their inner hopes and aspirations reflected on their faces.

I had been told that, being the wife of the 13 Block-Pramukh, it was not proper for me to go to each household and thank my sisters. So I made for the pathanwara. This place stands witness to all our joys and sorrows, Massav.

Ranveer had warned me when he was made the Pradhan that I could not behave like the other women of the village any

more, or carry pots on my head like them. And I was told that my presence at the pathanwara, too, would no longer befit my position. After all I was the wife of the Pradhan. When he became the Pramukh, the restrictions had become more stringent. And then I was elected the Pradhan. Ranveer's status in the village rose further. He was now known to be a generous and progressive individual. Our village rose in the esteem of the neighbouring villages. And I found myself weighed down by the ever increasing restrictions. I had strict instructions to keep a distance from the women in the village. But I couldn't. Any excuse was good enough to lead me to their midst.

Ranveer had remarked. "You're still inexperienced in the ways of the world. Someday you too are likely to be as particular about your dignity and status."

While I was in the pathanwara that day, Isuriya and her goats happened to pass by. I've mentioned her earlier. She is the blunt and outspoken one. I remember writing to you about her. She and I, we came to this village as brides on the same day. You were amused, Massav. "Of all the people, the goatherd's wife for your companion? Wah, Basumati!" you had said. But she's really sharp. I had barely lifted my veil and glanced around, while she was already familiar with every door and threshold. She'd even formed her own opinions about every villager. It is not in her nature to be diffident or shy. She would refer to the village elders by name. As if she were their great-grandmother. Free from the paraphernalia of caste and family ties.

And that day she called out as soon as she reached the pathanwara. "O ... Basumati ... Bride of Ranveer! O ... Pirmukhani!"

The women burst out laughing, "Basumati, here comes everybody's grandmother. She's calling for you. Why don't you respond, Pradhanji?"

Isuriya pushed the goats forward in our direction and soon enough she was with us. She said complacently, "So, you are now the Pradhan. That can only be for the better."

Nobody paid her much attention.

Waving her stick wildly, she proclaimed, "Ai ... listen everybody. Listen carefully. Things will be different from now. We can demand our rights. Now if those spindly little men beat us, shout at us, don't let us visit home, if they force us to ask our parents for money or they harass us, then snake straight for Basumati. Write it all down. Get them bastards jailed.

—"O Basumatia, you will not be unjust like Ranveer, will you", you would not destroy evidence, would you? That Saleega, he beat me black and blue. I made Leelo's son write all down as evidence that so that I could get a hearing. I had gone and given it to Ranveer myself. That really scared Saleega. He was so scared he didn't even abuse me for a day or two. But Ranna, he didn't do a thing about the paper and Saleega turned into a lion overnight : So you were going to send me to jail, huh? Infernal woman, I made up my mind too. So what if I had to sell two goats to ... So much for your piece of paper"

Isuriya flung away her stick and held out her arms for all to see. She bared her welts and bruises. Nobody was smiling anymore, Massav. The mirth in the air suddenly seemed to freeze.

Gopi tried to lighten things up. Putting on a smile she said, "What are you blabbering about? What if somebody heard you? They'd go straight to the Pirmukhji."

Isuriya immediately changed her tone, "If somebody heard me? But that's precisely why I'm saying all this! Ranveer will get his due one day. He'll stay at home and slave over the fire. While our Basumati, she'll sign the papers. Give orders. She'll hold sway. Isn't that so, Basumati? Tell us truly, aren't you eleventh-pass and Ranveer ninth-fail? So, who is the intelligent one? No longer can women be herded along like so much cattle. These are the days of equality. After all, Basumati has become the Pirdhan, hasn't she? Indira Gandhi rules now. Long live Indira Gandhi!

"Silly woman," scoffed Gopi. "Indira Gandhi's dead and gone. It's Rajiv Gandhi now." "Dead? Still that doesn't change things. Mother, son what's the difference? It's the same thing. But tell me, when is the procession?" she asked, the thought suddenly striking her. "When Ranna became the Pirdhan, there was such a glorious procession. So many garlands and flags. They had carried him around the whole village on their shoulders."

Saroopi rebuked her again, "Mad woman, why do you keep going Ranna, Ranna? You'll be the first one that Pirmukhji will send to jail."

She shrugged nonchalantly, "Here, listen to her. Ranna? Why, even your father-in-law Gajaraj can't harm me. Not even your brother-in-law Panna. Can they, Basumati?" One of the women said, "Why do you bother with this lunatic? O Isuriya, your goats are wandering off."

"O my god!"

Isuriya ran after her goats, brandishing her stick.

The morning sun must have just touched the threshold. I

had lit the stove and placed the tava on it. My hands were covered with flour.

A shadow fell lightly across the doorway.

Before I could see who it was, I heard her voice, "O Basumati! Basumatiya!"

It was Isuriya.

"The Daroga is sitting with the Panchayat. He's reading the papers. I swear Basumati, all the Panch are waiting for you." She could barely contain her excitement.

I called out to my sister-in-law, Kusuma. She said, "You go, bhabhi, I'll make the rotis."

The women watched me go, from behind their windows. Maybe it was just to check whether my face was veiled or not.

We met Gopi on the way. "Basumati bhabhi is going to the meeting. Where do you think you are going?" she teased.

Isuriya flashed back, "Be off with you, Gopiya! Let me inform you I happen to be Basumati's secretary. We're headed for the meeting. You mustn't waylay the Panch." "Where are your goats?"

"Saleega's taken them to graze. He's finally realized that the days of equality are here. He had better do his bit." We had almost reached the chabutra when I spotted Ranveer. A few long strides and he stood in front of us. A look of surprise on his face. His mouth drawn in stern lines. "Where to?" he asked.

The answer came from Isuriya, "Pirmukhji, we're on our way to the Panchayat. Do let us pass, you are in our way."

He heard her out and then turned on me, "You'd better go home."

Isuriya was at a loss for words but she recovered soon enough to say, "Don't try to stop us pass, you are in our way."

His brow contracted, his eyes became balls of fire. "Basumati, didn't you hear what I said?"

I could feel my feet shrivel under his fiery gaze. But Isuriya still stood there. I signalled to her that we had best return home. She looked at me with strange eyes and helplessly followed me.

I returned to the kitchen chores. I did not have any answers to Kusuma's unuttered questions. There seemed to be no respite from this choking frustration that had taken hold of me.

Isuriya could be heard muttering in the courtyard, "Isn't this the limit? Basumati holds the post but Ranveer calls the shots. Arre! Why can't he mind his own business? He is the Pirmukh. Why should he interfere with the Pirdhan's work?"

Kusuma could not contain herself any longer. "Why should he not interfere? "The money has to be extracted from Ramkisan, the potter. Bhaiya must have given his word to Bani Singh. What if bhabhi had gone and a wrong resolution had been passed?"

"Poor Ramkisan, he sold his bullock to Bani Singh so he could have a roof over his head. And that monster Bani Singh. Give my money back, he says. Now where is Ramkisan to get the money from? Sell his roof? Can roofs be sold? Who is to give him justice? The poor can't expect anything from Ranveer. Had you been there, the potter might have got a fair deal."

Isuriya dragged her feet homewards. And Massav, I could do nothing about the thorns that kept pricking at my soul.

On his return, Ranveer had done his best to make me understand. "Do you think your being on the Panchayat chabutra would have been in good taste? You must not lose your sense of propriety. Does our status, our standing, mean nothing to you anymore?"

A woman is respected only as long as she keeps within her bounds. Besides, what would you know about the scheming people in the village?"

Since that day, there were constant summons for the Pradhan. Although the village folk were aware of Ranveer's disapproval, they would still insist on coming to call me.

It was I that proved to be a coward. Or was it that Ranveer's image had become so much a part of me, a constant presence that reminded me every time I crossed the threshold. I'm here. Anyway, I've been handling this for a while. Why do you need to step out of the house?

My mind would heave violently in response, almost to the point of answering back. But being his wife, my anger remained mute, my words of protest subsiding like froth on boiled milk.

Massav, I had decided that I would not put my signature on anything. Let him do as he pleases.

So Ranveer sat with the register on the charpai. And I was tied up in the kitchen. There was always so much to do in the mornings. He had called for me. Perhaps many times. But I was still not free.

"I'm done with all the writing and you don't even have time for a single signature?" I still didn't go.

Irritated he said, "How long am I expected to wait? I have to reach the Block. You've kept this hanging for a week."

I walked upto him, wiping my hands on my sari. “Sign here.”

He uncapped the pen.

“What are you waiting for? You could have signed some twenty thousand times by now.”

I put the cap back on the pen.

Questions rose before me like a thick, dense forest. And I was lost in it. Couldn't Ranveer guide me out? Was I to be left defenseless amidst these thorns?

As Pradhan, Ranveer must have traversed the same paths. Or had his course been different? Shouldn't I make an effort to find out? Perhaps there was a way

“Ranveer? The labourers had come to me. They said they still haven't been paid.”

A shocked look came over his face and he stood there staring at me. I spoke on. “The women of the village jeer: Much good your being the Pradhan has done us. You've had your lane laid out with stones and levelled. What have we done to deserve this neglect, bahen? The roof might cave in any day. You are the only one who can do anything about it. Who could believe that this was the Pirmukh's village? Pot-holes filled with water, breeding mosquitoes. Garbage everywhere. Fever and disease in every house.

“If only we had dispensaries and medicine,” I said. “And, the roads ought to be repaired, like in Lalpur. Also, what about the money for the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana?”

Ranveer's gaze widened further. Anger simmering in his eyes. Darts of fire seemed to reduce me into ashes as I stood

there, Massav. My words sizzled and died like drops of water on a hot tava.

“Did the women say this, or was it you? Since when have they begun to talk about their feelings? Who do you think you are? The Pradhan or the MLA?” Lines of ugly laughter distorted his face. “Tch ... Tch ... Tch. Nobody's ever asked me anything and you face so many questions!” His voice was dripping with sarcasm.

My hands shook as I silently wrote “Basumati Devi.”

Signature!

The day I had signed and collected the JRY money, heaven had seemed a distinct possibility. I would constantly dream of shining, spotless schools and pukka roads. Of restoring houses ravished by the rain. Of supporting the unemployed through their bad times. Of providing relief and medical help to the ailing.

An old woman knocked at the door.

“O, beta Basumati?”

By the time I placed the water pot on the stand, Devveer, my brother-in-law had reached the door.

“What is it, dadi?”

“Beta, would you send your bhabhi outside for a minute.”

“Have you come here to call her to the Panchayat?”

“Why else would I call for her?”

“Go away dadi. Bhaiya is not at home. Bhabhi won't be able to go.”

“Won't be able to go? Why? Isn't she the Pradhan? She has to go to the Panchayat.”

“Why do you want to cause a scene at home?”

“Why should there be a scene? Anyway shouldn't you have thought of this earlier?”

I had reached the door by then. The old woman spotted me. She fell at my feet. “Beti Basumati, try and understand our plight. My son-in-law will not get any leave again for a long time. He's with the army, you see. Help us get a fair deal, bahu.”

I stood there listening to her.

“Beti. I cannot bear to see my daughter Hardai's unhappiness anymore. Her father is a monster. We've never had the good fortune to lead a quiet life.” Her eyes moistened, ‘Fears tears streamed down her wrinkled face.

What could I do? I had no choice. Sympathy was all I had and that I gave her. “You'll get justice, Aroma. Have faith. Why should the Panchayat be unjust?”

I don't know how I made the decision then. But my feet suddenly fell in step with hers. Devveer was left standing, trying to stop me.

I had the verdict passed. My entire being felt drenched through with a strange sense of ecstasy. A decision taken with seamless compassion and loving uprightness. The chabutra seemed like sacred ground to me, the temple precincts from where I had released the stagnating water; cleared out all the filth with my own hands; prepared the ground as though for new seeds, a fresh garden.

That night Ranveer entered the house quietly. His stern face turned ugly. It seemed as though somebody was gouging away at my heart.

In the still and unnatural calm of the night, I could feel the poison in his voice flow all over me. “If you were so fond of playing lawyer, why didn't you study law? Even when I had asked you so many times not to ...?”

I could not answer him.

“This daily drama, these scenes day and night! Tell me, when will there be an end to this?” Ranveer exploded into the silence of the house.

I was filled with dread. Waves of fear rose up in me.

Suddenly I spoke up, “I didn't go on my own. Aroma and her daughter had come to call me. Who doesn't know about Hardai's woes?”

“And, you know all about it?”

“Hardai had begged me. She said Ranveer bhaiya won't understand my plight. Being a woman, bhabhi, you can feel my distress, give me justice. My husband works in the army. He won't get leave again for another two years. Seven years have already passed this way. My father thinks that the money orders will stop if I go with my husband. So he keeps me locked at home. I am not allowed to meet my husband. Whenever Amma managed to let me out there is an uproar at home. Dirty, filthy abuse. And ... I've been to the town three times for abortions. Have you ever seen such a father, bhabhi? Save me now, send me with my husband this time. Hardai wept uncontrollably. But still I was not able to recognize the extent of her anguish. All I could think of at that moment was, if only you had helped with the decision of her case.”

His eyes bored into mine, “What kind of decision? Like the one you have just decreed? Do you think Hardai is living

in a lawless society? She is staying in her father's house. She has to live by his rules. Besides, where will that soldier keep her?"

"Anywhere. If they love each other...."

He rose violently, "You mean, I am in their way?"

I was deeply afraid, yet somehow uttered, "But I have heard that she had been taken to influential men ... to satisfy their lust...."

"Really?" he spluttered. "And you haven't heard how her good-for-nothing brother got a job? Or under whose protection her father openly traffics in cement? Or how they came to build a pukka house? Under whose patronage do you think they've been able to live like this? What do I stand to gain from all this?"

"So you know all about Hardai's plight. Why don't you free her from the clutches of her father?"

"Well, you've freed her. Against my judgement ... in this tasteless manner."

"That was never my intention."

"Oh? And pray tell me what was your intention the day the police arrested Ramsingh and were taking him away? Whatever possessed you to run after the police van like that, as if you had taken leave of your senses? What must the Darogaji have said? What would the people have been thinking? That the Pramukhji's wife pulls such cheap stunts! I have never been so embarrassed in my life. If you ever try to create such scenes again"

"Look, Ramsingh was not guilty. Why punish the innocent?"

He trembled with rage. "Hear this once and for all. Have no illusions about your position. I was forced to make you stand for the elections. I can't hold two posts at the same time. I had believed nobody would be more reliable than one's wife"

A poisonous smile passed over his face at the word "reliable."

It was a cold winter night. Chilly and frigid. I remained sitting outside. I tried to keep warm by drawing myself close. My hands and feet were beginning to grow numb.

My mind was not at peace with itself. I felt that I should, at this very moment, leave this house, this village, this earth, this sky. Go somewhere far away.

I must have spent half the night sitting out there in the courtyard.

In that mist, I could feel a shadow approach me. I looked up, it was Ranveer. He came and sat beside me. He stroked my hair and tried to coax me, "Come inside. Let's sleep. It's cold out here. Do as I say."

Straightening my sari, I sat upright, stiff as a statue. I had no desire to protest. Nor did I feel close enough to him to complain. A sense of alienation took hold of me and I dragged myself into the room.

He kept trying to explain, "Is there any distinction between a husband and wife, silly woman. They live and die for each other. There's no reason why you should harbour such doubts on account of the village folk. They are all jealous of us, cannot bear to see the husband as the Pramukh with his wife as the Pradhan. They would like to see you roam around on the streets so that even the urchins can make fun of you. They're

just waiting for an opportunity to comment on Ranveer's wife in the company of strange men

You may remember. Massav, you had sent a note for me the day I had become the Pradhan. You had wished me a happy future and a life dedicated to my husband. But you had also urged me to seek new horizons for myself. Challenged me to overcome familial ties. You had written, "Basumati, your courtyard must have a roof of honesty built on pillars of truth, where the weak, the oppressed, the accursed and the defeated will find shelter."

Surely you too must have been aware of the extent to which this could be possible. But your words certainly stirred me. And I forgot, Massav, that I was as much a part of the system as anyone else, a corrupt system that functions through the oppression of others.

If only I could have been Isuriya, outside the walls of propriety and decorum. Under the free sky. Beyond illusions fostered by the paralyzing customs and traditions of genteel society.

If only Ranveer did not hold the trump card of belonging to the aristocracy. Then I could have flown away from the cage that now confines my wings.

It was almost dawn. The chirping of the birds woke me up. Even though no trace of sleep or lethargy remained in me, the uncompromising way in which my wishes had been ignored had left me in low spirits.

I cleaned the stove and lit it.

Ranveer has the habit of drinking tea before cleaning his teeth. I poured out the tea. As I was carrying it to him, there

came the sound of loud cries that resounded in the courtyard. Isuriya ran forward like a woman crazed, wailing loudly, "O Darogaji, the truth is"

Ranveer stopped her midway. "Where are you rushing to? Don't worry, you'll get justice. I will change my name if I don't get that butcher hanged. Go home. Take Basumati with you."

After getting the Panchnama written, Ranveer sat in the Darogaji's jeep and they drove off in a blaze of glory.

Behind them the people were left in a cloud of dust. They returned to their homes lamenting the injustice.

Returning to my courtyard, I sat amongst the distressed women. I felt as if the funeral procession had set off from this house.

Numerous, unanswered questions seemed fixed in the still, stony eyes around me. Under the guise of holy matrimony, the association of a tormented bird and a powerful hunter

Did the women recognize this egotistical assertion of intimacy? Or else why had they all come? And left like deaf and mute people?

No questions nor any counter questions!

Time passed. The elections for the post of the Pramukh were to be held.

Ranveer was once again in the fray.

Those days he was too busy even to breathe. I too was run off my feet, busy with all kinds of chores. The chulha would be burning all day. And there were the sleeping arrangements to be made too. A constant stream of visitors, it seemed as though a marriage was taking place.

Ranveer would say, "Villagers aren't as simple as they are believed to be. There are those who have mastered the intricacies of the political labyrinth. The adept ones can easily outsmart the slickest city politicians."

Ranveer had to indulge the whims of each of the Pradhans. I think all the Pradhans of the tehsil must have come to our house to pay their respects. People were even talking in terms of Ranveer contesting the MLA elections after the Pramukh's.

True enough, Ranveer was extremely clever. His campaign was not based on ordinary tactics like say, sponsoring liquor. He was the kind of person who was useful in moments of crisis. This was the reason why he still had a hold over the people of Dariyapur, even though his rival candidate was a relative of theirs. Like a messiah, he had delivered them from the clutches of the crocodile after a daughter-in-law of the village had stated that she had been burnt for not bringing two thousand rupees

Father and son would have certainly been hanged, or at least sentenced for life. The pride and honour of their magnificent turbans had been preserved only by Ranveer's grace.

Popular opinion was such that three of the candidates conceded defeat even before the elections. There was only one rival left in the field. That too an ironmonger's son. He must have been naive.

Ranveer left early in the morning. He sent a jeep for me in the evening.

The household chores seemed unending. I could barely make it there.

Anyway, even if I hadn't gone, what difference would it have made? I had said as much to Ranveer. He hadn't agreed. He said that the people would jeer that the Pramukhji's wife was the Pradhan, but still hadn't come to vote.

I returned after having cast my vote. Ranveer returned at night.

As soon as they spotted the searchlight of the jeep, the villagers began to gather at our doorway.

Ranveer walked through straight to the dining area. He looked very tired, beads of perspiration glistened on his forehead.

I reached his side with a glass of water.

He was silent. The crowds dispersed slowly on seeing him unwell.

When we were alone, I smoothed my hand over his brow and he turned even more restless. His face took on a piteous aspect. In a little while, he began to tremble like a fish stranded on the sand.

There was nothing left to understand. Massav, I made an effort to console him over his loss. "Don't lose heart. Your job is to try. Defeat and victory are all part of the game."

The door was shut from inside. I caressed his hands, pressed his feet. I tried hard to console him but my being, too was choked with emotion.

Massav, this is nothing to write about, but I did everything I could to comfort him, prayed I could overcome his agitation by making my mind and body one with his.

He was lost in his thoughts, "Those promises, those pledges,

the oaths on the Ganga, was all that an illusion, Basumati ...?
Or a betrayal ... ?

Just at that intimate moment Devveer's voice caught my attention. He was talking to somebody outside the door, "Bhaiya would not have lost but for a single vote. At least then he would have been even with the ironmonger."

One single vote! I could not believe it!

Suddenly something within me gave way and everything seemed unsteady.

O God of fire! O great priest who had guided me through the seven steps to holy matrimony! O father, my creator! And Massav, you, my mentor ... you had made me his consort, companion and partner in all his joys and sorrows and bidden me farewell as Ranveer's wife.

But what could I have done? I just couldn't kill the Isuriya in me!

Forgive me.

Yours,

Basumati.

Roots of Deep Ecology Tree "Thinking Like a Mountain"

- Aldo Leopold

Aldo Leopold was trained as a forester and became the founder of the new field of wildlife management. As a young man, Leopold went to work for the Forest Service in Arizona and New Mexico. During his career Leopold created the first comprehensive management plan for the Grand Canyon and wrote the Forest Service's first game and fish handbook.

At one point, Leopold was assigned to hunt and kill bears, wolves, and mountain lions in New Mexico, because these predators were a threat to local livestock. One such incident would come to change his life. He recounts coming upon a mother wolf he had shot:

"We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes — something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters' paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view.

“Since then I have lived to see state after state extirpate its wolves. I have watched the face of many a newly wolfless mountain, and seen the south-facing slopes wrinkle with a maze of new deer trails. I have seen every edible bush and seedling browsed, first to anemic desuetude, and then to death. I have seen every edible tree defoliated to the height of a saddlehorn. Such a mountain looks as if someone had given God a new pruning shears, and forbidden Him all other exercise. . . . I now suspect that just as a deer herd lives in mortal fear of its wolves, so does a mountain live in mortal fear of its deer.”

This experience caused Leopold to rethink the importance of predators in the balance of nature. He saw how the removal of a single species can produce in serious negative consequences for an ecosystem. “Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf,” wrote Leopold. What was it then that the mountain knew? Leopold quotes Thoreau’s dictum, “In wildness is the salvation of the world,” and then goes on to write, “Perhaps this is the hidden meaning in the howl of the wolf, long known among mountains, but seldom perceived among men.” Eventually, Leopold articulated an ecological ethic which he called “thinking like a mountain”. To think like a mountain means to perceive the deep interconnectedness of all the elements in the ecosystems which are not apparent when we think of ourselves as isolated individuals.

“The land is one organism. . . . The outstanding scientific discovery of the twentieth century is not television, or radio,” wrote Leopold, “but rather the complexity of the land organism.” Following the Russian philosopher Peter D. Ouspensky, Leopold likened the unity of the human body to

the unity of the earth “with enormously slow, intricate, and interrelated functions among its parts”. He wrote that it is possible to regard

“the earth’s parts—soil, mountains, rivers, atmosphere, etc.—as organs, or parts of organs, of a coordinated whole, each part with a definite function. And, if we could see this whole, as a whole, through a great period of time, we might perceive not only organs with coordinated functions, but possibly also that process of consumption and replacement which in biology we call the metabolism, or growth. In such a case we would have all the visible attributes of a living thing, which we do not now realize to be such because it is too big, and its life processes too slow.”

Writing 50 years before James Lovelock articulated the Gaia Hypothesis, science had not yet caught up with Leopold’s perception. But “in our intuitive perceptions,” wrote Leopold, “we realize the indivisibility of the earth—its soil, mountains, rivers, forests, climate, plants, and animals, and respect it collectively not only as a useful servant but as a living being, vastly less alive than ourselves in degree, but vastly greater than ourselves in time and space—a being that was old when the morning stars sang together, and, when the last of us has been gathered unto his fathers, will still be young.” This idea of the earth as a living body would later find its way into Neo-Paganism.

The concept of “wilderness” took on new meaning for Leopold through his work as a conservationist. Modern people, he wrote, see wilderness as “the space between cities”, or at best as a place for recreation. “Hence the wilderness that he cannot personally see has no value to him. Hence the universal

assumption that an unused hinterland is rendering no service to society. To those devoid of imagination a blank place on the map is a useless waste.” But to Leopold, it is the most valuable part. “Of what avail are forty freedoms without a blank spot on the map?” he asked.

Leopold bemoaned the fact that modern human beings are alienated from the land. We have no “vital relation” to it, he wrote. And while he saw it as a good thing that people wanted to get back to nature, he was also concerned about the demands placed on public lands by those seeking outdoor recreation. He described outdoor recreation as “a paradoxical mixture of appetite and altruism”. “But all conservation of wildness is self-defeating, for to cherish we must see and fondle, and when enough have seen and fondled, there is no wilderness left to cherish.”

Leopold’s most important contribution to the environmental movement was an essay, “The Land Ethic”, in his book, *A Sand County Almanac*, which was not published until 1949, shortly after his death. The essay argued that human beings are members of a community which includes soil, water, plants, animals — collectively “the land”. “The land,” wrote Leopold, “is one organism.” He argued for a new attitude, “an intelligent humility toward Man’s place in nature.” Rather than acting like conquerors of the wilderness, human beings should act as citizens of an ecological community. Citizenship implies respect for fellow non-human citizens and for the community as such. “Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land.” wrote Leopold, “We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which

we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.” According to Leopold’s land ethic, a thing is right “when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community”, and it is wrong when it tends otherwise.

Leopold described human kind as “fellow-voyagers with other creatures in the odyssey of evolution”.

Leopold’s book has been called the most influential book on conservation, and it is the starting point for understanding the spiritual dimension of environmentalism. It was the beginning of what came to be called an ecocentric or biocentric ethic, in contrast to an anthropocentric one. Leopold’s ideas would later inspire deep ecologists, neo-animists, and Neo-Pagans alike to find ways to relate to the earth as a community, rather than a resource.

The Paradoxical Commandments

- Dr. Kent M Keith

People are illogical,
unreasonable, and
self-centered.

Love them anyway.

If you do good,
people will accuse you
of selfish ulterior motives.

Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you will win
false friends and true enemies.

Succeed anyway.

The good you do today
will be forgotten tomorrow.

Do good anyway.

Honesty and frankness
make you vulnerable.

Be honest and frank anyway.

The biggest men and women with
the biggest ideas can be shot down
by the smallest men and women
with the smallest minds.

Think big anyway.

People favor underdogs
but follow only top dogs.

Fight for a few underdogs anyway.

What you spend years building
may be destroyed overnight.

Build anyway.

People really need help but may
attack you if you do help them.

Help people anyway.

Give the world the best you have
and you'll get kicked in the teeth.

Give the world the best you have anyway.

It was never between you and them

It was always between God and you anyway.

The Paradox of our Times

- Dalai Lama

Is that we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers
Wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints
We spend more, but we have less.

We have bigger houses, but smaller families
More conveniences, but less time.
We have more degrees, but less sense
More knowledge, but less judgement
More experts, but more problems
More medicines, but less wellness.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values.
We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often
We have learnt how to make a living, but not a life.
We have added years to life, but not life to years.
We've been all the way to the moon and back
But have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbour.

We have conquered outer space, but not inner space.
We've cleaned up the air, but polluted our soul.
We've split the atom, but not our prejudice.
We've higher incomes, but lower morals.
We've become long on quantity but short on quality.

These are the times of tall men, and short character;
Steep profits, and shallow relationships.
These are the times of world peace, but domestic warfare,
More leisure, but less fun; more kinds of food, but less
nutrition.

These are the days of two incomes, but more divorces;
Of fancier houses, but broken homes.
It is a time when there is much in the show window, and
nothing in the stockroom.
A time when technology can bring this letter to you,
And a time when you can choose,
Either to make a difference or just hit, delete.

What Every Woman Wants

- Ogden Nash

Husbands are things that wives have to get used to putting up with.
And with whom they breakfast with and sup with.
They interfere with the discipline of nurseries,
And forget anniversaries,
And when they have been particularly remiss
They think they can cure everything with a great big kiss,
And when you tell them about something awful they have done they just
look unbearably patient and smile a superior smile,
And think, Oh she'll get over it after a while.
And they always drink cocktails faster than they can assimilate them,
And if you look in their direction they act as if they were martyrs and
you were trying to sacrifice, or immolate them,
And when it's a question of walking five miles to play golf they are very

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energetic but if it's doing anything useful around the house they are
very lethargic,
And then they tell you that women are unreasonable and don't know
anything about logic,
And they never want to get up or go to bed at the same time as you do,
And when you perform some simple common or garden rite like putting
cold cream on your face or applying a touch of lipstick they seem to
think that you are up to some kind of black magic like a priestess of Voodoo.
And they are brave and calm and cool and collected about the ailments
of the person they have promised to honor and cherish,
But the minute they get a sniffle or a stomachache of their own, why
you'd think they were about to perish,
And when you are alone with them they ignore all the minor courtesies
and as for airs and graces, they utterly lack them,
But when there are a lot of people around they hand you so many chairs
and ashtrays and sandwiches and butter you with such bowings and

scrapings that you want to smack them.
Husbands are indeed an irritating form of life,
And yet through some quirk of Providence most of them are
really very
deeply ensconced in the affection of their wife.

Love for Learning

- K. Shivarama Karanth

Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Vice Chancellor, Graduates of the
University, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My first duty is to thank this University for having
committed an initial “blunder” in 1963 by conferring on me
a doctorate and now more so by requesting me to deliver today’s
Convocation address. This I do with my humility and gratitude.
Though I had at one time, enlisted myself as a student of the
Madras University, my studentship lasted no longer than 7
months, thanks to Gandhiji who in 1922 goaded me to give it
up in preference to a much larger job of serving the cause of
Indian freedom. I am glad that I did so, for it taught me that
India was bigger than myself and also the Madras University
and during later years I discovered that this universe itself was
too vast, for comprehension by the mind of any single
individual, in a life time. Had I finished my University I would
have become one like any average graduate, who normally
comes out of its portals, feeling relieved of the big bother of
passing examinations. I would then have gone hunting after
security of my own life, at the expense of everything else, this
wonderful world had to offer me.

This has given me a chance to interest myself in many

things, that concern man, his past and present. Such an enterprise is vast. It is so baffling and intriguing as much as interesting and ever inspiring. My pursuit has shown me that an individual's life has a definite end, but the process of enquiry and learning has no end at all. As such I have read a little bit, about the activities of a few Universities, here and abroad. This was a sort of inference, which drew from the writings, of many scholars, who conducted pioneer studies, in varied branches of exact Sciences, Social Sciences, and if I am permitted to coin a term, "inexact" or speculative Sciences.

I feel that a University which trains young people in order to fit themselves into a larger world, ought to create first of all a love for learning. It has to inspire the pupils for ardent carving out a vaster and deeper understanding of the place of man in this universe. No doubt I am suggesting a never ending task. You would terrify him by the enormity of the project for his action starts with the little place he lives on this earth; life and other problems prevailing here so that he can adjust himself to his surrounding in order to live harmoniously with multitudes of other species that made a home, here before man himself. I would be content with this pilot scheme before aspiring after still more distant things and questions.

Do we stimulate such hunger for knowledge and sponsor such activities or research on unknown aspects of life and its problems about History and its implications about the beauties and the pleasures that life can offer us and about creative Arts?

Acquainting oneself with things already known and then probing into the unknown is such a vast enterprise that would warrant ignoring a hundred failures to one bit of success.

Those of you who would agree with me with the above

objectives will have to agree with me that these ambitions cannot be realised by mediocre brains who have no zeal, no sense of wonder, no curiosity but are only satisfied with memorising facts and repeat them whenever asked to do so. Men who feel amply satisfied if given a prestigious place and a comfortable purse are not the ones that could handle such an adventure. They cannot draw or discover talent in themselves, or draw them out of their students. That is possible by men, who by themselves are thirsty after knowledge. They by their personality can infuse such a zeal in students. They can by instinct spot out talent and encourage students in varied branches of knowledge so that they too become ever inquisitive. To them further knowledge becomes their reward in life. Society would provide them with all creative comforts. Such craze for knowledge does not end with a comfortable job. Even after retirement they will not seek comfort in Bhajan Parties. I know very well that such zealous persons are not to be found in large numbers. Universities to be Universities should go after such seekers after knowledge if they have to be worth the name. It is only when such scholars inspire, and guide the young-you are bound to have a crop of intellectual enthusiasts-in every University. Their labour, research and achievements are bound to reflect on the intellectual prosperity of a nation. The nation benefits; and such benefits can pass beyond a country's borders.

During the thirties, I read a book about the activities of Illinois University by Sudhindra Bose. A student who came there wanted to specialise, in the 'Culture of Crow-Indians'. The University had no chair for such a study. They could have said 'No' and asked him to choose some other course of study which they could offer. The Crow-Indians are a group of original inhabitants of the United States of America. They still

live there, and are treated as primitives of the land by the American colonisers. The Illinois University thought it fit to create a special chair for studies on the Crow-Indian language and culture. All this for a single student. We would have thought it utter waste of public money thus betraying our narrow attitude towards knowledge. We would not mind wasting money by creating a chair for the sake of persons whom we like, but not for subjects in general. Knowledge is knowledge to us if only it would help us to feed one's belly, but not the brain. Otherwise it is impossible to think of the place given to *Sanskrit* in our Universities. To us it is only a dead language. It was this and another dead language *Pali*, which store the best of the Indian cultural and intellectual tradition.

Both these languages reflected the intellectual life of our country, all our thought processes and our logic. Our religious teachings as well as philosophical attitudes were expressed through them. Every aspect of life and living had to face challenges from scholars of the age. Hence they were virile and not docile. It is not only the languages but also their contents that ought to receive due respect and attention by us. What we call Indian Culture is the product of so many challenging intellectual reflections and beliefs of the past.

We have been blindly accepting the choice of subjects of studies from the West. We imitate their curricula. So far as modern sciences are concerned this is a necessity but not so in everything. A number of subjects have to deal with problems of our own society and country. Unless our teachers become research-minded in all aspects, we can only be imitators, content with copying their curricula. After doing so, we begin to set a premium on memorising of texts. Examinations mean

recapturing what one has memorised. Let it be any subject unless the mode of presentation of a subject depends on the arousal of interest, making the student to investigate, to think and then make the subject part of his accepted beliefs it is no education.

It needs a professor of a different kind to whom a discipline is a live issue. His own learning has not ended and during the entire period of his teaching career he is in touch with all researchers that are going on about the subject. It is such a person who makes his students alive to the problems of the world.

We have now reduced all this to memorising facts; and teaching and learning of the same oriented to the demands of an examination paper.

What is the place of research in University education? Research is a quest that you pursue on your own. Is it enough if we spare a week-for it, in a whole year? Our professors cease to be researchers any more. That pursuit ends with their Doctorate. I am not alleging that everyone is like that but many of them are surely.

Your University Grants Commission has been good enough to provide funds even to retiring professors so that they may engage themselves in research. What would happen if the U.G.C. call for a report? Both active and retired professors are doing the jobs of tutors and no more. That is because the University is content to hand down to students only accumulated knowledge of the past. They have no further ambition. Research to us is not part of Collegiate education. Our Education is supposed to be job-oriented, without in the least bothering as to what those jobs are.

Ours is neither liberal education that makes one feel an elite or fits us well to particular jobs-the requirements of which we are not aware. Such omnibus education fails in serving any social need.

Prestige and popularity of Universities depend much on the prestige and brilliance of its professors. The Princeton University invited Einstein to stay with it when his theory of relativity had no immediate use. Many scientific researches do not have utilitarian objectives. But Einstein's theory shook the world of Physics and Astronomy. His equation $E=mc^2$ resulted in unimaginable profits to every nation that was prepared to receive it.

We seem to be practical minded people whose attitude towards knowledge has been equally practical. As such it is shorn of all glamour, all speculation and hence no further thirst for more of it.

Our textbooks reveal our attitude. It is enough, if our students memorise only portions, that have been prescribed to each class.

To speak in a lighter vein, let me cite an example. There is the bothersome question "What is life?" for us the answer could be "It is kicking between birth and death." We have reduced matters to bare essentials. Answers are to be either 'yes' or 'no'. Nothing lies in-between.

From the primary class to the highest collegiate one-we think drilling factual knowledge into the brains of the young constitutes education. But a genius here and a doubter elsewhere upsets us, by opening new windows and presenting new horizons and skies. He points out the nature of black holes and quasars. He reduces the atom to constituent energy

particles. All these begin to have their own repercussions on Applied Sciences too. Have the Universities to keep abreast of such things or not? Should they leave this job to Pure Science Research Institutes and say 'that is none of our job?'

I am surprised at the vast multitude of young men that flock to our Universities. Being an egalitarian race-we set no standards for admission. Our standards are simple; made much more simple each year so that no seeker of the college degree is driven back. We have created an illusion in the minds of the young that a pass bestowed here will fit him into every walk of life. So, they come and come in spite of knowing that there are thousands unemployed all over the country. This number is ever increasing and in inverse ratio standards are falling.

If providing jobs is our aim, we have to provide suitable technical education. This we are doing too. But many of our Technical Schools and Colleges-have to cater for the needs of Industries, that are in existence and many that may get established. Their needs dictate the terms for employment. These Industries have to face world competition and consumers' preferences for price and quality.

Imagine the fate of U.S.A. a far advanced country, with capital and technology being challenged by post-war Germany and Japan. Here again it is research into easier and newer ways in manufacture, that can make competition successful. Our students and graduates too will have to face it in life. Preparation for facing life in all spheres is the very concern of education.

Besides, education will have to provide the means and basis for emotional and intellectual needs of man. That may not bring salary or monetary gain. But it will bring pleasure

and contentment and save man from destruction and despair. Will teaching a few bits from the classics serve this purpose? Do arts really attract our students for their own sake?

The time has come when our young men and women who flock into the Universities have to seriously think about their own future. During the time they spend in the Universities a few poor students are serious about it. Where the state provides for 66 per cent of them they feel happy, because they are much better off than their people at home. They are not worried at all; they would like to continue here, if only you can keep them here. The prospects of white collar jobs are not plenty. Private trade or industry cannot pay as much as the Banks can. And the pupils who come out of the portals-cannot think of any other job, that needs hard work.

During my short sojourn in the U.S.A., I saw many college students work in restaurants as servers; and as workers in road building. It would look impudent to suggest such things to our students.

Our leaders feel that the exodus of talented young men to U.S.A. or Canada is unpatriotic. But here we do not recognise their worth. Those that have secured jobs did so by dint of hardwork, showing the Americans that to employ them would bring prosperity to their country. Shirkers of work don't have a place there. The more energetic you are, the better your pay scale and opportunity for enlarging your talents. Your contribution to the prosperity of the U.S.A. or Canada enables you to live there in comfort.

With us birth and influence may count in certain areas of employment. In fields, where the tax-payer pays for all inefficiency, it can go on but never so in a private enterprise. It is an area subject to heavy competition.

At this stage, I must express my fear about the deterioration of human character among our youth. Young men normally are idealistic and sentimental in nature. It is assumed that in later life society forces them to be something different. If I am to believe-the various newspaper reports-of mass copying, threatening invigilators with dire consequences and various dubious and shameful ways adopted to pass examinations and obtain false marks cards, I feel sad about their future. Except our benign government agency no private institution may be willing to absorb such a dubious talent. The unscrupulous ways practised during studenthood, are bound to tempt him or her-to shirk work and hoodwink his employers.

How long will our Universities tolerate such character-deterioration? It is telling upon the attitudes of honest, diligent and intelligent students, who may be small in number and who have begun to grumble "If honesty and diligence have no value-what next?"

Now I am nearing the end of my boring speech. Our Educators have failed the young. They failed the young. They failed them from the primary class onwards by making learning distasteful. No education is possible without creating interest in the subjects taught. It was Rabindranath Tagore who when questioned by his father, on his return from England within 17 months of his stay-said 'Even English men have not made education interesting.'

Children are prisoners, drilled mercilessly by teachers. They had to bear all that. Their own curiosity, age and interests were never heeded to.

Later as grown up young men they flock to colleges and revolt. They rebel for every cause, their own or the world's.

You may ask me why we didn't do so, when we were studying in our colleges. Then the number who sought admissions were too few. Those who came-knew of their own poor circumstances and value of money. They strove hard because they believed that education would provide them with a livelihood.

Now with thousands flock into colleges, they do so because the state takes care of two-thirds of the number. Requirements for admission are reduced to the minimum. They get in by right and not by worth. The 'anasakthi yoga' you taught them upto their high school stage-gets an impetus. The final stage has come. Just say it is the modern age. Revolt of youth is a natural phenomena. Trying to curb it may bring horrible results.

Then Sir, please abdicate your place and leave all the responsibility of Teaching Curricula, Examinations, Assessment and Management to them-and seek retreat elsewhere.

To you, young graduates, whatever the circumstances that have shaped your life so far, once you step into too wide world you have to fight your own battle. Parents of many of you cannot provide you any more. You cannot reduce your newly acquired standard of life also. If you set your goal-as living like men, you have to be brave. Face life squarely as crores of people are doing in our country. Shirk not your responsibility. Accept any work or toil and fit yourself for the task. At no time make your friends or employers feel that you are not to be trusted.

I chose writing as my profession and carried on as best as I could. It failed to provide for me and my family, I felt insecure till I was almost Sixty years of age and I assure you I have no regrets and I have not made undue claims against my society.

How the Web Destroys the Quality of Students' Research

Sometimes I look forward to the end-of-semester rush, when students' final papers come streaming into my office and mailbox. I could have hundreds of pages of original thought to read and evaluate. Once in a while, it is truly exciting to a question I've asked the class to discuss.

But this past semester was different. I noticed a disturbing decline in both the quality of the writing and the originality of the thoughts expressed. What had happened since last fall? Did I ask worse questions? Were my students unusually lazy? No. My class had fallen victim to the latest easy way of writing a paper: doing their research on the World-Wide-Web.

It's easy to spot a research paper that is based primarily on information collected from the Web. First, the bibliography cites no books, just articles or pointers to places in that virtual land somewhere off any map: <http://www.etc>. Then a strange preponderance of material in the bibliography is curiously out of date. A lot of stuff on the Web that is advertised as timely is actually at least a few years old. (One student submitted a research paper last semester in which all of his sources were articles published between September and December 1995; that was probably the timespan of the Web page on which he found them.)

Another clue is the beautiful pictures and graphs that are inserted into the body of the student's text. They look impressive, as though they were the result of careful work and analysis, but actually they often bear little relation to the precise subject of the paper. Cut and pasted from the vast realm of what's out there for the taking, they masquerade as original work.

Accompanying them are unattributed (no credit given to the original author) quotes (in which one can't tell who made the statement or in what context) and curiously detailed references to the kinds of things that are easy to find on the Web. Sadly, one finds few references to careful, in-depth commentaries on the subject of the paper, the kind of analysis that requires a book, rather than an article, for its full development.

Don't get me wrong, I'm no neo-Luddite (someone who believes new technology is bad or wrong). I am as enchanted as anyone else is by the potential of this new technology to provide instant information. But too much of what passes for information these days is simply advertising for information. Screen after screen shows you where you can find out more, how you can connect to this place or that. The acts of linking and networking and randomly jumping from here to there become as exciting or rewarding as actually finding anything of intellectual value.

Search Engines, with their half-baked algorithms, are closer to slot machines than to library catalogues. You throw you query to the wind, and who knows what will come back to you? You may get 234,468 supposed references to whatever you want to know. Perhaps one in a thousand might actually

help you. But it's easy to be sidetracked or frustrated as you try to go through those Web pages one by one. Unfortunately, they're not arranged in order of importance.

What I'm describing is the hunt-and-peck method of writing a paper. We all know that word processing makes many first drafts look far more polished than they are. If the paper doesn't reach the assigned five pages, readjust the margins, change the font size, and ... voila! Of course, those machinations take up time that the students could have spent revising the paper. With programs to check one's spelling and grammar now standard features on most computers, one wonders why students make any mistakes at all. But errors are as prevalent as ever, no matter how crisp the typeface. Instead of becoming perfectionists, too many students have become slackers, preferring to let the machine do their work for them.

What the Web adds to the shortcuts made possible by word processing is to make research look too easy. You toss a query to the machine, wait a few minutes, and suddenly a lot of possible sources of information appear on your screen. Instead of books that you have to check out of the library, read carefully, understand, synthesize, and then tactfully excerpt, these sources are quips, blips, pictures, and short summaries that may be downloaded magically to the dorm-room computer screen. Fabulous, How simple! The only problem is that a paper consisting of summaries of summaries is bound to be fragmented and superficial, and to demonstrate more of a random montage than an ability to sustain an argument through 10 to 15 double-spaced pages.

Of course, you can't blame the students for ignoring books. When college libraries are diverting funds from books

to computer technology that will be obsolete in two years at most, they send a clear message to students: Don't read, just connect. Surf. Download. Cut and paste. Originality becomes hard to separate from plagiarism if no author is cited on a Web page. Clearly, the words are up for grabs, and students much prefer the fabulous jumble to the hard work of stopping to think and make sense of what they've read.

Libraries used to be repositories of words and ideas. Now they are seen as centers for the retrieval of information. Some of this information comes from other, bigger libraries, in the form of books that can take time to obtain through interlibrary loan. What happens to the many students (some things never change) who scramble to write a paper the night before it's due? The computer screen, the gateway to the world sitting right on their desks, promises instant access—but actually offers only a pale, two-dimensional version of a real library.

But it's also my fault. I take much of the blame for the decline in quality of student research in my classes. I need to teach students how to read, to take time with language ideas, to work through arguments, to synthesize disparate (different) sources to come up with original thought. I need to help my students understand how to assess sources to determine their credibility, as well as to trust their own ideas more than snippets of thought that materialize on a screen. The placelessness (blamelessness) of the Web leads to an ethereal (intangible or vaporous) randomness of thought. Gone are the pathways of logic and passion, the sense of the progress of an argument. Chance holds sway, and it more often misses than hits. Judgment must be taught, as well as the methods of exploration.

I'm seeing my students' attention spans wane and their

ability to reason for themselves decline. I wish that the university's computer system would crash for a day, so that I could encourage them to go outside, sit under a tree, and read a really good book—from start to finish. I'd like them to sit for a while and ponder what it means to live in a world where some things get easier and easier so rapidly that we can hardly keep track of how easy they're getting, while other tasks remain as hard as ever—such as doing research and writing a good paper that teaches the writer something in the process. Knowledge does not emerge in a vacuum, but we do need silence and space for sustained thought. Next semester, I'm going to urge my students to turn off their glowing boxes and think, if only once in a while.

How Big Business Got Brazil Hooked on Junk Food

Mrs. Da Silva, weighing more than 200 pounds, recently discovered she had high blood pressure, a condition she acknowledges is probably tied to her weakness for fried chicken and the Coca-Cola she drinks with every meal, breakfast included.

Multinational food companies like Nestlé, PepsiCo have been aggressively expanding their presence in developing nations, delivering Western-style processed food and sugary drinks to the most isolated pockets of Latin America. As their growth slows in the wealthiest countries, these companies have been unleashing a marketing juggernaut that is upending traditional diets from Brazil to Ghana to India.

An *Times* examination of corporate records and government reports — as well as interviews with scores of nutritionists and health experts around the world — reveals a sea change in the way food is produced, distributed and advertised across much of the globe. This shift, many public health experts say, is contributing to a new epidemic of diabetes and heart disease, chronic illnesses that are fed by soaring rates of obesity in places that struggled with hunger and malnutrition just a generation ago.

The new reality is captured by a single, stark fact : Across the world, more people are now obese than underweight. At the same time, scientists say, the growing availability of high-calorie, nutrient-poor foods is generating a new type of malnutrition, one in which a growing number of people are both overweight and undernourished.

“The prevailing story is that this is the best of all possible worlds — cheap food, widely available. If you don’t think about it too hard, it makes sense,” said Anthony Winson, who studies the political economics of nutrition at the University of Guelph in Ontario. A closer look, however, reveals a much different story, he said. “To put it in stark terms: The diet is killing us.”

Even critics of processed food acknowledge that there are multiple factors in the rise of obesity, including genetics, urbanization, growing incomes and more sedentary lives. Nestlé executives say their products have helped alleviate hunger, provided crucial nutrients, and that the company has squeezed salt, fat and sugar from thousands of items to make them healthier. But Sean Westcott, head of food research and development at Nestlé, conceded obesity has been an unexpected side effect of making inexpensive processed food more widely available.

“We didn’t expect what the impact would be,” he said.

Part of the problem, he added, is a natural tendency for people to overeat as they can afford more food. Nestlé, he said, strives to educate consumers about proper portion size and to make and market foods that balance “pleasure and nutrition.”

There are now more than 700 million obese people worldwide, 108 million of them children, according to research

published recently in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. The prevalence of obesity has doubled in 73 countries since 1980, contributing to four million premature deaths, the study found.

The story is as much about economics as it is nutrition. As multinational companies push deeper into the developing world, they are transforming local agriculture, spurring farmers to abandon subsistence crops in favor of cash commodities like sugar cane, corn and soybeans — the building blocks for many industrial food products. It is this economic ecosystem that pulls in mom-and-pop stores, big box retailers, food manufacturers and distributors, and small vendors like Mrs. da Silva.

In places as distant as China, South Africa and Colombia, the rising clout of big food companies also translates into political influence, stymieing public health officials seeking soda taxes or legislation aimed at curbing the health impacts of processed food.

For a growing number of nutritionists, the obesity epidemic is inextricably linked to the sales of packaged foods, which grew 25 percent worldwide from 2011 to 2016, compared with 10 percent in the United States, according to Euromonitor, a market research firm. An even starker shift took place with carbonated soft drinks; sales in Latin America have doubled since 2000, overtaking sales in North America in 2013, the World Health Organization reported.

The same trends are mirrored with fast food, which grew 30 percent worldwide from 2011 to 2016, compared with 21 percent in the United States, according to Euromonitor. Take, for example, Domino's Pizza, which in 2016 added 1,281

stores — one “every seven hours,” noted its annual report — all but 171 of them overseas.

“At a time when some of the growth is more subdued in established economies, I think that strong emerging-market posture is going to be a winning position,” Mark Schneider, chief executive of Nestlé, recently told investors. Developing markets now provide the company with 42 percent of its sales.

For some companies, that can mean specifically focusing on young people, as Ahmet Bozer, president of Coca-Cola International, described to investors in 2014. “Half the world's population has not had a Coke in the last 30 days,” he said. “There's 600 million teenagers who have not had a Coke in the last week. So the opportunity for that is huge.”

Industry defenders say that processed foods are essential to feed a growing, urbanizing world of people, many of them with rising incomes, demanding convenience.

“We're not going to get rid of all factories and go back to growing all grain. It's nonsense. It's not going to work,” said Mike Gibney, a professor emeritus of food and health at University College Dublin and a consultant to Nestlé. “If I ask 100 Brazilian families to stop eating processed food, I have to ask myself: What will they eat? Who will feed them? How much will it cost?”

In many ways, Brazil is a microcosm of how growing incomes and government policies have led to longer, better lives and largely eradicated hunger. But now the country faces a stark new nutrition challenge: over the last decade, the country's obesity rate has nearly doubled to 20 percent, and the portion of people who are overweight has nearly tripled to

58 percent. Each year, 300,000 people are diagnosed with Type II diabetes, a condition with strong links to obesity.

Brazil also highlights the food industry's political prowess. In 2010, a coalition of Brazilian food and beverage companies torpedoed a raft of measures that sought to limit junk food ads aimed at children. The latest challenge has come from the country's president, Michel Temer, a business-friendly centrist whose conservative allies in Congress are now seeking to chip away at the handful of regulations and laws intended to encourage healthy eating.

"What we have is a war between two food systems, a traditional diet of real food once produced by the farmers around you and the producers of ultra-processed food designed to be over-consumed and which in some cases are addictive," said Carlos A. Monteiro, a professor of nutrition and public health at the University of São Paulo.

"It's a war," he said, "but one food system has disproportionately more power than the other."

Door-to-Door Delivery

Mrs. da Silva reaches customers in Fortaleza's slums, many of whom don't have ready access to a supermarket. She champions the product she sells, exulting in the nutritional claims on the labels that boast of added vitamins and minerals.

"Everyone here knows that Nestlé products are good for you," she said, gesturing to cans of Mucilon, the infant cereal whose label says it is "packed with calcium and niacin," but also Nescau 2.0, a sugar-laden chocolate powder.

She became a Nestlé vendor two years ago, when her

family of five was struggling to get by. Though her husband is still unemployed, things are looking up. With the \$185 a month she earns selling Nestlé products, she was able to buy a new refrigerator, a television and a gas stove for the family's three-room home at the edge of a fetid tidal marsh.

The company's door-to-door program fulfills a concept that Nestlé articulated in its 1976 annual shareholder report, which noted that "integration with the host country is a basic aim of our company." Started a decade ago in Brazil, the program serves 700,000 "low-income consumers each month," according to its website. Despite the country's continuing economic crisis, the program has been growing 10 percent a year, according to Felipe Barbosa, a company supervisor.

He said sagging incomes among poor and working-class Brazilians had actually been a boon for direct sales. That's because unlike most food retailers, Nestlé gives customers a full month to pay for their purchases. It also helps that saleswomen — the program employs only women — know when their customers receive Bolsa Família, a monthly government subsidy for low-income households.

"The essence of our program is to reach the poor," Mr. Barbosa said. "What makes it work is the personal connection between the vendor and the customer."

Nestlé increasingly also portrays itself as a leader in its commitment to community and health. Two decades ago, it anointed itself a "nutrition health and wellness company." Over the years, the company says it has reformulated nearly 9,000 products to reduce salt, sugar and fat, and it has delivered billions of servings fortified with vitamins and minerals. It

emphasizes food safety and the reduction of food waste, and it works with nearly 400,000 farmers around the world to promote sustainable farming.

In an interview at Nestlé's new \$50 million campus in suburban Cleveland, Mr. Westcott, head of food research and development, said the door-to-door sales program reflected another of the company's slogans: "Creating shared values."

"We create shared value by creating micro-entrepreneurs — people that can build their own businesses," he said. A company like Nestlé can bolster the well-being of entire communities "by actually sending positive messages around nutrition," he said.

Nestlé's portfolio of foods is vast and different from that of some snack companies, which make little effort to focus on healthy offerings. They include Nesfit, a whole-grain cereal; low-fat yogurts like Molico that contain a relatively modest amount of sugar (six grams); and a range of infant cereals, served with milk or water, that are fortified with vitamins, iron and probiotics.

Dr. Gibney, the nutritionist and Nestlé consultant, said the company deserved credit for reformulating healthier products.

But of the 800 products that Nestlé says are available through its vendors, Mrs. da Silva says her customers are mostly interested in only about two dozen of them, virtually all sugar-sweetened items like Kit-Kats; Nestlé Greek Red Berry, a 3.5-ounce cup of yogurt with 17 grams of sugar; and Chandelle Pacoca, a peanut-flavored pudding in a container the same size as the yogurt that has 20 grams of sugar — nearly the entire World Health Organization's recommended daily limit.

Until recently, Nestlé sponsored a river barge that delivered tens of thousands of cartons of milk powder, yogurt, chocolate pudding, cookies and candy to isolated communities in the Amazon basin. Since the barge was taken out of service in July, private boat owners have stepped in to meet the demand.

"On one hand, Nestlé is a global leader in water and infant formula and a lot of dairy products," said Barry Popkin, professor of nutrition at the University of North Carolina. "On the other hand, they are going into the backwoods of Brazil and selling their candy."

Dr. Popkin finds the door-to-door marketing emblematic of an insidious new era in which companies seek to reach every doorstep in an effort to grow and become central to communities in the developing world. "They're not leaving an inch of country left aside," he said.

Public health advocates have criticized the company before. In the 1970s, Nestlé was the target of a boycott in the United States for aggressively marketing infant formula in developing countries, which nutritionists said undermined healthful breast-feeding. In 1978, the president of Nestlé Brazil, Oswaldo Ballarin, was called to testify at highly publicized United States Senate hearings on the infant formula issue, and he declared that criticisms were the work of church activity aimed at "undermining the free enterprise system."

On the streets of Fortaleza, where Nestlé is admired for its Swiss pedigree and perceived high quality, negative sentiments about the company are rarely heard.

The home of Joana D'arc de Vasconcellos, 53, another

vendor, is filled with Nestle-branded stuffed animals and embossed certificates she earned at nutrition classes sponsored by Nestlé. In her living room, pride of place is given to framed photographs of her children at age 2, each posed before a pyramid of empty Nestlé infant formula cans. As her son and daughter grew up, she switched to other Nestlé products for children: Nido Kinder, a toddler milk powder; Chocapic, a chocolate-flavored cereal; and the chocolate milk powder Nescau.

“When he was a baby, my son didn’t like to eat — until I started giving him Nestlé foods,” she said proudly.

Ms. de Vasconcellos has diabetes and high blood pressure. Her 17-year-old daughter, who weighs more than 250 pounds, has hypertension and polycystic ovary syndrome, a hormonal disorder strongly linked to obesity. Many other relatives have one or more ailments often associated with poor diets: her mother and two sisters (diabetes and hypertension), and her husband (hypertension.) Her father died three years ago after losing his feet to gangrene, a complication of diabetes.

“Every time I go to the public health clinic, the line for diabetics is out the door,” she said. “You’d be hard pressed to find a family here that doesn’t have it.”

Ms. de Vasconcellos previously tried selling Tupperware and Avon products door to door, but many customers failed to pay. Six years ago, after a friend told her about Nestlé’s direct sales program, Ms. Vasconcellos jumped at the chance.

She says her customers have never failed to pay her.

“People have to eat,” she said.

An Afternoon with Shakuntala

- Vaidehi

Shakuntala went on. Seated on the mud plank of Hemakoota, she said, ‘You ask me to tell you, but what should I tell you? Everything? From where? And how?’

Haa... That day Kanva was not at home. Then walked in Dushyanta. Like the very splendor of Spring! Who was he? I knew not. But I felt I had known him for ages nonetheless. Was that the very first illusion? Maybe. But I drifted away. As if I was born only for him.

‘Hey, do not dream, for there is always a sacrificial pit right before you. ‘Whose words were they? Where did they come from? I meandered along the length and breadth of my mind. Could not see. I merely heard it. The voice became feeble and gradually disappeared. I was like a sketch that waited to be filled in. Hues had already begun to flow in.

Who was he anyway? How did I allow him to come in at all? Hues mingled and merged with one another to thicken and spread in ever new forms. Unfettered by the need to mean anything at all, he drew on. And doing so, he looked up. Standing a bit away, he closed his eyes. And then opened them. He came close with a smile that would steal me away. I had

given myself up. A sketch in the hands of a Master Artist! I had become Bliss itself. No, not a reverie, but a reality!

My mind still goes back to the moment the bee started wheeling around me. Why did it choose that very moment? To weave a web of illusion around me, perhaps? People reveled in their own interpretations. But who really circled around whom? Me around the bee? Or the bee around me? I had been trapped, however. Out of my own will. And that is the truth.

I needed him. But why? Not for love. Not because he was a scholar, not because he was the jewel in the crown of Puru dynasty, not for his sake, but for my own.

Like the flower that blooms at the hermitage, like the birds that sing during the season, like the deer's sprightliness that springs—innate, instinctive and innocent. Why explain? Do you know how intensely this Shakuntala loved Dushyanta the moment she saw him? — I asked iruvantige, a plant that I had watered everyday.

Was this a bond beyond births? — it felt blissful to think so.

Did you say, 'Would it be a surprise if Kanva's foster daughter, the one who never stepped beyond the borders of the hermitage, the one who grew up right within his eyes and ears, and the innocent one who thought she was ever-prepared to go wherever he sent me, was mesmerized the very moment she saw this being inside the hermitage?'

Would I hide anything from you?

There were several kings and their ministers who came to visit my father, Kanva. My eyes, that had come of age, looked

everywhere. This Shakuntala was apparently very innocent. But to whom did she seem so? Only to the onlookers: Her gaze rested on none. She would not be swept off her feet.

Kanva did not heed the kings who asked for my hand. Incidentally, once, he said, 'My Shakuntala's husband will not be a common man.' It was painful to imagine parting from him. 'This Shakuntala will never part from you,' I said.

My smiling father, Kanva, became serious instantly. 'Never say so, child,' came the gentle voice. Like one's inner voice.

Are you under the illusion that a hermitage is allideal? Oh, come off it! Do you think that the hermits are so sucked into the holy rituals that they have transcended all worldly desires? Could it be that easy? My father, Kanva, may command fear and respect from them. But, in his absence, there was no lack of young hermits who made advances. All they got was my indifference. Perhaps it stemmed from the arrogance of being the daughter of Vishwamitra and Menaka. So what if I had been abandoned by them? Unaware, but nevertheless! So I felt looking at myself in retrospect.

Days had passed by - with vanajyotsne, the wild plant, with harina, the deer, with my companions Anasuye and Priyamvade — nestled in the motherly care of Gautami and awash in the fatherly affection of Kanva. But all until Dushyanta appeared.

He came.

And I became impervious to all around me.

The yearling, the iruvantige, my companions, the motherly Gautami, and fatherly Kanva — all disappeared in a flash! Not just that, even I disappeared into thin air, my friend! Can you

believe that? I wouldn't dare describe the passion of love. That is no common passion. All description will only dilute it. And there is no need to describe the passion that makes the core of one's emotional being come alive.

He came there, right before me — Dushyanta!

Was I there?

Why ask such a question!

I thought I was. There was no proof. All the tender emotions in Nature had commingled with me. I was completely absorbed.

What about him?

Even since the beginning, there was a strange preoccupation that often cast its shadow on his face. Only that I had not noticed it. I was in no state of mind to notice anything around me. It was one of those days during which neither the ear, nor the sky, nor the woods were visible to me. The day was drifting towards evening. A cozy shade had surrounded the madhavimantapa. He had shrunk the world to the two of us alone. Words rang crystal clear. Seeing him made me stare. And staring left me unfulfilled. Hearing him left so much more unheard. And then...

What happened? Whatever happened?

All of a sudden, he sat stone cold and silent. Frozen all over! I looked up like a tiny vale to peer into his eyes. 'The Himalayas has several vales. The Himalayas do not heed vales...'

'Voices fell from everywhere and at any time. Several voices... This one was like a silken thread, full of mother care and concern. But I heeded it not. Great truths are good to

hear, not to believe. I wanted to be impervious to everything and everyone. But the voices haunted me, nevertheless.

He seemed as though melted by the sun. Vale satiated? Bells jingled. Without a word, Dushyanta rested in my arms, enraptured. A cool breeze caressed us. 'Sleeping?' I asked his shut eyes. The lids did not move. They seemed like a witness to something transpiring within.

He mumbled a name. I listened intently, yet again. Who is the woman in the stars? One who haunted him even in dreams? Whoever she was, she was not right here. But wasn't she? I looked into those eyes again. They wandered restlessly within. Could not be opened, until they themselves decided to.

He woke up on his own. 'What a dream!' he exclaimed. What dream could it be? - I did not ask. Instead, 'Preoccupied with the state affairs?' — I said. He smiled. A smile that felt warm as if he had kissed someone just then. A smile that quivered with passion. All at once, he seemed like a stranger.

Unable to bear the agony, I clasped his hands. He shook it off, perhaps unaware. Would it be true? Suspicion pierced my heart, leaving me distressed. Disquiet lurked in some corner. I failed to notice it then. That I had nevertheless noticed it is something I see only now.

The sun was sinking in the west. I had no desire to wake up.

Anasuya was wiser than I was. She had confronted the much-married king head-on. And what was his response?

'Shakuntala who will be instrumental in adding to the honor of my royal lineage and this Earth that bears the sea as

her ornamental girdle - no one will be more dear to my heart than these two.' (This statement coming from the mouth of a bahupatni king should have made me come to my senses!)

He shook me out of my reverie: 'You dear friend interrogated me, the other day. What will you do if I have several other lovers?'

Words choked me. Untangling myself from his embrace, I said, 'When you are here, they are not. That their memory has not been carried along should suffice.'

He laughed a laugh that sounded a bit excessive. What did it mean? Moonlight filled the world before the meaning dawned. He became a bee indulging in love. Or was it me who was misled?

Delicious moments dribbled down, drop by drop.

How many?

I refuse to count. Let the world do it.

To count is to be caught in the chain of moments.

Dushyanta was all my life.

Moonlight mesmerized us. 'This is no sin', he assured me. I conceded it. I gave. And I received. But was there not a tinge of sourness even amidst the sweet savour of the moment?'

'Would it be that he was invoked someone else in your stead, girlie?' A shakunta bird had twittered lovingly. I spurned the bird that I had affectionately nurtured. All the roots that had tightly bound me until then had been cut loose. I scaled the heights of bliss.

If only I could kick Timeout! He had to leave the next

day. There was no other choice. The job of protecting the holy fire was all done. I wanted that night to stretch eternally. I longed for the world to end that very night. Do you know how dark the nights following the moonlight can be?

He stood there, ready to leave.

I clung to him. Refused to let go of him. Like a typical teenage girl, I had reached the culmination of anxious love. There was no world besides and beyond him.

Did I tell you that I had clung to him? He neither clasped me nor pushed me away. He stood there waiting for me to release him. I consciously put aside what I knew. Instead, chose to lay bare my agony. 'I simply cannot be; I will die like the plant vanajyotsne that wilts without sap.'

In the face of my anguish, he became the mythological Neelakanta, who had borne all the poise in his throat. My agony peaked. 'No, there is no dividing in case of some.' Where did that voice come from? I simply did not know. Did the Neelakanta, holding Ganga in his head smile? His radiant smile at the corner of his lips revealed that his love had already been divided up.

One should never grow up in a hermitage. Listen. O Shakunta birds! Listen O people of the world! This is the tale of someone who, despite being the daughter of a rajarshi royal hermit, and Apsara the most beautiful woman in heaven, was destined to grow up in the woods and her painful love.

'I know you will forget me once back in the palace,' I said. He did not deny it. Instead, he merely promised to get me there soon.

He went away. I had the ring he had given me. Who knows how many times the earth revolved around the sun? He hid under the cover of forgetfulness. Calls were in vain. No messages, either. The hermit girl had no sleep at all. The world was a mere void. 'I cannot. I will go insane, inhuman. I will die!' I wept my eyes out.

'Why so fragile? Chin up,' he had said. Yes, one has to have one's chin up, indeed! Not merely to bear one's misery, but the whole host of it.

I remained utterly lonely.

Such biting loneliness perhaps was uncalled for. Kanva had not yet returned. 'You are indeed lovesick! Anyway, aren't you the one who will shortly be married to the king? Must be careful when we talk to you!' — Anasuya and Priyamvade reveled in humor. They looked like people spinning along the same axis endlessly. Wait for the day, my companions, when you too will be smitten by Love. Stung by it, your adolescent mirth and banter will vanish into thin air by the time you heal your life...

Didn't I, teenaged myself, sound like an old hag?

Priyamvade and Anasuya were still playful and childlike! How fortunate!

Fortunate? Was I not, more than him?

Baby Dushyanta's tender feet had already started pressing my insides.

There was a lot of hot air blowing about the Hermitage. The words from these hermits wearing holy linen were anything but holy.

'Dushyanta setting out to hunt means...'

'Does the king have only one woman? Sixteen thousand like her!'

What those to whom I have been stone-indifferent say!

Should I really heed them? But the words intended to fall on my ears, nevertheless hurt me. Anecdotes from the past were brought up. (Could I choose not to believe? His amnesia mocked me in the face, tightening the noose of inevitable acquiescence around my neck.)

Apparently, he had, once upon a time, loved a tribal girl, named Hamsapadike. And there were several such Hamsapadikes entwined with his young days! Who was that celestial being in his dream? Whose name was it that he uttered? Most amazingly, I too could love all of them. If he had loved them, I, too, longed to see them!

However...

'However' is a strange root word, for, around this root word, all our emotions, passions and weaknesses revolve. Do they not? Don't delve into them. Better not forget that you did not love Dushyanta for his own sake. Loving those who are dear to him is one thing. Sharing love is altogether another. The former is a human tendency. And the latter demands whole lot of mental preparation.

You, the husband of several wives, have you really forgotten this Shakuntala who cannot forget anything? Say No. Say No.

But he had never said 'No.' Even when I asked in feigned suspicion but with true anxiety whether he would forget me, he had said, 'Yes', with a laugh and pretended it was all a joke.

‘Why talk about it? Certain things are better unexpressed!’ He had tried to wipe my suspicion with a passionate kiss.

The truthful, born in the great Puru dynasty! But why did you perspire and tremble when you kissed me? Weren’t those regal eyes full of tears? He didn’t look like a king. All human, too human. How dear he was! I was so deeply lost in love that I thought all that vulnerability was for my sake. Why did the fear that hid in darkness deep in my heart surface now? It said again and again that he had forgotten me... But whenever the light in the heart flickered, I consoled myself saying where there is love, there is never any darkness.

Gautami was around. Detecting my inner panic, she nursed my body with care and concern.

Agony pulled at the very core of my being. How I longed to unravel the fine layers of distress that I pulled on with someone who had transcended all the worldly passions! To confide! Revive! Reborn!

I waited intently for that ever-awake soul.

Kanva, my father, where are you?

I stayed put at the very door, gazing at the sky, calling the clouds. None of them came down but flew away. And then I heard Durvasa’s footsteps.

Didn’t the Poet create the myth that I failed to hear his footsteps? And the world believed him. The world does not need the tranquility of truth, but the dazzle of lies. Not the authenticity of love, but the lure of pretention.

And the Poet? There is none to compare with as he who can mesmerize the world with his poetic lies. Will the world

trust Shakuntala as much as the Poet? Dushyanta’s behavior can be analyzed. But Shakuntala’s heart? It is safe to assume that this mind is beyond the analyzability of the worldly.

Why would Durvasa curse me at all? He was a soul of immense spiritual power. Father Kanva admired him for spitting fire at injustice. I knew him from my childhood days.

Whenever he was there at the hermitage, I climbed into his lap with my yearling. He petted me with words such as ‘Not only you, but I should accommodate this too?’ He was a great listener to my raw and childish feelings. ‘A life without pain is very rare, my dear child. May you have such a rare life’- he had blessed me in Father Kanva’s presence.

Kanva on hearing this had drawn me towards him and stroked my back affectionately. His warm breath against my cheeks still feels raw. Did my father, who knew my mind and heart inside out, know that I would tread life this way? That I would dip myself in such sorrow? (No, I shall not say that I was betrayed by Dushyanta. Such an accusation is uncalled for.)

Durvasa came in. There was no one at the Hermitage.

I did not run to him and say ‘Greetings, Grandfather!’ I kept staring at his walking in. It did not in the least strike me that I should get up, greet him ritualistically, talk. How long had it been since anything struck me at all Seeing him, a deep and long sigh escaped my lips. What a relief it was!

Soon after he stepped in, he said with a smile, ‘Alas! What do I see? Is our Shakunta bird anxious?’ But the smile was rather forced. I did not return his smile. He closed his eyes, meditated for a while, and burst into a violent being. I came to my senses when his lips seemed ready to move. ‘No! Please don’t taataa!

He should live long to protect the Holy Order! Don't! Listening to my words, Durvasa fell silent.

His violent anger took a while to subside. He stroked my forehead. He clearly saw the congealed wretchedness there.

'Che! He is a genius at willful forgetting,' he said as if to himself, but audible to me. 'Don't you have his ring with a royal insignia? Hold it to his face, if need be,' he said. I felt like dropping to his lap, resting my head on his shoulder and weeping my heart out, like a child. The days of childhood, wherever did you disappear?

The ones at the hermitage had seen it all, perhaps at a distance. That he had walked in, said something to me, burst into a violent rage, and then left — was all interpreted in their own ways while bringing in and sorting out things from the forest. The wild steed of imagination can never be reined in.

And the Poet invented curses and malediction to cover up the debauchery of men. He, another man, invented the tale of amnesia to keep all the champions of selective memory safe in his fold. Poetry does appeal indeed, for it always rides high on the wave of imagination.

* * *

Kuru Priyasakhi, vruttimsapatnijaney, said Father Kanva. I burst out, unable to hold my emotions back. Grief came out in spasms. People interpreted it as the tears natural while leaving the dear ones. And what truly was my predicament?

That I had to stand before the king of amnesia and ask: 'Do you remember me?' Why did Father, despite knowing

everything, have to bless me so? Perhaps for a scholar like him who would spend most of his time in engrossed study making such a statement was casual? Was a yearning like mine to drink life to the hilt a ridiculous desire? Why did my father, a hermit, look dejected? I looked at him. Unable to say anything to anyone, I hugged the yearling and kissed it. At least it would know the grammar of silent grief.

The anticipation of Dushyanta warmed up my heart.

I set out towards my husband's abode.

All the way along, Gautami, Shargharva and other chattered away. Not a single word came out of me. The path looked endless. The more we walked, the longer it remained. This path will end. And at the end, he will be there to receive me. Surely? Yes, surely — I assured myself. 'There it is! The Capital!' Said Shargharava in his brass-like tone.

A rod of brilliance flashed before my eyes! Opening my eyes wide, I looked around. Would he be somewhere around?

You silly girl, drowned in delusions! He is the king of kings. Not the one to be seen around. Don't you know? The inner eye winked at the longing of my eyes. Someone absorbed in love can only see her lover. If this is a delusion, let it be mine, I answered myself, smiling. Gradually a sense of gaiety filled my being.

How did I enter the main gates, how did I go on, where did I stand — I fail to recollect.

All that I remember, my dear, is only this. The moment he, seated on the regal throne, turned his eyes towards the royal court, gesticulated his hands in negation, saying, 'Never have I set eyes on this woman' and waved us aside.

Whatever happened to me?

I was all fire!

Fire — at the very core of my being!

The very Goddess of Fire born out of the intense conflict in the depths of one's belly. There was only one burning desire within me. To spread the tentacles of seething fire and burn him to ashes! I wanted to scream at the very top of my voice so that heaven, earth, and hell could hear it. To throw the pangs of separation into that fire and burn the whole creation so that the human species is burnt to a cinder, never to come alive again.

'Anaarya...!'

What do I say, my dear? Not a single sound came out of my throat.

No, not even a single word. Words lay charred within. I stood dumbstruck.

Why did it ever happen? In the light of seething anger, I hastily wondered.

'Priya Sakhi, underneath all this chaos, flowed the gentle spring of love, silently. As if its only nature was to love unconditionally and timelessly.

I was...

Not the daughter of the most beautiful Menaka, not born to the royal hermit, not even the foster daughter of Kanva. I was Nature itself. I could only stand thunderstruck at what had happened. And that horrific amnesia? Except that it could condemn the world to eternal darkness, what more should I say? The more I did, the more inane it seemed.

Thus spake Dushyanta.

Shargharava blamed it all on me.

Gautami was saddened. 'Can you not show the ring?' She said. But am I so hollow as to secure love showing a ring? Declining would amount to arrogance. So I feigned shock at the apparent loss of it. How would a ring ever be an antidote to a feigned amnesia?

(I remembered my father, Vishwamitra, too. Would it be that my mother's life was being re-enacted through me? Like abandoning my child in the midst of the forest? Never! It was not just Menaka's blood that flows through me.)

I, however, peered hard into his eyes.

Sakhi, did I find myself there? They seemed drunk with the art that would mesmerize several like me. How different the Dushyanta before and the one now were! Then, he was more human than a king. Now, it was a mere crowned king with no traits of a human. Perhaps that is how it should be? Heading towards the woods, away from the capital, only to revive the dead human within?

I gazed at him, hard. Has his mustache greyed? All his attempts at pretending composure, gaiety and sprightliness were rather towards concealing something. 'Did you say "You may have imagined all this? You never saw him from close, after all," Say not so. A loving eye is strangely sensitive. It scrutinizes even a feeble sound, but sometimes ignores even the most obvious!

* * *

Turning my back on my husband's abode, I looked ahead. The hand of tradition had erased the way back to Kanva's hermitage. I would not have trodden it even otherwise.

I found my way to Mareech hermitage. For an independent and solitary existence, how does it matter whether one lives in a town or the woods or mountains? And when one's life has been made bare and exposed at that?

There was life growing within me - a blissful experience that defied all the worldly suffering. It soothed the mind that had cracked severely. I learned to live. I would not abandon the child in the midst of thick woods. Certainly not scream and plead to Mother Earth to open up and swallow me. Not be alienated from life.

'Without you, my life will end. I will be lonely, I will go insane,' — so had I said to him then. Perhaps he knew how absurd it had sounded. I had realized it only now. Life is a force that cannot be constrained. Why did I not realize that what appears to be an annihilation carries within it the see of revival as well? Probe a bit, and we realize everyone is lonely.

Dushyanta, too.

Let the soul cling to none. I should be grateful to him for this experience of pure love. I should not keep dwelling on the past. All moments of agony and ecstasy are bound to end. Wouldn't digging them up only bring a death-like burden on one's spirit?

Swallow bitterness. Be purged of pain. Keep your mind cheerful. Not in a leap. Step up a step, but intensely.

I was my Guru. And I myself was my Shishye.

And then Sarvadamana was born. Was I healed? No pain disappears at one's bidding. May mitigate. May seep into the unconscious. But only in course of time.

I thought it had seeped into the unconscious.

But it was stirred and summoned to the surface. The muck came mingled with the moonlight.

There was Dushyanta in person, right before me!

Was he really there? Was he the one who was there? Was he truly the one? I queried with the trees, saplings, creepers, birds, deer, the walls and the floors of the Hermitage. Why! Even with Sarvadamana! But not allowed.

Arey! The child Bharata was already in Dushyanata's arms! If tears welled up in my eyes, I knew at least Sage Mareecha, one who had seen the blazing earth surpass her fury and cooling herself, would not trivialize them as a mere sentimental outburst.

Who cares what the world, that never naturally understands the natural, says?

Had he come for my sake?

'For the sake of helping Devendra...'

Oh, fragile heart! Why ask delicate questions? After all, the bloom of happiness is ever placed on a sensitive stalk, threatening to wilt and wither at any moment.

'Remember me... finally?'

Remember—the power of the word was such! For the same preoccupation engulfed him.

'With you, why should I shy away from the truth?' He talked at length about the human relationships and patiently so that I could comprehend.

Brilliant scholar that he was.

Several details of his loves, lusts, and liaisons within the harem came to the fore to serve as links in the long narrative.

What did it amount to? To drink the experience and drop it right there and then?

I had matured sufficiently to comprehend his words. I even thought I would never be able to love him again. But my thinking defied itself with even more intensified love that ached my very being. Vishwamitra's daughter whose very soul was hurt in love cannot stay so in a merely romantic manner. There is nothing more liberating than love.

'Come with me,' said he, full passion.

Should I...? Will I...?

Sage Mareecha fell silent. The decision was all mine.

Would his being inevitable to my life make me indispensable to him? Standing at the edge of this truth, I wondered. I felt that until the point of mutual inevitability (that would never be a reality, for no one is indispensable to anyone. But then there can be exceptions to eternal truths!), it would be a sin even to mate.

'I have the warrior Kshatriya blood flowing in me,' I used to say. What vanity! For the golden throne could not lure me.

I declined to go.

I was given to understand that the king was concerned about the successor to the throne. Securing my blessing, Bharata held the hand of his father and climbed on the chariot.

Now that Bharata's life is settled, I should feel lighter, I

thought. No sooner than feeling lighter, I felt weighed down. Wondering about the sense of burden, I soon after felt composed. Becoming this and becoming that takes us nowhere. It is a transient state. Between the two, we are mere parties floating around. What do you say?

Hugging Bharata, Dushyanta went away. Isn't he the one eternally happy? The word, the Poet, the Knowledge — all will deal with his dilemmas, sort them out and justify them. Truth is not their concern.

Truth need not be concerned with what?

'I have never been jealous about your amours,' I screamed.

The wheel of the chariot had already turned towards the affairs of the state. Was sure that he had not heard it.

As long as the sunset seems ever new, life does not weary us.

* * *

It was afternoon when I had reached here. Now the evening light fell on Hemakoota. Seated on the mud plank of Hemakoota, Shakuntala ended her narrative, leaned against the mud wall and closed her eyes. The grey hair on either side of the parting shone silver.

I gazed at her. With no mind to get up and leave.

Who is she? Lost in Love? Parted from and pained by love? Givenholy love? Or the culmination of all these?

Maybe she was each of those and purged of all of those?

Like the ever fresh Nature?

* * *

The sun disappeared beyond the mountains.

I got up gently. Came down the steps. Crossed the courtyard. And looked back.

A screen of darkness. Nothing visible.

The breeze heaved like one's breath.

* * *

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Shrimathi Udyogini

- Abburi Chaya Devi

Sunday was the busiest. By the time I was done with my chores it was nearing eleven. I looked for a patch of the sun that was forever eluding my house and, just as I found a corner in which to settle down with the paper, the bell rang. Damn! Must be the paper carrier with the bill, or the man from the shop next door to collect the empty bottles. Reluctantly, a little irritated, I forced myself to open the door.

It was a new face. A young girl - in her twenties. A folder in one hand and a leather bag in the other. Must be one of those girls who come to sell soap or sanitary napkins. My face automatically registered boredom as my words came out. "What do you want?"

She smiled. "I want you." Pretty to look at, too. "You know Mr.R.Rao. His wife told me about you .I hope you can spare me a little time."

Raghava Rao was a good friend of ours. Still! Have I a choice? I thought, as I opened the door, and asked her to come in.

We seated ourselves in the corner, sharing the sun.

"My name is Sujatha. I am at the university - doing

research." As she spoke, her eyes sparkled like stars. Young enough not to be married, I thought.

"Oh, in which area?"

"Sociology."

"And your subject?"

"You are my subject," she said triumphantly. "I understand you are a working wife. I have a few questions to ask. I hope you don't mind giving me the answers."

"So. . .?" Vexation crept into my tone again.

"I am sorry. I know I may be wasting your time. But I need these answers for the research I'm doing. Only women like you can help me."

She must have read my doubts and the irritation in my eyes, for the next minute she opened her bag, took out a file and gave me a piece of paper to look at. It was a letter of introduction from her department confirming all she had been telling me. I thawed a little.

"Gathering responses from working wives like you is an important part of my study. You know, it is not so common in our country for women to work, and it is useful to know women are fulfilling their dual responsibilities of being a wife and a working woman, what their problems are, and how they face them." She stopped to catch her breath.

"Fine. It is a good subject you have chosen, Sujatha. I am very happy that you are doing this kind of work," I said, mainly to dispel my earlier displeasure and to give her some confidence to continue. She didn't seem to need any, though.

"Madam, I'd like to ask you a few questions and I hope you will answer them frankly. Of course I won't use your name or embarrass you in any way," Sujatha said.

I was just about to say, "Ready," when I heard my husband call me from the inner room. "Please wait, I won't be long," I told Sujatha and went.

My husband was still lolling in bed. "Who is that?" he asked. "I thought I heard voices."

I told him.

"Oh, come on," he said in a bored tone. "Don't waste your time on her. Make some excuse and come back."

"Sujatha is very sweet. Besides, she is well recommended. The Raghava Raos have sent her. I want to talk to her. Better still, why don't you join us?"

"Hello no!" he said. "You won't catch me ruining my Sunday confessing to some unknown female."

"All right. You think I don't have that much sense. Don't worry. I won't say anything to compromise our family secrets."

"Oh, all right. But come back soon," he grumbled and turned over, pulling up the sheets.

I smiled to myself, closed the door, took a couple of Fantas from the fridge, gave one to Sujatha, and settled back into my chair. By this time Sujatha was ready with her pen and pad and began her assault.

"How long have you been married?" she asked.

"We have completed four five-year plans," I replied.

"Twenty years! How old were you when you married?"

"Never ask a women's age. But I'll tell you. I was twenty when I was married."

"And he?"

"Let me say he was ten years older."

"Was it an arranged marriage, or...?"

"Neither," I taunted.

"You mean?"

"Some people who knew both of us brought us together. We both agreed and our parents had no objection. We had a traditional wedding."

"How many children do you have?"

"We don't have any."

Sujatha wrote something on her pad and looked up at me questioningly.

"Does anyone else stay here with you?"

"No. Just the two of us."

"How long have you been working?"

"About fifteen years, I'd say."

"Did you work before you got married?"

"No."

"Does your husband like your working?"

"...."

"You mean he doesn't like it."

"Oh no. In fact he's the one who made me take the job....
But..."

"He doesn't like it any more.... Is that it?"

"I'm not sure. But sometimes I have this feeling that he doesn't like my working."

"Tell me why you took the job in the first place and why you are still doing it."

"In the beginning it was because I was bored at home with nothing to do. And now I am kind of used to it."

Sujatha smiled, making notes all the while.

"Is that the main reason? To help time pass?"

"I guess so."

"You're sure you didn't take the job because there wasn't enough money?"

"Well, there is never enough money. I can assure you it was not for the money."

"But the money is useful for the extra expenses, you'd say?"

"I didn't think so when I took the job. But neither can I say that the money has not come in handy."

"Was it to get out of the home -to avoid your mother -in -law or anyone else?"

"No, no. Luckily, I don't have such problems."

"It was to make some new friends -spend some time outside the home with others, I take it."

"May be! I got married just after I left college. Five years at home doing nothing was more than I could bear."

"Didn't you want to make use of what you studied at college?"

"Perhaps that was one more reason."

"Didn't you have any ambitions? To achieve recognition? To become somebody?"

"Thanks heavens, no it was mainly to spend some time usefully, not to make a name. But years of working have no doubt given me some stature, a few contacts."

"I take it you are happy with your job."

"Most of the time, yes -but, then, every so often I get a little dissatisfied with things."

"You mean at home, or outside?"

"Both. Sometimes when I am hard -pressed at the office, relatives descend on the house. If I spend some extra time at the office, they don't like it at home. And, you know, women aren't such climbers in their jobs as men are. So sometimes dissatisfaction creeps in."

"Are you satisfied with your husband's job?"

"As far as I am concerned, I am satisfied."

"I take it his parents are alive."

"Yes."

"Do you like your father-in-law?"

"What kind of question is that?"

Sujatha smiled softly.

"It is hard for people to understand the woman's side in many cases. But you didn't answer my question. Do you like your father-in-law?"

"Even if I do, can I say that openly?"

"OK. I'll write here 'Yes' to that. Now, about your mother -in-law. You like her?"

"Oh yes. I like her even more than I like my mother."

"You are very fortunate."

I agreed.

"Well, what about the others? His brothers, sisters? Do any of the other women in the family work?"

"Two of his sisters started working after marriage. Once had been working three years when she got married, but then she gave up her job. His elder brother's wife is also working. Another brother is yet to be married." As I said this a thought came in to my mind. Sujatha looked away as if she had read my thoughts.

"Perhaps part of your happiness has to do with having no children. Or...."

"When we married, my husband's brothers and sisters were quite young. We never had the feeling of being without children. The house was always full of children. Anyway it is all in the mind, I suppose. Happiness or otherwise. Nothing to do with one's wants or hopes."

"Yes. But what shall I write here? That you are happy...."

"What do you think, looking at me? Write what you feel."

"OK. Let me change the subject," she said. "Tell me, when you have some free time, do you feel like staying at home, or going out, or both? Or does each of you feel differently?"

"It's a difficult question. But let me see. This is one thing about which we argue. He likes to window -shop. I like to

shop. You know - buy things we need. I don't see the sense in tiring my legs and my eyes walking past shops. And then, on holidays I feel like going to a movie or a play or a concert. He wants to eat to his heart's content and lie in bed with a book. After he tires of that, he takes aimless strolls. If I suggest inviting friends or relatives over, he starts arguing and, finally, we end up going no place and wind up on different sides of the bed, each with a book."

"Is there anything else you do together?" Sujatha broke in.

"No. I don't think there is anything we do together. No, Wait. We write. I dabble in stories. He writes poetry."

"Do you discuss your problems with your husband?"

"Many times. Sometimes he listens. Sometimes he gets in to a rage, and I suffer in silence and tell him about it long after the crisis is over. Oh yes, we do discuss our problems with each other.... As long as I don't hurt him, As long as our arguments don't create misunderstandings between ourselves."

"And does your husband tell you his problems - does he open his heart to you?"

"Yes, he tells me everything about our family affairs, our relatives and so on. But he is silent about his work and his problems there."

"What I mean is, does he confide in you? Are you quite satisfied?"

"Oh yes... If anything, he loves me too well and not too wisely. He worries about me all the time. If I have to go out alone, he worries. I am old enough and can take care of myself,

but he won't agree. I often ask him to leave me to myself and do you know what he says?"

"What?" Sujatha asked eagerly.

"Well, he laughs! How can I leave you?"

"Well, I suppose you are quite happy and satisfied," Sujatha wrote. Before I could speak, she asked, "And he? Is he satisfied with your love?"

"You should ask him that," I said.

"But I want you to tell me," Sujatha insisted.

Goodness, this girl is something, I thought. How can I tell her everything- everything in my mind- even if it is for her research?

"Oh yes," I said simply, hoping she'd stop.

"Do you and he have any differences of opinion, you know, on important matters?"

"You might as well ask me whether we eat everyday," I said.

Sujatha laughed and started noting things down again.

"I want some more details - if you don't mind."

Oh God, I thought, what have we been doing so far? Aloud, I said,

"All right. Shoot." May be this will give me an idea for a story.

"Do you have different views on what you should spend on the house?"

"Oh yes," I said enthusiastically. "I want to buy curtains.

He prefers old coins. 'Why waste money on curtains? The ones we have are OK.' he will say."

"What about luxuries?"

"He has none. He can't stand shopping. I've already told you that. And he hates picnics, parties, card games, and the like."

"May be he prefers religious functions?"

"No way," I said. "He hates all such ceremonies. The year I was married I wanted to perform the Sravanapuja, and you know what he said? 'You are an educated girl. Don't indulge in such meaningless things.' I like to arrange my collection of dolls for the Sankranti festival. When I was young my parents stopped me because it would interfere with my studies. And now my husband tells me that it is childish. I wanted to have the neighborhood ladies over for Varalakshmi puja and he put on such a face. 'Imagine all those women in this small house,' he said. And that was that. You name it. He has an answer for all my desires."

Sujatha seemed disturbed.

"I am sorry. Am I boring you with our petty squabbles?"

"Oh no," she said, embarrassed.

"And what about friends? Do you agree there?"

"Yes," I said.

Sujatha looked at me eagerly. "Please tell me more. I don't understand," she said.

"I mix with his friends from the office and their wives. But he keeps his distance from mine."

"Why?"

"Perhaps he doesn't want to feel that he is just someone's husband."

"And that hurts you, no doubt."

"Definitely, yes."

"I suppose that means he doesn't accept you as equal to him."

"Of course. What man will accept a woman as his equal?"

"And you agree?"

"No, no. I say we are equal. And he says, 'Look I'm older than you, taller than you. How can we be equal? You have a frog's mind.' And I"

"OK. Do you at least agree on the chores you do at home?"

"Of course not" I shook my head.

"I don't deny that he helps me in the house, more than most husbands I know. When he helps me in the kitchen, he leaves cigarette butts in the sink, dumps refuse all over the place. Costs me more work ultimately, so I let him go. I'd rather he did his own work."

Sujatha abruptly changed the subject.

"What are your views as a dutiful daughter -in- law?"

"Well, we are both happy with my mother-in-law. But when it comes to his...."

"You mean?"

"Yes...He has this feeling that after marriage I should have broken away from my people. He doesn't say it in so many

words, but I know he wants me to keep away from my people. I don't think men will ever change in relation to this, do you?"

Sujatha stopped a yawn-not too obviously. But her fingers were busy taking the notes. And then, "What are your views, I mean both your views, on showing your feelings - your affection towards each other?"

"Well, if he doesn't like the food I prepare for him, I think he doesn't love me. And if I don't like the sari he has brought for me, he gets the same feeling about my love for him."

"No, what I mean is the more physical part of love."

"Oh that," I laughed. "You want me to tell you the truth?"

Sujatha blushed and turned her face away. Before I could answer, I heard his voice calling me from the bedroom. I jumped out of my chair.

"Wait. I'll be back in a minute."

I entered our room. "Oh, you have awakened, finally, dearest," I said sarcastically.

"As if I had been sleeping! One day a week, one day I get when I can lie down and relax. And there you go yackety-yacking, clucking like a couple of birds. God! Is she still here?" he said with irritation.

"Look. Why don't you come and sit with her for a while? I'll make some coffee for you."

"Never mind. I'd prefer you to finish with her. Then we can have our coffee here in peace."

"You know, there's something nice about that girl. I feel that she would be good for your younger brother Srinivas. Shall I broach the subject?"

"God! You are out of your mind. You hardly know her," he said, and settled back in bed.

I returned to the veranda, where Sujatha was fidgeting. As soon as she saw me, she shot out, "Doesn't your husband call you by name?"

"No," I said, "he feels that calling me by name is rather formal. Like between friends."

"But he could call you by some pet name."

"You mean like a cat or a dog? What's in a name, any way?" I said shyly.

"Yes, of course." Sujatha referred to her notes for the next question.

"Oh yes, I was asking about your love for each other. You have no differences of opinion, I'm sure."

"No," I said briefly, to cut her short.

"Let me ask, when you disagree on something, one of you has to give in-or do both of you stubbornly hold on to your views?"

"It could go either way. Depends on the situation."

She wouldn't give in. "What happens most of the time?"

"What can a woman do except give in," I said resignedly.

"Oh!" said Sujatha. "Here, I've listed a few qualities of husbands. All you have to do is check off the once that correctly describe him."

She gave me a list with a series of items.

1. *Argumentative*
Right. Of course, I am no less.
2. *Narrow-minded*
Right. He'll eat only what he likes. If I make something I like, he won't even touch it.
3. *Fault-finding*
Right. He sits at the dining table like a Supreme Court judge dishing out verdicts.
4. *Frowns all the time*
Right. But his anger never lasts more than a few minutes.
5. *Spoils the children*
Doesn't arise. Thank God!
6. *Secretive*
Not very.
7. *Jealous*
Right. If I wear the sari my father bought me, he can't bear it.
8. *Chatterbox*
Only with his friends. He has nothing to talk to me about.
9. *Has a roving eye for other women*
Which man hasn't?
10. *Lazy*
Right.
11. *Forgets his promises*

- Right. He tells me at night that we'll go to Kashmir this summer, and forgets it the next morning.
12. *Selfish*
Right. Sits in the bathroom for hours with the morning news paper.
13. *Smokes like a chimney*
Right. He feels that his manliness will suffer if he doesn't.
14. *Suspicious*
Right. Just now when I told him about Sujatha, he was suspicious of her.
15. *Irresponsible*
Right. Couldn't care less even if the tap were leaking away to glory. Won't even help me carry the shopping bags.
16. *Doesn't care about children*
Right. As if he even cares about me.
17. *Not interested in anything but his job*
Right. That's what he says about me, as a matter of fact.
18. *Impatient*
If I am ten minutes late coming home, he gets all excited. If I don't answer the doorbell at the first ring, he gets excited.
19. *Doesn't believe in tidiness or order*
Right. You must see our room. Papers and books all over the place. Cigarette ashes and butts. If I try to clean up, he gets upset because I have "disturbed his books." If I

say that the place is like a pigsty, he says that's how intellectuals live. Can't stand my making the beds. If I say, "How'll it look if somebody sees this mess?" he'll say, "Why the hell should others come into our room?" And so on... Endless, really.

20. *Gambles*

I don't think he knows how many cards there are in a pack.

21. *Doesn't worry about the home*

Not if he has his friends with him.

22. *Doesn't like to go out with me in the evenings*

Hates shopping. Likes walking.

23. *Comes home late for meals*

Especially when I'm feeling hungry.

24. *Doesn't like me to work*

Won't say it aloud though.

25. *Miserly*

No. Rather the opposite.

26. *Won't open his mind.*

What's the use?

27. *Can't stand my talking about the neighbors*

Gossip, that's all women are capable of, he says.

28. *No ambition*

Not even for me.

29. *Uncivilized boor.*

Ever since coming back from America, he slurps his food up and belches aloud. It is a sign of satisfaction, he says.

30. *Isn't particularly bothered about the state of his home*

No

31. *Doesn't treat me as his equal*

Right. How can he? I'm two inches shorter.

"Seems to me you're fed up," Sujatha said. "Quite an exhaustive list."

"I've never been cross-examined so thoroughly before," I confessed.

Her next question stopped me short.

"Have you ever thought of separating?"

"Yes. I have often thought of it. But never seriously."

"How many times have you two quarreled this year?"

"I haven't counted, but quite a few times."

"But why haven't you taken the step to separate? After all, there seems to be enough reason."

"Why don't you get married, Sujatha?" I said seriously. "You won't understand this strange chemistry that keeps a man and woman together in spite of all their misunderstandings and incompatibility. Besides, there is room only for two persons in a marriage. Others should keep out." I didn't mean it as a hint to her, but my words came out in a rush. "You need a sense of humor to make it go."

"Do I take it that you love your husband, or the opposite?"

"Well, a little bit of love, a little bit of respect, I think," I said, mostly to myself.

"And what does he feel for you?"

"Love and authority."

"Is there a difference between the first year of your marriage and now?"

"Of course. Then it was just infatuation. Now it is love born out of understanding and togetherness."

"One last question. If you were to marry again, would you marry him, or someone else, or not at all?"

"Of course I'd marry him. Only him," I said fiercely.

"And what would he say to that?"

"'No, I won't marry you again,' that's what he would say. Of course, he is a man, you know."

Relief at last, as I saw Sujatha sorting her papers, closing her shop.

"I can't tell you how grateful I am to you for giving me so much of your time and patiently answering my questions. I'm sure it'll help my research a lot."

"That's all right, Sujatha. Actually, all these lurking thoughts and feelings - you and your questions have brought them out of me. Really, it is I who must thank you. I see myself more clearly now. There's something else I want to ask you."

"Yes," Sujatha leaned forward expectantly.

"Never mind," I said. "You'll know of it by and by. I must go now. I think I hear him calling me."

The Sea Turtle and the Shark

- Melvin B Tolson

Strange but true is the story
of the sea-turtle and the shark
the instinctive drive of the weak to survive
in the oceanic dark.

Driven,
riven
by hunger
from abyss to shoal,
sometimes the shark swallows
the sea-turtle whole.

The sly reptilian marine
withdraws,
into the shell
of his undersea craft,
his leathery head and the rapacious claws
that can rip
a rhinoceros' hide
or strip

a crocodile to fare-thee-well;
 now,
 inside the shark,
 the sea-turtle begins the churning seesaws
 of his descent into pelagic hell;
 then...then,
 with ravenous jaws
 that can cut sheet steel scrap,
 the sea-turtle gnaws
 ...and gnaws...and gnaws
 his way in a way that appalls-
 his way to freedom,
 beyond the vomiting dark
 beyond the stomach walls
 of the shark.

Ode on a Grecian Urn

- John Keats

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
 What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
 What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
 Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,

For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!
 Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new;
 More happy love! more happy, happy love!
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
 For ever panting, and for ever young;
 All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
 What little town by river or sea shore,
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
 As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!

When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Just Lather, That's All

- **Hernando Téllez**

He said nothing when he entered. I was passing the best of my razors back and forth on a strop. When I recognized him I started to tremble. But he didn't notice. Hoping to conceal my emotion, I continued sharpening the razor. I tested it on the meat of my thumb, and then held it up to the light. At that moment he took off the bullet-studded belt that his gun holster dangled from. He hung it up on a wall hook and placed his military cap over it. Then he turned to me, loosening the knot of his tie, and said, "It's hot as hell. Give me a shave." He sat in the chair.

I estimated he had a four-day beard. The four days taken up by the latest expedition in search of our troops. His face seemed reddened, burned by the sun. Carefully, I began to prepare the soap. I cut off a few slices, dropped them into the cup, mixed in a bit of warm water, and began to stir with the brush. Immediately the foam began to rise. "The other boys in the group should have this much beard, too." I continued stirring the lather.

"But we did all right, you know. We got the main ones. We brought back some dead, and we've got some others still alive. But pretty soon they'll all be dead."

"How many did you catch?" I asked.

"Fourteen. We had to go pretty deep into the woods to find them. But we'll get even. Not one of them comes out of this alive, not one."

He leaned back on the chair when he saw me with the lather-covered brush in my hand. I still had to put the sheet on him. No doubt about it, I was upset. I took a sheet out of a drawer and knotted it around my customer's neck. He wouldn't stop talking. He probably thought I was in sympathy with his party.

"The town must have learned a lesson from what we did the other day," he said.

"Yes," I replied, securing the knot at the base of his dark, sweaty neck.

"That was a fine show, eh?"

"Very good," I answered, turning back for the brush. The man closed his eyes with a gesture of fatigue and sat waiting for the cool caress of the soap. I had never had him so close to me. The day he ordered the whole town to file into the patio of the school to see the four rebels hanging there, I came face to face with him for an instant. But the sight of the mutilated bodies kept me from noticing the face of the man who had directed it all, the face I was now about to take into my hands. It was not an unpleasant face, certainly. And the beard, which made him seem a bit older than he was, didn't suit him badly at all. His name was Torres. Captain Torres. A man of imagination, because who else would have thought of hanging the naked rebels and then holding target practice on certain parts of their bodies? I began to apply the first layer of soap.

With his eyes closed, he continued. "Without any effort I could go straight to sleep," he said, "but there's plenty to do this afternoon." I stopped the lathering and asked with a feigned lack of interest: "A firing squad?" "Something like that, but a little slower." I got on with the job of lathering his beard. My hands started trembling again. The man could not possibly realize it, and this was in my favor. But I would have preferred that he hadn't come. It was likely that many of our faction had seen him enter. And an enemy under one's roof imposes certain conditions. I would be obliged to shave that beard like any other one, carefully, gently, like that of any customer, taking pains to see that no single pore emitted a drop of blood. Being careful to see that the little tufts of hair did not lead the blade astray. Seeing that his skin ended up clean, soft, and healthy, so that passing the back of my hand over it I couldn't feel a hair. Yes, I was secretly a rebel, but I was also a conscientious barber, and proud of the preciseness of my profession. And this four-days' growth of beard was a fitting challenge.

I took the razor, opened up the two protective arms, exposed the blade and began the job, from one of the sideburns downward. The razor responded beautifully. His beard was inflexible and hard, not too long, but thick. Bit by bit the skin emerged. The razor rasped along, making its customary sound as fluffs of lather mixed with bits of hair gathered along the blade. I paused a moment to clean it, then took up the strop again to sharpen the razor, because I'm a barber who does things properly. The man, who had kept his eyes closed, opened them now, removed one of his hands from under the sheet, felt the spot on his face where the soap had been cleared off, and said, "Come to the school today at six o'clock." "The same thing as the other day?" I asked horrified.

"It could be better," he replied. "What do you plan to do?" "I don't know yet. But we'll amuse ourselves." Once more he leaned back and closed his eyes. I approached him with the razor poised. "Do you plan to punish them all?" I ventured timidly. "All." The soap was drying on his face. I had to hurry. In the mirror I looked toward the street. It was the same as ever: the grocery store with two or three customers in it. Then I glanced at the clock: two-twenty in the afternoon. The razor continued on its downward stroke. Now from the other sideburn down. A thick, blue beard. He should have let it grow like some poets or priests do. It would suit him well. A lot of people wouldn't recognize him. Much to his benefit, I thought, as I attempted to cover the neck area smoothly. There, for sure, the razor had to be handled masterfully, since the hair, although softer, grew into little swirls. A curly beard. One of the tiny pores could be opened up and issue forth its pearl of blood. A good barber such as I prides himself on never allowing this to happen to a client. And this was a first-class client. How many of us had he ordered shot? How many of us had he ordered mutilated? It was better not to think about it. Torres did not know that I was his enemy. He did not know it nor did the rest. It was a secret shared by very few, precisely so that I could inform the revolutionaries of what Torres was doing in the town and of what he was planning each time he undertook a rebel-hunting excursion. So it was going to be very difficult to explain that I had him right in my hands and let him go peacefully -alive and shaved.

The beard was now almost completely gone. He seemed younger, less burdened by years than when he had arrived. I suppose this always happens with men who visit barber shops. Under the stroke of my razor Torres was being rejuvenated-

rejuvenated because I am a good barber, the best in the town, if I may say so. A little more lather here, under his chin, on his Adam's apple, on this big vein. How hot it is getting! Torres must be sweating as much as I. But he is not afraid. He is a calm man, who is not even thinking about what he is going to do with the prisoners this afternoon. On the other hand I, with this razor in my hands, stroking and re-stroking this skin, trying to keep blood from oozing from these pores, can't even think clearly. Damn him for coming, because I'm a revolutionary and not a murderer. And how easy it would be to kill him. And he deserves it. Does he? No! What the devil! No one deserves to have someone else make the sacrifice of becoming a murderer. What do you gain by it? Nothing. Others come along and still others, and the first ones kill the second ones and they the next ones and it goes on like this until everything is a sea of blood. I could cut this throat just so, zip! zip! I wouldn't give him time to complain and since he has his eyes closed he wouldn't see the glistening knife blade or my glistening eyes. But I'm trembling like a real murderer. Out of his neck a gush of blood would spout onto the sheet, on the chair, on my hands, on the floor. I would have to close the door. And the blood would keep inching along the floor, warm, ineradicable, uncontainable, until it reached the street, like a little scarlet stream. I'm sure that one solid stroke, one deep incision, would prevent any pain. He wouldn't suffer. But what would I do with the body? Where would I hide it? I would have to flee, leaving all I have behind, and take refuge far away, far, far away. But they would follow until they found me. "Captain Torres' murderer. He slit his throat while he was shaving him, a coward." And then on the other side. "The avenger of us all. A name to remember. (And here they would

mention my name.) He was the town barber. No one knew he was defending our cause."

And what of all this? Murderer or hero? My destiny depends on the edge of this blade. I can turn my hand a bit more, press a little harder on the razor, and sink it in. The skin would give way like silk, like rubber, like the strop. There is nothing more tender than human skin and the blood is always there, ready to pour forth. A blade like this doesn't fail. It is my best. But I don't want to be a murderer, no sir. You came to me for a shave. And I perform my work honorably. . . . I don't want blood on my hands. Just lather, that's all. You are an executioner and I am only a barber. Each person has his own place in the scheme of things. That's right. His own place.

Now his chin had been stroked clean and smooth. The man sat up and looked into the mirror. He rubbed his hands over his skin and felt it fresh, like new.

"Thanks," he said. He went to the hanger for his belt, pistol and cap. I must have been very pale; my shirt felt soaked. Torres finished adjusting the buckle, straightened his pistol in the holster and after automatically smoothing down his hair, he put on the cap. From his pants pocket he took out several coins to pay me for my services. And he began to head toward the door. In the doorway he paused for a moment, and turning to me he said:

"They told me that you'd kill me. I came to find out. But killing isn't easy. You can take my word for it." And he headed on down the street.

Translated by Donald A. Yates

The Rhetoric of Advertising

- Stuart Hirschberg

Whether ads are presented as sources of information enabling the consumer to make educated choices between products or aim at offering memorable images or witty, thoughtful, or poetic copy, the underlying intent of all advertising is to persuade specific audiences. Seen in this way, ads appear as mini-arguments whose strategies and techniques of persuasion can be analyzed just like a written argument. We can discover which elements are designed to appeal to the audience's emotions (*pathos* according to Aristotle), which elements make their appeal in terms of reasons, evidence, or logic (*logos*), and how the advertiser goes about winning credibility for itself or in terms of the spokesperson employed to speak on behalf of the product (the *ethos* dimension). Like arguments, ads can be effective if they appeal to the needs, values, and beliefs of the audience. Advertisers use a variety of visual and verbal means to encourage their audience to identify with the people in the ads, the experiences the ads depict, and the values the ads promote. Although the verbal and visual elements within an ad are designed to work together, we can study these elements separately. We can look at how the composition of the elements within an ad is intended to

function. We can look at the role of language and how it is used to persuade. We can study how objects and settings are used to promote the audience's identification with the products being sold. We can judge ads according to the skill with which they deploy all these resources while at the same time being critically aware of their intended effects on us.

The Techniques of Advertising

The claim the ad makes is designed to establish the superiority of the product in the minds of the audience and to create a distinctive image for the product whether it is a brand of cigarettes, a financial service, or a type of gasoline. The single most important technique for creating this image depends on transferring ideas, attributes or feelings from outside the product onto the product itself. In this way the product comes to represent an obtainable object or service that embodies, represents, or symbolizes a whole range of meanings. This transfer can be achieved in many ways. For example, when Elizabeth Taylor lends her glamour and beauty to the merchandising of a perfume, the consumer is meant to conclude that the perfume must be superior to other perfumes in the way that Elizabeth Taylor embodies beauty, glamour, and sex appeal. The attempt to transfer significance can operate in two ways. It can encourage the audience to discover meanings and to correlate feelings and attributes that the advertiser wishes the product to represent in ways that allow these needs and desires to become attached to specific products. It can also prevent the correlation of thoughts or feelings that might discourage the audience from purchasing a particular product. For example, the first most instinctive response to the thought of smoking a cigarette might be linked with the idea

of inhaling hot and dry smoke from what are essentially burning tobacco leaves. Thus, any association the audience might have with burning leaves, coughing, and dry hot smoke must be short circuited by supplying them with a whole set of other associations to receive and occupy the perceptual “slot” that might have been triggered by their first reactions. Cigarette advertisers do this in a variety of ways:

- By showing active people in outdoorsy settings they put the thought of emphysema, shortness of breath, or lung disease very far away indeed.
- By showing cigarette packs set against the background of grass glistening with morning dew or bubbling streams or cascading waterfalls, they subtly guide the audience’s response away from what is dry, hot, congested, or burning towards what is open, airy, moist, cool and clean.
- In some brands, menthol flavoring and green and blue colors are intended to promote these associations.

Thus, ads act as do all other kinds of persuasion to intensify correlations that work to the advertiser’s advantage and to suppress associations that would lessen the product’s appeal.

The kinds of associations audiences are encouraged to perceive reflect a broad range of positive emotional appeals that encourage the audience to find self-esteem through the purchase of a product that by itself offers a way to meet personal and social needs. The particular approach taken in the composition of the ad, the way it is laid out, and the connotations of the advertising copy vary according to the emotional appeal of the ad.

The most common manipulative techniques are designed to make consumers want to consume to satisfy deep-seated human drives. Of course, no one consciously believes that purchasing a particular kind of toothpaste, perfume, lipstick, or automobile will meet real psychological and social needs, but that is exactly how products are sold-through the promise of delivering unattainable satisfactions through tangible purchasable objects or services. In purchasing a certain product, we are offered the chance to create ourselves, our personality, and our relationships through consumption.

Emotional Appeals Used in Advertising

The emotional appeals in ads function exactly the way assumptions about value do in written arguments. They supply the unstated major premise that supplies a rationale to persuade an audience that a particular product will meet one or another of several different kinds of needs. Some ads present the purchase of a product as a means by which consumers can find social acceptance.

These ads address the consumers as “you” (“wouldn’t you really rather have a Buick?”). The “you” here is plural but is perceived as being individual and personal by someone who has already formed the connection with the product. Ironically, the price of remaining in good standing with this “group” of fellow consumers requires the consumer to purchase an expensive automobile. In this sense, ads give consumers a chance to belong to social groups that have only one thing in common- the purchase of a particular product.

One variation on the emotional need to belong to a designated social group is the appeal to status or “snob appeal.”

Snob appeal is not new. In 1710, the *Spectator*, a popular newspaper of the time, carried an ad that read:

An incomparable Powder for Cleaning Teeth, which has given great satisfaction to the Nobility Gentry in England. (Quoted in W Duncan Reckie, *Advertising: Its Place in Political and Managerial Economics*, 1974.)

Ads for scotch, expensive cars, boats, jewellery, and watches frequently place their products in upper class settings or depict them in connection with the fine arts (sculpture, ballet etc.) The *value warrant* in these ads encourages the consumer to imagine that the purchase of the item will confer qualities associated with the background or activities of this upper-class world onto the consumers.

In other ads the need to belong takes a more subtler form of offering the product as a way to become part of a time in the past the audience might look back to with nostalgia. Grandmotherly figures wearing aprons and holding products that are advertised as being “like Grandma used to make” offer the consumer an imaginary past, a family tradition, or a simpler time looked back to with warmth and sentimentality. For many years, Smucker’s preserves featured ads in which the product was an integral part of a scene emanating security and warmth, which the ad invited us to remember as if it were our own past. Ads of this kind are often photographed through filters that present misty sepia-tone images that carefully recreate old-fashioned kitchens with the accompanying appliances, dishes, clothes, and hairstyles. The ads thus supply us with false memories and invite us to insert ourselves into this imaginary past and to remember it as if it were our own. At the farthest extreme, ads employing the appeal to see ourselves as part of a

group may try to evoke patriotic feelings so that the prospective consumer will derive the satisfactions of good citizenship and sense of participation in being part of the collective psyche of an entire nation. The point is that people really do have profound needs that advertisers can exploit, but it would be a rare product indeed that could really fulfil such profound needs.

Advertisers use highly sophisticated market research techniques to enable them to define and characterize precisely those people who are most likely to be receptive to ads of particular kinds. The science of demographics is aided and abetted by psychological research that enables advertisers to “target” a precisely designated segment of the general public. For example, manufacturers of various kinds of liquor can rely on studies that inform them that vodka drinkers are most likely to read *Psychology Today* and scotch drinkers the *New Yorker*, while readers of *Time* prefer rum and the audience for *Playboy* has a large number of readers who prefer gin. Once a market segment with defined psychological characteristics has been identified, an individual ad can be crafted for that particular segment and placed in the appropriate publication.

Ads, of course, can elicit responses by attempting to manipulate consumers through negative as well as positive emotional appeals. Helen Woodward, the head copywriter for an ad agency, once offered the following advice for ad writers trying to formulate a new ad for baby food: “Give’em the figures about the baby death rate-but don’t say it flatly ... if we only had the nerve to put a hearse in the ad, you couldn’t keep the women away from the food” (Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of Consumer*

Culture, [1976]). Ads of this kind must first arouse the consumer's anxieties and then offer the product as the solution to the problem that more often than not the ad had created.

For example, an advertisement for Polaroid evokes the fear of not having taken pictures of moments that cannot be re-created and then offers the product as a form of insurance that will prevent this calamity from occurring. Nikon does the same in claiming that "a moment is called a moment because it doesn't last for ever. Think of sunsets. A child's surprise. A Labrador's licky kiss. This is precisely why the Nikon N50 has the simple 'Simple' switch on top of the camera."

Ads for products that promise to guarantee their purchasers sex appeal, youth, health, social acceptance, self-esteem, creativity, enlightenment, a happy family life, loving relationships, escape from boredom, vitality, and many other things frequently employ scare tactics to frighten or worry the consumer into purchasing the product to ease his or her fears. These ads must first make the consumer dissatisfied with the self that exists. In this way, they function exactly as do *policy arguments* that recommend solutions to problems with measurably harmful consequences. The difference is that these kinds of ads actually are designed to arouse and then exploit the anxieties related to these problems.

Large industrial conglomerates, whether in oil, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, or agribusiness, frequently use advertising to accomplish different kinds of objectives than simply persuading the consumer to buy a particular product. These companies often seek to persuade the general public that they are not polluting the environment, poisoning the water, or causing environmental havoc in the process of manufacturing their

products. The emotional appeal they use is to portray themselves as concerned "corporate citizens" vitally interested in the public good as a whole, and especially in those communities where they conduct their operations. In some cases, the ads present products as if they were directly produced from nature without being subjected to intermediary processing, preservatives, and contaminants, thereby lessening concern that they produce harmful byproducts. For example, Mazola might depict a spigot producing corn oil directly inserted into an ear of corn. A jeep might appear to have materialized out of thin air on a seemingly inaccessible mountain peak. Companies sensitive to accusations that they are polluting the air and water can mount an advertising campaign designed to prove that they are not simply exploiting the local resources (whether timber, oil, fish, coal) for profits but are genuinely interested in putting something back into the community. The folksy good neighbour tone of these ads is designed to create a benign image of the company.

The Language of Advertising

We can see how the creation of a sense of the company's credibility as a concerned citizen corresponds to what Aristotle called the *ethos* dimension. For example, Chevron expresses concern that the light from their oil drilling operations be shielded so that spawning sea turtles won't be unintentionally misdirected and lose their way!

The appeals to logic, statements of reasons, and presentations of evidence in ads correspond to the *logos* dimension of argument. The wording of the claims is particularly important, since it determines whether companies are legally responsible for any claims they make.

Claims in advertising need to be evaluated to discover whether something is asserted that needs to be proved or is implied without actually being stated.

Claims may refer to authoritative-sounding results obtained by supposedly independent laboratories, teams of research scientists, or physicians without ever saying how these surveys were conducted, what statistical methods were used, and who interpreted the results. Ads of this kind may make an impressive-sounding quasi-scientific claim; Ivory Soap used to present itself as “99 and 44 /100% pure” without answering “pure” what. Some ads use technical talk and scientific terms to give the impression of a scientific breakthrough. For example, STP claims that it added “an anti-wear agent and viscosity improvers” to your oil. The copy for L.L. Bean claims of one of its jackets that “even in brutal ice winds gusting to 80 knots this remarkable anorak kept team members who wore it warm and comfortable.” It would be important to know that the team members referred to are members of the “L.L. Bean test team.”

Other claims cannot be substantiated, for example, “we’re the Dexter Shoe Company. And for nearly four decades we put a lot of Dexter Maine into every pair of shoes we make.”

In an ad for lipstick, Aveda makes the claim that “it’s made of rich, earthy lip colours formulated with pure plant pigment from the Uruku tree. Organically grown by indigenous people in the rain forest.”

Claims may be deceptive in other ways. Of all the techniques the advertisers use to influence what people believe and how they spend their money, none is more basic than the

use of so-called *weasel words*. This term was popularized by Theodore Roosevelt in a speech he gave in St. Louis, May 31, 1916, when he commented that notes from the Department of State were filled with weasel words that retract the meaning of the words they are next to just as a weasel sucks the meat out of the egg.

In modern advertising parlance, a weasel word has come to mean any qualifier or comparative that is used to imply a positive quality that cannot be stated as a fact, because it cannot be substantiated. For example, if an ad claims a tooth paste will “help” stop cavities it does not obligate the manufacturer to substantiate this claim. So, too, if a product is advertised as “fighting” germs, the equivocal claim hides the fact that the product may fight and lose.

A recent ad for STP claimed that “no matter what kind of car you drive, STP gas treatment helps remove the water that leads to gas line freeze. And unlike gas line anti-freeze, our unique gas treatment formula works to reduce intake valve deposits and prevent clogged injectors.” The key words are “helps” and “works”, neither of which obligates STP to be legally accountable to support the claim.

The words *virtually* (as in “virtually spotless”) and *up to or for as long as* (as in “stops coughs up to eight hours”) also remove any legal obligation on the part of the manufacturer to justify the claim.

Other favourite words in the copywriter’s repertoire, such as *free* and *new* are useful in selling everything from cat food to political candidates.

The Ethical Dimension of Persuasion

As we have seen in our examination of the methods advertisers use to influence consumers, ethical questions are implicit in every act of persuasion. For example, what are we to make of a persuader whose objectives in seeking to influence an audience may be praiseworthy but who consciously makes use of distorted facts or seeks to manipulate an audience by playing on their known attitudes, values, and beliefs? Is success in persuasion the only criterion or should we hold would-be persuaders accountable to some ethical standards of responsibility about the means they use to achieve specific ends? Perhaps the most essential quality in determining whether any act of persuasion is an ethical one depends on the writer maintaining an open dialogue with different perspectives that might be advanced on a particular issue. By contrast, any act of persuasion that intentionally seeks to avoid self-criticism or challenges from competing perspectives will come across as insincere, dogmatic, deceptive and defensive. The desire to shut down debate or control an audience's capacity to respond to the argument might well be considered unethical. The consequence of this attitude may be observed in the arguer's use of fraudulent evidence, illogical reasoning, emotionally laden irrelevant appeals, simplistic representation of the issue, or the pretense of expertise. Standards to apply when judging the ethical dimension in any act of persuasion require us to consider whether any element of coercion, deception, or manipulation is present. This becomes especially true when we look at the relationship between propaganda as a form of mass persuasion and the rhetorical means used to influence large groups of people.

Dead Man's Path

- Chinua Achebe

Michael Obi's hopes were fulfilled much earlier than he had expected. He was appointed headmaster of Ndume Central School in January 1949. It had always been an unprogressive school, so the Mission authorities decided to send a young and energetic man to run it. Obi accepted this responsibility with enthusiasm. He had many wonderful ideas and this was an opportunity to put them into practice. He had had sound secondary school education which designated him a "pivotal teacher" in the official records and set him apart from the other headmasters in the mission field. He was outspoken in his condemnation of the narrow views of these older and often less-educated ones.

"We shall make a good job of it, shan't we?" he asked his young wife when they first heard the joyful news of his promotion.

"We shall do our best," she replied. "We shall have such beautiful gardens and everything will be just *modern* and delightful . . ." In their two years of married life she had become completely infected by his passion for "modern methods" and his denigration of "these old and superannuated people in the teaching field who would be

better employed as traders in the Onitsha market." She began to see herself already as the admired wife of the young headmaster, the queen of the school.

The wives of the other teachers would envy her position. She would set the fashion in everything . . . Then, suddenly, it occurred to her that there might not be other wives. Wavering between hope and fear, she asked her husband, looking anxiously at him.

"All our colleagues are young and unmarried," he said with enthusiasm which for once she did not share. "Which is a good thing," he continued.

"Why?"

"Why? They will give all their time and energy to the school."

Nancy was downcast. For a few minutes she became skeptical about the new school; but it was only for a few minutes. Her little personal misfortune could not blind her to her husband's happy prospects. She looked at him as he sat folded up in a chair. He was stoop-shouldered and looked frail. But he sometimes surprised people with sudden bursts of physical energy. In his present posture, however, all his bodily strength seemed to have retired behind his deep-set eyes, giving them an extraordinary power of penetration. He was only twenty-six, but looked thirty or more. On the whole, he was not unhandsome.

"A penny for your thoughts, Mike," said Nancy after a while, imitating the woman's magazine she read.

"I was thinking what a grand opportunity we've got at last to show these people how a school should be run."

Ndume School was backward in every sense of the word. Mr. Obi put his whole life into the work, and his wife hers too. He had two aims. A high standard of teaching was insisted upon, and the school compound was to be turned into a place of beauty. Nancy's dream-gardens came to life with the coming of the rains, and blossomed. Beautiful hibiscus and allamanda hedges in brilliant red and yellow marked out the carefully tended school compound from the rank neighborhood bushes.

One evening as Obi was admiring his work he was scandalized to see an old woman from the village hobble right across the compound, through a marigold flower-bed and the hedges. On going up there he found faint signs of an almost disused path from the village across the school compound to the bush on the other side.

"It amazes me," said Obi to one of his teachers who had been three years in the school, "that you people allowed the villagers to make use of this footpath. It is simply incredible." He shook his head.

"The path," said the teacher apologetically, "appears to be very important to them. Although it is hardly used, it connects the village shrine with their place of burial."

"And what has that got to do with the school?" asked the headmaster.

"Well, I don't know," replied the other with a shrug of the shoulders. "But I remember there was a big row some time ago when we attempted to close it."

"That was some time ago. But it will not be used now," said Obi as he walked away. "What will the Government Education Officer think of this when he comes to inspect the

school next week? The villagers might, for all I know, decide to use the schoolroom for a pagan ritual during the inspection."

Heavy sticks were planted closely across the path at the two places where it entered and left the school premises. These were further strengthened with barbed wire.

Three days later the village priest of *Ani* called on the headmaster. He was an old man and walked with a slight stoop. He carried a stout walking-stick which he usually tapped on the floor, by way of emphasis, each time he made a new point in his argument.

"I have heard," he said after the usual exchange of cordialities, "that our ancestral footpath has recently been closed . . ."

"Yes," replied Mr. Obi. "We cannot allow people to make a highway of our school compound."

"Look here, my son," said the priest bringing down his walking-stick, "this path was here before you were born and before your father was born. The whole life of this village depends on it. Our dead relatives depart by it and our ancestors visit us by it. But most important, it is the path of children coming in to be born . . ."

Mr. Obi listened with a satisfied smile on his face.

"The whole purpose of our school," he said finally, "is to eradicate just such beliefs as that. Dead men do not require footpaths. The whole idea is just fantastic. Our duty is to teach your children to laugh at such ideas."

"What you say may be true," replied the priest, "but we follow the practices of our fathers. If you reopen the path we

shall have nothing to quarrel about. What I always say is: let the hawk perch and let the eagle perch." He rose to go.

"I am sorry," said the young headmaster. "But the school compound cannot be a thoroughfare. It is against our regulations. I would suggest your constructing another path, skirting our premises. We can even get our boys to help in building it. I don't suppose the ancestors will find the little detour too burdensome."

"I have no more words to say," said the old priest, already outside.

Two days later a young woman in the village died in childbed. A diviner was immediately consulted and he prescribed heavy sacrifices to propitiate ancestors insulted by the fence.

Obi woke up next morning among the ruins of his work. The beautiful hedges were torn up not just near the path but right round the school, the flowers trampled to death and one of the school buildings pulled down . . . That day, the white Supervisor came to inspect the school and wrote a nasty report on the state of the premises but more seriously about the "tribal-war situation developing between the school and the village, arising in part from the misguided zeal of the new headmaster."

How Smart Phones Have Destroyed a Generation

One of the ironies of iGen life is that despite spending far more time under the same roof as their parents, today's teens can hardly be said to be closer to their mothers and fathers than their predecessors were. "I've seen my friends with their families—they don't talk to them," Athena told me. "They just say 'Okay, okay, whatever' while they're on their phones. They don't pay attention to their family." Like her peers, Athena is an expert at tuning out her parents so she can focus on her phone. She spent much of her summer keeping up with friends, but nearly all of it was over text or Snapchat. "I've been on my phone more than I've been with actual people," she said. "My bed has, like, an imprint of my body."

In this, too, she is typical. The number of teens who get together with their friends nearly every day dropped by more than 40 percent from 2000 to 2015; the decline has been especially steep recently. It's not only a matter of fewer kids partying; fewer kids are spending time simply hanging out. That's something most teens used to do: nerds and jocks, poor kids and rich kids, C students and A students. The roller rink, the basketball court, the town pool, the local necking spot—they've all been replaced by virtual spaces accessed through apps and the web.

You might expect that teens spend so much time in these new spaces because it makes them happy, but most data suggest that it does not. The Monitoring the Future survey, funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and designed to be nationally representative, has asked 12th-graders more than 1,000 questions every year since 1975 and queried eighth- and 10th-graders since 1991. The survey asks teens how happy they are and also how much of their leisure time they spend on various activities, including nonscreen activities such as in-person social interaction and exercise, and, in recent years, screen activities such as using social media, texting, and browsing the web. The results could not be clearer: Teens who spend more time than average on screen activities are more likely to be unhappy, and those who spend more time than average on nonscreen activities are more likely to be happy.

There's not a single exception. All screen activities are linked to less happiness, and all nonscreen activities are linked to more happiness. Eighth-graders who spend 10 or more hours a week on social media are 56 percent more likely to say they're unhappy than those who devote less time to social media. Admittedly, 10 hours a week is a lot. But those who spend six to nine hours a week on social media are still 47 percent more likely to say they are unhappy than those who use social media even less. The opposite is true of in-person interactions. Those who spend an above-average amount of time with their friends in person are 20 percent less likely to say they're unhappy than those who hang out for a below-average amount of time.

If you were going to give advice for a happy adolescence based on this survey, it would be straightforward: Put down the phone, turn off the laptop, and do something—anything—

that does not involve a screen. Of course, these analyses don't unequivocally prove that screen time causes unhappiness; it's possible that unhappy teens spend more time online. But recent research suggests that screen time, in particular social-media use, does indeed cause unhappiness. One study asked college students with a Facebook page to complete short surveys on their phone over the course of two weeks. They'd get a text message with a link five times a day, and report on their mood and how much they'd used Facebook. The more they'd used Facebook, the unhappier they felt, but feeling unhappy did not subsequently lead to more Facebook use.

Social-networking sites like Facebook promise to connect us to friends. But the portrait of iGen teens emerging from the data is one of a lonely, dislocated generation. Teens who visit social-networking sites every day but see their friends in person less frequently are the most likely to agree with the statements "A lot of times I feel lonely," "I often feel left out of things," and "I often wish I had more good friends." Teens' feelings of loneliness spiked in 2013 and have remained high since.

This doesn't always mean that, on an individual level, kids who spend more time online are lonelier than kids who spend less time online. Teens who spend more time on social media also spend more time with their friends in person, on average—highly social teens are more social in both venues, and less social teens are less so. But at the generational level, when teens spend more time on smartphones and less time on in-person social interactions, loneliness is more common.

So is depression. Once again, the effect of screen activities is unmistakable: The more time teens spend looking at screens, the more likely they are to report symptoms of depression.

Eighth-graders who are heavy users of social media increase their risk of depression by 27 percent, while those who play sports, go to religious services, or even do homework more than the average teen cut their risk significantly.

Teens who spend three hours a day or more on electronic devices are 35 percent more likely to have a risk factor for suicide, such as making a suicide plan. (That's much more than the risk related to, say, watching TV.) One piece of data that indirectly but stunningly captures kids' growing isolation, for good and for bad: Since 2007, the homicide rate among teens has declined, but the suicide rate has increased. As teens have started spending less time together, they have become less likely to kill one another, and more likely to kill themselves. In 2011, for the first time in 24 years, the teen suicide rate was higher than the teen homicide rate.

Depression and suicide have many causes; too much technology is clearly not the only one. And the teen suicide rate was even higher in the 1990s, long before smartphones existed. Then again, about four times as many Americans now take antidepressants, which are often effective in treating severe depression, the type most strongly linked to suicide.

What's the connection between smartphones and the apparent psychological distress this generation is experiencing? For all their power to link kids day and night, social media also exacerbate the age-old teen concern about being left out. Today's teens may go to fewer parties and spend less time together in person, but when they do congregate, they document their hangouts relentlessly—on Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook. Those not invited to come along are keenly aware of it. Accordingly, the number of teens who feel left out has

reached all-time highs across age groups. Like the increase in loneliness, the upswing in feeling left out has been swift and significant.

This trend has been especially steep among girls. Forty-eight percent more girls said they often felt left out in 2015 than in 2010, compared with 27 percent more boys. Girls use social media more often, giving them additional opportunities to feel excluded and lonely when they see their friends or classmates getting together without them. Social media levy a psychic tax on the teen doing the posting as well, as she anxiously awaits the affirmation of comments and likes. When Athena posts pictures to Instagram, she told me, “I’m nervous about what people think and are going to say. It sometimes bugs me when I don’t get a certain amount of likes on a picture.”

Girls have also borne the brunt of the rise in depressive symptoms among today’s teens. Boys’ depressive symptoms increased by 21 percent from 2012 to 2015, while girls’ increased by 50 percent—more than twice as much. The rise in suicide, too, is more pronounced among girls. Although the rate increased for both sexes, three times as many 12-to-14-year-old girls killed themselves in 2015 as in 2007, compared with twice as many boys. The suicide rate is still higher for boys, in part because they use more-lethal methods, but girls are beginning to close the gap.

These more dire consequences for teenage girls could also be rooted in the fact that they’re more likely to experience cyberbullying. Boys tend to bully one another physically, while girls are more likely to do so by undermining a victim’s social status or relationships. Social media give middle- and high-school girls a platform on which to carry out the style of

aggression they favor, ostracizing and excluding other girls around the clock.

Social-media companies are of course aware of these problems, and to one degree or another have endeavored to prevent cyberbullying. But their various motivations are, to say the least, complex. A recently leaked Facebook document indicated that the company had been touting to advertisers its ability to determine teens’ emotional state based on their on-site behavior, and even to pinpoint “moments when young people need a confidence boost.” Facebook acknowledged that the document was real, but denied that it offers “tools to target people based on their emotional state.”

In July 2014, a 13-year-old girl in North Texas woke to the smell of something burning. Her phone had overheated and melted into the sheets. National news outlets picked up the story, stoking readers’ fears that their cellphone might spontaneously combust. To me, however, the flaming cellphone wasn’t the only surprising aspect of the story. Why, I wondered, would anyone sleep with her phone beside her in bed? It’s not as though you can surf the web while you’re sleeping. And who could slumber deeply inches from a buzzing phone?

Curious, I asked my undergraduate students at San Diego State University what they do with their phone while they sleep. Their answers were a profile in obsession. Nearly all slept with their phone, putting it under their pillow, on the mattress, or at the very least within arm’s reach of the bed. They checked social media right before they went to sleep, and reached for their phone as soon as they woke up in the morning (they had to—all of them used it as their alarm clock). Their phone was the last thing they saw before they went to sleep and the first

thing they saw when they woke up. If they woke in the middle of the night, they often ended up looking at their phone. Some used the language of addiction. “I know I shouldn’t, but I just can’t help it,” one said about looking at her phone while in bed. Others saw their phone as an extension of their body—or even like a lover: “Having my phone closer to me while I’m sleeping is a comfort.”

It may be a comfort, but the smartphone is cutting into teens’ sleep: Many now sleep less than seven hours most nights. Sleep experts say that teens should get about nine hours of sleep a night; a teen who is getting less than seven hours a night is significantly sleep deprived. Fifty-seven percent more teens were sleep deprived in 2015 than in 1991. In just the four years from 2012 to 2015, 22 percent more teens failed to get seven hours of sleep.

The increase is suspiciously timed, once again starting around when most teens got a smartphone. Two national surveys show that teens who spend three or more hours a day on electronic devices are 28 percent more likely to get less than seven hours of sleep than those who spend fewer than three hours, and teens who visit social-media sites every day are 19 percent more likely to be sleep deprived. A meta-analysis of studies on electronic-device use among children found similar results: Children who use a media device right before bed are more likely to sleep less than they should, more likely to sleep poorly, and more than twice as likely to be sleepy during the day.

Electronic devices and social media seem to have an especially strong ability to disrupt sleep. Teens who read books and magazines more often than the average are actually slightly

less likely to be sleep deprived—either reading lulls them to sleep, or they can put the book down at bedtime. Watching TV for several hours a day is only weakly linked to sleeping less. But the allure of the smartphone is often too much to resist.

Sleep deprivation is linked to myriad issues, including compromised thinking and reasoning, susceptibility to illness, weight gain, and high blood pressure. It also affects mood: People who don’t sleep enough are prone to depression and anxiety. Again, it’s difficult to trace the precise paths of causation. Smartphones could be causing lack of sleep, which leads to depression, or the phones could be causing depression, which leads to lack of sleep. Or some other factor could be causing both depression and sleep deprivation to rise. But the smartphone, its blue light glowing in the dark, is likely playing a nefarious role.

The correlations between depression and smartphone use are strong enough to suggest that more parents should be telling their kids to put down their phone. As the technology writer Nick Bilton has reported, it’s a policy some Silicon Valley executives follow. Even Steve Jobs limited his kids’ use of the devices he brought into the world.

What’s at stake isn’t just how kids experience adolescence. The constant presence of smartphones is likely to affect them well into adulthood. Among people who suffer an episode of depression, at least half become depressed again later in life. Adolescence is a key time for developing social skills; as teens spend less time with their friends face-to-face, they have fewer opportunities to practice them. In the next decade, we may

see more adults who know just the right emoji for a situation, but not the right facial expression.

I realize that restricting technology might be an unrealistic demand to impose on a generation of kids so accustomed to being wired at all times. My three daughters were born in 2006, 2009, and 2012. They're not yet old enough to display the traits of iGen teens, but I have already witnessed firsthand just how ingrained new media are in their young lives. I've observed my toddler, barely old enough to walk, confidently swiping her way through an iPad. I've experienced my 6-year-old asking for her own cellphone. I've overheard my 9-year-old discussing the latest app to sweep the fourth grade. Prying the phone out of our kids' hands will be difficult, even more so than the quixotic efforts of my parents' generation to get their kids to turn off MTV and get some fresh air. But more seems to be at stake in urging teens to use their phone responsibly, and there are benefits to be gained even if all we instill in our children is the importance of moderation. Significant effects on both mental health and sleep time appear after two or more hours a day on electronic devices. The average teen spends about two and a half hours a day on electronic devices. Some mild boundary-setting could keep kids from falling into harmful habits.

In my conversations with teens, I saw hopeful signs that kids themselves are beginning to link some of their troubles to their ever-present phone. Athena told me that when she does spend time with her friends in person, they are often looking at their device instead of at her. "I'm trying to talk to them about something, and they don't actually look at my face," she said. "They're looking at their phone, or they're looking at their

Apple Watch." "What does that feel like, when you're trying to talk to somebody face-to-face and they're not looking at you?," I asked. "It kind of hurts," she said. "It hurts. I know my parents' generation didn't do that. I could be talking about something super important to me, and they wouldn't even be listening."

Once, she told me, she was hanging out with a friend who was texting her boyfriend. "I was trying to talk to her about my family, and what was going on, and she was like, 'Uh-huh, yeah, whatever.'" So I took her phone out of her hands and I threw it at my wall."

I couldn't help laughing. "You play volleyball," I said. "Do you have a pretty good arm?" "Yep," she replied.

Sound of Silence

- Simon and Garfunkel

Hello darkness, my old friend
I've come to talk with you again
Because a vision softly creeping
Left its seeds while I was sleeping
And the vision that was planted in my brain
Still remains
Within the sound of silence

In restless dreams I walked alone
Narrow streets of cobblestone
'Neath the halo of a street lamp
I turned my collar to the cold and damp
When my eyes were stabbed by the flash of a neon light
That split the night
And touched the sound of silence

And in the naked light I saw
Ten thousand people, maybe more
People talking without speaking

People hearing without listening
People writing songs that voices never share
No one dared
Disturb the sound of silence

"Fools" said I, "You do not know
Silence like a cancer grows
Hear my words that I might teach you
Take my arms that I might reach you"
But my words like silent raindrops fell
And echoed in the wells of silence

And the people bowed and prayed
To the neon god they made
And the sign flashed out its warning
In the words that it was forming

And the sign said: "The words of the prophets
Are written on the subway walls
And tenement halls"
And whispered in the sound of silence.

The Life Hanging at the Butcher's

- Basudeb Sunani

Life hangs on the roadside
from butchers' ugly hooks:
severed chunks of goats' flesh
dripping blood, droning flies.

One asks for a quarker kilo
of his dream liver at a higher price,
another pleads for a kilo
of his heart's hopes,
someone else wants two kilos
of memory's loins,
and one or two linger on
for a cheap half-kilo
of possibility's intestines.

Dear Time's butcher:
give each one what he wants
satisfy everyone's needs
or whatever everyone orders.

I have no fear at all
waiting for fossils to form
on the moss of hanging principles
from the torn tiles of my mud shack
or to be caught
in the falcon's powerful claws
in the corrupt practices
that drift on freely in our skies.

Because the dead fish lying on the bank
has no need of any kind
for the murmuring water flowing by
and not even a little right too
for the traveller who has missed his train
already in the distance
puffing his smoke into the air.

Translated by Jayanta Mahapatra

How to Watch TV News

When a television news show distorts the truth by altering or manufacturing facts (through re-creations), a television viewer is defenseless even if a recreation is properly labeled. Viewers are still vulnerable to misinformation since they will not know (at least in the case of docudramas) what parts are fiction and what parts are not. But the problems of verisimilitude posed by recreations pale to insignificance when compared to the problems viewers face when encountering a straight (no-monkey-business) show. All news shows, in a sense, are re-creations in that what we hear and see on them are attempts to represent actual events, and are not the events themselves. Perhaps, to avoid ambiguity, we might call all news shows “re-presentations” instead of “re-creations”. These re-presentations come to us in two forms : language and pictures. The question then arises : what do viewers have to know about language and pictures in order to be properly armed to defend themselves against the seductions of eloquence’ (to use Bertrand Russell’s apt phrase)?...

Let us look at the problem of pictures. It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Maybe so. But it is probably equally true that one word is worth a thousand pictures, at least sometimes-for example, when it comes to understanding the world we live in. Indeed, the whole problem

with news on television comes down to this : all the words uttered in an hour of news coverage could be printed on one page of a newspaper. And the world cannot be understood in one page. Of course, there is a compensation: television offers pictures, and the pictures move. Moving pictures are a kind of language in themselves, but the language of pictures differs radically from oral and written language, and the differences are crucial for understanding television news.

To begin with, pictures, especially single pictures, speak only in particularities. Their vocabulary is limited to concrete representation. Unlike words and sentences, a picture does not present to us an idea or concept about the world, except as we use language itself to convert the image to idea. By itself, a picture cannot deal with the unseen, the remote, the internal, the abstract. It does not speak of “man”, only of a man; not of “tree”, only of a tree. You cannot produce an image of “nature”, any more than an image of “the sea”. You can only show a particular fragment of the here-and-now-a cliff of a certain terrain, in a certain condition of light; a wave at a moment in time, from a particular point of view. And just as “nature” and the “the sea” cannot be photographed, such larger abstractions as truth, honor, love, and falsehood cannot be talked about in the lexicon of individual pictures. For “showing of” and “talking about” are two very different kinds of processes: individual pictures give us the word as object; language, the world as idea. There is no such thing in nature as “man” or “tree.” The universe offers no such categories or simplifications; only flux and infinite variety. The picture documents and celebrates the particularities of the universe’s infinite variety. Language makes them comprehensible.

Of course, moving pictures, video with sound, may bridge the gap by juxtaposing images, symbols, sound, and music. Such images can present emotions and rudimentary ideas. They can suggest the panorama of nature and the joys and miseries of humankind.

Picture-smoke pouring from the window, cut to people coughing, an ambulance racing to a hospital, a tombstone in a cemetery.

Picture-jet planes firing rockets, explosions, lines of foreign soldiers surrendering, the American flag waving in the wind.

Nonetheless, keep in mind that when terrorists want to prove to the world that their kidnap victims are still alive, they photograph them holding a copy of a recent newspaper. The dateline on the newspaper provides the proof that the photograph was taken on or after that date. Without the help of the written word, film and videotape cannot portray temporal dimensions with any precision. Consider a film clip showing an aircraft carrier at sea. One might be able to identify the ship as Soviet or American, but there would be no way of telling where in the world the carrier was, where it was headed, or when the pictures were taken. It is only through language-words spoken over the pictures or reproduced in them-that the image of the aircraft carrier takes on specific meaning.

Still, it is possible to enjoy the image of the carrier for its own sake. One might find the hugeness of the vessel interesting; it signifies military power on the move. There is a certain drama in watching the planes come in at high speeds and skid to a stop on the deck. Suppose the ship were burning; that would be even more interesting. This leads to an important point about the language of pictures. Moving pictures favor images

that change. That is why violence and dynamic destruction find their way onto television so often. When something is destroyed violently it is altered in a highly visible way; hence the entrancing power of fire, Fire gives visual form to the ideas of consumption, disappearance, death-the thing that burned is actually taken away by fire. It is at this very basic level that fires make good subject for television news. Something was here, now it's gone, and the change is recorded on film.

Earthquakes and typhoons have the same power. Before the viewer's eyes the world is taken apart. If a television viewer has relatives in Mexico City and an earthquake occurs there, then he or she may take a special interest in the images of destruction as a report from a specific place and time; that is, one may look at television pictures for information about an important event. But film of an earthquake can be interesting even if the viewer cares nothing about the event itself. Which is only to say, as we noted earlier, that there is another way of participating in the news-as a spectator who desires to be entertained. Actually to see buildings topple is exciting, no matter where the buildings are. The world turns to dust before our eyes.

Those who produce television news in America know that their medium favors images that move. That is why they are wary of "talking heads," people who simply appear in front of a camera and speak. When talking heads appear on television, there is nothing to record or document, no change in process. In the cinema the situation is somewhat different. On a movie screen, closeups of a good actor speaking dramatically can sometimes be interesting to watch. When Clint Eastwood narrows his eyes and challenges his rival to shoot first, the

spectator sees the cool rage of the Eastwood character take visual form, and the narrowing of the eyes is dramatic. But much of the effect of this small movement depends on the size of the movie screen and the darkness of the theatre, which make Eastwood and his every action “larger than life.”

The television screen is smaller than life. It occupies about 15 percent of the viewer’s visual field (compared to about 70 percent of the movie screen). It is not set in a darkened theatre closed off from the world but in the viewer’s ordinary living space. This means that visual changes must be more extreme and more dramatic to be interesting on television. A narrowing of the eyes will not do. A car crash, an earthquake, a burning factory are much better.

With these principles in mind, let us examine more closely the structure of a typical newscast, and here we will include in the discussion not only the pictures but all the nonlinguistic symbols that make up a television news show. For example, in America, almost all news shows begin with music, the tone of which suggests important events about to unfold. The music is very important, for it equates the news with various forms of drama and ritual—the opera, for example, or a wedding procession—in which musical themes underscore the meaning of the event. Music takes us immediately into the realm of the symbolic, a world that is not to be taken literally. After all, when events unfold in the real world, they do so without musical accompaniment. More symbolism follows. The sound of teletype machines can be heard in the studio, not because it is impossible to screen this noise out, but because the sound is a kind of music in itself. It tells us that data are pouring in from all corners of the globe, a sensation reinforced by the

world map in the background (or clocks noting the time on different continents). The fact is that teletype machines are rarely used in TV news rooms, having been replaced by silent computer terminals. When seen, they have only a symbolic function.

Already, then, before a single news item is introduced, a great deal has been communicated. We know that in the presence of a symbolic event a form of theater in which the day’s events are to be dramatized. This theater takes the entire globe as its subject, although it may look at the world from the perspective of a single nation. A certain tension is present, like the atmosphere in a theatre just before the curtain goes up. The tension is represented by the music, the staccato beat of the teletype machines, and often the sight of news workers scurrying around typing reports and answering phones. As a technical matter, it would be no problem to build a set in which the newsroom staff remained off camera, invisible to the viewer, but an important theatrical effect would be lost. By being busy on camera, the workers help communicate urgency about the events at hand, which suggests that situations are changing so rapidly that constant revision of the news is necessary.

The staff in the background also helps signal the importance of the person in the center, the anchor, “in command” of both the staff and the news. The anchor plays the role of host. He or she welcomes us to the newscast and welcomes us back from the different locations we visit during the filmed reports.

Many features of the newscast help the anchor to establish the impression of control. These are usually equated with production values in broadcasting. They include such things

as graphics that tell the viewer what is being shown, or maps and charts that suddenly appear on the screen and disappear on cue, or the orderly progression from story to story. They also include the absence of gaps, or “dead time,” during the broadcast, even the simple fact that the news starts and ends at a certain hour. These common features are thought of as purely technical matters, which a professional crew handles as a matter of course. But they are also symbols of a dominant theme of television news: the imposition of an orderly word-called “the news”-upon the disorderly flow of events.

While the form of a news broadcast emphasizes tidiness and control, its content can best be described as fragmented. Because time is so precious on television, because the nature of the medium favors dynamic visual images, and because the pressures of a commercial structure require the news to hold its audience above all else, there is rarely any attempt to explain issues in depth or place events in their proper context. The news moves nervously from a warehouse fire to a court decision, from a guerrilla war to a World Cup match, the quality of the film most often determining the length of the story. Certain stories show up only because they offer dramatic pictures. Bleachers collapse in South America: hundreds of people are crushed—a perfect television news story, for the cameras can record the face of disaster in all its anguish. Back in Washington, a new budget is approved by Congress. Here there is nothing to photograph because a budget is not a physical event; it is a document full of language and numbers. So the procedures of the news will show a photo of the document itself, focusing on the cover where it says “Budget of the United States of America.” Or sometimes they will send a camera crew to the government printing plant where copies

of the budget are produced. That evening, while the contents of the budget are summarized by a voice-over, the viewer sees stacks of documents being loaded into boxes at the government printing plant. Then a few of the budget’s more important provisions will be flashed on the screen in written form, but this is such a time-consuming process—using television as a printed page—that the producers keep it to a minimum. In short, the budget is not televisable, and for that reason its time on the news must be brief. The bleacher collapse will get more time that evening.

While appearing somewhat chaotic, these disparate stories are not just dropped in the news program helter-skelter. The appearance of a scattershot story order is really orchestrated to draw the audience from one story to the next—from one section to the next—through the commercial breaks to the end of the show. The story order is constructed to hold and build the viewership rather than place events in context or explain issues in depth.

Of course, it is a tendency of journalism in general to concentrate on the surface of events rather than underlying conditions; this is as true for the newspaper as it is for the newscast. But several features of television undermine whatever efforts journalists may make to give sense to the world. One is that a television broadcast is a series of events that occur in sequence, and the sequence is the same for all viewers. This is not true for a newspaper page, which displays many items simultaneously, allowing readers to choose the order in which they read them. If newspaper readers want only a summary of the latest tax bill, they can read the headline and the first paragraph of an article, and if they want more, they can keep

reading. In a sense, then, everyone reads a different newspaper, for no two readers will read (or ignore) the same items.

But all television viewers see the same broadcast. They have no choices. A report is either in the broadcast or out, which means that anything which is of narrow interest is unlikely to be included. As NBC News executive Reuven Frank once explained.

A newspaper, for example, can easily afford to print an item of conceivable interest to only a fraction of its readers. A television news program must be put together with the assumption that each item will be of some interest to everyone that watches. Every time a newspaper includes a feature which will attract a specialized group it can assume it is adding at least a little bit to its circulation. To the degree a television news program includes an item of this sort... it must assume that its audience will diminish.

The need to “include everyone,” an identifying feature of commercial television in all its forms, prevents journalists from offering lengthy or complex lines. One of the ironies of political life in modern democracies is that many problems which concern the “general welfare” are of interest only to specialized groups. Arms control, for example, is an issue that literally concerns everyone in the world, and yet the language of arms control and the complexity of the subject are so daunting that only a minority of people can actually follow the issue from week to week and month to month. If it wants to act responsibly, a newspaper can at least make available more information about arms control than most people want. Commercial television cannot afford to do so.

But even if commercial television could afford to do so, it wouldn't. The fact that television news is principally made up of moving pictures it from prevents it from offering lengthy, coherent explanations of events. A television news show reveals not to be expected to offer a sense of coherence or meaning. What does this suggest to a TV viewer? That the viewer must come with a prepared mind-information, opinions, a sense of proportion, an articulate value system. To the TV viewer lacking such mental equipment, a news program is only a kind of rousing light show. Here a falling building, there a five-alarm fire, everywhere in the world as an object, much without meaning, connections, or continuity.

Shooting an Elephant

- George Orwell

In Moulmein, in Lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people - the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this happen to me. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town, and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me up on the football field and the referee (another Burman) looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter. This happened more than once. In the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me when I was at a safe distance, got badly on my nerves. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans.

All this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it

the better. Theoretically - and secretly, of course - I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos - all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. I was young and ill-educated and I had had to think out my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it. All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in *saecula saeculorum*, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are the normal by-products of imperialism; ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty.

One day something happened which in a roundabout way was enlightening. It was a tiny incident in itself, but it gave me a better glimpse than I had had before of the real nature of imperialism - the real motives for which despotic governments act. Early one morning the sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the phone and said that an elephant was ravaging the bazaar.

Would I please come and do something about it? I did not know what I could do, but I wanted to see what was happening and I got on to a pony and started out. I took my rifle, an old .44 Winchester and much too small to kill an elephant, but I thought the noise might be useful in *terrorem*. Various Burmans stopped me on the way and told me about the elephant's doings. It was not, of course, a wild elephant, but a tame one which had gone "must". It had been chained up, as tame elephants always are when their attack of "must" is due, but on the previous night it had broken its chain and escaped. Its mahout, the only person who could manage it when it was in that state, had set out in pursuit, but he had taken the wrong direction and was now twelve hours' journey away, and in the morning the elephant had suddenly reappeared in the town. The Burmese population had no weapons and were quite helpless against it. It had already destroyed somebody's bamboo hut, killed a cow and raided some fruit-stalls and devoured the stock; also it had met the municipal rubbish van and when the driver jumped out and took to his heels, had turned the van over and inflicted violence upon it.

The Burmese sub-inspector and some Indian constables were waiting for me in the quarter where the elephant had been seen. It was a very poor quarter, a labyrinth of squalid bamboo huts, thatched with palmleaf, winding all over a steep hillside. I remember that it was a cloudy, stuffy morning at the beginning of the rains. We began questioning the people as to where the elephant had gone, and, as usual, failed to get any definite information. That is invariably the case in the East; a story always sounds clear enough at a distance, but the nearer you get to the scene of events the vaguer it becomes. Some of the people said that the elephant had gone in one direction,

some said that he had gone in another, some professed not even to have heard of any elephant. I had almost made up my mind that the whole story was a pack of lies, when we heard yells a little distance away. There was a loud, scandalized cry of "Go away, child! Go away this instant!" and an old woman with a switch in her hand came round the corner of a hut, violently shooing away a crowd of naked children. Some more women followed, clicking their tongues and exclaiming; evidently there was something there that the children ought not to have seen. I rounded the hut and saw a man's dead body sprawling in the mud. He was an Indian, a black Dravidian coolie, almost naked, and he could not have been dead many minutes. The people said that the elephant had come suddenly upon him round the corner of the hut, caught him with its trunk, put his foot on his back and ground him into the earth. This was the rainy season and the ground was soft, and his face had scored a trench a foot deep and a couple of yards long. He was lying on his belly with arms crucified and head sharply twisted to one side. His face was coated with mud, the eyes wide open, the teeth bared and grinning with an expression of unendurable agony. (Never tell me, by the way, that the dead look peaceful. Most of the corpses I have seen looked devilish.) The friction of the great beast's foot had stripped the skin from his back as neatly as one skins a rabbit. As soon as I saw the dead man I sent an orderly to a friend's house nearby to borrow an elephant rifle. I had already sent back the pony, not wanting it to go mad with fright and throw me if it smelt the elephant.

The orderly came back in a few minutes with a rifle and five cartridges, and meanwhile some Burmans had arrived and told us that the elephant was in the paddy fields below, only a

few hundred yards away. As I started forward practically the whole population of the quarter flocked out of their houses and followed me. They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to shoot the elephant. They had not shown much interest in the elephant when he was merely ravaging their homes, but it was different now that he was going to be shot. It was a bit of fun to them, as it would be to an English crowd; besides, they wanted the meat. It made me vaguely uneasy. I had no intention of shooting the elephant - I had merely sent for the rifle to defend myself if necessary - and it is always unnerving to have a crowd following you. I marched down the hill, looking and feeling a fool, with the rifle over my shoulder and an ever-growing army of people jostling at my heels. At the bottom, when you got away from the huts, there was a metalled road and beyond that a miry waste of paddy fields a thousand yards across, not yet ploughed but soggy from the first rains and dotted with coarse grass. The elephant was standing eight yards from the road, his left side towards us. He took not the slightest notice of the crowd's approach. He was tearing up bunches of grass, beating them against his knees to clean them and stuffing them into his mouth.

I had halted on the road. As soon as I saw the elephant I knew with perfect certainty that I ought not to shoot him. It is a serious matter to shoot a working elephant - it is comparable to destroying a huge and costly piece of machinery - and obviously one ought not to do it if it can possibly be avoided. And at that distance, peacefully eating, the elephant looked no more dangerous than a cow. I thought then and I think now that his attack of "must" was already passing off, in which case he would merely wander harmlessly about until the

mahout came back and caught him. Moreover, I did not in the least want to shoot him. I decided that I would watch him for a little while to make sure that he did not turn savage again, and then go home.

But at that moment I glanced around at the crowd that had followed me. It was an immense crowd, two thousand at the least and growing every minute. It blocked the road for a long distance on either side. I looked at the sea of yellow faces above the garish clothes-faces all happy and excited over this bit of fun, all certain that the elephant was going to be shot. They were watching me as they would watch a conjurer about to perform a trick. They did not like me, but with the magical rifle in my hands I was momentarily worth watching. And suddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly. And it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd - seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the "natives" and so in every crisis he has got to do what the "natives" expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib;

he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing-no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.

But I did not want to shoot the elephant. I watched him beating his bunch of grass against his knees, with that preoccupied grandmotherly air that elephants have. It seemed to me that it would be murder to shoot him. At that age I was not squeamish about killing animals, but I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to. (Somehow it always seems worse to kill a large animal.) Besides, there was the beast's owner to be considered. Alive, the elephant was worth at least a hundred pounds; dead, he would only be worth the value of his tusks, five pounds, possibly. But I had got to act quickly. I turned to some experienced-looking Burmans who had been there when we arrived, and asked them how the elephant had been behaving. They all said the same thing : he took no notice of you if you left him alone, but he might charge if you went too close to him.

It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to within, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behavior. If he charged, I could shoot; if he took no notice of me, it would be safe to leave him until the mahout came back. But also I knew that I was going to do no such thing. I was a poor shot with a rifle and the ground was soft mud into which one would sink at every step. If the elephant charged and I missed him, I should have about as much chance as a toad under a steam-roller. But even then I was not thinking

particularly of my own skin, only of the watchful yellow faces behind. For at that moment, with the crowd watching me, I was not afraid in the ordinary sense, as I would have been if I had been alone. A white man mustn't be frightened in front of "natives"; and so, in general, he isn't frightened. The sole thought in my mind was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would see me pursued, caught, trampled on and reduced to a grinning corpse like that Indian up the hill. And if that happened it was quite probable that some of them would laugh. That would never do. There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim.

The crowd grew very still, and a deep, low, happy sigh, as of people who see the theatre curtain go up at last, breathed from innumerable throats. They were going to have their bit of fun after all. The rifle was a beautiful German thing with cross-hair sights. I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one would shoot to cut an imaginary bar running from ear-hole to ear-hole. I ought, therefore, as the elephant was sideways on, to have aimed straight at his ear-hole, actually I aimed several inches in front of this, thinking the brain would be further forward.

When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick - one never does when a shot goes home - but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly strickern, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet

had paralysed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time-it might have been five seconds, I dare say-he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed for a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him he seemed to tower upward like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skyward like a tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time. And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

I got up. The Burmans were already racing past me across the mud. It was obvious that the elephant would never rise again, but he was not dead. He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling. His mouth was wide open - I could see far down into caverns of pale pink throat. I waited a long time for him to die, but his breathing did not weaken. Finally I fired my two remaining shots into the spot where I thought his heart must be. The thick blood welled out of him like red velvet, but still he did not die. His body did not even jerk when the shots hit him, the tortured breathing continued without a pause. He was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet would damage him further. I felt that I had got to put an end to that dreadful noise. It seemed dreadful to see the great beast lying

there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. I sent back for my small rifle and poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat. They seemed to make no impression. The tortured gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock.

In the end I could not stand it any longer and went away. I heard later that it took him half an hour to die. Burmans were arriving with dahs and baskets even before I left, and I was told they had stripped his body almost to the bones by the afternoon.

Afterwards, of course, there were endless discussions about the shooting of the elephant. The owner was furious, but he was only an Indian and could do nothing. Besides, legally I had done the right thing, for a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner fails to control it. Among the Europeans opinion was divided. The older men said I was right, the younger men said it was a damn shame to shoot an elephant for killing a coolie, because an elephant was worth more than any damn Coringhee coolie. And afterwards I was very glad that the coolie had been killed; it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant. I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool.

One Friday Morning

- Langston Hughes

The thrilling news did not come directly to Nancy Lee, but it came in little indirections that finally added themselves up to one tremendous fact: she had won the prize! But being a calm and quiet young lady, she did not say anything, although the whole high school buzzed with rumors, guesses, reportedly authentic announcements on the part of students who had no right to be making announcements at all—since no student really knew yet who had won this year's art scholarship.

But Nancy Lee's drawing was so good, her lines so sure, her colors so bright and harmonious, that certainly no other student in the senior art class at George Washington High was thought to have very much of a chance. Yet you never could tell. Last year nobody had expected Joe Williams to win the Artist Club scholarship with that funny modernistic water color he had done of the high-level bridge. In fact, it was hard to make out there was a bridge until you had looked at the picture a long time. Still, Joe Williams got the prize, was feted by the community's leading painters, club women, and society folks at a big banquet at the Park-Rose Hotel, and was now an award student at the Art School—the city's only art school.

Nancy Lee Johnson was a colored girl, a few years out of

the South. But seldom did her high-school classmates think of her as colored. She was smart, pretty and brown, and fitted in well with the life of the school. She stood high in scholarship, played a swell game of basketball, had taken part in the senior musical in a soft, velvety voice, and had never seemed to intrude or stand out, except in pleasant ways so it was seldom even mentioned—her color.

Nancy Lee sometimes forgot she was colored herself. She liked her classmates and her school. Particularly she like her art teacher, Miss Dietrich, the tall red-haired woman who taught her law and order in doing things; and the beauty of working step by step until a job is done; a picture finished; a design created; or a block print carved out of nothing but an idea and a smooth square of linoleum, inked, proofs made, and finally put down on paper—clean, sharp, beautiful, individual, unlike any other in the world, thus making the paper have a meaning nobody else could give it except Nancy Lee. That was the wonderful thing about true creation. You made something nobody else on earth could make—but you.

Miss Dietrich was the kind of teacher who brought out the best in her students—but their own best, not anybody else's copied best. For anybody else's best, great though it might be, even Michelangelo's, wasn't enough to please Miss Dietrich, dealing with the creative impulses of young men and women living in an American city in the Middle West, and being American.

Nancy Lee was proud of being American, a Negro American with blood out of Africa a long time ago, too many generations back to count. But her parents had taught her the beauties of Africa, its strength, its song, its mighty rivers, its

early smelting of iron, its building of the pyramids, and its ancient and important civilizations. And Miss Dietrich had discovered for her the sharp and humorous lines of African sculpture, Benin, Congo, Makonde. Nancy Lee's father was a mail carrier, her mother a social worker in a city settlement house. Both parents had been to Negro colleges in the South. And her mother had gotten a further degree in social work from a Northern university. Her parents were, like most Americans, simple, ordinary people who had worked hard and steadily for their education. Now they were trying to make it easier for Nancy Lee to achieve learning than it had been for them. They would be very happy when they heard of the award to their daughter—yet Nancy did not tell them. To surprise them would be better. Besides, there had been a promise.

Casually one day, Miss Dietrich asked Nancy Lee what color frame she thought would be best on her picture. That had been the first inkling.

“Blue,” Nancy Lee said. Although the picture had been entered in the Artist Club contest a month ago, Nancy Lee did not hesitate in her choice of color for the possible frame, since she could still see her picture clearly in her mind's eye—for that picture waiting for the blue frame had come out of her soul, her own life, and had bloomed into miraculous being with Miss Dietrich's help. It was, she knew, the best water color she had painted in her four years as a high-school art student, and she was glad she had made something Miss Dietrich liked well enough to permit her to enter in the contest before she graduated.

It was not a modernistic picture in the sense that you had to look at it a long time to understand what it meant. It was

just a simple scene in the city park on a spring day with the trees still leaflessly lacy against the sky, the new grass fresh and green, a flag on a tall pole in the center, children playing, and an old Negro woman sitting on a bench with her head turned. A lot for one picture, to be sure, but it was not there in heavy and final detail like a calendar. Its charm was that everything was light and airy, happy like spring, with a lot of blue sky, paper-white clouds, and air showing through. You could tell that the old Negro woman was looking at the flag, and that the flag was proud in the spring breeze, and that the breeze helped to make the children's dresses billow as they played.

Miss Dietrich had taught Nancy Lee how to paint spring, people, and a breeze on what was only a plain white piece of paper from the supply closet. But Miss Dietrich had not said make it like any other spring-people-breeze ever seen before. She let it remain Nancy Lee's own. That is how the old Negro woman happened to be there looking at the flag—for in her mind the flag, the spring, and the woman formed a kind of triangle holding a dream Nancy Lee wanted to express. White stars on a blue field, spring, children, ever-growing life, and an old woman. Would the judges at the Artist Club like it?

One wet, rainy April afternoon Miss O'Shay, the girls' vice principal, sent for Nancy Lee to stop by her office as school closed. Pupils without umbrellas or raincoats were clustered in doorways hoping to make it home between showers. Outside the skies were gray. Nancy Lee's thoughts were suddenly gray, too.

She did not think she had done anything wrong, yet that tight little knot came in her throat just the same as she approached Miss O'Shay's door. Perhaps she had banged her

locker too often and too hard. Perhaps the note in French she had written to Sallie halfway across the study hall just for fun had never gotten to Sallie but into Miss O'Shay's hands instead. Or maybe she was failing in some subject and wouldn't be allowed to graduate. Chemistry! A pang went through the pit of her stomach.

She knocked on Miss O'Shay's door. That familiarly solid and competent voice said, "Come in."

Miss O'Shay had a way of making you feel welcome, even if you came to be expelled.

"Sit down, Nancy Lee Johnson," said Miss O'Shay. "I have something to tell you." Nancy Lee sat down. "But I must ask you to promise not to tell anyone yet."

"I won't, Miss O'Shay," Nancy Lee said, wondering what on earth the principal had to say to her.

"You are about to graduate," Miss O'Shay said. "And we shall miss you. You have been an excellent student, Nancy, and you will not be without honors on the senior list, as I am sure you know."

At that point there was a light knock on the door. Miss O'Shay called out, "Come in," and Miss Dietrich entered. "May I be part of this, too?" she asked, tall and smiling.

"Of course," Miss O'Shay said. "I was just telling Nancy Lee what we thought of her. But I hadn't gotten around to giving her the news. Perhaps, Miss Dietrich, you'd like to tell her yourself."

Miss Dietrich was always direct. "Nancy Lee," she said, "your picture has won the Artist Club scholarship."

The slender brown girl's eyes widened, her heart jumped, then her throat tightened again. She tried to smile, but instead tears came to her eyes.

"Dear Nancy Lee," Miss O'Shay said, "we are so happy for you." The elderly white woman took her hand and shook it warmly while Miss Dietrich beamed with pride.

Nancy Lee must have danced all the way home. She never remembered quite how she got there through the rain. She hoped she had been dignified. But certainly she hadn't stopped to tell anybody her secret on the way. Raindrops, smiles, and tears mingled on her brown cheeks. She hoped her mother hadn't yet gotten home and that the house was empty. She wanted to have time to calm down and look natural before she had to see anyone. She didn't want to be bursting with excitement—having a secret to contain.

Miss O'Shay's calling her to the office had been in the nature of a preparation and a warning. The kind, elderly vice-principal said she did not believe in catching young ladies unawares, even with honors, so she wished her to know about the coming award. In making acceptance speeches she wanted her to be calm, prepared, not nervous, overcome, and frightened. So Nancy Lee was asked to think what she would say when the scholarship was conferred upon her a few days hence, both at the Friday morning high-school assembly hour, when the announcement would be made, and at the evening banquet of the Artist Club. Nancy Lee promised the vice-principal to think calmly about what she would say.

Miss Dietrich had then asked for some facts about her parents, her background, and her life, since such material would probably be desired for the papers. Nancy Lee had told

her how, six years before, they had come up from the Deep South, her father having been successful in achieving a transfer from one post office to another, a thing he had long sought in order to give Nancy Lee a chance to go to school in the North. Now they lived in a modest Negro neighborhood, went to see the best plays when they came to town, and had been saving to send Nancy Lee to art school, in case she were permitted to enter. But the scholarship would help a great deal, for they were not rich people.

“Now Mother can have a new coat next winter,” Nancy Lee thought, “because my tuition will be covered for the first year. And once in art school, there are other scholarships I can win.”

Dreams began to dance through her head, plans and ambitions, beauties she would create for herself, her parents, and the Negro people—for Nancy Lee possessed a deep and reverent race pride. She could see the old woman in her picture (really her grandmother in the South) lifting her head to the bright stars on the flag in the distance. A Negro in America! Often hurt, discriminated against, sometimes lynched—but always there were the stars on the blue body of the flag. Was there any other flag in the world that had so many stars? Nancy Lee thought deeply but she could remember none in all the encyclopedias or geographies she had ever looked into.

“Hitch your wagon to a star,” Nancy Lee thought, dancing home in the rain. “Who were our flag-makers?”

Friday morning came, the morning when the world would know—her high-school world, the newspaper world, her mother and dad. Dad could not be there at the assembly to hear the announcement, nor see her prize picture displayed

on the stage, nor listen to Nancy Lee’s little speech of acceptance, but Mother would be able to come, although Mother was much puzzled as to why Nancy Lee was so insistent she be at school on that particular Friday morning.

When something is happening, something new and fine, something that will change your very life, it is hard to go to sleep at night for thinking about it, and hard to keep your heart from pounding, or a strange little knot of joy from gathering in your throat. Nancy Lee had taken her bath, brushed her hair until it glowed, and had gone to bed thinking about the next day, the big day when, before three thousand students, she would be the one student honored, her painting the one painting to be acclaimed as the best of the year from all the art classes of the city. Her short speech of gratitude was ready. She went over it in her mind, not word for word (because she didn’t want it to sound as if she had learned it by heart) but she let the thoughts flow simply and sincerely through her consciousness many times.

When the president of the Artist Club presented her with the medal and scroll of the scholarship award, she would say:

“Judges and members of the Artist Club. I want to thank you for this award that means so much to me personally and through me to my people, the colored people of this city who, sometimes, are discouraged and bewildered, thinking that color and poverty are against them. I accept this award with gratitude and pride, not for myself alone, but for my race that believes in American opportunity and American fairness—and the bright stars in our flag. I thank Miss Dietrich and the teachers who made it possible for me to have the knowledge and training that lie behind this honor you have conferred

upon my painting. When I came here from the South a few years ago, I was not sure how you would receive me. You received me well. You have given me a chance and helped me along the road I wanted to follow. I suppose the judges know that every week here at assembly the students of this school pledge allegiance to the flag. I shall try to be worthy of that pledge, and of the help and friendship and understanding of my fellow citizens of whatever race or creed, and of our American dream of 'Liberty and justice for all!'"

That would be her response before the students in the morning. How proud and happy the Negro pupils would be, perhaps almost as proud as they were of the one colored star on the football team. Her mother would probably cry with happiness. Thus Nancy Lee went to sleep dreaming of a wonderful tomorrow.

The bright sunlight of an April morning woke her. There was breakfast with her parents—their half-amused and puzzled faces across the table, wondering what could be this secret that made her eyes so bright. The swift walk to school; the clock in the tower almost nine; hundreds of pupils streaming into the long, rambling old building that was the city's largest high school; the sudden quiet of the homeroom after the bell rang; then the teacher opening her record book to call the roll. But just before she began, she looked across the room until her eyes located Nancy Lee.

"Nancy," she said, "Miss O'Shay would like to see you in her office, please."

Nancy Lee rose and went out while the names were being called and the word *present* added its period to each name. Perhaps, Nancy Lee thought, the reporters from the papers

had already come. Maybe they wanted to take her picture before assembly, which wasn't until ten o'clock. (Last year they had had the photograph of the winner of the award in the morning papers as soon as the announcement had been made.)

Nancy Lee knocked at Miss O'Shay's door.

"Come in."

The vice-principal stood at her desk. There was no one else in the room. It was very quiet.

"Sit down, Nancy Lee," she said. Miss O'Shay did not smile. There was a long pause. The seconds went by slowly. "I do not know how to tell you what I have to say," the elderly woman began, her eyes on the papers on her desk. "I am indignant and ashamed for myself and for this city." Then she lifted her eyes and looked at Nancy Lee in the neat blue dress sitting there before her. "You are not to receive the scholarship this morning."

Outside in the hall the electric bells announcing the first period rang, loud and interminably long. Miss O'Shay remained silent. To the brown girl there in the chair, the room grew suddenly smaller, smaller, smaller, and there was no air. She could not speak.

Miss O'Shay said, "When the committee learned that you were colored, they changed their plans."

Still Nancy Lee said nothing, for there was no air to give breath to her lungs.

"Here is the letter from the committee, Nancy Lee." Miss O'Shay picked it up and read the final paragraph to her.

"It seems to us wiser to arbitrarily rotate the award among

the various high schools of the city from now on. And especially in this case since the student chosen happens to be colored, a circumstance which unfortunately, had we known, might have prevented this embarrassment. But there have never been any Negro students in the local art school, and the presence of one there might create difficulties for all concerned. We have high regard for the quality for Nancy Lee Johnson's talent, but we do not feel it would be fair to honor it with the Artist Club award." Miss O'Shay paused. She put the letter down.

"Nancy Lee, I am very sorry to have to give you this message."

"But my speech," Nancy Lee said, "was about . . ." The words stuck in her throat.

". . . about America."

Miss O'Shay had risen, she turned her back and stood looking out the window at the spring tulips in the school yard.

"I thought, since the award would be made at assembly right after our oath of allegiance," the words tumbled almost hysterically from Nancy Lee's throat now, "I would put part of the flag salute in my speech. You know, Miss O'Shay, that part of 'liberty and justice for all.'"

"I know," said Miss O'Shay slowly facing the room again. "But America is only what we who believe in it make it. I am Irish. You may not know, Nancy Lee, but years ago we were called the dirty Irish, and mobs rioted against us in the big cities, and we were invited to go back where we came from. But we didn't go. And we didn't give up, because we believed in the American dream, and in our power to make that dream come true. Difficulties, yes. Mountains to climb, yes.

Discouragements to face, yes. Democracy to make, yes. That is it, Nancy Lee! We still have in this world of ours democracy to *make*. You and I, Nancy Lee. But the premise and the base are here, the lines of the Declaration of Independence and the words of Lincoln are here, and the stars in our flag. Those who deny you this scholarship do not know the meaning of those stars, but it's up to us to make them know. As a teacher in the public schools of this city, I myself will go before the school board and ask them to remove from our system the offer of any prizes or awards denied to any student because of race or color."

Suddenly Miss O'Shay stopped speaking. Her clear, clear blue eyes looked into those of the girl before her. The woman's eyes were full of strength and courage. "Lift up your head, Nancy Lee, and smile at me."

Miss O'Shay stood against the open window with the green lawn and the tulips beyond, the sunlight tangled in her gray hair, her voice an electric flow of strength to the hurt spirit of Nancy Lee. The Abolitionists who believed in freedom when there was slavery must have been like that. The first white teachers who went into the Deep South to teach the freed slaves must have been like that. All those who stand against ignorance, narrowness, hate, and mud on stars must be like that.

Nancy Lee lifted her head and smiled. The bell for assembly rang. She went through the long hall filled with students toward the auditorium.

"There will be other awards," Nancy Lee thought. "There're schools in other cities. This won't keep me down. But when I'm a woman, I'll fight to see that these things don't

happen to other girls as this has happened to me. And men and women like Miss O'Shay will help me.”

She took her seat among the seniors. The doors of the auditorium closed. As the principal came onto the platform, the students rose and turned their eyes to the flag on the stage.

One hand went to the heart, the other outstretched toward the flag. Three thousand voices spoke. Among them was the voice of a dark girl whose cheeks were suddenly wet with tears, “. . . one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

“That is the land we must make,” she thought.

The Forum

- William Shakespeare

Enter BRUTUS and CASSIUS, and a throng of Citizens

Citizens : We will be satisfied; let us be satisfied.

Brutus : Then follow me, and give me audience, friends.

Cassius, go you into the other street

And part the numbers.

Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here;

Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;

And public reasons shall be rendered

of Caesar's death.

First Citizen : I will hear Brutus speak.

Second Citizen : I will hear Cassius; and compare their reasons

When severally we hear them rendered.

[Exit Cassius, with some of the Citizens. Brutus goes into the pulpit]

Third Citizen : The noble Brutus is ascended: silence!

Brutus : Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my

cause, and be silent, that you may hear: Believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe: Censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him, I say, that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his. If, then, that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men? As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him, but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love, joy for his fortune, honour for his valour, and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak, for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak, for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

Citizens : None, Brutus, none.

Brutus : Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Caesar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol, his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy, nor his offences enforced for which he suffered death.

Enter Antony and others, with CAESAR's body

Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony: who, though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth; as which of you shall not? With this I depart,--that, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death.

Citizens : Live, Brutus! live, live!

First Citizen : Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

Second Citizen : Give him a statue with his ancestors.

Third Citizen : Let him be Caesar.

Fourth Citizen : Caesar's better parts shall be crown'd in Brutus.

First Citizen : We'll bring him to his house with shouts and clamours.

Brutus : My countrymen -

Second Citizen : Peace, silence! Brutus speaks!

First Citizen : Peace, ho!

Brutus : Good countrymen, let me depart alone,
And, for my sake stay here with Antony.
Do grace to Caesar's corpse, and grace his speech
Tending to Caesar's glories; which Mark Antony,
By our permission, is allow'd to make.
I do entreat you, not a man depart,
Save I alone, till Antony have spoke.

[*Exit*

First Citizen : Stay, ho! and let us hear Mark Antony.

Third Citizen : Let him go up into the public chair,
We'll hear him. Noble Antony, go up.

Antony : For Brutus' sake, I am beholding to you.
[*Goes up into the pulpit.*]

Fourth Citizen : What does he say of Brutus?

Third Citizen : He says, for Brutus' sake,
He finds himself beholding to us all.

Fourth Citizen : Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here.

First Citizen : This Caesar was a tyrant.

Third Citizen : Nay, that's certain:
We are bless'd that Rome is rid of him.

Second Citizen : Peace! let us hear what Antony can say.

Antony : You gentle Romans--

Citizens : Peace, ho! let us hear him.

Antony : Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones:
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious;
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest--

For Brutus is an honourable man.
So are they all, all honourable men--
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me,
But Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill;
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff;
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause;
What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?
O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason! Bear with me,
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

First Citizen : Me thinks there is much reason in his sayings.

Second Citizen : If thou consider rightly of the matter,

Caesar has had great wrong.

Third Citizen : Has he, masters!

I fear there will a worse come in his place.

Fourth Citizen : Mark'd ye his words? He would not take the crown,

Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

First Citizen : If it be found so, some will dear abide it.

Second Citizen : Poor soul! his eyes are red as fire with weeping.

Third Citizen : There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.

Fourth Citizen : Now mark him, he begins again to speak.

Antony : But yesterday the word of Caesar might
Have stood against the world; now lies he there,
And none so poor to do him, reverence.
O masters, if I were disposd to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,
Who, you all know, are honourable men.
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,
Than I will wrong such honourable men.
But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar,
I found it in his closet, 'tis his will.
Let but the commons hear this testament--

Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read--
And they would go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood,
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
And, dying, mention it within their wills,
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
Unto their issue.

Fourth Citizen : We'll hear the will: read it, Mark Antony.

Citizens : The will, the will! we will hear Caesar's will.

Antony : Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it,
It is not meet you know how Caesar lov'd you;
You are not wood, you are not stones, but men,
And, being men, hearing the will of Caesar,
It will inflame you, it will make you mad.
'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs,
For, if you should, O, what would come of it!

Fourth Citizen : Read the will, we'll hear it, Antony.

You shall read us the will, Caesar's will.

Antony : Will you be patient? will you stay awhile?
I have o'er-shot myself to tell you of it:
I fear I wrong the honourable men
Whose daggers have stabb'd Caesar, I do fear it.

Fourth Citizen : They were traitors: honourable men!

Citizens : The will! the testament!

Second Citizen : They were villains, murderers: the will! read the will.

Antony : You will compel me, then, to read the will?
 Then make a ring about the corpse of Caesar,
 And let me show you him that made the will.
 Shall I descend? and will you give me leave?

Citizens : Come down.

Second Citizen : Descend.

Third Citizen : You shall have leave.

[Antony comes down]

Fourth Citizen : A ring; stand round.

First Citizen : Stand from the hearse, stand from the body.

Second Citizen : Room for Antony, most noble Antony.

Antony : Nay, press not so upon me; stand far off.

Citizens : Stand back! Room; bear back!

Antony : If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
 You all do know this mantle: I remember
 The first time ever Caesar put it on,
 'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,
 That day he overcame the Nervii,
 Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through;
 See what a dent the envious Casca made;
 Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd
 And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
 Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it,
 As rushing out of doors, to be resolv'd
 If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no,

For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel.
 Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!
 This was the most unkindest cut of all.
 For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,
 Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
 Quite vanquish'd him: Then burst his mighty heart,
 And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
 Even at the base of Pompey's statue
 Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.
 O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
 Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
 Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.
 O, now you weep, and, I perceive, you feel
 The dint of pity, these are gracious drops.
 Kind souls, what, weep you when you but behold
 Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here,
 Here is himself, marr'd, as you see with traitors.

First Citizen : O piteous spectacle!

Second Citizen : O noble Caesar!

Third Citizen : O woeful day!

Fourth Citizen : O traitors, villains!

First Citizen : O most bloody sight!

Second Citizen : We will be revenged.

Citizens : Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay!
 Let not a traitor live!

Antony : Stay, countrymen.

First Citizen : Peace there! hear the noble Antony.

Second Citizen : We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him.

Antony : Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To such a sudden flood of mutiny.
They that have done this deed are honourable.
What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,
That made them do it: they are wise and
honourable,
And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.
I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts.
I am no orator, as Brutus is,
But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man
That love my friend; and that they know full well
That gave me public leave to speak of him.
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech
To stir men's blood: I only speak right on.
I tell you that which you yourselves do know,
Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor poor dumb
mouths.
And bid them speak for me, but were I Brutus,
And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue
In every wound of Caesar, that should move
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

Citizens : We'll mutiny.

First Citizen : We'll burn the house of Brutus.

Third Citizen : Away, then! come, seek the conspirators.

Antony : Yet hear me, countrymen; yet hear me speak.

Citizens : Peace, ho! Hear Antony. Most noble Antony!

Antony : Why, friends, you go to do you know not what:
Wherein hath Caesar thus deserved your loves?
Alas, you know not: I must tell you then;
You have forgot the will I told you of.

Citizens : Most true. The will! Let's stay and hear the will!

Antony : Here is the will, and under Caesar's seal.
To every Roman citizen he gives,
To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.

Second Citizen : Most noble Caesar! We'll revenge his death.

Third Citizen : O royal Caesar!

Antony : Hear me with patience.

Citizens : Peace, ho!

Antony : Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,
His private arbours and new-planted orchards,
On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,
And to your heirs for ever, common pleasures,
To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves.
Here was a Caesar! when comes such another?

First Citizen : Never, never. Come, away, away!

We'll burn his body in the holy place,
 And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.
 Take up the body.

Second Citizen : Go fetch fire.

Third Citizen : Pluck down benches.

Fourth Citizen : Pluck down forms, windows, any thing!

[Exeunt Citizens with the body]

Antony : Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,
 Take thou what course thou wilt!

Enter a Servant

How now, fellow!

Servant : Sir, Octavius is already come to Rome.

Antony : Where is he?

Servant : He and Lepidus are at Caesar's house.

Antony : And thither will I straight to visit him,
 He comes upon a wish. Fortune is merry,
 And in this mood will give us anything.

Servant : I heard him say, Brutus and Cassius
 Are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome.

Antony : Belike they had some notice of the people,
 How I had moved them. Bring me to Octavius.

[Exeunt]

The Tale of the Arab Who Died by Fire

- Dahlia Ravikovitch

When the fire grabbed his body, it didn't happen by degrees.

There was no burst of heat before,
 or giant wave of smothering smoke
 and the feeling of a spare room one wants to escape to.

The fire held him at once
 —there are no metaphors for this—

it peeled off his clothes
 cleaved to his flesh.

The skin nerves were the first to be touched.

The hair was consumed.

"God! They are burning!" he shouted.

And that is all he could do in self-defense.

The flesh was already burning between the shack's boards
 that fed the fire in the first stage.

There was already no consciousness in him.

The fire burning his flesh
 numbed his sense of future
 and the memories of his family

and he had no more ties to his childhood
 and he didn't ask for revenge, salvation,
 or to see the dawn of the next day.
 He just wanted to stop burning.
 But his body supported the conflagration
 and he was as if bound and fettered,
 and of that too he did not think.
 And he continued to burn by the power of his body
 made of hair and wax and tendons.
 And he burned a long time.
 And from his throat inhuman voices issued
 for many of his human functions had already ceased,
 except for the pain the nerves transmitted
 in electric impulses
 to the pain center in the brain,
 and that didn't last longer than a day.
 And it was good that his soul was freed that day
 because he deserved to rest.

A Baby Can't be Killed Twice

- Dahlia Ravikovitch

On the sewage puddles of Sabra and Shatila
 there you transferred masses of human beings
 worthy of respect
 from the world of the living to the world of the dead.
 Night after night.
 First they shot
 then they hung
 and finally slaughtered with knives.
 Terrified women rushed up
 from over the dust hills:
 "There they slaughter us
 in Shatila."
 A narrow tail of the new moon hung
 above the camps.
 Our soldiers illuminated the place with flares
 like daylight.
 "Back to the camps, March!" the soldier commanded
 the screaming women of Sabra and Shatila.
 He had orders to follow,

And the children were already laid in the puddles of waste,
 their mouths open,
 at rest.
 No one will harm them.
 A baby can't be killed twice.
 And the tail of the moon filled out
 until it turned into a loaf of whole gold.
 Our dear sweet soldiers,
 asked nothing for themselves—
 how strong was their hunger
 to return home in peace.

He is Quiet and So am I

- Mahmoud Darwish

He is quiet and so am I.
 He sips tea with lemon, while I drink coffee.
 That's the difference between us.
 Like me, he wears a wide, striped shirt,
 and like him, I read the evening paper.
 He doesn't see my secret glance.
 I don't see his secret glance.
 He's quiet and so am I.
 He asks the waiter something.
 I ask the waiter something...
 A black cat walks between us.
 I feel the midnight of its fur
 and he feels the midnight of its fur...
 I don't say to him: The sky today
 is clear and blue.
 He doesn't say to me: The sky today is clear.
 He's watched and the one watching
 and I'm watched and the one watching.

I move my left foot.
 He moves his right foot.
 I hum the melody of a song
 and he hums the melody of a similar song.
 I wonder: Is he the mirror in which I see myself?
 And turn to look in his eyes...but I don't see him.
 I hurry from the café.
 I think: Maybe he's a killer...
 or maybe a passerby who thinks
 I am a killer.
 He's afraid... and so am I.

I Come from There

- Mahmoud Darwish

I come from there and I have memories
 Born as mortals are, I have a mother
 And a house with many windows,
 I have brothers, friends,
 And a prison cell with a cold window.
 Mine is the wave, snatched by sea-gulls,
 I have my own view,
 And an extra blade of grass.
 Mine is the moon at the far edge of the words,
 And the bounty of birds,
 And the immortal olive tree.
 I walked this land before the swords
 Turned its living body into a laden table.
 I come from there. I render the sky unto her mother
 When the sky weeps for her mother.
 And I weep to make myself known
 To a returning cloud.
 I learnt all the words worthy of the court of blood
 So that I could break the rule.
 I learnt all the words and broke them up
 To make a single word: Homeland.....

From a he to a she

Unknown

From a he to a she I've been walking,
running away as fast as I can,
born to be a woman,
cursed with the body of a man.

Nothing could be further from the truth,
than to think I had no reason to cry,
when any mirror on a wall could have told you,
my reflection was no more a lie.

I could give you more than a thousand reasons,
more than I care to say,
why my waiting has seemed more than a life time,
and a life time that now seems so far away.

I've sat alone in depression,
raised my glass when it's been half full,
denied myself expression,
more times than I care to recall.

Been scorned for not having a birth right,
laughed at ridiculed and abused,
and by those who should know better,
accused of being confused.

I've jumped through hoops when command,
carried the pain, burned bridges in my wake,
bargained with lies and bartered with tears,
and often found myself the object of hate.

I've rejected my birth to the disapproval of some,
been outcast by more than a few,
but in all of my time I have never once been unsure,
that who I am cannot be dictated my you.

From a he to a she I've been walking,
sure footed in the path to my goal,
never doubting myself for one moment,
when I say I am female from my heart to my soul.

I've never tried to be someone special,
and the tears I have cried are not so too,
now I've answered all your questions,
so tell me what else do you expect me to do.

This isn't some kind of ambition,
 that takes on a life of its own,
 so don't say I'm invading your space,
 or push me aside demanding I leave you alone.

A snip or two here and a realignment there,
 will only stop some of the tears I cry,
 and though in myself I'll feel better,
 I will still be the same person inside.

I know I will never be happy,
 and a mirror will never be my friend,
 but my reflection is only skin deep,
 and how I feel matters more in the end.

So from the moment they lit my candle,
 until the day they blow it out,
 I've been and always will be,
 a woman beyond any doubt.

You Don't Know Me

Kim-berly

You don't know me,
 don't know how I feel,
 but you judge me,
 as if you would.

But I know you,
 know how you would feel,
 how you would judge me,
 if I told you.

But I absolutely
 need to change,
 or else, I feel like,
 going crazy.

You don't know how
 it is to feel wrong,
 but I can't do it alone.

I'm too scared.
I don't know how
to tell someone,
how I feel,
how it pains me.

I could never be,
who I want to be.
Could never behave,
like I want to.

I live in a cage,
a human body,
which seems to belong
to someone different.

I know that,
even if I would never,
be as accepted as before,
I'd be happier.

You hear it,
you are disgusted,
ask if I am joking
and turn away.
Or you hear it,

can't accept it,
ask how I could
ever do that to you.

I should not ask,
should just tell,
ignore them,
but I can't.

But I absolutely
need to change,
or else, I feel like,
going crazy.

I'd finally be myself,
no more hiding,
no more crying,
no more faking.

You don't know me,
don't know how I feel,
but you judge me,
as if you would.
