

LUMINOUS

IBDP
MAGAZINE
2023

The International Baccalaureate (IB) learner profile describes a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that go beyond success.

learner profile:
The profile aims to develop learners who are:

- Inquirers
- Knowledgeable
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Principled
- Open-minded

From the Director's Desk

Here at the Podar International School, we have been striving to promote a well-rounded education that equips students with the necessary technical, problem-solving, interpersonal and social skills required for success in the 21st Century. By providing our students with the opportunities to excel in their areas of interest and to develop keen passion for the fields of the future, we prepare them to reach heights beyond our imagination. Therefore, we have always balanced our pursuit of knowledge within the academic disciplines with a research-oriented creative method of learning. This enables students to develop holistically as individuals who are well-equipped and ready to create innovative solutions to real world problems.

The Student Community of Podar is built on a foundation of open-mindedness, inquiry, and communication, all of which is embodied by the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme's (IBDP) continued legacy of the Luminous Magazine—a student-led initiative which effectively incorporates the various spheres of creative expression and international-mindedness that is central to the International Baccalaureate's vision. In keeping with our mission of developing an inclusive environment for collaborative learning, each year, we support the Luminous Editorial Team in collating the art and writing of our students into a body of work that engages in cultural commentary, scientific inquiry, and analytical praxis. The magazine functions as a site for promoting intercultural understanding and developing newer ideas on topical areas of global relevance—spanning **ecology, science & technology, and society & culture**. By illustrating the learner portfolio and the school's pioneering vision, the magazine becomes a safe and stimulating environment for learning—where students from the secondary section worked collaboratively and built multi-perspective approaches to knowledge. Through centering the authentic student experience, this publication fosters an environment of wellbeing and upholds our core values of academic integrity.

This, the 6th edition, serves to address the global issues that our student community ponders upon and share the experiences that bond us together in a space of persistent learning. As a cornerstone of creativity, we believe in the potential of the Luminous Magazine, where the students' agency is prioritised and students' voices are at the forefront. This inclusive platform helps develop balanced, caring, and principled individuals, and, each year, we are always delighted to see the outcomes.

Director Principal
Dr Mrs Vandana Lulla





iNDEx

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From the Editors Desk

"I paint flowers so they will not die."

-Frida Kahlo

We started off working on Luminous 6.0 in the hope that we can bring together the collective knowledge of the school community. We were very inspired by Kahlo--in that we sought to capture this moment in Podar time and the creative spirit that a post-pandemic world of education brought on. Thus, without a theme or a set structure, we embarked on a months long exploration of what it means to paint the world as it is now and to preserve it for our future generations--and selves--to reflect on this particular moment in time.

Seeing as a diverse background means a collage of ideas from various people, each of our individual voices are present throughout this magazine. The editors' personal styles have been incorporated into a magazine that lives up to its idea of being a "compilation" of stories--as though each is a handpicked page from, at times, a novel, at others, a blog, a sketchbook, or a journal.

A patchwork of ideas later, we discovered with a keen surprise that this moment was filled with discourse spanning student actions and animal rights to safeguarding places and embracing art as a mo(ve)ment. We developed entirely new categories--Fashion, Ecology, and School Club Features to reflect this novelty in thought and praxis, beyond simple and set notions of fields & disciplines. Mind & Body emerged as a means to explore non-dualism, and Science & Tech to investigate future trajectories of innovation. Short Stories and Poetry, as always, serves to shine a literary lens on the human condition. Moreover, Cultural commentary seemed to be an overarching theme of the 2023 edition, with the Society & Culture and Reviews & Recommendations categories amassing a wealth of criticism on the media we consume and the social structures we are a part of. And lastly, our beloved classics: the Alumni and Teachers' insights that enrich our student lives with the perspectives of the people who have come before us, who have done this before us, and who are now imparting the wisdom that comes with that experience.

So, the question remains: how do we capture the sheer haunting beauty of a flower at this point in its circle of life? We found the answer amongst the words and colours we received from the school community--and we hope you do too.

From the IBDP Batch 2024 Editorial Team

I

SHORT STORIES



On Shuffle

by Haniyyah Katyal, 10C

It is the brink of midnight, and she is about to turn ten thousand nine hundred and fifty days old. Laying impassively on her couch; in her mind she had one conjecture playing on repeat. Would the witching hour drive a dent into her youth? Or would it precipitate into unending disquiet over thirty wasted years?

She had little memory of parts of her life that might be remarkable. The dry cake on her coffee table, the lonely candle perched on top, the dwindling stir of the avenue or the absolute disorder of her house, -nothing sparked the thrill of surviving another year.

Reaching for the TV control, she mindlessly ran her fingers over its buttons. She felt the mellow glow and heat of its beam but didn't turn her head to catch a sight. That was until the arbitrary tangent came along. A trail of ideas spiraling like space debris across her vision, coherent in essence yet haphazard in order.

Over these days, her body had housed many people. She couldn't really place a finger on any consistency in her personality. People often believe that adolescence is the most tumultuous time, though every fiber of her soul wished to relive those glorious years. In hindsight, that period was redolent of a swing that hurled her back and forth between a matrix of emotions. The air of the pathway between childhood and maturity was frenzied, yes, but she adored the invigoration of the wind it made upon harmonizing. The dreams this wind brought about, however, were a subject she would usually avoid.

A "Backstreet Boys" single suddenly echoes from the TV and all she can think about is those dreams, or rather the utter failure of them. Now every morning she rose in a bedroom that was not majestic, with sheets that weren't made of silk and curtains that didn't quite sway in the breeze as she would like. She wouldn't visit her poolside patio every Friday night, nor would she make conversation with a lifelong friend on a barbecue deck. Every day was just a facet of jarring mundanity, blurring together with no opulence, material or emotional.

The last time she garnered any fulfillment would probably be the day she got her first job, regardless of whatever ensued after. What started off as a sightless hope for the future rapidly transitioned into the constant labor of coping up. If she were to articulate happier times, she would point to her childhood. Considering what little she could remember of it; it had simpler swinging experiences and an unrelenting nonchalance for the heavier aspects of the universe. The agonizing comparison of then and now pushed her off the couch. She clutched her head and hissed, as if wanting nothing more to escape this trail of thought.

A few lights down the street were still illuminated, with a group of elder ladies chattering their night away, so she made her way through the breeze of the chiffon curtains into the narrow balcony. She tried to imagine what she would be like as an old maid, with her skin all gaunt and lined with prudence. Maybe she would sit in her unflustered rocking chair, beholding a country view like a true empress of the terrain while bearing the brunt of its seclusion too. She hopes that if nothing else, at least she would be content with that seclusion, not once grumbling about the daunting silence. For some wicked reason, this thought won a small smile from her. What better than to be an aging wildflower in the sprightly meadows?

Throughout most of her adult life, she has been clueless about whether she would like the same media as she did when she was younger, or whether she would still enjoy picking strawberries in a farm; her favorite ice cream flavor, her appetite for photography, the prolonged tangents her mother could've witnessed or the ludicrous laughter she could've shared with her best friend-all of this was such an inordinate mystery to her. She wished she could play these defining factors on shuffle to merely avoid the plight of choosing where to start.

With only five minutes to the fourth decade of her life, sighing ruefully and pitying herself shouldn't be an option anymore. She pulled herself together, attempting to pull her apartment together too, while she was at it. This space is surely about to go through some rigorous redecoration once she placates the birthday blues. As for her cake, she had a couple ribbons that could possibly fabricate the number thirty onto it. She'd place the numbers on the cake with all the pride, now that she had made a transcendent promise to herself. Running on a time crunch of ten seconds, she hurriedly lit the sole candle and waited for her smartwatch to ring the birthday alarm. But it didn't ring, what rang instead was her phone, with the first and perhaps only present in the form of a video call from her mother.

Initially, an immediate burst of gratification lifted her off the cold, hard ground. Faces she hadn't seen in ages were now serenading her, and in a way that is shown in the movies, she's brought back to life. However, it ended as soon as it began. With the shine of the candle subdued and the voices from the other end of the phone gone, the dourness was rebirthing. Grimacing, she slumped on her couch again, wondering when this vicious cycle was going to end.

She lazily proceeded to seal the doors and the windows, in preparation to get through the night where the notion of fulfilling her goals in pure aloofness would prompt her nightmares. But then she heard her doorbell go off, instantly procuring her guard up and readying her to put up a fight. Who she found to be her unsolicited guest, comprehensively knocked her down with a feather. There she was, holding a heart-shaped balloon, a gleaming gift box, and an even sweeter smile. Pure gold personified. Her oldest companion and the fuel to her missile jubilation. Her best friend was here, and now her bones felt lighter and somehow stronger.

The early hours of the A.M. let them rewind and reflect in all the radiance of a long-awaited reunion. The directions she would veer in thereafter would be consequential, which is the only thing she is certain of at this moment. Though for now, she was at ease in her living room with the presence of her confidant, admiring a small chit that messily read, "Happy Birthday".





My Irresponsible Son

by Aaditya Sawant, IBDP-2

Content Warning: Gore

It was a colourful dream that succoured me into a deep sleep. As deep as the wound that caused me to faint. My wound was like a well from the underworld. Bright red, filled with my blood. Not Satan but a manifestation of the combination of three devils was the architect of this well. Corroded was my abdomen owing to the hellish desires of the 'master' architect. I cannot see because he's stabbed my eyes. It would have looked as though a tot was using a fork to eat and then pluck a flower. The way a soft cube of cheese is stabbed with the fork by the tot repeatedly for elation; the way a flower is plucked out of a plant; and the way nectar and water drips out of the terminal. How blissful would it look if the flower was replaced by my very eyes and the fluids with my blood! I call them my tears of blood. I nurtured him, nourished him, and this is what I reap. What can I even do after all? He is my son and I shall always forgive him like an ideal mother. But what does the quintessential son do? Maybe I can use the precedent of my experience with my son to answer.

I only hear things now. My sense of listening is sharper than his fearsome weapon because it was that very weapon which was utilised to hamper my very vision. What next? I hear him approaching with that weapon in his hand. Oh son! You've skinned me already! What is this for? I cannot speak because it is my mouth that is devoid of a tongue. You may ask why I don't possess a tongue. It was eaten, dry, by some of my children as part of a tradition which prohibits them from uttering a word while consuming my organ. Maybe that is why my own children did not stand up for me. Probably they won't ever stand up again. They cannot raise their voice against the atrocities their mother faces because they are bonded by a mere tradition. They may end up eating me up tomorrow but all I would do is forgive them. My children would probably not stand up against the irresponsible son. Who else is left, then? I won't stand up for myself if my corroboration goes against the will of my children. I am a mother. You may think about my animal family, that could garner support for me.

But I don't have any animal family now. My husband is gone. His birth was painful and so was his death. Whose birth was like a curse to his breeders, was my very husband. Whose death was celebrated as part of the festivities of a grand Hispanic Fiesta, was the very father of my children. What did he do that he reaped such a painful death? I still ask this question to myself and now I bestow it upon you, my child. What was my husband's mistake?

They blind him in broad daylight,
And feast on him by midnight.
They make him run among thousands of his kind,
Only to be slaughtered to entertain people unkind.

How unkind can people get? All families in my locality pray to get closer to God. So, why are my children deviating away from the divine path and moving closer to the Fiend? The Matador, the butcherer of my husband, the entertainer of the crowd yet my son, is the farthest from the Almighty. He is the one who relishes animal suffering until the animal's ultimate death. If not so, why would he stab my husband with those perilous lances one by one, savouring each stab? The ruddy process is strikingly similar to the Chinese tradition of piercing a watermelon with a thousand needles, to extract its juice. Towards the end of this vicious course of stabbing, my husband's body boasted a thousand wells like the one on my abdomen. The only difference was that the wounds were not left open because of the pierced weapons. That did not stop the blood from oozing out however. The watermelon's juice normally tastes sweet; my husband's blood dripping from the many wounds would taste innocent. The matador adores the way the dumb animal's poor soul gradually leaves his body: initially black and now red. The periodic stabbing continues until the matador's patience is challenged. It is then that he bestows the final agony upon my husband. The 'final stab' or the 'winning slice' as they call it. This is a grand one, made with the Matador's personal sabre. One stab in the centre of the head and the weapon is left stabbed for a couple of minutes until the poor animal loses its life forever. It is believed that the animal's flesh becomes tender as it experiences spells of throbbing pain. The flesh of the slain animals in this Fiesta is believed to be of apex quality and one of the most expensive in monetary terms. A trifling price that's added on to each bull is his animal family, so trivial that nearly 150,000 animal families are neglected every year. The fiesta lasts for a 'week' only! How much more can the matador or the viewers endure, anyway?

They named this horrendous festival after a saintly individual. It often makes me question the credibility of such saintly personalities. Are saints violent? Do they like bloodshed like the viewers of this horrible sport? If not any of these, then why don't they catechise the population?

I cannot forget the way I lost my husband. His final moments are engraved in my memory like the way I was branded with hot iron near my neck. When the Matador drove his sabre towards my husband's head, he missed the head and ended up attacking his lungs. How ghastly could a sight be! My husband lost his life after a protracted death, with his blood flowing and bubbling through his mouth and nose. How could I ever forget this? This was the crudest exhibition of my child, the Matador's, Satanic traits. I saw this massacre through the cage. It was a mournful atmosphere. I had the company of more than ten thousand cows who were widowed during the so-called fiesta. I was the queer fish and could not stand the oppression. So, I attacked one of my sons. Now I reap multitudes of pain and you're witnessing my ill fate through this piece of work.

Some of my cousins from India reaped a better fate than the father of my children. All they bore was their tails being cut off and spices thrown in their eyes to blind them temporarily. All this violence to succour them to run faster than their counterparts in order to win the race. Such atrocities (if I could call them atrocities with respect to my husband's fortune) last for fifteen minutes only. Moreover, they are fed, irrespective of their win or loss in the race. I can place my bets on everything I possess, even if it is only this soul that I have now, and claim that my husband would've chosen spices thrown into his eyes and tails sliced over him being slain so horribly any day. Needless to say, however, he would not be able to see another one ever again.

Oh, good lord! What is this fortune thy have blest me with?

You did not even spare my offspring who were also separated from me. Nevertheless, the countless desires of my children did not come to an end. How could they even get over it? They stooped so low that they even deprived my calves of their birth giver's breastmilk. What for, you may ask. Mere MILK PUDDING. They say that my breast milk, or more sophisticatedly colostrum, is a precious liquid that's used in making the pudding. They call this pudding

Kharvas in India. It sounds so sweet and tastes so sweet. So so akin to the sounds of separation and the sweetness of a mother's cries and sorrow. I am a mother after all. The way my children happily feast on the pudding compels me to relinquish all my sorrows and overlook all of their mistakes. I am a mother after all, and my son is an irresponsible one. I am bound to forgive him despite his crimes.

Humans and their ugly desires.

Animals: the sunken aspirers.

What am I to do to accept my fate then, reader? Nothing: I embrace death. I embrace the death that my irresponsible son has bestowed upon me. I embrace my horrific end like all other mothers right now. Here he comes fiercely with the weapon that beheads me in one swift swing. Down goes my head while the rest of my body is hooked on the wall. I was skinned already. All he can do of my remains is feast on it now. Some say that the Lord resides in me, that he seeks peace and refuge in my body. Is this why my son uses my pious flesh to curb his hunger? I don't know. I am a mother after all. Forgiveness is my trait.

God resided in me through the thick and thin.

Now he guides me to his abode, his heaven.

You might call these atrocities cruel, wrong and evil;

I call this my sisterhood.

#BeVegan

#StopAnimalCruelty



A trip back in history!

by Vivaan Talreja, 9A

I was busy practicing my fielding with my dad when he threw the ball stridently on the wall. Unfortunately, when I went to retrieve the ball, I bumped my head against the wall with a loud thud. Blood was oozing from my head profusely, as I noticed the wall was sucking me. A few seconds later, I was pushed out of another wall like gushing water!

My heart was in my mouth at that moment...and I must have lost consciousness after that.

After a while, once I regained consciousness, I couldn't see very clearly. Slowly and steadily, I contorted my head to locate where exactly I was. I saw something out of the corner of my eyes— a big board saying, “Arabian Sea Coast 1930.” I rubbed my eyes; was I seeing things? Was my concussion so bad that I was seeing things in the past now? A thousand questions flooded my mind. I blinked hard, hoping it was just a trick of the light.

But, nothing seemed to change. One thing was sure enough, that I had gone back in time. Did I land in the times of the “Salt March” that I had learned about in the History lessons at school? Was Gandhi there?

I made up my mind to saunter about, but before I could do so, I decided it would be nice to keep a large red leaf near the wall so I could go back in the future once more. A few people nearby had caught my attention; so I went towards them to take a closer look.

It was Gandhiji! Followed by Pyarelal Nayyar, Chhaganlal Naththubhai Joshi and many more people in a rally. I couldn't believe my eyes. They were carrying large sacks of something, which I assumed to be salt. I stood in shock, and opened my phone to take photos as corroboration for my parents; proof that I saw the Salt March, but it wasn't working. That was fair after all; smartphones hadn't been invented yet.

Suddenly, I could hear the *thumps* of footsteps approaching them. I turned to

see soldiers dressed in uniform– British uniforms.

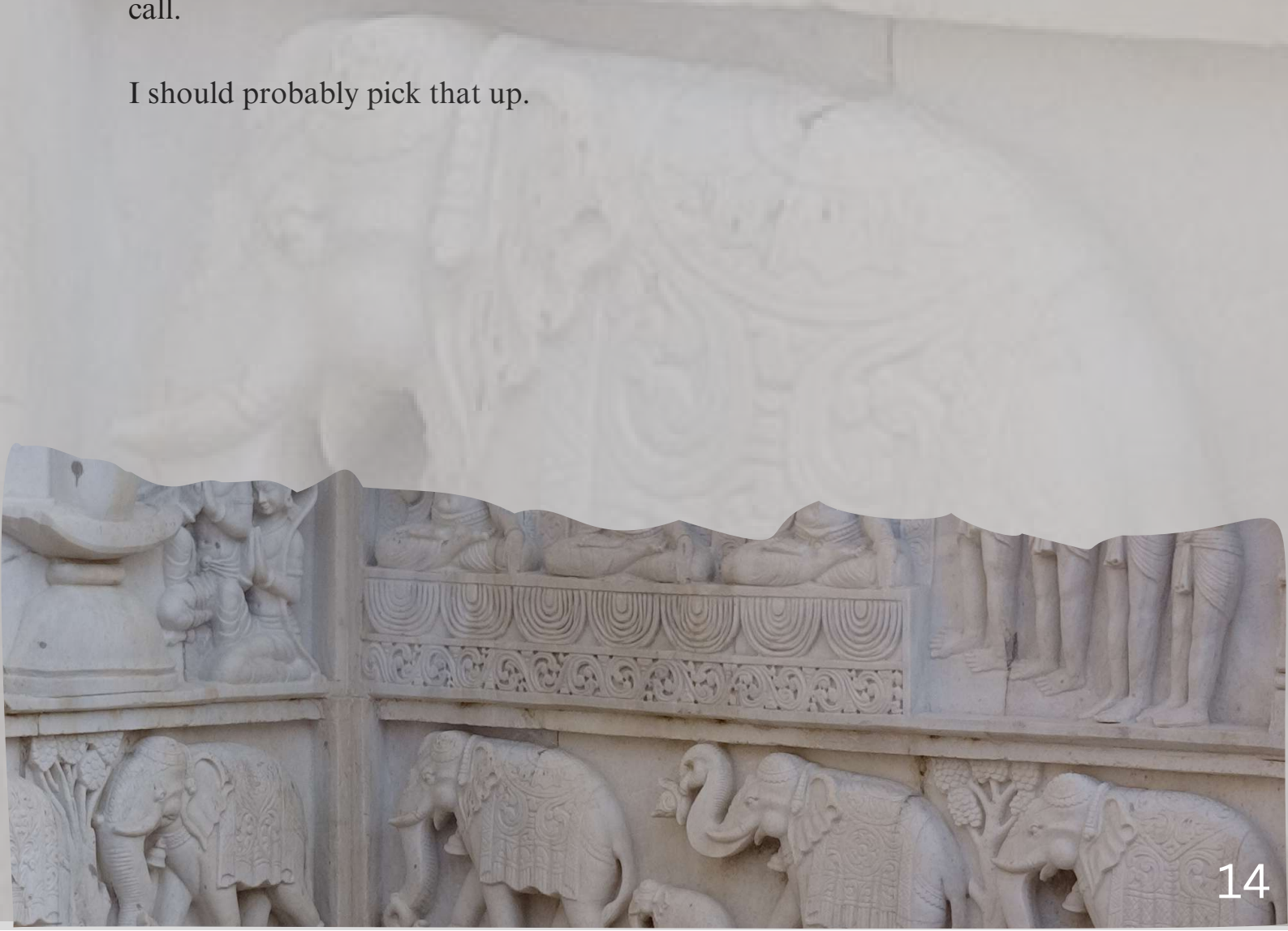
The head of all bellowed, “Soldiers! Arrest all of them!,” in a British accent. It was the British, who were jealous of the wealth of the Indians. Each and every person of the Salt March was being held from moving and arrested. When they struggled against the handcuffs, I could sense and empathize with the agony the Indians faced, the bravery they had, before independence. I could hear cries and shrieks– protestors and civilians alike– all around me.

60,000 people– all arrested just like that.

After a few minutes, I decided to go back to the future. I wanted to go back to Independent India, and besides– my sudden disappearance must have made my parents extremely worried.

I gripped the leaf I had grabbed from the wall and willed myself to return to the future, and lo and behold! The Arabian Sea Coast sign was gone and I could hear the familiar sound of my ringtone. I checked the phone to see my parents call.

I should probably pick that up.



The Best Sunday of my Life!

by Vivaan Talreja, 9A

It was a thunderous Sunday afternoon; the rain was so fierce and the wind was whooshing at breakneck speed all around the place. The whole of Paris was empty and bleak. However, it was a good day for all the pluviophiles out there. But most importantly, it was a good day for everyone to have a much-needed siesta to relax from the exhausting week at work and all the hustle and bustle. Not a single person was to be seen for miles and miles ahead. Too add to, even my own family had barely slept.

The whole place felt so soulless.

The Sunday that I anticipated would be the best day of the week felt so dull and colourless. No one wanted to move their legs even one step forward. That is when I had to turn my boredom into an opportunistic mindset. My eagerness for settling scores with my boisterous brother, for all the crimes he had committed against me was just too much to resist. Furtively, I tip-toed, without leaving any hints about the malevolent prank (pranks *plural*, actually, since I—well, you'll see) that was going to transpire in a while. I made a beeline to the hall room, to set up the snares. My nosy house helper was on my tail, at each step that I took, because Arham, my brother, was the apple of her eye.

She had a face which looked like she'd just bitten into the worst lemon of her life, her expression saying *stop what you're doing, this instant!*, so to stop her from stalking me, I turned on the television, so that she'd think I was not up to anything.

As soon as she was out of sight, I continued with my mission. I set up traps all around the house right from the bathroom to the hall, because I knew my brother would follow this path.

After a while, after hours of relentless arduous work and toil, I let out a sigh of relief and was all set to witness a comedy show.

All the traps were in place, they just had to be implemented.

Within a short span of, precisely two minutes, my clueless brother got up and howled in agony. He made his way to the bathroom, unbeknownst of what was coming his way. As soon as he set foot, in the bathroom, a plate full of flour smashed on his face. Seeing his shocked face covered in white flour was definitely one of the best things I'd witnessed all week— nay, my entire life! The experience was enhanced by him opening and closing his mouth without a sound, kind of like the old goldfish we had when I was six.

The next thing that he went to do was to wash his face, but I snuck a little coin up the tap, which spluttered the gushing water all over his body. He was drenched from head to toe.

He looked like an ice cream melting under the sun!

Next in the queue was wiping his face with a napkin. But what he did not realise was that the napkin was filled with sriracha sauce and tomato ketchup. Without a second thought he rubbed it all over his face. His eyes were burning with fury and was running helter-skelter all around the house, screeching on the top of his lungs, “Heeeeeelp!!!!”

He darted to the kitchen and before turning on the tap he made a couple of test runs, just to see if there was a coin stuck up or not. There was no coin there, fortunately for him, but I had shut the water source of the tap so no water flowed out at all.

He continued to scream in agony and apologised for all the trouble he had ever caused me. Then, like the good, kind brother that I am, I turned on the water power and he cleaned his face. He felt relieved and went to eat an Oreo.

He took two handfuls of Oreo out of the packet and dumped it in his mouth. His gluttonous behaviour continued.

What he did not realise, however, was that the cream was replaced with toothpaste and the cooling sensation burned his mouth to minus ten degrees Celsius.



Enveloped

by Vani Sharma, 9D

Diwali. The word holds so much beauty, so much excitement in it.

What first crosses your mind when you hear the word? I can answer easily: lamboyant fireworks, mouth-watering Indian delicacies, the hustle and bustle around the house, putting together rangolis and hanging up lights and strings of flowers. But is that the true meaning of Diwali?

Deepavali, as the festival is called synonymously, quite literally means ‘a row of lights’ in Sanskrit. This came to be as when Lord Ram, Sita and Lakshman returned to Ayodhya in the dark evening, the villagers lit up lamps in rows along the streets to guide them to the Royal Palace.

To me, this does not only symbolise the win of good over evil or light over dark, but also the unity of light, the support of the people who came together as one to help their exiled king find his way back to where he truly belonged.

As the years passed, Diwali has turned into something else entirely. Now, we merely celebrate the broad conclusion of the beloved story—not the passion, the integrality of people, which is what truly brought the festival to life.

I had this epiphany of sorts early one morning in my home town in North India, as we were driving to the airport for our flight back home. We had barely left the driveway when fog (as is very common in winter months in the North) enveloped us. I hadn't quite experienced this before, and began to get worried as we had close to no visibility. My family calmed me, however, by merely pointing out the window.

In the distance, glowing surreally, were the lights adorning the neighbouring houses. Just bright enough to show us the road: as if they were put there just to guide us. And that they did; all the way until dawn broke through and light returned once again

In the end, it's really all about perspective. The true meaning of Diwali is still alive, and it finds us in the most unexpected places at the most unexpected times.

We just need to know how to look.





A Strange Place

by Kyra Narain, 9B

The gaudy room, filled with strange people was not helping Alice. As she tried in vain to find her phone. It was perhaps her last hope of getting out of this strange place. Time glided by and the people, completely oblivious of her presence continued on their way. She was quite close to losing hope of ever getting out when a peculiar-looking lady with stars splattered across her gown marched up to her. Alice quavered. All questions vanished, as she shivered under her powerful aura and remarkable poise. She glanced out the carriage window, with guards holding her down by order of their queen. Her eyes scanned the surroundings, taking in every shop, every house. She squinted, the lights of the queen's courtroom blinding her. The queen addressed her like a cautious detective on a dangerous case. Her presence itself was a threat to them. Poor Alice, she did not even know how she was here. The courtroom buzzed, every entity present discussing her case. The last thing she could remember was a bright bolt of light hurling towards her, as she descended into a dark abyss.

The background of the page is a photograph of ocean waves. The top half shows a wave cresting with white foam against a blue sky. The bottom half shows a wave breaking, with white foam and blue water. The text is overlaid on a dark, semi-transparent band that runs horizontally across the middle of the page.

In The Middle of the Ocean

by Vani Sharma, 9D

Many would describe the middle of the ocean as the middle of nowhere. For 7 year old me, however: there couldn't be a notion more wrong.

My father, a master mariner in the merchant navy, would often take me on-board during my holidays. On board, I would observe people of various nationalities and cultures come together and work as one; an organism comprising different cells, each with a distinct role to play.

My learnings on-board weren't limited to the observations of my young eyes. My father, when he found some time off (this was a particular occurrence when we were mid-course) would show me around...and our trips would more often than not include a snack, a long walk on deck, dolphins(if we were lucky) and lots of wisdom from my father.

One such trip I will surely remember took place long after my bedtime. I told my father I couldn't sleep, and without a word, he took me on the deck to see the stars. I was always quite an astrophile, and the pure wonderment I felt that night was unparalleled.

He then pointed to the sky and told me, "Everyone in this world is like a star. Everyone is equally important. If a star vanishes from the sky, you and I won't come to know, but the sky just won't quite look the same anymore. As the seasons change, the stars come and go, constellations evolve, but every star—like every person—deserves a special place in the sky."

It seemed like nothing more than a bedtime story to put a 7 year old to sleep, but today, when I look back, I realize just how much it impacted my way of engaging the world around me. It is what birthed my passion for equality and teamwork. It is what essentially taught me that even if I were to find myself alone in the middle of nowhere, I wouldn't be forgotten; because, you and I? We'll still have our place in a sky full of stars.

Oh my darling Clementine

by Vani Sharma, 9D

Once upon a terrible and torrid time, there stood a castle on the shore of the vast ocean, in which dwelt a King with his two daughters. The Queen had passed away a few months after the birth of their second child. After her death the King diverted all his attention to his two thriving daughters.

The elder daughter was gifted with beauty and grace, enough to rival her mother. With long hazel locks, eyes as blue as the ocean, and lips as red as shimmering rubies, there was no one Clementine couldn't charm.

Her younger sister Cordelia, however, valued her intellect more than her beauty. She seldom gave more than a moment's notice to how she looked.

And as the girls grew, so did Cordelia's envy for her sister, who was marginally more liked by everyone at court; their own father preferred Clementine over Cordelia, showering her with all his love and attention. Over the years, Cordelia's constant yet vain attempts to gain her father's affection began leading to desperation. She often found herself wishing her sister were dead, believing that with her sister out of her life people would finally see her for who she truly was, instead of a weak imitation of the all too perfect Clementine.

As time passed, the notion of the Princesses' betrothal was raised, and Clementine's excitement could only match Cordelia's reluctance. As suitors came and went, each one promising something even more surreal than the last, one of them stood out to all; a young prince, wise and brave and witty. The Prince and Cordelia began spending time together; long hours of reading together in the library, and he slowly, but deeply, fell in love with her. However, Clementine had fallen in love with the handsome Prince, and for the first time in all these years, felt truly envious of her sister.

In due time, the Prince asked Cordelia to marry him, mistaking her kindness and attention for romantic interest. Cordelia, startled by the proposal, requested for a fortnight to respond.

That night, she decided to visit her father and ask for his opinion on the matter. When she reached his study, she found him drunk and in pure joy, misunderstanding Clementine to be the one receiving the proposal, and thinking she had agreed to a marriage which would lead to a mammoth increase in his power. As he sang joyous odes to his elder daughter, proclaiming her as a child of god himself, Cordelia's blood boiled with a wrath that could only be fueled by hatred. Every day she was reminded of being second to her sister, always the one to pale in comparison, never receiving so much as a moment's notice from her father, while her sister got not only his love and affection, but that of the whole kingdom.

And so, the very next day, Cordelia went up to the Prince and agreed to his proposal, and enjoyed finally being the center of attention, just like her sister had been all these years.

However, that very night, as Cordelia entered her chambers, she heard Clementine weep and lament, declaring her life meaningless if she couldn't spend it with the Prince she loved.

A part of Cordelia truly did want to take back her consent, but a greater part of her, one that had yearned for her father's love when all he could see was Clementine, that had envied her charm and popularity, wanted nothing more but to be an object of that envy herself.

On the day of the wedding, Clementine rose early and hiked up to a cliff, high above the inky depths of the ocean. She stared, long and hard into death's eyes, and just as she felt herself succumbing, she leaped back.

She realised that while a life without her prince did seem like torture, she wanted to be there for her father, who she loved more than life itself. Cordelia, who had followed her trail, saw her standing at the very edge of the cliff. Under the assumption that her sister was going to jump, she reached out her hand to stop her.

However, as soon as she touched Clementine's shoulder, Clementine lost her balance, and slipped off the edge of the cliff into the unforgiving arms of the sea, lost to this world that had been both kind and cruel to her.

Paralyzed with shock, fear and self disgust, Cordelia was in disbelief as she walked back to the castle.

Years later, the void of the King's heart had begun to fill, and he now devoted all his attention to Cordelia, and regretted greatly how he had neglected her for years. In the light of their repairing relationship, Cordelia helped him rule the vast expanse of their Kingdom. A wise and just ruler, she was loved by all the subjects.

Years after an unfortunate incident that Cordelia certainly did have a hand in, she had everything she had ever wanted from her sister. But now that Clementine was well and truly gone forever, she found one question pounding her head through the dark hours of the night; had she really wanted this? And if not, then why did she feel no remorse?



II

POETRY

In the realm of thoughts, where mysteries reside,
A study of the mind, a captivating ride,
Psychology, the science of the human soul,
Unraveling the depths, making us whole.

Exploring the unconscious, shedding light,
The psyche's labyrinth, intricate and vast,
Psychology seeks to understand it at last.

In the realm of emotions, psychology delves,
Unraveling the stories that the heart tells,
From joy and love to sadness and despair,
The human experience, it aims to share.

The mind's complexities, a fascinating maze,
Cognitive processes, attention's gentle blaze,
Psychology unravels what it means to be you.



Science of the Human Soul

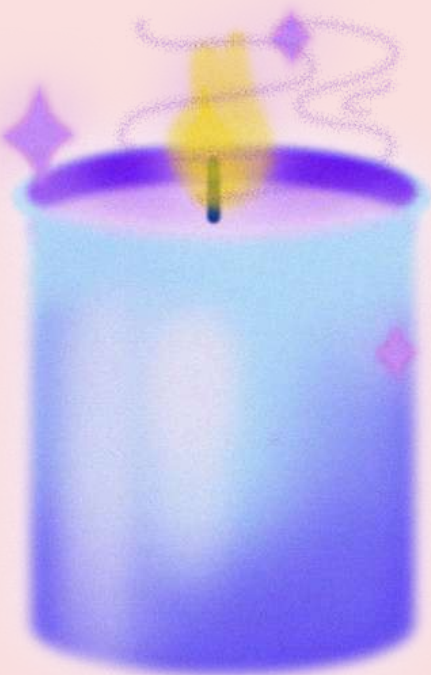
Schanna Muliyl, IBDP-1

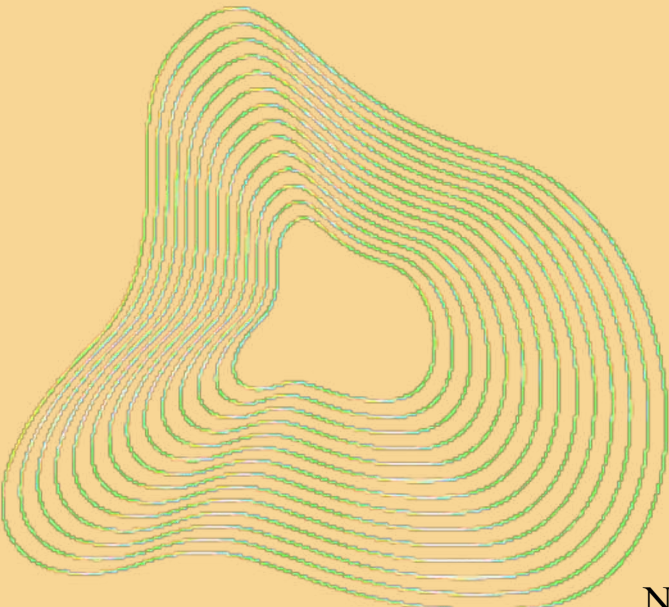
Through research and study, it seeks to find,
The patterns and behaviors of humankind,
From nature to nurture, the interplay,
Psychology unveils the human sway.

In therapy's embrace, it lends a hand,
Helping minds heal, helping hearts expand,
From trauma's grip to anxiety's hold,
Psychology aids in stories yet untold.

But psychology is not just science's domain,
It touches our lives in ways we can't explain,
It offers insight, empathy, and grace,
A lens through which we see the human race.

So let us explore the depths of the mind,
Through psychology's lens, may we find,
A deeper understanding, a compassionate view,
Of the beautiful complexities that make us, me and you





My brother and me

Kendarit Lodha, 9A



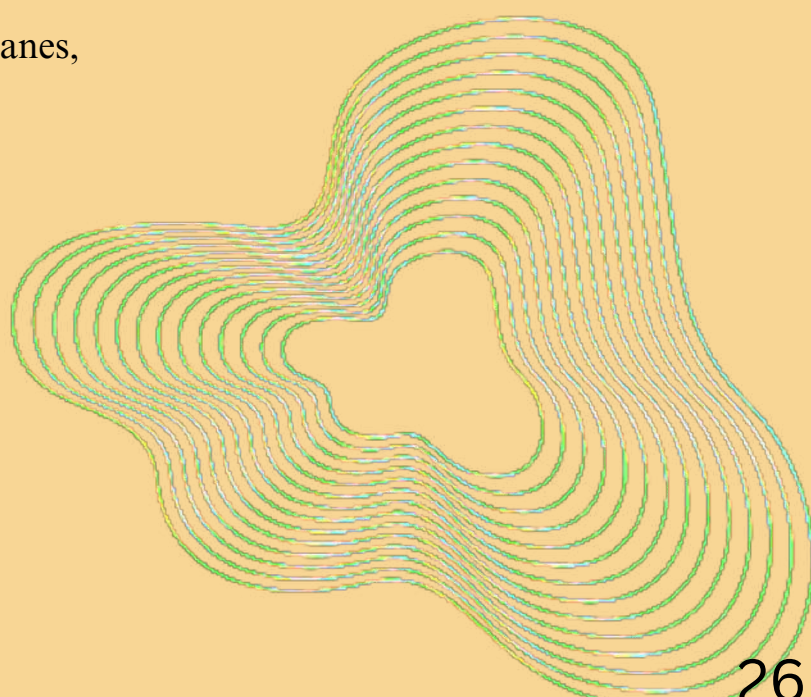
My brother and me...

A real brother is not just from the same mother,
But a replica of the other,
And always like a protective cover,
Lastly they care for one another.

Not fighting with each other is like freezing in motion,
And they know us from when we were putting lotion,
Their main aim will be to play with our emotions,
But lastly our trust will never be broken...

My brother, young with little brains,
Behind him, my energy drains,
I don't know why he always runs across the lanes,
Lastly, I cannot bear the pain.

They will always buzz like a bee
And our relation will grow like a tree
Then the whole world will see
My brother and me...



A mother does not abandon her child and so my goddess won't leave me.

I am lost and so shall it be.

Oh, my loving mother, come help me!

The woods scare me and the dark forces engulf me;

Oh, my powerful mother, where have you been?

Answer my prayers, for I am a devout admirer within!



Oh, My Mother, Come Help Me!

Aaditya Sawant, IBDP-2

This long-lost son has lost his path,

Help him escape his past!

Oh, my wise mother, come guide me,

Come light the path for me!

The fiend strangles me and so I yelp;

Oh, my strong mother, this son desperately needs your help!



You are my strength, so let me manifest you;

Oh, my mighty mother, come to my rescue!



The dawn of creation and the ruler of death:

You are everything that can, and ever will be!

Oh, my dear mother, come help me!

You are everything that can, and ever will be!

After all, you, my mother, are the almighty Shakti!



I will raise my voice
For roars on city streets,
For tumbling homes,
Homes of naïve critters,
Homes of feeble souls

I will speak up
For we have long domesticated,
Enslaved animals,
Poached the ingenuous,
All in the name of moronic speciesism

Symbiosis

Sarah Kathuria, IBDP-2

I will revolt
For the ethics of eating meat
For the dilemma of riding horses,
Hunted in the past,
But why are we living there now?

I will deride
For this lack of symbiosis
For decadent humanity

Nature will
And always fights back

Her strengths lies not in her victories,
But in her scars that don't mend,
The scars of her battles lost and barely won,
But with bravado fought till the end.



She Who We Call A Warrior

Vani Sharma, 9D



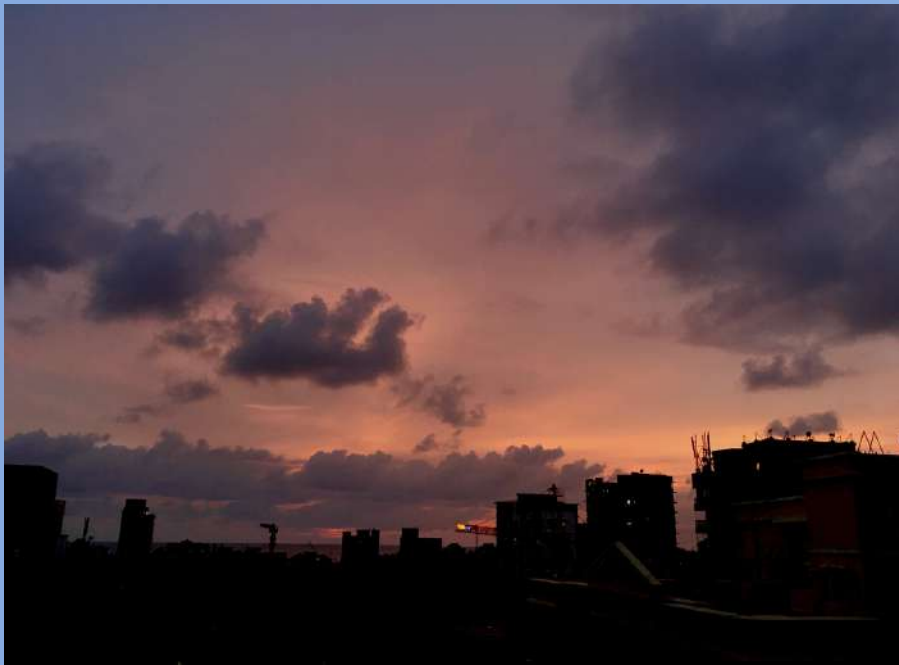
Her strength lies in the way she rises
From the inky depths of night like
dawn
To meet the battlefield of a new day
And she fights, saying to all fear;
'Begone'.

Her strength shows not when she
shines on the top,
But in unforgiving struggle to get there;
In her every humiliating loss
And her every act of strategy and dare.

Her strength shows plainly on her face,
A face not one where tears are never found,
But one that cares not for them, holding her head high,
Despite the shackles of agony that pull her to the ground.

For her strengths lies in her spirit,
That every time scarred, broken and built,
Glows a stronger, mightier weapon
And calls she who wields it;
A warrior.





on clouds & skies

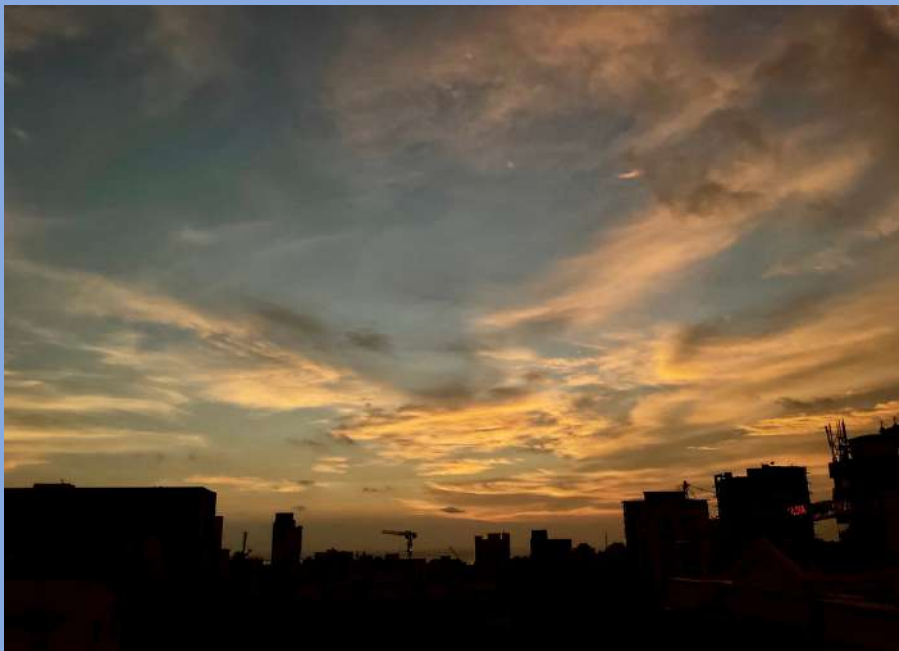




photo by Yash Vadhar, IBDP-2

If we could comprehend the airy language of
the clouds--what would it tell us? Would
it be sorrowful of the smoke-filled urbanity
we call home? Would it be delighted at the
human vision that captures it in so many
different hues? Would we realise that
that the sky and the clouds
are, together, one big
small painted-on
mural for
the whole of life?

musings by Ananya Pathak, IBDP-2

III

REVIEWS

&

RECS

Ruben Fleischer's Uncharted:

An Ideal Way To Capitalise On A Live-Action Adaptation Of A Video-Game Franchise?

By Aaditya Sawant,
IBDP-2

Making live action adaptations of video games is an arduous task---the failure of movies like Mortal Kombat and Lara Croft simply adds more credibility to this statement.



Makers of films belonging to this genre are answerable to a wide audience. There are chiefly two categories of viewers who are equally difficult to deal with: those who have already played the game and newcomers with no idea about the game.

Players of the video games are already aware of the plot of the games and have elevated expectations from the movies. They require a newer storyline based loosely, *but not entirely* on the games and simultaneously crave for the 'feel' of the video games in live-action. On the other hand, newcomers need something that is simply intriguing and not too fast-paced for those without pre-existing knowledge. This is indeed a colossal job and with his latest movie Uncharted, Fleischer should be lauded for having taken up the challenge and successfully delivering exactly what the audience at the box office needs.

I have been a huge PlayStation fanboy for almost a decade by now. Video-games have always been an important part of my life and especially memorable ones like the Uncharted Franchise. For the unaware, this video game series is one of the greatest video-game hits. With four main instalments and four spin offs, Uncharted has been developed exclusively for PlayStation consoles which includes all generations after the PlayStation 3. Uncharted games are full of mind-bending puzzles and everlasting adventures, accompanied by a thrilling background score.

Players cannot think of 'Uncharted' without two core elements: an intimidating storyline and an immersive gaming experience which improves with each new instalment. Fleischer is aware of this and capitalises on what these players expect from his movie---even more 'Uncharted' but *not too much*.



Inclusion of jaw dropping action sequences inspired by the games and Nathan's humour are a few among many other core components that one would expect from any work of entertainment produced under the banner of 'Uncharted'. The film too, encompasses the basis of all Uncharted games, that is, **NO ONE CAN BE TRUSTED**. On the other hand, the movie is based on Magellan's Voyage while the games follow the tale of Sir Francis Drake. This was a wonderful creative choice that worked very well with audiences exposed to the franchise before. As a player, it was refreshing to follow Magellan's tale rather than what the games followed for nine full years!

As an action-adventure movie, Uncharted also performs well in entertaining those who are unaware of the franchise, or generally remain aloof from video- games. These alien eyes get to see what they have been missing out on ever since the release of Uncharted: Drake's Fortune, the first instalment in the franchise. The movie enthralls these viewers with its stunning visuals and intensity. The element of humour is well-coordinated and the story is not too fast, which helps the movie to 'cling onto the viewers'.

Apart from Fleischer and the production houses, the actors deserve praise too. Tom Holland plays the protagonist Nathan Drake, the main character of Uncharted, and is the centre of attraction in the film. His performance convinces viewers that he is the perfect choice to play an iconic character like Drake. He could accurately grasp the comic and slightly immature character of Drake with a touch of his own sense of humour, to such an extent, that his character in the movie feels like Nathan Drake and Peter Parker at the same time. As a Marvel and Uncharted fan, I absolutely loved it!

In the games, Chloe Frazer is a very easily lovable character but the last person one can trust. Her ventures are largely driven by her personal ambitions and she could go to any extent to acquire what she desires. She has also been Drake's love interest. This character is played so well in the film by Sophia Taylor Ali that even a non-Uncharted fan would love and hate her simultaneously (like the players do) after watching the movie. Ali even makes efforts to learn Chloe's accent which showcases the cast and crew's dedication.

Mark Wahlberg, who carries the experience of playing a father-like figure from his previous films, does the same in Uncharted. He plays Victor Sullivan, who is a father figure and mentor to Drake in the games. Without any doubt, all the actors in the film have done a commendable job.





A live action adaptation needs a plot that is simply based on the games and not a mere recreation. When fans are deprived of the excessive dependence of the movie on the games, the hidden essence of the film is perceived by them. Essentially, as mentioned earlier, fans need just the ‘feel’ of the games and not the entirety. Understand this analogy: a dish (live-action film) is dressed with sauce (plot) and seasoned with herbs (video-game references). This factor is probably even a substantial success criterion for such films. For example, the filmmakers chose not to make Sir Francis Drake the pivot of the movie’s narrative unlike the games while concurrently preserving the intense atmosphere of trust issues evident in the games.

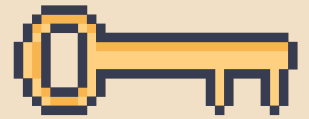
Similarly, the entire plane sequence was adapted from the memorable chapter - *Into The Desert* from *Uncharted: Drake’s Deception*. The plane in the game flew over a desert while the one in the movie flew over an ocean. Such a strikingly similar scene fulfilled its purpose of simply providing the feel without being a complete remake. The auction scene in the movie was akin to the one in *Uncharted: A Thief’s End*. Again, a few minute changes could do the work.



The loss of a greater part of the ultimate treasure, Sullivan’s iconic moustache and Cuban cigar in the post-credit scene and the accent of Chloe throughout the film are three instances where small details derived from the games worked really well. To summarise, the makers knew how to create the perfect blend using adequate *sauce* and *herbs*.

The movie also has its own flaws and a very few cliché moments. A very plausible question is: how did the two ships laden with treasure manage to remain concealed despite being hidden deep in a cave with a wide cavity on top, for so many years? It could easily have been spotted owing to the size of the opening. Another feature about the film is that it feels very incomplete (for good). There are many stones in the plot that are unturned. Nevertheless, these simply arouse questions in the minds of viewers. This is a clever way of creating the hype for *Uncharted’s* sequels. The ending and the post-credit scene of the film leaves the audience on a cliff-hanger and in a way, compels them to anticipate the plot of the next film! Drake and Sullivan were dumbstruck in the post-credit scene and what they saw still remains a mystery.





Is Jo dead? There is a popular technique among filmmakers that compels viewers to believe that a certain character is dead for a certain period of time, who isn't really dead and appears out of nowhere in the future. Has Fleischer planned something similar with Jo? This is something the audience doesn't know! Maybe she dived under the water so quickly that she managed to avoid the brunt of the impact of the ship that fell towards her. The film also teases Sam, Drake's elder brother who has been a protagonist in the games and also a prisoner. An obvious question arises: will Sam join the adventures of Drake in the immediate sequel of *Uncharted*? All such questions may remain unanswered but certainly point out the possibility that the makers planned something more than just the first film!

Therefore, I highly recommend Fleischer's *Uncharted* to people who are unaware of the video game series and even more to those who are versed with the *Uncharted* franchise already. The 166 minutes long runtime makes it very rewatchable as a standalone film. One can stream the movie on Netflix. Even though the official IMDB rating is 6.4/10, I strongly believe that it deserves a rating that's above 8.5/10. As a fan, I am really grateful to the makers for making this film as it helped me to move on from the Nathan Drake saga in the games that came to an end with *Uncharted 4*. As of now, following Holland's Drake seems fun and I expect the sequels to answer my trove of questions.

On a concluding note, yes, *Uncharted* (2022) is an ideal live-action adaptation of a video game franchise, especially a popular one. Other studios certainly have something to learn from the makers of *Uncharted* regarding the far-sighted vision and the execution of the film. Maybe, this is the dawn of a new era in the history of this genre. Will we be able to see more live-action adaptations after the courage and brilliance shown by the filmmakers of *Uncharted*? Only time will tell, until then, kudos to the team of *Uncharted*!





ART BY ARMAAN

EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE:

THE CINEMA THAT DEFINED THE DECADE

A perfect collage of cultural identity, maximalist symbolism and the chaos that makes us human--the Daniel's 2022 film speaks to the diverse sensibilities of a society that is fragmented by interconnected. Every shot explores how we define our fates.

The film reshaped how we think about multiverses and the concept of infinite choices, centering (for perhaps the first time in several histories) the story of a 50-something Chinese-American mother, entrepreneur, and person, as she navigates her relationships with her family but make it surreal sci-fi battle scenes (as illustrated above).

THE WEB OF LIFE AND DESTINY:

Armaan F.D.'s review of

SPIDER-MAN

ACROSS THE SPIDER-VERSE

——LIGHT SPOILERS AHEAD!! ——

Ah, Spider-Man: Across The Spider-Verse.. Where can I even begin with my feelings towards this movie? Almost 5 years ago, when its predecessor Into The Spider-Verse released, I thought to myself, "This is the absolute peak of movies. It can never get better than this." 4 years, 6 months, and a 136 minute movie later, I cannot believe how wrong I was. Across takes elements from all over the Spider-Man mythos, and uses them to create a beautiful tribute and look at the iconic character.

Of course, there's the animation. It's almost a moot point to say "Across the Spider-Verse has beautiful animation", since that's one of the main takeaways everyone can have from the movie, but honestly? It's an understatement. The movie takes cues from its predecessors medium-defining animation, and takes it a step further. Some highlights for me were Gwen's beautiful, paint-like universe full of bright vibrant colours, and Hobie's punk-rock cutout style that blew me away upon first watch. Of course, I need to mention Pavitr Prabhakar's inclusion; seeing representation of the culture and city I grew up in in an entry of my favourite franchise ever was something really special. (Don't you DARE call it 'chai tea'.)



Artwork by Armaan F.D.

But aside from what most people's takeaways would have you believe, this movie isn't simply eye-candy. The transcendent animation itself is simply a companion to the movie's captivating story, impressive voice acting and amazing music. (Seriously, Daniel Pemberton's score AND Metro Boomin's soundtrack? We were blessed.) This movie is such an intensely layered web (Get it?) of detail, love, and attention. Across the Spider-Verse continues to display how animation isn't just a genre, and it is truly pure cinema. As a fan of Spider-Man and animation itself as a medium, I feel no shame in saying this is my favourite movie of all time.

11/10. A simple scale of 1 to 10 is less than this movie deserves, honestly.



OPPENHEIMER

Sahana Radhakrishnan, IBDP-2

We all know the line. J Robert Oppenheimer's famous words after creating the first atomic bomb: "I am become death. Destroyer of worlds."

With a career as monumental as his, it's no wonder his inevitable biopic would be directed by one of the greatest directors alive right now: Christopher Nolan, who also wrote the script for the movie. The film depicts Oppenheimer's life, the story of how he discovered theoretical physics and eventually led the (in)famous Manhattan project. Nolan integrates visuals with stellar soundtrack and the use of eerie silence to amplify events and Oppenheimer's emotions into a movie that deserves all the attention it has gotten from the internet the past few months. A movie that deserves to go down as one of the best movies of the year.

Let's start with the positives: Ludwig Göransson (who has composed tracks for other media like *Community* and *New Girl*) does a stellar job with the soundtrack, making it beautiful with a sense of incoming doom, much like the way Oppenheimer himself viewed his bomb. Nolan uses these with complete silence to intensify the emotional value of the scenes. For instance, when the bomb first goes off, there is no sound – not from the characters, not from the soundtrack, not from the explosive itself; it is allowed to revel in its simultaneous beauty and horror, as seen from the perspective of the scientists in the project. The words "I am become death. Destroyer of worlds" are uttered by Oppenheimer, and are followed by the deafening explosion of the bomb, heralding all the damage it is going to do to the world, to America, and to him.

The script is, on the most part, beautifully written, with most characters being fleshed out to a great degree; the motives of most characters are understood and the lines don't feel cheap and shoved in just for the sake of a cool Tiktok or Reels edit (songs that sound amazing for the fifteen seconds a reel allows them to have but sound abysmal for the remaining 3 minutes of its runtime, I'm looking at you). The actors also do a phenomenal job of delivering their lines. Robert Downey Jr's eerily calm tone revealing his involvement in the 'Oppenheimer incident' got the entire theatre to gasp around me. While I don't think the Ken-nergy of Ryan Gosling could ever meet its match, Downey Jr's acting was skilled in its own way. Emily Blunt delivered her lines with efficiency, and I was able to empathise with her character despite her limited screentime.



The actor who truly stole the show, however, was Cillian Murphy, or J Robert Oppenheimer himself. I don't think I've ever seen an actor act with his eyes the way Murphy does. If Oppenheimer had been played by any other person, I truly believe I would have just pointed and laughed at these characters feeling bad about making a weapon of mass destruction. But with Murphy? I could empathise with him. I felt bad for him. I was able to understand why Oppenheimer did what he did. If he doesn't win Best Actor, I will eat my hat for dinner and this is a promise.

Now, on to the negatives. Florence Pugh's character was frankly dull, with her five minutes of screentime consisting of her being naked on camera and killing herself. The treatment of women in this movie was a significant issue, with the female scientist in the Manhattan Project getting less time on-screen than her male counterparts, and Emily Blunt having limited screentime and less personality than literally every male character in the movie, despite playing the role of Oppenheimer's wife.

This movie also does not touch on the fact that the Project destroyed the lives of several people in New Mexico due to the nuclear testing – both indigenous and non-indigenous people. It glosses over the suffering non-white people and other residents of New Mexico faced, and instead focuses only on the moral dilemma faced by the rich, (mostly) white scientists and politicians.

I think, after taking all this into consideration, I would give Oppenheimer a solid 8.5/10; it was well directed, acted, and written, and Nolan's message could be (mostly) seen. It does, however, give a somewhat sanitised and male-centric view of the events which occurred, but if you can get past those things, it is an amazing watch and I recommend everyone see it at least once.

IV

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a glowing, warm-toned incandescent lightbulb. The hand is positioned palm-up, with the thumb and index finger supporting the base of the bulb. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

MIND
& BODY

Can you hear me

Ishana



Art & Caption by Ishana Tibrewala, IBDP-2

With the help of social media everyone is able to put forth their opinions. Yet, these opinions are not necessarily heard in the large influx of voices in the media. From my perspective I feel voices go unheard even if they have been given a platform. Even after being heard there no change has been made or no help given. Many individuals do not get the appropriate attention to what they want henceforth feel misunderstood and unheard.

Voices get frequently ignored...



Inside the Mind of Sherlock Holmes

by Vani Sharma, 9D

A long trench coat, a magnifying glass and an exceptional mind—thirsty for a new case to solve. I think we'd be lying if we said that Sherlock Holmes' immense intelligence hasn't captured our imagination and been an object of envy.

Though Detective Holmes is a fictional character, I recently began to ponder on whether it is possible to think and analyse information the way he can.

Sherlock's problem-solving technique relies on observation, deduction, and logic, all of which are skills that can be developed by common people easily enough. So what sets him apart?

Well, along with these important skills comes the understanding of mindfulness. Sherlock analyses the world, the situations around him with full consciousness, which allows him to engage his surroundings from a completely different perspective.

So what is mindfulness? It can be put as simply as the state of being conscious or aware of something. One might ask, if I am consciously experiencing my daily life, doesn't that mean I am being mindful?

The answer will be no.

While we are experiencing what is going on around us, we are not truly being mindful of it. And that's exactly where Holmes can one up us.

The greatest difference between Holmes' system of thinking and ours is how we spend our attention. Attention is a limited resource, and one that cannot be spent in multiple foregrounds all at once. Attention is also closely related to observation and deduction, for example; if you pay close attention and observe all the apparatus in the chemistry lab, you may completely miss out on what the teacher is saying. The Sherlock thinking pattern has been trained to focus on details of importance; first by analysing the bigger picture and then deciding what to focus minutely on.

We shouldn't confuse mindlessness for mindfulness. Passive absorption of information around us, without analysing and engaging it, is useless. We must shift our thinking pattern to active awareness, by having mindful interactions with the world.

Now let's get to whether it is possible for us to adopt his way of thinking.

William James, father of modern psychology wrote that ‘The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgement, character and will.’ To put it simply: training the mind to stay focused and attentive is the key to achieving mindful presence. And how can we do that?

The answer to this is unsurprising; the single powerful step to attaining this state of mind comes from **meditation**.

Recent studies have shown that meditation **for just 15 minutes a day** can help us become more insightful and productive, encouraging an actively aware approach to situations around us. Once our brain has adapted to the pattern of mindful thinking other skills will follow.

However, while training our brain to work in the Holmes pattern of thinking, we will encounter hurdles as our brains are adapted to paying minimal attention in multiple directions; our species is often found scrolling through instagram while doing homework, or eating dinner while watching Netflix and keeping track of the cricket score simultaneously.

However, **hope is not lost**; it is very much possible to attain mindfulness and shift to a Holmes way of thinking, and when you do, grab that trench coat, find yourself a magnifying glass and set to work!





(The Ireland

Syndrome)

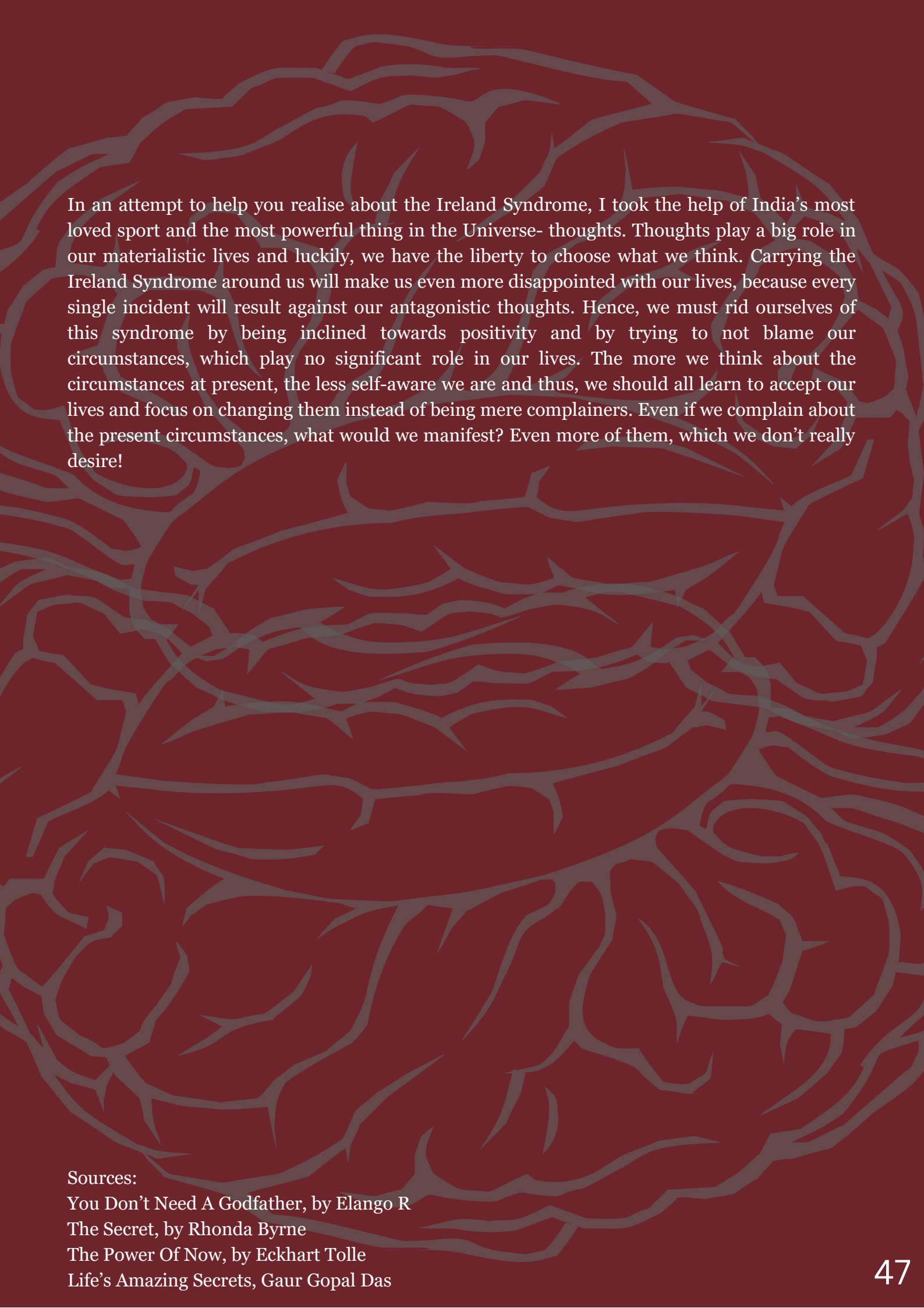
by Aaditya Sawant, IBDP-2

What could the Ireland Syndrome be? To understand this, consider a hypothetical cricket match between Ireland and India. India doesn't play well in contrast to what it usually does, which makes the Indian audience dull and disappointed. They came to see the match with high hopes from the home team but were witnessing their very hopes shattered. They are unhappy with the Indian team's performance so they blame the Irish team for its outperformance. This is where the syndrome gets its name from. The audience with the Ireland Syndrome would never think of questioning the shortcomings of the Indian Team, but would wholeheartedly criticise the Irish team. Isn't this wrong?

We experience this in so many ways in real life. "Why did she get a special mention in the MUN wherein I was the one to author the directive?" I call this a hypocritical mindset. Why are our minds trained to accuse others before scrutinising ourselves?

Blaming others won't help but would rather not only hamper our relation with the accused, but also cause damage to our own selves. In context of the match, imagine if like many of us, the Indian team would continue cribbing about Ireland's outperformance and accuse them of various crimes such as tampering with the ball, for the rest of the tournament. This is the least feasible way to go about with failures. Failures shall be embraced and worked upon and not cribbed about. If the Indian team proceeds with this attitude of blaming their opponents, they would never be able to win the match! They must scrutinise and realise the shortcomings about themselves first in order to improvise.

This syndrome also has ties with the laws of manifestation. As the Principles of Manifestation by Bob Doyle in Rhonda Byrne's *The Secret* suggests, our perspectives shape the world around us and what we attract. According to Boyle, the Universe is biased towards positivity, which we as humans should naturally be. It is more likely to be considered 'pro' feelings than 'anti' feelings. For example, in terms of the match, the Indian audience thought more about the 'anti-Irish' feelings than the 'pro-India' feelings. Consequently, the Universe by the Law of Manifestation, translated the anti-Irish feelings as pro-Irish feelings. This made the Irish team play well for the rest of the match, for, their victory was manifested by the Irish audience as well as unconsciously by the Indians as well.



In an attempt to help you realise about the Ireland Syndrome, I took the help of India's most loved sport and the most powerful thing in the Universe- thoughts. Thoughts play a big role in our materialistic lives and luckily, we have the liberty to choose what we think. Carrying the Ireland Syndrome around us will make us even more disappointed with our lives, because every single incident will result against our antagonistic thoughts. Hence, we must rid ourselves of this syndrome by being inclined towards positivity and by trying to not blame our circumstances, which play no significant role in our lives. The more we think about the circumstances at present, the less self-aware we are and thus, we should all learn to accept our lives and focus on changing them instead of being mere complainers. Even if we complain about the present circumstances, what would we manifest? Even more of them, which we don't really desire!

Sources:

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Portraiture

art by Vihaan Bhatia, 9A



"PATTERNS"

by Armaan F. D.

Patterns



comic by Armaan Dadyburjor



"Self-portrait, 2022" by Armaan Dadyburjor

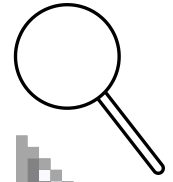
V



SCIENCE & TECH

SCI-FI MOVIES BECOME REAL? HUMAN IDENTITY CHIPS: A NEW FUTURE

BY AMRIT RATHI, 10C



From shows to stories, human identity chips have found their way everywhere. A perfect picture of a horrifying universe where an evil organisation controls all the citizens. Well...that slowly might be becoming a reality---a serious possibility but not entirely.

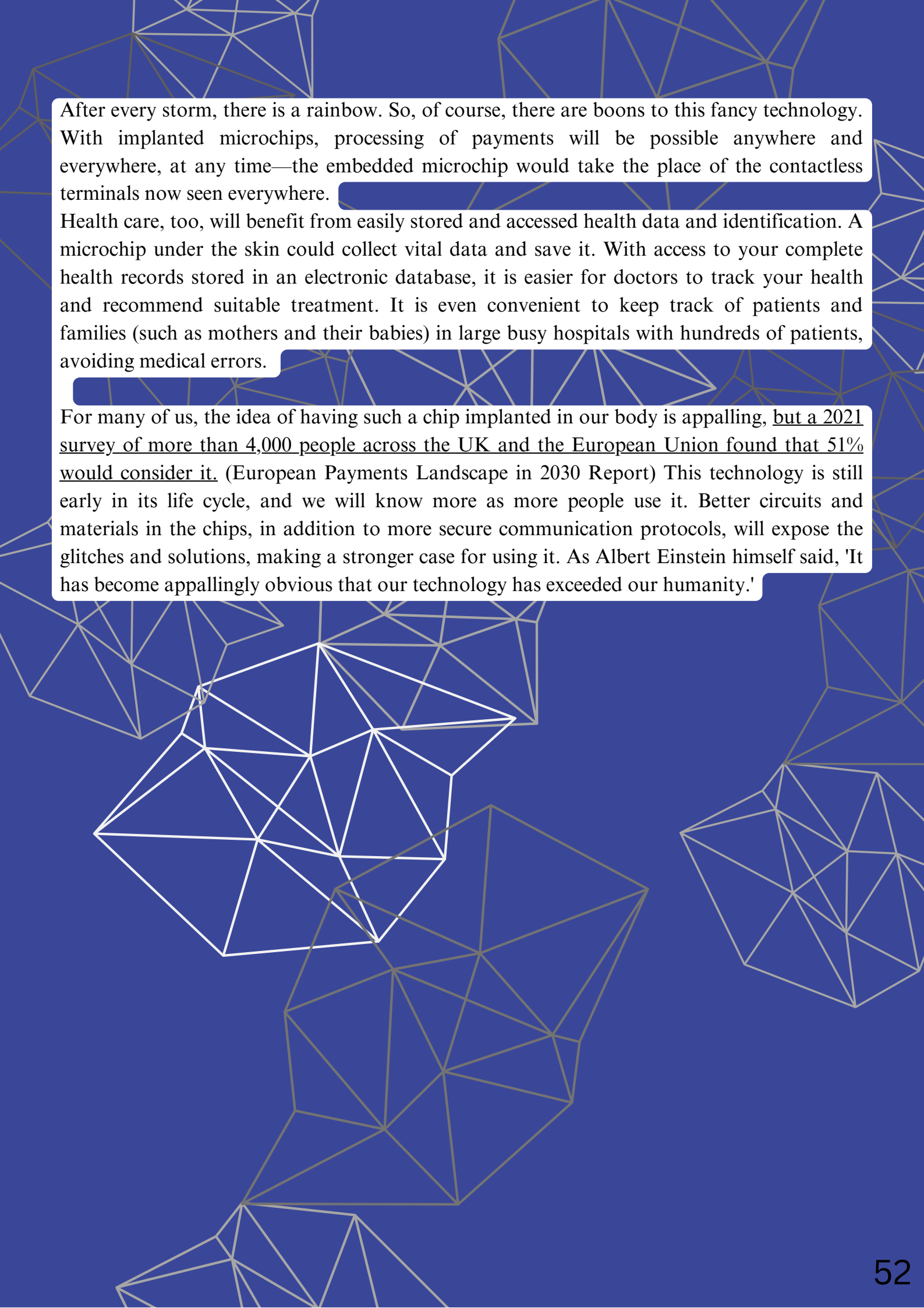
Technology keeps merging closer to our bodies, from smartwatches to earphones, and it is now getting under our skin literally. A microchip was first implanted into a human back in 1998, but it is only during the past decade that the technology has been available commercially.

The cons of such technology go without saying: there is always a dark side that has a potential for abuse. The main challenges facing the implementation of microchips can be summarised in three words; security, safety, and privacy. They are the pillars of any potential user's trust in new technology. Researchers also point out that implanting chips in humans have the same privacy and security implications as those raised by the rest of the devices that connect and exchange our personal data. Cameras in public places, facial recognition apps, the tracking of our locations, and our spending histories—to name a few examples—are already being collected and stored by every device for analysis later.

Firstly, companies that manufacture and program microchips often need access to the chips to be updated. With this, upgrades and new features are part of any product's life span, but this might be difficult for something implemented inside your body—an embedded microchip is not a smartwatch that can be replaced at a shop or mailed to the manufacturer. Also, the process could be painful and risky, with possible technical glitches.

Then there are to obvious ethical concerns. It is one thing for animals to have microchips to identify them (which has been going on for years); there is no need to gain informed consent. Nevertheless, now the industry is dealing with humans—who should be able to decide whether or not they want the chips tied to them for a lifetime and who may change their mind at a later date. In addition, some repressive governments may attempt to force the chips on specific groups, giving authorities the power to monitor them for their entire lives.

In addition, regardless of whether it is active or passive, a microchip requires a communication channel that uses Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, or a mobile network between the microchip and its receivers—opening up an opportunity for hackers to take control over your chip remotely and gain access to what you have stored on the chip—or even worse, altering or damaging it with many consequences.



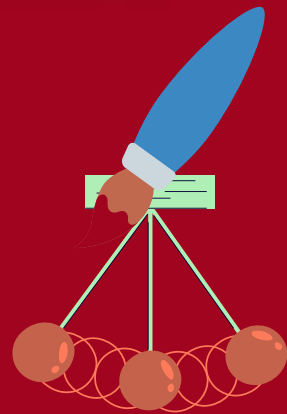
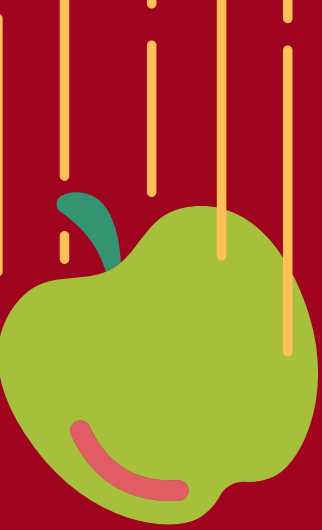
After every storm, there is a rainbow. So, of course, there are boons to this fancy technology. With implanted microchips, processing of payments will be possible anywhere and everywhere, at any time—the embedded microchip would take the place of the contactless terminals now seen everywhere.

Health care, too, will benefit from easily stored and accessed health data and identification. A microchip under the skin could collect vital data and save it. With access to your complete health records stored in an electronic database, it is easier for doctors to track your health and recommend suitable treatment. It is even convenient to keep track of patients and families (such as mothers and their babies) in large busy hospitals with hundreds of patients, avoiding medical errors.

For many of us, the idea of having such a chip implanted in our body is appalling, but a 2021 survey of more than 4,000 people across the UK and the European Union found that 51% would consider it. (European Payments Landscape in 2030 Report) This technology is still early in its life cycle, and we will know more as more people use it. Better circuits and materials in the chips, in addition to more secure communication protocols, will expose the glitches and solutions, making a stronger case for using it. As Albert Einstein himself said, 'It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity.'

Art in Physics: a Glimpse into How we Conceive the Inconceivable.

V. Shiv Vale IBDP-2



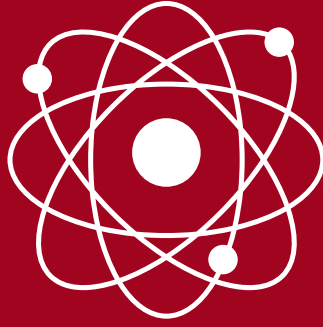
For centuries, the field of Physics has been a purely empirical pursuit, with observations which range from *easy* to merely *possible* to make. While this took imaginative leaps, an era dawned in the latter half of the last century which I would argue elevates it to an Artform. String Theory: an umbrella term; a style hundreds of painters could employ for millions of paintings of the universe; **a collection of models which consider “strings” as the fundamental building-blocks of the universe.**

Note that I do not possess any particular authority; this is merely my opinion. My knowledge comes from a basic 10-lecture series by Prof. Leonard Susskind (a developer of the theory).

In virtually all other areas of Physics, current technology can make empirical verifications, unlike in String Theory, which has no experimental means of investigation. Thus methods other than observing and explaining were employed. One limitation stems from size: even if electrons are made of strings, you still cannot look *inside* an electron for them.

So how did Scientists come up with String Theory? They noticed that some particle interactions (if not all), like the Strong Force, act in ways very similar to strings and decided to explore! But that's just the beginning; next is the prediction of the existence of *26 dimensions* (including time). Relying on equally creative Maths, Theorists realised that strings needed more than three ways to wiggle to resemble real things (like light) so gave them 25 (plus time). Both show the artist's eye for metaphorical connections and their willingness to cross all boundaries for *beauty*.





I would say that unlike the older, linear Physics of ‘yes’ and ‘no’, this newer form is more like a puzzle, with pieces from every part of Physics and Maths with a paintbrush for flair; a puzzle which can be arranged into millions of possible ways all equally possible but only one perfect. A particle and its antiparticle meet each other and annihilate; a D-brane is a structure to which string ends are attached. Similarity? Well, if two ends meet, they are no longer ends! They are free to leave our 3-dimensional D-brane slice and wander the 25-dimensional world, “annihilated”.

We are in an exciting era of Physics; hopefully its Magnum Opus.

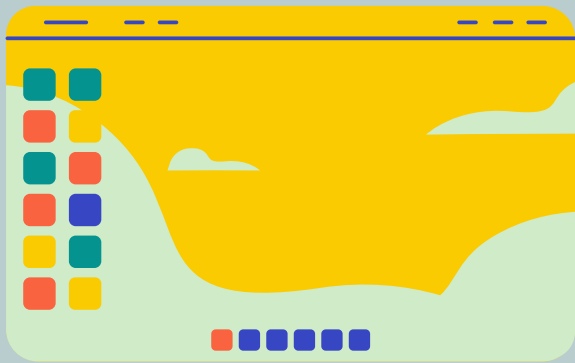
As promised, this is but a glimpse into the layered metaphors which arise from the **Theorists’ adoption of the artist’s toolkit to compensate for the experimentalists’**.

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CHINA GROWING ITS OWN OPERATING SYSTEM?: DHRUV BEHL IBDP 2



The logo of this new operating system -
Credit: It's Fox News

As typical consumers of technology, the majority of us likely utilize the widely popular operating system, Windows, with a significant portion also opting for Mac. However, for those with a more advanced technological mind, another available option is Linux. Recently, China introduced its own operating system, OpenKylin, which is now available for public use. Let us delve deeper into its specifics. So why was it created in the first place? It is common knowledge that China harbours a preference for domestically developed software over Western technologies, in an effort to reduce reliance on foreign entities. This preference served as the driving force behind the development of OpenKylin, the latest addition to China's growing repertoire of homegrown technology. In 2014, China also unveiled a mobile operating system called COS (China Operating System) to decrease the number of Android and iOS users.

CHINA GROWING ITS OWN OPERATING SYSTEM?: DHRUV BEHL IBDP 2

What is it exactly?

Initially released in 2001, Kylin OS is derived from a Linux-based distribution called FreeBSD. Subsequent versions also incorporated a more user-friendly distribution known as Ubuntu as their foundation. Recently, an open-source version of this operating system was released for general use by the Chinese population. However, it was originally intended for use by government officials and military personnel. The development of OpenKylin involved the contributions of over 4000 developers, 74 Special Interest Groups, and more than 200 Chinese enterprises.



2 A quite nice operating system, looking like a cross between macOS and Windows. Credit: Desde Linux

CHINA GROWING ITS OWN OPERATING SYSTEM?: DHRUV BEHL IBDP 2

OpenKylin supports the ARM, RISC-V, and x86 architectures, meaning that the vast majority of personal computers manufactured within the past two decades should be capable of running this operating system. By including support for the emerging ARM technology, China appears to be future-proofing OpenKylin in the event that ARM dominates the industry. While OpenKylin can certainly be run on a standard personal computer, it can also be utilized on more specialized devices such as Raspberry Pi, Arduino, HiFive, and other engineering development boards.



3 The range of platforms on which KylinOS can run on. Credit: Aroged

CHINA GROWING ITS OWN OPERATING SYSTEM?: DHRUV BEHL IBDP 2

Interestingly, macOS is derived from a Unix-like operating system and shares many similarities with Linux systems. One such similarity is the way in which macOS handles multiple windows. Every Linux operating system has a desktop environment, and for macOS, this is called Aqua (if you have a Mac and open “Activity Monitor” to search for “WindowServer,” you can see your window manager in action!). While most Linux operating systems use KDE, Plasma, or GNOME as their desktop environment, OpenKylin employs its own independently developed UKUI (Ultimate Kylin User Interface) to handle GUI functionality. The result is a clean and visually appealing interface.



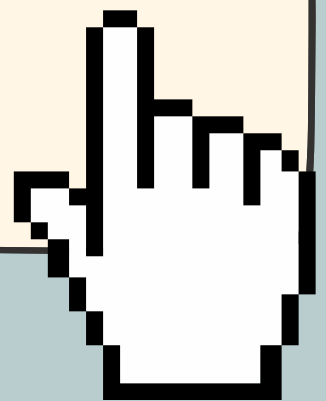
4 An image of KylinOS running on a tablet similar to an iPad. Credit: ARY News

CHINA GROWING ITS OWN OPERATING SYSTEM?:

DHRUV BEHL IBDP 2

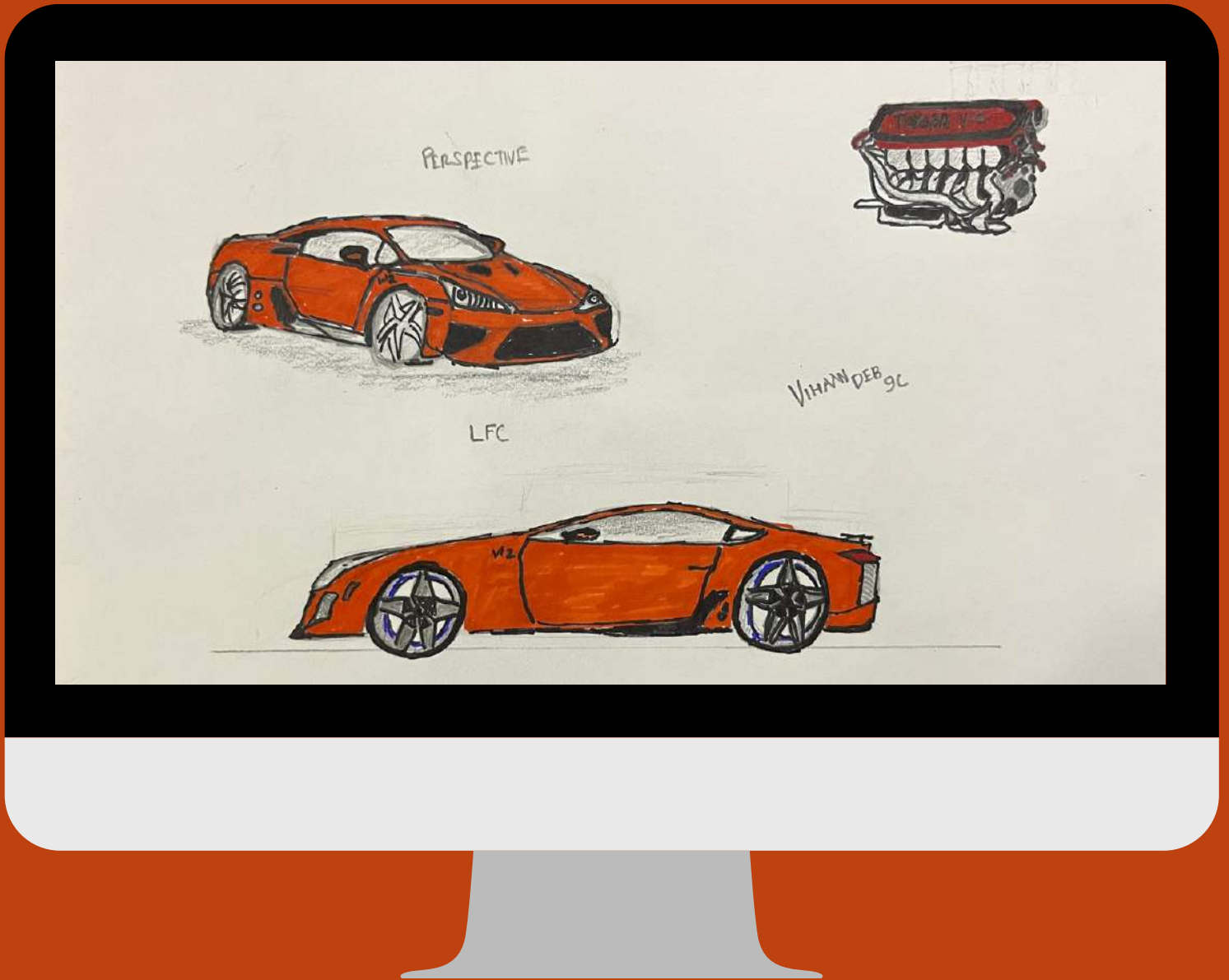
SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US MAC AND WINDOWS USERS?

Not much really. Linux has quite a bad reputation as a daily driver operating system due to its lack of compatibility with many of the applications most of us use on a day to day basis, not the fault of Linux but more so the fault of the developers of the applications *ahmm* Microsoft *ahmm*. As such, due to OpenKylin being based off of Linux, it's not expected to arrive in our hands anytime soon. However, with a growing distaste for mac and windows emerging on the horizon due to a lack of innovation and lack of privacy, many people have started to consider to switch to Linux, and at the rate that Linux usage is increasing, we might even start seeing the effects of it by tomorrow!



Cars....

art by Vihaan Deb, 10C



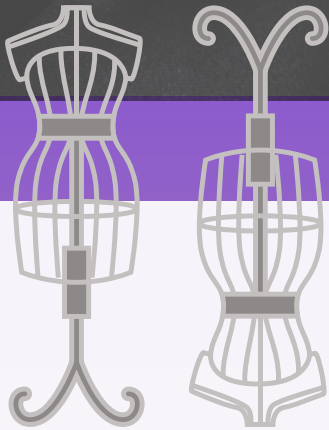
A photograph of a sewing workshop. In the foreground, a white garment hangs on the left. In the center, a sewing machine sits on a table, surrounded by spools of thread and fabric. A window is visible in the background on the right.

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FASHION

The Slow Descent of Wardrobe Oppression

by Haniyyah Katyal , 10C



In the boundless expanse of the world of fashion, society has been the dictator of stereotypical trends and the prisoner of individuality. Sure, globalization is gradually breaking down the tough wall separating masculinity and femininity emanated through clothes, though how often have you spotted a man donning a blouse and stilettos on the street? Such a gesture is largely viewed as a public statement, when it really is an attribute of oneself.

The conventional idea that pants are for boys and skirts are for girls wasn't rooted in the social construct before the eighteen hundreds. The Post-Vedic Era in India had both men and women wearing "antariyas", gold jewelry and ornate footwear as status symbols. In fact, the intricacy of your clothing was a determining factor of your social rank, discounting of gender. As the next century brought industrialization with it, this former route of fashion deviated immensely. Meekness, elegance and sensitivity were anchored as typical feminine traits, while males took on simplicity, strength and assertiveness. So much so, that any flamboyant garments were deemed unsuitable for men-primarily due to the introduction of business attire and class distinction in society. Thereafter, widespread media representation of cliched standards instilled gender conformities in the audiences, which eventually turned them into norms.

Growing up, boys are constantly made to believe things like "being tough is par for the course" or "you can't wear pink, it's too girly". This frame of thought is a facet of masculinity essentially translating to power and dominance, which is where a cardinal polarity of double standards arises. A man in a dress would easily earn sniggers, foul looks or malignant flak on twitter. But women are lauded for instigating their road to milk and honey in a suit. The well-known idiom of "wearing the pants in the family" is directly attached to command being a masculine characteristic; femininity has been brought down to submission and the character of a follower rather than a leader. Hence, dressing like a girl is esteemed as a loss of authority, almost as if it were an expletive.

Leading lights of pop culture like Harry Styles and Billy Porter have been admired for getting past these standards and dressing under their own discretion. Male models are especially embracing the flexibility of fashion. The London Fashion Week has dispensed the need to separate menswear and womenswear, so have designers in their clothing stores.

The emerging generation is ostensibly in favor of this evolution too. A fashion student in Dubai remarks, “I feel like it's a very positive movement, it shows how humans are evolving to accept people and not discriminate against one's fashion choices. It shows the appreciation of cultural values as well, considering the way Egyptians and Arabians used to face disapproval of their attire. I believe fashion is the portrayal of your inner beauty and I find it impressive how people find joy in expressing that freely.”

Although the revitalization of this concept has been prominent in past few years, the average man, however, would be too ashamed to disturb the norms. Clothes aren't fabricated with the goal of serving a particular gender's aesthetic, and so they shouldn't be marketed like they are. They are indescribable, only elucidated by the person who chooses to wear them. The carte blanche and the liberation that make up integral parts of fashion are yet to be unveiled by the entirety of the globe.

Radical indifference is yet to be achieved as a society. Complete revolution is yet on the horizon.

FASHION AND MUSIC: THE ULTIMATE TANGO

HOW BOTH INDUSTRIES ARE INTERDEPENDENT

BY HANIYYAH KATYAL , 10C

Music is not just limited to sound that makes you want to break into a dance, it has the power to unite individuals, make them feel understood, it's something to bond over. It's a medium we can express ourselves through. But then again, so is fashion, being a true art form that has saturated every aspect of human culture, and a tool for self-empowerment. So where exactly do these two cross paths and to what extent are they interconnected?



On multiple occasions, the two industries have come together, producing the most dynamic visuals in history. I mean, can you really imagine how black and white the world would be without them? The exclusive designs donned by artists in their music videos quickly make their way to being the talk of the fashion industry, setting trends that live on for a long amount of time. There is evidence throughout history of music's influence on fashion.



THE 1970s: THE DISCO FASHION ERA

Starting off in the 70s, the disco fashion era picked up elements from the 60s and exhibited female and male liberation. This era was built on a dance floor, so it is inevitable that fashion played a vital role in fulfilling the disco experience all while taking care of the venue and music. Together, John Travolta's white three-piece suit from *Saturday Night Fever*, and Diane Von Furstenberg's wrap dress were definitely the climax of this era. Shoes, furthermore, were just the icing on the cake. Not just women, but men too wouldn't hesitate to put on a pair of chunky high heels. The dance floor was now loud and bizarre, like a replica of Disneyland where anyone could be anything they wanted.



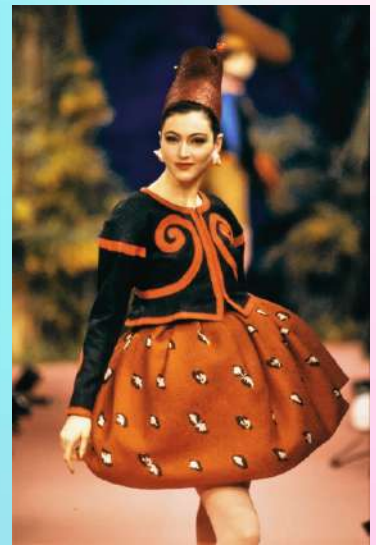


THE 1980s IN BIG AND BOLD



During the 80s, much was happening in the world of music. The pop artist “Prince”, revealed his fierce and adventuresome personality by pushing the boundaries as far as possible. His diverse palette consisted of velvets, purples, golds and the iconic animal print, a signifier of the birth of goth music inspired by deathrock mimicking gloom and shadows.

Amongst the boatload of upcoming designers collaborating with artists, were Christian Lacroix and Drew Bernstein. Lacroix’s designs, on the contrary, were filmy, flirtatious and floaty. His clothes emphasized plentitude and saturation. He dressed big names like Madonna, Rihanna, Sarah Jessica Parker, and the list doesn’t end there. Drew Bernstein founded the Lip Service clothing company in 1985, lured by the spell of glam and deathrock. After having given one of his jackets to the singer Axl Rose from Guns N’ Roses to enrobe, his sales skyrocketed and a significant trend ensued.



THE 1990s: SPEAKING IN RAP BATTLES AND BREAK DANCES



During this era, rap battles and breakdancing became a medium of communication to put across feelings, thoughts and social injustices of the time. Halter-necks, crop tops, jelly shoes and tracksuits became the centerpieces of this subculture. Another exhibit was gangster fashion. Celebrities like Tupac, Snoop Dogg and Diddy were seen showing off double-breasted suits, textured alligator shoes, and silk shirts.

Before diving deep into the world of fashion, Tommy Hilfiger was an aspiring rockstar. After Snoop Dogg was spotted performing at the Saturday Night Live show wearing a red, blue and white rugby shirt, everyone wanted one, including the most influential stars in the R&B and pop industry. That marked him as one of the first to create an uncontrolled promotion in the golden era of hip-hop. Usher, Gwen Steffani, T.L.C and Destiny’s Child were a few of the many artists he dressed.





PRESENT DAY

Fast-forwarding to decades later, music artists continue to strongly influence the fashion industry and have a more significant impact on the “snazzy and chic” generational style . Constantly cosigning labels, and brand deals and building their own clothing lines, they have a hold over fashion like never before.



Beginning in 2010, popular artists like Drake, Rihanna and Kanye west heavily impacted what's trending and what isn't. At present, it's hard to spot a well-known artist without a brand deal or endorsement. For instance, Kanye West, the rapper and owner of Yeezy, a brand that has altered the course of streetwear as we know it today. Even though rap music considerably affects fashion, other genres are no less. For instance, Billie Eilish is creating her own definition of style. With her baggy outfits and neon beanies, she has individuals across the globe wearing t-shirts with her name and face all over them. Now that's what you call heavy influence. Rihanna also has a cosmetics brand called Fenty Beauty that was established in 2017.

All these creators have myriads of fans and followers with figures going up to millions. Their fans certainly do not miss a chance to sport garments designed by brands owned by their favorite celebrities. Hence forming a trend that impacts the fashion industry as a whole.

One influences the other and vice versa, giving way to a never-ending shift of trends. Music is an ever-changing animal that mirrors fashion in numerous ways, and without the firm rapport these two industries have with each other, entertainment would cease to exist.

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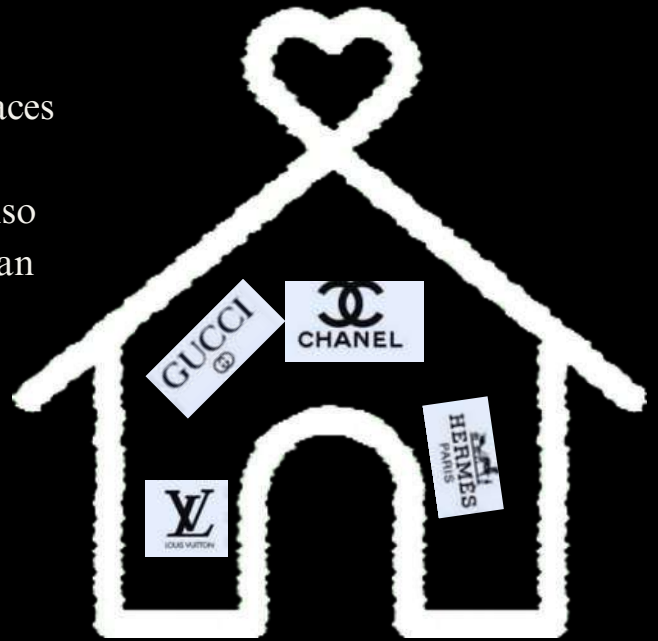
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LEADING FASHION HOUSES AND THEIR INFLUENCE

BY PARI KRIPLANI, 10C

Each year in the fashion industry, a new trend surfaces becoming a straw that stirs the drink of revolution. A revolution that not only tosses out the old, but also embraces the new. Fashion is not just clothing, it's an art, a passion that creates a dream and designs a vision for life. Although, what is the creation without the creator? Art without the artist? The fashion without the designer? Like pieces of a puzzle, fashion and the designer just fit. Plenty of designers change fashion, with a cutting-edge hemline or a much-replicated outfit, but few have influenced the industry this monumentally.



From bending and testing the laws of fashion to achieving the unachievable, these designers really have done it all and it certainly hasn't been a walk in the park. To name a few, Gianni Versace would definitely be on top of the list in bold, just like his statement-making designs.

Fashion is entertainment. ”

Everyone knows that now and Gianni Versace made sure of it. That is what Versace did. He blew the cobwebs off haute couture, added a much-needed plethora of colours and cranked up the volume, transforming clothes into Pop.

Versace's creativity, efficient use of resources and his precisely calculated risk-taking are exactly what led him to become a pioneer in the fashion industry, influencing a multitude of individuals. Not just fashion designers and celebrities, but also visual artists, graphic designers, creators and the list goes on. In fact, Versace designs have been featured at the Victoria & Albert Museum, New York Museum, Museo del Traje, Madrid, and many more. He was among the first to fully recognize the true potential of models and their hold over the industry.

From square one, Versace has been all about challenging snobbery. His dresses were definitely not created along the lines of the rulebook, further proved by their unrestrained print, lavish glitz, or excessive display of bare skin. The colours celebrated the exuberance of fashion at street level and put it on the runway for the first time. Saying that Gianni Versace carved the path for international fashion with his keen eye for authenticity and his bravado, would not be a stretch. By tearing down barriers, he undoubtedly made his mark in history and incomparably impacted the future in fashion. When it comes to being the most influential female fashion designer, Coco Chanel certainly takes home the cake.

In order to be irreplaceable, one must always be different.

- Coco Chanel

”

The name Coco Chanel is often associated with fashion, simplicity and elegance. But how did she pave her way to becoming one of the most impactful designers in fashion history? It is no surprise that she did innumerable things differently in the fashion industry and had a colossal impact on women's rights. She influenced fashion forever with her fusion of women and men's wear, after she introduced pants that were inspired by her love for horse riding.

Coco Chanel created her revolutionary clothing line with the 'working woman' in consideration. After she freed women from confining corsets there was no stepping back. Her sophisticatedly simple designs pushed women to discard complicated and bothersome clothes like the 19th century petticoats and corsets.



Her creations highlight comfort and effortlessness reflecting her fashion belief that caused a significant breakthrough for the industry, changing it forever. This is visible in her iconic 'little black dress' that in today's world is seen as an essential in every wardrobe.

"A woman that does not wear perfume, is a woman without a future" was also rightly said by Coco Chanel and exhibited by her best known fragrance, Chanel No.5. She has made many other contributions to the fashion world, such as costume jewellery and the quilted purse, all of which helped her get to the top of the ladder.

To wrap it all up, let's end with probably the most misunderstood one on the list, none other than the creator of the most famous American fashion house : Calvin Klein. Though the name Calvin Klein may conjure up visions of a young male model in white boxers or jeans, the designer's footprint in fashion is much greater than that. He's known for founding a brand based on American minimalism in fashion that is truly an example of the phrase "Less is more".

Remarkably affecting everything starting from the popular grunge and hip hop era of the 1980s to minimalist evening fashion and women's wear in the current day. His very first creations demonstrated how underestimated simplicity was along with the contradiction and reward of restraint in simple dressing. His effect is also mirrored in the greater parts of the fashion pyramid as he transformed controlled minimalism into wonderfully uncomplicated silk slip dresses worn with lipstick and heels to multiple occasions including the Oscars. His casual style brought America to equal footing with Paris. The man behind the designer jeans craze of the 1970s, Calvin Klein has indeed built a fashion empire.

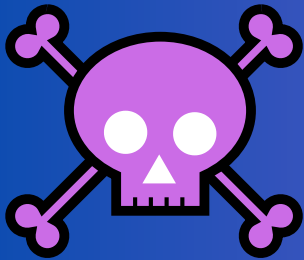
Ultimately, these fashion houses evidently dominate the industry, being the original trendsetters and creating footsteps for the future generations of designers to follow in. They sowed the seeds fashion needed in order to flourish, spread out its branches and bloom into the multi-billion dollar industry we know it is today.

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VIVIENNE WESTWOOD: A PUNK PIONEER

by Anushka Sriram, 10C



Vivienne Westwood passed away peacefully at her home in Clapham, London on 29th December 2022 at age 81. Widely recognized as a punk icon and the messiah of the new punk movement, Vivienne breathed life into cliched trends and defined 'in vogue'.

Born Vivienne Swire in a small village– Tintwistle– in Cheshire, she had fashion dreams from the start. At the University of Westminster, Swire pursued a course on jewelry and silversmithing. However, she soon dropped it, claiming the art world was not for her. As she took on other jobs she continued making her own jewelry. In 1962, she married Derek Westwood and received her memorable surname.

After a divorce and remarriage to Malcolm McLaren, Vivienne and Malcolm opened a shop together. The shop quickly grew into a meeting area for the early London punk scene. This is where she flourished, skyrocketing to fame with her provoking and contentious clothing. Ripped shirts, safety pins, political and provocative slogans - she was unafraid to challenge the norms of fashion. A rebel in the truest sense.



Vivienne inspired the style of punk icons often enough too. Viv Albertine wrote in her memoir that “Vivienne and Malcolm use clothes to shock, irritate and provoke a reaction but also to inspire change. They conveyed that it’s okay to not be perfect, to show the workings of your life and your mind in your songs and your clothes.”

Westwood's first runway show, in 1981, for her Pirates collection, was a cardinal step in the punk rebel becoming one of the fashion world's most revered stars. Despite the newfound fame she accumulated, Vivienne was adamant about remaining ever-changing and constantly inventing. She seamlessly melded punk and haute couture, creating a whole new niche of fashion. When the scandalous graphic tees became old, she moved on to devising the mini crini and more traditionally feminine clothes.



Westwood was additionally known to be quite the activist. In spite of the industry she was in (which was infamous for profiting off of sweatshops and unethical ways of producing clothes), she never budged on her beliefs. All her collections and items were ethically manufactured in Kenya and proudly said so on the tag.

From calling Margaret Thatcher a “once punk” to creating t-shirts with the phrase ‘i am not a terrorist, please don’t arrest me’ inscribed on them to protest the unlawful treatment of prisoners, Westwood believed in expressing her opinion. “We can only take democracy for granted if we insist on our liberty”, she declared. Though perhaps the biggest cause Vivienne stood for was climate change.

In an era where the pleas of scientists were ignored, Westwood donated and contributed to plenty of climate change funds, actively spoke out, and collaborated with people on the harmful impact caused. A huge focus in her life was creating sustainable reused clothing and encouraging other designers to do so.

In fact, she didn’t even like people purchasing her collections: she vehemently expressed her dislike for consumerism and conspicuous consumption. She was contradictory in a lot of ways. While she won several awards from the British Empire, she constantly showed up to receive them in outrageous pieces, grinning at the paparazzi.

Ultimately, it is fearless, appalling women like Vivienne Westwood who dare to dream, who dare to invent, and dare to challenge. An irreplaceable figure in the fashion industry, her presence will be missed by many. She is survived by her second husband and two sons.

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VII

SOCIETY & CULTURE

Heroes: navigating heroism

by Haniyyah Katyal, 10C

Whether actual or imagined, history has weaved a myriad of heroic figures onto its allegorical song and dance. Upon hearing the word “hero”, a lover of myths might think of the ancient Greeks, with the raging and unforgiving Achilles, the rebels of Theseus, Odysseus's shrewd art of war or the incredibly resilient Heracles. All of these were flawed humans, as well as of divine ability, but together they constructed perhaps the most violent account of bravery, especially considering the dramatized circumstances and extreme bloodshed that brought it to life. In doing so, they defied the perfect moral compass of a conventional modern-day hero.

If a hero was to be a savior of mankind; the heaven-sent gift for all, heads would probably turn towards the beloved Percy Jackson and Superman, or patriotic figures like Mahatma Gandhi and social activists like Malala Youzafsa, each of whom have brimmed with courage and an overwhelming sense of selflessness, all while undoubtedly surpassing the Greek heroes in the race of humility. Some would argue that cinematic heroes are interchangeable, and it is true that a bunch of astounding CGI effects can easily subdue the endurance and fortitude that real-time warriors experience in the most genuine, rawest form. Sometimes, we lose ourselves in the glamour of the big screen's depiction of the big-hearted which organically sets back the heroes' humanity has in the flesh.

Heroism in its most authentic essence exists without an ulterior motive-it is one-way and purely for the sake of others. Bravery is not limited to warfare and schemes. From saving the entire world to scurrying a child away from a highway car and everything in between, these actions require true empathy and an unrelenting desire to satisfy a moral code of conduct. A common misconception suggests that all heroes are larger than life, invincible, not to mention muscular and fit as a fiddle-an idea only strengthened by most of mainstream action, and even romances that generate and elevate this narrative time and time again.

In all actuality, everyone's definition of a hero is variable. To Fred Rogers, a hero is “anyone who does anything to help a child in his life”, and “an ordinary person who makes themselves extraordinary” to Gerard Way. With each inhalation, soldiers out there on the national borders determinedly shield every one of us with immeasurable love and grace. So, it may be that a hero would be someone who's ready to “die for something”, gaining victory over “cowardly self-preservation” as per J.R.R Tolkien's writings.

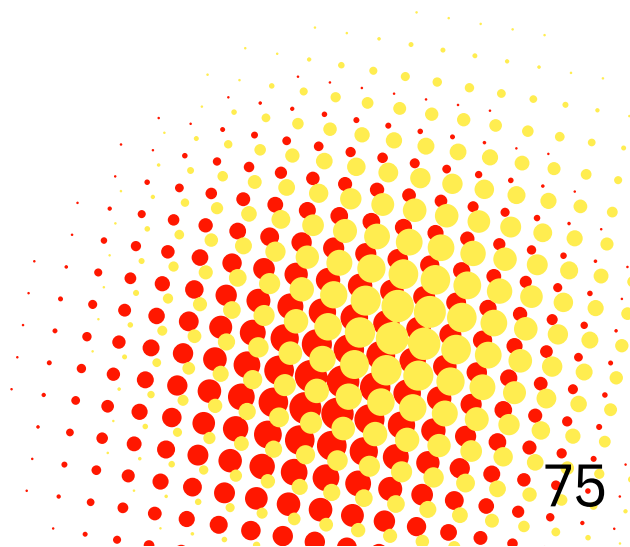
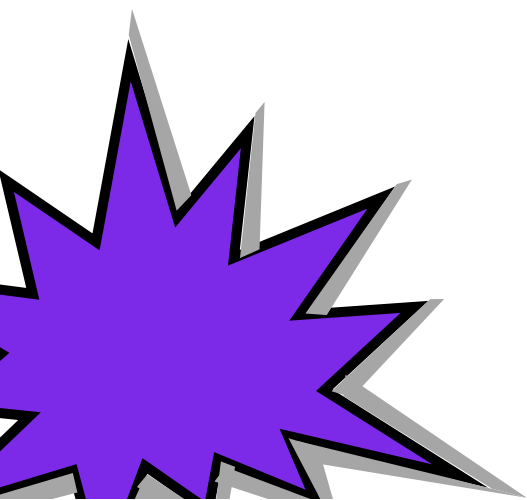
The levels of abstinence throughout the mentioned examples greatly differs, but it safe to say that a hero need not jump over skyscrapers, take down a couple goons, be a mastermind or fall a truck with bare hands. There is no hard and fast rule of gymnasium in the air over eyes hid behind a famed mask.



In today's time, it could be as simple as the act of honesty against social backlash or any other retaliation. Taming unproductive impulses or conquering one self's internal turmoil is all the more applicable to the same. Even a businessman, who wouldn't be one without risking a fortune. With this definition of bravery, you could walk through a bustling market and each face would be heroic.



Heroes are distinct and common, mysterious and effortless. The epitome of nobility, the innate tendency of sacrifice, and the persistence of will power. A mother to her little girl, a mentor to a tireless dancer, a doctor to a relived patient. The lionhearted are produced through a mixture of the brilliant and the bad, without which the human population won't be human anymore, with the painstaking constant of colorless and eternal dullness.



Princess Qajar: A Testimonial To The Deceptions Of The Internet

by Aaditya Sawant, IBDP-2

The internet is as deceptive as something could be. There are many revelations that occur way after something or someone that was wrongly interpreted or misunderstood, becomes 'viral' on the internet. Such viral media is widely discussed on the internet, often made fun of in the form of 'memes'. A meme, though a very commonly used word, is defined by the Oxford dictionary as an image, video or piece of text, typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by Internet users, often with slight variations. In most cases, memes don't affect the dignity of an individual. Still, there have been numerous public figures who have mocked on the internet through memes based on misinformation or inspired by propaganda. Such memes cause controversies as well as add to the lustre of the misleading and unreliable nature of the internet.

Princess Qajar, as she is wrongly referred to on the internet, is an individual who has her dignity attacked and manipulated, for nearly a decade. You too, must have come across a meme that alleges this public figure of being the reason why thirteen men gave up their lives. Apparently, as these memes suggest, the bearded princess was a symbol of beauty in the kingdom of Persia, whose rejection to the proposals of marriage proffered by thirteen men, compelled them to go as far as ending their lives. This sounds bizarre, because accepting a bearded woman as a symbol of beauty contradicts the modern definition of a beautiful woman. She has been heavily trolled for the same and rude and disdainful comments are made about her personality and appearance, even to this day. When I spotted one such meme on my Instagram feed, I was adamant to learn more about this personality and thus turned out to be a queer fish amidst the harsh lot that made fun of the queen in the comments section.



حاجه شمس الدوله دختر ناصرالدین شاه
دانش مجریان شیرالممالک

Firstly, the pictures of Princess Qajar feature not one individual but two Persian princesses, falsely claimed as one individual. They were the daughters of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, ruler of the Qajar Dynasty, who in reality, led way colourful lives as opposed to the mundane lives assumed by the memes. The reason why so many pictures of the two are available is because the King had an obsession with photography and clicked pictures of Persia, the royal family and also his cat named Babri Khan. Princess Fatemeh Khanum Esmat al-Dowleh, was the second daughter of the king while Princess Zahra Khanum Taj al-Saltaneh was the twelfth daughter. Both of them

were married at a very young age and so the chances of thirteen suitors having proposed them for their hand in marriage sounds dubious. The older princess led an artistic life for she studied embroidery under a French tutor, learnt to play the piano and hosted European wives of the diplomats who paid a visit to their country. On the other hand, the younger princess was a radical feminist who sought feminism in Persia. She divorced two husbands and earnestly advocated women's rights. She made use of her writing prowess and wrote a book on her ideologies named *Crowning Anguish: Memoirs of a Persian Princess from the Harem to Modernity*. Undoubtedly, both the royal women lived up to their royal titles and are timeless examples of ardent feminists.

The posts simply mock the royal duo because of their outward appearances. They blatantly neglect the other aspects of their extraordinary lives. Nevertheless, the memes surprisingly get only one thing right about the two princesses- the fact that bearded women were beautiful in Persia.

Correcting our loved ones is something we all do. Preventing someone from deviating from the right path and enlightening them about the right path is a moral obligation—moreover when the need to correct our loved ones arises. However, things usually turn ugly when we are not able to help the receiver of our feedback, who does not grasp the gamut of what we try to convey. Our very words of care can often end up antagonizing our loved ones and in extreme cases, hamper our relationships with them. Personally, I have witnessed countless incidents wherein, good feedback causes more harm than not speaking about improvisation at all. I have concluded that to correct our loved ones is a herculean task and requires us to keep a few things in mind before committing this moral obligation.

//The Wielding of Words//

We shall always be precarious about the words we choose to bestow upon our loved ones for correction. This is because our speech may end up becoming the foundation of the pillars of the bridge that succours in separating us. WORDS and SWORD are two words that comprise the same letters and can be used interchangeably for the sole purpose of—destruction. Our words, just like swords, can very easily ruin our personal relationships. Under the influence of an emotional mind, it is very easy to douche a few harsh words and crude statements. It may be unintentionally done but transforms into a scar in the relationship eventually. Therefore, it is very essential to think twice before uttering words of advice.

//On the Receiving End//

It may happen that our very parents make use of very unkind words in an attempt to correct us. Comparisons and mockery may ensue.

This could even break the hearts of those with brassy bosoms because our parents are the dearest ones to us (in most cases). We may be disheartened and demoralised to an enormous extent.

Yes, parents can be wrong in their thoughtless choice and use of words. Still, there is a ray of hope for the relationship to sustain if the receiver of the advice acts in a mutually-favourable manner.

We are not always the advisors however. Sometimes, we may find it very difficult to accept hurtful comments from a loved one which could have been wrongly voiced suggestions. The words may come as an initial blow but contemplation about the actions of the person may either break or improve the relationship—it is up to the receiver.



Her rights or ours?: Kyra Narain (9B)

The world is in turmoil as the United States of America supreme court, has decided to abolish Roe v. Wade. The news has sent shockwaves across the globe, as protestors take to the street. There are the ones who are celebrating the Supreme Court's decision, while most disagree. The Senate faces constant backlash which they have been unsuccessful in responding to. While the question constantly remains, why are women being refused their fundamental reproductive rights?

This decision was expected due to the leaked document back in May, which nevertheless did not lessen the blow. What started in Texas in 1970 as a challenge opposing a law that banned any kind of abortion unless the mother's life was in danger, has resurfaced as a larger problem. Norma McCorvey under the name of Jane Roe, brought a lawsuit, challenging Henry Wade, a district attorney from Dallas County. She was a single mother and pregnant at that time and wanted to terminate her pregnancy.



Her rights or ours?: Kyra Narain (9B)

She could not afford to travel outside Texas and it would be illegal for her to have an abortion. Her lawsuit said that this law violated her right to privacy, which was supposed to be protected by the First, Fourth, Fifth, Ninth and Fourteenth Amendments and sued on “behalf of all women”. The case reached the supreme court and in 1973 the Supreme court ruled that during the First trimester of pregnancy, a woman had the right to an abortion “free of interference by the state”. After nearly 50 years of having this right, it’s amazing how suddenly it has been taken away. A draft of the document, which was circulated among the justices was leaked in May. The decision to finally abolish the constitutional right to abortion was released in June. The reaction from the public clearly showed how out of line the Supreme court actually was. From coast to coast people gathered to participate in protests against the new decision. The right to women’s bodies was being taken away from them. Regardless of the religious beliefs that certain groups including some of the Justices had, it is entirely unreasonable to force someone else to live by your religions and morals. Abortion should be a right of every woman who has been sexually assaulted, who could die giving birth due to her child’s condition, who does not want to bring a child into poverty and who is not emotionally, physically or financially ready enough to have a child. Every woman should have the right to an abortion, simply because she wants one.



Devotion to the Lord

art and caption by Sindhuja
Venkatraman, IBDP-2



I am no artist, but I enjoy drawing and colouring silhouettes of the Gods I worship, using reference artworks online. The full, but dark figure of the Lord tells me that I don't have to define Him. His form is merely an aid to understand Him - a stepping stone to reach Him. The energy He radiates (the coloured concentric circles) are the power many worship. The power that protects and heals many. The power that I believe in. Representing this idea through virtual art is one of the many ways I enjoy expressing my devotion to the Lord.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of green leaves and thin branches, creating a natural, textured backdrop. The leaves are in various shades of green, some in sharp focus and others blurred in the background.

VIII

Ecology

Red Pandas

Nahush Tirumala, IBDP-2

The red panda, also known as fire fox, is an endangered species that is native to parts of China and the eastern Himalayas.

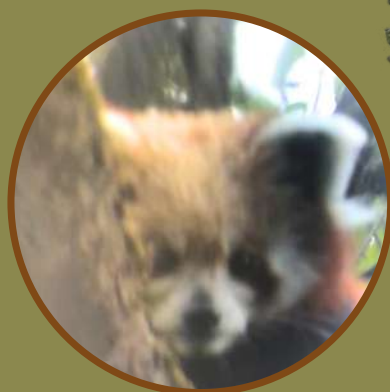
The Singalila national park, a national park in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal at an altitude of more than 2300 meters above sea level, heavily protected by the Indian and Nepali military, is teeming with pulchritudinous biodiversity and a major habitat for the ever elusive red panda. The Singalila national park is estimated to have around 40 overall red pandas in the wild. It is also estimated that there are less than 10,000 red pandas left in the wild in total.

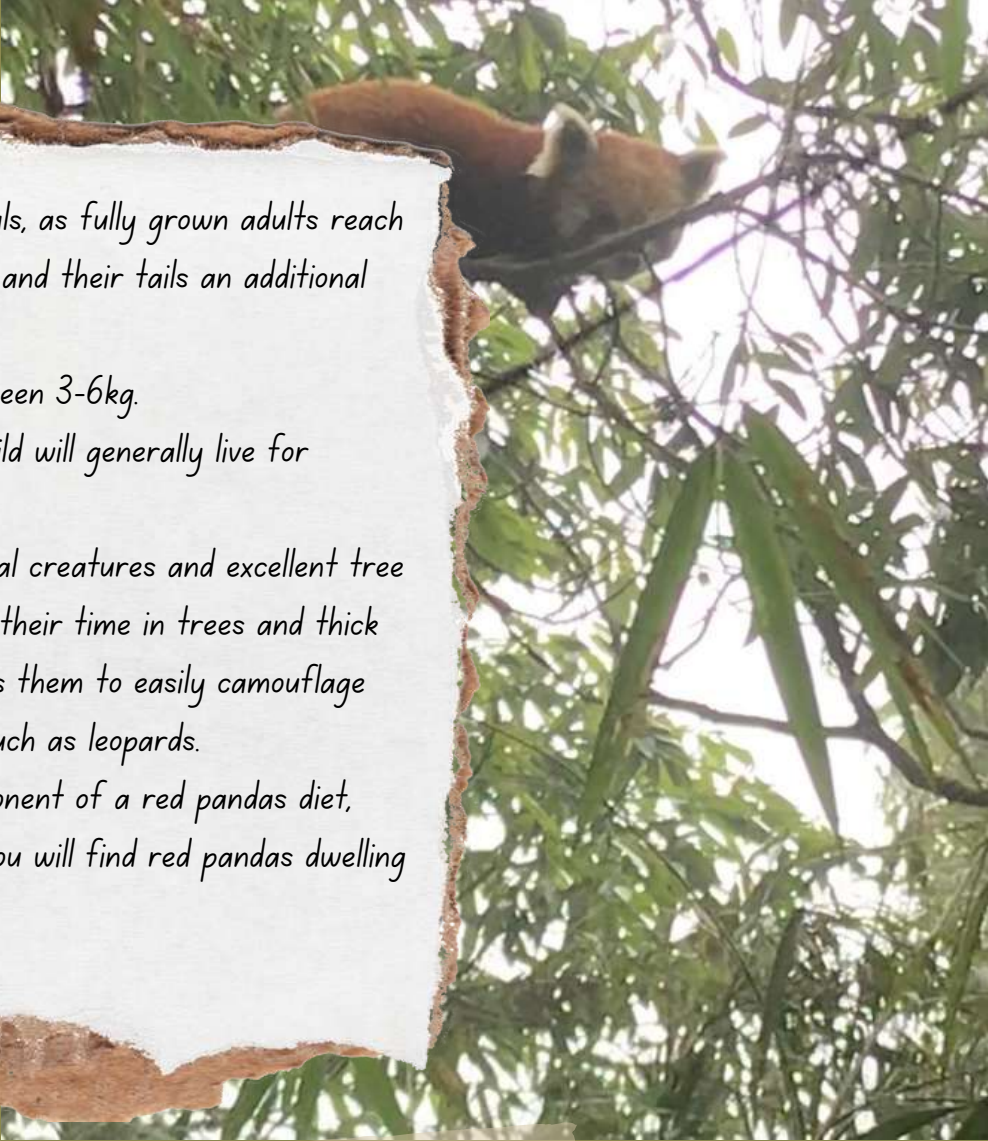



In April, I was fortunate enough to be offered the opportunity to visit Singalila national park and embark on a red panda expedition to try and find the magnificent *Ailurus fulgens* in its natural bamboo filled habitat and view it in all its glory. Here's what I learnt:



Red pandas are critically endangered and are in desperate need of our help and cooperation to ensure they don't go extinct in the next few years, as red panda numbers are dropping at an alarming rate. During my time in the Himalayas, I noticed huge heaps of trash discarded thoughtlessly, blatantly ruining the biodiversity of such an enigmatic place. The least we as responsible citizens could do is spread awareness and educate people living in small settlements such as the ones in the Himalayas that don't understand much about conserving biodiversity and coexisting with beautiful animals such as the red panda. We should also take efforts in spreading awareness against the poaching and trafficking of these animals, because these are two of the leading causes of their exponential decrease in numbers. Red pandas are only one species, but every single species that shares our earth with us is getting negatively effected every day because of our actions. We must take efforts to learn how to coexist with these animals, and especially keep out of their already depleted habitats. Not just for red pandas, but for all the 8.7 million species of animals on this globe, because animals are beautiful people.



- 
- Red pandas are small mammals, as fully grown adults reach up to 20-25 inches in length, and their tails an additional 10-20 inches.
 - They weigh anywhere in between 3-6kg.
 - A healthy red panda in the wild will generally live for around 7-12 years.
 - Red pandas are mainly arboreal creatures and excellent tree climbers. they spend most of their time in trees and thick bamboo vegetation. This allows them to easily camouflage and escape from predators such as leopards.
 - Bamboo is also a major component of a red pandas diet, hence more often than not you will find red pandas dwelling in dense bamboo thickets.



Red pandas are extremely shy creatures and don't come out of their bamboo thickets very often, which makes them incredibly hard to spot. The rare lucky tourist will get to see a panda basking in the sun on a tree branch early in the morning to dry the dew drops that cling onto their fur during the nights. Once the sun fully rises they vanish back into the depths of the thickets. Red pandas almost always prefer to live a life of solitude. The cubs stay with their mother till they're about 1 year old, which is when they've approximately fully grown. Red pandas mate once a year, and mate with multiple partners throughout their life. These animals however rarely interact with each other apart from mating season, which is around early winter. Once mated, the male red panda has nothing to do with the female or its young.

Wildlife photography: Anokkhi Shah

(IBDP-2)

One of the many ways I get to interact with animals in their natural habitat is through wildlife photography. I began photographing wildlife when I was ten years old, and I've been doing it ever since. It's impossible to duplicate the sensation of being on a jungle safari, surrounded by lush green trees, melodic bird chirps, roars of tigers, and merely the feel of the wind on my face. These images were captured at India's Maharashtra state's Tadoba-Andhari National Park. These creatures belong in the forest, where they are most at home. Zoos and private backyards are not the ideal place to keep such rare and threatened species of animals because doing so amounts to animal mistreatment. I hope this motivates people to take pleasure in spotting and tracking animals in the jungle because that is the responsible and appropriate way to do it.

Photos!



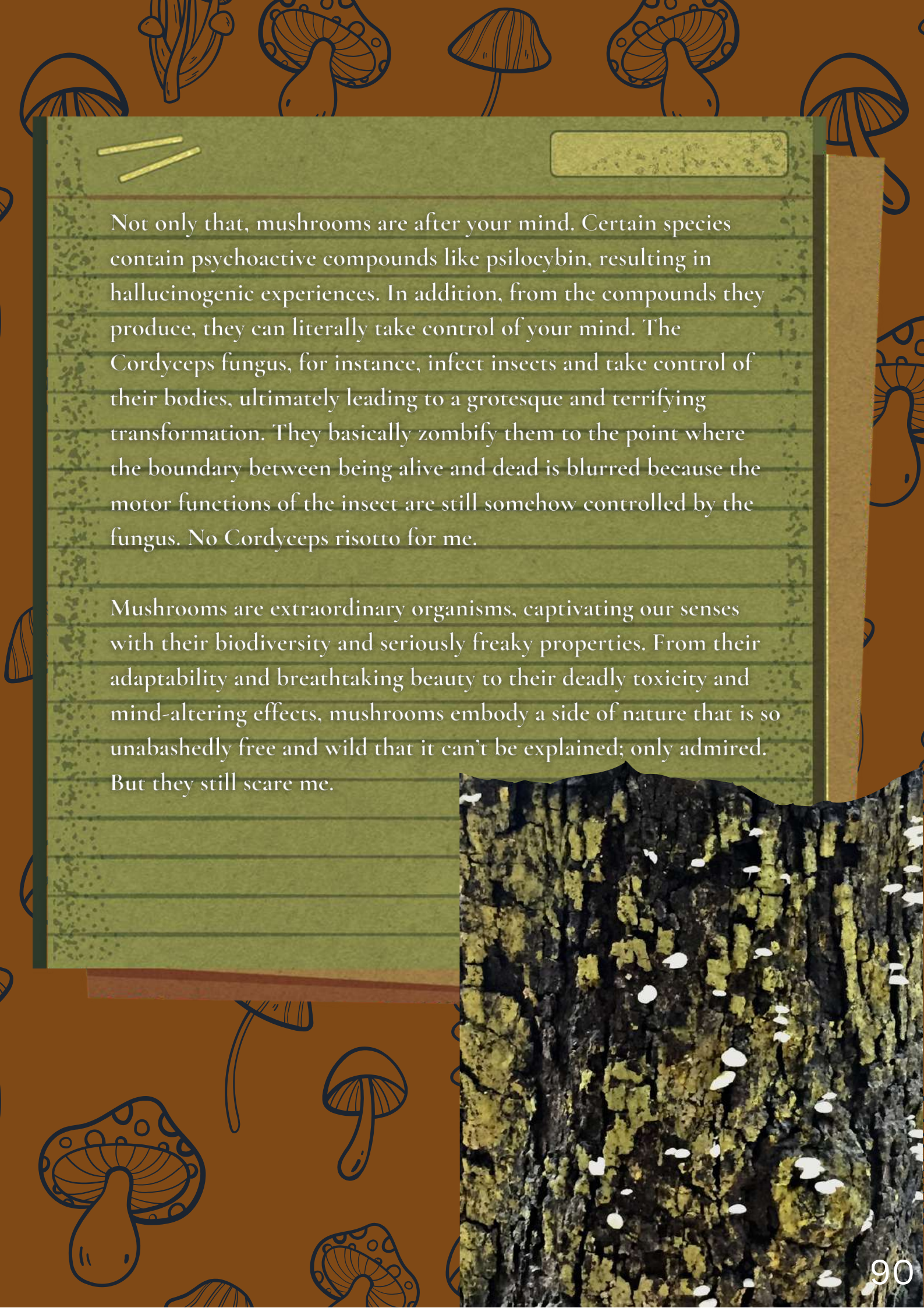
Mushrooms and why they scare me

by Jiya Kher, IBDP-2

Mushrooms are enigmatic organisms, belonging to the kingdom Fungi. These little things possess a multitude of intriguing qualities that make them both terrifying and insanely cool even to people who know little about them. One of the most remarkable aspects of mushrooms is their adaptability. They thrive in a diverse range of environments, from dense forests to decaying logs, and even in the lightless bowels of caves. When I say anywhere, I mean anywhere. This adaptability has led to the evolution of incredible mushroom species that possess awe-inspiring attributes. Consider mushrooms with the trait of bioluminescence, which, through the activation of a chemical called luciferin, emit a haunting blue glow in the darkness. Bioluminescence is just one otherworldly spectacle that is as beautiful as it is ghostly, really.

While many mushrooms are harmless or even edible, a number of species produce toxic compounds, making them almost lethal if consumed. But some others produce life saving substances. They are neither plants, nor animals, nor something in between: purely making them unable to categorize. Some are so closely related to humans by way of genetics that if a human consumes them, they have an allergic reaction with their own body. The mushrooms may look unassuming, but the names Destroying Angel and Death Cap start to make sense now.





Not only that, mushrooms are after your mind. Certain species contain psychoactive compounds like psilocybin, resulting in hallucinogenic experiences. In addition, from the compounds they produce, they can literally take control of your mind. The Cordyceps fungus, for instance, infect insects and take control of their bodies, ultimately leading to a grotesque and terrifying transformation. They basically zombify them to the point where the boundary between being alive and dead is blurred because the motor functions of the insect are still somehow controlled by the fungus. No Cordyceps risotto for me.

Mushrooms are extraordinary organisms, captivating our senses with their biodiversity and seriously freaky properties. From their adaptability and breathtaking beauty to their deadly toxicity and mind-altering effects, mushrooms embody a side of nature that is so unabashedly free and wild that it can't be explained; only admired. But they still scare me.





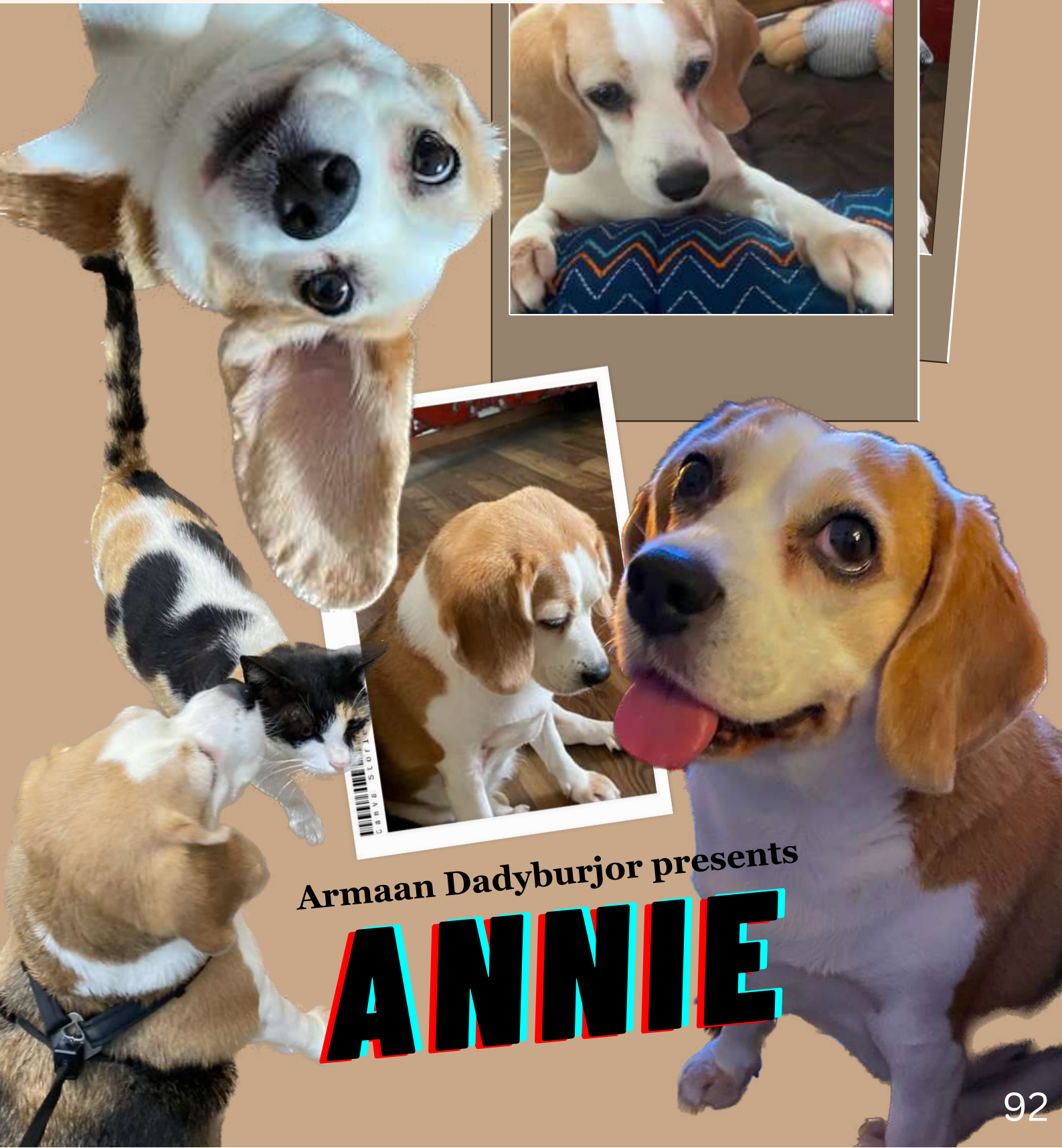
IX

PETS

Meet our adorable pets!

IBDP-2

We adopted my dog Annie about seven years ago, and ever since her skittering, silly, chaotic, adorable presence has changed my life. Dogs truly are mankind's best friend!



Armaan Dadyburjor presents

ANNIE

Meet Ginger, the cutest ginger cat I met seven years ago. When I first met this shy stray, he managed to steal my heart with his adorable charm. As time passed, Ginger transformed into a confident and loving friend. It's heartwarming to see how far he's come, yet he still retains that adorable fear of mice.



**Aashrita Narayan
presents**

GINGER



Now this cat and I have had extremely tense relations, while she was the first cat to scratch me and hiss at me, she was also the only cat that found comfort in me. Here are a few adorable pictures I found, wherein the cat is napping and playing on my lap



Taksheel Patel
presents

PSPS

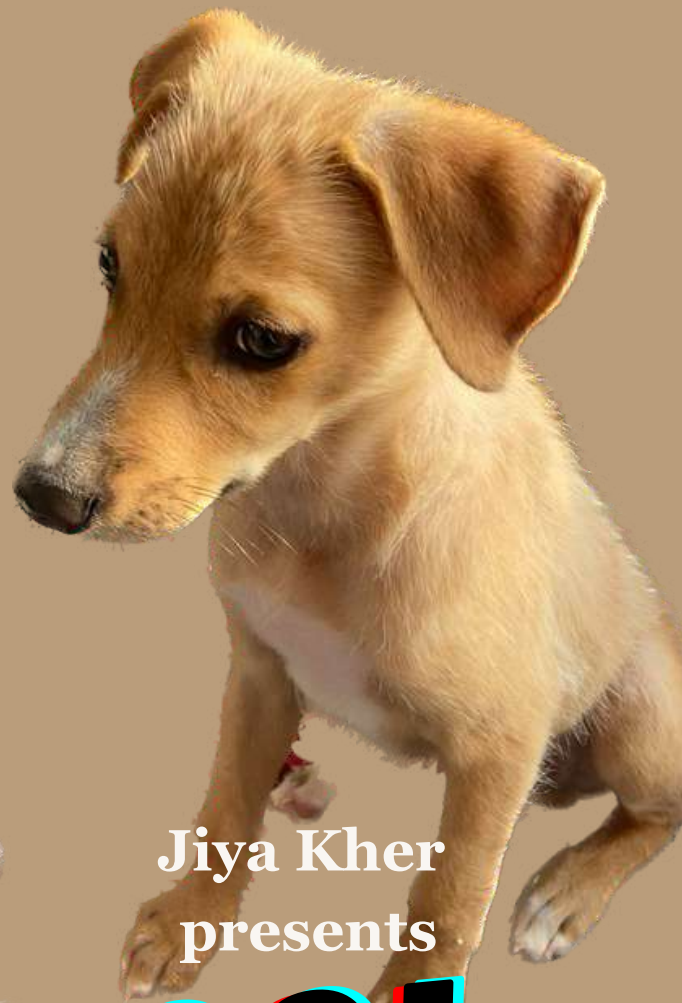


Sol!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Meet Sol! He's nervous like 98% of the time due to him being a rescue puppy, but he is so, so lovable. He loves food more than anything and probably would sell me for a good biscuit if he had any concept of currency.

The only problem is: He thinks everything is food. I cannot tell you how many times I have to say my dog ate my homework because he will chew on anything and everything thinking it's a treat.

He's also very fluffy for an indie dog, and he's just a puppy so half his fur hasn't even grown out yet. He's great to pet and he jumps around near constantly. We love him loads!



**Jiya Kher
presents**

SOL





Kyle Henriques
presents

**DUKE, STELLA, TING
TANG, LYKA, PANDA,
ZORO, ZUES, CHAMP**



Sharing a singular brain cell Cookie and Kiara are 2 pups at heart. Enjoying their walkies thrice daily they fulfil the Labrador stereotype by stopping at every person that walks by with the hope of being pet, and always looking forward to their next meal. One tiny and one larger, the younger and the elder, the doggos have bonded through as sisters.



Miron Mistry
presents

KIARA AND COOKIE

X





FOOTBALL

TAKSHEEL PATEL IBDP2

I am a left back at Feugo Tormento, and I've been playing football for as long as I can remember. Through my journey, I have realised that football is mainly a game of passing and patience. 90% of the game relies on your ability to scan the field and make crucial passes. Dribbling and shooting are just tools used to help you score. It was noticed that most successful dribbles take place when you have open space, and no one is free for a pass.



Furthermore, dribbling doesn't need flair or fancy skills to be successful. A simple hesitation or faint is enough to do the job and give you the opening you need without using up too much stamina. Here is me performing a cut-back in order to lose my defender and pass it to an open player. Holding the ball for too long while dribbling makes it easier for defenders to catch up and intercept. So, why not give simple dribbling without holding onto the ball for too long a try? The results will shock you!

FOOTBALL

VISHESH AGARWAL
IBDP 1



I play football competitively for my club Mumbai Royals, I joined this club in the midst of 2022 and never looked back. I started playing football during covid and fell in love with the game, I then joined a club with which I played for 1 year and then I switched to another then finally to Mumbai Royals. I love playing football as the game has a lot of competition and that's what drives me and there is a lot of thrill in the game. I had played a lot of leagues and tournaments with my club and it has been a great journey. All the tournaments kept getting harder which helped me improve and grow, football also helped me develop as a person as it made me more communicative and improved my leadership qualities.





CRICKET



FARISH PRADHAN IBDP 2



For me cricket is more than just a sport. It is the only thing for me which comes really close to explaining life. Sometimes, when your day is going bad, you just need to bat till lunch. And in the second session when the sun comes out the runs flow. Sometimes you need to leave all stumps in the open, open your guard to make achieve something more. And you can never lose in one day, it requires a 5 day consistent effort and sometimes the best thing you can get from life is a draw.





Kickboxing



PremKhanvilkar IBDP 2



In November 2020, I stepped into the world of kickboxing with a burning passion and a relentless determination. Little did I know that this journey would take me to places beyond my wildest dreams. From humble beginnings to international recognition, my experience has been nothing short of a rollercoaster ride. Along the way, I encountered opponents of various calibers, witnessed the heights of success, and faced the depths of defeat, though I never lost a fight, I lost myself in the process.

The road to greatness demanded extreme sacrifices, as I underwent grueling training sessions and a transformative process that pushed me beyond my limits. Through it all, I have emerged stronger, wiser, and more resilient. Every bruise, every setback, and every hurdle has shaped me into the kickboxer I am today. My journey has been far from easy, but I wouldn't trade a single moment of this exhilarating ride for anything else in the world. Kickboxing has become more than just a sport; it is a way of life, and I can't wait to see where this remarkable path takes me next.

Sailing



Trijna Kapileshwar IBDP 2



Sailing, my recently discovered passion. My father introduced me to sailing when I was quite little. He used to be an international champion, so it wasn't difficult for me to pick up the sport. I never really took an interest in it, until recently, when I discovered the true beauty of this sport.

School comes with its own issues and difficulties, and we all need some "me" time. Sailing is my "me" time because of the incredible adrenaline high it provides. For me, sailing is a metaphor for life; you are on your own and are in complete control of the boat. Like rough waters and unpredictable weather conditions, life presents us with various challenges. Sailing helps us to adapt, maintain composure in stressful situations and navigate our way through challenges.

CYCLING

MIRON MISTRY IBDP-2

Cycling has always been a part of my life, thanks to my dad who used to cycle long rounds around Marine Drive. As a child, I would watch him with awe as he effortlessly glided, and it wasn't long before I decided to hop on a bicycle myself and join him in rounds. Little did I know that this simple childhood fascination would lead to one of the most unforgettable experiences of my life.

One day, my buddy Steeven and I decided to embark on a long cycling trip of around 120 km. We traveled from Mumbai all the way to a village near Murud. We had planned a route that would take us through scenic roads, and charming villages.

As the hours passed, a sense of fatigue started kicking in. Nevertheless, we cycled side by side, sharing and creating lasting memories along the way.



On the way, I had made the mistake of taking a wrong turn which only after 4 km of cycling on my own I realized. I looked at my phone to Steeven only to find out I had twenty missed calls. I turned back immediately, as fast as I could. Fortunately, I reached him safely. On the other hand, we were delayed due to us not being able to find the house, it ended up being dark and having had taken a lot of breaks in the middle. Instead what was supposed to happen was that we were supposed to eat our lunch and return back home but, we had to sleep there for the night and continue the next morning.

📍 CYCLING 🚴



At this point, I was filled with uncertainty as I was unaware of what would happen and even though Steeven knew and trusted them, they were still unknown to me.

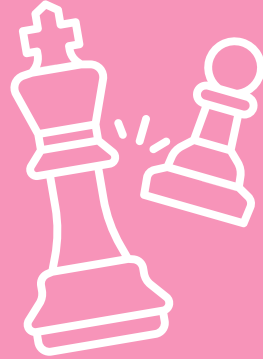
I woke up the next morning, extremely fresh. Although, I was doubting whether I would be safe and didn't even know the people I was staying with, they were one of the sweetest people that I had encountered.

Finally, I had to say my goodbye and Steeven and I travelled to the jetty to take a ferry back to the gateway of India.

Looking back on that day, I couldn't help but marvel at how cycling, a simple activity born from my dad's love for it, had brought me so much joy and unforgettable memories into my life. The journey already become one of the best experiences I had ever had.



Chess



From such a young age of around 3, I started playing Chess. My dad would always play chess with and would take me to all his tournaments in New York. I would even play in my school competitions which marked the start of my love for the sport.

When I moved to India, due to the larger appeal I was able to join my first official class. I still remember it vividly to this day. After some time, as I had shown a consistent improvement, I was upgraded to the Intensive Program and that class was one of the best but at the same time the most rigorous class. I would sit on the weekends for 10 hours continuously.

But this is all finally paid off when I finally got my rating in a tournament which really boosted my confidence and I ended up winning the rest of the tournament.

I think overall, out of all the tournaments including my State ones, this was the one that really stood out because no one other than yourself knows how satisfying it is to finally see your hard work pay off.



BADMINTON

Khayal Shah, IBDP-2



I've been playing badminton for ever since I can remember. Whether it was just down in the building or playing with the toy rackets at home, it's been and is a big part of my life. I never really had a big passion for anything like I saw everyone else did. I played basketball, table tennis, and did skating, gymnastics and swimming and I definitely liked doing them but I never loved them from the bottom of my heart. I started training for badminton just for the sake of exercising but it wasn't long before I fell in love with the sport in all its glory. It was no longer a just a way for me to be active but rather something that gave me a sense of purpose and focus.

Friday evenings were training evenings, and they were something that I always looked forward to, but soon enough, they became what got me through the week. There were definitely phases where I wanted to play professionally and not "just for fun" anymore, but I feared making it into a career would mean that I'd lose my love for the sport. And I'm glad I made that choice. I'm glad because this is something that I know will remain a "hobby" for the lack of a better word, for the rest of my life. I know this is something I will always make time for no matter what. In the mornings before work and at the end of a bad work day, I know playing a match will lift up my mood better than anything else would be able to. That's how something that started off as a way to better my health became something I truly can't live without.



Football is much more than a sport. It is a way of living which helps unite people through strategy and hard work. The bonds formed between footballers are near unbreakable and can be perceived as a universal language as it eliminates the boundaries of language, cultures, race and more. Football helps teach people true values like discipline, teamwork and perseverance. The unforgettable memories and the numerous amounts of football sessions helps further deepen my love for football



KYLE HENRIQUES, IBDP-2

FOOTBALL

RUNNING

I started training for athletics when I was 7 years old and have been training ever since then. Every day I wake up at 4:30 am to go for my training to either Juhu beach or Wings Sports Center in Bandra. I enjoy my training because the physical activity complements the mental rigor of school. Athletics has helped me grow as a person and has changed my mindset and outlook towards everything. It helps me abide to schedules and keeps me fit. Over the years, I have participated in many city level, state level and international level competitions: the YMCA, MSSA, DSO and various other track meets, to name a few. Amongst my wins in district, city and state level competitions, my most memorable competition was the Avon Athletics Meet in the UK. I was the only Indian in my race and against all odds of weather conditions and me being a year and half younger than all other participants, I won the silver medal in 100 meters sprint.



NAHUSH TIRUMALA, IBDP-2

XI

SCHOOL CLUB FEATURES

Editor's Note

This is a special new category contributed to by members of various school clubs and edited by the founders. This space serves to compile the experiences of the 2024 IBDP Batch in building their own student-led projects



Atlas Club

We felt that there are a lot of unknown cities to view and visit in India itself. Like in several magazines top tourist places around the world are published, we wanted to popularise some of our own hidden gems.

**Farish Pradhan,
Founder**

Guwahati, Assam **Profiled by Farish Pradhan**

How can a list of underrated Indian cities miss out on the Northeast? Well, Guwahati is the gateway to the rich culture of Northeast India. It is built around the steady flowing waters of the Brahmaputra. Lush, green hills overlooking the river invites tourists from around the country to savour a serene view.

Tourists will find heaven in Guwahati due to the uncountable temples on every nook and corner. The cool and mist of the city add to the heavenly atmosphere of the place. 24 Kms away from the city centre, you will find a band of devotees joyfully walking towards Hajo. Hajo is concentrated with temples, holy sights and a mosque which makes it a pilgrimage destination for Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims. One can also steal a glimpse of the one horned Rhino in the famous Assam State Zoo.

If you are interested in the city already, you will be astonished to know the multiple universities in the city. IIT, NLU (National Law University) and Royal Global are all located in the city.

The local cuisine of Guwahati is extremely diverse. This is because the city's population comprises of Assamese, Indigenous, Bengali, Bangladeshi, Nepali and Punjabi People. Moreover, the food is overshadowed by tea. Assam Tea is famous all over the world and most of the traders are located in Guwahati. Tea exports amounted to 17 Billion INR.

Guwahati is not only a place for culture, it is a place for business, education, devotion, nature, and tea.

Hemis, Leh Ladakh

Factsheet by Yash Vadhar

Hemis is situated to the south of Leh close to the western banks of the Indus River. The Hemis Monastery made in 1630 is the largest monastery of Ladakh. Hemis is different from the other important monasteries of Ladakh, as the monastery is dotted on all four sides with colourful prayer flags that flutter in the breeze sending prayers to Lord Buddha.

Pangong Lake: Pangong lake is an endorheic (landlocked) lake situated at 4350 metres. It is famous amongst tourists as Ladakh lake, the spot where the Bollywood movie "3 Idiots" was shot.

Hemis Monastery: nearby town of Hemis, landmarked by its monasteries, gompas and an occasional spotting of the rare snow leopard at the highest wildlife sanctuary in the world.

Hemis national park: At an altitude ranging from 3,300 m to 6,000 m above sea level, this sanctuary is known to be the highest in the world as well as the largest park of South Asia. It is also a habitat for Snow Leopards that are rare to find.

The Hemis Festival: celebrated as a sign of victory of good over the evil and demonstrates that no matter what we do in life evil can never come victorious. This festival is a very important part of the Ladakh culture and diversity is mainly celebrated by the Buddhist community but is a festival enjoyed by all religions and cultures.

Pali, Rajasthan

Factsheet by Trijna Kapileshwar

One of Rajasthan's 33 districts, Pali, is situated in the state's centre. Pali is well connected to neighboring districts and states through the road and rail networks. It is known as "The Industrial City."

Industries in Pali -

Although Pali's economy is largely reliant on agriculture, the city is also well-known for its textile industry. These businesses provide yarn, cotton, and synthetic clothing at extremely low prices to other states in the nation. Pali is home to the largest and most renowned composite textile mill in India, the "Maharaja Shri Umaid Mills." Here, additional industries like marble cutting and finishing have also grown.

Agriculture in Pali -

The Pali district has a lot of irrigation dams. But about 50% of farmers in this area rely heavily on the monsoons. Jowar, bajra, moong, groundnut, rice, and red chillies are the main Kharif crops in Pali.

Service Industries in Pali -

There are many textile and printing businesses in Pali, and there is room for both providers of natural colour dyes and machine repair and maintenance services. Tourism is another important service sector where fresh investment is being made and where some significant firms are investing.



Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh

Description and photos by Bhavee Senghani

Vrindavan is a city in Uttar Pradesh, more specifically located in the Mathura district. It is 11km away from the main Mathura city. Vrindavan is known as the city of temples as it has over 4000 temples dedicated to Lord Krishna and his love Radha. Each temple has its own unique story.

For example, the temple Nidhivan has many Tulsi plants which are paired together. It is said that at night the plants turn into Gopis and Krishna and perform a huge Raas Lila. This is why no one is allowed into the temple after the evening aarti. Legend also says that anybody that tries to see the Gopis and Krishna dancing would either become visually impaired or would lose their sense of hearing.

Not only this but the city is full of beautiful paintings of Lord Krishna and Radha on every wall you see. The wall paintings and the temple create such a positive energy around one that they feel nothing but happiness in the city. Another thing to add to all this happiness is the food of Vrindavan. Nothing too fancy but the street food at Vrindavan is a must try especially the flavourful Kachori and sweet Jalebi that just melts in your mouth.



Ratnagiri, Maharashtra

Edited by Aaditya Sawant

In the southwestern region of Maharashtra lies an attractive and lively port city. This city has had a prodigious history and its government has made efforts to keep it as relevant as possible with institutions for higher education, extensive network of roadways and railways, etc. Surrounded by beautiful hills of Sahyadri ranges, this city is also highly blessed with a wide range of flora and fauna. This city is India's Ratnagiri. The name of this city, in itself, is an appropriate description of this city, which would translate roughly to the *land of gems*.

Ratnagiri has produced *ratnas* (gems) throughout history and continues to do so even today. Maharashtrian culture is deeply embedded in the residents of Ratnagiri, evident from their amiable nature, food, patriotism and their mother tongue- Marathi.

Land of Freedom Fighters

Ratnagiri is indeed the land of freedom fighters. The city houses the Jaigad Fort, said to have been built in the 16th century by the Bijapur kings, which played a pivotal role in Maratha History. Towards the close of the sixteenth century, it was throned by the Naiks of Sangameshwar who battled against the combined Portuguese and Bijapur forces from 1583-85. Nearly 200 years later, it was under the control of Balaji Vishwanath, who was part of the Maratha Civil War and later went on to be appointed as the Peshwa by Shahu Bhosale I (Fifth Chhatrapati and grandson of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj). In 1713, this was one of the ten forts ceded by Vishvanath to Kanhoji Angre on his promising to release the Peshwa, restore all his conquests, and maintain the cause of Shahu I. Unfortunately, in June 1818, the fort was under the hands of the British forces.

Nevertheless, Ratnagiri is also the birthplace of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who though born in British India, devoted his entire life to rename his nation as The Republic of India. Tilak also helped to revive the Shivaji Jayanti and Ganesh Chaturthi festivals in Maharashtra to unite people against the ultimate foe- the British.

Land of Wonders

Alphonso mango is a seasonal fruit, considered to be among the most superior varieties of the fruit in terms of sweetness, richness and flavour. It is also one of the most expensive varieties of mango and is famously known as *Hapoos* in Marathi.

The Royal Thibaw Palace was built by King Thibaw of Burma in 1886 in Ratnagiri. This is historically significant because it signifies transfer of power to the British crown and annexation of Burma by the British, who held the king and his family prisoners, forcing them to exile in Ratnagiri (then under British India). The palace is a tourist attraction owing to the wonderful views of the Arabian Sea, Bhatye Bridge and Someshwar Creek, all of which are landmarks in the city.

Dharampur Lake is another landmark of Ratnagiri, which is the largest in the city and a man-made one, constructed by King Nagesh Desai in 1530. It is known for its clear water and hill ranges and lush greenery on both sides, that includes dense plantations of mango, kokum, and coconut trees. In addition to the Raigad fort, Ratnagiri is also home to 29 others which includes peculiar ones such as Ratnadurg and Bhagwati Forts.

Land of Beaches

Since Ratnagiri makes a part of the mighty Konkan Coast, it is blessed by nature with numerous picturesque beaches. Unlike the ones in Goa and Mumbai, these beaches are less crowded and thus less polluted. Nevertheless, the small number of tourists does not discourage the locals from letting visitors make use of the services offered in most quintessential beaches. This includes refreshing water sports and small restaurants along the beaches. Some of the beaches that stand out are:

The Ganapatiphule Beach
The Guhagar Beach
Pandre Samudra
The Ganeshghule Beach

Land of Devotion

Ratnagiri does not fall short of gems, some of which are the temples situated around the city. Most of the temples in the city are dedicated to Lord Ganapati and Lord Shiva, two pivotal figures in Hindu belief. Three among the countless number of temples in Ratnagiri are as follows. Each one of them is extraordinary in a way and even though all of them are dedicated to the same deities, they are distinct among themselves.

The Marleshwar Temple
The Swayambhu Ganpati Temple
The Jai Vinayak Temple

Land of Advancement

The people of Ratnagiri have always had a progressive mindset and their ambitious nature is evident from the various development projects the city has undergone in the fields of education and transport. With continual efforts of the government to seek the progress of the city, Ratnagiri can rightfully be called the land of advancement.

There are many colleges and institutions for higher education. Two of these are affiliated to the University of Mumbai, namely, Rajendra Mane College of Engineering & Technology and Finolex Academy of Management and Technology. A few colleges are also aided by the government that includes Government College of Engineering, Government College of Pharmacy and Government Polytechnic. There is also a branch of Podar International School in the city.

In terms of transport, Ratnagiri is well connected to the other parts of the state and country by the National and State Highways. Private and MSRTC buses could be used to commute to other parts of the state. The Ratnagiri Railway Station is a major railhead on the Konkan Railway and has the daily connectivity to important cities of India. All special trains such as the special trains for Ganesh Chaturthi and Christmas halt at this station. It offers uber-amenities like free Wi-Fi and lifts on each platform. Ratnagiri also has an airport which would start commercial air travel shortly. It is named Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak Ratnagiri Airport to honour the legacy of the assertive nationalist.

Ratnagiri encompasses the Marine Biological Research Station which was established in 1958 by the Government of Maharashtra. This station is one of the premier institutes with an enormous field facility including a three storied building at the main campus, a well-equipped aquarium and museum, a modernised brackish water fish farm, various laboratories at its disposal, etc. It generates professionally trained manpower in fish culture and transfers the technologies to fish culturists. The station is also a tourist attraction because it boasts some of the rarest specimens of aquatic life, like the sea horse, sea turtles and sea cucumbers and, ancient skeletons of whales.

Land That Lacks Attention

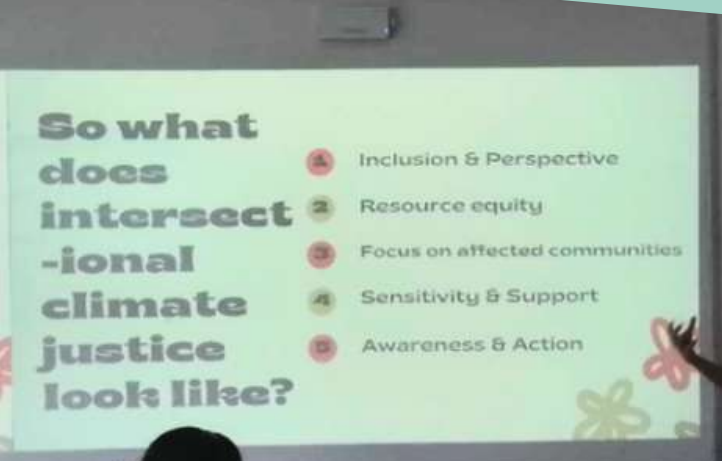
To conclude, Ratnagiri is one among the many underrated cities of India. Like the others, this city is also neglected by the world which negatively impacts the local government and population. It discourages both and distracts them from the path to development and prosperity. Encouraging tourism through advertisement is a feasible process but an expensive one. Such tier-II and tier III cities are highly overshadowed by the financial hubs of the nation such as Mumbai and Delhi. As responsible citizens, it is our duty to bring these cities to the books, against the prolonged ignorance. We must keep our minds open and encourage tourism in these cities. Not only by paying a visit but also help promote the cities by highlighting their *métiers* as well as by dispelling their flaws.

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Climate Action Club



Upon realising that information about the climate was limited to pure ecological science, we decided to conduct participatory sessions on intersectional climate justice-- which is centred on prioritising lived experiences and marginalised voices in climate action. What started off as a PPT and an impassioned discussion, kicked off a series of student-led actions for safeguarding our present and future ecologies and societies.

Over the course of these two years, we have conducted several strikes and activities related to everything from waste management to fossil fuel non-proliferation. Here's an insight into some of the behind the scenes.

by Ananya Pathak,
Founder

Aren't you tired of creating biohazardous waste? One disposable sanitary napkin is equal to 4 plastic bags!

Taking this shocking fact into consideration, one of the many projects undertaken by the Climate Action Club(CAC) led by the student body of the 2024 IBDP batch is the **Sustainable Menstruation Project**.

This project aims to stir up conversations about the perils of using disposable sanitary napkins and their impact on the environment.

We have partnered up with the Asha Trust Mumbai to amplify their recent initiative of teaching underprivileged women to sew and produce cotton pads at an affordable rate hence providing them with a source of income and breaking taboos surrounding the same. The current undertakings by the CAC includes the conduction of a survey to test out the cotton pads. After the collection of multiple in-school volunteers, we successfully completed the survey last December.

We do understand that it is a personal and rather intimate preference but we strive to encourage everyone to at least try it out and play their part in working towards a sustainable future.

by Sarah Kathuria,
SM Project Lead

I had an extremely fun time taking part in **The Gardening Project** held by the Climate Action Club which was where we had to make potted plants to put near the windows of our school. I remember we had to bring recycled plastic bottles and make our own pots out of them. After which we filled each one with soil, took a lot of time for the whole thing but, after finishing the entire potting of the plants we were finally able to put the seeds in. We planted a few plants like cilantro and radish. To say the least this was a messy but enjoyable process and I had a lot of fun with my group, especially watering the plants everyday and even sometimes renewing the seeds and pots for certain plants. Overall, I would absolutely be thrilled to do this again.

by Aashrita Narayan,
CAC Member



logo designed by
Armaan Dadyburjor
for PCS '22

The **Podar Climate Symposium 2022** was the first of its kind 'Climate' conference organised by Podar International School in October 2022. Students from grades 8, 9 and 11 showed the most enthusiastic and active participation in the endeavour to learn more about the environment and hone their debating skills. The Podar Climate Symposium, organised by the grade 11 Secretariat, was an essential step towards making the future leaders of India more aware of natural disasters and atrocities brought in by humans. The event not only sparked interesting debate but also developed environmentally sensitive and empathetic individuals in the process. It would be safe to say that PCS 2022 was a grand success!

- Meher Bathija



by Meher Bhatija,
CAC Member
& PCS EB

To see the interest in issues surrounding climate action was a unique and enthralling experience and the event was a testament to the power of words and small actions leading to big change. Being a part of this event through from ideation through to execution has been a truly fulfilling journey.

Rhea Mehta,
CAC Coordinator
& PCS Logistics Head

"I learnt today that we need climate action and we need it now, because this is much more urgent than anything we had imagined before."

a 13-year-old student participant

The concept for the symposium started with an idea fervently outlined in a text message in a Climate Action Club team group chat--over the course of the next 2 months, we brought this to reality: a model international policy conference centering climate concerns with over 250+ delegates from across ages groups. We realised that there is a severe lack of awareness about the socio-cultural, trans-boundary, and health impacts of the Climate Crisis and even lesser awareness on how we can mitigate the problems and adapt in adversity through a just transition to sustainable societies. With an increasingly vulnerable climate, the youth are the most affected--and thus need to be the most empowered to choose action pathways, careers and lifestyles centering sustainability. Spanning 9 different committees (including, but not limited to, UNSC, ECOFIN, and WHO, as well as our key committee The MOCK COP27), we explored the measures needed for climate action across the board and not just through a singular isolated climate committee. We knew it was all worth it when one student shared that they had only just discovered the holistic implications of our seemingly tiny actions and policy changes.



by Ananya Pathak

XII

FROM
THE
ALUMNI

Reflections from Japmehar Kandhari

Batch of 2019



I am Japmehar Kandhari, a recent graduate in Chemical Engineering Computer Process Control from the University of Alberta. I often find myself reflecting on the invaluable years I spent at Podar International School. Being an alumnus of this esteemed institution fills me with immense pride, as it was during my time there that I gained the knowledge, skills, and experiences that have shaped my journey to success.

One aspect that truly stood out during my high school years at Podar International School was the exceptional faculty of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The teachers with their remarkable expertise and dedication, played a pivotal role in molding my academic trajectory. Their passion for teaching and unwavering support ensured that I received a transformative educational experience.

The excellent years I spent at Podar International School proved to be a solid foundation for my university journey at the University of Alberta. The rigorous academic curriculum and holistic approach adopted by the school equipped me with the critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and discipline necessary to excel in the demanding field of chemical engineering. The lessons and values I imbibed during my time at Podar International School continue to benefit me in my university studies and will undoubtedly shape my future endeavors.

As an alumnus, I hold Podar International School in the highest regard. It was there that I discovered my passion for learning, nurtured my intellectual curiosity, and honed the skills that have propelled me towards my goals. The school's unwavering commitment to providing a world-class education, supported by an exceptional faculty and staff, has undeniably played a pivotal role in shaping the person I am today.



“The Evolution Within”


Aishwarya, Batch of 2020

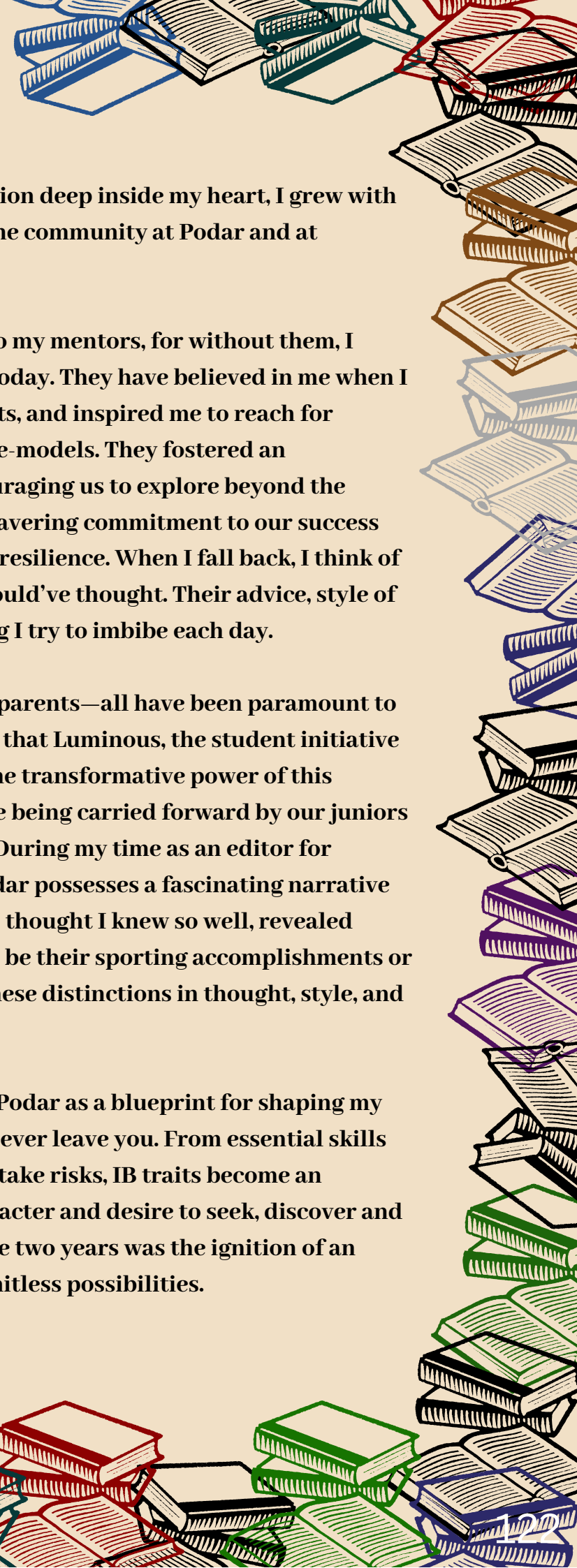


It's one thing to witness, and another to experience. To internalise. To believe, change, grow. That's what the IB was for me. An experience. Every moment spent engrossed in writing my extended essay on Draupadi, every late night devoted to mastering calculus (which has proven invaluable for my Masters—where we're diving into a Math workbook this summer!), every weekend immersed in coding, and even every roleplay in my French class—where I passionately debated everything from my right to a croissant to the violation of human rights in Syria—has been truly enjoyable.

I mean it. Even when I rewrote my 9th Business IA draft, I was grateful because these experiences helped me grow organically. DP subjects are not more "subjects," they are schools of thought that come to life through IAs, EEs and TOK. And DP is not just a curriculum. It's a mindset, an exploration, and a way of life.

Nonetheless, it was a time of struggle. But this struggle is part of the story. I strongly believe that strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle. To me, setbacks are like assets, you need to collect them and be proud of them. Each time I had to re-work on my extended essay draft from scratch or each time, I had exceeded my intellectual capability to solve a math problem, I was grateful. Grateful that there was a transformation happening and that the momentary pain I felt was the beginning of a revolution in myself. IB made me more comfortable with discomfort. It gave me the courage to be bolder in my pursuits. I began to increase my attacks during sparring sessions at Karate classes. I began to attempt vocals and songs out of my comfort zone. I participated in the Annual Day at Podar, in a musical, dressed up as a scarlet macaw. Small changes, big changes, different changes—I saw myself evolve.



A large, colorful illustration of various books is positioned on the right side of the page, extending from the top to the bottom. The books are depicted in different colors (blue, green, yellow, orange, red, purple, pink, and brown) and are shown in various orientations, some stacked and some open, creating a sense of a vast library or a collection of knowledge.

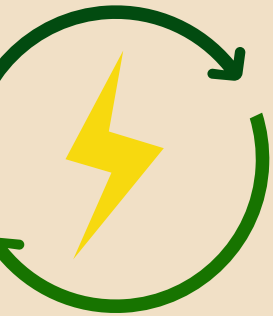
With an evolution of the mind and a revolution deep inside my heart, I grew with the support of the community around me: the community at Podar and at University of London.

Very honestly, I owe my deepest gratitude to my mentors, for without them, I would be but a mere fragment of who I am today. They have believed in me when I doubted myself, pushed me beyond my limits, and inspired me to reach for greatness. Beyond academics, they were role-models. They fostered an environment of intellectual curiosity, encouraging us to explore beyond the textbooks and to think critically. Their unwavering commitment to our success instilled in us a sense of determination and resilience. When I fall back, I think of them. What they would've said, how they would've thought. Their advice, style of thinking and perspective in life is something I try to imbibe each day.

My community—my teachers, my peers, my parents—all have been paramount to my growth during those two years. I believe that Luminous, the student initiative of Podar, stands as a radiant testament to the transformative power of this collective support. Witnessing this initiative being carried forward by our juniors fills me with immense pride and gratitude. During my time as an editor for Luminous, I discovered that everyone at Podar possesses a fascinating narrative waiting to be shared. My colleagues, whom I thought I knew so well, revealed unexpected facets of themselves, whether it be their sporting accomplishments or their profound passion for art. Capturing these distinctions in thought, style, and culture was a truly magnificent.

Even to this day, I view my IB experience at Podar as a blueprint for shaping my future. As cliché as it may sound, IB doesn't ever leave you. From essential skills like time management to the willingness to take risks, IB traits become an ingrained habit in your life. They instil character and desire to seek, discover and re-invent the world around you. To me, these two years was the ignition of an ongoing journey of personal growth and limitless possibilities.

To me, this evolution was a start of many.



"Power of Embracing Change"

Aman Mehta, Batch of 2020

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the teachers and coordinators for providing me with the opportunity to be featured on this platform. I am truly honored to have the chance to share my experiences and journey with all you students. The support, guidance, and education I received during my time at high school have played an invaluable role in shaping who I am today. I wanted to take all of you back a few years and take you through my journey.



March 22nd, 2020 will forever be etched in my memory. On that fateful day, my classmates and I received news that shattered our expectations and left us grappling with uncertainty. The COVID-19 pandemic had forced the cancellation of our final IB examinations, leaving us with only our Internal Assessments (IA) to determine our grades. The news filled us with doubt and raised questions about the validity of our hard-earned achievements. For a lot of my peers, the universities started retracting offers due to disparities between the predicted and final grades, casting a shadow of fear over our hopes and dreams.

Yet, here we stand today, making it through the periods of extreme uncertainty and entering our senior years at university. I am a senior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), ready to reflect on the remarkable journey that unfolded over the past five years since I joined the IBDP as a 16-year-old. It's amazing how hindsight can reshape our perspective and reveal the silver linings in the darkest clouds. With each hurdle I faced, I learned valuable lessons about resilience and discovering beauty in the most unexpected places.

Stepping into my freshman year of college, I never imagined I would be taking classes online from my room in the middle of a freezing winter. It wasn't the vibrant and exhilarating university experience I had envisioned. But even in those challenging circumstances, I discovered the power of embracing change. Amidst the pandemic's turmoil, I decided to change my major from Engineering Physics to Mechanical Engineering, the most competitive field at UIUC. It was a leap of faith fueled by my passion for renewable energy and sustainability. This bold move taught me a valuable life lesson: it's never too late to pursue your true calling.

As the conditions started settling down, opportunities unveiled themselves like I couldn't have imagined. I found myself leading the Research & Development endeavors of a startup company which is developing a long-duration energy storage system, securing two rounds of funding, and pushing the boundaries of innovation. My dedication to sustainability led me to assume the role of chairman of the Energy Committee on campus which handled a substantial \$2 million fund. During my time with the committee, I advocated for policies and implemented technological advancements that propelled our university towards a greener and more eco-friendly future.

But the journey didn't end there. I found myself immersed in the world of academia, where curiosity fueled my drive to explore new frontiers of knowledge. Through internships, research positions, and countless hours of dedication, I had the honor of contributing as an author to three published research papers. These experiences reinforced the importance of resilience and the pursuit of excellence, even when faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges.

Looking forward, the horizon shimmers with promise. Yet, as I reflect on my time at Podar, I can't forget the role that my years at Podar played in shaping me. It was there that my journey truly began.

Entering the International Baccalaureate (IB) program as a wide-eyed 16-year-old, I was unsure of what lay ahead. The first test scores I received shattered my confidence—a modest 35/45 grade point, a far cry from my desired target. It took a long time and a lot of effort before achieving a 45 Predicted Grade Point, but it just goes to show that a turnaround is possible if you put enough work in.

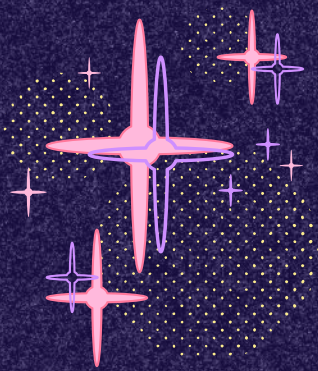
I carry with me the memories, the lessons, and the faith that the path of perseverance leads to extraordinary heights. To my fellow students embarking on their own journeys at Podar, I extend my heartfelt wishes. May your remaining years be filled with vibrant experiences, determination, and the unwavering belief that you have the power to shape your destiny.

Embrace the challenges, for they will become the stepping stones to your greatest achievements.

If you would like to learn more about Aman's work, he'd be happy to speak to you and you can write to him at: amanm2@illinois.edu

XIII

FROM
THE
TEACHERS



7TH HEAVEN: A COORDINATOR'S JOURNEY

by Hema Ma'am

When good people die, they reach heaven.

At least that is the commonly held belief. For the DP Coordinators of the seventh floor, when good students follow deadlines, we reach 7th heaven. However, the journey is never a straightforward one. One is obligated to cross six levels of hell first.

Here is a brief description of the aforementioned levels of hell using the linguistic quirks typical of a classic IB submission:

1st Level – When, having just finished unpacking the TOK essay titles, you are met with dead silence to your question, “What are the four aspects of the knowledge framework?”

(I die just a little.)

2nd Level – Planning sheets must now be submitted, and students must decode the essay titles in their own words. One student examines the essay title of ‘Do you agree that so little knowledge gives us so much power’, and replies with a resounding “Yes!”

(The little knowledge leaves me with a sinking feeling.)

3rd Level – The drafts of not just the TOK essay, but other IAs as well, are submitted, and run through Turnitin.

A draft of cold air passes through me and then changes to feeling hot under the collar.

(Death would have been merciful, but...not just yet.)

4th Level – The requests for extensions come. As expected.

The plethora of reasons ranging from laptops crashing to files not opening leave me feeling lightheaded and fleet-footed, as I now have to run behind everyone – students, parents and teachers.

(Before I, myself, am run down.)

5th Level – I have to now upload all the final IAs, EEs, TOKs, IOs. All the abbreviations of the world leave me short of breath and gasping for respite.
(This must be hell, no? I am filled with self-doubt.)

6th Level – The IB exams are on. Seeing stressed faces, heads bent over papers, and hearing pens scratching, feet scraping, the sighs and pent-up breaths...the examination has ended, please stop writing. This must be the end. So close and yet so far. Two months to July 6th. This particular level of hell can leave me so very happy, yet so truly sad that a cohort's two-year sojourn has now come to an end.
(I hope we all did our very best.)

The seventh heaven is on the seventh floor. I experience it each day. I see small triumphs, those “AH-HAH!” moments in classes, the fist bumps, the moving from one class to another. The passing of time each year. From guiding students in their subject choices, teaching, giving feedback, registering students for exams, uploading it all (before getting uploaded myself), conducting exams, discovering results...and then, back to the beginning with a new batch. We may drag ourselves through six levels of hell each day, but we also reach seventh heaven on each of those days. Here, in the thick of the action, is what truly matters. When drafts turn to final submissions, when tears of stress turn to tears of gratitude, and when success is showcased in the form of university acceptances. Those six levels of hell? All worth it. And seeing the sweat, blood, and tears transform into sweets, wide smiles, and tassel-turning? Seventh heaven.
(At last!)

Language Teachers: Modern-Day Hercules Without the Muscles!

by Rashmi
Ma'am



In the enchanted realm of education, language teachers find themselves in a Herculean predicament, juggling tasks that would make the mythical hero himself break a sweat. They don't have superhuman strength, but boy, do they face some ludicrous challenges! So, let's dive into the perilous world of language teachers, where the labours they perform day in day out will put the mighty Hercules to shame!

Labour 1:

Language teachers face the insurmountable task of handling diverse learners in their classrooms. It's like dealing with a bunch of shape-shifters. From students who fly through lessons like Pegasus to those who struggle like an ant pushing a boulder uphill. We are all guilty of holding some of them to ransom, not letting them use the washroom till we hear the magic words "peux-je aller aux toilettes?" it's like juggling tasks that require both the wisdom of Athena and the patience of a saint and we do it with a smile!!

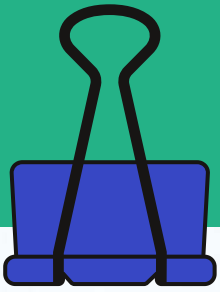
Labour 2:

Hercules might have faced daunting mythical beasts, but language teachers contend with something far more terrifying: technology! Embracing the ever-changing landscape of educational apps is enough to make anyone feel like they're wrestling with a Sandman. As if online translators were not enough, now we have the mightiest of all beasts CHATGPT!! I can hear a collective sigh from my colleagues!! This too shall pass, my dear friends!!

Labour 3:

Imagine Hercules trying to convince the Titans to join a dance party - that's the level of motivation and engagement a language teacher has to conjure.

Encouraging students to stay enthusiastic about language learning feels like attempting to solve the enigma of the Sphinx every single day. You have to be a dancer, singer, actor, all rolled up in one if you are to hold their attention!!



Labour 4:

Just like Hercules' multi-headed foe, the grading Hydra keeps sprouting new heads. Language teachers have to grade mountains of assignments with the speed of Hermes, only to have students asking about their grades like sharks. Finding a balance between meaningful feedback and appeasing the grading gods can feel like an eternal struggle and yet we manage to do it seamlessly.

Language teachers may not wear lion skins like Hercules, but they certainly face Herculean challenges in their noble quest to educate and inspire. Their journey is nothing short of a comic adventure. Maybe someday we will have a Marvel character based on the Language teachers!! So, let's raise a metaphorical goblet of ambrosia to our language teachers - the true modern-day Hercules without the bulging muscles! May they continue to conquer the ludicrous challenges of education with wit, humour, and boundless determination.



Why be a Biology Teacher

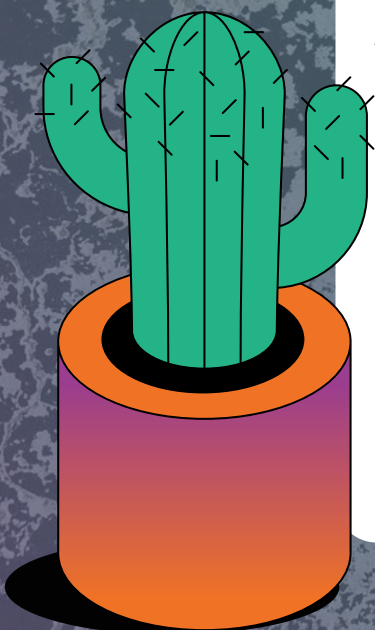
Kalpana Ma'am

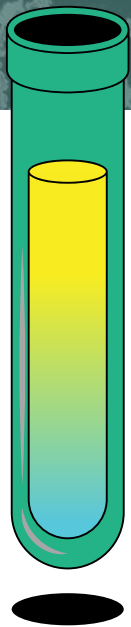
A couple of years ago, in a bustling grade 9 classroom, a young and enthusiastic student who had a passion for physical sciences bravely raised her hand and asked me, "Ma'am, can I ask you a question?" With a nod of encouragement, she proceeded, "Mam, don't you get bored teaching the same subject and topics year after year?" The question sparked a moment of reflection for me, and I replied thoughtfully, "The subject and topics may remain constant, but the students, their individual sparks of understanding, and the ever-deepening understanding of life make each year unique and energizing."

Teaching is not merely a profession for me; it's a source of joy and fulfillment. Being in the company of growing minds, nurturing them, answering their endless "whys" and "hows," and witnessing their physical, mental, intellectual, and emotional growth is a privilege that fills my heart with warmth.

Now, you might wonder, why specifically teach Biology? Biology is the awe-inspiring science that unravels the very mysteries of life. It delves into the profound questions of how life began, the vast diversity of living organisms, the fascinating story of our evolution, the intricate web of interdependence in nature, and the remarkable similarities and differences among all forms of life. Who wouldn't be curious about such an intriguing subject?

And let's not forget the focus on us, the mighty humans! Understanding our own bodies is essential— how are we born, what keeps us ticking from birth to death, what happens when things go off track, and the marvellous chemical factory in our minds that gives us our emotional highs and lows. As a biology teacher, there's nothing more exhilarating than unboxing the complexities of human systems to my students, helping them appreciate the wonder of their own existence.





Over the past two decades of teaching biology, I find immense satisfaction in knowing that I have ignited the passion of numerous students to pursue successful careers in allied fields such as medicine, pharmacy, environmental science, biochemistry, genetics, and more. Seeing them blossom and contribute to the world in meaningful ways brings a sense of fulfillment that words cannot express. It gives a sensation of life lived worthily.

Teaching isn't just about imparting knowledge; it's about instilling curiosity, igniting passion, and nurturing future generations to become compassionate and knowledgeable stewards of the world. So, as I continue my journey as a biology teacher, I look forward to inspiring many more young minds to unravel the mysteries of life and make their mark in this beautiful tapestry of existence.



GLOW UP

by Tapati Ma'am

It is not just about big decisions of life, it's more to do with the seemingly small things in life. The way you greet people, the way you affirm and speak to them, the way you care for other people and encourage them. Understand that a truly meaningful life is made up of a series of daily small acts of decency and kindness, which, ironically, add up to something truly great over the course of a lifetime. Reject versions of the world that define success solely in terms of money, accumulation of things and over-emphasis on status and security. Resist shallow definitions of what constitutes a worthwhile and valuable life. And finally: "DON'T QUIT"

"Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver tint of clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems afar,
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit."

--Edgar A Guest

Ode to Economics

by Vajrakant Sir

In a world of numbers and charts,
Where choices mold the finest arts,
Economics weaves its grand design,
Balancing wants, needs, and the bottom line.

Supply and demand, a timeless duet,
Price and quantity, they never forget.
As consumers seek goods to acquire,
Producers toil, their dreams to inspire.

In the marketplace, ideas take flight,
Entrepreneurs' visions shining bright.
Risk and reward, they dance hand in hand,
Creating jobs and a prosperous land.

The invisible hand, a guiding force,
Fostering growth, charting the course.
From Adam Smith's pen to modern day,
Economies thrive in a dynamic display.





Monetary wizards, the central banks,
Taming inflation with tactical ranks.
Interest rates sway, currencies glide,
In the quest for stability worldwide.



Trade across borders, a global embrace,
Fostering ties, enriching each place.
From goods to services, a flowing tide,
Connecting nations far and wide.



Yet challenges loom, as cycles turn,
Economic downturns cause concern.
Policies crafted to steer the ship,
Tackling hardships with a steady grip.



Through booms and busts, we forge ahead,
The quest for progress, never misled.
Economics, a journey we traverse,
In this ever-changing, diverse universe.

सातवीं मंज़िल

- संगीता गुप्ता

पोदार अंतर्राष्ट्रीय विद्यालय की सातवीं मंज़िल पर जो अनुभव होता है वह अवर्णनीय है, यहाँ का हर छात्र अपने में अनूठा है। यहाँ के विद्यार्थियों में कभी सूरज की किरणों से बने मनोहारी इन्द्रधनुष के सात रंग लाल, नारंगी, पीला, हरा, नीला, जामुनी, बैंगनी नजर आते हैं तो कभी शरीर के सात चक्र। कभी संगीत के सात स्वर षड्ज, ऋषभ, गांधार, मध्यम, पंचम, धैवत और निषाद जिनके संक्षिप्त रूप सा, रे ग, म, प, ध और नि हैं, तो कभी सप्ताह के सात दिन नजर आते हैं। यह सातवीं मंज़िल इन विद्यार्थियों के जीवन में बहुत महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती है, कभी हंसाती है तो कभी रुलाती है, लेकिन उनको सौंदर्य देती है, ज्योति देती है, शीतलता देती है, शक्ति देती है, और इस प्रकार इनके आनेवाले जीवन को खुशनुमा बनाती है। यह सातवीं मंज़िल इन विद्यार्थियों के जीवन में उत्साह, प्रकाश, जागृति बनकर आती है, यह सिखाती है कि कैसी भी विषम परिस्थिति हो, उससे उबरिए, उंचा उठिए, आगे बढ़िए।



LANGUAGE AND THE SEVENTH FLOOR

-Pavitra Ma'am

¡Hola amigos! Navigating the linguistic labyrinth on the 7th floor, my journey has been nothing short of a fiesta! Since stepping into this realm last year, I've danced the salsa of knowledge, painting vivid vocabularies and conjugating verbs with flair.

From engaging debates that sizzled like a caliente salsa to thought-provoking discussions that kept us hooked like a thrilling telenovela, every day was a linguistic adventure! And, ah! The treasure hunt we embarked upon, unearthing hidden gems of wisdom amidst gales of laughter, brought us closer as one spirited familia. Who knew that decoding riddles would be a metaphor for our exhilarating classroom life?

Together, we've surfed the waves of language, laughing and learning in equal measure. Those moments truly made the 7th floor a place of laughter, growth, and camaraderie. It has been a space where minds meet, and bonds of friendship flourish. Together, we've conquered grammatical dragons and unlocked the doors to new worlds through the gateway of language.

¡Hasta luego, mi gente! Keep flipping through the pages of life, where every chapter holds a "taco"-load of adventures!

A FLOOR OF DESIRES

ANKANA MA'AM

"Why are all the students with a laptop?" inquired a middle school teacher on her first proxy on the seventh floor in room 704.

Well, wherein knows the truth. It's the desire to excel that propels one to go beyond, to research ideas and to investigate their authenticity.

Stay calm and fasten your seatbelts. Let's continue with an investigation of fulfilling desires in the following few months:

1

August: The perennial desire to be independent just sets in. Plans for counselling sessions continue and the season of essay writing commences.

2

September: TOK essay title released. To desire or not to desire becomes a question—the fundamental paradox.

October: IA update with red flags noticed. The Tom and Jerry show begins—*Desire Season 4*.

3

November: The desire to spend the last Diwali with family and friends before embarking for further studies suddenly grips in.

4

December: 137

6

January : IA, TOK, EE—
which does one desire
more over the other?

7

February: Universities
desire a particular
grade. A desire to get
45 churns in—Season 8

5

Desire in 150 words—EE
final reflection. *WHAT*—a
saga of 4000 to be told in
200?

9

April: Desire to graduate—further
desire to be the Valedictorian—
further and further desire to receive
the Principal's Award.

8

March: IBIS desires
that work should have
been long completed.

10

May: IB has desired that
the exams go off early
April. May desires a
near completion of the
two years toil.

12

July: IB desires a particular date to
release the pain of two years. You
desire that EMPATHY would strike the
right chord.

11

June: A desire for
internships. Examiners
desire to fulfil marking
allotted scripts within a
deadline.



The 12 months of desire are over. Are you floored?

You are seated on a chair on the 7th floor of desire. There is nothing above to desire. You are seated in the heart of tales with Desire glittering its flashing sharp edges—and in your singular pursuit of desire leaves you in a muddle of confusion. Only for you to strive to be on the brink of divinity. Fueled by a desire to dream and thwarted with fear and shortcomings in its path, your curiosity still does not get killed. Think you are now unravelling a mysterious collection of knowledge and as it aggravates, you hear a voice crying out—CHARGE!! Do not succumb for your moment of blissful desires; you will soon gain an extraordinarily passionate culmination.

Reflect: Did you have the right desire? Should 7 be the desired number? Could you have worked harder to fulfil your desire?

Now, switch timelines: enter back into the desires of today.

What are you waiting for? Did you take 12 minutes to read the above chronology of desires? Do not take 12 seconds more. Are you looking, still, for self-gratification? Do not suppress your desire. Simply plunge into this ocean of desires by asserting your control on it. Remember the depth is infinite. The clock is ticking...

Disclaimer:

Word of caution: You are on a Race-car named Desire — not a Streetcar

To Podar, with love

Gurneet Ma'am

The day I stepped in Podar marked the beginning of a completely new life. Coming from an aviation background to an educational institution was a big step but, as it's said if you're under good guidance you not only learn how to work, you actually work like a professional.

But most importantly, I can't even express and thank all my students for all the love they keep giving me – their love which is so pure and expects nothing in return. I might not be their teacher but they have always respected me like one. If I may quote one of them, " You might not be our subject teacher but you're our emotional support teacher 😊" I wouldn't have enjoyed working so much if it was not for these amazing students in IBDP.

I really miss their cute faces when I come to work on a Saturday and I see empty corridors with no noise or mischief 😊. I will always be grateful to God for giving me this opportunity to meet such young amazing minds and loving souls.

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