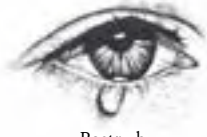


Campus Caricature

Cartoon by Karun Thapa, XII

Pg. 5

AN ODE TO SYLVIA



Poetry by Letminlun Haokip, Deputy Editor (Batch of 2021)

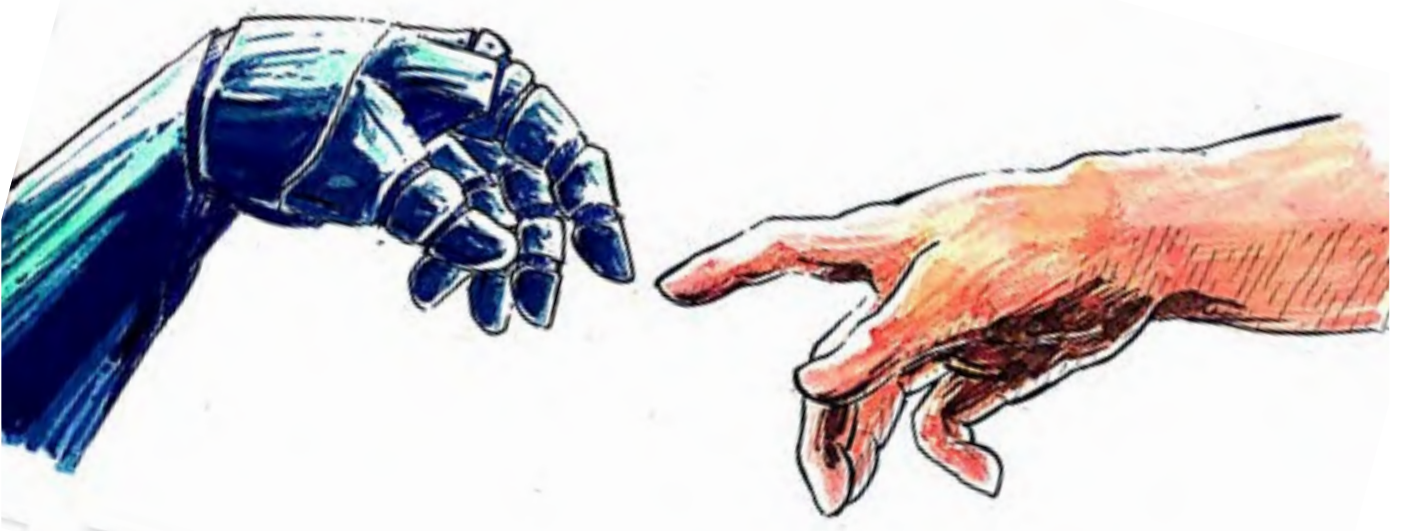
Pg. 2

Tongue Of Slip!!



Pg. 6

Illustration: Barishha Gogoi, XII



GOLIATH & DAVID

-Anoushka S. Rabha, Associate Editor (Batch of 2021)

The Modi government’s relationship with the erstwhile Silicon Valley scion has been fraught since the beginning of the year when Twitter declined to carry out calls for action against specific accounts during the farmers’ protests. Dorsey’s Twitter and its employees in India saw at least four FIRs, one police notice, two instructions from the IT parliamentary committee regarding company policies, and requests both from India’s law enforcement and government to take some action on over 80 pieces of content. Now that the contentious farm laws have been repealed and Dorsey’s reign of “divided attention” has come to an end, let us see who is thy shepherd.

Entrée — AI or Artificial Intelligence. Today, it is multinational corporations like Twitter and Facebook

who “regulate” social media and attempt to fight misinformation and propaganda, not the governments of the new world order. Be it election interference or vigilantism, these Goliaths have been accused of it all. The mighty colossus, Google, even took it up a notch and proceeded to “protect” the EU from malignant influence by excluding non-EU sources from buying political ads ahead of the European Parliament elections because the EU lacks a cohesive framework for preventing online meddling. This is all but another instance of such multinational corporations designing and implementing their own public policies. Apple with its \$240 Billion in reserves can launch an investment program twice the size of the Marshall Plan in countries like Belgium, Russia, India and Mexico. The AI industry gravitates

towards monopolization, with monumental projects like the colonization of Mars, and universal access to the Internet being initiated by the Goliaths instead of the supposed David(s) of our times.

At the Paris Peace Forum, it was Microsoft, Facebook, Google and Twitter along with its swarm of tech giants, who came together with the governments of 50 odd countries to sign a multilateral cybersecurity agreement. The world might see a gathering of powers, but this is the advent of the new world order. Individuals around the globe are currently willing to hand over their most important asset — their personal information — in return for free email services and humorous kitten videos. It's similar to the unknowing sale of entire countries to European imperialists in exchange for beautiful beads and cheap trinkets by African and Native American tribes. A soothsayer would hint at how it will be increasingly difficult to prevent the flow of data in the future, especially when we have come to rely on the Internet for all of our decisions, including healthcare and physical survival.

The appointment of Indian-origin Parag Agarwal as the CEO of Twitter is being hailed with relief at a time when

Twitter has long lost its “safe harbour” protection or legal immunity in India. In lieu of the “What does this mean for India?” headlines that followed the appointments of: Google - Sundar Pichai, Microsoft - Satya Nadella, IBM - Arvind Krishna, Adobe - Shantanu Narayen, VMWare - Raghuram and now, Twitter - Parag Agarwal; we must assess the threat of an upheaval in the current political, social and economic system as the Goliath triumphs over our David.

The dance with death at dawn, in a storm of your own choosing — that is the phenomenon of multinational corporations superseding nations. Most people would prefer handing their data over to Twitter than their own government, which is why the ongoing tussle with the Goliath has gained fervour. When we see the giant and the shepherd in the Valley of Elah, our eyes are drawn to the one with the sword and shield and the glittering armour. Though it is questionable whether it would be better to let governments control our data, we must not forget the value of the shepherd, who has more strength and purpose than we can ever imagine. Out of despair, rises an indomitable force.

an ode to SYLVIA

-Letminlun Haokip, Deputy Editor (Batch of 2021)

The kingdom of heaven is within,
Jesus said, yet two thousand years later,
we are still stuck in our heads.

Weary-eyed children of concrete,
swimming in deep blue pools of deceit.
And as the cicadas buzz into the night,
Selene sheds her Peplos and sets it aside,
a tear in her eye for Sylvia.

She watches as her hands move in beautiful agitation,
her lips whispering subtle incantations,
a declaration to the congregation;
the moon and the stars that watched in admiration.





-Marwati Imsong, XII

It was dead silent; I drew in small breaths as I lay on the ground, afraid of disturbing the silence that governed. I didn't feel any different from a log, concealed in the endless jungles of the island. I turned my head and saw Lieutenant Nubo in the same position as me; we were hanging on with a couple of hand grenades which we had salvaged from some dead soldiers. As we waited for the Americans to cross our path – who never seemed to arrive – the day stretched into dusk, and then into night. A month back, the American planes started bombing the island. On the first night, thirty B-16 bombers showered bombs on the camps; the ones who survived that rain of hellfire took to the jungles. Slowly and carefully, the Americans arrived on the shore. We were ready and waiting for them with an ambush.

As they entered the jungle, we took them by surprise using all the firepower we had; we whittled down their numbers until only a few remained who managed to flee from the scene. We had won the battle.

The victory was however short-lived as a little while later the B-16s returned, bombing every nook and corner of the island. A lot of us didn't make it this time. Once again, they set foot on the island but this time with a battalion of tanks and a more devised band of soldiers. Quite predictably, the tanks were rendered obsolete – they were unable to enter the deep and marshy jungles for there was no space for the tracks to tread on. We prepared another ambush for the Americans. Once bitten, twice shy – the Americans were wiser for this time they had laid a trap for us instead. As we pulled ourselves up for the ambush, we were blown to bits by the bullets of their machine guns. Only Lieutenant Nubo, Doctor Ishikawa and I made it out alive.

We headed deeper into the jungle to hide, carrying only a few bullets and a rusty rifle, where we took refuge in the dense foliage. Later that night we found that Doctor Ishikawa had sustained an injury to his stomach. He knew he wouldn't survive so I took the honor of relieving him from his pain. The painkiller was a single bullet to his head. For the next few days, the lieutenant and I proceeded hidden, looking for any and every way to procure food and weapons. A few nights later, we succeeded in raiding a scouting party, from whom we salvaged a few grenades and some cans of food. Days passed and food became scarce again. We decided then that instead of striving futilely like stubborn

“I turned my head and saw Lieutenant Nubo in the same position as me; we were hanging on with a couple of hand grenades which we had salvaged from some dead soldiers.”

cockroaches, we would take the honorable way out. All we had were a few grenades and even fewer options; so, we strapped the grenades to our bodies.

Lieutenant Nubo and I are waiting for the right time to strike. We don't know when that time will come – it might be today, it might be tomorrow, or even tonight, but we are high in spirit as we know we will go out with honor for the Emperor and the country.

July 7th, 1944

Heitero Kemura.

THE SCAMMER ON The Qfaraque

-Neelabh Kashyap, Associate Editor

“They say dead men tell no tales, but whoever they be, they be dead wrong, me says. Dead men do tell tales, laddie, just not in yer typical manner. Ya need to be able ta salvage those tales; the worth be depends on how much yer able to recover, and how much yer able to string toge- “

“Spin a story, and tell a tale,
Over some gin, and rum and ale;
Each a dime, a couple of lies,
And a nasty twist, what a nice surprise.”

“A nice surprise... A nice surprise... Oh, oh, what a nice surprise!”

Old Heizmann swung down on the oaken wall with his boulder of a fist, eliciting a resounding bang that shook the small cabin. “Will ya stop making that awful racket, ye lumps of unmelodious seafish excreta?” The din on the other side shrunk to a whisper, the spirited singers no doubt deterred by the blatant slur that, like a bucket of ice-cold water, contained nothing but the truth – they were indeed abnormally unmelodious.

Heizmann took a long drag from his prized meerschaum pipe, running his dirty thumb along the intricacies carved on the tube. He let the smoke take a long trip round his lung-pipes before exhaling it quite reluctantly, and then turned to the young boy sitting in front of him. “So where was me? Anyways, ya wanted ta know the story behind this ship, aye?” The boy bobbed his head up and down timidly. “Everything’s got its price, laddie. If ya wanna hear the story, ya know what ya hafta gimme in return, aye?” The boy nodded once more. “Very well then.”

The old man reached out with his right hand and touched the skin behind the boy’s left ear, for that was where the tiny tattoo of an ear and a mouth was inked; Heizmann had the exact tattoo on the back of his right hand, and the young boy gave it a light touch with the same – this was the ritual that initiated the contract. A faint amber glow emanated from the tattoos and coloured the cabin and its contents warm – the small berth jutting from the wall; the walls punctured with rusty nails that held sea-charts and cartographs; the round bottles of that certain brand of rum that the owner of the cabin preferred to others. The glow retreated like a shy housewife; the contract was signed.

“Listen well then, laddie,” and the story shall be

recounted in civility befitting the civilized reader, in no way allowed to be slaughtered by the shameless seafarer’s slangs:

“Long, long ago, the gods had a fight; it wasn’t just a fight between the gods and the demons, or the gods and some evil creatures, or the gods and the mortals, no! It was a fight amongst the gods themselves. The gods who had a difference in convictions broke into three factions – the sentinels, the radicals, and the neutrals, and waged a war that lasted shy of a millennium on the Heavenly Ocean. Each side brought to the treacherous cosmic waters their own fleets – billions of battleships, each no younger than a small mountain. The Qfaraque was one such godly vessel which, due to the incompetent leadership of the five demigod brothers commanding it, capsized, and was washed ashore on the banks of the mortal realm by a tsunami.

“The five demigod brothers, now outcast from the heavenly realm, decided to raise a city of their own on the upturned Qfaraque. There, however, arose a problem that threatened to incite friction of a similar nature to the gods’ amongst the five brothers – currency. They were unable to see eye-to-eye on a currency that would be used by the entire populace of their new city. They, unwilling to tread on the trails of their predecessors, decided to solve it without bloodshed, and the solution they arrived at after much mental expedition was: they would each head out in five different directions with a bag the size of a fist; they would bring back objects of a kind each that they thought was of value; the one who brought back the largest amount of valuable objects that occupied the least amount of space in the bag would be declared the victor.

“And they did: Tyrim brought back thousands of gold coins; Tora brought back a mammoth, chopped into mincemeat that took lesser space than the coins; Tatha brought back millions of grains of salt that took even lesser space than the meat; Tuxi brought back a bag soaked in rum; and the fifth and the youngest brother, Tuli, returned with an empty bag.

“And quite unanimously it was decided that the currency of the Qfaraque would be what the fifth brother had brought back in his empty bag – stories; stories that Tuli had brought an infinity of, but filled the bag by not a dust.”

“Spin a story, and tell a tale,
Over some meatloaves, damp and stale;
Each a crime, the tales repeated,
Do it thrice, you shall be beheaded.”

“Shall be beheaded... Shall be beheaded... Oh, oh, you shall be beheaded.”

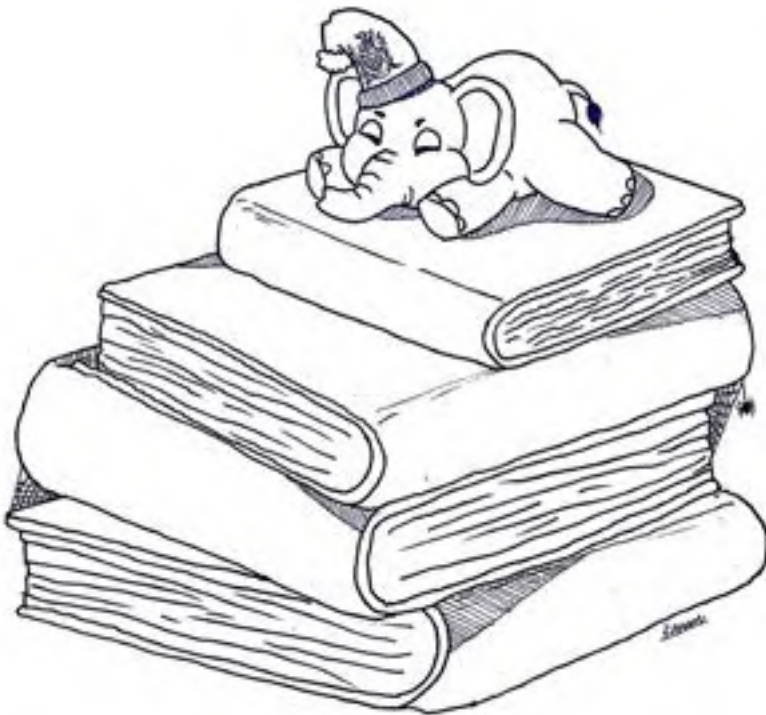
The merry-men on the other side, who, by this time had repaired their shattered ego and recovered a substantial bit of confidence in their vocal skillfulness, were harmonizing, or rather trying to – it was rough, crude, violent, and still unabashedly ungraceful; but the merriness made up for the lack of all else.

“Cause stories be immaterial, one’s wealth can have no bounds; the limitless one’s imagination, the richer that son of a she-anglerfish be. But me thinks the Qfaraque be a wretched ship – where one can nay but pass on stories to their children without asking for anything in return; where history and folklore, legends and myths, and bedtime stories each have a price. A paradiso and an inferno for stories and tales, if me be honest.” Heizmann didn’t bother wasting his energy on the bunch of racket-makers this time; he let them be, and brought the meerschaum pipe to his lips. “Do ya even know why ya hafta touch yer tattoos before buying or selling anything?” He didn’t even wait for the young boy

to shake his head, for he knew. “Well, how’d ya know? They never tell ya the story behind it. And course, how could they; why would they? Telling ya a story for free would be like throwing ‘way your precious wealth, aye? So consider this a freebie, laddie; Me’s in a good mood to tell ya:

“The tattoos come out of the mothers’ wombs along with the infants, etched on distinct parts of their flesh – gifts of the five demigod brothers. Touching tattoos meant signing a contract – a contract governed by power of a primordial nature and adhering to the Three Commandments left by the demigods: Thou shalt not repeat a story told prior by thyself to make purchase, unless thee buyeth it back with another story; Thou shalt not imitate thy fellow’s story, for that is counterfeit; Thou shalt uphold the part of the contract that is thine, for failure shalt incur gods’ wrath. After the contract is signed, the transaction takes place. The buyer tells the story, the tattoos decide its worth, and the seller sells anything of that value.

“And now, laddie – it’s yer turn to spin a story,” there was a mischievous twinkle in Heizmann’s eyes, “and tell a tale; ye gotta pay the price for listening to mine, aye?”



Campus Caricature

STU-DYING
UNDER THE WINTER SUN

-Karun Thapa, XII

Ripple #173

-Neelabh Kashyap, Associate Editor

*She hugged her frail,
freezing frame -
A dweller of the night,
Her profession didn't
allow her warmth;
She looked up and
wondered,
"What does the Milky
Way taste like?"*

Tongue Of Slip!!

1. "I am as determined as a determinant" -Shripriya Kajaria, XII (Took me a while to calculate.)
2. "We brained our storms over" -Dr. Pooja Jain (Yet, here we are.)
3. "I'm thinking of making Ramen in this cold heat for you" -Danica Boro, XII (Go ahead, make my day.)
4. "I am precautioned" -Trinayana Saikia, XII (Against the Grammer Nazis?)
5. "This tastes so smart" -Garlina Saikia, XII (How was it licking brains?)
6. "Wait but speed up" - Mr. Devesh Prajapati (*Waits faster*)

Keep It Reel!

Live'n Up!

- Zainab A. Khan, XII



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