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MAGAZINE

# SHOUT

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TALES OF TUTORING  
AMIDST THE PANDEMIC  
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WHAT FUELS YOUR  
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**PG 4**



# THE RIGHT WAY TO CONSUME NEWS



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

# EDITORIAL

How do you consume news?

There was a time when news meant whatever was slipped under our doors every morning. And there were the TV channels and their fancy graphics and daylong tickers. Who knew that years from then – now – news would be a product to be consumed?

Regardless of you get your daily (or hourly) fix of headlines, there's a lot that goes behind the scenes. And well, it's safe to say that the internet is a wild jungle; there's the pristine nature but also animals ready to strike. In this age of information, it's crucial that all that you hear and see comes from a source that you, and every one, can trust. All the text, sounds, images and videos that you absorb affect the way you think, and impact the way you live.

When it comes to food, you go through nutritional values, health benefits and go even as far to pick the freshest from the best source. For news, do the same.

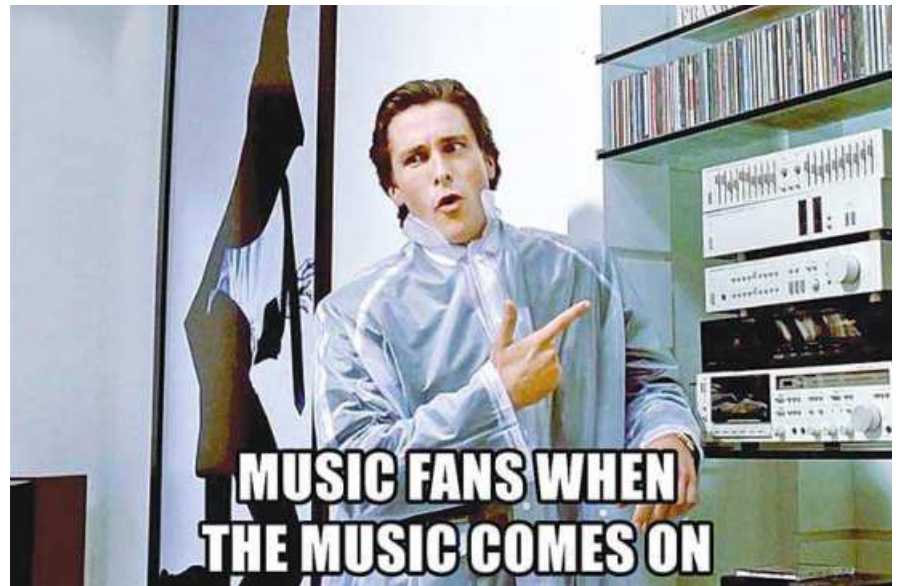
Do your part. Get your news the right way, responsibly.

-- Kazi Akib Bin Asad, Editor In-charge, SHOUT



## PLAYWATCH

### MOVIES



# Movies That Were Revived by Memes

**SYED TAMJID TAZWAR**

#### AMERICAN PSYCHO

Based on Bret Easton Ellis's 1991 novel, this satirical horror film directed by Mary Harron in 2000, launched Christian Bale to stardom and was loved by both audience and critics alike.

Yet, the film couldn't establish itself in mainstream culture because of its violent nature. *American Psycho* later got something of a resurgence, complete with a notable cult following, on social media.

Protagonist Patrick Bateman's tantrums and egocentric delusions provided the internet with heaps of meme templates and launched *American Psycho* into mainstream pop culture. Bateman's deadpan stare at a colleague's business card, hilarious dance sequence with the axe, and other moments caught the eyes of many. The viewers weren't disappointed one bit with Harron's unique take on satire and horror.

#### STAR WARS: THE PREQUEL TRILOGY

Returning to the big screen after 16 years, *The Phantom Menace* had big expectations to fulfil, but failed miserably and was rejected by both critics and the audience. The case that would be repeated throughout the trilogy with viewers blasting George Lucas' bad writing and Hayden Christensen's portrayal of Anakin Skywalker.

The prequel trilogy was disappointing for series devotees who were introduced to the magic with the classics. That slowly changed with time, and after the movie disasters, with some help from the meme community, the prequels found their footing.

The corny dialogues and cardboard cut-out characters were gold for meme templates and were suddenly everywhere. Almost every line of dialogue

was turned into bite-size humour for internet dwellers.

Due to the overall surge in the movie's popularity, Disney was prompted to take on the new Obi-Wan series. Heck, some of us just watch these films for the memes. These days the internet is scrutinising the prequels day and night to find the next big template.

Like Master Kenobi said, "Perhaps the archives are incomplete."

#### THE ROOM

Ah yes, *The Room*. Arguably the best worst movie of all time.

This infamous film was directed, produced and written by Tommy Wiseau, who also starred in it. *The Room* was blasted by critics everywhere and was universally hated. On the flip side, though, the movie was so bad that people started enjoying it for all the wrong reasons.

Bad acting, bad writing and plenty of other issues made the film hilarious and people started enjoying it as a comedy. The room eventually got a cult following with midnight screenings and a dedicated fan base and Tommy Wiseau being deemed a cult hero.

Flash forward to 2017, the film got a colossal amount of new viewers and followers with YouTubers like PewDiePie making videos about it. The meme community came together, particularly Reddit, and they saw the potential in it. They turned up the volume, finding templates and creating memes left and right. The cringe-worthy dialogues and hilarious scenes were processed into small doses of humour, bringing in a sizable new fan base and placing this movie in mainstream pop culture.

*Syed Tamjid Tazwar is too lazy to come up with an original blurb. Contact with him at syedtazwartamjid@gmail.com*



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# Tales of Tutoring Amidst the Pandemic

## TAZREEN ZAHAN BARI

Tutoring is the most popular form of side-hustle among students to earn some quick money, whether it be for financial independence, personal savings, or pocket money.

Amidst the pandemic, the tutoring scene in Bangladesh has gone through considerable changes. While some struggled to make ends meet, others had their financial goals compromised. To compensate, online tutoring became a norm, although not without its own set of challenges both on the students' and the tutors' side.

While some are opting for offline tutoring despite the pandemic, others are forced to do so. Many parents, due to financial strain during the pandemic, prefer offline classes. Others, because of their lack of understanding or experience, tend to think online classes take less effort. So, they insist on paying the tutors less.

Ayesha Sumaiya, a final year English Language and Literature student at Bangladesh University of Professionals, says, "I tutor four students because I am financially independent and need the money to pay my bills and tuition fees. During the pandemic, however, it has become harder to do so. Due to the confusion regarding online and offline classes, I had to keep the room I rented in Dhaka close to my university when I went back home around March last year.

However, because I earn my tuition fees and living cost through tutoring, I had to come back and tutor amidst the pandemic. What is even worse, despite having to give more effort and time in online tutoring than offline ones, the student's parents insisted on paying me less than they used to. So, I had to go back to offline tutoring."

A lot of tutors' stories are similar to Ayesha's. However, others have found online tutoring to be easier and less time-consuming.

A third-year Economics student, Nishat Tasnim Anika from the University of Dhaka, says, "I prefer online tutoring over offline because it saves me the time spent commuting. I also like the flexibility it gives, allowing me to carry my side-hustles on with more ease. However, I do find tutoring online challenging in the sense that it is difficult to explain complex concepts. It is also difficult to gauge whether my



PHOTO: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

student is understanding the things I am trying to teach. Especially with younger students, it is difficult to tutor online. I have been receiving half the payment I used to while tutoring offline, but I do not mind as the money I earn from tutoring is not essential for me and I only do it for personal savings. Besides, I think it is fair as I am saving money and time previously spent commuting anyway."

Among students who are taking lessons from their private tutors, the experience varies depending on the mode of tutoring, technological adaptability and age. For younger students, it is difficult to pay atten-

tion in online classes, hence they often get distracted. If the student is a little older and comes from a financial background that allows the use of multiple devices easily, the experience is not that different from physical lessons.

Tahmid Safi, a student of standard four at Playpen says, "I have not faced any problem in receiving lessons from my private tutor online. It is not very different from physical classes."

This is not the case for most students as they find it difficult to communicate and understand through online lessons.

A first-year college student, Tamzeed

Abid from Rajuk Uttara Model College says, "I do not think online and offline tuition experience is the same. I have observed a lack of effort from the teacher's side. Often my tutors will keep their camera off, draw on applications like Paint or Notepad which makes it very difficult to understand certain concepts and it also creates room for miscommunication. Other than that, internet connectivity issues are a problem on both sides which makes the whole process lengthier and often frustrating."

During the pandemic, a lot of parents chose to go the more reasonable and safer route which is switching to online tutoring. Some parents have prioritised their children's education over health.

Mohammad Mahmud Abbasi, a doctor and parent to two, says, "Initially I made my children switch to online private lessons to prevent the virus from spreading and harming my family. But my son is an SSC candidate and finds it very difficult to understand Physics and Chemistry online. So, I had to make him switch back to offline tutors for these two subjects. We make sure that they remain physically distant and use sanitisers."

While this parent can afford to equip his children with devices and a stable internet that allows them to take private lessons online, a lot of parents do not have the same ability which leads them to choose offline tutoring over online, even amidst a pandemic. Regardless of ability, it is worth questioning whether prioritising potentially dangerous private lessons over safety from Covid-19 is a reasonable choice to make.

Students, both as students and tutors, depend on private tutoring in our country. But the struggles and risks on each side regarding online tutoring including financial strain and technological barriers are very much real.

Although some struggles are inevitable depending on context, understanding and compassion from parents who act as employers for the tutors and guardians to their children can make things easier on both ends.

*Tazreen is busy critically binge-watching Korean movies from the early 2000s. To have nerdy conversations about the metaphorical implications of color palettes and what not, reach her at tazreenzahan@gmail.com*

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# What Fuels Your Fear of Failure?

**NUZHAT HASSAN CHOWDHURY**

Life is often turned into a competition it never needed to be in the first place, either by us or by the people around us.

Parents compared us to our peers when we were children, which resulted in spending the rest of our lives comparing ourselves to others in terms of achievements. Driven by this intense desire for success, many develop a crippling fear of failure.

But, is there more to it? Could there be other underlying reasons that fuel this fear?

## DENIAL OF THE INEVITABLE

Do you often quit if you don't excel at something immediately?

Success is the result of a prolonged process of trial and error. Therefore, to expect yourself to immediately excel in everything you attempt is not only naive, but also arrogant. Your competitive side may compel you to set high expectations for yourself and become your harshest critic — one that always expects you to come out on top, regardless of the circumstances. Hence, in your quest to avoid failure, it becomes easy to forget that it is, actually, an inevitable part of life.

The discrepancies between expectations and reality can take a serious jab at our self-esteem, thus resulting in a deep-rooted fear of failure.

## DREADING DISAPPOINTMENT

We all wish happiness for our loved ones, especially our parents. In an attempt to make them happy, some of us set out to achieve the goals they've set for us. Although extremely noble, this practice can often prove to be a burden.

If your first thought upon facing failure is "How will my parents feel about this?" then perhaps you're striving to make them happy before yourself. This reaction is understandable as sometimes the expectation of the disappointed look, accompanied by silence, feels a lot more dreadful

than a full-blown lecture.

However, is it realistic to always meet others' expectations? Is it fair to judge yourself solely based on somebody else's perception, without asking what you think of yourself? The sooner we realise the absurdity of this approach, the easier it'll become to overcome the fear of disappointing others.

## TYING SELF-WORTH WITH SUCCESS

In this cutthroat world, you may often find yourself subconsciously measuring your worth with the amount of success you achieve.

We see people posting their accomplishments all over social media — there's always somebody that got into their dream university or landed a highly rewarding job. The success stories around us can convince us to overlook our own accomplishments and fixate on failed attempts.

Believing that you're inherently incompetent upon facing any form of failure may be a sign that you have tied your self-worth to your achievements. Perhaps you've started to believe that your victories and defeats are the only things that define you, which is why you are terrified of failure and resort to disparaging yourself when you inevitably face a few defeats in life.

It's perfectly normal to feel sad, confused or even frustrated when faced with rejection or failure.

As a matter of fact, it is healthy to allow yourself to feel these emotions rather than trying to bottle them up. However, it is important to try and be in control of our emotions, rather than to allow our emotions to control us. What we can do is let ourselves sulk, but pick ourselves back up in time, to ensure that our fear of failure does not prevent us from growing.

*Nuzhat enjoys baking but simply cannot find the required ingredients. Tell her about your favourite baked goods at nuzhatchowdhury07@gmail.com*



# It's Okay to Not Follow Self-Improvement. Here's Why.

**SABIBA HOSSAIN**

Another lockdown, and more of "How to be productive every second of your quarantine."

As appealing as the idea of becoming perfect is, with just one wrong turn, it could make one delusional. Hence, if you're not careful, you could lose yourself in the world of self-help and toxic positivity.

What's wrong with being productive? Nothing.

However, when you get obsessed with self-help and think that your life will be ruined if you waste a minute — that's where the problem begins. We're humans, not automatons; it's healthy for us to rest and enjoy.

Some YouTube videos will tell you otherwise, prodding you to work 24/7 until you feel burned out. Social media will show you people whose lives have been butterflies since they started self-help and became productive to the power infinity, making you feel inadequate about your lousy life.

There's a massive community of self-help around the world that relies on your insecurities and forces you to channel them to deepen their pockets. Self-improvement tells you to get out of your comfort zone, and while that is usually a good thing, pushing yourself all the time beyond your abilities could backfire, leaving you exhausted and disappointed in yourself. Now that you're probably depressed, you seek even more self-help content. The cycle goes on.

The world of self-help will teach you toxic positivity, tell you to smile even when everything goes downhill. But it's

not necessary. Everybody feels pain, and there's no shame if you have a mental breakdown or a panic attack.

We're flawed. There isn't a single soul who hasn't binged Netflix shows, woken up late, or felt hopeless during the pandemic. Even your favourite celebrities who have been claiming that they have been super productive in the quarantine had their fair share of bad days.

So what if you couldn't schedule every second of your quarantine? What if you couldn't wake up at 5 in the morning? What if you felt so bored that you took a nap in the middle of a day?

Not everyone perceives a situation the same way as you. Your neighbour takes a run every morning to feel happy, and you read thriller books for bliss. Why add that extra anxiety to follow something that's not your cup of tea?

Don't get me wrong. It's perfectly okay if you have plans for the upcoming days of being locked indoors. If you find tranquillity in planning, don't abstain from it. If writing, painting, or any productive activity fills you with ecstasy, do it. Do something because you want to, not because some motivational speaker said so.

So, in this lockdown, don't stress too much over being productive. Do what you love, and hopefully, that'll bring what you need most — peace.

*Sabiba Hossain is a Hufflepuff who plans on going into hibernation every winter but never succeeds. Send her fantasy book recommendations at: fb.com/Sabibastro*

# The Right Way to Consume News

**AMRIN TASNIM RAFA**

When a few friends and I took up high school debating a couple of years ago, we were scared. But it wasn't the cutthroat competition or public speaking that we were most afraid of, it was the possibility of being perceived as ignorant or under-prepared, given that there is no limit to the range of topics debate motions can cover. Having shared our worries with our coaches and experienced debaters, we were told that to compete, we must consume as much news and information as we had access to.

It didn't take long for the combination of fear, ambition, and access to unlimited amounts of content on the internet to become counterproductive and overwhelming us.

Such advice is hardly exclusive to debaters, throughout high school and university we all hear the importance of keeping up on new and current affairs being emphasised over and over by teachers, guidance counselors, motivational speakers on social media, and literally anyone I can think of.

The problem is that when we are told to read up and research, we aren't told how.

While young people do not have the same unquestioning faith in WhatsApp chat threads as their parents, and generally tend to be more tech-savvy, they still aren't completely immune to the dangers of misinformed news consumption. Knowing about the nature of how news outlets operate, how news is circulated online, and the why and how of taking in news from varied sources and perspectives can make the process of news consumption more enjoyable and productive.

We all know that not everything we see on the internet is true; misinformation is often subtler than we think. Besides completely untrue stories, which are usually easy to identify, misinformation is also heavily biased propaganda, digitally-altered images or video, or satire believed to be true.

This problem can be combated with the simple solutions of going beyond the headline, being aware of whether you're reading a news report, an opinion piece, or a sponsored post, and checking if all the sources of the same news story report basic facts that match.

Zyma Islam, journalist and reporter at The Daily Star, says, "The main thing when it comes to understanding whether or not a news article should be trusted is determining its sourcing. Almost all sentences must include a citation, either from a person or a report or data source. If an article is making generic statements without saying where they got their information from, run ten miles away from it."

"Also, it is alright for news articles to pick a side or have an opinion but it must be an educated bias, and the bias must only exist when there is a clear moral or ethical right or wrong. That being said, even if there is a bias, the article must make a clear effort to reach out to the opposing POV as a part of the right-to-reply exercise."

It's also possible to be misled by the reporting of facts that are completely true. To avoid that, we need to be aware of the

fact that the process of reporting news itself has its limitations. All news outlets, including reputed international news ones, have their own specific biases, such as which political party it endorses. Therefore, it's important to know what comes out of a certain medium. The way a story is told is almost always unintentionally affected by the reporter's personal bias. It is also affected by the time when it is told since all news reports are far from the whole story and only a snapshot in time.

"Local news outlets, the ones that are credible and pursue ethical journalism any way, operate under a lot of pressure," says Karim Al Waheed, Digital Editor of The Daily Star. "The Covid-19 pandemic has only made it worse."

According to Fardeen Ameen, former president of the Bangladesh Debate Council, it's important to take into account incentives and leverage when relying on and sharing news that is circulated online. "Clickbait headlines are meant to gen-

erate shock value and provoke a reaction; while it's only natural to react accordingly, it helps to take a minute to reflect and remember that many such creators need engagement numbers and clicks. Knowing this helps us understand why a headline came about; it's not the full news, which should be read before we click the share button," he comments.

Where you're getting your news from is one of the most important factors controlling what information you're consuming and its influence on you.

"Social media algorithms are designed to put the content we prefer in front of us first," said Sadid Murshed, debate coach at Scholastica Debating Society and former debate coach at Jahangirnagar University Debate Organization, as he shared how this isn't the most ideal for our exposure to news. "The more time we spend in this 'echo chamber' of information filtered according to our identity and pre-existing beliefs, the more disconnected to alternate views we become."

"Read different versions of the same thing," advises Zyma Islam. "Read all types of media — the top tier ones, the mid-tier ones, the ones you've never heard of. Follow the discussions on those topics happening on Twitter or Facebook. Identify who are the people having these conversations and identify their leanings."

Karim Al Waheed advises us not to stay stuck in the 'social media bubbles created by algorithms.'

"Seek out news, views and other content you won't necessarily find on your news feed," he says.

Productive news consumption should occur in a way that our views are constantly challenged. While it not the most ideal, it's still possible to achieve this while consuming news on social media.

"To mitigate the disconnect, be explicitly aware of the biases of the news sources that you follow. Intentionally expose yourself to counter-narratives. For example, if you generally hold liberal views, seek out and follow news outlets that

impairment to our individual creativity and critical thinking abilities.

Again, Sadid advocates for not making social media our primary source of news, "Social media generally pumps a lot of low-quality content in high volume, most of which you did not want to see anyways. Be an intentional consumer. Find out what information is relevant to or interests you, and actively look for that. That way you can be conscious of what sources you pick, and the risk of going overboard on information is minimised."

Instead of trying to gain surface level knowledge on a wide variety of topics, or trying to keep up with as much breaking news and news stories as possible, the process is a lot more enjoyable when you find out what kind of news really interests you, and dig deeper on news that is relevant to your field of work or study. But when you want to share or know more about a story that is impactful or important to you, be sure to cross-reference.



cater to a conservative viewpoint. This way you'll be forming constructive, informed opinions that have been weighed against alternatives and been put into an intellectual test," Sadid added.

It's also helpful to examine our own biases and assumptions, since humans have a tendency of trusting information that confirms our own biases. When reading up on current affairs or researching a certain news story, it's much better to use a search engine like DuckDuckGo that does not personalise search results.

All this emphasis on cross-referencing and researching across various outlets may make it seem like the more news we read, the better. That's not always the case. Daily exposure to too much news can be counterproductive.

Constant exposure to a large number of news reports, opinions, and analyses may negatively impact our ability to formulate our own opinions and perspectives, instead, we may become convinced and regurgitate whatever popular opinion and its justification is. This is a considerable

A good strategy to prevent information overload can be to keep your social media use and news consumption separate. This way, you're not looking at news whenever you're communicating with your friends, aren't suddenly bombarded with unfavourable news, or just simply too much information. Set aside a certain time of the day when you sit down and read news, from whatever your preferred outlet is.

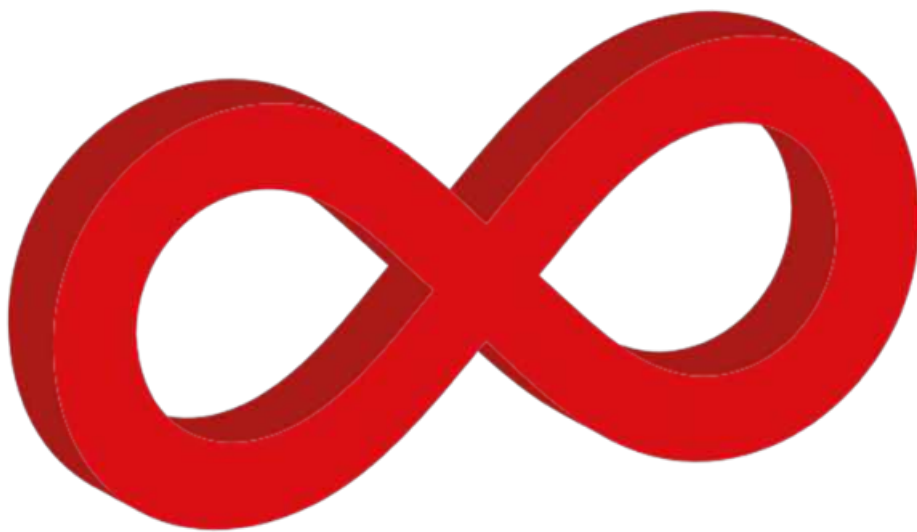
Despite what the prevalent "woke" culture says, you really do not need to know about everything that is going on. If constant exposure to grim news upsets you or adversely affects your mental health, it's not worth it. Even if it might not seem like it, with a little awareness and tweaking of your social media feeds, you are in control of what you see, and you are the one who gets to choose.

*Amrin Tasnim Rafa is always confused, it's literally her dominant personality trait. This is maybe her email, she can't be sure: amrinrafa@gmail.com*



**ECHOES BY**  
 ASRAR CHOWDHURY

## The Dimensions of Infinity



**I** People first started to count in singles and duals. They didn't assign numbers. I, you, he, she would refer to one. Duals were expressed with an "operator": He *and* you; *neither* this *nor* that; *either* you *or* I.

Then came the challenge to describe three or more. For that, people relied on we, us, they, many.

Counting became a necessity when cities emerged. For practical purposes, around here, large units were *lac* or *lakh* ( $10^5$ ); *crore* or *koti* ( $10^7$ ). There are units in the Indian Vedic number system that express one lakh crore as one *sanku* ( $10^{12}$ ); a *maha sanku* as one lakh *sanku* ( $10^{17}$ ); even one *vikrant* ( $10^{67}$ ) and one *maha vikrant* ( $10^{72}$ ). The international number system has vigintillion ( $10^{63}$ ) and centillion ( $10^{103}$ ).

These large numbers would have been enough, had it not been for Archimedes.

Archimedes asked: Is there an upper bound to the number of grains that can fit into the universe? He had to redefine counting, and so introduced the "beast number". The Archimedes Beast Number is 1 followed by 80 quadrillion zeros.

Is there a number larger than that? Yes. It's called infinity. And to describe infinity, we need to redefine the way we count.

**II** You cannot count to infinity. In space, you can fit more and more people into a room, and still there would be some space leftover to accommodate more people. In time, the clock will carry on adding a second and will never stop. This means there's no upper bound or limit to infinity. We need to think differently.

Our first exposure to infinity comes in school when learning ratios. If  $y < x$ , then  $x / y > 1$ . As  $y$  becomes smaller and smaller compared to  $x$ , the ratio becomes larger and larger. How large can the ratio become? If negatives are ruled out, then the smallest value for  $y$  will be zero. We all know  $x / 0 = \infty$ . Since  $\infty$  can't be counted, some texts

define this special relationship as *undefined*.

If something is undefined, then something is unknown. This opens a wide box of defining infinity that may not be as large as we might think.

**III** At the ground floor, you're waiting for the elevator to come down. An indicator tells you where the lift is. You patiently wait; the end is defined.

Flip this situation. You're at the same place, blindfolded. You don't know when the lift will come, although you know the building is finite. The end is undefined. When something is undefined, it will be uncertain.

Here's a little teaser.

A mathematician requests a friend to meet him any time after 5 by sending a text,  $x > 5$ .

The mathematician then starts to read Alice in Wonderland. When Alice asked the White Rabbit, "How long is forever?", he responded, "Sometimes, just one second."

The mathematician hears the bell ring. It's a minute past five. His friend, smiling, asks, "Didn't you say  $x > 5$ ?"

The poor mathematician. What could have lasted for long, ended abruptly.

**IV** One of the beauties of math is that it can redefine itself when needed. If counting fails, keep things open-ended. If that doesn't work, is it possible to show infinity visually, through graphs on a 90-degree gradient?

These are questions mathematicians ask. The beast of the discipline is that schools almost never expose students to the intuitive beauty of math when they're young.

*Asrar Chowdhury teaches Economics in classrooms. Outside, he watches Test cricket, plays the flute and listens to music and radio podcasts. Email: asrarul@juniv.edu or asrarul@gmail.com*

satire.

## "Ignorance about your undergraduate major is completely normal," VC says in freshers' orientation

*Ensures YouTube Premium subscription to watch Indian tutorials*

**HASIB UR RASHID IFTI**

Bidirectional University (BDU) warmly welcomed the newly enrolled batch of undergraduate investors students of Bhepsha 2021 semester, through an orientation ceremony held at BDU Auditorium and Community Centre, held earlier this week.

VC of BDU Dr Jordan Jailfort was the chief guest of honour at the programme. In his speech, he gave the freshers an idea of what to expect in the next four years.

Dr. Jordan said, "Your parents forced you to get enrolled in any one of the departments. Whether it is the BBA department, or any one of the other 43 made-up engineering departments, at the end of the next four years, irrespective of your major, you will all be left with something in common — empty pockets."

"Our campus is as small as your self-respect, so make yourselves at home. The canteen food is overpriced and the chicken is stale enough to finally make you consider eating vegetables. The security guards are present 24/7 to shame people for holding hands. You, the students, are always welcome to talk about any sort of mental or physical 'discomfort' you might be facing from seniors, just don't expect us to listen," he added.

As students started to look dumbfounded, halfway through his speech, Dr. Jordan quickly reminded them of the recreational facilities available.

"We have 18 mandatory concerts each semester, and 27 clubs. Although 24 of them are not worth it, and are only there to help with some accounting errors, I'm pleased to announce that a team from our business club came second in a local competition. This gave the club a much needed confidence boost to change its name to BDU MAYBE," said Dr. Jordan.

He continued, "We also have a mandatory residential semester which offers the opportunity for students to learn a wide range of skills, to find temporary relationships and to gain questionable experiences they will regret for the rest of their undergraduate lives."

Having been repeatedly reminded to talk about academics, he hesitantly said, "BDU always tries to find and dedicate the finest resources to its students. Our highest grade is A, for which you'll have to get more than 95 out of 100. A+ is available upon special requests."

"We have recently initiated a 'Sliding into Your MBA' programme for our beloved students, which allows them to graduate if they press the right arrow key on their keyboard long enough with their lecture notes open. Of course, students will have to pay extra to unlock premium features of the lectures," he said with a wink. "All freshers will be provided with a YouTube Premium subscription so that they can watch Indian tutorial videos and pass their semesters."

After 68 minutes and multiple yawns from the crowd, the VC finally ended his speech on an inspirational note.

"Remember, having no real idea about your major after four years of university is completely normal. Life is an ocean of opportunities, BDU is a sinking boat and you can't swim, but hey, at least you have your degree."

*Hasib Ur Rashid Ifti reads books, idolizes Osamu Dazai and plans to check his email any day now. Send him book suggestions at: hasiburashidifti@gmail.com*



DESIGN: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

# Of you, I know not

**SYEDA ERUM NOOR**

I know you don't see me out here in the dark  
 But that is where I stand when you think you're alone.  
 When the air is too heavy, and the water too thick,  
 It weighs on me too with you in its wake.

A blurring in passing, a static in spot,  
 Existing in half-lives when you're not a whole.  
 I'm the dream that you have of meadows and sun,  
 The silence that sits when you've just gotten home.

Of you, I know not.  
 A home to be found.  
 But a home is a home.  
 No matter the grounds.

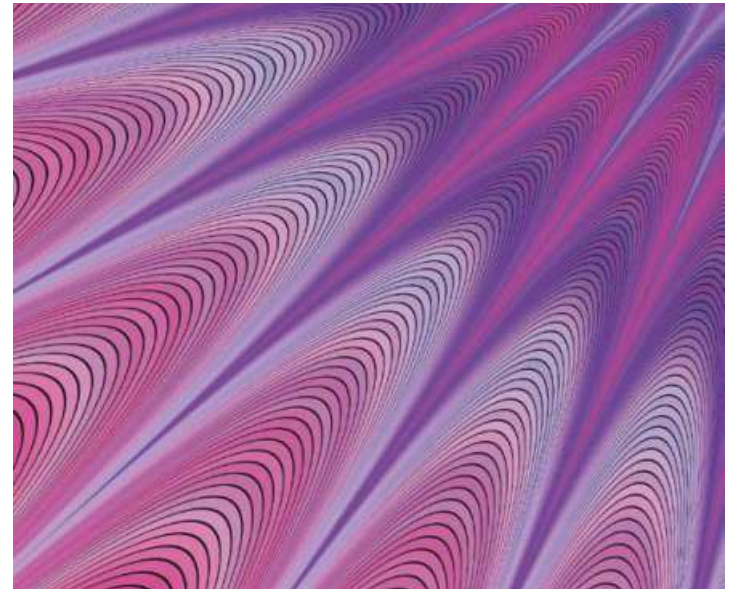
Asking for faith from an abyss that's so dark,

It's unfair on your mind and unfair on your heart.  
 I speak to the walls, who've grown quieter since  
 And ask the wind to bring me a soft, distant thought.

Blindness is only filled with grim sight  
 Of all that you've done and all that you might.  
 Take from me what I can't offer myself,  
 A blanket to safety and a moment of truth.

Of you, I know not.  
 Yet know in you too.  
 Like a solemn melody  
 That's lost its way to you.

*Syeda Erum Noor is dangerously oblivious  
 and has no sense of time.  
 Send help at erum.noor1998@gmail.com*



# UTOPIA

**AYRA AREEBA ABID**

Hop on the train. Greet smiling and genial faces. No one is screaming, not even a baby. There is no sign of differences among the White, Brown and Black. There is no room for hatred and agony. Only love and peace resides in your utopia.

You wake up to the sound of the train stopping. No one is impatient. No one tries to race and no one tries to push. Everyone selflessly puts others, even strangers, ahead and gives space to go. No one has a phone in their hands while you go down. Everyone is immersed in the music of their voices rather than being immersed in artificial music through the headphones and earphones stuffed

in their ears. Your ears and your heart resonate with the sound of laughter which induces this feeling of strange, indescribable tranquility and a boost in your serotonin level. Here, everyone knows each other and love knows no bounds. There are no 'Love Laws', something you had once read in your favourite Arundhati Roy book. This land knows no sorrow, grief and agony. Stop. You realise no such place exists. Is this a dream? It cannot be. Everything looks so real.

The trees have lush green leaves and bear fresh, plum fruits. Here, there is no deforestation. Instead, trees are planted by each person of this land. The air is fresh. The rivers and lakes are clean. No one litters. They have trash cans everywhere. No

one wastes and no one harms. There are politicians but there is no corruption. No one is greedy for wealth. There is no zoo because they believe animals are meant to be free. They have their home and family. They have feelings too. "No animal is to be caged and no animal should be used for entertainment purposes," the president had said.

In Utopia, no one commits crimes so there are no jails. Everyone, including females of all ages, is free to be, even during the dark. Everyone works in unison and peace. There is no sense of inferiority or superiority. A team is a team, they believe. There is no sole leader, everyone leads. The climate here is also perfect, perfect winters and perfect summers. The air does

not choke you. You want to be outside all the time now with these wonderful strangers. That is strange. You never felt like being outside for a long time. You preferred lounging at home on weekends and forcefully worked from home on most weekdays. The weather and people were never like this. What happened?

The loud sound of the television breaks you, detaches you from your utopia. You find yourself lounging on your sofa with an open bag of chips spilled under you. "Scientists believe it is too late," the reporter says with a sullen voice.

*Ayra Areeba Abid's favourite word is 'serendipity' and she's a linguistics geek. Connect with her at areeba.ayra@gmail.com*



# Dora the Explorer Ends Up In Dhaka After Map Malfunctions

**MALIHA MOMTAZ OISHI**

In an unexpected turn of events, Dora the Explorer and her lovable sidekick Boots the Monkey were spotted near Dhanmondi Lake.

They were headed to the Land of Rainbows and Cupcakes, when their usually reliable guide, a map named Map (known for his hit song "I'm the Map") malfunctioned and gave them the route to Dhaka instead.

We saw the incident as a great opportunity for an interview. Our journalists asked Dora and Boots about their thoughts on doing the show in our city.

"It was fun, initially," said Dora. "You see, I started out long ago, when I was seven. Twenty years later, I'm still clapping along to alphabet songs and asking 'Can you tell me what this word means?' to toddlers that are probably drooling on their living room carpets, when what I really want to say is 'Can you tell me why I'm still doing this?' Somehow, my appearance didn't change much either. My friend, Ash Ketchum, went through the same thing."

Boots added, "What do I think? My name is Boots. It's like the producers didn't even try. If I wore a hat instead of these boots, what would they call me? Hats? I need a walk."



We think that Boots would look lovely with a hat. A Fe-Dora hat, to be precise... Next, our team asked them about their experience in Dhaka.

"See these bags under my eyes? They separated me from my family in the jungle, made me learn English and painted me blue — all so I could tail Dora on her stupid adventures," Boots said gloomily. "It took a toll on me. But enduring the traffic jams here took a bigger toll on me. That Martin Scorsese guy *wishes* he could

make films as lengthy as Dhaka traffic."

"I was minding my own business, when these men started gawking at me. I thought they were mocking my outfit — Boots says my shorts are *too orange*" said Dora. "Honestly, I wanted to scream at Map. Get the directions wrong again, I said, and I'll paste you on some roadside wall and leave you there next to all those election posters and cockroach extermination ads. But then I reached for my backpack to take Map out, but my

backpack was gone. We were in this place called Moha—"

Boots interjected, "I kept warning her that the place seemed shady, but she wouldn't get it. It's just like this on the show. She can't see Swiper trying to steal from her even when he's right beside her. All she does is stare and blink at the TV screen with those soulless eyes. Girl's so slow that you might as well call her *Internet the Explorer*."

However, their experiences weren't entirely bad. According to Dora, the local food is on par with her Abuela's tortillas, and the rickshaw rides were to die for. Although literally, sometimes.

"Some of those truck drivers need to relax, man. This isn't NASCAR," she commented. Boots said he's now friends with stray animals.

We found Map near a sewer a few hours after the interview.

"They'll shift to Google Maps now, won't they?" he asked, distressed and covered in mud.

*Maliha Momtaz Oishi is a critically acclaimed writer, if you count full marks in 5th grade English tests. Mail her at malihamomtazoishi@gmail.com*

## Your Ultimate Guide to Sunscreen

**SUBAH NUZHAT HUSSAIN**

The only shield that stands between you and the damaging rays of the sun is sunscreen.

Let's face it, the time spent on your skin care regimen is futile if you don't use sunscreen. Long-term exposure to the sun has detrimental effects on the health and longevity of the skin cells, since UV rays contribute to premature aging and even some forms of skin cancer.

**GET TO KNOW THE ENEMY**

Two types of UV radiation damage the skin: UVA and UVB. UVA rays have longer wavelengths and can penetrate deeper into the dermis, while UVB, which has shorter wavelengths are responsible for sunburns.

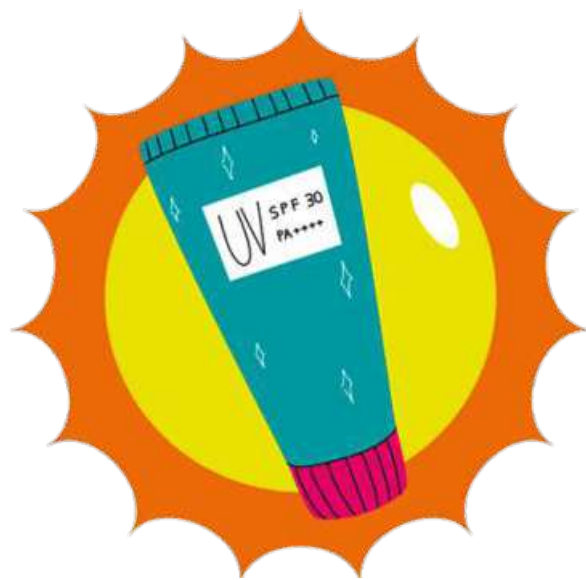
The cumulative effects of long-term exposure to UV radiation can lead to skin cancer. As ozone levels plummet each year, the number of people afflicted with skin cancer climbs higher and higher. An estimated three million people suffer from skin cancer each year.

**WHAT IS SPF?**

Sun protection factor, or SPF, measures how much ultraviolet radiation is required to cause sunburns if you use sunscreen compared to unprotected skin. This means higher SPF gives your skin more protection from the harsh rays of the sun.

SPF 50 reflects 98 percent of UV rays while SPF 30 reflects 97 percent. This doesn't seem like much of a difference, until you consider the fact that your skin is exposed to twice as much UV radiation when you opt for SPF30 over SPF50.

However, it is common that when people use sunscreen



DESIGN: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

with SPF higher than 50, they become complacent and spend more time in the sun or forget to reapply sunscreen.

SPF is not a measure of how much time you can spend under the sun. In fact, the amount of UV radiation that you are exposed to can vary with the time of day. Fifteen minutes under the sun at 1 PM exposes you to the same amount of radiation that an hour at 9 AM might.

Furthermore, SPF only refers to protection against UVB rays. In order to protect yourself from both UVA and UVB rays, look for broad spectrum sunscreens. In addition,

sunscreen should be applied generously and applied every two hours.

**MINERAL OR CHEMICAL**

Sunscreens can be categorised into two groups, based on formulation. Mineral sunscreens usually contain zinc oxide or titanium oxide. They sit on top of the skin and deflect UV radiation. On the other hand, chemical sunscreens contain organic compounds like avobenzone, oxybenzone, that sink into the skin and convert UV radiation into heat.

The choice between mineral and chemical sunscreen depends on a person's skin type. People with more sensitive skin should choose mineral sunscreens since they act immediately after application and sit on the surface. Chemical sunscreens are a better option for people with oily skin and people with darker skin tones since it has a thinner texture and it does not leave a white cast.

It is good practice to wear hats, caps and sunglasses along with sunscreen. Ultraviolet rays aren't going to avoid your eyes or hair follicles just because you have sunscreen on.

**References**

1. FDA (July 14, 2017). *Sun Protection Factor (SPF)*.
2. WHO (October 16, 2017). *Radiation: Ultraviolet (UV) radiation and skin cancer*.
3. Skin Cancer Foundation (June 2019). *UV Radiation & Your Skin*.

*Subah spends her free time contemplating on the ultimate questions of life, the universe and everything, send her your questions on twitter at @hussain\_subah*