



DURGA PUJA  
AS I REMEMBER IT

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THE AFTERMATH OF  
GETTING BULLIED

PG 4



# SCHOOL LABORATORIES

## UNDER THE MICROSCOPE



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA



# EDITORIAL

I watch a lot of television. Whether I'm on an Uber ride home, or studying for a final with my room locked, I always leave something playing in the background. Not only do I function better with the sound of something familiar running, but I also find it very comforting.

Then there are days I have more time, so I sit in front of my TV with an assortment of snacks to munch on, and watch something deeply uncomfortable. However, this weekend as I sat there with my pack of chips watching *The Platform*, my stomach turned and I had to keep the chips aside.

A movie well known for its gory scenes, it wasn't the violence in it that made me lose my appetite. It was the depiction of the very real problems in our society and the parallels between it and this seemingly dystopian world. The depiction of overconsumption and unequal distribution of basic needs, while extreme, were very well put together and made me very uncomfortable. But it was for good reason.

Being uncomfortable can sometimes be good.

– Syeda Afrin Tarannum, Sub-editor, SHOUT



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## PLAYWATCH

### MOVIE



# Do We Really Need Another Cinderella Movie?

SABIBA HOSSAIN

With the recent release of *Cinderella* (2021), the internet is once again buzzing with the question “Do we need another Cinderella movie?”

The answer is “no.” Before presenting arguments on my behalf, let’s go back to 1950 when the first Cinderella movie was released.

The characters in the original *Cinderella* were one dimensional. Cinderella is the kindest, while her step sisters and mother are the most evil. There’s no in-between. Now, this strategy may have worked in 1950 and in children’s tales, but it doesn’t seem relatable anymore. Sadly, most new movies didn’t deviate from this. They had different settings, but not different character tropes.

One exception was *Cinderella II* (2002) where the focus is on Anastasia’s story instead of Cinderella’s. This movie also showed the post-marriage life of Cinderella where she struggled to adjust to life in the palace. Another brilliant twist of the original film was *Cinderella III* (2007) where time is reversed and we see an alternate timeline where Cinderella wasn’t magically transformed that day for the ball.

*Cinderella* (2015) did try to shed some light on the stepmom’s story, but the rest of the movie was purely committed to the original. The main reason this version won audiences’ hearts was its gorgeous cinematography. Another *Cinderella Story* (2008) wasn’t particularly cinematic, and had several plot holes, but it did a brilliant job of portraying the message that miracles can be found

without the help of magic.

Books did better at retellings than the movies. A great example is perhaps *Ella Enchanted* where Ella is cursed with a spell of obedience, so she’s forced to tolerate her stepsisters’ maltreatment. Instead of focusing on finding a prince, the story focuses on rediscovering Ella herself. The movie adaptation (2004) of this book starring Anne Hathaway was lighthearted, quirky, and refreshing to watch. Some other great retellings are *Cinder*, *Cinderella Is Dead* and *The Prince & The Dressmaker* where the authors kept the characters the same, but changed the plot, added creative flavours of sci-fi, dystopian, or historical fiction.

*Cinderella* starring Camila Cabello tried to solve the “saved by a prince” trope by giving Ella a passion. But it didn’t provide much since the period the movie is set in is inconsistent with the dialogues, the music every ten minutes was annoying and, most importantly, Ella’s problems were either fixed by magic or superior authorities rather than figuring out a way for her to fix those by herself.

When I said I don’t want to watch another Cinderella movie, I meant that I don’t want to watch another copy of the original. The original was fun; we grew up with it. But the same trope doesn’t carry that appeal anymore. I’m up for watching retellings with clever twists any day, but copycat versions? Nah.

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



# Durga Puja as I Remember It

**ANUPOMA JOYEETA JOYEE**

"Is this how it's going to be from now on?" I asked myself before making peace with the fact that Puja doesn't feel the same anymore. In a full somersault from denial to acceptance, I have let the inescapable monotony of adulthood set in.

I remember the time when I used to wait for Durga Puja all year around. The lingering rush of picking out outfits and showing them off to the cousins is no longer there. It took so little to be happy back then.

I would spend *Panchami* on a bus, munching on Potato Crackers and the sickly sweet, sticky delicacy known as *til er khaja*, falling asleep on my dad's lap and repeating the same question until he got tired of answering, "Are we in Jashore yet?"

Then a van ride to the village. After about an entire day's journey when we finally reached, I always felt like a celebrity. That was the time before migrating to Dhaka was the norm. Pretty much everyone in the village and their grandma (literally) would be there to greet us.

Puja at my ancestral village was the highlight of my year. It came with promises of things I couldn't enjoy in Dhaka. Everyone would gather around the yard conceding to the darkness of the routine power cut that would last for hours – catching up with



PHOTO: STAR

local politics and relatives drifting around in Bangladesh and India. I could be found in a corner playing *antakshari* with my cousins, my dull city heart enthralled by the occasional sighting of a firefly.

*Ashtami* came with colossal amounts of *luchi* and *naru*. On *Nobomi* we would do a make-believe sacrifice with a white pump-

kin filled in with red colour. *Bijoya Dashami* was an extravagant affair where everyone would showcase their usual and unusual talents of singing, dancing, Geeta recitation, *Ululudhvani* and everything in between.

The night grew deeper as the melancholy of *bishorjon* would set in with everyone chanting "*Ashche bochhor abar hobe, Ma tumi*

*abar esho*". The last thing I would do before going to sleep on *dashami* was watch the customary BTV programme about *mahisha-sur vadh*.

Now that my days go by in a strange urgency, I struggle to feel the excitement that made me wait all year. Families being scattered around in the country and the globe make it harder to fill in the hours. With every passing year the ancestral home gets lonelier.

In recent years, I have been guilty of wanting to spend Durga Puja in Dhaka. As wholesome as my childhood experiences were, when I figured out that I had outgrown the time I used to once cherish, the idea of spending it in the city, meeting up with my friends felt like a more tempting option. As years go by, I realise it may never come back to the way it once was. In the race between time and memory, what I now feel is a responsibility to retain the relationships and the keepsakes from home.

If not for the fun of Puja, that seems like a good enough reason to go back once a year to what my passport still lists as "permanent address."

*Anupoma Joyeeta Joyee would like to know about your Durga Puja memories of childhood. Email her at anupomajoyee@gmail.com*

## Not Just a "Product of Its Time"

**ABIR HOSSAIN**

Authors, writers, poets, and other laureates don't just imagine new worlds, they often shape reality as well. They are, after all, pioneers of cultural change.

However, what appears to be a progressive realm of new ideas and open-minded discussions, is too often filled with the overwhelming domination of exclusively white experiences.

The standards that have been set, the language that people are accustomed to, and the influence it has on individuals have mostly been pre-determined by Eurocentric male figures. The dangers of which plague us to this day.

Origins of racial stereotypes, deeming people of other gender and races as inferior, and misrepresentation are just a few outcomes of many that initially went on to define "the norm." As a result, authors and artists of colour were shunned out.

With their voices silenced, these groups of people did not have a platform. Their cultures and experiences were relegated out of people's reach, and readers were deprived of educating themselves about a whole new world, very different from the ones they know. Although accounts of their heritage and tradition were recorded, it was done by their colonisers. Thus, not only were the records inaccurate but their lifestyles and values were also portrayed in a negative light.

Stereotypes were normalised, which ultimately found their way in pieces of literature and art. Sylvia Plath perpetuates racist stereotypes and even involves a scene where she assaults a person of colour through her

novel *The Bell Jar*. While it may be argued that her writing was merely "a product of the time," the argument fails to render her encouragement of bigoted behaviour as problematic.

To this day, people of certain races, ethnicities, and nationalities are widely misrepresented. Early accounts of derogatory caricatures of African-American people were done with characters such as Jim Crow, and blackface. They were portrayed as gullible, intellectually inferior, and ignorant.

All of this ties into the importance of branching out and enjoying art from other cultures. Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* is a gripping portrayal of the corruption that runs rampant in the life of a Nigerian government official. Toni Morrison's works delve into the experiences of being a slave, Ocean Vuong talks about his Vietnamese roots and his experiences as an immigrant. These are just a few names out of many that should be explored. In addition, translations of books written in foreign languages are a great way of exploring a wide variety of new reading material.

The family ties, unique practices, and untold stories can only truly be captured by the artist experiencing them. It is an authentic portrayal of what it is like to be in their shoes and witness the wonders of their cultures. So, the next time any of us are at a bookstore, perhaps we could do our due diligence and pick up a book to delve into an unfiltered rendition of an unfamiliar culture.

*Abir Hossain is a failed SoundCloud rapper. Tell him you too can't find anything to rhyme oranges with at fb/abir.hossain.19*

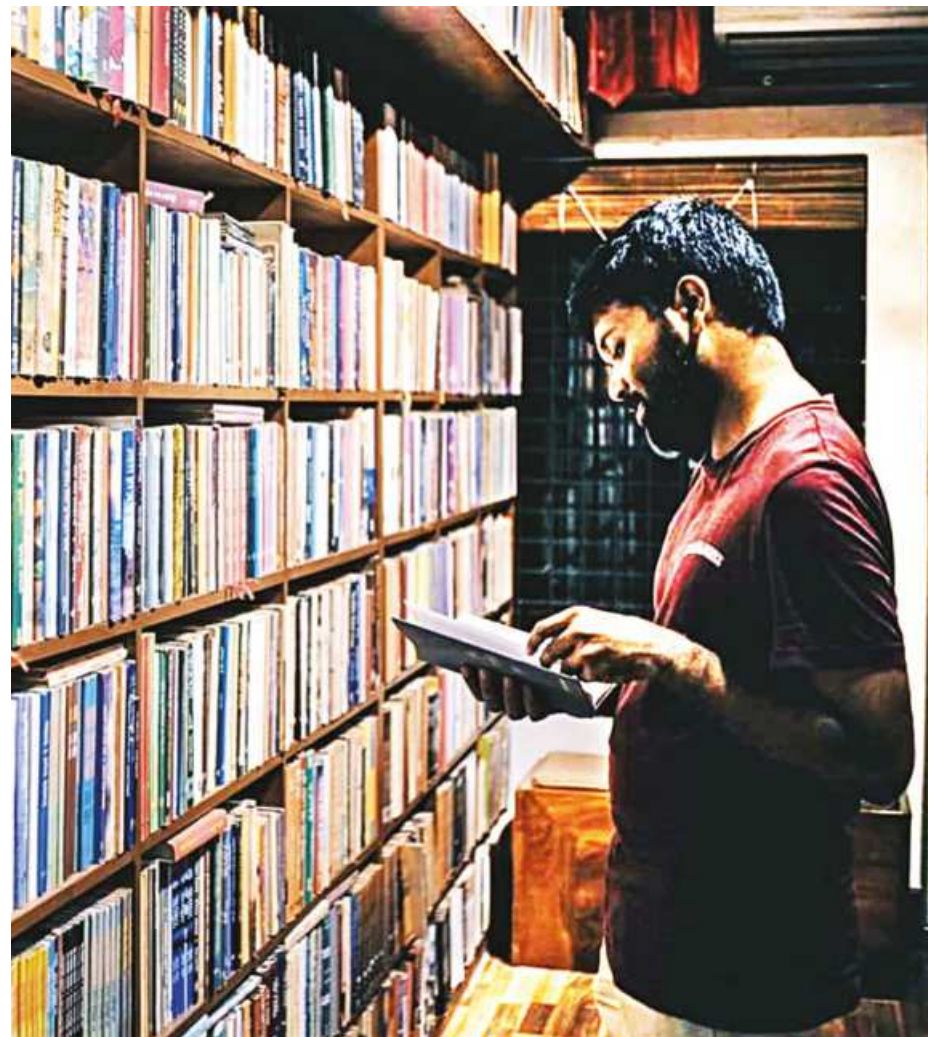


PHOTO: AFRA ANAN SABA



# The Aftermath of Getting Bullied

**NUZHAT HASSAN CHOWDHURY**

"I was bullied both verbally and physically when I moved to London in my early teens. As the new foreign kid, my peers often made racist remarks and made fun of my appearance. I later resorted to picking on other people as I couldn't retaliate against my own bullies. However, being physically violent brought me no joy, and I soon realised that I was stuck in a cycle," shares Farhan Rahman, a clinical analyst at Renata Limited, who turned his experience into an opportunity to grow as a person.

Many of us have faced some form of bullying at school, university, workplace or at home. These experiences not only take a toll on the victims, but even when the bullying finally stops, its after-effects may linger for years to come.

"As someone who has dealt with anger issues for most of their life, it taught me the need to control my temper," he adds. Upon being asked about the consequences of being bullied on his self-esteem, he says, "Insecurities that stemmed from being made fun of for my appearance have largely been resolved, but still resurface now and then."

According to Dr. Most. Aeysha Sultana, Associate Professor at the Department of Psychology, University of Dhaka, most Bangladeshis don't have proper awareness about bullying.

"They tend to think that it is synonymous with fighting, which is incorrect. Both physical and verbal bullying can cause long-term psychological damage to the victims. It can develop low self-esteem or lead to students avoiding school in fear of getting bullied. Victims may later go on to become bullies themselves out of frustration from constantly getting picked on. This phenomenon is called displacement," she states.

Although some people are able to largely reverse the consequences of being bullied, others may struggle to do well in their adulthood.

Twenty-five year old Emad Chowdhury, a fourth year student at North South University, says, "The impact of bullying is long lasting. Even today, I hesitate to stand up for myself because a voice inside my head tells me that confrontation may lead to me getting ridiculed. I've noticed that I've become more of an introvert after my experiences with getting bullied."



Emad also believes it had more serious consequences. "It has also played a part in me developing social anxiety and overall lower confidence," he reckons.

Bullying is commonly associated with educational institutions and is mainly expected to occur between peers. However, the possible perpetrators could be anybody, even teachers. The line between a strict teacher and an unkind teacher is often blurry. This may lead to students having to endure unnecessarily harsh treatment in the name of being disciplined.

Fatima Tasnim\*, a 20 year old student at UCLA, shares her experience with a school teacher who asked her to stay back after class to talk because she was late that day. "She outright said that I would never get into a good university after graduation, wouldn't get anywhere without the help of my parents, wouldn't get married and would be alone while all my friends would leave," recalls Fatima.

"Overall, I wouldn't say it affected me a lot because I had a great support system," she mentions.

I, too, was faced with a similar situation when I was assigned classes with a professor that bullied students and used inappropriate language in class. I later found out that he has a reputation for behaving this way, but seemed to have never faced any consequences. His behaviour was so discouraging that I contemplated changing my major as his disparaging words created

doubt in my mind.

The lack of consequences for such behaviour reminded me of the bitter truth that many people in positions of power know they can get away with bullying people, which is why they confidently continue to do so.

Furthermore, contrary to popular belief, bullying can also take place at home. Family members often comment on people's appearance, whether positive or negative. When it comes to negative comments, what seem to be "friendly" jabs, can often become the source of long-lasting insecurities for many.

Sara Jamal, 23, says, "I used to be fat-shamed by my relatives every time I visited them. I was young and didn't appreciate their comments. I then resorted to dieting before meeting them, but that never worked because I couldn't keep up with it. Today, I'm always insecure about how I look, whether it be chubby or thin."

In some cases, the consequences of enduring bullying over a long period of time can be severe and irreversible.

"My brother was bullied by his classmates for various reasons, but mainly for his skin tone. Even our extended family members didn't spare him in this regard. This went on for a long time and its effects permeated into our home when he started taking out his frustrations on us. He went on to become very emotionally volatile due to all this. What people targeted him for might be specific, but on the inside, it affected him in far reaching ways," says Akib Ehsan\*.

Although some people are able to dodge or reverse the consequences of getting bullied, many understandably struggle to do so. The experiences of everybody mentioned in this article are testaments to the fact that our words and actions hold a lot of weight, so much so that it may impact somebody else's life in ways we never anticipated.

It is imperative to not only discourage bullying, but also recognise that it can occur in any place, and not just in schools.

*\*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.*

*Nuzhat has messed up her sleeping schedule once again. Tell her to go to sleep at nuzhatchowdhury07@gmail.com*



ILLUSTRATION: ALIZA RAHMAN

# School Laboratories Under the Microscope

**SABIBA HOSSAIN & HIYA ISLAM**

Laboratory exercises are mandatory for any student studying Science in high school. This requirement is often overlooked by a majority of schools in Bangladesh. Students from both Bangla and English medium backgrounds go through a number of problems when it comes to acquiring essential lab skills.

While many schools will boast about their up-to-date lab facilities with dedicated staff, the reality is a different story altogether.

Many a time, school laboratories are seen as rooms barely used. With dusty counters and scarce materials to work with, the hype of lab classes only falls among students. Avijit Ghosh, a Chemistry teacher at Banani Bidyaniketan School and College, states that the school charges lab fees from students at the beginning of every semester but never takes any classes.

"The authorities are ready to spend their budget on trivial things but when asked to buy a reactant, they lose interest quickly," he states.

However, not all schools are guilty of poor lab facilities. Generally, lab classes begin from the eighth grade. Mehnaz Bushra Hamid, a recent Biotechnology graduate from Brac University who studied in Scholastica school, looks back in time and says, "We always had fresh reagents and well-maintained equipment. And spacious rooms where we could work on our own at times."

Despite having laboratories in their schools, students complain of not having spent enough time carrying out experiments. Manaara Saleh, a Lakehead Grammar School alumnus, recalls, "Going to the lab was a rare occasion. Most of the time, the teachers were used to demonstrating reactions in the classroom."

Adib Shaheen, an A Level candidate, adds that he thinks gaining hands-on experience helps students connect with the subject much better and helps with retaining enthusiasm as they advance. Whether it is the testing of pH of different solutions or measuring the velocity of a moving toy car, it is evident that a significant number of students are missing out on what it feels like to work in a lab. This is important to young learners who aim to study STEM-related majors at university.

At present, English medium students enrol in either of the two UK-based curricula and they vary in few ways; Edexcel provides paper-based tests only while Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE) offers practical exams in some cases.

Very few English-medium schools are select venues for practicals. This has to do with the quality of labs and other factors that deem them fit for examination purposes by international boards. At this point, students do not feel comfortable with the idea of a real, practical exam even if given a chance.

Saleh says, "The fact that most of the lab-related syllabus is taught theoretically, there are high chances we would not perform well when we are manually put to test." This stresses the importance of trials and errors in labs where students can rediscover ideas by themselves and be confident about their results and observations.

When these classes do happen, they are lacking in more ways than one, thereby failing to meet students' needs. For starters, the duration of each class is either too short or not enough classes are taken on a weekly basis. Oftentimes, the capacity of a lab is insufficient to hold

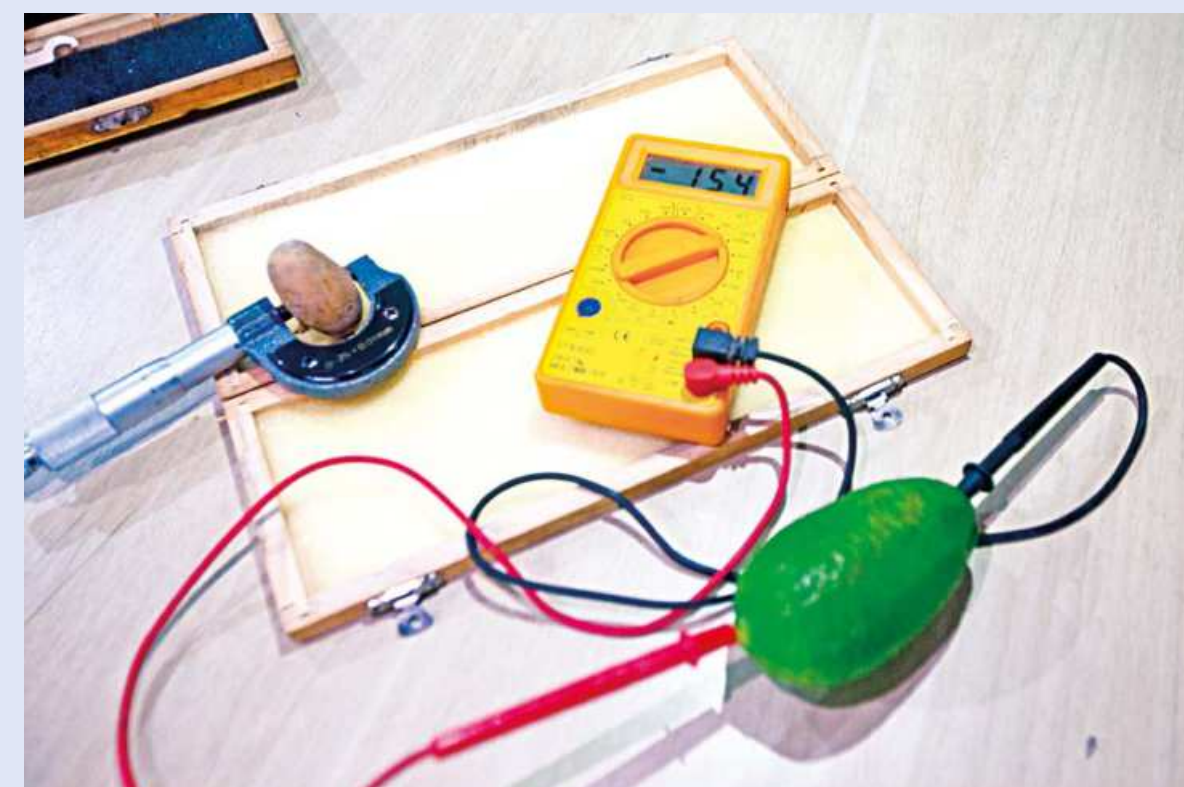


PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

an entire class of students. As a result, students end up watching their teachers perform various procedures rather than try them out themselves. It can get too crowded to work and learn which also leads to unwanted group work that impedes individual creativity and freedom.

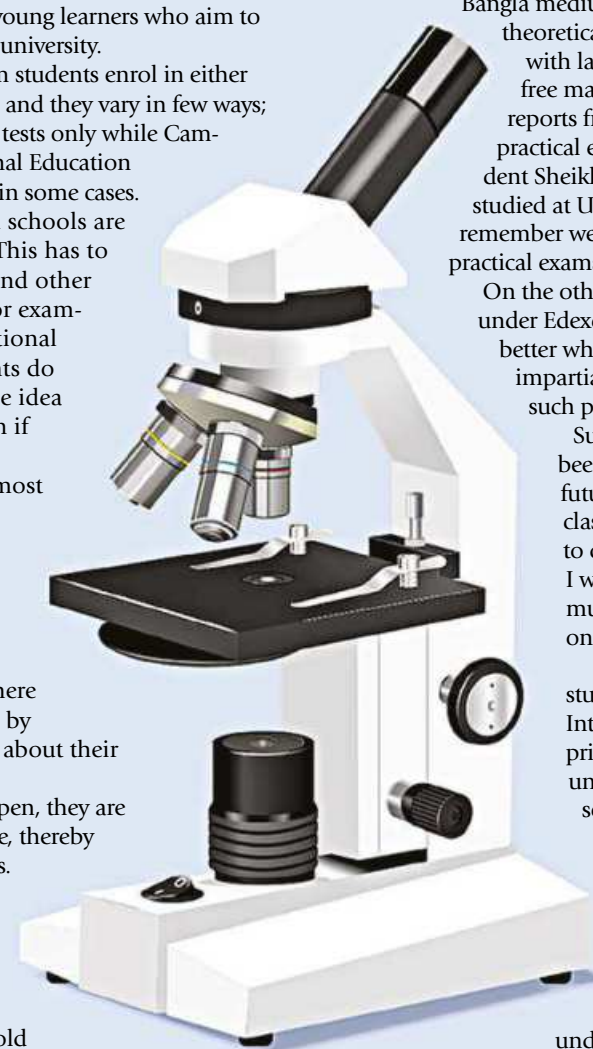
Ghosh complains, "Sixty students in a 30-minute period held for one or two days in the entire term, is it remotely adequate?" He further argues, "The way I see it is that students want to learn and it is the teachers' liability to teach. But in most cases the teachers are not interested in doing practical tasks."

Bangla medium teachers are busy with theoretical exams and bother little with lab routines. Students earn free marks by copying off lab reports from guidebooks in their practical exams. Current MBBS student Sheikh Sabila Afrine Sutopa, who studied at Uttara High School, says, "I remember we got full marks in our SSC practical exams without doing anything." On the other hand, students studying under Edexcel and CAIE fare much better when it comes to fairness and impartiality in earning marks for such practical courses.

Sutopa thinks she would have been better prepared for the future if she had regular lab classes. "If I had the chance to do my experiments alone, I would not have struggled as much in my academic life later on," she comments.

Faiza Khondokar, a former student of SFX Greenherald International School, says, "A prior lab experience is why university lab classes did not seem daunting." She later adds that many of her peers would beg to differ as they did not have the same privilege in their respective schools.

Students who engage in lab problems can understand the theoretical



concepts quickly and never develop a fear of working in labs. An ex-student of Udayan Higher Secondary School, Aditi Sarker, shares that she used to have one lab class per week in her school. She says, "It dissipated the monotony of the classroom. I looked forward to going to school when it was lab day." In hindsight, she feels that the instructors should have focused more on ensuring equal participation when working in groups.

Farhana Tasneem Chowdhury, a lecturer of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Dhaka, says that her students often fail to demonstrate basic laboratory skills. "We try to keep our first-year lab work as basic as possible. We do it so that those who did not have the chance to strengthen their foundation at school can get a shot."

If lab classes were properly held in all schools, universities would not be stuck with beginner courses. Students would have been capable of taking on more advanced classes sooner in their undergraduate journey. Apart from that, students can get acquainted with lab etiquette and learn how to navigate themselves in such a setting early on.

Ghosh suggests that schools should aim to take one-hour lab classes thrice a week. Chowdhury thinks funding will be necessary to accomplish such a feat.

"If the government allotted more budget to the education sector Bangla medium schools can provide better lab education by allowing each individual its own working space and separate instruments to work with," she recommends.

With the national curriculum stressing ways to increase Golden A-pluses, the importance of practical lab skills goes severely unnoticed while students following international syllabuses endure the pain of negligence. These students equally suffer from the dearth of science practicality in their education. This, later on, takes into effect as a reduced drive in seeking research careers or jobs that value lab skills in general. Students grow up to view lab science as unimportant. But, if provided with the help they need, students can achieve a lot more in STEM and research related fields.

*Sabiba Hossain is an alien coming from the future to rescue Earth. Tell her not to mess up with the time at fb.com/Sabibastro*

*Hiya loves food that you hate by norm - broccoli, pineapple pizza and Bounty bars. Find her at hiyaislam.11@gmail.com*



# Why Gatekeeping in Football Helps No One

**MALIK ARAF**

Every time there is a major international tournament, we see a drastic rise of football fans around us. Copa America, Euros, and the World Cup are the biggest examples of when this happens.

As a football fan myself, it's always nice to see new people learning about the beautiful sport. I feel there isn't a benchmark you should reach to be qualified as a "football fan." Some people buy jerseys, some buy posters or change their wallpapers to declare their newfound love for the game.

However, just like that random relative in your family gathering that tends to ask intrusive questions about your life, some people think the new fans should be authenticated to experience football to the fullest. In short, they will gate keep at every possible chance and make sure they end up being the person you want to avoid the most at the gathering. Gatekeeping is when someone takes it upon themselves to decide who gets to be a part of a specific community and who does not.

Why do they do this? Maybe it satisfies a certain craving of feeling better about themselves. Or, perhaps they have nothing better to do.

How do they do it? First, with simple questions. Then slowly, they ask you different facts and statistics to know whether you are a real football fan. Answer right, and you are welcome to the club. Answer wrong, and they will shame you for being a seasonal fan and having no passion whatsoever.

Who are they? You'll find these people in your friend circles, classes, family, and you could be one yourself too. Most importantly, who asked them? Absolutely no one.

This whole questionnaire can get worse if you're a girl. Men will bombard you with questions and immediately associate your interest in football with liking pretty footballers. Even if you answer them correctly, they will never admit that girls too can be football fans.

What the so-called more "educated" football fans don't understand, is that someone's lack of depth in technical knowledge shouldn't be any reason for being bullied. Under no circumstances should any of the new fans go through this. It's understandable how different your connection towards your favorite team is maybe, but one should embrace instead of scrutinise the new fans like a university club recruitment process.

Furthermore, using a hobby to undermine others makes the whole point of sports redundant. Because passion and connection work differently for different people, your abundance of football knowledge (read: top 10 useless facts you have in your brain) shouldn't be something you use to run over people. No, Faiyaz, feeling better because someone couldn't answer your 2002 World Cup quiz doesn't make you a superior person.

If you are one of the oldies, be kind and give the help you needed when you first started loving the sport. And if you are the new kid on the block, get ready to get your mind blown.



satire.

## Engineering student gives up 14 minutes into new semester

**HASIB UR RASHID IFTI**

Local engineering student breaks the world record for "Fastest Abandonment of All Hope in a Semester," as he reportedly gave up 14 minutes into the first Physics lecture of the semester. The previous record of 16 minutes was held by a first-year BBA student who, like millions of gullible teenagers, thought BBA was the easy way out in life.

Following a session of blaming his parents for his life choices, Sadman Sakib, the current world record holder told the press, "My first year at AUET was just me trying to inject my parents' obsession with AUET into my veins. Unfortunately, in the second year, I genuinely started enjoying Physics, awed by lectures of Richard Feynman and Walter Lewin explaining intricate theories effortlessly."

"The transition from Lewin's genius to dull Power-Point slides made me give up on Physics, quickly. The first Quantum Mechanics class was just the lecturer pressing the right arrow on his keyboard for 13 minutes as we stared in horror at the slides. What the likes of Bohr, Schrödinger and Dirac worked on for decades, he covered within 13 minutes," Sakib continued. "It took me 52 seconds to attain nirvana and realise that engineering is



a scam. My only reward out of this would be to embrace this pyramid scheme, persuade juniors into believing that engineering is worth it and make some money out of it."

"They killed Maths, dude!" Sakib reminisced on his experience at AUET. "Their slides would make Ramanujan sick of mathematics, reconsider his career as a poorly paid accountant and endure lifelong poverty. They took the passion out of bright young minds and stomped on it, much like home I suppose. Nothing good ever comes out of introducing boomers to technology. First, they ruined Facebook. And now Mathematics."

"I did everything first year dreamers with a false sense of pride and heart full of enthusiasm do. I bought blue pens and markers for separate notes of each subject," he sobbed. "Before the semester even started, I asked my seniors about the minimum CGPA necessary for getting a scholarship in the USA. Don't know why they all laughed when I asked if 3.9 was good enough."

As one reporter questioned Sakib's decision of pursuing engineering, he sighed, "After HSC, I had many options. However, as a Bangladeshi, my parents take all my major life decisions for me. I did what every teenager in Bangladesh does when they realise they aren't brave enough to follow their passion. I chose engineering."

Regarding his future endeavours, Sakib sounded quite numb, "Childhood is when you aspire to be a faculty member. Adulthood is when you realise MBA was the answer all along. Having bullied BBA people my entire life, I'll do what wise people before me have done to hide their unemployment – parkour my way to MBA. I'll always have my AUETian tag though. Do you know what the difference between a cow and AUET is? You can't milk a cow for 50 years."

Suggest Ifiti nonfiction at [hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com](mailto:hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com)



# To My Dearly Departed

**NUZHAT HASSAN CHOWDHURY**

When the city slept, I wrote in my diary as if I was writing to you, not knowing if my words would ever reach you. I cried myself to sleep every night just to wake up to a reality that was more excruciating than any nightmare I could think of.

"Whatever happens, happens for a reason," they said, but is the reason always good enough? "He's now in a better place," they said, but what place is better than home? Is there anything more cruel than comforting lies? If their words were meant to console, why did it pain my soul? They probably took me for a fool.

Years have passed since you left me and I've stopped writing in my diary, but some things haven't changed all that much. I have come to terms with this loss, but if acceptance comes with peace, why does agony find me in the most unexpected of times?

Old pictures of you, your belongings or even the sight of your now lifeless bedroom opens up the floodgates to a wave of emotions I thought I had overcome. After all this time, why does this still happen?

I suppose the floodgates were never fully shut, but always left ajar, waiting to burst open at the slightest of nudge.

Today I stand six feet over the person that once towered over me. When I visit you, I see flowers and butterflies around

your resting place, but none as precious as you. Not even close. Every time I look around, I spot other visitors that carry the same pain as me. Some have blank expressions on, perhaps because they've run out of tears. But will they ever run out of grief? I don't think so.

I'd like to think that you still linger around. During my highest of highs, and lowest of lows, I'd like to believe that you are right by my side, and yet out of reach. I hope I don't sound too silly, wishful thinking is all I can rely on anymore.

I still wonder why you left so soon and why couldn't it have been somebody else. I know it sounds selfish, but I'm only human. I don't have a heart of gold or the halo of an angel. I'm not even sorry, but I know you'll forgive me for thinking this way.

I deeply regret not spending more time with you while I still had the chance. I wish we got to know each other a little bit more. To this day, I still wonder if there were things you wanted to tell me but couldn't.

Above all, I hope you're happy and at peace wherever you are. One day I'll meet the same fate as you and we will reunite, perhaps then we can finally make up for lost time.

*Nuzhat has messed up her sleeping schedule once again. Tell her to go to sleep at nuzhatchowdhury07@gmail.com*

## EXIT

**SYED NABIL AHSAN**

The sun was defeated as the moon rose,  
The streaks of sunlight gleamed close,  
Silence turning to questions in my head,  
As the sorrow in my heart whispered my fate.

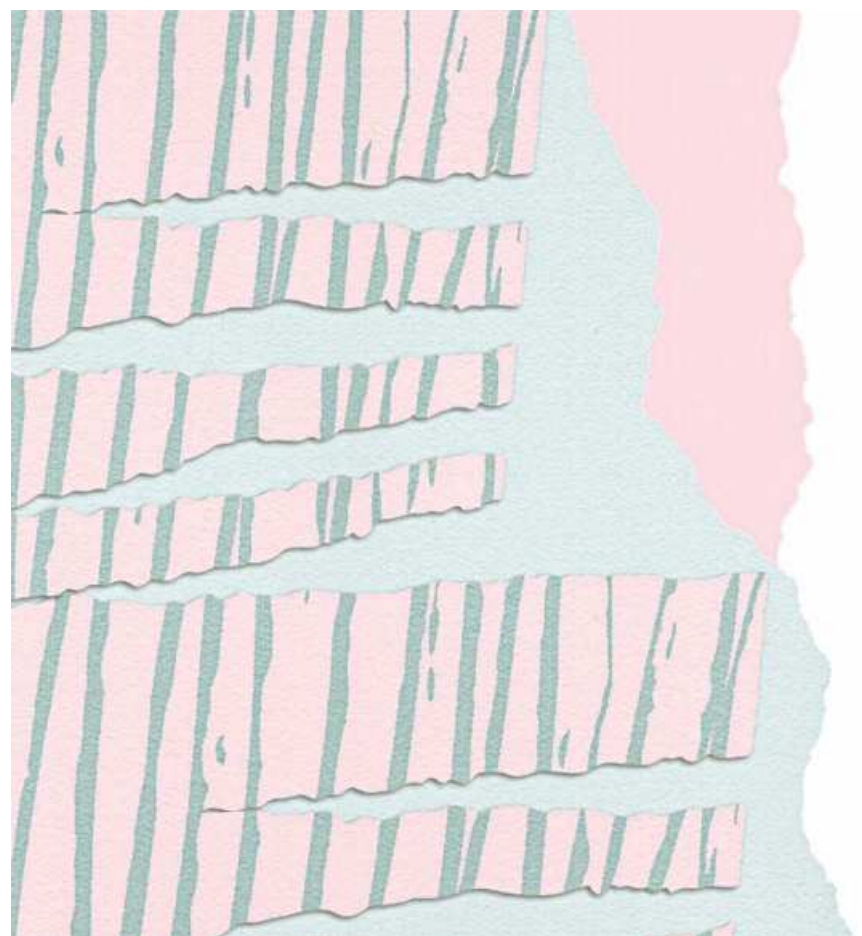
I was a bird who broke free,  
When have I become the siren that I swore to flee from?

The times I wished you held my hand tighter;  
The longer you held, I had the most of you,  
And the time I had to let go when the storm took you.

Love came as a gentle breeze,  
Soon to leave me drowning and gasping beneath the blue wave spree;  
The faded moon searched for its solace,  
But the resentful clouds showed its grimace.

We became a poetry looking for an exit,  
A forgotten verse in the reminiscent afterglow of love;  
A midsummer night's dream under the blanket of stars,  
To the ends of the world, we meet when we part.

*The writer is a 2nd-year university student at North South University.*





# ART AND ITS CYCLIC NATURE

**SAMIHA HARUN**

The specialty of art lies in its ability to flawlessly express itself while manipulating innumerable forms of illustrations and incarnations that have echoed through generations and significantly evolved at each turn. Paintings, sculptures, music and language – all of these forms have been known to embody the essence of our imagination. Corresponding to that, art has remained fluid and ever changing in its motion whilst adorning centuries with the evolution of our minds.

Except that, our mind seems to be travelling around the spectrum in a cyclic pattern!

Stemming from realism, art transitioned to surrealism until it finally entered the era of abstract. The contrasting themes of art created throughout different time periods only enunciate the distinct patterns that it has followed through time. The establishment of this cyclic nature brings us to the main question, on which we can only speculate – “Why does art follow this cycle?”

Realism refers to the form of art where it is the general attempt to represent subject matter truthfully, without artificiality, avoiding speculative fiction and supernatural elements. Realism can be seen integrated into various works, whether they are paintings or sculptures, prevalent from the ancient times to the early Renaissance period. This strict adherence to portraying only the life around us was likely rooted from an unyielding environment, where living on to see the next dawn was not guaranteed.

Fear of being eaten alive by bears is hardly a recipe for creative inspiration.

However, with the bears restricted to forests, and the new brewing civilisation, humanity prospered with improved living standards and freedom. This allowed imagination in forms that had never before been observed, leading to the style of art ubiquitous during the 20th century – surrealism, which incorporated elements of realism mixed in with abstract. Sadly, the Greeks were left behind as artists delved into newer and bolder art forms. Thus, humanity began its journey towards perceiving more than what meets the eye.

Some might say we have reached the zenith of civilisation. The fear of feral animals is now replaced with the looming dread of the no-internet dinosaur. This significantly enhanced lifestyle and over a millennia of progress means that imagination can soar through the roof and enable us to create completely abstract and illusory ideas. After centuries of trials and experimentations, art has finally reached a distinct place when it comes to self-expression. However, is it really the end of this cycle?

Evolution is a continuous process, and so art will invariably metamorphose with the passage of time. We might witness art devolve into the ideals of old, with realism making a grand comeback as a victim of technology’s habit of constructive destruction. Alternatively, art might continue its seemingly perpetual pursuit of abstractionism and infinitude, and bring about yet another unforeseen revolution transcending the limits of our imagination.



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## What’s Your Gateway Instrument to Music?

**SABIH SAFWAT**

It is common to feel lost while trying to decide which instrument to choose to delve into the world of music with. Here are some of the common choices for beginners, along with the pros and cons to help you make the decision.

The guitar is probably the most popular choice. It’s one of the most versatile instruments available, fit for both a solo performance or as an accompaniment to vocal singing. While it may not be the best option to learn music theory with, it does have a multitude of playstyles and is very mobile.

Many take to keyboards as its layout is really nice to figure out melodies and harmonies. The wonderful seven-octave range makes playing both the bass and treble sections possible at the same time. Best of all, electronic keys come with dozens of different instruments’ sample sounds to choose from. However, it is not exactly travel friendly, and requires either an electric outlet or batteries to be set up, unlike the guitar.

Drums are the rhythm drivers for a wide range of genres, and the prospect of being the one leading the grooves is nothing short of attractive. Unfortunately, one



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of the downsides one may experience is missing out on the melodic side of music, but a full set of drums bring with them great opportunities to explore various sides of music. If this is your choice, be prepared for emptied wallets and half a room worth of space gone.

Casual players often go for the ukulele. Its bright tone works nice as an accompanying instrument for certain genres of music like folk or pop, but at the cost of an empty bass range. The chord shapes are quite simple and the nylon strings are easy on the finger, so the instrument is

also perfect for younger music enthusiasts.

Flutes, while a monophonic instrument, have more presence in comparison. The rich timbre of the instrument draws in aspiring soloists. Flutes require one to learn extensive breathing techniques and control in addition to fingering, so the learning curve is a bit steep. But its exceptional ability to add emotion to melodies, makes the pain of learning it worth it.

The harmonium is preferred by classical music learners. While it’s good as a lead instrument, the tone of the harmonium often does not go well with a lot of popular music genres, leading to its declining popularity. It remains one of the best instruments to supplement vocal exercises due to its lasting sustain though.

There’s a running joke that people pick up a bass guitar when they aren’t good enough to play the good old six strings, which unfortunately has some amount of truth to it. The rest, however, just feel that the standard guitar sounds weak and needs something thicker, with more of a bite to it.

*Sabih Safwat has tried half a dozen instruments and failed to get good at any of them. Remind him to get some practice done at [sabihsafwat@gmail.com](mailto:sabihsafwat@gmail.com)*