

A forum to encourage independent thinking

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Leisure and Creativity



The Forty-fifth



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Editorial

Why Think Independently? Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'



"I would never die for my beliefs because I might be wrong" Bertrand Russell"

"Is there any knowledge in the world which is so certain that no reasonable man could doubt it?" Asked Bertrand Russell, the British philosopher in one of his essays. This is a puzzling question after experiencing all the vagueness and confusion that underlie our ordinary ideas.

After a closer scrutiny of the current political turmoil, it seems difficult to understand what to believe and who to believe. A lot depends on the influence of our acquaintances who tend to shape our belief. While growing up in India, my acquaintances (which also included educational materials) instilled in me that everything was invented in ancient India and the west simply stole those ideas from us.

Similarly, the liberals in this country think that anything said by the conservatives is wrong and it must be opposed and proven wrong at all the cost. The same applies to the conservatives when it comes to dealing with the liberals. Can it be true that we may be drawing wrong inference from our acquaintances?

We know that on very many subjects different people hold different incompatible ideas, hence some beliefs

must be erroneous. Since erroneous beliefs are often held just as strongly as true beliefs, it becomes a difficult question how they are to be distinguished from true beliefs. One way to look impartially in this matter may be the possibility that our ideas don't have to conform to our acquaintances' because the later may not have taken any opposite in account. "Minds do not create truth or falsehood. They only create beliefs." If there were no beliefs, there could be no falsehood and no truth either. Truth and falsehood are correlated. Russell stated, "In fact, truth and falsehood are properties of beliefs and statements." Thus, we should know that there is no reason to suppose that only one coherent body of beliefs is possible. That's the benefit of independent thinking. An independent thinker can look at any action critically and can take the bad with the good. Every purposeful action has unintended consequences. We can always reduce the severity of unintended consequences by tweaking our action. In management, we call it control. All I know is that there are no perfect measures and no guarantees in life.

Commentary

A Less Valued Life?

Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

The Indian diaspora in the US is not even 1% of the general population. Hence their votes don't make much difference on state and national levels. Because the Indian community lives peacefully without demanding special rights, their lives matter less to media, politicians and human rights organizations. I am not being rancorous or fatalist. I am just stating the fact.

A maniac killed Srinivas Kuchibhotla, 32, and wounded Alok Madasani, also 32, in Austins Bar and Grill in Olathe, Kansas, on Wednesday evening shouting, "get out of my country" before shooting the Indian victims. I must also mention the heroic act of Ian Grillot, 24 who intervened and said later, "I was just doing what anyone should have done for any other human being." The incident happened on Wednesday evening.

It is hard not to wonder whether the color of the skin is at the root of the renewed manifestation of racism when one reflects that the gunman, Adam Purinton, had wondered whether the victims were from the Middle East -- and hence identified with a community -- when he pulled the trigger.

However, violence against Asian-Indians is nothing new. "In the 1980s, a gang known as the Dotbusters specifically targeted Indian Americans in Jersey City, New Jersey with violence and harassment. Since the September 11, 2001 attacks, there have been scattered incidents of Indian Americans becoming mistaken targets for hate crimes. In one example, a Sikh, Balbir Singh Sodhi, was murdered at a Phoenix gas station by a white supremacist. The murderer claimed that his turban made him think that the victim was a Middle Eastern American. In another example,

a pizza deliverer was mugged and beaten in Massachusetts for "being Muslim" though the victim pleaded with the assailants that he was in fact Hindu. In December 2012, an Indian American in New York City was pushed from behind onto the tracks at the 40th Street-Lowery Street station in Sunnyside and killed. On April 5, 2006, the Hindu Mandir of Minnesota was vandalized allegedly on the basis of religious discrimination. I can go on and on and cite at least ten more violent attacks against Asian-Indians." (Compiled from various sources)

It is disturbing that the Trump administration instead of stating the truth stated,

"It's too early to determine the motive."

I urge the Indian diaspora to look at what has happened this past week and internalize that two



beautiful, loving men were killed and injured because of misconceptions about their race. I urge them to do whatever they can to help realize a nation in which all lives do matter. All it takes is voicing discontent in whatever way is needed. Take to social media, write to your congressperson, senators and president. None of us should be okay with this. If they truly believe that Indian lives are equally valuable, it is their civic responsibility to make sure that our government understands that they (Asian-Indians) will not tolerate this wanton apathy anymore.

Humor

Faking It by Musafir

There are three kinds of people in this world, those who read the thread before they post, those who don't and those who don't care. The latter just want to believe in what they read on social media. They are willing victims of fake news.

One of my old pals, Terry Aki fits this category. Terry's mouth is like a race car-it keeps running making loud noises. I wish there was something called 'Friendship Protection Program' where I could hide before he could sneak up on me. I was



invited at Jack's house. Jack is a common acquaintance of Terry and mine. Terry was there with his date of the month, Sonia.

Terry found me alone and lunged at me, "Hey! How come you are sipping tomato juice?"

"No, it's Bloody Merry. It has vodka in it."

"Russian connection- just like Donald Trump!" Terry quipped. "Talking of Trump, did you hear that he vowed to send Statue of Liberty back to France?" Terry informed me.

"Why?" I asked.

"He wants to be tough. He is going to build a new Statue of Liberty. It's going to be bigger. He's going to have a new

model. A gorgeous chic."

"Where did you come across this news?" I asked.

"It's all over Facebook man"

"How do you know that it's not a fake news?"

"Can't be. It's from a reliable source, freewoodpost.com."

"What's fake news?" Terry's latest girlfriend Sonia asked.

"It is news that my friend here doesn't believe in," replied Terry. Sonia was impressed.

"No, that's not true. Fake news sites are portrayed to be spinoffs of other news sites to make visitors believe they are visiting trusted sources." I corrected him.

I was feeling run over by Terry's speed. He didn't care. He just kept chattering away, lips flapping as if they were trying to fly off his face. He stared straight in my face. I was like a dazed deer caught by headlight.

"Remember buddy, both you and I used to hate classes and teachers in our school days? Terry yelled.

"No I don't remember that," was my short reply.

"Anyway buddy, you'll be glad to know that Trump's appointed Education Secretary Betsy DeVos is taking a bold approach to educating the young people of the United States- a ban on teaching."

"Can't be true, No one will ever do such a stupid thing," I reacted.

Terry tilted his head and started giving his old tongue the needed action. He yelled, "On Tuesday afternoon just hours after her nomination was confirmed, DeVos and Trump announced a new executive order which prohibits the use of teaching in public schools. If you don't believe go to 'React 365.'It's all over the Internet now."

Jack, who was listening to the conversation, soon joined to rescue me from Terry's vocal incontinence.

"Terry, take a drink. We have Coke, Diet Coke, Dr Pepper, root beer, Fresca, tea-hot or cold, orange juice, cranberry juice, apple juice, milk, wine, beer, scotch, rum, bourbon and V8."

"Faute de mieux," replied Terry waving his coffee mug.

"So how long do you plan to talk about politics?" Jack asked stirring his Cape Cod.

"Oh, they can go on for years. There is so much news on social media. I just read on 'Red Flag News' that the second coming of Jesus has been cancelled."

"What?" I shouted. Bashing Trump was fine, but saying something about Jesus was blasphemy in my mind. "Who said that?" I asked.

"Vatican cardinal, Georgio Salvidore said." The cardinal thinks that Jesus was drinking wine at the time."

"Is there really a cardinal named Georgio Salvidore in the Vatican?" I fumed.

"Must be. 'Red Flag News' cannot be wrong. They are the ones who first reported that president Obama was waging war on Christianity."

"That's fake news. That's fabricated content designed to fool readers and subsequently make viral through the Internet," refuted Jack. "What do you think? Jack asked me.

"Well Jack, I gotta go. I can't talk anymore. I used to have vocal cords, but they just died. One thing I know for sure, Terry was not born a fool. It took work to get this way.

(Note: all the sources and news mentioned above are true and can be verified.)

Travel



Our Trip to the Grand Canyon By Dr. Niru Prasad

During February of 2016 we had an opportunity to visit Arizona with our family which included our children and grandchildren. We had a wonderful trip to one of the 7 wonders of world, "Grand Canyon National Park".

We were fascinated by the top of mountains and my curiosity grew more and more. After coming back from trip I did research regarding the 7th wonder of world that I would like to share with all of you.

Facts about Grand Canyon Arizona

At its widest point the Grand Canyon stretches 18 miles (29 kilometers) across. At its narrowest point it stretches 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) across. The Grand Canyon is around 6000 (1800 meters) feet deep. The Colorado River runs through the Grand Canyon, it has been eroding its steep sides for millions of years

.Our journey to Grand Canyon began next day by car as we rented a van so our family could be comfortable while driving. As we drove through Scottsdale to Phoenix on major highway we were intrigued by the glamorous view of Camel Back Mountain.

As the highest peak in Phoenix, Camelback Mountain is probably the most scenic hiking spot in the city. Soaring 2,704-feet high, Camelback's summit offers spectacular views of Phoenix and Scottsdale and can be reached from the 1.2-mile (incredibly steep) Summit Trail. If you're looking for a more low-key hike, the 1.5-mile Cholla Trail on the east side of the mountain offers a more gradual incline, at least until you near the summit. You can also try one of the several beginner-friendly trails that circle Camelback's base. Hiking Camelback Mountain is best attempted earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon when the desert heat is bearable. But no matter when you decide to climb, make sure you have plenty of water and sunscreen.

The camel back mountain Sedona was an excellent view of copper stained rocks and the major attractions there includes the Sanctuary which is a famous luxury resort spread on 53 acres of private paradise,

The chapel of holy cross which is a Roman Catholic chapel built into the buttes of Sedona and run by the diocese of phoenix as a part of St John Vianney opened in 1956 and is significant for natural beauty of very picturesque rocks, desert, red rocks the cactus .and the guardian chapel.

Grand Canyon Mule Rides. left to right: South Rim - Phantom Ranch, Bright Angel Trail switchbacks, North Rim riders descending North Kaibab Trail

While at the canyon we had spectacular views of the mountains, valleys, the river, and cactus growing around and the sun set. The Desert View Scenic Drive at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon is a very scenic stretch of Arizona Highway 64 that extends 25 beautiful miles along the canyon rim. It runs east to west from Grand Canyon Village to Desert View Overlook. The most eastern view point is at the South Rim. Along the way, enjoy astounding views from six canyon viewpoints, four picnic areas, and five pullouts that are accessible with private vehicles.

After having completed our tour through the desert we had dinner at the resort and headed back with the most spectacular views in mind of the canyons. A week went by fast and we returned to Michigan very happy. Especially our grandkids they were so excited for this wonderful trip.

Book Review

Physics of the Impossible

Author: Michio Kaku

Publisher: Doubleday (Paperback)

I had not read any scientific literature since finishing Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*. Previous to that I read *Cosmos* by Carl Sagan, probably, twenty years ago. I couldn't find any comparable scientific literature for several years that would be as interesting and informative as the two mentioned above.

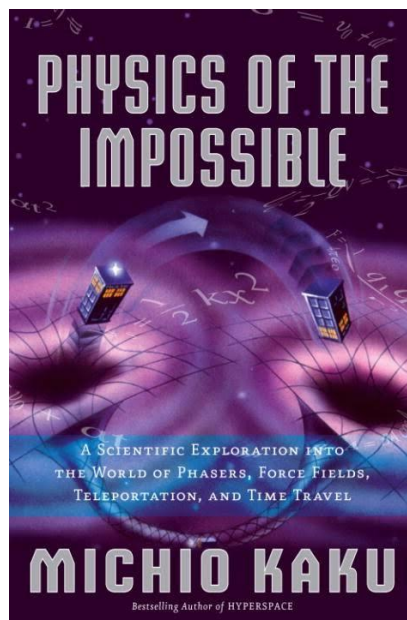
I recently finished reading *Physics of the Impossible* by Michio Kaku, a professor of theoretical physics at the City College of New York. Michio Kaku's *Physics of the Impossible* describes many of the concepts such as tele-transporting, antimatter energy, warp drives, space elevators, time travel, and much more quite vicariously for his readers. In doing so, Michio Kaku uses many science fiction examples in the book.

Each of the improbable applications of science is classified at one of three levels. Class I impossibilities have no problems

with today's science but present significant engineering challenges. We can't do them today, but could well be able 100-200 years. Class II impossibilities sit on the edge of our current knowledge of physics. They may be possible in the far future, but getting there would require a big breakthrough. Class III impossibilities actually break the laws of physics.

Though Kaku has a light and approachable style, *Physics of the Impossible* lacks explanations of premises and assumptions that *A Brief History of Time* or *Cosmos* have. Instead we get insights into just why the technology in question needs to be labelled impossible, and what the potential ways around the difficulties are.

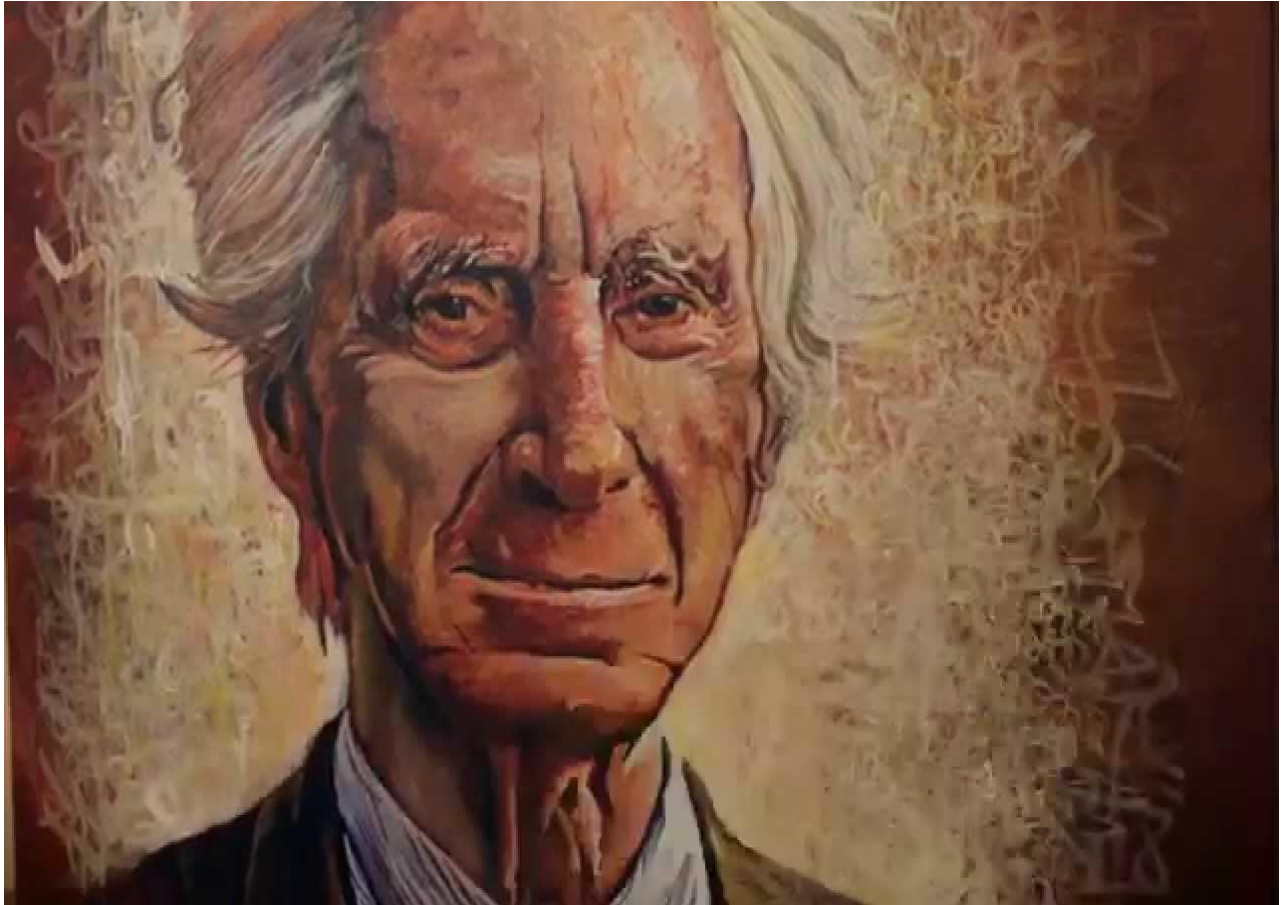
I do think that there's a slight tendency to over-simplify. It's always hugely difficult to describe complex physics like quantum theory in a few lines, and the simplification that is essential to be able to do this occasionally makes a point slightly inaccurate. These are very minor points, though the simplification is almost a necessity in a book that has the huge scope as this one.



Essay

Leisure and Creativity: Anil Shrivastava

exactly the same and now I feel reinvigorated.



Bertrand Russell

Sorry folks for my absence. I was busy doing nothing. It was a bliss. I didn't have anxiousness to go on social media, check email, watch bad news on television and the stresses of work. I didn't suffer from insomnia, anxiety, depression, and unremitting stress either. I remembered the words of a wise man, "When your car goes out of control or your mind wanders uncontrollably, put them in idle." I did

I enjoyed listening to Ghalib's ghazals (a nineteenth century Urdu poet), reacquainting myself with American presidents, World Wars, American poets, ancient history, basic science, and Shakespeare's heroines. I caught up with the old issues of The New Yorker (especially the humor section) and played with my grandkid.

I thought a lot about Bertrand Russell's essay, 'In Praise of Idleness.' I read some of his essays in my youth and was

always impressed by his perennial philosophy. Russell was a great believer in individual creativity and felt that the workers of the world should get more leisure time to use their imagination. Here is an excerpt from his essay:

“In a sensible world, everybody concerned in the manufacturing of pins would take to working four hours instead of eight, and everything else would go on as before. ... The men still work eight hours, there are too many pins, some employers go bankrupt, and half the men previously concerned in making pins are thrown out of work.?”

Today, we have the technology and infrastructure to greatly reduce the forced workload of the average human, and that should be our goal. The workers should be liberated from excessive work so that they can freely pursue the things that bring them intrinsic joy and happiness. After all, we all accept that happiness is the most important thing in life.

The wealthiest 1% of the global community controls over half of the world’s wealth and in which the average person works a job that is disconnected from the basic realities of life. Huge portions of humanity spend their days balancing someone else’s checkbook, or trying to sell people gizmos that they don’t need, or moving pixels around on a digital screen to make the display more aesthetically pleasing, or talking on the phone with people who are dissatisfied with a product that they didn’t need in the first place. Russell writes:

“Leisure time creates the space necessary for imagination, inquiry, aesthetic contemplation, introspection, and the pursuit of that which one finds most exciting and rewarding.” Look at Michael Angelo, Beethoven and Shakespeare. Could we have statue of David, Symphony 5 or Romeo and Juliet, if they had a 9 to 5 jobs with occasional requirement to work overtime?

So, let’s stop complaining about automation or China and India taking our jobs. We should feel lucky that our work hours are reduced. Of course, there is no need for the employers to reduce our wages. They make enough money to share their wealth with their employees. When wealth is distributed, there is more prosperity and peace in the neighborhood. That’s the reason, I don’t mow my lawn, clean the snow or work around the house. I am not lazy. I am just trying to spread the happy times and I am loving it!

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Current Affairs

A Lesson Learned: Anil Shrivastava ‘Musafir’

In case you don't follow the international news, something amazing happened in India last week. Mr. Narendra Modi's party, BJP which can be compared to the Republican Party here won more than 80% seats in India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh (UP). To give an idea of its magnitude, UP with a population of nearly 200 million people will rank as the fifth most populous nation in the world (if it were an independent country), next only to China, India, the United Sta



tes of America and Indonesia.

What is amazing is that before BJP's resounding victory last week, UP was always run by the Congress Party of India and other leftist parties (equivalent of the Democratic Party here) as a welfare state where its large but impoverished Muslim and Dalit (previously known as lower caste) population depended on freebies bestowed on them by their rulers. Finally, the Dalits and Muslims realized that they had merely been used as vote banks by the leftist liberal parties for the last 69 years of India's existence as a free nation. The lack of employment opportunities and perpetual backwardness worsened the matters for the youth.

'Women votes' was a great factor in BJP's victory too. The Dalit women were fed up with a lack of protection against rapes and other heinous crimes against them and almost no conviction of the criminals. The criminals ruled the state as the government existed on their mercy. The Muslim women were fed up with male dominance who could divorce their wives just by uttering the word 'talaq' (meaning divorce) three times. The BJP

and Modi government promised to consider a change that will make this practice illegal in India. The phenomenal victory of the BJP in Uttar Pradesh has surpassed the figures projected by various exit polls, and has almost fooled political pundits. The outcome can rightly be viewed as a tectonic shift in the country's political landscape, whose aftershocks will continue to reverberate across the political spectrum.

The BJP's also got the votes of folks who were fed up with pseudo-secularism, fanning the discontent among the majority about the perceived restrictions on the free articulation of Hindu socio-religious practices. The myth of a consolidated vote-bank along the caste and com-



munal divide was debunked.

Does sound familiar? The electorate enjoyed the jibes, the mocking style of Mr. Modi who is always at his eloquent best at the election rallies and excels in the use of the language of the common man, but as it turns out, the voters have reflected on the issues of development, of peaceful, harmonious, living with members of other communities, of an overwhelming desire to have opportunities while choosing their rulers. Mr. Trump can learn a few pointers from Mr. Modi to refrain from bitterly divisive discourses and make an attempt to soften his hateful words with decent homilies. The rest is up to the American consciousness. The Indian experience can work for them as 'lesson learned.'

Perspective

The Forty-fifth

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'



Call it destiny or call it a smart strategy, Donald Trump will be the 45th president of the United States of America in less than 24 hours. Baffling as it may sound, he proved to be a more acceptable candidate than anything GOP had to offer in past two decades. He revived the Republican Party which was on a life support just one election ago. He may, as well, have shaped the future of GOP by appealing to union workers and Democrats (except in the coastal states). Hate him or love him, Donald Trump is distinct inasmuch as some see him as a freak and others find him unique. Though no other president possessed all his oddities, some experienced similar

circumstances as Trump did.

Donald Trump never held a public office. Though unusual but this is not unprecedented in U.S. history. He will be the fourth president who never held public office before the presidency. George Washington, U.S. Grant and Dwight Eisenhower were the other three. All of them served the country with distinction.

Trump will be the fifth person who would become president without winning the majority vote. The other four were John Quincy Adams, Rutherford Hayes, Benjamin Harrison and George W. Bush. While history will judge George W. Bush, the remaining three (Adams, Hayes and Benjamin Harrison) are viewed as contentious.

Trump will be the third president to switch his party affiliation. The other two were Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan.

Roosevelt served nearly two full presidential terms as a progressive Republican. But after he grew dissatisfied with his hand-picked successor, William Howard Taft, Roosevelt left the 1912 Republican convention and formed his own party.

Reagan was also originally a Democrat and a New Deal supporter, who became a union leader while in Hollywood. He switched parties officially in 1962 and gave a famous quote: "I didn't leave the Democratic Party. The party left me."

Both Roosevelt and Reagan are considered great presidents.

Mr. Trump's wife, Melania Trump will be the second First Lady born outside the United States. The only other First Lady born outside was Lousia Adams, wife of John Quincy Adams. She was born in England. Melania Trump was born in Slovenia. Ms. Lousia was extremely beautiful. As First Lady, she became reclusive and depressed. For a time, she regretted ever having married into the Adams family. We don't wish the same for Ms. Melania

Donald Trump will be the richest US president with a net worth of 4.5 billion dollars. The next two richest presidents were George Washington and Thomas Jefferson with net worth of 580 and 234 million dollars respectively (in today's money). Both George Washington and Jefferson are considered greats.

Trump's slogan, "Make America Great Again" was first used by Ronald Reagan while he was running against President Jimmy Carter. Donald Trump subsequently applied for and received a US service mark for the slogan. In Reagan's case, the slogan was viewed favorably, but many considered it regressive coming out of Mr. Trump's mouth.

Trump will be the only U.S. president married three times. The presidents who married twice were John Tyler, Millard Fillmore, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Ronald Reagan. The results are mixed here.

According to many historians Richard Nixon, John Tyler and Ulysses Grant are among the most hated presidents. Among the most admired are Abe Lincoln, George Washington and Theodore Roosevelt. One should also notice that the traits mentioned above are no indication of one's success or failure, so let's hope that Mr. Trump will be good for America.

For those who don't believe in Trump, "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope" –Martin Luther King, Jr.

Short Story

Auld Lang Syne: By Musafir



Sorry folks for my absence. I was suffering from writer's block. It was not that I was vegetating due to lack of

ideas. On the contrary, my thoughts were sublimating to hundred different feelings due to the current bitterness in our society at large. Mind is like an automobile. Once they go out of control, you need to apply the brakes immediately. That's what I did.

While in idle, I reminisced about the days gone by and it occurred to me,
"Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!" (Robert Burns)

There comes a moment every day when my mind flies. Then, effortlessly, I am away, light as a feather to familiar valleys of my childhood then swoop up beneath my favorite hilltop trees and land on the Main Road, Ranchi. I walk a few blocks past refugee markets (now renamed as Shastri Market) and the post office. I stop for a while at the martyr memorial then hang left to enter my high school. That's where I met Niaz Mohammad. Niaz came from a poor Muslim family. His family was so poor that he often came to school in his sleeping pajamas. Niaz was a backbencher and didn't have many friends.

Most of us who came from well-to-do upper class families had our own circle and we avoided the boys of lower orders. I was different inasmuch as I have always been unconventional, curious and gregarious. I became friends with Niaz. I remember once skipping the class and going to a movie with him. The friendship didn't last long after my parents came to know about the incident from my teacher and friends.

Eighteen years passed by. I was now living in the USA. On one of my visits to Ranchi, I went to Kali Mandir (temple). It's the most revered Hindu temple in town located on Church Road in a Muslim neighborhood. Yes, India is a really secular country. Anyway, while coming out of the temple, I noticed that my shoe needed a shine as it looked tarnished. I went inside a small cobbler shop. I gave my shoe to the cobbler who looked frail. He had a long ungroomed beard. He was donned in white pajamas and a white Muslim cap. After the business was done, I asked him, "How much?"

He smiled and said, "Not a penny from you Anil."

"How do you know name?" I asked.

"Remember me? I am Niaz," he uttered with enthusiasm. I talked to him for some time then left.

Years later when I visited Ranchi, I again went to the Kali Temple and got reminded of Niaz. So, I walked into his shop. I didn't find Niaz, but there was a young man in pajamas attending the shop. He reminded me of Niaz of school days.

"Are you Niaz's son?" I asked.

"Yes sahib (sir)!" He replied.

"Where is Niaz?"

"He died three years ago," the young man replied.

I asked him to shine my shoes then I asked, "How much?"

"Five rupees sahib," he answered.

I gave him ten instead. The other five was my debt to Niaz.

"Thank you sahib," Niaz's son said.

I walked away slowly with a moral doubt of another kind. Must we always beware of kids like Niaz? Does the rest of the world only have bad people?

MOVIE REVIEW

ARRIVAL

(Anil Shrivastava)



On my way back from the East Coast, I was sitting next to a guy who looked like a passport picture.

"There is not a single place on earth I won't like to visit," he uttered while yawning on my face.

"Confucius?" I asked.

"Clint Eastwood," he said.

"When did Clint Eastwood utter those words?" I asked frowning up at him.

"Have you watched his movies? He asked.

"Did you?"

"I watch all movies. I am a film critic," he answered.

I wanted to change my seat so I looked around. People were packed like eggs in a crate every which way I looked.

"Did you watch any of the Oscar nominated flicks?" He continued the conversation.

"Yes, Arrival," was my short answer.

"Is it not a brilliant movie? I gave it 4.5 stars out of five," he replied

"It's goofy, serious and seriously idiotic," I replied, "Frankly, I think ET is still better for the money."

"What do you know about linguistics?" snapped the stranger.

"What do you?" I asked. "If those octopus looking heptapods were that intelligent, they would have brought some sort of key to decipher their thunder and moan and logograms. Moreover, I don't know of anybody who would argue that speaking a different language would radically alter anyone's view of the world as it happened to Louise Banks (played by Amy Adams). She might as well be trying to learn the language of a dog or a dolphin."

He looked at me over his coke-bottle glasses and inspected me like a bug.

"Mind your looks," I warned him and continued, "Tell me how could those ink blot looking heptapods manufacture such a monstrous spacecraft? How did the spacecraft defy earth's gravity by hanging a few feet above the earth in the air?"

"Movie making is not science. It's an art. Art is neither right nor wrong. It only reflects the person who's looking at it," he fired a salvo at me.

"Just because you have the privilege to see a few free movies, it doesn't make you a connoisseur of art. Deciphering an alien language doesn't give one the capability to see the future. Get your head around that," I fired back regaining my self-respect.

"And just because they let you enter into a movie theatre doesn't necessarily mean you deserve to critique it. Leave the driving to Greyhound," he was not making any sense anymore.

"Listen I don't blame you for having an IQ lower than your age but can you tell me why the heptapods left any more than what brought them here? And here is a free tip for your patron filmmakers: take on one wacky sci-fi genre at a time. Don't do what 'Arrival' does and make a complete fool of yourself on multiple dimensions at once," I suggested.

"I will not, I do have a reputation to uphold," he suggested.

"To tell you the truth, reading 'War And Peace' and 'Atlas Shrugged' cover to cover will be more entertaining than watching a movie like that."

Luckily, we soon started preparing for our own arrival.

Thinking Out Loud

The Value of Experience

By David Beagan



What is the value of experience? With age comes experience, of course, but it is more subtle than that. The value of experience is that it is self-reinforcing. An important part of experience is not just knowing, but how to apply the experience to your advantage. All the knowledge is out there on the internet for young and old. But what information applies in each situation, that's where the experience comes into play. Youth has many advantages including energy, enthusiasm and the ability to look at situations with fresh eyes, something that experience can get in the way of. In any enterprise a good mix of young and old, experienced and non-experienced is ideal. However, positions of the highest leadership require the most experience.

The challenge of leadership is more than being able to astutely analyze and synthesize the information at hand. A leader must also deal with unknowns with incomplete information. The that is where experience comes to the fore. With experience you are able to fill in the blanks with reasonable assumptions. This reminds me of a speech United States Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld gave to a question at a U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) news

briefing on February 12, 2002 about the paucity of evidence linking the Iraq government to the supply of weapons of mass destruction to terrorist groups.

Rumsfeld stated:

Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns - the ones we don't know we don't know. And if one looks throughout the history of our country and other free countries, it is the latter category that tend to be the difficult ones.

What we comprehend	Unknown	What we <i>don't</i> know we know	What we <i>don't</i> know we <i>don't</i> know
	Known	What we know we know	What we know we <i>don't</i> know know
		Known	Unknown
		What there is to know	

And actually in addition to the three categories mentioned by Rumsfeld there is a fourth: the unknown known, those things which we intentionally refuse to acknowledge that we know. These are the things we pretend not to know, a willful ignorance.

Now with President Trump, what had long been suspected has now come to be laid bare for all to see. Our president's lack of experience is astonishing. His business success had been thought to be a good preparation for the office. The truth is, he started with "a small loan of one million dollars" from his father. With infusions of cash from his father, and leaving creditors holding the bag through a number of bankruptcies, he built an empire worth billions. There is definitely a kind of skill there and a lot of experience in his one area of real estate development. It has been suggested that he is a kind of Idiot savant of real estate.



Trump's impression of a disabled reporter.

Trump's assumption that he could just show up for the job of president and do the Trump thing, and be successful and adored is proving to be a woefully bad idea.

Apparently the Dunning Kruger effect (a cognitive bias in which low-ability individuals suffer from illusory superiority, mistakenly assessing their ability as much higher than it really is) was in full effect during the Trump campaign. The healthcare issue will be easily solved.

"Nobody knew health care could be so complicated." Really?

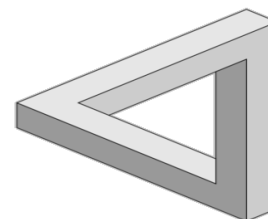
Then several weeks later, "This is more work than in my previous life. I thought it would be easier. I'm a details oriented person. I think you would say that, but I do miss my old life. I like to work, so that's not a problem, but this is actually more work." Hmm, turns out that being the king of your own company is not the kind of experience that prepares one for the political maneuvering required of a president.

The job of president requires more experience than any other. Has there ever been anyone more under-prepared for this office? It is hard to see how he will be able to serve out his current term: whether through impeachment, a major health issue, or just an outright resignation - in which case his final decision would be his wisest.

P.S. As I writing this there is yet another story emerging the Trump revealed classified information to the Russians.

Mental Exercise

By David Beagan



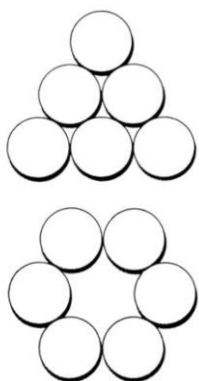
Improbable Sentence

This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious as to just how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it. It looks so ordinary and plain that you would think nothing was wrong with it. In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is highly unusual though. Study it and think about it, but you still may not find anything

odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out. Try to do so without any coaching!

Favorite Food

What food do you buy at the market, take it home and throw away the outside and cook the inside. Then you eat the outside of what you cooked and throw away the inside.



Penny Pincher

Consider the tringle at the left. It is made up of six pennies. What is the smallest number of pennies you can move in order to form the square shown at the bottom left.

Answers

Improbable Sentence. The letter e is the most common in the English alphabet. Yet the paragraph does not contain any of the letter e.

Favorite Food. .r

Corn on the cob, you remove the husk, cook the corn on the cob. Then you throw away the

cob.

Penny Pincher.

Move the top penny and the one at the bottom middle. Place them below the other four to form the circle.



My Happier Days

(Ashok Kumar Lal)

I never used to hurry
lived the life with no worry
ate drank and made merry
sometimes also picked a nice cherry.

There was always tomorrow
for doing household work
why are you lazying around
no one asked with a smirk

No cleaning of windows
curtains never changed
bedsheets changed when torn
in there place, everything remained.

Had a drink whenever wanted
roamed in streets till late night
went to movie at sweet will
sometimes picked unnecessary fight.

Then I lost my mind
fell in love,like blind
into matrimony, rushed like fool
jumped into life\'s dark cess pool.

slowly and steadily surrendered my freedom
turned everything nice into doldrum
gave up smile, took on frown
became serious, though I was clown.

Now I advise every single man
get married as fast as you can
just like me you also suffer
why the hell, should our lives differ