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The Oliphant

WELHAM BOYS' SCHOOL



Think about it “Perhaps someday I’ll crawl back home, beaten, defeated. But not as long as I can make stories out of my heartbreak, beauty out of sorrow.” - Sylvia Plath

EDITORIAL

The one month that we were supposed to be home for hasn’t ended even though twelve of those have passed. A year has passed since I have seen the place I lived in for the better part of the last eight years since I actually saw a new issue of this magazine on paper. This distance has thrown a wrench in the vision many of my predecessors had and I have for the Oliphant. The diversity of writers who wrote for the magazine in the past few years has again narrowed down to ones who I can count on my fingers. This column has encouraged you to write about ideas that are a part of your story to let go of your apprehensions and express yourself but the pandemic got us back to square one. Writing is again perceived as an odious task by many since a meme or a GIF is enough to express yourself.

Though the Oliphant has often been called the ‘voice of the people’, the readership and the authorship of the magazine has dwindled in the past year. The connect that existed between the magazine was weakened because the magazine is no longer distributed on our way to Bethany. People no longer laugh at the last two pages of the magazine, there aren’t students forcing their batchmates to read what they wrote and nobody talks about the articles or the humour section anymore. Instead, the magazine has now been reduced to an e-mail which many students don’t even know about. If we, the board were to envision a future for the magazine, we would want that link to be reconnected-- for the magazine to be read and the might of the pen to be acknowledged once more, for the word war to be used to send a message and for

you to write. I hope that the recent invite to return to campus helps our case and that the next edition of this magazine is printed on sheets in shades of brown like it rightfully should.

We have taken a long time to reminisce about our memories of school, but don’t we all have something to finally look forward to. Finally, after a year of waiting, when the summons finally arrived many eleventh graders chose to defer to March. They will return to take their place on the top after spending the long nights preceding the promotional exams far away from the biting cold Dehradun. To add to that, the path taken by eleventh graders in the month of February was further disturbed by the lack of certain calendered events. Though many would not admit it, apprehensions are widespread when the next year’s agenda is discussed. On the other hand, grade 12 finally recovered a few more of their last months at school. The delay of the board exams might give rise to contrasting feelings but it surely gives them more time to enjoy school. I hope the following months facilitate transitions befitting all the students and the Oliphant as well.

-Viraj Lohia
Editor-in-Chief

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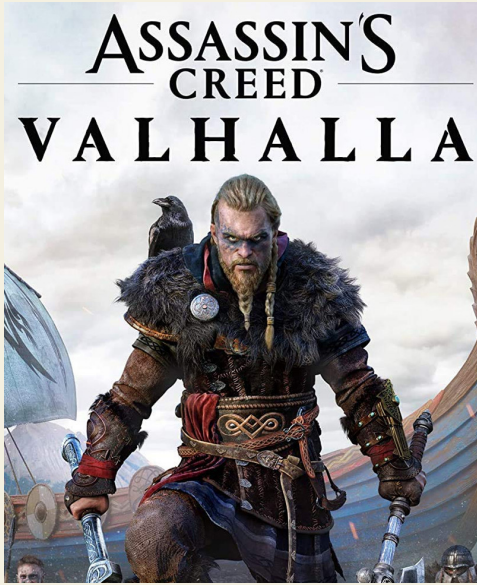
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GAME REVIEW ASSASSIN’S CREED: VALHALLA

The journey of the Assassin’s Creed franchise has in many ways been a roller coaster. It is a franchise that has lost its originality, its sense of purpose, and most importantly-- its identity. Except for the shared name, there is virtually nothing to connect the earlier titles such as the Ezio trilogy and the half-baked tryhard RPGs we see today. Of course, one might argue that the series has moved on as any series should. But ‘moved to what?’ is the question. In a multitude of ways, Assassin’s Creed Odyssey, Valhalla’s predecessor, was the culmination of Ubisoft’s efforts aimed at gradually changing the series’ traditional Stealth-Action format into an Action-RPG format. Did the game remain faithful to its forebears? Was it a good Assassin’s Creed game? Was it, regardless of its name even, an Assassin’s Creed game? The answer to these questions, in my opinion, is a no. These questions, however, are mere pedantic ones meant to distract us from the meat of the matter. The cold, hard truth is this- Assassin’s Creed: Odyssey was a good game if evaluated on its own merits. And thus, to evaluate Assassin’s Creed: Valhalla in relation to its predecessors and not on its merits is unfair by all means.

That being said, here’s the review. Assassin’s Creed Valhalla is a good game, in fact, it is infinitely better than even Odyssey. It is a perfection of the new AC formula. It is a careful balancing of both, the franchise’s fundamentals and its newfound characteristics. It is a commercial and creative triumph. It is an optimal combination of the elements that made the series distinctive and unique and some necessary revisions meant to keep the formula fresh and welcoming.

Developer- Ubisoft Montreal
IGN rating - 8/10



It is a faithful homage to the original and loyal AC fanbase and a sturdy hook for hesitant newcomers.

The story is structured as a classic Icelandic saga. You play as a Viking raider named Eivor who arrives from Norway and wants to settle his/her clan in England. England is highly unstable, with its warring clans, kings and chieftains. Your task is to pacify England and carve out a piece of land for yourself. The story takes you to many places, covering nearly all of modern-day England. Also included are areas from Norway, Vinland (part of modern-day North America) and even some areas from Norse Myths such as Asgard and Jotunheim. The storyline is a continuation of the traditional AC storyline, which fans know and love.

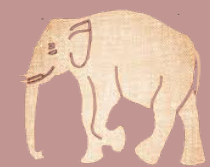
Gameplay, however, is completely different from the ‘traditional’ formula.

To describe it in relative terms, it is a reworking of Origins’ and Odyssey’s mechanics, with some much-needed improvements. The combat is familiar, albeit crunchier, gorier and much more satisfying. One of the many improvements to the combat system is the addition of a dual-wielding mechanic, which allows the user to wield two different weapons- two axes, a sword and a shield, a hammer and a spear, you name it. Gameplay other than combat has also undergone improvements. Social stealth, a mainstay of the earlier Assassin’s Creed, is back in Valhalla. So are one-hit assassinations and playable loading screens.

These story and gameplay elements come together to give the player the ultimate Viking experience. As a Viking, you sail through the meandering rivers of England in your longboat and raid any monasteries you come across with your crew. You forage for resources from which to grow your settlement- the heart and soul of this adventure. You invade to take over fortresses and strongholds, forge alliances and personal relationships and hunt mythical animals.

To underscore once again, Valhalla is a good game, a really good one at that. Its mechanics are fresh and engaging. Its story is captivating. Its progression is rewarding. Its ending is satisfying. In short, it’s a fabulous game. And hey, can you really go wrong with a game about Vikings?

-Samanyu Malik
Senior Editor
XI



Little Did He Know

For a nine-year-old boy, it was a dream come true. He never had to go to school again. After his parents passed away, his ‘dadi’ was everything for him and his brother. To fill their empty bellies, his grandmother told him “You will never have to go to school again but go help your brother at work.” He was overjoyed, but little did he know about the depth of the consequences. School for him was like a bizarre world where words used to fly and he was treated like an outcast. Working with his brother was like the taste of sweet honey.

His brother, five years elder to him, took him to the mansion he used to work at. There he saw things so dazzling that he believed it was God’s palace. The owner of the house was an affluent man who got richer every day by victimising many poor men. The boy saw the owner as someone who was beyond his comprehension, he was given the job of cleaning the house and he observed their house and saw things which pricked his eyes. He could never believe that a human being could sleep on a bed so soft, in his world food never went beyond was rice and vegetables. There he also saw a girl his age playing with toys and that filled him with confusion, he asked his brother “ Why isn’t she working?” His brother, aware of this unfair world, replied, “She’s not like us.” The boy’s mouth was flowing with questions which his brother never answered.

Soon, he started to get the harsh reality and knew that he had to work for everything. Life went on and he realised that studying is better than being a slave. One day, when the boy was wiping the dust off a television screen, a mirror which according to him showed the images of different people, the girl asked him to play with her. The boy had always fancied her toys and now he got a chance to play with them. He could never forget those moments of bliss, which, unfortunately, did not last long. When the owner saw them, his thoughts were filled by limits of the social boundary and his superiority, he slapped the boy and asked the girl to bathe once again; he never experienced anything like that before, the sound of the slap still echoed in his

ears, he ran to his brother and told him about the situation in the hope of vengeance. His brother was his hero, the boy thought that his brother is capable of everything but no hero could do anything against a reality this dismal. The boy, disappointed at everything, got to work again. The little girl, who felt guilty, thought of giving him her favourite toy. Once again he had a smile on his face. It was a model car that would have cost him twice his monthly salary.

The boy adored the car and the very next day when he brought the car to work he broke it because he never experienced such luxuries and didn’t know how to handle the delicate toy. When someone spotted the toy, he was called at once. The owner who was about to hammer the little boy was stopped by his brother who happened to be cleaning the room at the same time. He said, “Sir, I broke it.” The owner who had a sense of respect for his brother because of the years he worked there replied with” I do not want to see you here from tomorrow.” Then he left the room. The boy who just got his brother fired was overwhelmed with guilt and could not do anything about it.

Bearing the guilt of everything that happened to his brother broke the boy. Overwhelmed by such load, a nine-year-old boy lost his innocence a little too soon. All he thought of was running away and that’s what he did. He blamed God for such a fate but little did he know that this very fate was not written by God but by those who thought of themselves as Gods.

**-Trayambak Pathak
IX**

History of Music

Music is perhaps one of the most effective indicators of the “mood” of society. A great example of this is American history, the various phases of which have constantly been linked to the “musical era “. The patriotic melodies that began in 1920 and resurfaced periodically till as late as the invasion of Afghanistan, the anti-establishmentarian rock music that rose in popularity with the anti-Vietnam war protests, the mellow jazz of the simpler decades, all serve as examples of how music actively interacts with social situations & responds to them.

In this essay, I will discuss not how music responds to changes in society, but rather, how the consumption of music is affected by them. Currently, we are at a phase where, for the first time in centuries, the willingness to pay for music is decreasing.

Many perspectives exist that are trying to throw light on this phenomenon. Some would argue that this was a simple effect of the inevitable hand of the market. Within this argument lie 2 assertions. First, with the increase in the availability of cheap music, the overall value of individual productions has decreased. Second, music itself now has to compete with other, more appealing forms of entertainment, which has caused an inevitable decline in its value.

In my opinion, both these assertions are valid. The cost of producing music has greatly decreased over the years. Seldom does an artist with more than a thimble of talent struggle to find a producer willing to foot the bill. Technology has allowed for the drastic lowering of production costs, with most instruments being simulated and a plethora of beats available at cheap rates on the Internet. In fact, ‘Old town road’, by Lil Nas X, was based on a beat purchased for a few dollars off the internet. The song has gone on to dominate the billboards for longer than the Beatles. Thus, the dual factors of easy production and an increase in willing sponsors have made it drastically more convenient to become an artist. As a consequence, music production has skyrocketed. Due to the increased number of songs which customers can choose to listen to, the value of each individual song has reduced. This is simply an example of the law of supply and demand playing out in front of our very eyes. In my view, this is a good thing, as it has levelled the playing field for artists that belong to economically weaker backgrounds.

The second assertion, that music companies have to face greater competition for the attention of consumers, also holds its ground. Music is a purely an auditory experience. It is boxed in by the fact that it can only draw the attention of one of our senses. Visual entertainment has a decided advantage here, as does interactive entertainment, like gaming.

Thus, music is becoming more of a background function in our lives. It is rarely the principal focus of our activities (except live concerts). We might play music in the background while playing

on the newest Xbox, but I doubt a lot of us would be willing to pay a high price for it.

But this is where my opinion deviates from the assertion. I believe that the development of modern technology has forced the music industry to evolve and it has risen to the challenge. A prime example of this is the largest & most sold musical group in the world, called BTS. It is a Korean Pop group and has developed a fan following that goes well into millions.

Most of these fans are stereotypically portrayed as teenage girls. The question is, how has this group of Korean men who look very little like the generic Western boy band managed to capture an audience well into millions? That too when most of their fans are unable to even understand their Korean lyrics? The answer lies in their use of modern pop beats (which are addictive), advertising disguised in the form of tabloid drama and most importantly, use of music videos. BTS puts videos of their music on YouTube like most other artists, but their artistic use of modern cinematic tools has allowed them to combine their music with video experiences in a manner that has allowed them to dominate the industry.

The evolution of technology is always a tremendous force of change in the music industry. The development of new mic technology paved the way from the instrumentals of the early 1900s to the likes of Elvis (and later) Frank Sinatra, who relied more on their voices rather than instruments. At the dawn of the 21st century, new changes emerged. Streaming services began paying artists on the basis of the amount of time people spent listening to their songs. Old storytelling formats of poetic music, the likes of Billy Joel, The Eagles and Don Mclean lost out to youthful pop which had faster choruses and more appealing beats. Thus, the average length of songs has declined considerably since we have shifted from Vinyl and walkmans to Spotify and Apple music.

To conclude, while it is true that the amount people are willing to pay for music is decreasing, this is not entirely a bad phenomenon. The cause of this situation, the dramatic lowering of production costs, has a net positive outcome, as it means that more artists will be able to create melodies without worrying about the price. This has, in effect, ‘ democratized ’ music production. The result is a greater choice for us, the listeners, which is definitely a positive. In the end, we must remember, the only other constant to change is the futility of one’s resistance to it.

-Anonymous

The Meme Culture

An Internet Meme (pronounced meem) is defined as “An image, video, piece of text, etc., typically humorous in nature—that is copied and spread rapidly by internet users, often with slight variations” (Oxford Living Dictionary, 2018). The evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins coined the term “meme” initially in his 1976 book, ‘The Selfish Gene’.

It represented a concept — an idea, a style, or a type of behaviour — that courses through and gains popularity within a culture. Since the process is similar to the transmission of genetic attributes in humans, Dawkins looked for a monosyllabic word that would rhyme with a gene. He consequently took the Greek word “mimeme” (that which is imitated) and shortened it to — meme. It took 18 years for the term to surface on the internet.

Their capability to express thoughts and feelings in a fun and relatable way resonated with young viewers from the get-go. Where most other mediums have failed to maintain their relevance in the internet era, memes have since become one of the most universally consumed online content types. Memes are not only an internet substation but also a social sensation. They are everywhere around us and their impact is difficult to overlook.

Internet memes are usually formed from social interactions, pop culture references or circumstances people often find themselves in. Commercially, they are used in marketing, where they are an inexpensive form of mass advertising.

Most of our conversations today, whether between millennials or zoomers are informed by the puns and references made online. Public relations, advertising and marketing experts have embraced memes as a form of viral retailing and guerrilla marketing strategy to create “buzz” for their product or service. Memes are often seen as being cost-effective. Companies also get to share information in a fun and memorable format, humanize their brand through a personage demonstration.

Another place where we have seen a significant influx of memes is politics. Political memes are becoming increasingly noticeable in political discourse and politicians are using them to attract, infuriate, persuade or bemuse voters. They thus create images and ideas in the mind of people. The stronger the emotional response provoked by a meme, the greater the intention to spread it. And this reaction is enough for politicians to capitalise on.

It is, however, essential to consider that memes can be used for harassment and to further hate speech and disinformation about various social groups. People are increasingly becoming aware of the darker side of memes. We no longer consider memes to be harmless fun. For better or for worse, we are becoming cognizant of their social and political influence. Like many other online cultural aspects, memes are easily misinterpreted by those who do not use them frequently. Some believe them to be completely irrelevant. Others recognise and account for their reach and power.

Nevertheless, the fact of the matter is that memes are a mere communication tool and they can be used for many distinctive purposes. They can aid positive and pleasant changes, but they can also be used to harm others. It is essential to develop a realistic idea of memes’ power as a medium of communication presently and in the future.

-Vihan Shukla
IX-A

What Makes Body Positivity Questionable?

Most of us are engaged in social media and aware of various social media trends and movements, such as body positivity drift. Body positivity movement initially started to empower overweight people. Just like every movement, this one too has its pros and cons. This campaign sets a clear message that everybody is acceptable and we should not assess someone based on things and aspects they don’t choose, such as their sexuality, gender, race and appearance. I agree that people should change their perspectives about other people’s non-changeable elements, as I mentioned earlier.

The narrative which makes this movement questionable is the one it sets about being overweight. The concern is that you can choose to be fit or unfit, and with this campaign, we are giving overweight people enough fodder to be proud of the fact that they are unfit.

I don’t mean to say that calling someone ‘fat’ or ‘thin’ or using any other irrelevant slur is acceptable or relevant, but with this movement, people get an example that being unfit is good and that’s what makes this toxic. Unlike other aspects in this movement, obesity or being overweight is the only changeable thing, but people don’t motivate obese people to get fit but to love themselves the way they are. Self-Love and this case are completely different. Self-love means to love yourself, accept your problems and identify the things you are good, but with the body positivity movement, you are told even to love the issues you have with your body, instead of working on it. I think telling someone that they need to work on something they are not good at or lack and the things they can change for good is not something this movement should restrict, but it does.

I have seen many people who love themselves and work on their problems instead of running from the issues with excuses like fake self-love. I have also seen people who get offended even when someone tells them to change their physique very politely but

they retaliate viciously. This movement engenders an awful impression of what body positivity means. Body positivity doesn’t mean to promote being unfit, but to influence them to change and be happy with the way they are. Obesity is a treatable disease but it’s just that it needs patience, dedication and regular movement which people often ignore. Being racially and sexually unacceptable for the society’s standards is a very different debate and being physically unfit is another aspect, which shouldn’t be included with the other non-changeable factors.

The whole point is to differentiate between the changeable and non-changeable elements of the body positivity movement. There are many flaws in this movement and the flag bearers of this movement want to promote those flaws, which sets a terrible impression and message. In conclusion, don’t change yourself for society, change yourself for your own sake and that’s what self-love means. Body Positivity is what makes you feel good, and I don’t think there’s any problem if you change yourself physically for good and it doesn’t affect your happiness. In return, it will make you feel good- that’s the whole purpose of self-love and body positivity.

-Pranay Dhaka
IX-A

The Worth of Meaning

I'm suspicious of those things where more is always supposed to be better. Nature prefers moderation, so good things can harm you when you get too much of them. Drinking more water is good. Too much and you'll drown. I think "meaning" is one of those things that is usually good, but that can cause you problems when there is too much of it. Meaning is a slippery word, so it's hard to be clear when we're using it the same way. However, we all know when a person, thing, goal or idea feels significant to us, and when those same things feel ordinary. The difference is meaning. In addition to being a feeling, the meaning is also an idea. When someone asks you what something means, they're asking for you to explain it in words. They want its definition, cause or likely implications. Meanings are words and ideas you weave together in your head. More meaning tends to be better. A complete absence of meaning usually (although perhaps not always) feels awful. Similarly, a lack of meaning in the conceptual sense is confusion and ignorance. We'd prefer to say what things mean and believe it, than to simply shrug our shoulders and say, "I don't know."

I think there are two ways you can have too much meaning. First, you could feel too strongly about the significance of something. We've all had anxiety and fears when something is so important to us that we're unable to function. That relationship that you wanted to hold onto even though the other person wasn't in love with you. That job which meant everything to you—until you got fired. That

conviction you held onto desperately until it started to unravel.

Feelings are mental tools. They put our minds into a state that allows certain ideas, actions and thoughts to flow more easily than others. However, to allow some ideas to flow more easily, that must necessarily mean you're blocking others. The feeling of significance therefore will be useful in some contexts and harmful in others, just like anger, fear, optimism, joy, love, sadness and everything else you feel. The second way you can have too much meaning is related to the intellectual idea of meaning. If you have a strong set of ideas about what something means, either in terms of its definition, explanation or implied effects, that can "lock" you into a certain way of seeing things. Too much meaning can prevent you from seeing something in another way, and other perspectives may be necessary to solve certain problems. I suspect that the anxiety and fear we often feel in our daily lives is a result of too much meaning, rather than too little. It's a combination of a strong feeling of significance along with a perceived lack of control.

**-Utsav Kumar
VIII**

It's okay not to be okay

It is rightly said- "Mental health is not a destination, but a process. It's about how you drive, not where you're going."

Mental health refers to the emotional, social and psychological well-being of an individual. It has a direct impact on an individual's thought process, behaviour, feelings and how they look at others. With the establishment of new forums such as social media, mental health has become the talk of the town. No individual would deny the fact that they have experienced some sort of mental health issue at some point in their lifetime. However, a large population is relatively ignorant toward this concept. One of the major reasons is that mental trauma has been taboo for a very long time. People with mental illness were said to be scary, weird and socially unacceptable.

Physical symptoms of mental illness were considered unreal and unimportant. Even nowadays, some people would decline the existence of the fact that mental trauma has real, tangible consequences. Mental illness is majorly seen in adolescents and old people. It is caused due to various factors such as brain structure, genetic factors, imbalance of brain chemicals and several other external factors. The external factors could be daily stress, a change in

lifestyle, the loss of a loved one, lack of friendships, exposure to toxins like drugs and alcohol, a lack of social acceptance and unrealistic life expectations created by social media platforms. The statistics are staggering: 1 in 5 young people suffer from a mental illness, that's 20 percent of our population. Yet, only about 4 percent of the total health care budget is spent on mental health.

The use of social media has affected the mental health of teenagers by addicting them to it. Moreover, social media platforms build up such high beauty standards that teenagers develop body image issues and other complexes. It further leads to depression and anxiety. Individuals in old age may suffer from mental illnesses as a sign of growing old, other factors may be loneliness, lack of brain chemicals.

It is important to understand someone's mental condition and to learn to empathise with them. We often tend to make fun of people who suffer from such illnesses. Having a mental illness is not a choice or a moral failing. It is, in fact, perfectly normal.

**-Madhav Makheja
IX**

VE'R'SES

Broken Before

Two Poems. One Heading. You Be The Judge And Jury

One doesn't recount the past
One does not care for tomorrow,
No one knows how long they shall last,
For when in love we thrive
To capture nothing but the moment itself.

Let me hold your trust
Give me a chance to help
I would do my best,
To help you escape the burden.

Do you need someone ?
Are you scared of what shall be the outcome?
Worrying too much isn't the key
But the aura within is!

Love is blind,
And so it makes it hard to find,
What is truly wrong?
What is truly right?

The clock doesn't bother me anymore
Your past doesn't define your soul
Your innocence and love does
And they have always been on your face

The scars you're never willing to unfold
I still might not know you too well
But for sure, you've been broken before.
But when in love, haven't all of us at least once?

**-Parth Tiwari
X**

The commencement is always mesmerizing ,
The bow makes you forget
Why the act was stopped;
The fire to your forests that were lit.

The blankness left you puzzled,
The tiredness left you distorted,
The lacking of reasons from the past --
Making your head heavy, still.

Not much is asked;
Not much is answered ;
Some are genuine misinterpretations,
Some are the 'talk' gathered.

Nights are still cold and gloomy,
The flowers are half as bloomy ,
Acceptance seems the only key
The last certain chance of settling.

Feels like a millennium,
Since this feeling was gone
A twinkle of joy was yet to come;
Still waiting, even though it's past dawn.

**-Viraj Mahajan
Editor
XI**

India has a long history with censorship. From colonial times, when British officials tried to silence the nationalist voice of the public to the post-independent “modern times” where anything considered inappropriate by the Government is banned under the “for public interest” flag. Our government is responsible for overseeing the content displayed in the cinemas, the newspapers and national television; the only free platforms where artists could truly express themselves and cover topics which our cinemas would curtail were the OTT (over the top) platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hotstar, etc. These new houses of liberal expression are no longer free as the Government has put them under the watchful eye of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

In July 2020, our Commerce and Industry Minister Mr. Piyush Goyal asked the entertainment industry to self regulate their programs on OTT platforms. Apart from that, with the framework of age classification, content descriptions and parental control in combination with grievance redressal systems, OTT platforms have made it easier for consumers to make proper viewing decisions for themselves and their families; so, what changed in the past few months for the Government to start regulating OTT platforms?

After a petition filed in public interest to regulate OTT platforms things quickly paced along and protests over new content like ‘Tandav’ added to the Government’s justifications. The inadequacies of current laws to cope with objectionable content were also pointed out. OTT platforms generally choose to produce movies and shows based on real life political or economical issues, an example would be the Emmy award winner ‘Delhi Crime’. So is the Government, fazed by this form of media which they couldn’t control, trying to censor the truth under the guise of public interests? Even though such shows claim to be fictionalised retellings, they do bring

important issues to the limelight to be discussed and debated by the public. Censored content wouldn’t be able to play this role effectively.

Imposing restrictions on artists limits their creativity. If the current censorship laws were present during the Renaissance would artists like Sandro Botticelli be recognised for his world renowned work ‘The Birth of Venus’? Or would critically acclaimed movies like ‘Brokeback Mountain’ be known to the world if the U.S. Government had banned them? Self regulation is the international democratic norm and grants many benefits to society as a whole. The current mindset of the citizens of our country is that the media is unreliable and not trustworthy. However, if granted self regulation, the credibility of the media can be advanced and the public’s confidence can be restored. Further, this would protect the rights of journalists and producers to be independent. It would even reduce the pressure on judicial bodies if matters like violation of personal rights by the media are corrected with satisfaction by self regulatory bodies. These bodies can include in-house and industry officials and equally interested stakeholders can become civil society’s representatives.

I would like to conclude with a quote from Benjamin Franklin,

“Without Freedom of Thought, there can be no such thing as Wisdom; and no such thing as public Liberty, without Freedom of Speech.”

-Aaditya Chandra Gupta
Editor
XI

People often forget that digital platforms broadcast a vast array of content including films, web series etc. that have different target audiences. A section of society might relate to one movie but easily get offended by another. Then, of course, there is the question of age restriction - whether a particular movie is suitable for younger viewers and what could be the criteria for judgement. Frequently, while directors are working on a project, they neglect scenes that might possibly cause controversy. Even a small spark can ignite riots. These platforms have gradually become important parts of our

lives and have a great impact on our lifestyle, which is exactly why they need to be monitored. One objective of cinema is to give viewers something to take away but on the other hand, cinema might inflame the wrong kind of thoughts. Something as sensitive as OTT media definitely needs to be regulated.

Boards censor satellite networks and mainstream movies over the world for a simple reason. A film motivates thought and action and assures a high degree of attention and retention as compared to the printed word. In a semi-dark theatre, all other forms of distraction are eliminated, which is why movies impact most of us greatly. When a negative thought is promoted in a movie, it has the potential to incite conflicts. Thus, keeping in mind the psychological effects on children and other marginalised people and for the overall welfare of the public, cinema is censored. This can be paralleled to OTT platforms. With the spread of coronavirus and worldwide lockdown, OTT has become part of every household. Content ranging from tv shows to movies is available to people of

all age groups. For years, streaming services like Netflix have been bypassing the basic scrutiny of a country’s film board. However, they do not realise the extent to which their media affects its viewers. Thus, they should be monitored similar to satellite networks.

The opposition might argue that regulating OTT suppresses freedom of expression and creativity for artists. However, this does not always hold true. The harms principle states that a person can only exercise a right as far as it doesn’t interfere in another person’s bubble of rights. In this case, the creator can only express something that is appropriate for the audience. Since content on such platforms is available to all people who subscribe to their service, it should be well regulated to suit the country’s requirements. This is the function that censor boards perform and it needs to be emphasized in today’s situation. In conclusion, regulation of content cannot be considered synonymous to banning freedom of speech. It is the appropriate decision at this stage and with adequate steps, it can be perfectly executed.

-Arnav Goel
Editor
X



The Spotlight Effect

Let's assume you are on a stage in front of a marvelous audience who are on the edge of their seats waiting for you to give an amazing speech, but unfortunately you make a blunder before even beginning your speech and your mind starts to race and you begin to feel conscious about how the audience is thinking about you. If you have experienced a situation like this before, well yes, you are familiar with the 'Spotlight Effect'.

It's a strange phenomenon, the Spotlight Effect. There might be thousands of people in a room, millions of things going on around you and yet you're convinced that all eyes are on you! This feeling makes you panic and ill-at-ease. One may even sense the Spotlight Effect so intensely before a certain scenario or confrontation that he or she may avoid it entirely.

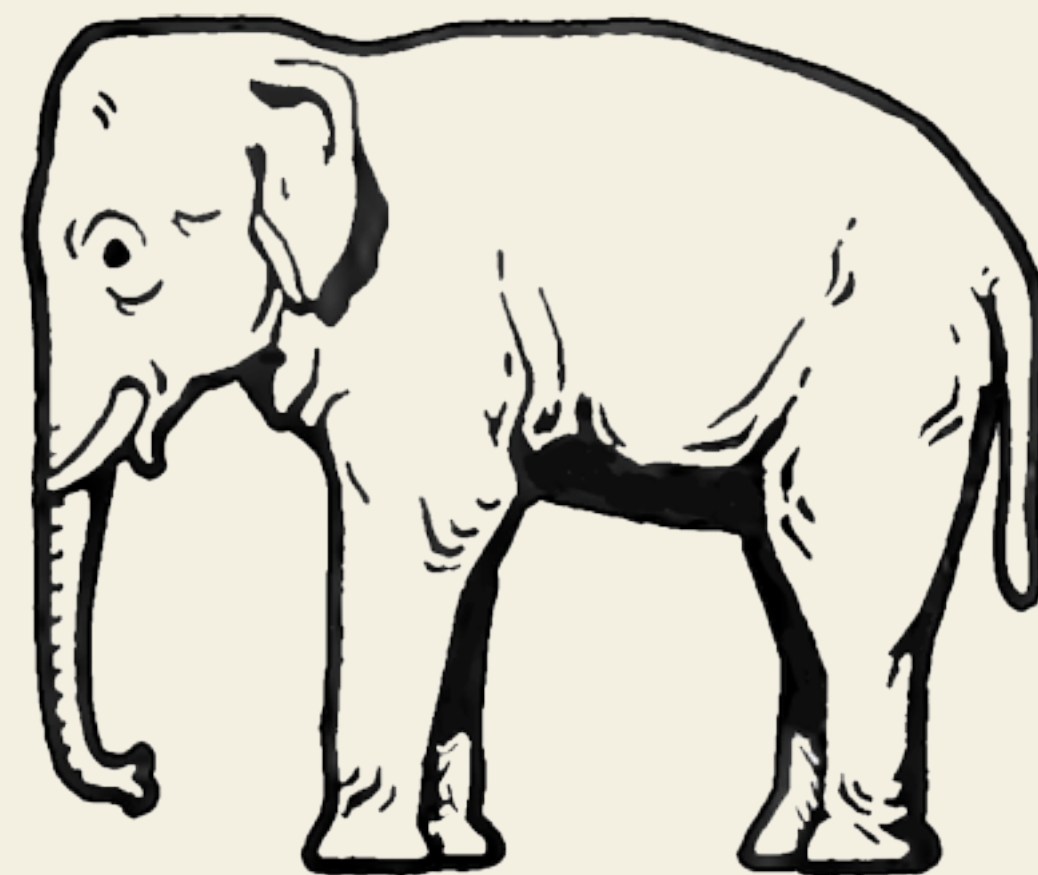
Our brain tricks us into thinking that everyone's attention is focused on us as if there was a virtual spotlight continuously shining on us. This phenomenon even uses the concept of heuristics as each of us tends to live in our own little world and the only truth we recognize is the one based on ourselves. It's not shocking, thus, that we often forget that we're not the core of anyone else's world. We falsely believe that since we are hyper-aware of our actions, everyone else would also be hyper-aware of it. But bear in mind that just because we overestimate the number of people noticing us, it doesn't mean that nobody notices us. The number of people noticing us is still much less than we believe. For example, if your shirt has a stain on it, you might believe everybody in the restaurant has noticed it. But in reality the people at your table might not have noticed, much less anybody else. This effect appears to have the biggest influence on a person's personality when it's at one of the two ends of the emotional spectrum. It is either when we have extreme confidence and pride or we feel embarrassed or shy or conscious about our conduct. The latter seems to have a much bigger negative effect. Now the question that arises is, how can the Spotlight Effect bias a person's frame of mind while addressing a crowd? The Spotlight effect can cause various changes in person when he or she is talking. It can be related to the embarrassment caused by physical appearance. If you are self-conscious about any element of your appearance, the Spotlight Effect intensifies your emotions, dramatically adding to your nervousness. In severe cases it also creates an impact on your delivery while you're talking, making you fumble and your voice turns shaky. Or you believe that the audience has superhuman eyesight and they notice everything about you. If your hands are trembling or any other physical signs of nervousness, you might overestimate the degree to which members of the public notice this. These overly-hyped fears are just figments of our imagination. Obviously an audience has its attention directed towards the speaker but that attention is only

on what the content of the speech is. Some others may notice other things about you but it isn't much relative, particularly with larger crowds. There are many more ways in which the spotlight effect restrains you from performing at your best. So we should relax and focus on what is important without getting trapped in a psychological prison.

The most basic solution to overcome this issue is to assume that the Spotlight Effect doesn't exist. It's like dancing when nobody's watching. Acknowledge that the audience does notice some little details but remember these are irrelevant and focus on the task at hand. When you see the members of the audience remember that they are not actively dissecting your appearance and how you look, instead they're primarily focused on making sense of your speech. Whenever you feel conscious and nervous before a big speech, mark those feelings as false alarms and turn your mind to whatever it is you are going to talk about. It's hard to compromise with your brain when it's in this situation, so it's important not to waste your time trying to do that. Another way to feel more confident before an event is to record your speech and give yourself feedback on what you could have done better. You may also try this method with family members and friends that you trust.

The Spotlight Effect helps us to remember that the presentation is not about the way a speaker appears, it's about the audience which has gathered to listen to you. This audience-centric outlook helps to forget everything about the Spotlight Effect easily. After all, the viewer is focused on absorbing your speech, not your physical traits.

-Rakshit Khurana
IX



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