

E Pluribus Unum

Impact of Twitter & The Legacy of Jack Dorsey

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193 Member States<> One United Nations

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-by Agastya Rao, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



Twitter has become one of the world's most popular social media platforms ranging for everyone from Politicians to YouTubers. With more than 200 Million daily users as reported by Statista, it is one of the most widely recognised social media platforms for its mountain bluebird logo.

It has also had an eventful past few years and has been in the news for clamping down on hate mongers (like Donald Trump and his followers following the US Capitol Riots) and for its controversial new rule for requiring consent to post photos (more on this later) and for countless other incidences.

However, out of all of these new instances, a recent highlight which came out of the blue was the announcement by Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey declaring that he would be stepping down from his post as CEO. So how did he start the company and why is he leaving?

Who is taking his place?

Taking Mr Dorsey's place is Former Chief Technology Officer of Twitter Mr Parag Agrawal. Mr Agrawal, who has been at Twitter for over a decade and joined as a Software Engineer. Mr Dorsey has fully backed him. Mr Agrawal got his Bachelor of Technology degree from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay and obtained his Doctorate in Computer Science from Stanford University. He will now become the youngest person to run a company in the S&P 500.

Part 2- The Impact of Twitter-

It would not be too much of an overstatement to say that Twitter changed the way our world absorbs news and information. The novelty of 140 characters (increased to 280 characters), fast sharing of news catered to a new audience as well, the ones who did not want to read too much to absorb data. Twitterverse is a major part of social media these days. In later years, we will surely think of the world as pre-Twitter and post-Twitter.

In our ever changing world, people have lost the patience to read even a page of writing. Twitter (and other social media platforms) have tapped into this market and created a quick method to provide and read news, information and facts. Yes, there is a lot of fake news swirling around, but with new Artificial Intelligence and rules, things seem to be improving.

Twitter and Censorship

As I said before, Twitter is widely used, especially by politicians. Ever since Jack Dorsey made the decision to ban all political advertisements, just before the 2020 USA Presidential

elections, he stirred quite the hornet's nest by taking a bold stand. Twitter is also a voice to speak up against injustice for many people, but this is also becoming a problem nowadays- especially in India where the Government of India is trying to "censor" Twitter.

In February of 2021 The Government of India released the Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics code under which Social Media platforms would have to censor speech based on a series of "Rules". **These Rules have been called out for being arbitrary and for giving extra powers to the Government to control Social Media platforms.**

While Twitter has been fighting this case in the Supreme Court of India, the fight to remain independent and without censorship is a war that Twitter will have to continue to wage for some time, otherwise what will happen to free speech?

Major policy changes in Twitter

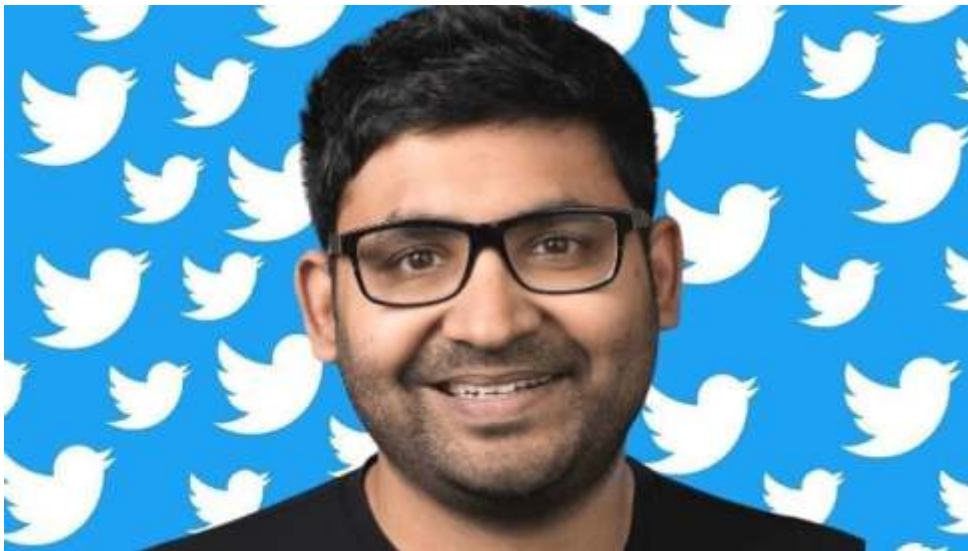
One of the first major moves by Twitter in late 2020, was when they shocked the world by permanently banning former President of the USA Donald Trump from Twitter. This move came after the horrifying attack on the US Capitol. This move showed the world that Twitter was not afraid to stand up against someone/something when it was wrong.

The next major policy change was rather controversial. Twitter announced that it shall not permit people from posting private videos or images of other people without their consent. However, this policy was not framed well, and it led to some members of the Proud Boys (Far Right group, involved in the Capitol riots) going after people who posted photos of them. This policy

permitted people to report those who had released said private photos/videos. Thankfully, seeing as this policy backfired, Twitter announced that it would be conducting an internal review on this policy.

Twitter, going forward

Twitter is going to be very important in the near future. It can shape democracies in the future, but it will have to work with governments and maintain a balance between censorship and free speech. From new policies, to a new CEO, Twitter seems to be going through a semi reboot of sorts. It will have to try to grow as a business, keeping in mind the fragile and forever changing world we live in.



PARAG AGARWAL

Transition between online and offline school : Effect on student's mental health

-by Anshika Kansal, Grade IX IGCSE, SNS Gurugram



We are all aware of the closure of educational activities all over the world due to the existence of the virus COVID-19, which led us to transition from the traditional methods of learning to digital platforms which came with a limitless amount of technical issues. However despite the availability of technology, the internet, and a ton of excuses to get out of any form of social interaction we were soon able to resume face-to-face interaction in classes.

I remember walking on the school grounds without a care in the world even though I had to give two exams that day as just the thought of meeting my friends had me in bliss. The time we had spent in physical classes helped us communicate and interact with our teachers.

The physical school also provided us with extra-curricular activities which in

turn made us more productive during classes. Lastly, it gave us a proper mechanism of education as each teacher was aware of their students weaknesses and strengths which resulted in teachers clarifying concepts using foreign innovative methods.

The utilization of recently developed means of teaching which fascinated the students clarified the intellectual level of each student as well as their approach to new concepts. For example, the use of smart boards to show entertaining videos on the topic which the class is learning made the sessions enjoyable. Unfortunately due to the condition of the air quality our schools were once closed till further orders from the environment department.

The pollution from the annual rice crop and plant wheat burning peaked. Temperatures dropped further and pollution got trapped in the thick winter fog which further transitioned into smog. The decrease in air quality took an incredibly large toll on the environment but, it had a considerably greater impact on the mental health of the thousands of students who were finally delighted to come and study in physical space.



The mental health of students has recently become an exceedingly large concern, as it should be and the recurring Covid-19 pandemic which had collaborated with the increasing levels of pollution led the students to be more vulnerable. It had most certainly weakened their mental condition. Covid-19 felt like an incessant book that didn't have an end, as it was yet to be written.

It might have started out with people exploring the gift technology, but soon the screen time became overwhelming and the sudden halt to in-person learning contact made us all miserable. The six-eight hours which were spent alongside hundreds of others became unbearable. Time stood still. At the end of the day, we'd all be too worn out because of the constant headache, and on top of that, we would have to encounter what felt like a billion assignments.

This exhausting process of reliving the same day over and over again stressed us out and we developed anxiety. After knowing how joyful it was to be around our friends most of the day, didn't help the increasing levels of anxiety and the feeling of loneliness. It became more evident than ever that we aren't made or suited for online communications.

The concentration levels of students dropped drastically as our eyes would meander elsewhere. The pressure to pay attention and at the end of the class being ready with the answers required stressed us out.

Assignments piled on, deadlines passed away and most of them succumbed to the pressure. Day by day we became less motivated to do anything even slightly productive as the thought of doing something other than schoolwork gave us anxiety.

Fortunately, we were able to share our struggles with people who are close to us which might have helped us to some extent however, it didn't get rid of the burdens we faced.

Unfortunately, we might never be able to throw the idea of online classes out the window but we can be optimistic about our schools understanding that we have responsibilities at home and online classes have always simply added to the lengthy list of duties we already have.



I don't wanna be home anymore!

-by Anavi Jindal, Grade IX, SNS Faridabad



I never anticipated a life like this...
I wanna go to school again but I am helpless.
Nothing seems decent to me, nothing is in progress,
And it is just a hope of going to school in each child's eye. Sometimes I wondered, why?
I didn't wanna wake up and go to school,
But now, school seems a jolly place and I count each day...

I really miss my friends, the environment, and the amusement
And it seems my childhood is lost somewhere.
I want to find my childhood again; I don't wanna be home anymore. Every day, when I
wake up and be an optimist,
With a thought of being a schoolgirl again,
There is nothing I can really holdback except my belief.

Going to school has now become a reverie, which will fulfil
But I am unknown of a word called "WHEN?"
Time has slackened.
Each time, I look at the clock, just a minute or so has passed.
Now I feel, life is too lengthy,
It gives us time which is a lot more than sufficient.
I don't wanna be home anymore...

I always imagine, the moment of getting into the school bus,
With the responsibility of my younger brother along with a shine, a
hope in my eyes,
When I see my friends after so long.
That moment will be still for a second
And I will live it to the fullest.

Imagine me at one end of the corridor
And my best friend at the other end,
I know it will be awkward first
But still that feeling will never end.
It will be so marvellous to experience
That, I can just imagine
But don't really know how it will be.

There is still an expectation and a question though,
When will I be a schoolgirl again, when will I have fun?
I don't wanna be home anymore,
I just don't wanna be home anymore.

I have been to school since I was 3
But I am glad about a thing
That I can live that feeling, that moment again.

I yelled at some people, there were some ups and downs,
But now I value even those.

"Those were the days!" this is what I say.

I want to relish each moment when I come to school

But I really can't as nobody works on my ways

But I have to on theirs.

I can't have control over some things

But I definitely have feelings to express,

When will I be a schoolgirl again, when will I have fun?

I don't wanna be home anymore,

I don't wanna be home anymore.

I just look out of the window and everything gets still

And then the world of imagination begins where I am a schoolgirl.

I wait right here in the silence with just a thought,

I wanna enjoy each moment and live every feeling,

I don't wanna be home anymore!

Acceptance

-by Naina, Grade IX IGCSE, SNS Gurugram



Acceptance. What is acceptance? **Acceptance is just a person's agreement to the reality of a situation, recognizing a process or condition without attempting to change it or protest it.** I think for me it is walking into a place and not getting judged. **Getting people to be okay with the way I am and not try to change me.**

Everyone in this world cannot like you and that's definite so it's just a waste of time trying to make them like you, but what you can do is hope to be accepted. **Hope to be accepted the way you are and the way you will be when you change for the better or for the worse.** Hope to be accepted for what subjects you like, for what profession you want to pursue, for what race you belong to, for what religion you belong to, for what your body size is, for what your gender is, for what your sexuality is, for how you look and so many more things.

From finding drinking water to inventing spaceships, if a human wanted something they had to work for it. **So if we want to be accepted for ourselves we can't just sit back and wish, we have to go the extra mile and work day and night.**

We have to make a move for ourselves so our society and the atmosphere we live in currently evolves for the better. We have to be determined and persistent to be accepted because it might not be easy but eventually, things change. **And things can change. We are lucky because we have the privilege to make a change. We can raise our voices on stuff we feel should be ostracized.**

Take education for an example. First-people used to study in fields using feathers as their mode to write, then came the use of actual pens in classrooms which were indoors and had fans as well as air conditioning, and now finally we use our laptops to type at schools and while working-from-home.

You should be able to be whom you want without caring if others will judge you or not. **Accepting does not mean liking, wanting, choosing, or even supporting. It means allowing yourself to behave in the same way with different people in different situations or rather, making someone feel 'normal'.** Acceptance is the ability to see that others have a right to be their own unique and diverse persons. Everyone is different.

It also has a direct relation with time, the more time you put into practice and master it, the more acceptive you become. **It's like growing fruits, they cannot magically grow in a week. They need time.**

Acceptance is a very broad term and one which is hard to

understand and master. You may have good grades and a lot of friends. But if you can't make a person feel accepted and let them be true to themselves then are you really doing a good deed?

From the day we are brought into this dynamic world, we are told what to do, how to do it, how not to do it, what is good, what is bad. But are these concepts real? Or are they just words we, as humans, have categorized into different segments so we get a particular perception when we come across them?

Everyone is familiar with the term 'labels'. What are labels? A label may be a classifying phrase or name applied to a person or thing, especially one that is inaccurate or restrictive. It can assign someone to a particular category.

These labels might not bother us at first, but after a time they begin to make us feel uncomfortable in our skin or our behavior. They start to control our actions, our way of reacting, our way of conducting ourselves, and whatnot. They also define how others intercept and look at you from their perspectives.

For example-two commonly used labels are 'underweight and 'overweight'. If you were labeled as underweight or overweight and constantly pestered about it, it would bother you. Maybe not at first, but after a while, yes. But who gets to decide what the standard weight is? And why do they get to decide it?



We often are labeled and do also label people as 'fat' or 'thin'. **Now, if a person is called fat they take it as an insult, whereas if they're called thin they take it as a compliment. It's like a reflex now, but why?** There was no concept of thin being a compliment and fat being an insult, it is just our mindset and the stereotypes we have created about how people are and how they should be.

These labels identify our recognition of other people and ourselves. **If you believe that you can achieve something, but someone constantly demotivates you and deprecates you it might not affect you. But in most cases, it will.**

They might give 'incapable' as a label to you, which forces you to prove yourself over and over again. The cycle keeps repeating, sometimes it's with your sibling or the other times with a friend. But it is always there. These labels, why are they making our lives so much harder? **After all, they are only words. We accept these labels because of society and surroundings and allow them to carve ourselves into someone who we maybe don't want to become.**

If you keep telling a person that they're really bad at public speaking, but they have the confidence and want to pursue it; they may not and may lose their confidence just because of remembering your thought imputed on them. Then why do we accept these labels so easily compared to accepting people for the way they are?

If someone in your class tries a new hairstyle, you will be fast enough to make fun of them and classify them as hilarious-looking. Now in this scenario, the way the person wants to be is not being acknowledged and accepted the way it should be but instead, the person is receiving tags on how she/he/they are changing and being made fun of. If a person wants to change then it is not our place to

assess them, but it is our place to accept and not make fun of them. How are we so fast in accepting the labels given to classify our personalities and looks, but not in accepting people for actually being themselves?

Let's say a newborn baby is born in your family. You learn how to live with her/him/them, you learn how to adjust and adapt according to the baby's needs. Maybe you want to, maybe you don't but you still have to do it because it feels like it's your responsibility. This is acceptance. You accept the baby whether you want to or not.

One thing I'm certain about is that all of us know the concept of give-and-take, and how it is the only one that constantly makes our world function. So let's accept to accept. Let's accept others for who they are to get ourselves accepted for who we are, without changing but just being whom we want to be.

I'm sure everyone is familiar with the name 'Rosa Parks'. What did she do? She just refused to give up her bus seat as she was tired. By sitting down on a simple seat she stood up for the rights of so many people. She stood up for the rights of racial equality and initiated the Montgomery Bus Boycott. She also played a colossal role in making the civil rights movement active. She made people accept the rights of all black citizens.



"Acceptance doesn't mean resignation; it means understanding that something is what it is and that there's got to be a way through it." -Michael J. Fox

Life is a Road

-by Anavi Jindal, Grade IX, SNS Faridabad



Life is a road...

Road is a path that leads me somewhere I wanna go.

Or maybe not.

As I drive along the road,

I leave behind the trees, the signs,

The darks, the lights,

My past, my fights.

And I see my future in the front

While I am still unaware of where this path, my destiny leads me.

Maybe I find the right way,
Maybe I am lost...
But I will end up somewhere
Cause life's a road...

It takes me to the path I chose for myself and the decision I took but I
may fail sometimes cause life is unpredictable and so is the road...
Life is a road.

When I achieve what I want
I look ahead to the next milestone
I plan on reaching it on time but sometimes have traffic...on my
mind.

And I can't fly to escape my reality cause life is a road and road is my
life...

Vaccine Racism:

A shocking reality

-by Abhimanyu Rao, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



Just as we thought the pandemic was finally over, the virus decided to do what it does best - it changed! This change not only created the Omicron variant, but also brought forth a lot of confusion, along with a few jarring issues with the current state of the world. Before delving into the details of these issues, here is a quick recap of the latest developments in the Covid sphere.

What is the Omicron Variant?

The Omicron Variant is a variant of the SARS-CoV-2 that supposedly has a higher transmissibility. However, it is also supposed to be lower on the deadliness scale instead! It has made changes to its spike protein. Unfortunately, this spike protein is what most of the vaccines protect people against, so there is a possibility that the current vaccines may not work against the Omicron variant. On the bright side, there are

some theories that this variant will not only eliminate the Delta variant, but since it is weaker, it may just dissolve into nothing more than a common cold! **Having said this, it is pertinent to note that scientists across the world are still not in possession of sufficient data to determine the Omicron variant's true colours with any finality.**

Why is there another variant???

That is the question that everyone is asking. Everyone was fed up with the Alpha, Delta, and Lambda variants, and we keep on wishing for the end of this pandemic, and now there's yet another variant! Well, here's where it gets interesting!

The reason there are newer variants is because a huge part of the world is not vaccinated. **Furthermore, one of the reasons why a large portion of the world is not vaccinated is because all concern is directed towards major world powers like the United States, leaving places like Botswana vulnerable.**

Why did I bring up Botswana? Well, that's because that is the country where the Omicron variant was first discovered, and I know why! There have been 8 billion vaccines given till date, but only 6% of that massive amount was administered in Africa, which evidently wasn't enough! **This vaccine inequality is what has stretched the pandemic for almost two years.**

Between March and September, the US had thrown away 15 million doses of the Covid Vaccines! This was for a wide range of reasons, which included improper storage! **Had these doses been sent to Africa instead, they could have helped vaccinate people, and maybe even prevented the creation of the new variant!**

A WHO initiative known as COVAX is working on ensuring vaccine equity. COVAX believes that no one wins the vaccine race until everyone wins. This is a very true statement, and they are ensuring that all countries are at least 20% vaccinated, which will help prevent the rise of new variants. This is extremely important, which is why I have talked about it in such detail, and this is why I brought up the US vaccine wastage scenario.

Incorrect Prevention measures!

The new variant stirred up quite a lot of drama, but it also seems that it caused several countries to make decisions that were not the most sensible ones! Sure, the Omicron variant was detected in southern Africa first, but shortly after, it was detected in parts of Europe as well. As more information unravels, it turns out that it is quite likely that the variant was already present in other parts of the world.



Despite being armed with all of this information, countries have imposed travel bans on the entire southern part of the African continent, even areas where there hasn't even been a single case of

Covid detected! On the contrary, there are no travel bans to the European countries where Omicron has been detected with certainty with the exception of some countries placing restrictions on travellers from the UK!

What's even worse is that South Africa has 15000 new cases every day, some of the countries in Europe that aren't facing a travel ban have more than 50000 cases! **Many have pointed out that European countries with very high daily Covid cases had not even imposed mask wearing requirements on their own people or even stopped large scale gatherings, but were trigger happy enough to ban people from other countries.**

Imagine the absurdity of a situation where Namibia had less than 20 cases a day and Germany had 75000 daily Covid cases, but flights from Namibia were not allowed to enter Europe.

Why is this? Well, it's because of an implicit bias that the world had developed towards Africa. While Africa is a continent that is behind many other regions in terms of economic development, studies conducted brought forth a lot of disturbing results. It turns out that old epidemics like Ebola have had a lasting effect on the mindset of the world.

This is an awfully harmful time loop, because this stigma against Africa causes decisions like the travel bans, which slow down their development. **This decrease in development makes it look like countries are right in their beliefs about the continent, which obviously doesn't do wonders for Africa's public image.**

Even worse, this huge travel ban was discouraged by the WHO for an extremely important reason! This negative reaction from

other countries to a country that reports new Covid might discourage countries from reporting infections to protect their economy. That could lead to a potential superspreader event, and even re-escalate the pandemic again.

Effects of the Travel Ban

This travel ban is inherently wrong, but that isn't the only issue with the ban. **The ban will OBVIOUSLY affect the economies of the countries who will no longer get visitors, and therefore not get any income from the tourist industry!**

This will hinder their development, which will slow down the process of inoculation against Covid-19, causing new variants to form, and the cycle will repeat itself! **If this happens, not only will it greatly affect the African economy, but it will definitely not change people's perception of Africa, and may actually worsen it!**

Furthermore, a travel ban is simply a way to buy time, and isn't actually a definite solution. The WHO has stated that travel bans are not a solution to the Omicron variant, but no one seems to be listening. **It isn't a holistic solution to the new variant, and unless it is paired with other measures (which it isn't right now!), it will only harm Africa, and won't help any other country.**

Most recently, the WHO Chief Tedros Ghebreyesus said that major powers who are now scrambling to get boosters must stop, and instead let smaller countries who are yet to get the vaccine get priority instead. He was referring to the fact that rich countries are taking vaccines for boosters, even though some countries haven't gotten any vaccines at all! **He said, "No country can boost its way out of the pandemic", and he is not wrong at all.**

The whole world is in this mess together, and we won't be free of this virus until everyone in every country is fully vaccinated.

Solution

We have seen today that this problem has more layers than the most layered onion in the world! In order to fix this, we need to start by ensuring that Africa gets the vaccine doses that it needs. Once we have done that, we have security against a new variant, which will prevent one of the cycles that I explained.

Once that is done, we need to start working towards completely obliterating the biases that exist in the world. I know that it is a very idealistic task, but we need to take some steps towards it, because that is the solution to another one of the deadly time loops that I talked about. **Once we have destroyed the possibility of the occurrence of the time loops, it will significantly decrease stigma and biases against Africa, which will finally solve this problem!**

Why young adults struggle: with their body image?

-by Anshika Kansal, Grade IX IGCSE, SNS Gurugram



Our body image is essentially how we view our body and feel in our own skin. As the name suggests it is the mental picture we have of our body in our mind. The image might have been of our own body which we look at almost ten times a day yet, the proportions of it might not look anything like the picture we have drawn in our head.

An individual can either have a healthy body image or an unhealthy body image. **Having a healthy body image has a positive impact on our mental health, as it leads to us feeling comfortable and having a healthy relationship with food.** One is able to accept the way we appear to others as well ourselves. They are relaxed and confident in the way they present themselves and interact with others.

A negative body image on other hand has several young adults falling into the trap of eating disorders. Body image can change through your life, if not it will definitely

leave a mark on the way one lives life. A healthy body image is crucial. When we feel good about the way we look, we're most likely to have stable mental health and excellent self-esteem as well as a satisfactory attitude towards reading and day-to-day physical activities.

It is quite understandable why teenagers are so heavily influenced and impacted by the way their body looks, after all, adolescents are susceptible to social media, family environment, the attitude of peers as well as teachers, and more. In my opinion, a child's family environment is probably one of the most consequential out of the factors listed above as family members are in all probability the first people we interact with and they are the first relationships we form in our lives.

Even though they are well aware of the fact that their opinion matters, families still go to bully adolescents for the way they appear which they disguise as moulding us into what their perception of perfect is. Media influence on children can be equally damaging if social media isn't used responsibly. Teenagers are immediately drawn to the life-styles influences live.

As most of us are exposed to the unrealistic expectation which it has set, it leads to unhealthy eating behaviours and disordered eating. Constantly coming across the various videos on diet culture has led to most of us have a thing for the extremes. Either one eats too much or too little.

This has gone on to young adults cutting out entire food groups and at times meals from their diet. However, to our luck, social media is now changing for the better as influencers and celebrities are now aiming towards promoting body positivity and

promoting realistic healthy lifestyles. For the longest time everyone had gone on to believe that popular media has the largest influence on an adolescent's body image but, the truth is that peer pressure is equally at fault.

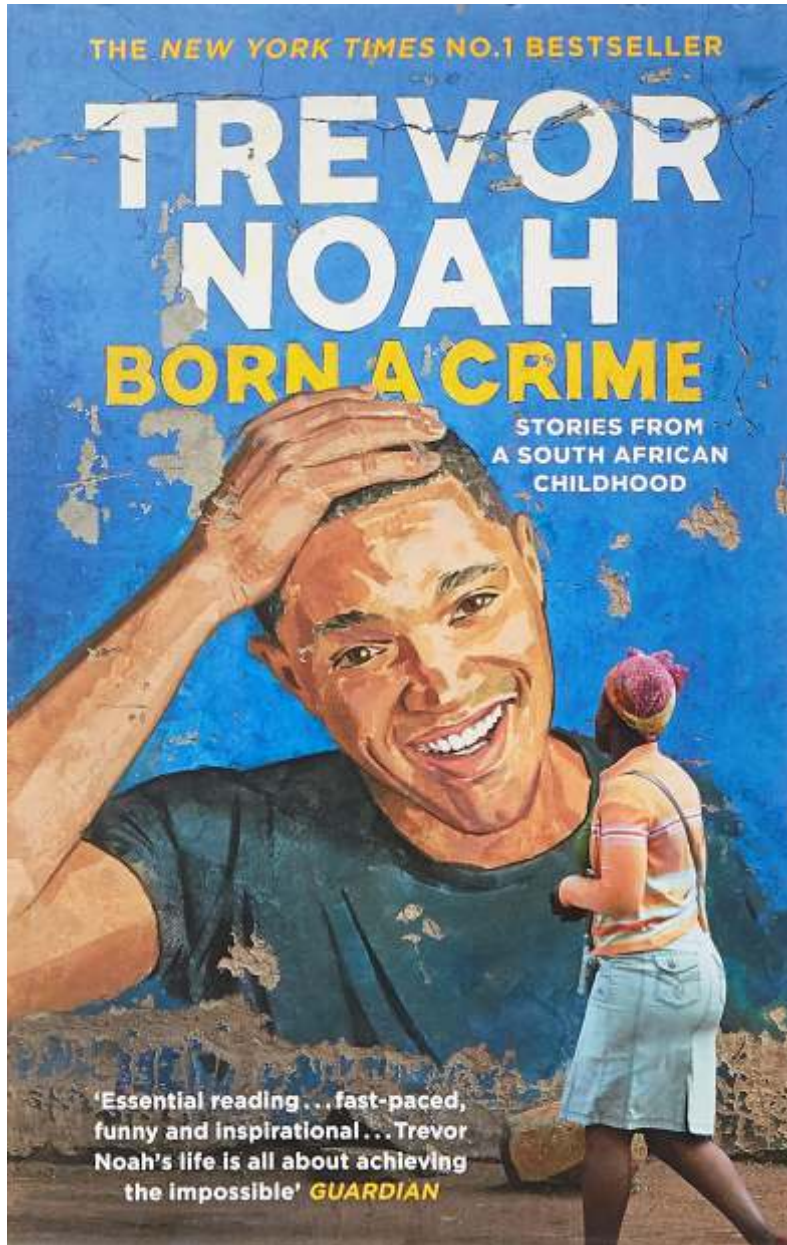
When young adults see their fellow classmates looking a certain way, this has certainly caused teenagers to worry about their weight and take more steps to control it. Young adolescents from the onwards are always anxious about what others think of them which is why they tend to create negative perceptions of themselves.

Lastly, in order to develop a healthy body image we need to learn to love and respect our bodies what all that it is capable of.



Book Review: *Born a Crime*

-by Agastya Rao, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



Trevor Noah (Host of The Daily Show) is well known as being one of the world's funniest comedians. When you come across a book written by a comedian, naturally you would expect the book to be funny, which is what I expected from this book. I can happily share

that this book was a laugh riot and lived up to the hype around it!

For me, it seemed that this book had been handcrafted and written for a reader just like me who likes a good autobiography, but also an interesting autobiography filled with humour, wit, personal anecdotes, thrilling stories and of course the life story of the person writing the book.

While this book may seem like just another autobiography, it has changed the way autobiographies work, as Trevor Noah brilliantly recounts his hilarious personal anecdotes (more on this later) but also tackles topics like racism and the horrible apartheid system followed in Africa through both his own experiences and explaining the reality around him.

In the midst of all the humour, Trevor Noah takes out the time to give a history lesson (which was much needed to understand the book) in between the various chapters of the book- explaining the apartheid, the various tribes of South Africa, how South Africa was colonised and much more! **With this, Trevor Noah took a good book and elevated it to a great one!**

The book starts off with a quick but in-depth explanation of how South Africa was colonised by the Dutch and the British.

“I was nine years old when my mother threw me out of a moving car”, (Don't worry she wasn't trying to kill him, but was trying to save him, as we learn later) and with this from the very first line Mr Noah has you hooked, making you want to flip the page over and read more.

He continues by talking about his religious upbringing, the

fact that the unjust and appalling Apartheid prevented his mother and him from living together and also prevented black men and women from working in jobs other than in factories, in mines or as maids.

However we learn about how he was raised practically by a single parent (even when he had a stepfather- more on this later), how his courageous mother defied apartheid "rules" to take a secretarial course to provide for her family, deifying the "norm" of only Whites having White Collar jobs. He also writes in great detail about how life as a child of mixed race was hard for him.

One early part of the book that I thought was well written was where Mr Noah speaks about how he could never really fit in with any one community due to his mixed race, and how he highlights the disadvantages faced by the black community even after the apartheid ended due to the previous discrimination, poor access to schools etc. **He describes his being born as a mixed-race child to be a crime, hence the title of the book.**

One of the highlights of the book has to be the comedy! This book had me rolling on the floor laughing, Mr Noah practically dedicated a whole chapter of the book to... poop. Yes, in the book there is a rather funny narrative (if you find toilet humour funny) ! These additional added parts of the book made the book incredibly funny!

Now we come to the part of Trevor being thrown out of a moving bus by his mother. **Long story short, they got into a bus where a member of a different tribe started driving very fast and not stopping, and to save Trevor and his brother, his mother threw Trevor out of the bus and then jumped off the bus with his brother and they ran away.** So, for those who were shocked by the line, Trevor's mother

saved him, by well... throwing him out of the bus.

The book isn't all fun and jokes, it did have a serious connotation when later in the book Trevor's Mother marries a man who is abusive, domestically violent and an alcoholic. This story takes a darker turn when his alcoholic Step-Father shoots his mother which results in her nearly dying.

What I think the book teaches us the most is that success doesn't come easy, and it definitely did not come easy for Mr Trevor Noah either, whether he was hustling CDs, making money on the side as a DJ and much more! From highlighting the Apartheid, to showing the hard and tumultuous journey of Mr Noah's childhood, his reconciliation with his father, to Mr Noah even getting arrested, and how Trevor Noah spoke many languages and how that saved his life!

This book is as open as an open book can get! All of us have read about Apartheid, we may have watched a movie or a TV show about it, but this book takes us to the very heart of the system by showing us a real slice of life; tells us just how tough it was to grow up as a second class citizen in one's country, to face discrimination and hatred every single day.

I have got to give credit to Mr Noah for writing a truly entertaining autobiography which is hilarious, which gives an informative background on his upbringing, the apartheid and even the history of South Africa. This has got to be one of the best and funniest autobiographies I have ever read. The 300 odd pages just flew by when I was reading it. Pick this book up, and you will not want to take your eyes off it!

Book Review:

Refugee

-by Abhimanyu Rao, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



'Refugee' carries within its pages a lot of emotions. First, it's a book about being a refugee. There's not one, but 3 stories, of refugees from the most tumultuous times in history, that really opens your eyes to what many people have to live through. Second, it's a gripping book that you will never forget. Third, it's a masterclass in writing and story development. The little nuances of Alan Gratz's writing, as well as the web of connections between the three stories that he has created is what truly makes this book one of the best you will ever read in this genre.

The book starts off with Josef's story. He is a twelve-year-old boy in 1938 Germany. His house is broken into by Nazi Storm Troopers, who take his father away to send him to a concentration camp. **When his father is released, they begin planning an escape from Germany.** From there, we fast-forward to 1994, where we meet Isabel, a young girl who lives in Cuba.

Cuba was then under the rule of the infamous dictator Fidel Castro, who despised the US, and arrested anyone trying to leave Cuba! Isabel's best friend Ivan is building a boat with his father, so that they may escape their prison of a life in their nation, and build a new life in the United States! Finally, we go to Syria in 2015, where Mahmoud is stuck while the world around him is spiraling into a violent civil war, where he has learned to go unnoticed in order to avoid conflict.

The description I have given right now makes it seem like a run-of-the-mill book about refugees, doesn't it? Well, it most certainly isn't, and here's why. Firstly, the style of the book really brings about the best qualities in it. The book alternates between three stories in the most seamless way.

The writing is so impeccable, that you notice the change in stories, but it never throws you off, it just leaves you waiting for the next time you encounter that particular story, and that's the genius of it! These stories from different ages in history, about different protagonists, highlight for us the fact that conflict and hatred cause destruction in every era. The stories bring home to us the fact that human emotions and the human spirit can make one arise out of the toughest of situations.

You start off with 6 pages of Josef's story, then go on to 6 pages of Isabel's, and then onto Mahmoud's. Why is this the perfect way for the book to progress? Well, because each chapter ends with a cliffhanger about that specific character! In a regular book, the next page means the next chapter, which means that your story progresses instantly, and the only time you really ask yourself, "What happens next?", is when you put down the book.

Contrary to that, in this brilliant masterpiece of a book, that

question is resolved 3 chapters later, so you are constantly asking yourself that question. **What's even better is that each of the three stories are going on at separate times, so there are three separate, "What happens next?"** questions that you are trying to answer at any given point in time. When you answer Josef's "What happens next?", there are still the same questions for both Isabel and Mahmoud, and the new one from Josef's latest chapter!

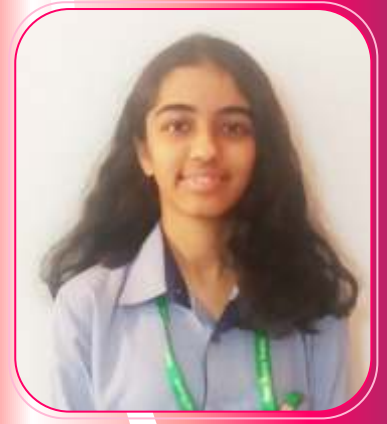
It is due to this, that this book will not leave your hands! For every cliffhanger other books have, this book has three! If that's not enough, each of these stories is exemplary on its own. They are bursting with raw emotion, power, and enough twists and turns to make them a great standalone book, which is another thing that makes this book so special. **Rather than reading three stories that together make up one book, you are reading the equivalent of three books in one!**

The final aspect of this book is the one that makes it stand out the most! It is a symphony of connections between the three stories. You come across characters from one story in another, and it happens in the most unexpected way. **The connections this story has made are nothing short of jaw-droppingly insane, which is what makes this such a fun read! I will just end with one line, the line that will ensure that you read the book. Old sins cast long shadows...**



Movie Review: *Colonia*

-by Naisha Arora, Grade XI, SNS Gurugram



When we read about democracy, democratic erosion, especially the overthrow of democracy and establishment of authoritarian rule, one of the first case studies taught to us is that of General Pinochet in Chile. Any 9th or 10th CBSE student would remember

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studying about this same in their civics course. General Pinochet, the president of Chile from 1973 to 1990 was one of the most renowned defiers of democratic rule. During the 1970's, the population of Chile was politically and ideologically divided into two: those who supported the then president- Salvador Allende and those who supported Pinochet in terms of ideology and for presidency.

During this time, a Nazi colonel named Paul Schaefer had established 'Colonia Dignidad' which translates to the 'Colony of Dignity', an 'anti- Semitic apocalyptic religious sect'. This establishment was used to torture and execute dozens of opposers of Pinochet's regime. It was also a refuge for hunted Nazi supporters at the time.

Paul Schaefer, an ex colonel in Hitler's army was forced to leave Germany when charged with the sexual assault of two minors in an orphanage run by him. He was later investigated and arrested for a number of crimes in Chile. He ran 'Colonia Dignidad' much like a religious dictator- separating males, females and children, exerting excessive control through a variety of punishments.

It is also said to have been a Nazi stronghold protected by the Chilean government. Despite these charges and outrage within human rights advocates, Colonia Dignidad remained open till much later.

The movie 'Colonia', a 2015 historical thriller film directed by Florian Gallenberger, produced by Benjamin Herrmann, written by Torsten Wenzel and Gallenberger is based on true events during these turbulent times in Chile. It is set against the backdrop of the Chilean coup d'état and centres around the experiences of a German stewardess named Lena (played by Emma Watson) along with her

significant other- Daniel (played by Daniel Brühl). Daniel is a photographer and an avid supporter of Salvador Allende- leading protests as well as recruitment drives for the cause. Shortly after Lena arrives in Chile, the area they are staying in is taken over by the aforementioned military coup led by Pinochet who claims the establishment of law and order.



Daniel starts taking pictures and is captured once pointed out by an anonymous source despite claiming to be a German citizen. **We see the brutal treatment of suspected Allende supporters and resisters- they were beaten and even shot to death.** Daniel, being German, was abducted and taken to an underground establishment where he was tortured for information. He was then taken to Colonia Dignidad under guidance of the leader who called himself 'Pious'.

Here he pretended to be a mentally challenged man in order to gather information. **Parallely, Lena attempts to save her boyfriend by going to an office of Amnesty International at which point she realises the extent of suppression and censorship when the handler**

tells her that his office is bugged. The only option she finds to save Daniel is to voluntarily join the cult despite the fact that she has been warned of no escape. Through the couple's experiences, we see the extent of inhumane treatment and emotional manipulation of the community.

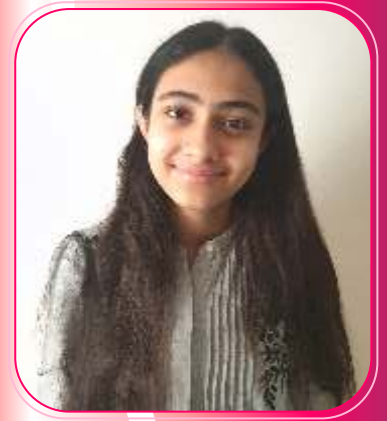
There are even instances of assault, child abuse and mental/emotional torture of the residents. In that regards, we see the cult as destructive and oppressive- supported by Pinochet himself. Although the couple just manages to escape with their lives, through their experiences, we see the extent of Paul Schafer's influence- even within the German Embassy.



Personally, I found the film thrilling and engaging. However, due to the fact that it represented a realistic horror of events, there were numerous scenes of violence, assault and strong language which might not be suitable for a younger audience, under 16.

The crash at Coonoor

-by Mehar Gaba, Grade X, SNS Gurugram



On the 8th of december, a Mil Mi-17V5 helicopter crashed in Tamil Nadu's Coonoor. The flight had in it, the first Chief of defence staff General Bipin Rawat of India and thirteen others, including his wife and staff. Thirteen of the fourteen people in the crash were killed immediately. Group Captain Varun Singh died from his injuries seven days later.

Amongst those in the crash were Chief of defence staff General Bipin Rawat, his wife Madhulika rawat, Brig LS Lidder, Lt Col Harjinder Singh, NK Gursewak Singh, NK Jitendra Kumar, L/NK Vivek Kumar, L/NK B Sai Teja and Hav Satpal along with four more staff members. Brigadier Lidder and Lt Col Singh were senior members of General Rawat's staff. Rawat's death, along with his wife's and eleven other crew members was confirmed by the Indian Air Force (IAF).

The cause given for the crash was given as turbulent weather conditions and fog. The exact conditions however are not known. The crash took place at about 12:10p.m. local time.

General Bipin Rawat was the first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of India. He served as the CDS from January 2020 up until his death this month. Prior to being appointed as the CDS of India he served as the 26th Chief of the Army Staff. He is survived by his two daughters.

Lt Col Harjinder Singh belonged to 11 Gorkha Rifles, the same regiment that General Rawat belonged to. He had served in various operations with his battalion including a tenure in the United Nations Peacekeeping missions and deployment on the Siachen Glacier.

Brigadier LS Lidder was the defence assistant to the CDS. He was from Panchkula and was a second generation officer with an impressive career record. He is survived by his wife and sixteen-year-old daughter, Ashana.

Group Captain Varun Singh was commissioned as a fighter pilot in 2004. He died at the Air Force's Command Hospital in Bengaluru on Wednesday, a week after he was seriously injured in the helicopter crash.

The helicopter had taken off from the Tamil Nadu's Sulur base in Coimbatore and crashed just about a 10 kms away from where it was supposed to land in Wellington in the Defence Services College (DSSC).

The helicopter used was an IAF Mi-17V5. This particular helicopter has a history of crashes in India. The Mi-17V5 is a modern

transport helicopter used by the Indian Air Force. Manufactured by Russia's Kazan Helicopters, the chopper has a range of 1,065 km and can carry a maximum load of thirteen thousand kilograms.

The remains of Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat and his wife Madhulika Rawat arrived at his residence in the capital on Friday, where top officials paid their last respects. Out of the thirteen bodies, only three bodies were identified- General Bipin Rawat, his wife and Brigadier LS Lidder.

The bodies of all those in the crash were brought to an army base in Delhi on the 9th of December, Thursday, where each of them were given proper military last rites.

The Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat and his wife Madhulika Rawat were cremated with full military honors and a 17-gun salute at the Brar Square crematorium. The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to the victims late Thursday on the ninth of December.



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