

## Cis-tems: Affecting Us on Systemic Levels as a Spider Web of Networks

- Anuj Kanojia, SYBA

As said, liberty is a synonym for freedom that can be reflected in representation within different aspects of society. But are we truly free? While talking about the true construct of liberty, what is freedom really? How is it affecting us on systemic levels by not just one but a spider web of many systems?

As we know, "Intersectionality" is a theoretical framework that highlights the ways in which multiple intersecting social categories (e.g., race, gender, ability) and corresponding interlocking systems of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, etc.) affect people's lived experiences (where I talked about a spider-web of systems previously). Hence, experiences of gender-based violence are shaped by the intersection of various aspects of identity. In the Indian context and its relevance today, there's queer community, family trauma, and also how most people don't even have resources to recognise or rehabilitate trauma. Psychological help is very difficult to access even for the middle classes and quite inefficient too.

It is said that mental health is a new wave of pandemic as suddenly there's a huge emergence of therapists, mental health professionals and

this is the topic which everyone is talking about. Somehow the capitalistic society is turning it into a business and yet, they don't want to spread awareness about mental health. Also, there's a lot of political indoctrination in the youth. Colleges are forced to change syllabus and remove very important "unconstitutional" stuff which is indeed needed for application purposes in our life and life skill sets. The culture of everyone to turn out like-minded or just to be an 'another brick in the wall' shows that it is not celebrating diversity which is ironic as India is a multicultural society.

Women and queer people, people of different caste and religions don't feel safe. The only people supposedly safe and benefiting from the system (or as I put it, cis-tem) are cis upper caste men. The rest are always somehow marginalized. One of the byproducts of living in a capitalistic society which caught my attention is that it can be the commodification of our interpersonal relationships and how it has affected us. Indeed, existing inside a system that expects us to truncate and water down our fullness in order to become more efficient at generating profits can translate into us treating one another like a means to a profitable end.



I don't think so that I can ever answer what liberty truly means but what I can say is we as human beings, a mere part of society do not exist in vacuums. Being human together is inherently messy, sometimes inefficient, and often with no purpose other than sharing the experience of being alive alongside someone else. The least we can do to utilize the superpower of language as the 'most intelligent creatures on earth' is to monitor and reflect how our codes of conduct and exchange of information through interpersonal relationships can have an influence on others as human beings are social animals. I hope we are not here to just 'survive' and 'reproduce' but to also witness a holistic change in the system.

## Liberty: A Concept

- Khushi Kapadia, FYBA

What is liberty really, the backbone to the concept of freedom of speech and freedom of action. It is also said that, and I quote "People demand freedom of speech as a compensation for the freedom of thought which they seldom use." Everyone's representation of liberty varies a lot. Negative, positive, good, bad, who knows? It's all subjective. Does everyone deserve liberty and the right to represent? In the past and in the present, havoc and chaos has been created by negative liberalism but for that should we snatch the right from the people who are using it for a good cause? Frankly I think people are afraid of liberty because liberty is the weapon but still people will have to fight the war, and no one likes change.

Thomas Jefferson once said, "We are not to expect to be translated from despotism to liberty in a featherbed." Using liberty as your weapon

requires courage and I bow to it. A connection has been made with liberalism and rebellious nature, which is not entirely true, but the misuse of liberalism can be directly connected to rebellion. But can't rebellion be constructive? I know it contradicts my previous statement, but everything is contradictory in this grey world of ours. People have represented their anger and frustrations in a million ways by burning and breaking authority properties, thinking that by doing this they are conveying their message but are they really? What is the correct method of representation? Proposals represented calmly or a raging protest? We have been taught that representation is everything, even if you are on the right side but if you don't represent your case appropriately you will lose. For example, there are two lawyers, one right the other wrong. The judge wants to rule in favour of the right side but the lawyer didn't make

compelling arguments, the wrong side won. Appropriate representation is very crucial.

If one looks at liberty from a philosophical point of view, liberty means being free from any superior power and is it necessarily a good thing? Politically if you practice liberalism, you are not under any law or administration and that gives you a different kind of freedom and also opens you to endangerment from which the law won't be able to protect you. Would you want that?

Everything is confusing and puzzling but that is why it is so beautiful. It forces you to ignite the intellectual side of your mind and makes you think beyond the rules because thoughts have no bounds and neither does liberty have any boundaries. All humans have ever wanted is freedom from the shackles of life.

## Subtle Reasonable Restriction

- Gargi Salvi, FYBA

To be completely free, or to do something of your own is free will, but if you cannot avoid acting in a particular way, then your action is not free. While it is generally understood that human beings could think and act freely as rational and moral agents, the common causal laws by which all human activities and responses are governed are unquestionable. It is this conflict that provides the real problem of how we are free.

In its purest form, freedom is having the largest amount of potential experience and having an even greater amount of mental mobility to be able to choose those experiences. The extent of our freedom depends upon how knowing and intentional our life choices are. Depending upon our choice making ability and awareness of the

given options, although not always a best decision cause we as humans are always influenced by individual history and our living environment. The philosopher who provided the main theoretical foundations for modern liberalism – John Stuart Mill – famously argued that liberty, is the mark of a civilized society that seeks to curtail the options available to people. He stated that "Actions are right in the proportion they tend to promote happiness and wrong when they reverse happiness".

However, human beings are so in constant cycle of socialization that all the agents that help one socialize constantly influence the person's original ideas and thoughts. Even the person with a most individualistic approach and a deflective character

is a result of constructive input of values and norms of others.

It seems to be quite clear now that we do not possess free will in any dual sense. All that we are left with is independent mental state with physical in control of external forces and, also these external forces somehow still controlling the mind in some way. Thus, freedom exists rather only in some certain limitations and only in sense that a person continuously chooses from the given available in its response, being aware of the daily changing needs ranging from simple evolutionary ones to the more and more complex. Hence, to conclude, the freedom worth wanting appears to be 'Autonomy' of course with some restrictions.

## Deprivation of Liberty

- Khooshie Sinha, FYBA



According to the preamble, the Constitution of India secures to all its citizens the liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. The concept of liberty has frequently been personified, symbolizing the way to freedom. Nonetheless, the most agile and jubilant group of people- children, remain deprived of this rudimentary principle. This article aims to highlight health concerns for children resulting from deprivation of liberty, under the principles of equivalence and continuity of care, human rights and international treaties. It also identifies policy actions and recommendations for children deprived from this very fundamental right.

Among the broad spectrum of population groups living under circumstances detrimental to their health, it is difficult to imagine a more vulnerable group than children deprived of liberty. The circumstances in which they find themselves are often extremely disadvantageous to short and long-term health development- not only during the period of deprivation of liberty, but also preceding and following it.

Deprivation of liberty is commonly defined as the confinement of human beings to a narrowly bound location that they cannot leave by free will. Firstly, this general situation applies to most children, as caregivers will limit their children's freedom of movement to protect them against dangers or for other reasons. Next, the Global Study limits its scope to deprivation of liberty for which the state bears direct or indirect responsibility through, for instance, state-run institutions and state-licensed private institutions. This study of population is further categorized into subgroups that differentiate between primary situations of deprivation of liberty currently faced by children. Furthermore, an ecological framework highlighting the interplay between individual, interpersonal, community related and societal factors is helpful

in promoting understanding of the complexity behind health development in children deprived of liberty.

A life-course approach enables consideration of how the levels of the ecological framework manifest in the times before, during and after deprivation of liberty and how these stages interact in relation to exposures, vulnerabilities, and health development from birth to death. These stages and several health-impacting factors can be situated in the framework. The early childhood period is considered the most important phase of development throughout the life-course. Forty-three per cent of children aged younger than five years in low-income and middle-income countries grow up in an environment that will hinder them from developing their full potential. Deficits in the powerful combination of five central factors – adequate nutrition, security and safety, responsive caregiving, early learning, and access to health services – will have long-lasting impacts on children and contribute to increased vulnerability to adverse experiences. These broader social determinants of health may interact with specific types of adverse experiences, such as abuse, neglect and childhood household dysfunction, or traumatic experiences related to wars and conflicts, including war injuries, loss of support system and family, and exposure to violence and torture. While recognizing that early-life factors may modify the health impact of deprivation of liberty, it is important to acknowledge that deprivation of liberty is such a severe stressor that negative health impacts will be unavoidable for the great majority. While a strong focus on early-life factors is warranted, the period of adolescence should also be acknowledged as being significant, not least because of its great importance for brain development and mental health. Furthermore, premature health conditions will also affect and, in many cases, exacerbate the negative health effects of adversities experienced while deprived of liberty.

Several factors contribute to the health effects of deprivation of liberty. Pre-existing concerns are either general to a great majority of children deprived of liberty or specific to those in different settings of liberty deprivation. Type of deprivation of liberty will interact with duration and age at liberty deprivation: a longer

cumulative duration is associated with worse health outcomes, and age-specific needs will also determine the short-term and long-term effects of deprivation of liberty. Most importantly, lack of nutritious food, sanitation, education or health care combined with limited physical activity, exposure to severe physical or emotional neglect, and high risk for substance misuse and exposure to physical and psychological violence will constitute an extremely disadvantageous environment for child health development. Shedding more light on this situation is an important task for the future.

To attain eradication of children deprived of liberty as a universal goal, measures need to be taken at every single level- individual, societal, parental, governmental, non – governmental and global. Promoting health in a setting of structural violence is in many ways deeply contradictory, which reinforces the need for immediate government action to abolish deprivation of liberty in children as the top priority. This will not happen overnight. In the interim, measures need to be put in place to protect the rights of children deprived of liberty and ensure they have access to the highest attainable standard of health. In addition to that, provisions of food, shelter, sanitation facilities, health-care services and protection against violence are required. Children deprived of liberty spend their formative years in highly unfavorable circumstances. During this time, social determinants of health must be promoted within the institutions. Schooling and other educational services are central in this regard. In fact, there is every reason to go even further: states need to better respect and protect the rights of children, not only by drastically reducing the number of children deprived of liberty, but also by working towards complete abolition of institutions depriving children of liberty.

This aim can be achieved by preventive measures that minimize the risk of children getting into situations leading to deprivation of liberty and through active means of diversion. This Global Study urges countries to invest more resources in supporting families in their role as primary caregivers for children and simultaneously take a systemic approach to strengthening child justice and child welfare systems. All in all, just like a plant needs light and space to grow, a child needs love and liberty to unfold.

## Liberty and Representation

- Khushi Kapadia, FYBA

Liberty in the modern world is understood in a broader sense than before. The modes and ways of representation have also increased. But everyone must agree that the path to liberty and its representation has not been facile for women. The first fight for women's liberty was when the first wave of feminism took place around the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Now, in the twenty-first century, we are in the third wave of feminism and social media is giving rise to the fourth wave of feminism. But the representation of women on social media is two faced. Of course, we cannot ignore the positive side, nor the negative. The representation of women in society especially through mass media has been the most delusional act ever done on the grounds of human existence. Social media has given the liberty to every female on the earth to represent their political, personal, philosophical, or social point of view. Social media has been playing the role of a splendid platform and given voice to all the silenced women. There are campaigns being

launched on social media platforms by influential and respected women to encourage others to speak up and express and represent their perspectives. As feared, social media is a boon and as well as a bane. Conservative men shower their hatred on these positive efforts of enhancing the representation for the questions of women's right to liberty or freedom on the same social media platform.

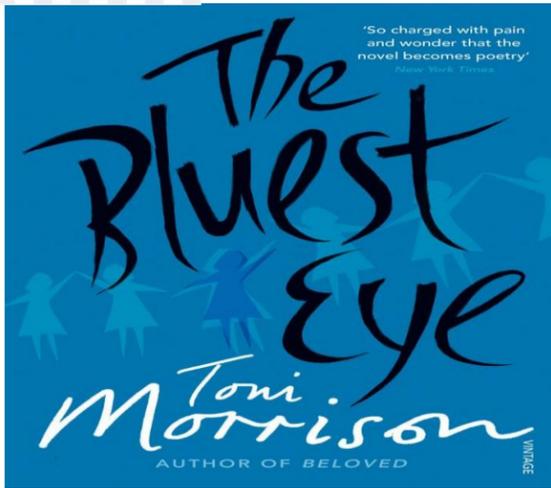


The idea of liberty for women started from their fight for the right to vote. However, though women vote now, their struggle for liberty and representation is still ongoing. Society should be a haven for women, giving them the liberty to be their true selves but is society truly so? Freedom is the right of every person then why are women deprived of it? Right to representation is a genuine ask then why are women denied the same? These questions must be answered. The whole discussion about liberty and representation is an unending one, there is so much to be said and done. Laws and regulations should be made and revised at regular intervals of time to avoid the unjust environment, which is a world deprived of liberty and representation. We need more advocates and volunteers to promote liberty and constructive representation. Its high time for society to 'become more accommodating, open, supportive, and reasonable. Lastly, considering human nature, the quantum of liberty and representation given is never going to be enough, we will always crave for more!



## Beauty and The Beast

- PRATISHA MISHRA, SYBA



Before closing the book on that town and those people, the author has us pause for a few final images and thoughts framed by regret, shame, and horror. The book? Toni Morrison's debut novel *The Bluest Eye* which turns fifty this year. As the story ends, one of its protagonists, the blighted Pecola Breedlove, has been abandoned by the townspeople, who have treated her with scorn for most of her life; now she's left to wander the streets in madness.

Like all the principal characters in *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola lives in Lorain, Ohio, where Morrison, who died last August, was born in 1931. When we meet Pecola, she is eleven years old but already ancient with sorrow. Her only escape from the emotional abuse that her family and her classmates heap on her is to dream. And the dream is this: that someone—God, perhaps—will grant her the gift of blue eyes. The kind of blue eyes Pecola has seen in pictures of the movie star Shirley Temple. The kind of

blue eyes that she imagines lighting up the face of the girl on the wrapper of her favorite candies, Mary Janes. Pecola feels, or the world has made her feel, that if she had blue eyes she would, at last, be free—free from her unforgivable blackness, from what her community labelled ugliness long before she could look in a mirror and determine for herself who and what she was. She knows what she'd find there: judgment of her blackness, her femaleness, the deforming language that has distorted the reflection of her face. Eventually, Pecola does acquire, or believes she acquires blue eyes. But in those harrowing final images, Claudia MacTeer, Morrison's spirited nine-year-old narrator, sees what Pecola cannot, what her madness, the result of all that rejection, looks like to the rest of the town: "Grown people looked away; children, those who were not frightened by her, laughed outright." Despite all this looking, few people, aside from Claudia, bear witness to much. To do so would be to think critically about the society that formed them and be moved to effect change. Instead, there's a great deal of condemnation and parochial disapproval. And it's mostly aimed at black women—especially those mothers who don't keep their home or their children clean. Cleanliness, of course, is next to godliness, and who would want to commit the double sin of being black and dirty? Pecola's very presence exacerbates some of the other characters' not so buried feelings about their own race and poverty—liabilities that push these Ohioans apart, rather than unite them: no one wants to be confronted with her own despair, especially

when it's reflected in the eyes of another despairing person. And the truth is, by the time we leave Pecola, pecking at the waste on the margins of the world, we, too, may feel a measure of relief at no longer having to see what Morrison sees, her profound and unrelenting vision of what life can do to the forsaken. Morrison the modernist dispenses with narrative suspense and focusses our attention on character, on how the stories we tell about and to one another often are the story. We first meet Claudia and Frieda when a white neighbor taunts them, and we are shown that whiteness has no erotic pull for Claudia; she has no interest in being defiled or overtaken by it. Given white dolls for Christmas, she destroys them. But, she says, "The dismemberment of the dolls was not the true horror. The truly horrifying thing was the transference of the same impulses to little white girls. The indifference with which I could have axed them was shaken only by my desire to do so." Claudia has already learned to hate; she knows that the world doesn't admire and validate her the way it does white girls, and she compensates for her vulnerability by fighting for attention and respect.

According to Morrison, you need serious and seriously good work to inspire the discourse on race. For me *The Bluest Eye* and *The Black Book* works of the highest quality, were tangible and galvanizing evidence that to be an artist meant arming yourself with the truth—about where you came from and where you hope to go—and that hypocrisy was the enemy of art. Morrison showed me what was possible.

## CALIBRE CORNER

- Aryan Yadav, TYBA



**Q.** Tell us about yourself.

**A.** I am Zia Mirza, a second-year student of the Bachelor of Arts program at S.K Somaiya College of Arts Science and Commerce. I'm hoping to major in psychology next year.

**Q.** How did you get started with volunteering work?

**A.** In my first year of college, we were introduced to NSS, and I enrolled myself for the same. When I joined NSS, I got various opportunities and one such was with NGO Aksara. My NSS leader advised us about this organization and as I got to know more about them and their work, I got more and more interested. This led to me joining the NGO last year as a peer guide.

**Q.** Which organizations are you currently volunteering for, and could you tell us a bit about them?

**A.** Currently I'm volunteering with the NGO Aksara center which has a 'Youth for Change' program of which I'm a part. The goal of this initiative is to empower women and work

towards solving common societal problems. The NGO is linked with over twenty-five colleges in Mumbai, and it provides a platform for students to lead in bringing about deemed changes in our society.

**Q.** What was your experience in volunteering and what skills have you acquired doing it?

**A.** I started my volunteering work while the world was still dealing with covid crisis, so my initial work involved online interactions. The online aspects of that taught me many things with increased emphasis on patience. This work has also changed me in many ways, and all positive. This helped me to develop a positive attitude and enhanced my decision making and time management skills. Everyday seems like a new day waiting to teach me something and allowing me to bring about the change and be the change itself.

**Q.** How does it feel being a representative of our college on such platforms?

**A.** It obviously feels good! When you're invited to different colleges and organizations and their events, it always feels nice to be the one representing our college at those platforms. Along with this, I also understand the added responsibility on me to be a good representative and project our college in the German fundraisers and other dignitaries in an event.

**Q.** How do you manage college along with your extra co-curricular activities?

**A.** Sometimes, it is easy but at times it becomes very difficult. In these organisations I have a very active role that sometimes does get a bit hectic. The one thing that helps with this is consistency and patience. Being patient and trying to be as calm as I can so that I can work out those things in

a better manner.

**Q.** Other than academics, what other activities do you partake in?

**A.** I've been an NSS volunteer member for two years. This year I'm also the HOD of the logistics and hospitality department. I'm also connected to an NGO called 'Aksara' wherein I'm a peer guide and our college ambassador to that organization. I also am keenly interested in horseback riding and Taekwondo, spending time with animals and gardening.

**Q.** What inspires you to do all that you are doing?

**A.** My greatest inspiration has always been my parents. Both have been there for me always and have always encouraged me. As I come from a rural background and in our neighborhood, no one was sent far away for higher education especially not girls. My parents went against the norms and supported me in pursuing higher education at these institutions. This step of theirs, in supporting me has been an inspiration for me that leads me to in turn volunteer and support various other causes. Seeing the holistic change in myself and with the work I am doing, there's now a change in the attitudes of those people who once were against me going to study in a college in Mumbai. Looking at that change somewhat makes me happy.

**Q.** Anything else you'd like to say to the readers?

**A.** Well, I'd say to them, be yourself. Being yourself and allowing yourself to be an honest representation is a service to oneself. I'd also like everyone to try to learn from others' mistakes and to try to learn something new every day. If we want to bring about change, we must be ready to accept the challenges.

## Crimson

-Anuj Kanojia, SYBA

A midsummer Arcadia with bursts of emotions  
Inspired by impermanence and mere existing of things

I'll keep my eyes buried within my heart until I  
seek a true soul connection I'm not wrong for  
though  
Perhaps you should understand me a bit more

A deep rooted enigma,  
Mirrors - deep love and fragmented  
memories hold  
In integrity and despair  
Manifesting itself into light Not caged but  
For the pleasure of being able to see

Yet in its abode, escaped away from the  
farfetched reality of illusions  
A graven innocence is still crystallized in the  
magic of 'hopes' and 'dreams.'

I remember someone telling me that I don't  
need to be buried

I need to be extracted and held in as the most  
delicate wallflower In turquoise and blue

## Home Abode

-Nandana Pillai, SYBA

My home has flaws, a lot of them, stretch marks  
and curves, at every end, just like the five fingers,  
two bodies are never the same, and I take pride, in  
the deformity of my heaven.

my life has a lot more to it, than to look like  
"them". and I sure will keep working, on my  
heavenly abode, but would not hate it, for it's  
flaws, forms and defects.

## Perplexia

-Anuj Kanojia, SYBA

A butterfly's teardrop turns into an amber of gold  
Buried with history of it's own  
The soliel shines bright in red Not the red of anger  
but the red of innocence

A beautiful lyre now sings its tune 'Lay with me  
till my memories grow out wings  
And soar with the wind without sorrow;  
As mist on the greens

As dandelions that fly high'  
The lyre is now at rest, Like emotions behind  
paintings.

Only to seek out a new home, Laid in freedom  
and choice

For the future is set  
...Finally one with the ocean combined It  
whispers, 'May your heart always remain the sea'

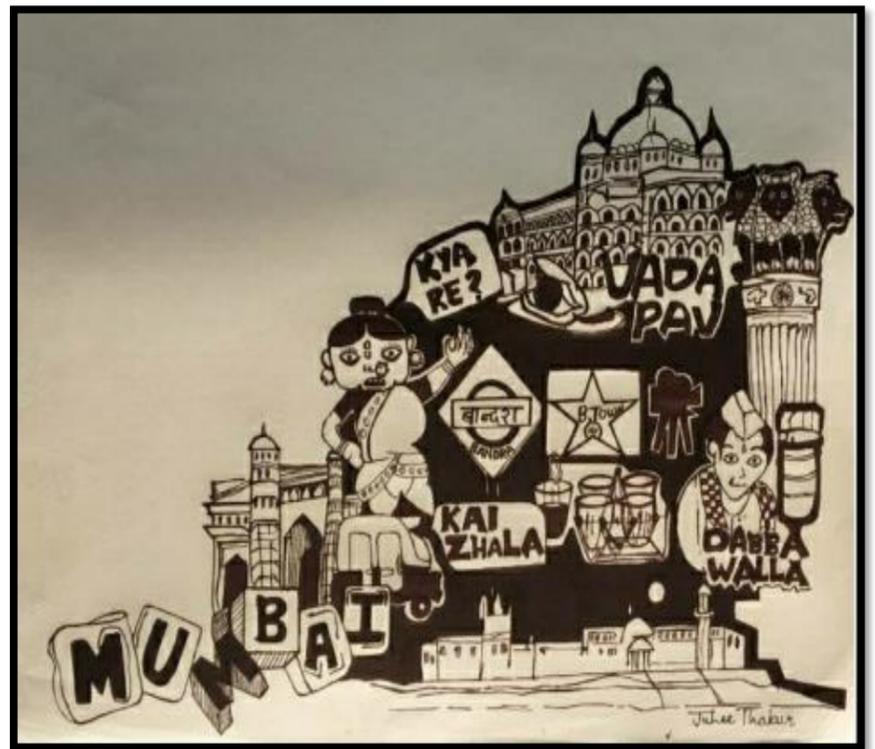
## Drowning

-Nandana Pillai, SYBA

No one talks about the bravery it takes, to let  
things end.  
Everyone voices about playing with snakes,  
And letting them bite you, But what about cutting  
your hands off, Before the venom takes your life  
away?  
When the bridge I walked on,  
caught fire,  
I chose to jump into the water,  
Staying with you, was death by fire, Painful and  
blazing,  
So I chose to leave and die by drowning,  
I'm still dying, But it's not as painful.



Khooshie Sinha, FYBA



Juhee Thakur, FYBA



Juhee Thakur, FYBA



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