



NOVEMBER 2023

# UJALA

BY MOJZA

A **WARRIOR'S**  
TALE

A DELUGE OF  
ABUSE

PAKISTAN CLOSE  
TO **DOOM**

HOW TO IMPROVE  
YOUR GRADE IN A  
**WEAK SUBJECT** IN  
LESS THAN A YEAR

**2<sup>nd</sup>**  
Edition

**Palestine**  
75 YEARS SINCE THE NAKBA

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# About Us

## About Ujala

Mojza presents Ujala!

A magazine for students covering a wide range of content.

The word "ujala" means "light", aligning with our aim of bringing students 'into the light' by showcasing the talents and abilities of students and spreading knowledge.

## About Mojza

Mojza is a student-led nonprofit organisation providing resources to students and empowering them towards success.

Visit our website for more information and free resources for O levels, IGCSE and A levels.

# Editor's Notes



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Hello Ujala Readers, I'm Fasiha Raza.

It brings me joy to witness the continuous growth of Mojza and Ujala. This initiative not only supports students to excel academically but also provides a platform for showcasing talents that often go unnoticed. I'm honored to be part of Mojza. I believe that Ujala, Mojza's magazine, perfectly embodies the well-known quote:

*"Medicine, law, business, engineering — these are all noble pursuits, and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love — these are what we stay alive for."*

Continuing in the same spirit of Founder Mojza to empower students, we proudly present to you the second edition of Ujala! Our heartfelt gratitude extends to each and every individual who contributed to the magazine and shared their stories, passions, ideas, and expertise to enrich the tapestry of Ujala. And to the readers, who are the heartbeat of Ujala, it is your voices—diverse and resounding—that have collectively enabled Ujala to reach the milestone of publishing its second edition. Here's to many more editions and continuing to evolve into something greater!

# ARTICLES



## Cultural Competence in Education

**How to Improve Your Grade in a Weak Subject in Less Than a Year**

**The Heart of the Matter: The Latest Advances in Cardiology**

**The Age When We Realize**

**Mindset Matters: The Key to Self-Development**

**Netflix's One Piece: An End to the Curse of Live-Action Adaptation**





# Cultural Competence in Education

by Nashrah Majid

The value of teaching students to understand and respect other cultures is increasing in importance in today's increasingly interconnected globe. More kids, from more ethnic backgrounds than ever before, are learning and growing together in today's schools. Educators who value cultural competency create more welcoming and productive classrooms for all students. This article will explain the importance of cultural competency in the classroom and offer suggestions on how teachers might encourage students to develop this skill.

## Understanding Cultural Competence

Cultural competence refers to the ability to effectively interact and communicate with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It involves not only recognizing and respecting diverse cultures, but also having the skills to engage in meaningful cross-cultural interactions. In education, cultural competence goes beyond tolerance; it promotes inclusivity, equity, and a sense of belonging for all students.

## To What Extent Does Cultural Competence Really Count?

**Enhanced Learning:** Students benefit from a more welcoming and accepting classroom climate fostered by teachers who demonstrate cultural competence. Students are more invested in their education when they can relate to the material and the methods used to teach it.

**Improved Communication:** The core of any successful educator is effective communication. Educators who demonstrate cultural competence are better able to reach students of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

**Reduced Stereotyping:** Instead of making assumptions about their students based on their cultural backgrounds, teachers with cultural competency see each child as a distinct individual with their own set of skills and weaknesses.

**Global Citizenship:** Students in today's more interconnected world will benefit greatly from the development of their cultural competency in order to work effectively with people from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds in their future employment.

## Practical Strategies For Developing Intercultural Fluency

**Professional Development:** Workshops and training for educators on cultural competence should be a part of schools' continuous professional development programs. As a result, educators will be able to enhance their knowledge and expertise throughout time.

### Inclusive Curriculum

Make sure there is a wide variety of cultural perspectives reflected in the lessons. Include works of literature, history, and art from a wide range of cultures to help students see themselves mirrored in their academic pursuits.

### Diverse Resources

Books, posters, and media that highlight multiple cultures should be among the classroom's many resources. These materials can be used as discussion starters to foster mutual appreciation across cultures.

### Open Dialogue

Foster conversations on culture that are both open and civil in the classroom. Make sure students feel comfortable talking about their backgrounds and asking questions.

### Cultural Awareness Activities

Students can benefit from cultural awareness events like culture fairs, international days, and speakers from a variety of backgrounds talking to their class. The viewpoints and interests of pupils can be widened through these exercises.

### Individualised Support

Think about how pupils from different cultural backgrounds may have different requirements. To ensure the success of every student, you should offer whatever assistance and materials are required.

### Collaborative Learning

Get kids from all walks of life working together on group projects. Cooperative education programs encourage students to work together and broaden their understanding of other people's points of view.

Being culturally competent is not a destination, rather a way of being. It's essential in education to make the learning environment welcoming to all students. Educators who value cultural competency are equipping their pupils not only for the future, but also for making it more inclusive and egalitarian. It's a gateway to a more peaceful and prosperous future for the world's many civilizations. Let's make a pact as teachers to improve students' ability to interact respectfully and productively across cultural lines.



# HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR GRADE IN A WEAK SUBJECT IN LESS THAN A YEAR

by Khadija Hashmat

Are you dealing with a subject that seems determined to defeat you? Well, look no further! This article unveils all the tips and tricks you need to conquer your weaknesses and master your concepts!



## IDENTIFY YOUR WEAKNESSES:

It is important to identify your weaknesses as it is very unlikely you are struggling with the entire syllabus. Go through the syllabus, and review your books and notes to locate the chapters you find difficult to grasp. Furthermore, examine your past assessments and highlight the mistakes you have made. This will help you spot the chapters you need to give more attention and time to. Make an organised list of the topics and concepts you're struggling with.



## SET ATTAINABLE TARGETS FOR YOURSELF:

Before you start preparing, make sure that you are following the updated syllabus for your year, so you do not miss covering any content point and avoid wasting time on topics that have been omitted. Create a timetable for the month, allocating a set amount of time daily to practise that subject. Remember, consistency and discipline is key! Divide the contents of your previously curated list throughout the timetable, so it is manageable and easy for you to tackle. It is crucial for you to give yourself breaks to prevent overburdening yourself as that may lead to burnout and loss of motivation.





## EXPLORE YOUR RESOURCES:

After you have sorted out your timetable, start covering the syllabus from your book and pre-existing notes. Search up the topic you find difficult to grasp on YouTube and watch explanation videos till you have a better understanding of it. Ask for help from a friend or teacher. Engaging in a two-sided conversation can help you discuss your queries and doubts. As you work through the syllabus, make notes of the content that you are learning, so it can be reviewed later for help and revision.



## REVISION IS ESSENTIAL:

The significance of revision cannot be overstated. It is vital for you to revise the content you are learning as you go. If you neglect any topic or concept for too long, it is probable that you will start to forget it. To reinforce everything you're learning, it is important that you revisit your notes and re-read them to fully absorb the concepts.

Have faith in yourself and do not give up on your academic goals. Anything is possible if you put your mind to it! Goodluck!



## SELF-EVALUATION:

Once you have gone through the syllabus and have completed your list, move on to topicals. Topicals are compiled past paper questions arranged topic-wise; therefore, they can be used to practise questions from individual topics. Note down the questions you're unable to solve and consult the marking scheme, online videos and assistance to understand why you got them wrong. After you have solved questions of all the topics on the list, revisit the questions you failed to solve and attempt them again. Complete the topical for the rest of the chapters. When you're confident in your preparation, move to yearly past papers as they target all the topics and show you where you stand with your preparation.



# The Heart of the Matter:

by Kanwal Kumari

## The Latest Advances in Cardiology

### Lub dub! Lub dub!

As weird as it might sound, unknowingly, it is the most significant thing your body is familiar with: the sound of the heart. Before we dive into the never-ending world of complexities of the human body, let's go over what even is Cardiology? Why do we have to pay heed to it? Cutting to the chase, cardiology, the study of the heart and its diseases, continues to witness breakthroughs and intriguing findings. This article explores the realm of cardiology, focusing on Ventricular Assist Devices (VADs), general terms in cardiology, recent innovative inventions, fascinating theories, and fun facts that shed light on the captivating world of the heart.

Unfortunately, in ancient times, when the human body wasn't perceived as complex or well-understood, heart failure was one of the common reasons for death. But thanks to the ever-evolving world, VADs (Ventricular Assist Devices) came to the rescue. These mechanical pumps are implanted to assist weakened hearts in pumping blood efficiently. They sustain patients awaiting heart transplants or even serve as long-term treatment options. Recent advancements in VAD technology have resulted in smaller and more durable devices, improving patient comfort and supporting extended survival rates globally.

Trust me when I say that cardio is a branch with one of the most riveting and mind-boggling devices; hence, it continues to benefit from these commendable inventions. Latest innovations in cardiac care include bioresorbable stents that dissolve after serving their purpose, reducing the risk of long-term complications and promoting vessel healing. Thinking about it, it is crazy how technology can help us make something which just disappears after doing its job! Flabbergasted, right? Additionally, groundbreaking procedures like transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) enable valve replacement without conventional surgery, minimising recovery time and invasiveness. Yes, it does prevent you from visiting the surgeon!



Not only this, cardiological research has also lead to captivating theories. Take the concept of the "heart-brain connection". It suggests that the heart communicates with and influences the brain in ways beyond its physical function. (So our heart and brain really do talk). Studies show that heart health can affect cognitive abilities, emotions, and overall well-being. The field of psychocardiology explores this intricate relationship, uncovering intriguing connections within the human body!

To top it off with maybe your favourite thing to be told by the end of this article, studies show that owning a pet can reduce the risk of heart disease and lower blood pressure. So you are more than encouraged to have pets! Better and cuter if dogs :)



# THE AGE WHEN WE REALIZE...

by Hafsa Asif

There is a time period in every persons life where they realize that they are no more too childish or too mature... do you ever just get tired and overwhelmed and think where life got you?. There comes a stage in life where some people get mature enough to take on responsibilities, and very few lucky ones still get to enjoy the few years left till adulthood.

Furthermore, individuals face different kinds of difficulties and responsibilities which they are expected to adapt to in no time. Somehow, college is no more fun, teachers make us realize how we should be mature after that one summer break, parents have high expectations. All of a sudden, we need to choose our careers, we need to run in a race with our heart and brain. When all these obligations are on us, we tend to forget about ourselves. We start getting out of shape, get dark circles, lose hair, and get insecure. It becomes difficult to keep your physical and mental health intact.





Rewinding back, we never cared about who would judge us or if there is a thing called insecurity. All of a sudden, we have to count hours, minutes and seconds of our day because all the things that didn't matter then, do matter now. We have to earn money, take care of our parents, set reachable goals; we have to take responsibility... It's too much to handle. It is devastating that a single year can change so much just because we get a year older. I wish things were a little bit easier. I wish becoming something professional was as easy as we thought when we were kids. I wish getting a job was easy. I wish studying was as easy. I wish winning the race with ourselves was easy.

However, when life has it extremely hard on us, we should be easy on ourselves. We should love ourselves, take care when we can, feel proud of those little achievements, and award ourselves. Why wait for a perfect day,, a perfect opportunity? Enjoy your own company because in this world, no one will come to rescue us, no one will appreciate us, care or be happy for us.

Life is a test. When life burdens you with hardships, just take it... Fight, and be strong. It cannot be something you cannot handle. You are capable of everything and anything. I would like to conclude with a statement that no matter how hard it gets, you can face it, you can do it, and no one else could do it better than you!



# MINDSET MATTERS

## The Key to Self-Development

by Muneeb Ahmad Khan

Self-development. What does it mean? Self-development is a lifelong journey of developing one's own skills to achieve success in life. Changing our mindset for the better is a task we must engage ourselves in on the road to self-development. In this article, we will embark on a journey to explore what qualities we may adopt that can change our mindset for the better. Here we go.

### 1. Forgiveness

We all have the capacity to hurt, upset and insult each other, but we also have the capacity to forgive, something we tend to forget at times. The act of forgiveness is often misunderstood by a lot of people. Forgiveness is not an act we do for others; it's an act we do for ourselves. We should also bear in mind to be kind and forgiving to ourselves when others are not. After all, none of us is perfect. By forgiving others and ourselves, we let go of our past and start to look ahead. This simple gesture brings us a sense of stability in our lives which would have been unknown to us before.

### 2. Gratitude

As humans, we are hardwired to long for things which we do not or cannot have, but we should always strive to be thankful for everything we have and not be ungrateful. A lot of times, things don't go our way, and we end up doubting God and overthinking our decisions, but showing gratitude reminds us that our results are always meant for our betterment. On top of that, we should always remember to be grateful for our friends and family who show support to us whenever needed. Keeping this in mind is important for our mental and emotional well-being and plays a huge part in our self-development.



### 3. Taking Risks

This may seem like a daunting task, but it is actually a very important and positive one since it results in a person building self-confidence and learning more about himself. Taking risks truly means to explore new endeavors without caring if we succeed or fail because we learn either ways. We get valuable experience if we fail and gain vital skills if we triumph. At any rate, it is a win-win situation, and one which shapes us as a self-assured person. This can pave the way for leading a successful and happy life without any regrets.

### 4. No Regrets

I believe that everyone should live a life without having regrets. For this to happen, it is essential that we all realize that our time on earth is limited, and so we should live our life to the fullest. As humans, we are all imperfect and make countless mistakes and decisions that come back to haunt us, but we must never dwell on them for long, and instead, should learn from them. Regretting them only makes our life miserable and unhappy. That is why we should never ruminate on them for long if we wish to have peace in our lives and should master the act of letting go.

### 5. Confronting Our Fears

One of the main reasons why people never reach their full potential is because they are held back by their fears. They never take the required leap of faith to overcome their fears, rather they succumb to it and let it become their limitations. It is of utmost significance to face our fears, for the failure to deal with them can result in never growing and developing. Although confronting our fears can be a daunting prospect and one can be left embarrassed and alone, it is an imperative process through which a successful person must advance as it ultimately leads us to be a more mature and self-reliant version of ourselves.



### 6. Not Comparing Ourselves to Others

A big reason as to why people are never happy is because they always compare themselves to others. Theodore Roosevelt rightly said: *"Comparison is the thief of joy."* Our competition is with our former selves, not with others, and our goal should be to be the best version of ourselves, not to get better than others. We should only try to learn from each other as we all have different paths. Additionally, we should not get engrossed in the lives of others. If we do, the only outcome would be to feel dejected at the thought of knowing that someone is doing better than us. That is why we should focus on ourselves and not worry about things that are beyond our control, otherwise it would adversely affect things over which we do have control.

*In conclusion, I think it is safe to say that having a positive mindset is the key to achieving any goal. These qualities help a person live a fulfilled and happy life. Above all, who does not wish to be happy?*



NETFLIX'S

## ONE PIECE

AN END TO THE CURSE OF LIVE-ACTION ADAPTATION

by Mian Abubakr Nadir

The Japanese manga series written by Eiichiro Oda, *One Piece*, has recently received a live-action adaptation by Netflix, and it has taken the internet by storm. The 'anime series to live-action curse,' where Japanese Characters are Americanised, to many, seemed unbreakable, but with the success of the Streaming Giant's new production, the curse may have just been broken.

### Premise

The fantasy-adventure manga series dives into the imaginary world of pirates, following Monkey D. Luffy and the Straw Hat crew on their quest to find the One Piece: an enormous treasure promising wealth, fame and power to anyone who manages to find it. Gol D. Roger, the late King of the Pirates, stirred up the world before his death, revealing of the One Piece and leading it into a new era of piracy.

Premiering in 1997, Oda sensei's *One Piece* has published over 1000 chapters, collected into 100+ volumes and is one of the only 2 literary series alongside *Harry Potter* to have sold over 500 million copies, also making it the best-selling manga series of all time. It is also one of the longest running anime series of all time with over 1084 episodes till date.

### Cast

Cast members were first revealed on November 9, 2021, and for the fans, it was love at first sight. The cast included the 5 members of the Straw Hat Pirates with Iñaki Godoy as Monkey D. Luffy, Mackenyu as Roronoa Zoro, Emily Rudd as Nami, Jacob Romero Gibson as Ussop, and Taz Skylar as Sanji. Further cast members were announced on 8 March and June 6, 2022.

### Production

The live-action series was first announced on July 21, 2017, by Hiroyuki Nakano, the editor-in-chief of the weekly shonen jump magazine, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the manga. Due to Covid, production was delayed, and it was not until February 2022 that the production began in Cape Town.

The series was produced by Tomorrow Studios, with Oda serving as an executive producer on set. The live-action series had a whopping budget of \$138 million for a total of 8 episodes, which equates to around \$17 million per episode. In comparison to other live-action adaptations by Netflix, 'Death Note' had a budget of \$40 million, and *Cowboy Bebop*'s estimated costs were in between \$6-7 million per episode. In a letter to the fans, Oda said that this would be his last chance to bring *One Piece* to the entire world, and stated that the series won't launch until he himself is completely satisfied.



Eiichiro Oda, Japanese manga artist and creator of *One Piece*.



## Reception

The trailer for the live-action dropped on the 13th of June 2023, amassing millions of views worldwide. The series itself premiered worldwide on August 31st 2023 following a number of fan screenings in different countries around the world.

As soon as the series dropped on Netflix, it was a global success as it received many positive ratings from fans and critics alike. The series reached the Top 10 in 93 countries and topped the charts in 46, breaking debut records previously set by *Stranger Things* and *Wednesday*. It debuted to 18.5 million views and 140 million hours watched in the first four days of its release, and amassed a total of 37.8 million views in less than two weeks of its release. In comparison, Netflix's live-action adaptation of *Cowboy Bebop* only garnered 21.6 million hours viewed over its first four days of release. The viewership is also, by Netflix's own numbers, better than other big releases over the last year such as 'The Witcher Season 3, Part 1,' which garnered 73 million viewing hours in its first four days of release, and Arnold Schwarzenegger's 'Fubar' which opened to 88 million hours viewed.

With a 96% Audience score on Rotten Tomatoes from 10,000+ ratings, it's among Netflix's highest audience scores. The live-action adaptation quickly became a social media sensation with more than 4 billion search impressions for #onepiecenetflix on Tik Tok alone. The series continues to create buzz and trend globally across social media platforms.

ROTTEN TOMATOES

96%



## What's Next

One Piece fans will rejoice as Netflix has officially renewed the live-action adaptation for a second season just 2 weeks after the global premier of the first season. This was announced by the Streaming Giant in collaboration with Oda himself, in a video on the 14th of September. Unfortunately, no details about the production and the release date for the second season were shared. Still, the fans are over the moon at the announcement of the renewal.

The second season of the live-action will introduce us to new characters, including new members of the Straw Hat Crew, and will likely be covering the Arabasta saga.

The One Piece fan base and all of the anime community have been loving the live-action adaptation so far. Other live-action adaptations such as *Cowboy Bebop* and *Death Note* were all met with immense criticism by both the fans and critics. There has never been a live-action adaptation that has been welcomed by the viewers. Some people deemed it hopeless and believed that a good live-action adaptation was almost impossible to make, but with the responses that the live-action One Piece has garnered, it is safe to say that the series has ended the curse of live-action adaptations.

# Poetry & Writings

SUBMISSIONS

# Brutal Melody

*All those days, she pretended to be sane  
Until it all started fading like a masquerade  
Silent sufferings, masked misery, buried heartaches The pain of his  
words, was hard to evade*

*It breaks my heart to watch the afterwar silence  
The marital contract; a mere license?  
The emptiness that lingers, the lack of compliance Broken Vows and his  
fragile resilience!*

*Satisfying the society, rather than the soul  
Not long before they realized, The Marriage was a foul  
Broken Vows, kiss poisoned  
Oh! Shouldn't have walked the aisle*

*Engulfed in darkness, she cried her heart in prayer  
But there was some kind of hollowness, uttering in despair  
The hope in her heart, so fragile and faint  
That her parents would reconcile and the pain would abate*

*My childhood was like a wet soil  
A suffocated feeling of dread  
The heart ached to say, but my head turned void  
All those years, the weight imprisoned my chest  
The worries, the veil or the emotional turmoil?  
Mercilessly dragging me down with each and every breath  
But turning a blind eye was no way out  
Creeping inside me it had started turning me e paranoid!*

*Cowering in the dark, I've seen it all  
Silent stares, silent battles- the tears that fall  
Broken heart, shattered walls  
Into a pit of bickering and brawl  
I wistfully watch the binding ties fall*

*One hopeful look was what I longed  
but his fragile ego proved me wrong  
He smiled for a second, and I thought that was all  
and illusory satisfaction it was or a mere delusion  
it made me realize just where I belonged*

**by Nabiha Ahmed**



# HEROINES

## OF THE MORDERN TIMES

*I grew up, hearing stories of old  
Of cursed damsels waiting to be saved  
And envious sisters refusing to co-operate*

*Where, in history, are woven the tales  
Of women exuding pride and grace  
Of those rising like sun in dark of distress*

*Where are the women slaying dragons  
Or, within their souls, nurturing magic  
To bring forth feats, painting their dreams*

*I realized we must be heroines of modern times  
Not just mending clothes, but bridging divides  
Wielding pens, raising our voice*

*Unshackling ourselves from the stereotypes  
Ascending as empowered moms, CEOs, engineers  
Shattering glass ceilings that confined us for years*

*Unshackling ourselves from the stereotypes  
From our minds, ideas come to life  
With innovation, our lives shall take flight  
Hand in hand, together, we turn the tide  
Shattering glass ceilings that confined us for years*

*As radiant as a thousand stars unfurl  
We shall become wonders unseen by the world  
As we soar as warriors, of stories unheard*

**by Eshaal Arshad**



# BEHIND THE BARS

by Nabiha Ahmed

*A woman's nightmare begins the day she's born  
I'll treat her like a princess, her father forsworn  
but right from her birth, she was treated the same  
Oh what a disgraceful shame, the society claimed  
Thrown to the floor, punched, slapped and abused  
"I've had a rough childhood", was just another excuse*

*Forcefully married off like they're an item of sale  
but when they return back; divorced, father says they're to blame  
Beneath a dark corner, they just lay there  
For them love is a gift wrapped with fear*

*Trapped in shackles of marriages that break them down  
Healing from trauma, with eyes so brown  
Years passed on but she rarely smiled  
All she could remember was that monster beguile*

*Unaware of whether to cry or laugh in a dilemma she was  
She had escaped that wild prison but her life had taken a pause  
Disguising her fears, collecting her lost pride  
Devoid of emotions, she was dead inside,*

# THE BLEEDING EDEN

1947 - 2023 and the fight for bleeding eden continues

*Blossoming in the midst of the Saffron Fields  
And the rustic fragrance of the Chinar trees  
She grew up -  
Uncertain about the ultimate fate of their land  
with death sitting beside her on life's charabanc*

*Plethora of it's exquisite beauty, that makes it so picturesque  
with it's ocean blue water and lush flora that's worth being entitled  
'a crowning glory'  
the wonderfully welcoming aura of the Kashmiri tribes  
Serving you wholeheartedly with traditional sweets and their special Kashmiri Chai*

*Kashmir- the bleeding Eden on Earth  
where carnage has been in vogue right from it's birth  
Subjecting those little lives, with bleeding wounds  
The lofty mountains, that are a witness to their cries & ordeal  
Coiled concertina wires, isolating their homes  
That reminds them of their miseries decades old  
The valley that used to be a mosaic of greenery  
Is now turning into a graveyard of broken dreams, stolen lives, and hope, so feeble.*

*Gazing upon the visage of her little brother  
who she vowed to protect for eternity and forever  
But the hapless reality of life, carrying tales that'll make you shudder  
with just faded memories left in the way and a casket draped with white cover  
In the wailing valley of Kashmir,  
where the trails of blood, summons you to a lifetime of regrets  
Love, loss and longing is all that's now left!*

*The mellow meadows of Kashmir,  
that once echoed with the beatific melody of life  
now the valley stands in the midst of an uneasy calm  
with the once merry bulbul, that now only sings the death song*

میں خون سے لکھی تحریر کا غم ہوں...  
مدت سے سلگتے ہوئے کشمیر کا غم ہوں

by **Nabiha Ahmed**

# The Mulberry Drape

by Aryaah Khowaja

The empty pale sky was desperately waiting for the whirlwind to arrive when the noise inside the house began to increase the forecast. The tension was building up inside, therefore, I decided to navigate my way through the hall to Saira's room. 'I am not wearing that antique thing', she howled, adamant to not accept the dress mom chose for her to flaunt at the wedding. On the other side of the room the cupboard was shoved open with clusters of dupattas peacefully sleeping on the ground, while mother started ranting about her unfilial eldest daughter, comparing her to Mrs Qasim's compliant girl who just received another marriage proposal. 'Fizza, tell your sister that I am not taking her to the wedding in this blue simple cotton shalwar kurta. You belong to a high class family, I don't want people to think we are destitute', mother adjourned me, her eyes fixed on Saira. Weddings always come with disagreements and grudges in our family.

The sky was welcoming its next chapter whereas I was dressed up in a bright pink lehenga with cream embroidery of a bird in a cage which was decorated with white roses. I went down to the hall while noticing puffs of smoke dancing through the enormous window facing the staircase. It was Aswar, leaning on the fruitless tree, clenching a vape in his hand. Father was ready downstairs, fussing about how no one was ready on time. Finally, we left for the wedding but the ride wasn't able to ease the tension between mother and Saira, she rebelliously wore the blue shalwar kurta, and hopeless, mother had to drag her along. It felt like Aswad and Saira were just hauled into the event and I was ...just here.

Arrival at the wedding meant dressing yourself in a perfect smile and pseudo attitude before entering the wedding hall. The family members of the bride and groom welcomed us at the entrance with their plastic smiles, the hugs baking me. Saira maintained her rebellious attitude, she just smiled at the guest and went down the hall while mother was trying her best to maintain her sanity for upcoming conversations.

The hall covered itself with golden silk, a giant glass chandelier reflecting the colors dangled in the middle. We followed the maroon carpet to a table wrapped in ruby red silk and chairs around it, trying to breathe in their crimson attire and golden corset, with the pair's imitations evolving at every point. The sides of the hall had five big mirrors on each side, their borders clustered in pearl white chains. The end of the hall was layered with a giant scarlet stage sofa in a background of blood dripping roses. A grumpy giant man was sitting on the stage sofa, stitched with a tiresome smile, his eyes weary and expressions dull. He wore a branded golden sherwani which perfectly matched with a red triangle on his chest pocket. On his left, a meek, shy girl was sitting. Her head remained chained downwards, staring at the red desolate floor. She was dressed in a bright red heavily embroidered lehenga. Red liquid pasted on her lips and white powder baked on her whole face, a perfect conventional bride indeed. However, her eyes told another story. 'Huh, the poor girl', exclaimed Saira, looking at the stage with pity.

After greeting the relatives, we followed mother towards the group of old ladies chattering nearby. She instructed us to talk in a low voice with polite behavior, maintaining the pseudo smile. However, Saira strolled the other way down, stubborn to make mother pissed. We entered the conversation when Mrs Anwar was giving her friends an insight into her latest purchase of a sapphire ring and necklace, while Mrs Rafiq was telling stories about her Paris venture. Their conversation shifted from the purchases to their children's achievements. 'My Saira also won a top notch math competition last month. Oh, how competitive it was but I was sure my daughter would win of course. And my dear Aswar is no less, you know right, how active he is in football. Always in competitions, so busy with his practices that he is rarely at home. And well, Fizza she is a -a- obedient girl, shy and soft spoken. I am sure she will be the perfect wife.', mother concluded, taking a breath of relief after prattling on.

After some time, everyone started gathering for Nikkah. The groom was asked for acceptance and he repeated 'I do' thrice. The bride was questioned next by the Imam, yet she stayed silent. The crowd started noticing her hesitation, while tension was building up. Everyone looked at each other with confused faces, the whispering and murmuring proportionately increasing. Suddenly, the bride looked up for the first time in the whole length of the event, her eyes meeting ours once. Glimpse of confidence was invading her, her shoulders becoming stiff and face turning stern. It felt as if a new soul entered that body who was ready to write her own destiny. However, her mother hurriedly went and sat beside the bride. She clasped her daughter's hand tightly, expressing to the worried groom's family that her daughter is nervous because of this imperative occasion in her life. The grip of the mother's hand tightened as everyone stared at the rebellious bride again, waiting for the worse.

Consequently, the bride lowered her head, the hope in her eyes fading while she repeated 'I do', a destiny written by society again. Our fate is never in our hands, people are wrong. The day is not far away when I am also going to be in this position and I know, I will say 'I do'.

# War on Gaza

**Palestine: 75 Years since the Nakba**  
**by Jawairia Shaikh**



# The Nakba

(Arabic: النكبة, romanized: an-Nakbah, lit. 'the "disaster", "catastrophe", or "cataclysm"). A word with meanings that can only cover a fraction of what it really was. Ask the people. Ask their children. Ask the memoirs that they have written. The Nakba is but a word. And the year is just a **stamp**.

The Jews arrived to seek refuge in Palestine after World War 2, holding a sign, "The Germans destroyed our homes. Don't you destroy our hopes." But the Palestinians didn't know their feeding hand would be bit. Soon, there was a mass exodus of **750,000** Arabs from their rightful homeland. Over 78 percent of historic Palestine was taken by Zionist forces. This ethnic cleansing claimed 15,000 Palestinians. The ones displaced have never returned.

In 'Atlas of Palestine of 1948', Salman Abu Sitta states something that has remained true to this date,

***"Expelling people from their homes is a war crime, as well as preventing them from returning. Israel didn't just commit a war crime in 1948 but continues to commit one to this day."***

While the whole world rests in comfort, Palestine burns with the remnants of the hopes and dreams of its people. Like Mahmoud Darwish said,

***"A person can only be born in one place. However, he may die several times elsewhere: in the exiles and prisons, and in a homeland transformed by the occupation and oppression into a nightmare".***

But at the same time, you may notice he also said,

***"Palestinian people are in love with life."***

Palestinians have a will of stone.

I will certainly not defend the actions of Hamas, but in no way can the apartheid state of Israel be on the same level as any Palestinian resistance group. Not in weaponry. Not in assets. As I write this, more than **7** days have passed since the power outage in Gaza. As I write this, it has been over **11** days of hunger, thirst and a severe shortage of medical supplies. As I write this, the Al Ahli Arab Hospital has been bombed and over **800** souls have been claimed. Targeting hospitals is a war crime. Another grave violation of international law is the use of white phosphorus (extremely fatal) in densely populated areas. Just as I thought I was done writing this paragraph, a UN school in Gaza was hit; this was followed by an attack on one of the oldest churches in the world, Porphyrius Orthodox Church. Mosques, churches, schools, hospitals, bakeries; the list goes on long. The death toll has now crossed **12000**, over **4000** of whom are children. Every **5 minutes**, a Palestinian becomes a martyr.



A mere article cannot cover the rich history of Palestine, nor can it tell you all the atrocities committed. For that, I profusely apologize.

But I must tell you how an innocent life living thousands of miles across was stabbed to death as a consequence. Six year old **Wadea Al-Fayoume** and his mother were targeted by their landlord because of their Palestinian-Muslim identity. The world will not forget how the people were told to evacuate to the southern Gaza strip and their vehicles were destroyed by warplanes on the way; how doctors and helpers on the frontline sob when they come across the bodies of their family; how children write their names on their hands and legs so that they can be identified after death; how fathers carry the body parts of their children; how health officials in Gaza resort to storing the bodies in ice cream trucks because of the risk of getting targeted by airstrikes.

The world will never forget this genocide.

Jamal Durrah lost his son, **Muhammad Al Durrah** (the symbol of Second Intifada), in 2001. After 23 years, Jamal is once again mourning the loss of his two brothers, sister-in-law and niece. Another Palestinian, **Yara Eid**, tells her story in a shaking voice after losing 14 family members in addition to her journalist best friend,

***"This is just my family's story.***

***There are thousands of others just like it."***







People surround dead bodies in the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital.

Now, this is how **YOU**, the reader, enter into the equation of this decades-long struggle and the over a month long siege on Gaza. This is how you play your **due** part.

### 1. EDUCATE YOURSELF:

Books, movies, articles, illustrations, documentaries — all forms of media are relevant right now. Anything that conveys what's happening is useful. Books like *Light in Gaza* (an anthology of Palestinian authors), *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine* by Rashid Khalidi and *Nakba* by Ahmed H. Sa'di are to name a few.

### 2. TAKE ACTION:

Whether it be your family, friends, young ones or just an acquaintance, it is now your responsibility to help them stay up to date. Join protests if you can. **Boycott** products that fund the oppressor and support local alternatives. Yes, it does make a difference.

### 3. ADVOCATE ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

As a person who is literate and has access to the internet, you have enough resources to advocate for the Palestinian cause. This one is not a fleeting trend. Try to engage as much as you can with content surrounding Palestine. Spread word to your own audience, especially against algorithms that censor victims' voices. It doesn't matter if you have a large or small following - **every message counts**.

### 4. DONATE AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME:

Even with the plethora of blockages, organizations with partners are trying their best to provide aid. The **UNRWA, Doctors Without Borders, Al-Khidmat Pakistan, and Palestinian Children's Relief Fund** are some of them. However, be sure to fact-check for proof before donating.

### 5. STAY ON TOP OF REAL NEWS:

Journalists, especially the ones in Gaza, are risking it all to deliver the latest news. The only way we can pay them back for their admirable persistence is to keep up with the reports. But, you don't have to eat up everything naively. Follow trustworthy sources and, most crucially, follow the stories of real Palestinians.

### 6. MOST IMPORTANTLY, PRAY:

Your faith is certainly a significant part of your persona. But you don't have to share that with another human to feel their pain, to sympathize. A sentence of genuine prayer can turn around the life of the ones suffering without respite — and in congregation, it can do wonders.

**“FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA,  
PALESTINE WILL BE FREE.”**

It's not just a slogan. It is an emotion, long etched into the hearts of those who pray and long for Palestine's freedom.

Sources and People:

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@mondoweiss @worldofhazem

@sbeih.jpg @byplestia

Khalid Beydoun. Yara Eid. Muna El

Kurd. Mohammed El Kurd. Motaz

Azaiza.





# ART & PHOTO- GRAPHY

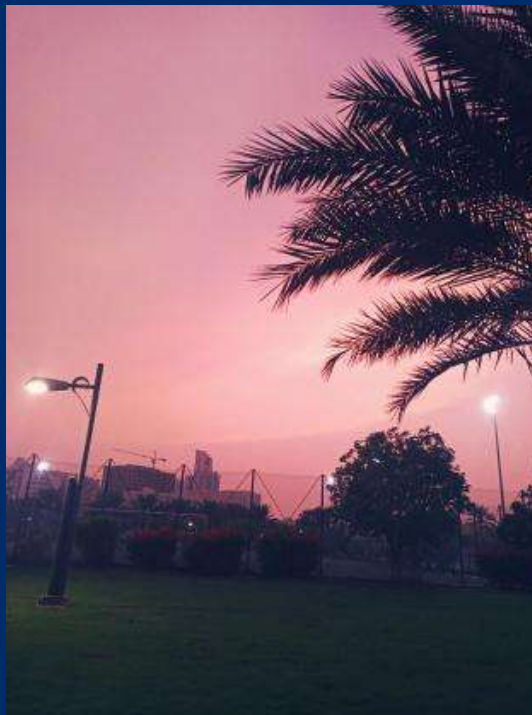


Submissions by Hamza Bajwa

# ART







# PHOTOGRAPHY

Submissions by Zoya Faisal



**Interesting AI Tools: Revolutionizing  
Communication, Creativity, and Efficiency**

**A Deluge of Abuse**

**Drug Abuse: The Growing Catastrophe of  
Pakistan's Youth**

**Holographic Reality: Expanding the Horizons  
of Perception**

**Pakistan Close to Doom**

# ARTICLES



# Interesting AI TOOLS

## Revolutionizing Communication, Creativity, and Efficiency

by Laiba Ahmad

In the ever-evolving world of technology, AI (Artificial Intelligence) has become a powerful tool that has reshaped various aspects of our lives. Surely, the impact of ChatGPT and other similar tools has reached even the average internet user. In this article, we will explore some of the most intriguing AI tools that have emerged in recent times.

One fascinating application of AI is the concept of preserving personalities and allowing people to interact with their loved ones even after death. China has taken the lead in this initiative, developing AI-powered chatbots that simulate the personalities of deceased individuals. By analyzing vast amounts of data such as text messages, social media posts, and videos, these chatbots can engage in conversations and provide a sense of continuity and comfort for those left behind. Does this not remind one of the moving portraits of the deceased in the Harry Potter world?

The influence of AI has also permeated the entertainment industry, particularly in the realm of music and visual arts. One notable example is Mave, a K-pop girl group created entirely by AI. From their music videos to their designs, every aspect of Mave's existence is a product of advanced web designing algorithms. Although this has been a controversial move, particularly amongst kpop fans, it has indeed been a success as the music video for their song "Pandora" received a large number of views as well as amassing appreciation for the song itself and the choreography.

Moving beyond entertainment, AI is now making its presence felt even in the corporate world. Companies have started utilizing AI-powered tools to conduct office interviews. These tools analyze facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language to gauge the suitability and compatibility of potential candidates. By removing human bias and subjectivity, AI tools ensure a more objective evaluation process, leading to fairer and more informed hiring decisions. This also saves time for both the interviewer and the interviewee.



*MAVE, an AI K-Pop Girl Group*

AI has also revolutionized the way we communicate through written correspondence. Google's AI Email Assistant, for instance, uses natural language processing and machine learning algorithms to help users compose emails more efficiently. By suggesting relevant phrases, detecting spelling errors, and improving grammar, this tool saves valuable time and enhances overall productivity. This development is particularly beneficial for professionals who are constantly bombarded with a high volume of emails.

Moreover, the integration of AI in the field of space exploration is awe-inspiring. Astronauts can now communicate with spaceships using AI-powered systems. By analyzing space data in real-time, these tools provide vital information to astronauts, assisting them in decision-making and troubleshooting. This breakthrough has greatly enhanced the safety and efficiency of space missions, pushing the frontiers of human exploration farther than ever before.

In the realm of education, a notable AI tool called Otter.ai is transforming the way students take notes and summarize important information. By generating text from people's voices, this tool can create comprehensive notes and summaries during real-time meetings. Students can capture key points without the need for extensive manual note-taking, making their studying process more efficient and effective.

It is evident that AI tools are not just fascinating technological advancements but also practical solutions that improve our lives in various domains. From preserving personalities to enhancing creative output, streamlining communication, and revolutionizing education and space exploration, AI continues to reshape our world at an unprecedented pace. While there are ethical considerations to address, there is no denying that AI is here to stay, and its potential for growth and innovation is infinite.

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# A Deluge of Abuse

by Asadullah Gillani

As the sun rises daily, millions worldwide wake up to a reality that no child should ever endure a life marked by exploitation and labour instead of laughter and learning. According to Article 11 of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan, labour performed by children under 14 is categorised as child labour. And although this practice has been constitutionally declared a crime, it is widely prevalent.

The current situation of child labour has been compounded by the political and economic spiral the country has been in for a long time now. Pakistan could be heading towards a precipitous downfall if it fails to recognize what its younger generations are missing out on. The country's efforts to eradicate or even reduce child labour have failed catastrophically. Real progress has yet to be made in this aspect, which is alarming.

This problem is not a recent development, but the question may arise: 'Why does it keep taking place at an immense scale?' Well, the first and foremost reason is the industrialization boom under Zia-ul-Haq. When industries began to emerge in Pakistan, a great demand for factory workers arose, and unprofessional, amateur children were hired as labourers. The parents of young children welcomed this as the handful of money their child would earn helped to keep them afloat.

However, the pernicious phenomenon of child labour is not the byproduct of a single factor. Instead, it has been the outcome of various interrelated factors.

We might think how preposterous it would be to send your child to earn money as an adolescent. Still, we fail to notice that parents teetering on the edge of bankruptcy cannot even afford the necessities of life, such as food and education; henceforth, they have no option but to turn to their children for help. Nothing can even justify why more than 16 million children fall under the sway of manual labour, exploitation, and pain in Pakistan.

Other socio-economic issues also contribute to child labour. The country has a severe education crisis and a high rate of illiteracy. The lack of knowledge results in a lack of enlightened values being inculcated. Children, in such circumstances, are more likely to pursue child labour than schooling. Furthermore, overpopulation has always been a part of our society, which burdens the family, so people start seeing their children as sources they can use to complement their meagre incomes. So far, the most comprehensive law about child labour has explicitly been the Employment of Children Act 1991. The act states that child labour in Pakistan is prohibited. However, this act and other reforms have hardly been effective in addressing the issue, so the role of political factors cannot be overlooked in the rise of child labour in the country.





So, is child labour harmful? How can it not be if it deprives kids of the most basic human right: education? The years that should have been spent in school are wasted when children are toiling away in factories and workshops. This worsens the economic conditions of the country as well. Economy and child labour are closely intertwined, resulting in a situation where most of the population is unskilled, which can only cause a persistence of class and income differences. The impoverished are further squeezed. The workforce (which includes young children) can also be negatively affected by labour. They often work under critical conditions, such as in mines, which can cause chronic ailments and diseases depending on the work undertaken. Spending childhood in adverse and threatening conditions can result in extremely low self-esteem, stress, and depression. No one can deny that child labour can trigger children's physical and emotional abuse. In this regard, child labour has consequences for society's long-term stability and tranquillity as well.



Child labour is a complex, unyielding issue in Pakistan. Despite constitutional prohibition and unprecedented efforts of the officials, it continues to persist. A problem with its roots leading back to economic downfall, low literacy, and socio-economic factors, child labour not only seizes the right of children to good education, free will, and good health, but it also leads to abuse and exploitation of children, which leads to mental and physical health issues and a lack of personal development.

Several organisations and local official bodies are working to address this prevailing issue in the country. However, there is a lack of implementation of the law. The Government of Pakistan must join hands with international organisations like the WHO to create and, most importantly, implement a coherent solution to eradicate child labour by punishing the exploiters. Moreover, educational facilities on subsidised rates should be made available, so that the underprivileged can identify that the opportunity cost of sending children to school is less. Only through combined and comprehensive efforts can we hope to eradicate this deluge of abuse and create this country a better place for the rising generation.



# Drug Abuse

## The Growing Catastrophe of Pakistan's Youth

by Khadija Aamer

Addiction to drugs is on the rise in Pakistan's educational institutions. Students in schools, colleges, and universities are becoming increasingly addicted to different forms of drugs, risking not just their own future but also the lives of those around them, including family and friends. While Pakistan's institutions are suffering from drug abuse, students are ignorant of why and how drug abuse is detrimental to Pakistan's future, although 63% of Pakistan's population comprises youth out of 207 million people (The 2017 Pakistan NHDR). However, drug abuse is still treated as a taboo, because drugs are not 'acceptable' in the society, yet drug abuse starts from a young age, and the rate continues to grow due to a lack of health literacy in adolescents.

Moreover, Pakistan is suffering from a vaping epidemic, the era of use of e-cigarettes. These small, USB-shaped devices are not only used by high-schoolers, but are now widely accessible to even middle-schoolers. As the rate of the use of e-cigarettes increases among the youth and vaping becomes more common, although it had seeped into large cities long ago, we continue to build it as a norm instead of addressing it before the consequences are clearer.

Any substance that alters how individuals feel, think, or act is considered a psychoactive substance. This definition includes both natural and manmade medications, as well as alcohol and cigarettes. The majority of medications that were utilized in the past were produced from plants i.e. cultivating plants, after which they are processed into drugs. People learned how to produce medications from chemicals in the 20th century. These are referred to as synthetic or man-made medications, which includes vapes.



Substance abuse is defined by either the use of illicit substances or the misuse of medication. In some contexts, this misuse may seem casual. On the other hand, utilizing chemicals whose impact on the brain's reward center is so strong that it changes brain's functions is what is meant by addiction.

If you see brain images of the human brain from ages 12 to 20, only the very small areas of dark purple are fully developed. This means that throughout high school and young adulthood, students' brains are changing and developing. While that is exciting, it means that the developing brain is uniquely vulnerable to anything that negatively affects it, including drug abuse.





*Picture from Business Recorder*



*Picture from Hamariweb*

But why is this even an issue for us? People all over the world use drugs; they are all over the internet, in every movie and drama. The strong character is shown to consume substances and makes it look cool. The reason lies simply in its calamitous impacts which are never quite addressed.

Drug abuse has numerous negative consequences, starting with health issues like addiction, overdose, and chronic diseases. Students' academic performance takes the toll, with lower grades, absenteeism, and reduced motivation. Socially, drug abuse hampers peer connections and raises mental health risks like anxiety and depression. Legally, possessing illicit drugs can lead to legal trouble and harm future prospects. Financially, obtaining drugs is costly. In conclusion, addressing drug use among students is vital due to its wide-ranging detrimental effects. But why do we students resort to them in the first place when they are told all their lives, 'say no to drugs,' 'smoking kills'? Is it because they have become more accessible? Is it because of stress and depression?

A lot of factors in our environment make us vulnerable so it can be difficult to cope with our problems sometimes. If we are stressed, either we can engage in healthy activities like painting, or writing, or anything that does not harm your wellbeing, and then there is an unhealthy side of that, like not prioritizing your sleep, or using medications and stuff that hampers your thinking capacity and makes you dizzy or lose consciousness.

That temporary moment of pleasure and peace spikes a large amount of dopamine, which is a hormone that makes you happy. And these large surges of dopamine 'teach' the brain to seek drugs at the expense of other, healthier goals and activities."

Thus, there lies a responsibility towards both school administrations, and youth themselves, to provide the young generation with awareness and counseling regarding the factors that make them vulnerable to drug abuse e.g. stress, poor self-esteem etc. School curriculums must integrate development of the communication skills of students to effectively condemn the use of drugs. If schools start introducing drug refusal kits to students and use school's own resources in the form of students and staff members to handle the vulnerable students, it can prove to be an effective step towards leaving behind drugs for the better. Moreover, Hayat, an NGO has evolved as a youth-led initiative that is an anti narcotics and student wellbeing society. Their work can be found on Instagram at [@\\_hayat.ngo](#).



# HOLOGRAPHIC REALITY

## EXPANDING THE HORIZONS OF PERCEPTION

by Hadia Ieman

In a world where technology ceaselessly redefines the boundaries of human imagination, holography stands as a testament to the limitless possibilities of innovation. Formerly, a staple of science fiction, holograms — essentially three-dimensional images — have emerged as a transformative force, profoundly influencing how we perceive and interact with reality. Let's delve into the diverse facets of holography, offering insights into the immense potential of this groundbreaking technology.

### **Revolutionising Communication: Holoportation - Can You Be in Two Places at Once?**

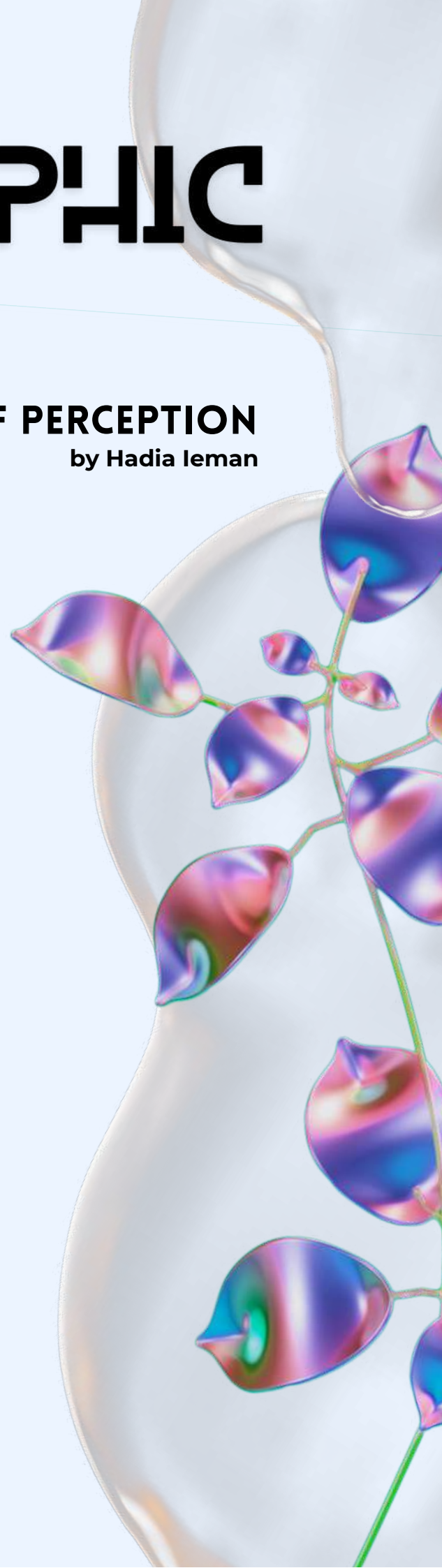
Imagine a world where physical distance is no longer an impediment to presence. Microsoft's pioneering "Holoportation" project has made this a reality. With cutting-edge cameras and sensors, it conjures real-time, life-sized, three-dimensional holographic representations. The question is, could this redefine the way we connect with loved ones or colleagues across the globe? Is this the next frontier of human interaction?

*Did you know that the term "holography" was coined by physicist Dennis Gabor in 1948?*

### **Transforming Healthcare: Precision and Learning - What Can Holography Offer?**

Our journey takes us to the heart of healthcare, where holography is a game-changer. Surgeons now wield holographic displays as surgical tools, offering unparalleled insights and precision during intricate procedures. Simultaneously, medical education is undergoing a profound transformation through holographic imaging. The question arises: how might this revolutionise patient care and surgical precision? Can holography bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience?

*By the way, the first hologram was created in 1962 by physicist Yuri Denisyuk.*





## Nano-Holography: Data Storage Reinvented - How Small Can We Go?

Venturing into the microcosm, we encounter nano-holography—a technological marvel that challenges conventional data storage norms. Researchers at RMIT University have harnessed nano-scale structures called "metasurfaces" to craft nano-holograms, capable of storing vast amounts of data on a grain of sand. And speaking of data, *did you know that a gram of DNA can theoretically store 215 petabytes (215 million gigabytes) of data?* The question lingers: could this innovation reshape the landscape of data management and archival? What new frontiers does it open for technology?

## Tactile Holography: Engaging the Senses - Can We Feel the Unreal?

Our exploration extends to tactile holography, where ultrasonic waves craft tangible experiences. Imagine feeling holographic objects. It's not science fiction—it's becoming a reality with applications in virtual reality and remote surgery. And here's a mind-blowing fact: *Holograms can be found on credit cards, passports, and even some currencies to prevent counterfeiting.* The question that beckons is, how might this redefine immersive experiences and telemedicine? Could it transform the way we learn, play, or heal?

## Holographic Education: Redefining Learning - Are We Ready for the Future?

Education, too, has embraced holography's transformative potential. Firms like ZSpace provide interactive 3D displays that immerse students in subjects as intricate as anatomy and physics. The question resonates: could this hands-on approach revolutionise the way we acquire knowledge? Will it usher in a new era of engagement and understanding among students, and are we prepared for this paradigm shift? And here's an interesting tidbit: *The first holographic book was published in 2008, featuring 3D holographic images.*

## Holographic Gaming: A New Era - What Awaits Gamers?

Our journey culminates in the thrilling world of holographic gaming. Mixed reality headsets, exemplified by Microsoft's HoloLens, blend digital and tangible realms seamlessly. Augmented reality games like "Pokémon GO" infuse holographic characters into our world. And did you know, *the first commercial hologram was created in 1968 for a cereal box promotion?* The question emerges: how might this redefine gaming, leisure, and entertainment for the younger generation? What new horizons await gamers in this immersive universe?

Our exploration of holography transcends science fiction, beckoning us into a world teeming with boundless potential, where glimpses of an unimaginable future tantalise our senses. As we stand on the cusp of a holographic revolution, we are compelled to ponder these questions, for they may well define the course of our evolving reality.

# PAKISTAN CLOSE TO DOOM

by Nabeeha Shakeel

Pakistan, a nation brimming with youthful energy and potential, has been grappling with a persistent challenge: the departure of its youth abroad. Pakistan has a remarkably young population, with over 60% of its citizens under the age of 30; however, in today's time, the only option left for them is to leave the country that every Pakistani loves to bits. The country is crippled under economic stress, and the government is not taking effective measures to address it. Economic stability is a crucial factor in a country's development; however, Pakistan is facing some of the worst economic challenges, such as inflation, currency devaluation, and fiscal deficits, which contribute to uncertainty about the country's prospects.

Pakistani expatriates send billions of dollars in remittances back to Pakistan each year. While these remittances help bolster the country's foreign exchange reserves and provide financial support to the families left behind, a country can't be run on remittances. If such policies continue, Pakistan would face grave challenges ahead. With a growing population and decreasing resources, people have nothing to do but leave.

To counteract the brain drain, Pakistan must create an environment that encourages the return of its skilled diaspora. Incentives must be provided, better job prospects must be provided, and a better quality of life must be provided. The government is taking loan after loan without considering how they will repay it, leading to a national debt crisis. Taxes are rising, the infrastructure is falling apart, and no one is standing up to help.

Economic conditions are changing rapidly due to various factors including global economic trends, government policies, and geopolitical events. With global warming on the rise and recent floods and earthquakes in Pakistan, the economy is facing a further hit due to such issues and events. The economic costs of adapting to and recovering from these events can be substantial. Prices are rising for basic commodities, and everyone is struggling to survive. Educated individuals are searching for jobs, and many skilled individuals have to settle for low-income jobs, or jobs unrelated to their area of expertise as finding any job, even a low wage one, is a daunting challenge.

Pakistan has cut its GDP growth estimate for the fiscal year 2022-23 to 0.29% from an earlier estimate of 2% while its population growth rate continues to soar at a magnitude of 1.8%.



Oil prices are rising, and our currency is depreciating. According to the former PM of Pakistan, "Pakistan's economy needs a major surgery. The country's economy direly needs reforms, which in turn, could be undertaken in a stable political environment as economic development is intrinsically linked to political stability."

According to many experts, the next 4 years are crucial for Pakistan in navigating its future. The economy is already heading towards doom, people are drawing near starvation, and many UN-led organisations are now turning their attention towards Pakistan due to the disastrous situation Pakistanis are facing these days. Organisations like WFP, UNICEF, and many others are working together for the betterment of Pakistan.



*The Constant Hike in Oil Prices*



*Never-Ending Loans and Debts.*

Pakistan is burdened with an overwhelming amount of debt. In recent times, Pakistan's External Debt reached 124.3 billion USD in June 2023, compared with 125.8 billion USD in the previous quarter. Pakistan has recently taken a \$3 billion loan from IMF to stabilise the economic situation. However, the situation continues to get worse. PIA, one of the previously leading airlines in Pakistan, is incurring losses of 12 billion rupees monthly, leading to its collapse. According to documents, PIA is not paying 1.25 billion PKR in tax to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), while it is not paying over 1 billion PKR a month to the Civil Aviation Authority. PIA is drawing loans from Askari Bank and other organisations as a last resort for survival.

With increasing loans taken each fiscal year, the situation is going from bad to worse; the national debt is increasing day by day, putting immense stress on the people of Pakistan. With no option in sight, the only escape left, according to many, is to leave.



# A WARRIOR'S TALE

by Kanza Ahsan

## TURNING LOSS INTO OPPORTUNITY



## DR. BAKHTAWAR KIANI

**Dr. Bakhtawar Kiani** got celebrated for her representation of Asia as the first visually impaired female archer in the International Blind Sports Association (IBSA) hosted by University of Birmingham, UK. She is also a dental student, a Markhor, and actively engaged in promoting inclusivity for differently abled persons.

## What Brought Her to Archery

As a brilliant student of dentistry, Dr. Bakhtawar's life was all set with good grades and praises when, all of a sudden, she experienced loss of vision as a result of a genetic disorder, Retinitis Pigmentosa. However, the condition did not steal away her determination or the passion for future goals. After a supportive rehabilitation period, during which her family became her true support and her mother her biggest motivator, Bakhtawar soon got back to her dentistry journey.

It was about three years ago, when she was introduced to Blind Archery, and as she had always been an agile sportsperson, she soon excelled in this technical sport, too. With constant training, practice and support from her brother Owais, who also served as her aid for the game, she became one of the very few people who are excellent in this art in Pakistan. While speaking to me, she revealed that females mostly practice it periodically and without consistency, whereas she had never given up on the sport. And when she did, it was her mother who'd prompt, remind, and make her complete her lessons of archery.



*Dr. Bakhtawar in Birmingham: During the Competition*



*Pride of Pakistan bearing the flag of her country*

## Games At Birmingham

The world witnessed the Games, but did it know how challenging it was to make that long journey to England?

Dr. Bakhtawar narrates that generating revenue for the participation was something that had convinced her it was a lost dream. However, it was her sister-in-law, also a fellow Youth Impact Alumnus, who took the initiative of calling a fundraising drive for the cause. With the support from HBL, Al-Shifa Foundation, and Youth Impact, they were able to sponsor IBSA for Dr. Bakhtawar.

With these humbling turn of events, a new challenge was up. Her brother Owais, who was also her aid in archery as per the requirements set by the international standards of IBSA, too, was not granted a visa. She would have had to travel alone, and lead the games by herself. They were dismayed, but strove harder. By writing letters to several authorities in England and showing them how unsatisfactory this was, they waited till only a week remained. 6 days before their due departure, her brother was granted a visa and was to cover his own stay in Birmingham.

With renewed energy, the duo set off, managed to make up for the shortcomings, and practiced daily till the final day. Dr. Bakhtawar mentions that her determination was to believe in herself, and call it her win. She battled on till 25 rounds and it was Germany who won against her but made her ever so proud. She had done what no other female could do from across the biggest continent of the world!

## Markhor'17- Finding Resilience and the Markhor Spirit

In 2017, a transformative journey took Dr. Bakhtawar by the hand, aiding her in the discovery of her new self. At Markhor, Pakistan's First Wilderness Based Leadership Conference by Youth Impact, Dr. Bakhtawar was to break her old beliefs, do what the world deemed impossible, by redefining inclusivity, empowerment, feminism, and visual impairment.

YOUTH IMPACT  
MARKHOR

*Dr Bakhtawar at Markhor 2023, narrating her tale of Resilience*

Away from home, amid the mountains, upon the rolling lush meadows of Siri Paye, a campsite held the force which broke off stereotypes held against the unique world inside each of its participants. At this life-changing conference, Dr. Bakhtawar hiked, trekked, cooked, won challenges, defied norms, and camped just like the rest of the 70 individuals. She found her Markhor Spirit, and realized once more that no matter the circumstances, she would find the same love for everything that she did before losing her sight, and never let any obstacle dampen her spirit again. She spoke of her stubborn denial to endorse the pitiful treatment for diversity, which has become a motto in her life. While speaking of inclusivity, she says,

“

***"The world will provide an enabling environment then I will prove myself."***

Fast forward to the ride back to Islamabad from Shogran, where she was staying, in this year's Markhor'23, I could feel the fondness in her tone when she mentioned that this was the same place where she had herself been championed a Markhor.

### What is Markhor?

Youth Impact has been actively working towards positive youth transformation for over a decade now. It is led by Abdul Samad Khan (ASK) who is a cancer survivor, avid traveler, and an alumnus of NOLS. As a pioneer in Wilderness Based Leadership Training platform, the Youth Impact has generated a massive force of youth leaders across the country. They have alumni from Yemen, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, whereas their network is now spread all across the Globe.

Markhor is the First Wilderness based Youth leadership Conference that happens yearly with over a 100 delegates from national and international backgrounds, different socio-economic sectors, multiple ethnicities, regions, and religions.

### What struck me while I spoke to Dr. Bakhtawar

Dr. Bakhtawar had always amazed me by her apt expressions during any conversation. She keenly keeps up with the mode of any discussion with her face and gestures. Well, she reveals that it is due to her application of learnings from medical life. She is well versed in understanding the makeup of human facial musculature, which aids in giving us facial expressions. She uses this knowledge to control her body language while engaging in a dialogue.



# MOVIES & BOOKS







Anne Hathaway  
as Jules



Robert De Niro  
as Ben



# Movie Review

by Alina Azhar

If you are looking for a movie where your heart finds peace, then look no further. “The Intern,” directed by Nancy Meyers, with Anne Hathaway and Robert de Niro playing the main lead, is a heartfelt drama-comedy with a slight touch of sadness, realisation of life, and the feeling of bittersweetness. This movie explains how everyone who enters your life has a role to play and an impact to make, and sometimes the people you least expect to change your life, end up doing so.

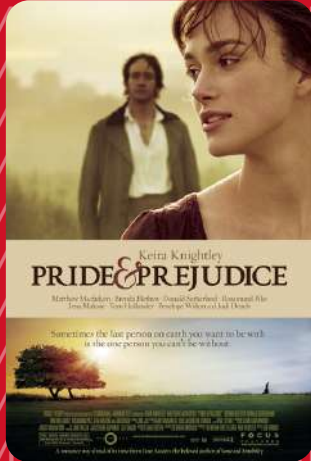
The story primarily revolves around Ben Whittaker (Robert de Niro), a widower who joins a company run by Jules (Anne Hathaway), a young, passionate workaholic, as an intern to add some purpose to his life and how both of the characters interact with each other to navigate through their respective challenges.

The movie does a slight play with the thought process of 'wisdom comes with age' and 'wisdom comes with experience,' by playing around with the personalities and mindsets of both of the main characters — showing how wisdom is not fully dependent on experience but on how one has lived their life and how long have they seen the world.

The movie makes one feel like their heart is at ease. It's easily a watchable, rewatchable and re-rewatchable movie. So, what are you waiting for? Watch “The Intern” now, and make your weekend enjoyable.

# MOVIE RECOMMENDATIONS

ROMANCE ROMANCE ROMANCE ROMANCE



ROMANCE ROMANCE ROMANCE ROMANCE

THRILLER THRILLER



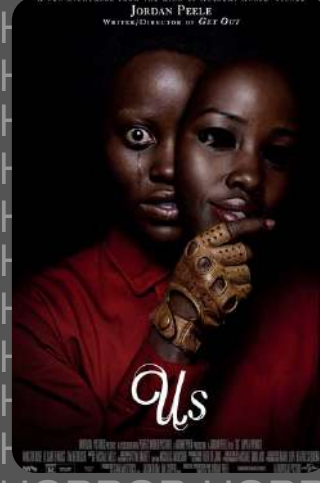
THRILLER THRILLER

MYSTERY MYSTERY



MYSTERY MYSTERY

HORROR HORROR HORROR HORROR



HORROR HORROR HORROR HORROR

DRAMA DRAMA DRAMA DRAMA



DRAMA DRAMA DRAMA DRAMA

ACTION ACTION ACTION ACTION

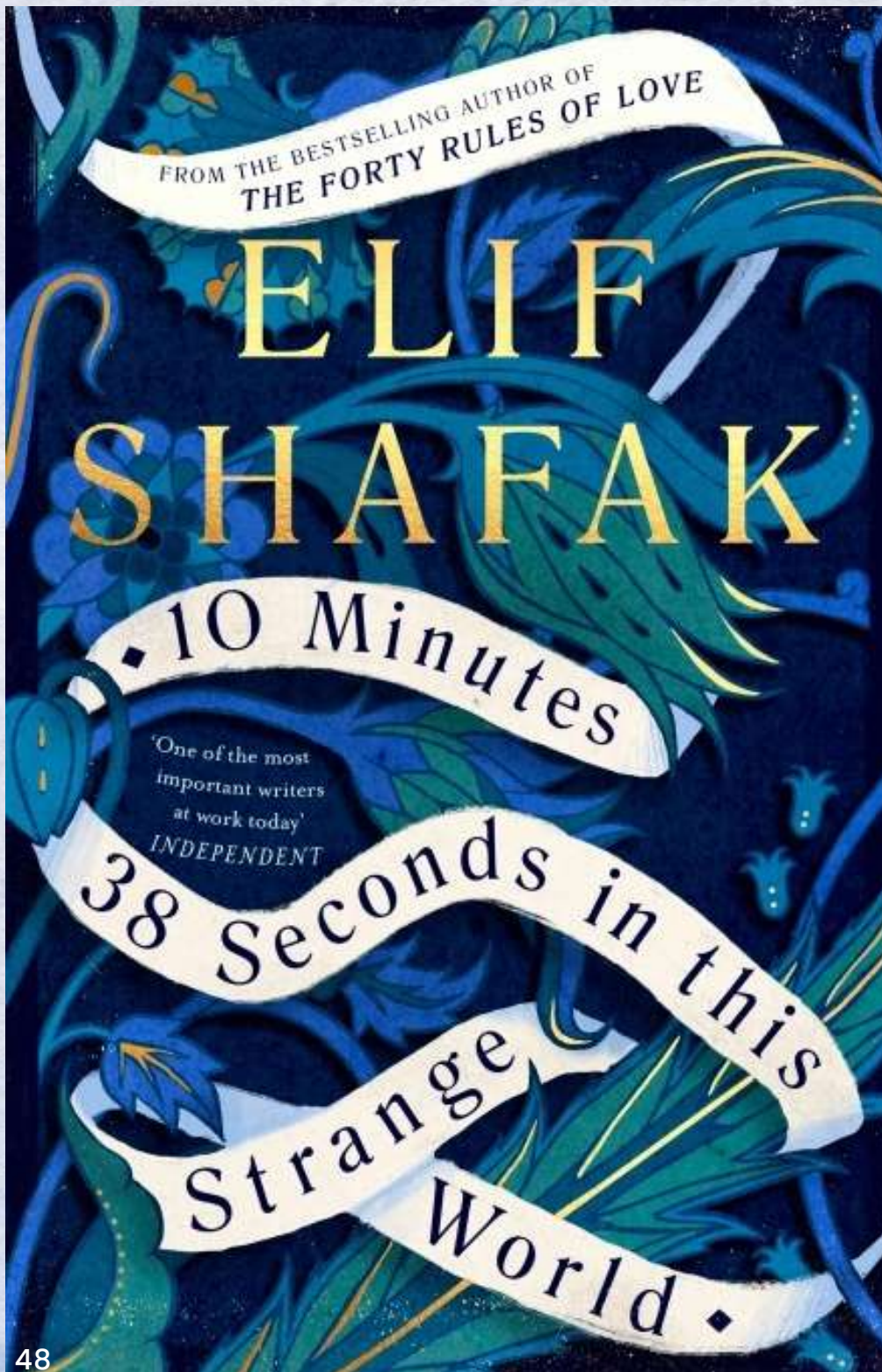


ACTION ACTION ACTION ACTION



# BOOK REVIEW

by Fateha Nizam



In the tapestry of modern literature, certain works emerge as enigmatic gems, inviting readers to decode their profound narratives. Published in 2019, "10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World" by the brilliant Elif Shafak. With a reputation of a fearless storyteller, her words have been our guides through uncharted territories of emotion and thought. Shafak's words are not just read; they are experienced. As I delved into the pages, Istanbul's streets came alive before my eyes, each corner exuding its distinct aura and every character becoming a familiar face in the bustling crowd. This novel explores a range of complex themes that enrich the narrative.

Shafak's writing is a symphony of emotions, a melody that resonates long after the last page is turned. Her characters breathe, bleed, and live within the confines of the pages. Leila's life story, woven through a series of poignant flashbacks, left me both heartbroken and hopeful. The layers of her existence were revealed like the petals of a flower, each revealing a new facet, a new shade. While the novel's strength lies in its unflinching portrayal of challenging themes, it's important to acknowledge that the explicit content and exploration of trauma may be triggering for some.



## Identity

The novel delves into the concept of identity, especially how it is shaped by society, circumstances, and personal experiences. Leila's journey prompts readers to question the nature of identity and how it evolves over time.

## Memory

Leila's brain remains active for 10 minutes and 38 seconds after death, allowing her to recall her life's experiences. The novel explores the fragility and significance of memory in shaping one's perception of the past.

## Friendship

The close bonds between Leila and her friends, known as "the five," highlight the theme of friendship. Their loyalty, love, and support for each other showcase the importance of chosen family.

## Sexuality and Gender Exploration

Challenging norms and stereotypes related to sexuality and gender identity were also discussed, advocating for acceptance and understanding whilst breaking societal conventions.

## Trauma and Resilience

The novel also explored characters' struggle with trauma and the journey toward healing and resilience. It also examined the impact of past traumas on present experiences and recovery processes.

In closing, "10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World" isn't just a novel—it's an odyssey through the depths of human experience. Elif Shafak's ability to infuse life into words and commitment to unravelling the threads that connect us all make this book a literary masterpiece. What struck me deeply were the relationships Leila forged with "the five," her chosen family. I couldn't help but reflect on the cherished relationships in my own life, the ones that make us who we are. As I closed the book, I carried with me the appreciation for the fleeting moments that shape our existence and the lasting impact of the connections we forge along the way.



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