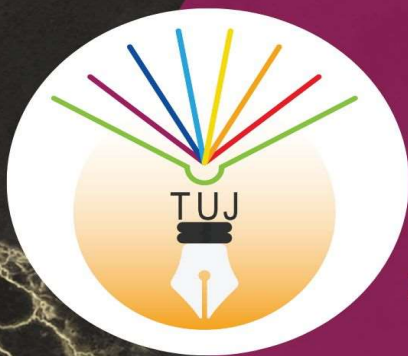


**Volume 01
Issue 05
March 2023**

ISSN: 2582-6352



The UNiVerse Journal

**A Quarterly Refereed
Open-Access Multidisciplinary
e-journal of Humanities.**

**Editor-in-chief:
C.P.Pathakk**

**Indexed Journal
Peer-reviewed**

An International Quarterly Refereed Open Access
e-Journal

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An India reimagined - My Paeon to Ayn

B. A. Krishna

While Nehru's famous "Tryst With Destiny" speech is etched in the annals of history and grudgingly repeated verbatim by unenthusiastic middle-schoolers all across India, what transpired shortly thereafter despite being of monumental importance, is hardly ever mentioned by present day historians. The temporarily deflated but still purposeful Prime Minister of India realized his daughter, Indira, had been acting more annoying than usual lately. It wasn't her usual "But you don't *understand*" gripe either. Her latest lament *du jour* seemed to include being a "misunderstood genius." Something was off.

Eager to address this new domestic crisis, Nehru rummaged through his daughter's dresser and amidst piles of accumulated laundry, stumbled upon a book by one Ayn Rand - a hefty tome whose thickness rivaled your average Mumbai telephone directory. Curious, he flipped through the first few pages and was hooked. Unable to resist inhaling the rest of its contents with gusto, Nehru realized something profound - an insight which Reagan would make a big fuss about decades later - which is that the "government *is* the problem." All governments. Each and every government. Yes, all avatars and incarnations of government. Immutably and axiomatically. For Nehru, this was nothing short of a Eureka! moment.

Disorienting as this epiphany was, Nehru steadied himself and with steely resolve busied himself searching for a box of crayons to draw up a blueprint for modern India sans government. What better governance than by that which doesn't even exist?! Suppressing a smug smile, Nehru put on his statesman-esque face and made a list of wealthy Indian industrialists to set up important institutional pillars in various critical sectors such as machine tool manufacturing, electrical engineering, electronics, aviation, nuclear power, space research etc. But *of course* the rich were guaranteed to be more efficient and altruistic than any possible manifestation of the government. For all values of government. You know the drill by now. Were the rich not legendary in their unmitigated acts of altruism? Was the private sector not to be trusted to roll out universal benefits that would educate and safe-guard the masses, while alongside, miraculously always capable of pulling profits out of the ether?! For all values of the private sector. Each and every. As long as they're unregulated. Better yet, let's call it "self-regulation"!

Encouraged by his uncharacteristic and abrupt attention to detail, Nehru briefly paused to give himself a well-deserved pat on the back and proceeded to crayon

“No rules, no oversight” just below “No government” on a piece of scrap paper that was later to be framed for posterity. After sticking it to the vision board that was his refrigerator, Nehru stepped back to admire his own colorful handiwork.

If less is more, surely none is even better? The beauty of the no-government-government (NOGOGO) memorandum lay in its sparse simplicity and economy of ideas. An unparalleled act of genius that is only spoken of in hushed tones by aspiring nation builders worldwide.

Instead of letting democratically elected officials fumble around with the levers of power, isn't it far better to just hand them over to *selected* officials? Businessmen, the last of the real men? You see, once the inevitable incompetence of government was established, Nehru could shift his focus from governance to more pressing matters such as creating tax-shelters for these patriotic businessmen as they rendered the nation profitable. And it would free Nehru up for more golf.

The Indian business community, led by the Tatas, Birlas and Haldirams, rose to the challenge. To this day, no one is entirely sure whether the Mahatma's dying words were “Hey Ram!” or “Haldiram!” Therein lay a clue for the discerning reader who is no doubt a scrupulous student of history.

These benevolent corporate agents are usually crouched coiled, Usain-Bolt like, ever ready to spring into action and serve the public - profitably! They jostled each other as they created highly efficient institutional pillars overnight, ones that were universal, profitable and free to the public. They elbowed each other, fighting over the right to fund elite educational institutions which were world class, as well as free elementary, middle and high schools all across India. As is typically the case, these corporate servants of the public knew better than to fritter their wealth on stock buybacks. Instead, they thoughtfully expended their surplus capital on public citizenry as they always do, guided by the blinding faith that long term investment in the future citizens of the country was far more critical than myopic obsession about quarterly profits, and it is this sort of long term foresight that only the private sector can be trusted to have.

In their efforts to establish an administrative service, this business troika recruited MBAs from all across the country as well as members of the Baniya community, i.e. anyone with last name *Kansal, Bansal, Goyal, Tayal, Singal, Mangal* and *Ungal*. After cursorily testing their addition and multiplication skills - but not subtraction and division since these threatened profitability - these eager recruits were then inducted into the administrative services. This translated to zero red tape in matters of administration. Just profits at every turn. These recruits knew what their charge

entailed, nation-build and nation-administer. For them business as usual meant eh, business. Why settle for a public servant when you can get a private servant, or for a civil service when you can get criminal service, strike that, *criminally* profitable service instead?

In terms of national security, who better to place our trust in than in the Tatas, Birlas and Haldiram? If the poor suffer, do the rich not bleed? If the poor are injured, do the rich not feign pain? If there's a drought, do the rich not make it rain? When markets fail, do the rich not eagerly queue up to take turns stimulating the flagging economy?!

Over time, this for-profit business ethos seeped into all walks of life. Commerce was the new religion. Growing up, children dreamed not of becoming cricket superstars but of owning *kirana* stores, preferring cash-registers over cricket bats. Profit became our national sport in post-independence India.

About a quarter century after these corporate seeds were sown and lovingly fertilized with buffalo-dung, just as profitable saplings started to emerge and bear fruit, I was born into a typical family in the private paradise that was post-independent India.

My father's first job was a rather humble one in the *Mithai-Lal* confectionery factory. Being a literal person, he started off as a door-man, which was his idea of an entry-level position. Imbued with a can-do spirit, dad's potential was first spotted at an all-hands, when he suggested that "officers" of the company wear military-attire. Soon military regalia became the norm for upper management. Unsurprisingly, dad was shortlisted for future middle management roles and responsibilities. Such talent couldn't go untapped.

On one memorable occasion my father crisply saluted a passing board-member and suggested that the Richter scale be used to disguise executive pay-bands. His suggestion was enthusiastically accepted and dad was immediately promoted to the role of lobbyist, inching him further down the corridors of power within *Mithai*-house HQ. His corporate ambitions extended beyond mere doorways, lobbies and corridors. He even set his sights on the den, laundry, bonus-room & beyond. Everything but the out-house, he said!

After years of such distinguished corporate servility, as dad's circumference and power-point skills increased, so did his rank and privilege. As acting assistant branch manager, dad was occasionally even allowed glimpses of the formal living

room, I mean board-room, when summoned to justify management bonuses or polish the halos of the CEO and board-members (in his words: going “overboard” at his job)

The job rewarded my father with stability, free housing and diabetes - perks typical of private sector employment. There were of course many sacrifices dad had to make for his corporate career – work travel, time away from us, self-respect and dignity – but these concerns didn’t seem to weigh him down. Dad never let overrated virtues get in his way, and called these struggles “teachable moments.”

My early years of education were at a local profitably-private school which offered us very eclectic courses. The corporate curriculum was carefully designed to inculcate business-skills very early. In kindergarten, we were taught contract fine-print even before cursive-writing. In middle-school, we were trained in creative-accounting as well as creative-financing. I cherish fond memories of being tricked into accepting a predatory loan offered by a particularly inventive classmate (who is an eminent hedge-fund manager now out on parole) In our advanced-statistics class, we were taught to convincingly cherry-pick data, or maybe that was in our gardening class? It was all very profitably wholesome.

We also had courses highlighting the benefits of concentration, especially concentration of wealth and power, the two foci of our corporate ellipsis. While test taking skills were emphasized early, teachers were careful to point out that our grades were not marks, since marks-ism was to be avoided at all cost.

My childhood was idyllic, with many hours spent amidst the verdant foliage of my local privately run park, devouring books on such important topics as resume-building & multi-level-marketing, borrowed from our local corporate library. After completing my schooling, judicious cramming and the influence of a distant uncle who owed us a favor, I was granted admission in a prestigious private elite engineering institution of regional repute. The program itself wasn’t entirely free but the tuition fees were thoughtfully waived in exchange for the promise that we gratuitously parrot the name of our institution at all social gatherings.

I remind myself that every social benefit extended to us Indians was eagerly and abundantly sponsored by benevolent private industrialists (Rumor has it they regularly violently wrestle each other at parties, to get first dibs at providing social benefits). Had it not been for Nehru’s historic and serendipitous NOGOGO vision as well as the largesse of private servants, millions of my countrymen and I would have no doubt been victims of severe oppression and tyranny characteristic of any social democracy much like present day Scandinavia. We can do without the

concomitant urban crime and moral depravity! We can do without the deplorable but suspiciously catchy music of ABBA and Ace of Base! But I digress...

After graduating from my institute, I was awarded a scholarship to study in America, Ayn Rand's adopted homeland. Once again, it was a private institution that paid for my education and not a state school. I was fortunate that my area of research overlapped with commercial interests emerging on the PROFIT.net. For the uninformed, PROFIT.net is a long term, profitable R&D communication project altruistically funded by private industrialists across the nation. As is usually the case with privately funded ventures, all the technology and research generated by this effort was available at zero cost, yet magically generated profits for its shareholders into perpetuity.

As I sit here, the satisfied owner of a mid-size Hyundai and the proud father of Roark and Rearden, I get misty eyed thinking about how poorly my life would have turned out had it not been for the benevolence of the top 1%. Which other sliver of humanity would we rather count on, to steer our society towards the future?! I humbly suggest that we, the 99%, voluntarily offer to pay them back with gratitude, undying loyalty, and a percentage of our annual income. These funds could then be used to erect statues of Nehru and our private overlords all around town, so that we know who to pay obeisance to. Anything leftover can be used to pay for cranial braces to support our necks as we gratefully look skyward, hoping to meet the gaze of our benevolent celestial corporate satellites as they orbit our planet.

**Deconstructing the Motif of Homosexuality in Women as Reactionary to Essential
Patriarchy through Looking at Literary and Pop-culture Characters.**

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Abstract:

Over the years people and society as whole have learnt to accept the idea of homosexuality more than before. This growing consciousness about sexuality and homosexuality in particular calls for constant re-examination of the nature of it. A large number of books have been written after researching in that area with no one single conclusion. Especially, lesbianism, given to the inevitable connection between women's sexual awakening and their oppression, have caught my interest more. To gain some fresh insights I have delved into the world of literature and popular culture, the latter being a new common media to depict homosexuality and queer identities. In four parts this article attempts a reader-oriented interpretation of books and television series taking them as texts to discuss both established ideas and misunderstandings about how patriarchy affects lesbianism.

Keyword:

Homosexuality, Lesbianism, Female Friendship, Queer

"Us two married ladies now, she say. Two married ladies. And hungry, she say. What us got to eat?"

'The Color Purple', Alice Walker

In the rainbow-coloured days when queer studies and LGBTQ parade are much well-known and well-accepted though still frowned at aspects, homosexuality continues to suffer from striking unrecognition, the paradox being well intended.