

THE LIBERAL CANON

OF THE NEW YEAR
GHOST

HELP

NEWYR

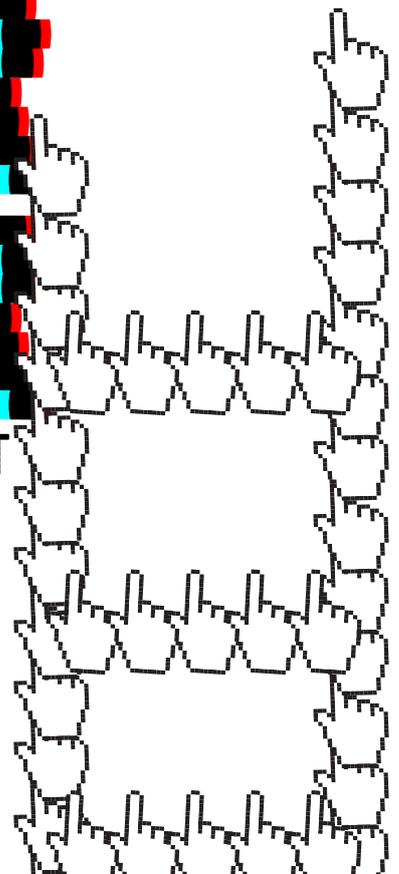
NEWOR

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THE GREAT PRIVACY HEIST



EDITORS NOTE

Throughout the past year, change has been a concurrent theme so most of us may agree that parading into 2021 with joy and hope feels like a rebirth. With the outdoorsy life put to a halt and learning to live in a bubble, 2020 taught us more about ourselves and tested us at every curve. This time has allowed our lives to realign and readjust according to the given circumstances, not forgetting all the hardships of life during a pandemic.

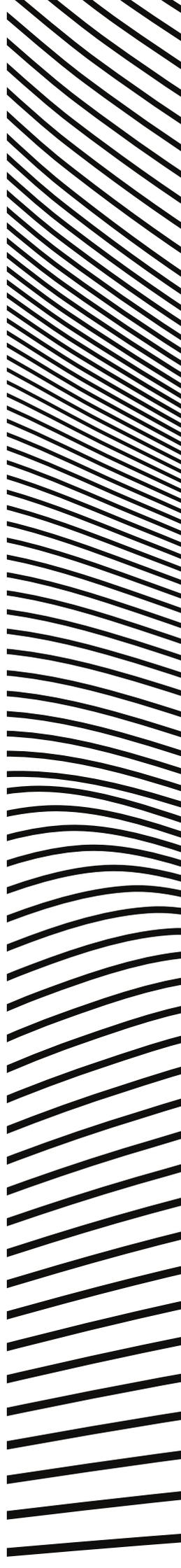
A recurring issue has been data mining and privacy hacks when the entire world's communication and life depends on them using digital surfaces. What began as ingress into the matter has become the focus of this edition. There are informative reports that propel you to think about the impact of data collection on our lives, to the extent of gender inequality and women's rights being brought into the very same topic.

Addressing prevailing and important issues, there is a well researched article on abortion which adds onto women's rights and choices. These issues require urgent attention as a woman has always been entitled to her choice and her voice to be heard.

On a lighter and creative note, it can be understood that we face various problems in our society that need healing and what's a better outlet or means of expression than poetry? Coupled with aesthetic poetry and pleasant articles, this edition is infused with the perfect combination of provoking thoughts and equally tranquilizing literature to bring serenity.

The team of The Liberal Canon wishes everyone a very happy new year with lots of love, optimism and happiness in this year. May we finally put all the self-discovering of 2020 to use by applying the best versions of ourselves and creating a better world for all of us. As Oprah Winfrey said, "It's another chance for us to get it right!"

Sanah Shah



ACHILLES FALLS

SAACHI GUPTA

there are flowers in your hair,
the soft pink of a rosebud
but what will you do, achilles,
if the flowers are made from blood?

you sing like the world will end,
like you can swallow it raw.

like the world is all yours, achilles,
and you've driven away god.

and still achilles is soft,
his love, sunlight on winter skin
till achilles' eyes shine without reason,
the storm never reaches him.

the days here are long, too precious to lose,
we sink into the earth.
the nights suck the colour out of the sky,
remind us of our worth.

and in the shadow of the day,
in a rose quartz cave,
achilles falls.
in the songs of the spring,
between frail, paper wings,
he slams down his crumbling walls.

the golden age is here, achilles.
if you look at me to feel real,
if you look at me and feel something like love,
the end of the world is near.

and there is desperation somewhere outside:
tell me what you see in achilles.

hey fear the unknown, they fear you and me:
do you want to be or be with achilles?

but achilles is the way the river roars.
he is the taste of revolution, i sigh.
achilles is the silver moon come out of hiding
his pride is a dwindling high.

achilles is gentle, achilles the killer,
achilles is wildly in love,
achilles is the golden child of the sea,
he fears no god above.

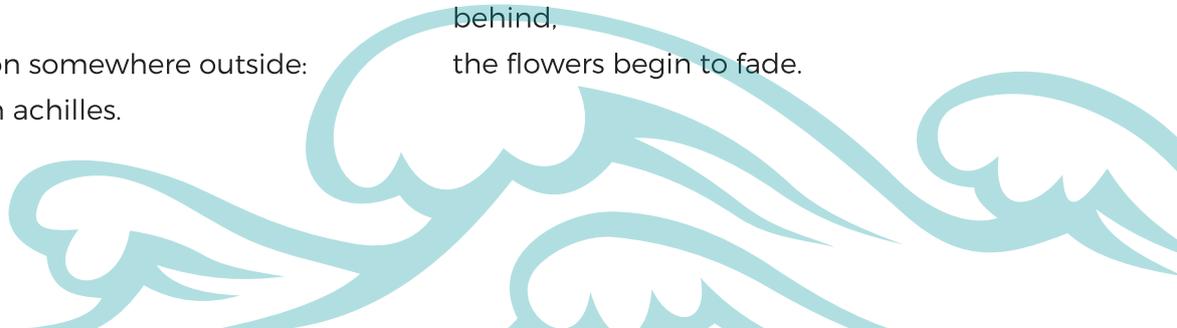
and have you ever lost, achilles,
the only person you used to fight for?
have you ever found
that there is nobody you can die for?

for here i am on my knees, achilles.
my body ill fit in an armour that's yours.
you have made me into a crazed monster,
you've turned love into a bloody war.

and in the dead of the night,
he dreams i'm alright,
and achilles falls again.
at the break of dawn,
he knows i'm still gone,
drags madness around walls again.

and achilles falls with a smile on his lips,
achilles falls with grace.
we are doomed and lovelier for it, he knows
as he waits for my embrace.

and in the empty mornings after achilles falls,
they bring flowers, soft pink, to his grave
and when they return home, leaving achilles
behind,
the flowers begin to fade.





ASMITA KUMBHAR AND AMATULLA MUKADAM

Historically, women have been harassed in a plethora of ways, be it verbally, sexually, or mentally. Recently, this harassment has also leaked onto online platforms. Many women can attest to this fact, evidenced by the ever present unknown men in the direct messages of our social media accounts. However, there, we have the choice to avoid, ignore, and even block them from contacting us. What happens when that choice, that veil of protection, is not there? The recent Mettl proctoring incidents answered that question for the students of NMIMS university. It's safe to assume that none among us are completely unaware of what happened, but here is a short summary: NMIMS partnered with Mettl Online Assessment, a software that is supposed to ensure that academic integrity is not compromised, for the recent Term End Examinations. This integrity, however, came at a price for many female students. Proctors, initially thought to be our faculty, were discovered to be random people who were paid to monitor students writing their exams and who were in no way vetted beforehand. These unknown people not only stared at us for hours, they also had access to our email-ids, phone numbers, and in some cases our Aadhar card numbers and addresses. The 360° view we had to provide to 'confirm' our test-taking environment even allowed them to look into our homes. Unfortunately, some male proctors went one step further: sending students offensive, scary messages both during the exams on the software and later via social media. Putting 2 and 2 together,

The 4 we have are strangers who have our information and are clearly not afraid to use it for online harassment, possibly worse. It's

clear that this was a severe breach of our privacy and of the trust we place in the university as its students. But the incident lends itself to a much larger sphere of issues too.

On 13th January, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, supported the bid of raising the marriage age for women from 18 to 21 years of age. While this is a lot to unpack in itself, it's the latter part of his statement that's most relevant to the proctoring incident. The CM proposed that women who leave the house for work should register themselves with the nearest police station and their movements be tracked for their own "safety". Here we find, yet again, men in positions of authority trying to restrict the movement of women in the name of their own safety instead of working on the cause behind the very need for their protection instead. Not only will this be a severe breach of privacy, the programme also operates under the assumption that homes are the safest spaces for women. Needless to say, this couldn't be more incorrect, considering that abusers and harassers are sometimes members of the household, and being at home clearly did not stop the Mettl proctors from harassing women. It also opens up a whole new avenue of harassment possibilities for those so inclined. Can the government guarantee that the police who will have access to our locations won't misuse this information and abuse the power given to them to hurt instead of protect? The Mettl proctors too were responsible for making sure that no malpractices occurred during our examinations, and they too misused the power that came with this responsibility to terrorize students instead.

This incident has forced us to ask: does academic integrity hold more importance than our safety and security? When we sign up to be part of any institution, we make ourselves vulnerable to their system. For the administration, these might just be isolated incidents, but for the students, this is a major moment in their life. Institutions have a responsibility to protect their students, and must take this more seriously in light of these disturbing incidents. Here's hoping our concerns will not go unaddressed.



The lack of response from the university has been disappointing and disheartening. I still had to give an exam after a panic attack and another exam the very next day. I don't know how my exams ended or how they went by. I really do hope the university starts looking into their students mental health and safety concerns more seriously.

-Jhanvi Adatia

To summarize the horrors of last week would be difficult. But I'll take this attempt to encourage everyone to check up on your friends. Victims or not, in this period of uncertainty there was one constant: fear. The fear that anything can happen. Anything can go wrong. Anyone can harass me during my exam. Or after my exam. Exams are over, but what if my number is still out there waiting to be exploited? The fear of the unknown brings endless anxieties. So check up on your friends. Don't hope, but demand. Demand that no student should be brought to the brink of feeling unsafe in their own bedrooms. You only have each other.

-Pranavy Yadav

It was quite triggering to see my peers go through something so traumatic and have to turn to social media to have their concerns addressed. It was disappointing to see authorities and individuals we had respected wait till the last possible moment to give an ear to our juniors.

-Azania Patel, alumnus and Rhodes scholar at Oxford University

That day I was relieved to be done with my last exam and a few minutes later I got a text from the proctor. It was a blur honestly, I panicked and texted my friend who told me to report to the college. I felt so anxious and unsafe inside my own house. I felt like somehow our privacy was never a priority during these exams.

-Radhika Pandere

AN ISSUE OUT OF SYLLABUS

SIDDHANSH AGARWAL

As the world faced a cultural paradigm shift from physical setups to everything happening over digital real estate, education was forced to do the same. As soon as the lockdown was announced, online education became a necessity rather than a choice, and it's now at a point where it's more or less default. With online education, hand in hand came online exams. Online exams had been a long living concept, but when they turned to exams from home, we had a new variable to deal with called supervision. Since time immemorial, students have always found ways to cheat during exams, online or offline. Remote examinations are much easier to cheat in the traditional sense. To tackle this, online video proctoring was introduced. On a fundamental level, you can see the problem of privacy invasion lying here. Fortunately, the students themselves realised this because most of us have been a part of the internet growing up hence know how important privacy is. But unfortunately, most of the concerns were brushed off as just college students being rebellious. So even students had no other option but to succumb to the rules of their institution.

Now, when exams came knocking on our doors, we welcomed them knowing that like usual, they'll have the tea of anxiety and fritters of stress. Little we knew they planned on bringing with them, the gift of harassment. Mercer Mettl is an online platform which offers exam portals and remote proctoring services. The university

chose to conduct the Term End Examinations. Then came the uninvited problem. During, and after the examination, the remote "proctors", who were allegedly hired for Rs. 600/- day by Mettl decided to send creepy messages to students. These messages include the likes of asking them to lower their cameras, their Instagram IDs, amongst many other inappropriate requests. Most of the time, this happened during the examination, when the student is supposed to be at their most peaceful and focused state of mind. Again, fundamentally it's the invasion of our personal space without knowing the identity of the person doing it. Then, it takes a toll on our mental health during and after the examination because most of the messages fall straight under harassment! In a time like this, when the internet is as real as it gets, harassment is as serious on the internet as it is in real life and that too during exams. During a semester in which most of the students couldn't obtain a chunk of what they're taught, thanks to online classes, examinations on the very syllabus came as a burden onto the shoulders of the students.

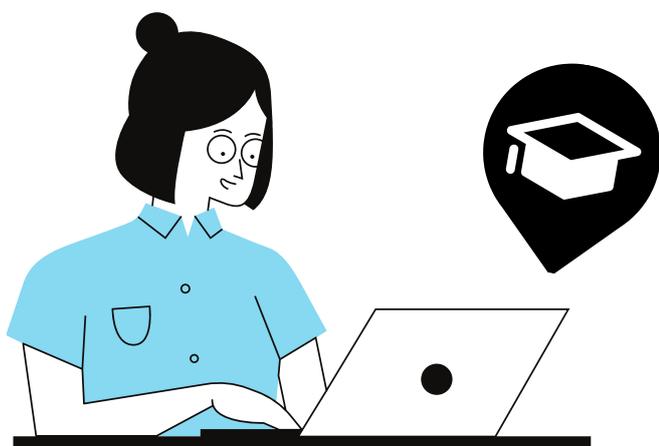
This incident also slapped the reality of gender inequality in our faces. In a country which likes to believe that sexual harassment is "justified" because it was provoked, its society will remain silent when an incident like this takes place where there was no sexual provocation. The sole reason for harassment cases like these is the mentality of some men who think that they have control over the women they're interacting with.

Here's what you can do if you ever find yourself a situation like this. The first and immediate action should be collecting all the evidence you can. It could be photos, videos, or any other form of media which verifies the

crime. Next, you identify the convict. There have been instances when the proctors have tried to contact students through other platforms i.e., Whatsapp, Instagram, etc. You can get a name and a face from these apps most of the time. The most favourable condition is to have both of them, but even if they're not present, you can still file a complaint and let the authorities investigate.

Now, this isn't a university problem, it is the platform that had the responsibility of conducting background checks on every person that they were gonna share our information with. Also, most of the proctors in the exams are males, and that is another problem. As the participation of women in the workforce decreases over the years, we immediately need more of them, especially in the information and technology sector. If there were an equal, or at least comparable number of male and female proctors, cases like these would fall by half, and that's just probability. We need to realise that it's time we pass the mic to women and let social change shine. That's the sole cure to a regressive and patriarchal society, and although it will be a slow process, it is important that we start somewhere.

In conclusion, I believe that the immediate response should be punishing the convicts, the platform learning from its mistakes, and institutes paying more attention to what the student fraternity has to say, as most of us as adults are mature enough to spot the warning signs, especially in the digital age.



ANGELS TO THE RESCUE

SACHI SARAF

Nobody really understands
For nobody really knows
Nobody really cares
Cause they're starring in their own shows

You lay there in your bed
With your eyes burning up
Your head throbbing loud
While you're trying to suck it up

You're pitying yourself
Oh so alone you feel
Nobody to count on
Such an unfair deal

Everybody's cruel
Everybody's to blame
You're looking for excuses
To curse, hate and shame

You try to kill that monster
It's called "loneliness"
It makes you such a loser
It makes you such a mess

One thing scares it away
It's the angel of "company"
Be it your friends and family
Or a show that's kinda funny

There is a stronger angel though
One that fights it hard and good
We call it "self love"
It hides in things like comfort food

You're pitying yourself
Oh so alone you feel
Nobody to count on
Such an unfair deal

It makes you enjoy you
Showing you the beauty that you hold
The funny, caring girl
With a heart made of gold.

So you see, it's not that difficult
The secret ingredient is you
To save your own self,
With a tiny hand from
The angels to the rescue.

THE BURIED LIFE

ASMITA KUMBHAR

But often, in the world's most crowded
streets,

But often, in the din of strife,

There rises an unspeakable desire

After the knowledge of our buried life;

A thirst to spend our fire and restless force

In tracking out our true, original course;

A longing to inquire

Into the mystery of this heart which beats

So wild, so deep in us - to know

Whence our lives come and where they go.

- Matthew Arnold

Picture this: You're traveling all over the world with your best friends, crossing out items from your bucket list, carpe diem-ing the heck out of life. You would dismiss this picture, simply a daydream, an unreasonable, unattainable ideal life. "We have classes to attend, jobs to get, money to earn, families to support! We can't just up and leave everything to go chasing fantasies!" Well, why the hell not? Unlike cats, the aphorism YOLO applies to us, so why do we live life according to a template made decades ago? "It's impossible for normal people like us, okay?" You'll reason. What if I told you it's not?

In 2006, four regular friends got together in a garage in Canada and decided they didn't want to live a regular life. Taking inspiration from Matthew Arnold's poem, they made the ultimate bucket list, 100 "impossible" items, and set out to uncover their buried lives. Comprising Dave Lingwood, Ben Nemtin, and brothers Jonnie and Duncan Penn, the Buried Life team centered their mission around one question: What do you want to do before you die? In Jonnie's own words, *"We ended up on the phone together one day because, like most (people) our age, we had no idea what to do with our lives. Overwhelmed by school, work, family and life in general, we wanted to create something new, but we didn't know what. Everywhere we looked the media was claiming that our generation was fat, lazy and violent. A long look at our friends and ourselves, however, suggested something different. Underneath our generation's seeming sluggishness lay an often-untapped potential that was, for some reason or another, "buried." To uncover the truth, we decided to write a list of all the things we wanted most in life, all the things we wanted to experience and achieve before we died, and do them. We promised that for everything we were able to complete, we would help a stranger do something on their list. And every new place we went, we'd ask the question, "What do you want to do before you die?"*

With money for gas that they raised by throwing a farewell party, a borrowed RV and a camera from Ebay, they set out to cross off 24 items, including classic bucket list items like "Get a tattoo" and "Go to Burning Man". As time went on and their popularity increased, they started going for the more "insane" ones. From kissing the Stanley Cup

to asking out Taylor Swift, from having a beer with Prince Harry to playing basketball with Obama (yes, you read that right), they did everything we would have dismissed as mere daydreams. And everywhere they went, they helped others cross off items on their bucket lists. They aided a child in getting a kidney he needed for a transplant, reunited lovers who had been apart for almost a decade, and helped a young girl get a prosthetic arm so she could finally hug her parents. If you teared up even slightly at this, you're not alone. It just is that touching.

Ever since I discovered it, the original bucket list has had a permanent place on my bookmarks bar. I like to look at it whenever I feel like this life stuff just ain't working for me. If anything, it gives me hope, and I hope it can do the same for you. So go ahead, ask out that cutie you've been crushing on, try that exotic dish you saw on the menu, write that story, record that video, post that picture. Or, you know, take that nap, binge that show in a single weekend. Life's too short to deny yourself actually enjoying it. Let's go uncover our buried life.



THE LIFE IN THE WOMB

RAHUL INGOLE

What does the word Abortion make you think/feel?

For me, it does not signify death; it signifies the right of a woman over her body. Surprisingly, only 34% of countries in the world allow abortion based on the woman's request. In many countries, abortion can turn women into criminals. In America, certain states like Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi and Ohio allow abortion upto only six weeks of pregnancy.

In India, according to Lancet's 2015 report, around $\frac{1}{3}$ of the pregnancies in 2015 ended in abortion (15.6 million) with half of the pregnancies being unintended. Around 56% of abortions are designated as unsafe resulting in death of atleast 10 women every day. Surprisingly, in India, the recently updated Medical Termination of Pregnancy Laws (MTP), 2020 tries to be progressive but falls short of it. Abortion is only need based and fails to have a right-based directive in this country. The new law increases the upper limit of abortion from 20 to 24 weeks for special category of women (i.e victims of rape, incest, minors etc) and also reduces the requirement of the opinion of two doctors to one for upto 20 weeks, but requires two doctors to sign off during the period of 21-24 weeks. The question here is, why do women indirectly require a doctor's permission to do something that should be their right? Is a woman incapable of taking the decision on her own?

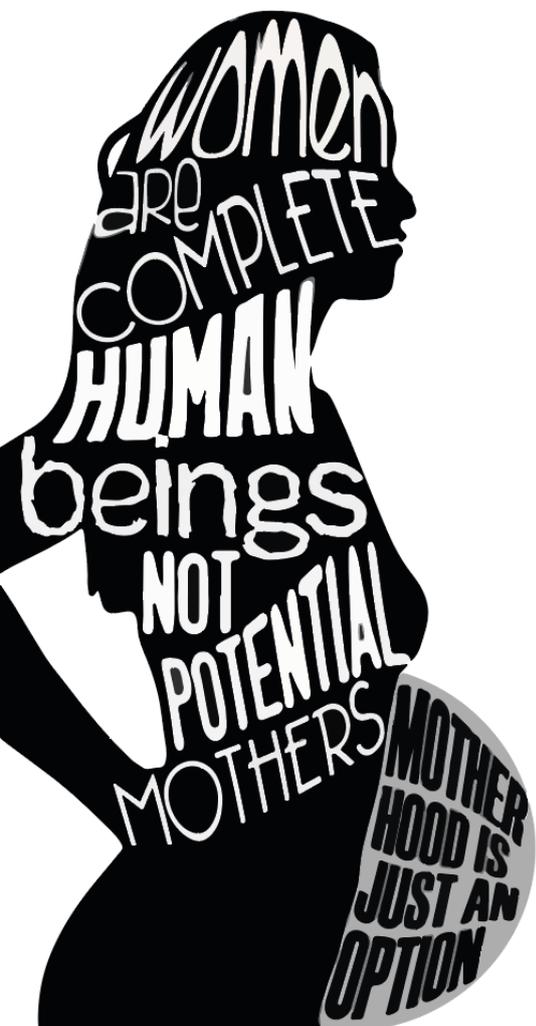
It fails to cater to the needs of special categorized women who have passed the 24 week limit. What do they do? Beg and file petitions to the uncompassionate, bureaucratic justice system of our country. From June 2016 to April 2019, 20% (19/97) of the rape victims were denied abortion forcing them to carry something that demeans their entire existence. In 2017, a 10 year old who was 28 weeks pregnant was denied abortion by the Supreme Court on grounds that termination would result in a health risk for both her and her foetus. Here, I ask, what about the lifetime of societal persecution and agony the girl will have to face if her pregnancy is successful? (Yes, unfortunately it was successful)

The MTP completely removes the upper gestation limit in the case of foetal abnormalities but it requires the consultation/permission of the Medical Board, which in most cases delays the

decision resulting in huge mental and physical trauma to women. How can women in rural areas avail such services when they are already burdened by the weight of class, caste and religion? It fails to consider the willful needs of women to perform an abortion, and in case of "contraceptive failure", it only applies to married women and excludes a large number of single women including marginalized groups - sex workers, transgenders etc. It also fails to explicitly accept that abortion is a right and that a woman who has a perfectly healthy child growing in her can opt for it, without being scared of any repercussions.

These laws, according to me, portray tools which withhold women from progressing, and undermines their freedom of choice entirely. The abortion laws rise out of the duty of the state to protect life, but I ask the state on what grounds is it protecting life when it can't even nurture it in the womb. The woman literally gives her life to the child and hence, till it's in her womb she should have complete choice as to whether she wants to continue nurturing the child or terminate it. As harsh as it may sound, the question of whether the child is alive or not, should not even arise.

Abortion Laws in most places around the world have to be reconsidered but the question I ask myself is, is it possible when high ranking political positions are still held by men who have repeatedly failed to understand a woman's dilemma? Abortion needs to be normalized to prevent the need to pursue unsafe abortion practices but this would require massive awareness penetration to the deepest levels of our social structure which makes me question the ability of India to do the same.



JD16 LOVES

OUR JANUARY FAVOURITES

TV SHOW

TANNAV

MOVIE

WONDER WOMAN 1984

ONLINE COURSE

THE SCIENCE OF WELL BEING OFFERED
BY YALE UNIVERSITY

DIY

BULLET
JOURNALING

TECH PRODUCTS

APPLE AIRPODS MAX

ART

CAFÉ TERRACE AT NIGHT
BY VINCENT VANGOGH

GAME

ABALONE

BOOK

THE GREAT GATSBY
BY SCOTT FITZGERALD

MENTAL WELL BEING

MINDSPA

WORKOUT APP

MAP MY RUN

DREAM DESTINATION

MAURITIUS

RESTAURANT

YAUATCHA MUMBAI

MUSIC

RISE UP
BY IMAGINE DRAGONS

PODCAST

MONDAY MOTIVATION
BY SANDI BALLAR

ONLINE SHOP

MACYS

STUDENT ESSENTIALS

TO DO LIST [FOR ONLINE COLLEGE]

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Editor in Chief: Sanah Shah

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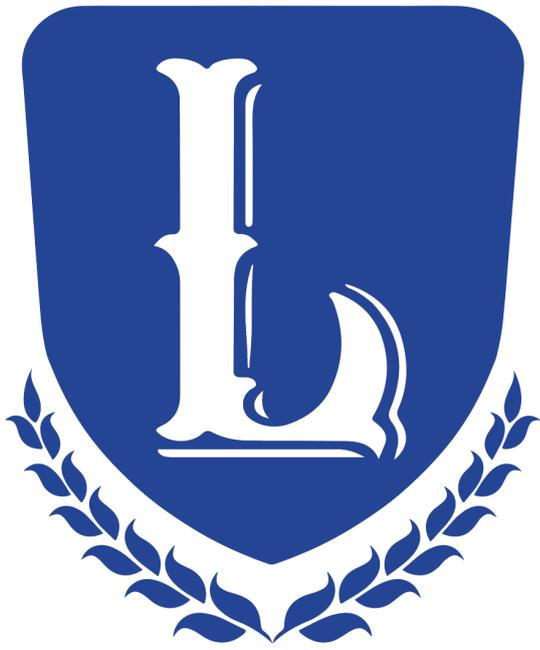
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Rhea Danak
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M

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Simran Pitale
Som Nagda
Tanaya Mashruwala



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theliberalcanon@gmail.com
medium.com/@theliberalcanon

