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Editorial

So the end is here again (don't get your hopes too high, it's only the end of the term): four days from now, most of us, if not all, will be back home – apart from those lucky people who have already nicked off home on some pretext or the other.

Chandbagh will become a peaceful abode once again (actually, I am sure the masters will take advantage of our absence and have a party time themselves!). And, in retrospect, I can safely say it's been a great term.

What exactly happened this term? A lot...the D formers survived their first term in school (thanks to a batch of nice Scs), Kashmir House finally won a major cup (just kidding guys, well done!), the Nizams left the rest of the Houses gaping cluelessly as they took away the Cricket Cup by a considerable margin, while the Warriors made a bid for the Gong successfully and won the Hockey Cup with Kashmir. The Scs had two rocking Socials (or at least that is what we made you believe), the new S form and Sc-Leavers got brilliant results in the Board Examinations because of their hard work (masters also deserve a round of applause for their success), 'biker-boy' took over as Dy. HM, the school cricket team had a 50 percent

From The School Captain

Avyay Jhunjunwala reviews the term gone by

Another term has come to a close, and we leave School with fond memories and some unhappy reminiscences. Yet, I must say that the term did fly by and most of us, if not all, will cherish the term gone by.

Commenting on sports this term, both the School cricket and hockey teams had an average season. However, both the Inter-House Competitions were played with immense zeal and enthusiasm. I sincerely hope that all DoscOs play with such passion and so-called 'josh' for the School and not only for the House. I appreciate the fact that all the players displayed a great sense of sportsmanship and hope that this will continue. It was nice to note that the disputes at the matches ended on the field itself and were not carried to the Houses. Much to everyone's surprise, our basketball team performed spectacularly in pulling off a stunning victory against the BKSP boys in the semi-final of the Afzal Khan Basketball Tournament. Although they were defeated in the final, it was good to see budding talent.

The School Council had a very hectic term. Many meetings were prolonged, due to the discussion of important matters. Out of the many conclusions that were drawn out from the meetings, we came to the agreement of having a Senior, Junior and House Cup after it was passed in the Games' Committee, and this, I personally feel has been a great success. There was a lot of debate on the relaxing of the S and Sc form schedules. The surprising thing is that some of the proposals were shot down by the seniors themselves. It

success rate, the school hockey team was also right up to there as it reached the finals of the Districts and the Council Schools' Hockey Tournament, and by lunch today, Trials would have breezed by. These were the main pieces making up the term's jigsaw.

The Weekly has been delivered to you on every Saturday this term (except the Saturday after midterms, sorry, but we couldn't excuse ourselves from our date with the mountains). We continue to be open to your suggestions as it is impossible for the twenty-one of us to decide what the school community appreciates or what should be the correct mix of articles.

It's time to part (only for two months, sadly) and take a well-deserved break. So, go have fun, gain a few kilograms. On behalf of the entire Editorial Board of The Doon School Weekly I wish you Happy Holidays (and finally a few easy-going Thursdays and Fridays for us!).

was very interesting to note that boys are actually concerned more about the future of the School than their personal luxury.

The masters have been quite supportive of the prefects this term. Prefects *do* require their support at all times to make sure that the School's conduct and behaviour is not unbecoming and it is, to some extent, a give and take relationship. Prefects need to be given space, to handle the affairs inside the House. For the smooth functioning of the House, it is very important that the prefects and the Scs share a good rapport with the Housemaster. Both need to make compromises for the general benefit of the House.

To comment on the senior-junior relationship in School: it has become a lot more relaxed than it ever was. An example of this was seen in the K House quadrangle where boys from A to Sc form played *marram pittti* together, and it was nice to see the juniors and seniors 'crack' each other with the ball alike. But, even as we look into this issue, we must realize that there is a fine line between a senior and junior, and a junior must learn not to exceed his limits. There are times when you can joke around with seniors and there are times when you need to adhere to what the senior says.

I totally support the notion that there should not be any ragging and no one should, at any cost, be physically intimidated. Yet, the School needs to guard against being too protective towards its juniors.

I must say that the level of discipline has improved by a huge margin. But, the one thing we really need to work on is punctuality. It was disheartening to learn that many of the boys only understand through the language of punishments. Words hardly have any effect on them. Surely, it is not that tough to abide by the rules, and yet boys have to be constantly checked and punished for breaking them. Do we need to be constantly policed in order to teach us what is right? Can we not learn without punishments?

In the end, I would just like to add that it is us, the people of The Doon School that make up this community and we must strive to make Doon a better place.

regulars

The results of the **Hindi Poetry Writing Competition** are:

- 1st:** Skand Goel
- 2nd:** Apurva Maheshwari
- 3rd:** Shubham Gupta

The results of the **Hindi Short Story Writing Competition** are as follows:

- 1st:** Vansh Bhatia
- 2nd:** Amritesh Rai
- 3rd:** Sahil Jain

Keep writing!

Take Five !

Movies	
English	Hindi
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Da Vinci Code ● Superman Returns ● Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest ● X-Men: The Last Stand ● Mission Impossible 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phir Hera Pheri ● Dhoom 2 ● Fanaa ● Krrish ● Don 2
Games	Books
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hitman: Blood Money ● Half Life 2: Platinum Edition ● Ghost Wars ● Da Vinci Code ● GTA: Liberty City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Racists – Kunal Basu ● Everyman – Philip Roth ● The Hills of Angheri – Kavery Nambisan ● Beloved – Toni Morrison ● Never Let Me Go –

RADIO MIRCHI

C.K. Dikshit reports on the HAM Radio convention, held in the Andamans last month

On Easter Monday, two science teachers from the School boarded a Jet Airways flight before daybreak, on their way to Port Blair.

Next day, the festival was formally inaugurated in the Conference Hall of the Hotel Megapode Nest by the Lt. Governor of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Around a hundred participants were present, out of which forty had come from outside India. The convention was sponsored by the Departments of Information & Technology and Tourism. The National Institute of Amateur Radio played a key role in organizing the three-day festival.

The convention started with a formal welcome address by Mr. S. Suri, the chairman of NIAR, who highlighted the role of HAMS in providing service to the community and the significance of the Amateur Radio in promoting research and development in Information Technology. The involvement of educational institutions in promoting this hobby was also emphasized by him. The Chief Secretary praised the NIAR for providing yeoman service to the people when the Tsunami created havoc in the Islands.

The post-lunch session was devoted to deliberations about generating public awareness towards Amateur Radio and its integration to higher education and disaster management.

Next morning, most of the participants staying at the South Point Circuit House were up by 5 am to watch the sun rising from the Bay of Bengal. There, at the beach, I met a senior lecturer from the National Institute of Engineering, Mysore, who advocated the idea of integrating Amateur Radio in the curriculum of educational institutions. Later, when he presented his paper on Amateur Radio as a scientific hobby for students in schools and colleges, a very lively discussion took place regarding the motivation of students who are now getting more accustomed to the cell-phone culture. We, too, took active part in the deliberations and projected our viewpoint. A HAM, using a hundred watt receiver-cum-transmitter can afford to communicate for ten hours just by paying the cost of one unit of electricity which may be taken as rupees ten as per tariff at Port Blair. So, it comes down to a rupee per hour or less than two

Opinion Poll

Award the term gone by with one of the following: Distinction, Commendation, Satisfactory, House List.

- **Distinction: 20%**
- **Commendation: 39%**
- **Satisfactory: 13%**
- **House List: 28%**

ERRATA

We would like to apologise for the misprint in the Regulars column last week with regard to the **Junior Cup** positions in the **Inter-House Hockey Competition**. The correct results are as follows:

1st: Oberoi; 2nd: Jaipur; 3rd: Tata and Kashmir; 5th: Hyderabad.

We also omitted mentioning Chirag Nangia being awarded **Cricket Half-Colours**. Our apologies, and congratulations!

paisa per minute! At this nominal cost, a window is available in the wide spectrum of Electromagnetic Waves for communicating with other HAMS on the Air, from any part of the globe. A HAM Shack thus became a small nest where one experiences oneness with the universe. The third, and final day of the festival, were exclusively dedicated to DXing i.e. making contacts with HAMS in other countries and studying propagation conditions. Various rigs were active at different levels in the Hotel Megapode Nest throughout the day. One rig was also set up at the South Point Circuit House where the festival formally concluded after a late-night sumptuous feast. Full of hopes for our Chandbagh HAM Club (VU2 CHC) OM CKD and YL MTS were back in school by lunchtime on Saturday, April 22.

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The Minutes of the School Council Meeting

held on April 14, 2006, in the Kilachand Library

The following members were present:

- 1.) Dr. Kanti Bajpai- Headmaster (Chairman)
- 2.) Mr. Philip Burrett- Deputy Headmaster (PBR)
- 3.) Mr. Prabhakaran Nair-Dean of Academics (PKN)
- 4.) Mr. Deepak Sharma- Dean of Sports (DKS)
- 5.) Dr. Mohan Joshi- Dean of Activities (MCJ)
- 6.) Mr. Piyush Malviya- Housemasters' Representative (PMV)
- 7.) Mr. Harinder Chakhaiyar- Masters' Representative (HCH)
- 8.) Avyay Jhunjhunwala- School Captain
- 9.) Chirag Hirawat- Oberoi 'A' Senior Representative (Secretary)
- 10.) Aditya Ajmani- Prefect's Representative
- 11.) Akash Maheshwari- Hyderabad House Senior Representative 1
- 12.) Shoumit Mukhopadhaya- Hyderabad House Senior Representative 2
- 13.) Abhishek Sharma- Hyderabad House Junior Representative 1
- 14.) Arjun Kapoor- Hyderabad House Junior Representative 2
- 15.) Abhimanyu Walia -Jaipur House Senior Representative 1
- 16.) Rohan Gupta- Jaipur House Senior Representative 2
- 17.) Arjanvir S. Maini- Jaipur House Junior Representative 1
- 18.) Siddhant Gupta- Jaipur House Junior Representative 2
- 19.) Adil Sg. Boparai- Kashmir House Senior Representative 1
- 20.) Achshay Singh- Kashmir House Senior Representative 2
- 21.) Yashvardhan Jain- Kashmir House Junior Representative 1
- 22.) Sumer Boparai- Kashmir House Junior Representative 2

- 23.) Himanshu Mishra- Oberoi 'B' Senior Representative
- 24.) Aaditya V. Gupta- Oberoi 'A' Junior Representative
- 25.) Sagar Agarwal- Oberoi 'B' Junior Representative
- 26.) Kushagra Kumar- Tata House Senior Representative 1
- 27.) Siddhartha Sharma- Tata House Senior Representative 2
- 28.) Amit Gupta- Tata House Junior Representative 1
- 29.) Jaivardhan Singh- Tata House Junior Representative 2

1) Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Proposed by Akash Maheshwari and seconded by Adil Boparai, the Minutes were confirmed.

2) Matters Arising Out of the Minutes

Draft of Liberalisation of the Schedule/Codes for 'S' and 'Sc' Formers.

The Chairman noted that this was a special meeting of the Council devoted to the draft liberalization of schedule and codes for S and Sc formers. He began the discussion by mentioning that he had brought up these matters both at the Housemasters' Council and the Prefects' Council and received some feedback which he would share in the course of the discussions. The meeting's proceedings were broken up into the following sections:

a) Sports

DKS suggested to the Council that if all competitions were to finish by the end of October in the 2nd Term, it would give the Sc Formers enough time to prepare for examinations. Another option was to have a compulsory ban on Sc Formers on all activities after August. Kushagra Kumar suggested that a ban on activities after Founder's would be the most appropriate and feasible. PBR suggested that P.T. could be ended, and inter-house basketball could be played in the 1st Term so as to ease the burden on Sc formers in the second term. DKS said that he would see if a schedule along these lines could be worked out. The Chairman also suggested that perhaps the PT competition could be held at the end of March, with A Transitioners continuing to do PT throughout the Board exams and then going home on March 31 at the completion of PT and cricket. The Chairman noted that the number of A Transitioners seeking permission to go home and miss the cricket competition was disquieting. There was also discussion around having the parent-teacher meeting on March 31 so that parents could watch the competition. It was felt that this might be too complicated a schedule to manage. The school would look into this possibility.

b) SUPW/STAs

PKN brought to the attention of the Council that the ISC Council required at least forty hours of service, twenty hours each in S and Sc form. This was quite easily done by the boys. As for STAs, they were not compulsory for either S or Sc formers.

c) Saturday Nights

Student members felt the Saturday night movie should not be compulsory. The Chairman explained to the Council that entertainment had been originally made compulsory for reasons other than just entertainment. Attending the movie collectively and having something in common to talk about, behaving with dignity and order in the absence of teachers, and learning to sit still during a performance were all important values and skills. It was agreed that Sc formers could ([contd.](#))

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be excused from Saturday entertainments in the second term. The Chairman urged all Sc formers who took permission to go back to the House to behave in a dignified manner during this time. PBR suggested that all houses should keep a list of all those who took permission to stay in the House.

d) Home Clothes

Aditya Ajmani and the Secretary suggested that Sc formers should be allowed to wear light, single-coloured home shirts, once a week for dinner. They also suggested khaki-coloured trousers as an alternative to the current white pants. However, Kushagra Kumar, Shoumit Mukhopadhaya, and Akash Maheshwari felt that the sense of uniformity amongst DoscOs would be lost. After discussion, it was decided that the current dress code would continue.

e) Non-Regulation Black Shoes

Sc Formers would now be allowed to wear black leather shoes with no logos. They must be laced shoes with no buckles. Boots, platform soles or slip-ons would not be allowed.

3) Any Other Matters With the Permission of the Chair

a) Floaters

The Council felt that the Adidas floaters that were under trial were too flashy and expensive. The Liberty Coolers were not attractive. There was agreement that the Aspen Crew floaters were of better quality. A final decision would be taken in the next meeting.

b) Grading System and Consistent Marking Scheme

The boys felt that for Sc form transcripts, a grading system such as percentile be introduced. If not, there should be some consistency in the marking scheme. The Chairman decided to forward the matter to the Academic Council.

c) Prefects Revised Punishment List

The revised punishment table had been reviewed with Housemasters and Prefects. The highlights of the new table were discussed. The new table was to be displayed on the House noticeboards and the Headmaster would announce at Assembly the fact that a new table was being brought into effect. The new table would be annexed into the Prefectorial Oaths.

The meeting was adjourned and was scheduled to meet next on 21 April 2006.

Minutes of the School Council Meeting

*held on **April 21, 2006**, in the Kilachand Library*

The following members were present:

- 1.) Dr. Kanti Bajpai- Headmaster (Chairman)
- 2.) Mr. Philip Burrett- Deputy Headmaster (PBR)
- 3.) Mr. Prabhakaran Nair- Dean of Academics (PKN)

- 4.) Mr. Deepak Sharma- Dean of Sports (DKS)
- 5.) Dr. Mohan Joshi- Dean of Activities (MCJ)
- 6.) Mr. Piyush Malviya- Housemasters' Representative (PMV)
- 7.) Mr. Sanjiv Bathla- Masters' Representative (SJB) (Stand-In)
- 8.) Avyay Jhunjunwala- School Captain
- 9.) Chirag Hirawat- Oberoi 'A' Senior Representative 2 (Secretary)
- 10.) Rohanjit Chaudhry- Prefect's Representative (Stand-In)
- 11.) Akash Maheshwari- Hyderabad House Senior Representative 1
- 12.) Shoumit Mukhopadhaya- Hyderabad House Senior Representative 2
- 13.) Abhishek Sharma- Hyderabad House Junior Representative 1
- 14.) Arjun Kapoor- Hyderabad House Junior Representative 2
- 15.) Abhimanyu Walia- Jaipur House Senior Representative 1
- 16.) Rohan Gupta- Jaipur House Senior Representative 2
- 17.) Arjanvir S. Maini- Jaipur House Junior Representative 1
- 18.) Siddhant Gupta- Jaipur House Junior Representative 2
- 19.) Adil Sg. Boparai- Kashmir House Senior Representative 1
- 20.) Achshay Singh- Kashmir House Senior Representative 2
- 21.) Yashvardhan Jain- Kashmir House Junior Representative 1
- 22.) Sumer Boparai- Kashmir House Junior Representative 2
- 23.) Himanshu Mishra- Oberoi 'B' Senior Representative 1
- 23.) Aaditya V. Gupta- Oberoi 'A' Junior Representative 1
- 24.) Sagar Agarwal- Oberoi 'B' Junior Representative 2
- 25.) Akaash Pathare- Tata House Senior Representative 1 (Stand-In)
- 26.) Siddhartha Sharma- Tata House Senior Representative 2
- 27.) Amit Gupta- Tata House Junior Representative 1

28.) Jaivardhan Singh- Tata House Junior Representative 2

29.) Dipankar Tiwary- Special Representative

1) Matters Arising out of the Minutes

a) Floaters

Dipankar Tiwary had been wearing the Bata floaters and was asked to attend the meeting and present a report. He felt that there was not much difference as compared to the Gliders. Siddhartha Sharma reported on the second Aspen ([contd.](#))

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Crew floaters. He said that the material was much better and since they were locally available, it would be the best bet. PBR brought two more pairs of floaters, both Gliders. One pair was given to Avyay Jhujhunwala and the other to Adil Boparai. The Council would take a final decision at the next meeting.

b) Entertainment in the Hospital

PBR had followed up on the issue and told everyone that the Doctor suggested a deck of cards, a carom board, chess, and some magazines. The Council decided on the following:

- 1) 1 Carom Board
- 2) 2 Chess Boards
- 3) Magazines – *India Today, Outlook, Sportstar*
- 4) Newspapers – *Times Of India, Hindustan Times*

c) Different Games Shirt

DKS brought some samples of the different games shirts to the meeting. It was decided that more blue should be present on the shirt. It was also decided that the shirts should be collared. The discussion then shifted to the School Team kits for Hockey and Soccer. Both these teams should have more or less the same style of kits. DKS and Akash Maheshwari offered to think of possibilities.

2) Proposals

a) Washing Machines in Houses

Shoumit Mukhopadhaya felt that having washing machines in all houses would bring about convenience in washing clothes, especially home clothes. The question was of supervision and maintenance. The Chairman said that currently the laundry of 3 Houses was outsourced and 2 Houses was washed in school. PBR reported that a company had approached the school some months earlier, but since their working area was not hygienic, the school had rejected it. The school may look at their facilities again to see if they had improved. Moreover, he said that he would take the issue to the Dames and ask them the current situation of laundry regarding frequency. The Chairman also felt that boys should get clothes tailored more often rather than relying on hand-me-downs from boys who had left school. He also felt that the cuts at the sides of the school shirt and the current games shirt made the children look sloppy. PBR would look into the matter.

b) Dance as an S.T.A

Abhimanyu Walia said that dance would be quite popular was an S.T.A. The Secretary suggested that we hire a choreographer, only for the Inter-House competition. MCJ reported that Mr. Gursharan Singh had been looking for a dance teacher, but was not able to find anyone with the right combination of folk and western skills. It was decided that if enough boys were willing to learn folk dance, then a teacher could be arranged. *The Doon School Weekly* would feature a poll on whether or not boys wanted to learn Indian classical dance. Council members were doubtful that there would be much interest.

c) More Inter-School Junior Activities

Amit Gupta suggested the School arrange more inter-school competitions for juniors such as debates, chess, and quiz. However, the Chairman said that it was his impression that there were not many junior

competitions in these areas at the junior level in Dehra Dun as also in Delhi. Also, the School had not received any invitations to such competitions. The Secretary suggested that the School start some junior competitions. PKN felt that the term schedule was too full for this. A Sub-Committee of Jaivardhan, Amit Gupta, and PBR was formed to look into the possibilities.

d) Coaching for Entrance Exams of Institutions (S-form)

Aaditya Gupta told the Council that the majority of S formers left to do engineering or medical courses. He suggested that if the School had some type of coaching classes to offer, it would reduce the amount of S Formers who left. The Chairman explained how the school's previous connections with FIT-JEE had ended because of the franchise had closed. Mr. Kamal Ahuja had looked into alternatives but could not find anything suitable. Some of the problems with various local coaching institutions included time, finance and the quality of instruction. If anyone knew of institute offering coaching, the authorities could look into the matter. He also mentioned that IIT had brought down the standard of its Entrance Exam. This may or may not ease the pressure on students to opt for coaching.

e) Publication and Dramatics Colours

Achshay Singh felt that like, art, music and quizzing, publications and dramatics colours should be awarded. The Council felt that boys who contributed tremendously towards school publications, usually received School Colours. As far as dramatics was concerned, there were already enough awards given during Special Assembly. The Chairman then went on to explain that since there were Inter-School Competitions in art, debating, and quizzing, the respective colours made sense. Boys also got points for the Scholar's Blazer. It was therefore decided that publications and dramatics colours were not warranted.

f) H& K Bathrooms Should be Renovated

Shoumit Mukhopadhaya felt that the bathrooms of Hyderabad and Kashmir House were in very poor condition. PBR said that the bathrooms of all houses were repaired to a certain extent every term. Nonetheless, PBR would have a look at the bathrooms along with Shoumit Mukhopadhaya and see if anything could be done.

g) Usage of Gymnasium by A formers

DKS said that boys under the age of 16 are not meant to use weights for various health reasons. There was also the question of numbers. If A formers were permitted to use the weights, there would be too many users for comfort.

h) McDonalds Should be Served in the Tuck Shop

The Chairman felt that fast food was very unhealthy, particularly in respect of the fats and oils. He even said that pizza was healthier than fast food. The discussion then shifted to improvement of the tuck shop menu. The School Captain ([contd.](#))

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and Adil Boparai were to consider a new menu.

i) Replacement of Main Building Furniture

Akash Maheshwari felt that it was time the school should get new furniture for the Main Building. The Chairman agreed and mentioned Mr. Mason's efforts on this issue. The Chairman felt that the current classrooms had such big tables that they didn't allow for any mobility. A modified flip-up desk was placed in Mrs. Purnima Dutta's classroom. However, the general feeling amongst the students was that these chairs didn't offer enough space for big textbooks. It was decided that the Secretary would appoint specific boys to sit in the new chair and get back to Council in the next meeting. The issue was to be taken to the Academic Council as well.

3) Any Other Business with the Permission of the Chair

a) Segregation of Showers

Rohanjit Chaudhry felt the time had come to segregate showers and make them into cubicles. The Chairman felt that it was a tradition that had never been questioned. Moreover, open showering enhanced hygiene and maturity. The cost of maintaining cubicles would be enormous and they wouldn't be hygienic either. It was decided to remain with the present system.

b) Medical Facilities in the Houses

Sagar Aggarwal felt that there should be medical facilities in each House. The Council decided that a First-Aid Box, along with a stretcher, would be kept with the House First-Aid Captain or Housemaster. PBR offered to look into the matter.

c) No-Outing Weekend Before Test Week

The Council felt that next term it should be ensured that there was a no-outing weekend before test week otherwise boys did not study sufficiently seriously. PBR noted this point and said he would make a change in the schedule.

d) Master Planning of the School

The Chairman brought up the issue of the general layout of the school. He spoke about specific places in school, such as the workshop, the designs of buildings, and their interiors. He asked the Council for suggestions for different structures that ought to be on the campus besides the conventional academic blocks and boarding houses. He concluded by asking the Council to come up with ideas for the next meeting.

Letter To The Editor: Changing Profile

The April 17 issue of *Outlook* magazine profiles the Doon School as losing its prestige due to the changing demography of its students. While the logic of the article is understandable, one really could not comprehend the wistfulness that the article has tried to portray. It is unclear what this article is trying to prove! Whether The Doon School is losing its prestige because of its present crop or whether Doon is losing out by not getting enough metrokids. Earlier Doscos are referred to as 'babalog' in the article. Pampered, rich, living on public largesse. Times have changed and so must Doon. The tone of the article seems to highlight a social difference between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. It should not really matter

if one is a farmer's son or petrol pump owner's son or a two-wheeler agency owner's son. What should matter is what the student does in the years after he passes out of Doon. Does he become a Vikram Seth, Prannoy Roy, a Peter Mukherjea, a Sanjay Labroo – who were not really 'babalogs', if we were to stick to the pejorative definition. Or is he unable to stand up on his own feet and carve a niche for himself just because of his background? Doon aims to empower every Dosco to do his best. It continues to groom its students to be front-runners irrespective of which town they hail from or what their fathers do. If School caters to only the 'haves' then where will the 'have-nots' go? Maybe the 'others' are made of better mettle than the so-called 'babalog'. Should the School only cater to those people with established brand worth? After all, are not schools there to educate those who have the potential to become the leaders of tomorrow? The nostalgic tone of the *Outlook* article revealed a feudal mindset and a consciousness which sadly has not been undone by fifty-nine years of Independence

(Vaibhav Bansal)

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Foul Filcher: Or How Opal Mehta Was Laid To Rest

Palash Krishna Mehrotra

In his book, *The Forger's Shadow*, Nick Groom describes plagiarism as 'a threat, a fear, a panic, a plague. And like all other aspects of social abnormality, such as illness, madness and death, it is imagined as despotic – contagious, sickening, unnatural, and terminal; to be guarded against only with the most vigilant surveillance.'

While it is true that plagiarism went hand in hand with the proliferation of printing technologies – its first English usages date from the end of the sixteenth century – it would be foolish to deny its ancient pedigree. Plagiarism is as old as creativity. Greek authors made this charge so often that much of Alexandrine scholarship was dedicated solely to the investigation of this 'crime'. Shakespeare is said to have lifted entire passages from North's *Plutarch* and Golding's *Ovid*. Thomas De Quincey accused Coleridge of plagiarism while Lawrence Sterne, posthumously attacked for plagiarizing Richard Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, wrote in *Tristram Shandy*, "Shall we for ever make new books, as apothecaries make new mixtures, by pouring only out of one vessel into another?" We also have the writer in the Borges story who wants to compose the 'Quixote itself' but never contemplates the simple, mechanical transcription of the original: "His admirable intention was to produce a few pages which would coincide – word for word and line for line – with those of Miguel Cervantes."

All the above instances or accusations of plagiarism have one thing in common – the existence of an original that was then copied from. There is an original text that can be located in physical space and time. In the case of Kaavya Vishwanathan no such master text exists. All that exists is an amorphous formula and the charges of plagiarism that have been brought against her are nothing more than desperate attempts at patenting this formula. This is the Coca Colisation of writing and literature taken to its logical conclusion.

So what's the ready-to-eat formula? Add hot water to powdered exotic curry, simmer for two minutes. Open packet of chick-lit seeds, add to curry and let concoction come to a boil. Remove from burner and serve piping hot. Suggestion: printing pictures of the chef's face on table napkins greatly enhances the quality of the meal. Websites and newspapers display the evidence with breathless, barely concealed glee: this passage was copied from this passage, look how foolish she is, oh what a shame, what a sham. In the age of instant celebrity, people want to hero worship but they are also strangely thrilled when overnight fame, glamour and money are lost in a matter of minutes.

One of the books Vishwanathan has admitted to plagiarizing from is Tanuja Desai Hidier's 2002 novel *Born Confused* (Push/Scholastic) – another book about an Indian-American girl growing up in New Jersey. There is no doubt that there are passages that are strikingly similar but consider another point. Is it that only Hidier has the right to write about pouring tea into saucers, drinking buffalo milk, blossoming hibiscus flowers, the smell of spices, billowy salwar kameezes, 'brown sugar' rotis, 'cloud-puff' puris, transparent samosas, garlic, sun, dust, hair oil, lizards, 'cold baths from a bucket with a plastic dipper' (a mug?). Chitra Bannerji Divakaruni has done it for years, so has Shauna Singh Baldwin, as have a younger generation of 'rootless' multi-culti teen-lit types. There is very little to choose between each of these authors. The prose is uniformly pedestrian and functional, the subject matter predictable and formulaic. Each writer dips her ladle into the same boiling cauldron. It's only the garnishing that is different. It turns out that everybody has been borrowing from everybody all these years, and the accusations of plagiarism are, at least in this case, illusory.

Having said that, one has to concede that the facts of this case are interesting in themselves. Even if one grants that there was an original work of art to begin with, which was then plagiarized from, it is not clear who actually did all the plagiarizing. How much of this novel was written by Vishwanathan herself? Once upon a time the relationship between writer and editor was considered sacred. It wasn't unusual for a writer to change publishing houses when the editor left. Things are different today. Editors spend more

time in sales meetings than ever before. Rather than investing in and nurturing genuine new voices, the emphasis is on netting that one-hit-wonder, the next-big-thing. Vishwanathan's case is fascinating because the person responsible for getting her her first breakthrough wasn't an editor or an agent. In high school, and desperate to get a place in an Ivy League university, Vishwanathan hired a professional college counselling firm called IvyWise. She met Katherine Cohen, the company's founder and CEO and casually informed her that she was also working on a novel. Cohen asked to have a look and was excited enough to contact her representative at William Morris. It might be mentioned that Cohen herself is the author of literary classics like *Rock Hard Apps: How to Write a Killer College Application*. Vishwanathan acquired a literary agent who promptly declared the original story idea 'not commercially viable.' Next, they contacted 17 Street Productions, a subsidiary of Alloy Entertainment. 17 Street is a book packager specializing in fiction for young adults. A book packager's job is simple: come up with saleable plots, then hire anonymous writers to flesh out the storyline. With publishers like Little, Brown on their list of clients, this is a model that seems to suit everyone just fine: the writers, the publishers and, of course, the packagers.

It is at this stage that things get a little fuzzy. Since everyone associated with the book has decided to clam up, we can only conjecture. Who was doing the actual plagiarising? Did a ghost writer crack under the pressure of a deadline or was Vishwanathan doing it herself? If the novel was not written by her alone but a team of hired writers, then wasn't it dishonest on the part of the publishers to stick her pretty face on the novel.

What does Vishwanathan do now? Like a good American, she will undoubtedly go in for counselling. She will finish her degree, become an investment banker. The corporate world will love her. Her dishonesty will be interpreted as a sign of ambition, a desire to succeed at any cost, no matter what. In her late twenties she will write a modern day memoir about fame, money, power, greed and The System. This time round she will eschew long descriptions of samosas and bucket baths, dadas and dadis. The book will become a bestseller and, having achieved her teenage ambition of becoming a literary superstar, Vishwanathan will retreat into the world of investment banking, and hopefully never write another book again. Will publishers touch her again, is public memory really that short? We just don't know. All one does know that the bugbear of plagiarism is not easy to shake off. As William Hazlitt once declared in a lecture, "If an author is once detected in borrowing, he will be suspected of plagiarism ever after." (Courtesy: *Hindustan Times, Saturday May 13*)

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Fool's Mosaic

Rijul Kochhar

The wafting smell of the Diner's Bar,
Through the alleys of dark,
Upon the mound of fool's arc,
I bid adieu to the novice's mark,
Outside the realm of my dreamless heart.
The entry into the concrete jungle,
Is a shock from my balcony,
The 'city of hope' is a crumbling lie,
As the facades fade, of the day gone by.
Mists of memory shroud the greed.
When it clears, it is bleaker than before.
Fool's Gold – they call it sure.
And it persists on its path,
Like never before, for evermore.
The city chokes like a belching boar,
As though some bone was stuck in its throat.
And then it pukes out its gold,
Of what they call – ghoulish mould,
On the street, at His door.
What pricks it's bottom, when it squats?
Where is the haven that mocketh at all?
Why are the people scurrying, though old?
While the rest scout the monuments, bold;

The Bond

Rohanjit Chaudhry

High above the mountains, amidst the shimmering
sky,
Tearing through the clouds with grace, beneath the
sun's eye,
Gliding past spiders' webs, nests' of crows and
stinging bees.
He cries out in anguish and watches man arrive,
Bringer of death, bow in hand and bird in eye.
Grim and solemn, hurt and tried, the man took his
aim,
It glided, turned to look and tried to fly – in vain.
The arrow pierced its wing and its body throbbed
with pain,
As the proud eagle fell, the world wept tears of rain.
The little boy sat all alone, on the dirt by the tree,
When suddenly a loud thump near by
Awoke him out of his dream to see,
The victim of man...that failed to flee.
It took three cold nights and four dawns
For the proud little eagle, from death to return.
Pure joy the boy felt, as he helped it up,
For no longer was he alone, in his dark, thatched hut.
The bond between them was forged with love,
And the eagle rose, and hovered above
On the fateful day, that it flew away,
Their love it took...that lasted night and day.

I look at their faces, expressions sold.

The oppression of summer,

Or the dynamics of fall.

All are revisited, all retold.

The mist of the morning,

Befriends noon – it's foe.

God made Heaven and Earth alike,

Infinite ways to equilibrium we find.

Yet in the torch's light it defies,

The very nature of impartiality – it flies;

Flying to Heaven's lake.

What is left is worthy of a fight,

The monster awakes beaming in delight;

At the destruction of a dream,

In the days of yester,

In the time of yore.

I am appalled at the heinous sight,

Death to the Keeper is our delight.

The keys to the bread are lost,

Leaving the ketchup on the table,

Spilled as though it were blood.

Blood in rivers,

Sweat in drains:

That is left, my dear,

Of the dream that was,

And far away, as the eagle flew on

Not once did it forget,

The kind deed done.

SWEET SURRENDER

(On the term gone by)

Nargish Khambatta

Whooooosssh...

Afore I could savour the concluded event,

Applaud, rue, compliment or repent,

The advent of the one that followed

Ensured the experience was hurriedly swallowed.

Whooooosssh...

Glorious victory, dampening defeat...fleeting unruly
visitors

Played temporary havoc, the fickle tricksters.

Rush, rush, rush...responding to the need of the hour,

Relationships, dreams, aspirations threatened to sour.

Whooooosssh...

Reflection: the exclusive luxury bestowed on Man,

Lost in the quicksilver quagmire of qualms.

Relaxation: reduced to an experience hurriedly
snatched

On the wings of weekends that went by unwatched.

Ahhhhhh...

Glorious summer beckons from the fringes,

With comely promises on which sanity hinges.

As I awaken to a day, yet to transpire.

Terminating the madness of the *whooooosshhed*
existence

The countdown begins for sweet surrender.

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