



The Doon School WEEKLY

"I sketch your world exactly as it goes." -Arthur Foot
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A Choice?

Anshul Khakhar explores the reasons behind herd mentality

A choice between two roads knocked on my door about a month ago when our Headmaster sent us an email saying that on March 27, School would start to systematically open its gates to the geographically scattered species known as the Dosco. Upon receiving this email, I was filled with joy!

I was beyond excited at the prospect of meeting my friends, and the thought of playing hockey on the vast Main Field exhilarated every fibre of my being. However, I was soon fear-stricken due to the fact that the phenomenon that had caused School's closure was not only still present, but had become a greater threat due to the new variants of the virus. Therefore, the logical choice would have been to examine, with a cautious eye, School's safety measures against COVID, and should the plan seem fool-proof, to return to Chandbagh, all the while remaining vigilant and responsible. Instead, I asked my friends if they were going to School and upon hearing that they were, I decided to go too. At the time, I did not give my decision a second thought, but with a similar situation occurring now (in our decisions to return home) I find myself pondering over it. I recall that I did not follow them because I considered them to be particularly wise, or because I believed that they had painstakingly analysed

the situation and chosen the best path: so why did I decide to go?

To understand the reasoning behind my decision, I looked toward the internet for aid and found Mr Solomon Asch and his conformity experiment. As per the experiment, people conform to the choice of the majority for two main reasons: "because they want to fit in with the group (normative influence) and/or because they believe the group is better informed than they are (informational influence)"¹.

We witnessed conformity in our society in many peculiar ways during the pandemic. For instance, consider the toilet paper crisis in the US last year. The pandemic had just struck the country (USA) on a large scale as schools, movie theatres and other amenities were being shut down. It was the perfect setting for the people to panic, but when they did, they did not know how to prepare themselves, so some people began to hoard toilet paper and others followed suit. The others thought that the initial hoarders must know something that they did not (informational influence) - perhaps that the pandemic would cause problems for the importing of toilet paper - and even if this was not the case, buying toilet paper also made them feel relieved because, as poet Leslie Klein said, "A cushion of paper gives a sense of security".

This brings us to the third reason for people to conform. When an emergency presents itself, our natural reaction is to take action to alleviate its consequences, and the safest thing to do would be what others are doing because this satisfies our urge to act without opening us up to criticism.

In a paper entitled *Consensus Decision Making in Human Crowds*, researchers from the Leeds University along with the University of Oxford and Wales Bangor concluded that it takes 5% of confident looking people to influence the direction of 95% of the rest of the people in the crowd.

Perhaps, when 5% of the A Formers chose to return to School, the other 95% or so followed, largely without even realising the reason for their decision, the reason being that it provided us with a sense of security and we believed that a group of 20 or 30 chose a better path than we had, alone. Of course, normative influence (the fear of missing out) also played a role. It is interesting to note how the decisions of a small group of people influence those of an exponentially larger one in somewhat of a domino effect, without either party being aware of the phenomenon they are part of. Though we have heard the phrase 'herd-mentality' thrown around, we are aware of neither

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our part in it nor exactly why it occurs. Therefore, if we are to shield ourselves from its effects, we need to stop and take a moment to think about why we

want to pursue a particular course of action. Perhaps now that we know the reality of how our decisions are made, we will be better equipped to make similar critical decisions in the future.

Editorial

Advaita Sood

Since its publication in Issue No. 2601, the article ‘O Captain! My Captain!’ has stirred much controversy with the *Weekly* being critiqued for advancing its Board Members’ political agenda and for the lack of wider representation of writing from the School community. I do not intend, with this editorial, to refute any criticisms we have received, for we are thankful to have received them. Rather, the intent of this editorial is to reconcile the opinions of our readers and those of the Editorial Board in the interest of discourse.

In recent years there has been a shift in the contents of the *Weekly* from articles that simply report School events to those that offer students’ opinions on a variety of pertinent matters. Such articles may concern a range of issues, though the front page of most issues of the *Weekly* is often reserved for those that comment on an issue or aspect specific to School. Regardless of their content, opinionated articles are written with the intention of provoking thought and eliciting a response, may it be of appreciation or distaste. It is with this intention that the article ‘O Captain! My Captain!’ was published: An article presenting a student’s opinion on one of School’s core ideals. The Editorial Board members’ personal preferences hardly played a role in its publication; had any other member of the School Community written an article similar to the one published, it would have been examined and considered for publication based on the same metrics employed to evaluate the aforementioned article.

It might also be prudent to note that the article itself had no noticeable political colour. It simply offered a student’s opinion on leadership while asserting its importance in School today, and its contents were no more controversial than what we are taught in the leadership workshops leading up to the year’s captaincy appointments. While we admit that we faltered in our judgement of the article’s quality, namely the unusual comparison between School and America during the Civil War and the consequent trivialisation of Civil War, the article was made political by the context in which it was perceived - the advent of this year’s School Captain elections. While the context is important, particularly its timing, the *Weekly* cannot prevent a student from expressing their opinions and offering their beliefs simply because of how they

might be received or because of the student’s perceived ‘political standing’ in School. Were this the case, the *Weekly* would disallow articles by all students running for prefectship or School Captaincy, an undesirable situation, because going by that principle, students are prevented from expressing their opinions simply because they are assumed to be politically motivated. Instead, we accept all contributions on equal grounds and do not reserve our pages for a particular person or group of people and therefore do not promote a particular political agenda.

The recurrence of articles by certain authors (mainly those part of the Editorial Board) coupled with the absence of a wider range of others has been cited as a reason for the *Weekly*’s perceived lack of neutrality and its peddling of an ‘agenda’. While there are no excuses for mediocrity, it is no secret that the complete shift to an online format has diminished readership and contributions, a consequence which reduces the range of opinions published in each issue and creates the perception that we are biased toward members of our Editorial Board. It is not the case that we favour articles written by the Editorial Board over those written by non-Board members, but that a majority of the contributions we receive happen to be written by the same group of people time and time again. On occasions in which there seem to be an imbalance of opinion or an important issue that requires discussion but a dearth of writers, the Editorial Board itself intervenes and tries to offer a balanced narrative to the readers. We cannot force balance by forcing non-board members to write, we can only urge them to do so. And while we try to persuade students across Forms to contribute, either by actively encouraging or ‘chasing’ them or through the introduction of writing prompts or sections such as ‘Story Continuation’ in our issues, it has become increasingly difficult to acquire content.

Therefore, if any member of the School Community holds an opinion on or disagrees with anything published, we urge you to write a Letter to The Editor or an article of your own elucidating your arguments. Such contributions will aid the *Weekly* in its bid to present balanced views and maintain a neutral position on any topic, allowing readers to formulate their own opinions while serving as a medium for discourse.

UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

That's why farmers started to grow more children.
Nipurn Bhoopal, intriguing.
I don't see some of the people who haven't joined.
RDG, with a third eye.
A bad touch is not a good touch.
Zubin Mehra, philosopher supreme.

This Week in History

1790 C.E.: Benjamin Franklin, a Founding Father of the United States of America, dies.
1814 C.E.: Napoleon, facing an invasion of France, accepts the Treaty of Fontainebleau, ending his rule as the Emperor of France.
1928 C.E.: Hermann Kohl completes the first non-stop flight from Europe to North America.
1961 C.E.: Yuri Gagarin becomes the first human ever to enter space.
1979 C.E.: Ugandan President Idi Amin flees the country.
1981 C.E.: NASA launches the first space shuttle, Columbia, which is designed to orbit Earth, transport people, cargo to and from orbiting spacecraft, and glide to a runway landing on its return to Earth.
2003 C.E.: Michael Jordan plays his last game in the National Basketball Association.

THE WHO?

Who is Jerry West?

Praj Boiragi: A race car driver.
Parv Agarwal: A rapper
Udai Singh Dungarpur: A writer
Maharshi Roy: A musician

Jerry West is an **American Basketball Executive** and **former player** for the **Los Angeles Lakers** of the National Basketball Association. He won the NBA title in 1972 and was named the Finals MVP in the year 1969, and is the man on the logo of the NBA.

Around the World in 80 Words

Following a study that concluded that 70% of emerging diseases may come from wild animals, the WHO recommended a pause in the sale of wild animals. CBSE board exams for class 10 were cancelled and the class 12 exams delayed to a future date. The US government recommended a pause in the deployment of the J&J COVID vaccine after reports emerged that the vaccine was causing blood clotting. Real Madrid beat Liverpool 3-1 aggregate in the Quarter Finals of the UEFA Champions League.

“

If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way.

—
 Napoleon Hill



CLARIFIED



Qatar FIFA World Cup Human Rights Issues

Following the decision to hold the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar in 2010, several problems sparked concern and debate around the Gulf nation's ability to prepare and host such an event, while maintaining their pledge to worker welfare. 'The beautiful game' attracts viewers from every race, background, and ethnicity and while we may only see the final product in the form of tournaments and state of the art stadiums, the problems behind the scenes often go under the general public's radar. The effects of the construction development on migrant workers in Qatar ahead of the 2022 FIFA World Cup has been met with heavy criticism from several media outlets, sporting experts, and human rights groups.

Construction companies supplying building resources to Qatar for the 2022 World Cup are allegedly abusing migrant workers and defying the country's own labour laws. Migrants from Bangladesh, India and Nepal working on the refurbishment of the Khalifa Stadium and landscaping the surrounding gardens and sporting facilities known as the "Aspire Zone" are being exploited. They are allegedly being forced to work for an unhealthy amount of time. These migrants have to wait months for the salary they have been promised by their recruitment agents, and in many scenarios, have been conned in regard to the amount of money they were to receive. A recent study by 'The Guardian' revealed that 6,500 migrant workers have died in Qatar since the World Cup was awarded to it, and 37 deaths among the workers were directly linked to the construction of stadiums. The treatment of these workers hired to build the infrastructure caught global attention in 2013 when a non-governmental organization, Amnesty International, reported the 'serious exploitation' including workers having to sign false statements that they had received their wages in order to regain their passports. Sharan Burrows of the ITUC described the workers as 'modern-day slaves' and claimed that if the Qatari Government does not do the fundamentals, they have no commitment to human rights.

After receiving immense backlash for this treatment, The Qatar 2022 Committee promised a change in the working conditions to ensure a lasting legacy of worker welfare. In 2014, the country took responsibility to help protect migrant labourers, however the number of 'modern day' slavery allegations and deaths did not show any signs of decreasing. Recently, upon reading the news reports exposing these problems in Qatar, a Norwegian club took a stand, by convincing its country to boycott the World Cup. This led to the Norwegian national team displaying t-shirts with the words "Human Rights - on and off the pitch" during the national anthem before its match against Gibraltar. The gesture was replicated by the Dutch and German national teams who also wore t-shirts displaying human rights messages before their recent games. This boycott spread throughout the sporting world as more countries became aware of the issue.

Other significant problems that have gained attention are Qatar's limited football history, the high expected cost (most facilities had to be built from scratch), alcohol ban due to the Sharia law, and the local climate leading to the traditionally Summer tournament being held in the Winter months of November and December, a decision which disrupts the schedule of club leagues around the world.

Furthermore, Qatar's conservative religious code forbidding same-sex relations conflicts with FIFA's stance against homophobia. However, the host has given the clearest indication yet that 'gay supporters' will be welcome.

Football's global governing body, FIFA, its sponsors and the construction companies involved are set to make huge profits from the tournament, but in the process have violated the Human Rights they stand for as a globally recognised organization, displaying the ugly side to the beautiful game.

Sources:

- 1 <https://www.firstpost.com/sports/ffa-world-cup-2022-qatar-prepares-to-host-amid-boycott>
- 2 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2016/03/qatar-world-cup-of-shame/>

100 Jahre Sophie Scholl

Vivasvat Devanampriya reports on the 100 Jahre Sophie Scholl workshop which discussed the effects of the Holocaust

The recently-concluded workshop *100 Jahre Sophie Scholl* was held over two and a half days and saw over 25 participants from schools across Pakistan, India and Germany come together to discuss the effects of the Holocaust and how the voices of young people matter in today's challenging reality. The workshop was conducted on a virtual reality platform in which participants could choose their avatar and control its actions.

On the first evening, the participants were introduced to each other, the workshop organisers, and the conductors. Following these formalities, we were told about Sophie Scholl, a 22-year-old anti-Nazi political activist in the early 1940s. A member of the undercover non-violent resistance group known as the Weiße Rose (White Rose), Scholl and her colleagues tried to spread awareness about what was happening under the Nazi regime and to convince people not to support the war. The workshop built on the situation that on February 22, 1943, she was convicted of high treason after being found distributing anti-war leaflets at the University of München with her brother, Hans Scholl, and was executed shortly after. Aristotle once said that history is the study of what was, and poetry is the study of what could have been. In this spirit, the participants were split into four groups and asked to make a social media profile for Sophie Scholl as though she were a normal young girl living in the 21st century. It was fascinating to see the diverse ideas and perspectives that each participant brought to the table. Some came up with Twitter and Instagram profiles, some with a YouTube channel and even one with a LinkedIn account!

Another interesting moment in the workshop was when participants were given the opportunity to interact and listen to Gershon Willinger, a child survivor of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. He spoke about his early life and said that all non-Jews who made an effort to hide Jewish children and families and be part of the resistance were to be commended highly, as they selflessly risked their lives to help the persecuted Jews. He was born in 1942 and was taken to one transit and two different concentration camps across 3 years (Westerbork, Theresienstadt, Bergen-Belsen). He did not remember any of his time there, but his memory began as he was rescued and taken back to The Netherlands, where his wartime parents, entrusted by his birth parents to take care of him, managed to find him. He met his older sister for the

first time at the age of eight, having been separated from her at a very young age.

Gershon Willinger still keeps 'Israel' as his middle name, which was given to him by the Nazis to identify him as a Jew. He elaborated upon the fact that if you have self-pride and are proud of who you are, nothing can destroy you. He stated that there is no point in being a good person who does nothing and told us that the children had no voice after they were liberated, and everything was decided for them. Picking up from this, he believed that it is very important for young people to have their voice heard because they are the future of the world, and their ideas are what future generations are going to live by. He said also that there is no such thing as a bad idea, it is the execution of the idea that is important. The hardest thing for him to deal with after being liberated was being able to trust people.

The final day of the workshop was based on the voices of youth being heard in the community. Participants were sorted into three national groups and were told to list the main problems that are prevalent in their respective countries. At the end of this exercise, it was intriguing to see the extent of the impact a government has on a country's citizens and their responses to important issues. The list of the German participants was restricted to 'no sexism' and 'no racism', while the list of the Pakistani and Indian participants, while including these points, also spanned casteism and about 15 different problems they felt was caused largely by flawed governance. The workshop conductors also talked about the European Youth Organisation which allows young people to make themselves heard and have a say in big decisions. A limitation of this part of the workshop was that it was very Eurocentric, and it had little bearing on the majority of the participants who were from Asia. This is understandable though, considering that this was largely due to the fact that India might not have any comparable organisations. To conclude the workshop, all the participants put their heads together and came up with a ten-point plan to better the future of our generation.

I felt that this workshop was extremely beneficial and enriching, and I believe that in these crucial times, it is important for an individual to face a variety of challenges and new perspectives so that they bolster critical thinking and creativity, two aspects of life that are crucial in moving forward.

Match the Following

Conspiracy Theories

1. The International Airport of this city is believed to have been built over an underground town which acts as the headquarters of the 'New World Order'.
2. This country is believed to use animals for carrying out espionage activities.
3. This massive planet's existence is believed to be hidden by NASA. The planet is believed to have enough potential to destroy Earth.
4. This Indian is believed to have invented the aeroplane 8 years before the Wright Brothers.
5. This musical legend is believed to have been assassinated by the CIA for admitting that the agency invented LSD.
6. This country is believed to be non-existent but is said to have been made up by Japan and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.
7. According to the Gospel of Phillip, this woman is said to have been married to Jesus Christ.
8. This former British Prime Minister is believed to have been a KGB spy.

- A. Israel
- B. Wilson
- C. Nibiru
- D. Talpade
- E. Magdalene
- F. Finland
- G. Lennon
- H. Denver

8. B	4. D
7. E	3. C
6. F	2. A
5. G	1. H
Answers	

What Have You Been Reading During The Lockdown

Do No Harm

Author: Henry Marsh

This book takes us through the author's journey as a neurosurgeon in the NHS, starting from being a new, rather inexperienced doctor to becoming a veteran. It talks about the changes the healthcare services and infrastructure in Britain have gone through, as well the changes in neurosurgery in other countries like Ukraine and Bhutan. The book provides a fresh perspective on operating on something as complex as the human nervous system by taking the reader through a surgeon's mind while operating on patients. It also gives the reader an insight into the drama in the Operating Theatre and is an enriching read.

- Ahan Jayakumar

What Have You Been Watching During The Lockdown

Lucifer (13+)

Director: Len Wiseman

In this intriguing show, Lucifer -The Devil - takes a break from ruling Hell and comes to Earth to become a nightclub-running civilian-consultant for the LAPD, in the heart of LA. The show explores the trials and tribulations of Lucifer's time on Earth and covers interesting topics like the family dynamics of the divine, and the moral and relationship issues that Lucifer faces. I particularly enjoy the uncanny humour related to the concept of divinity in the show. I certainly recommend this show as it is an easy watch and will also keep your attention with the presence of the Biblical characters put into human situations.

- Arjun Prakash

The views expressed in articles printed are their authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Weekly or its editorial policy.

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