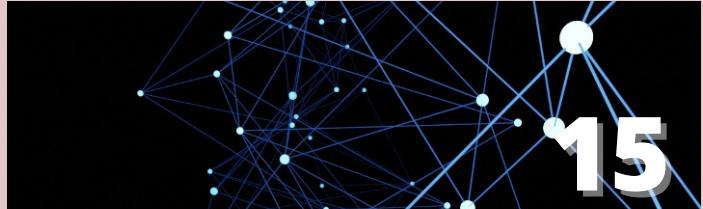
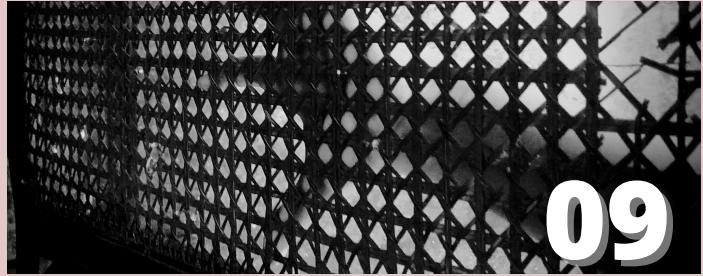


VERITY TODAY

OCTOBER - 2021

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THE
RENAISSANCE
ISSUE





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Editor's note

As I sit writing this piece, my city around me is investing every effort possible to undergo its annual journey of changing over completely. Decked in the finery of firefly-yellow lights and the canopy of minutely crafted tapestries of multi-coloured lights, the city prepares for the home-coming of the Goddess. As the preparation goes underway with makeshift stalls selling rolls and chow mein, we at Verity also prepare to start things anew.

On the occasion of our one year anniversary we at Verity Today we bring to you Verity 2.0 - a more streamlined version of our content. As we bring down our varied departments to six broad categories - Arts, Sciences, Affairs, Social Change and Mental Health - we hope to give our readers a better reading experience and every reason to choose our content over others this day and every day.

But with this new relaunch, we also bring to you a new element - our newsletter. As the Senior Editor for the month, it is my pleasure to introduce this new component which will feature the finest art and pieces by our correspondents and in-house artistes. As the city prepares itself for its autumnal celebrations we at Verity Today have also worked hard, with articles exploring musical rejuvenation and political coups coupled with fantastic art prepared from scratch. This edition has been made with love and heart and warmth and some tears.

As the Goddess leaves, in the wake of the sound of thunder and heavy hearts and the city prepares to return to normalcy - we at Verity Today wish to remember things at their brightest. At their happiest. Turns and changes and births and rebirths which make us better and stronger.

Under cinnamon roll clouds, not-so-Grecian skies and the smell of farewell, here is presenting the first newsletter of Verity Today and it's celebration of Renaissance/Rebirth. For the better or for worse - you decide!

Anwesh Banerjee

Senior Editor

Verity Today



Madness in Music

Written by: Ishani Datta

Edited by: Anwesh Banerjee

I just find it so difficult to imagine what the world would have been like, had the coronavirus not happened. It really did press a pause button on our lives - literally and figuratively. But that has not, in any way, shape or form, put a damper on what I think, is one of the most beautiful forms of creative expression. *Music*.

This lockdown has been described as a contemporary 'Dark Age', and rightfully so. A cloud of darkness had cast its shadow over the world, and everything seemed dim. While in the beginning, everyone was delighted to have time off work, school, and so on, over time it became restless, unproductive and mentally draining. With every dark age comes a renaissance, and mine (for this corona induced age of darkness) began on 23rd July, 2020, with the release of Taylor's Swift's 8th studio album, *Folklore*, closely followed by *Evermore*, released on 11th December, 2020.

I am a swiftie, through and through, as you can tell by the title. I like to believe the best music can sometimes awaken a kind of hysteria, a type of intoxicating madness, that keeps us hooked for as long as possible, possibly to no end. In my opinion, the best examples of this madness, is of course the aforementioned latest offerings by Taylor Swift - who has finally reached that stage in her career where an active reinvention of the self has led her to take a turn for the indie in the creation of her music.

Folklore was released seemingly out of nowhere. I distinctly recall the day it was announced. It was also coincidentally, One Direction's 10 year anniversary (the celebration was a massive disappointment, I said what I said). I was in class, and Miss Taylor posted on her instagram that it would be dropped at midnight. Screaming bloody murder does not remotely capture my emotions.



Folklore was such a departure from the music Taylor was creating prior. She slipped into Folklore after the Lover era (which I believe is her most understated era). But anyway, Folklore was something completely different, and it evoked emotions and thoughts that one didn't realise existed. For me, 'cardigan', 'mad woman', 'exile', and 'this is me trying' were the reasons for my madness and temporary insanity. Since it would be impossible for me to individually delve into the 17 lyrical and musical masterpieces, I'm going to write about the songs that stuck to me the most. Starting with 'cardigan', also her first and only single from Folklore. A song that you would listen to coming back home on a train, as the rain pelts on the windows. You would watch the grim scenery, the wind blowing loudly, as a cloud of past memories comes over you. The rain, so peaceful to look at against the darkness of the scenery. Another song that I would listen to in a similar scenario, is 'this is me trying', but in this case, it's when you leave home after, possibly a failed relationship, wondering what would happen if you returned and tried to fix things. The lyrics can make anyone ache because of the way it speaks to the soul. Regretful nostalgia appears to be the most alluring driving force of inspiration.

Coming to her duet with Bob Iver's Justin Vernon, 'exile'. The low piano ballad stirs emotions in you that you didn't know existed. As someone who has never been in a relationship, I feel betrayed, hurt and abandoned by an ex in this song, and I think that tells you just how powerful the song is. 'I think I've seen this film before / And I didn't like the ending' will never fail to make me go feral. And, how could I forget 'mad woman'. It speaks truths that women have but don't know how to express. 'Every time you call me crazy, I get more crazy, what about that?' is one of my favourite lines of all time, and truly, there is nothing like a mad woman. Something that runs through all of Taylor's songs in *Folklore* is a deep sense of self, almost as if she put herself or someone under a powerful magnifying glass, or more accurately, their souls. Listening to the deep truths that in the daily hustle and bustle, you wouldn't be able to hear. I think that's why these songs hit hardest during this time.





by annanya periwal

Now, onto *Folklore*'s sister record, *Evermore*. Keeping to the same bedroom pop genre, 'evermore' stirs those same emotions through different words, different tunes, but it always hits the same. Starting with 'tis the damn season', thought to be influenced by Sally Rooney's 'Normal People'. This song resonated with me the most, because it's what I relate to the most. The idea of leaving your home and everyone you've known, especially that one special person and what it's like when you come back some years later. A haunting familiarity, a cautious nostalgia, that is what 'tis the damn season' is about. Throw in a snowy little town, where everyone knows everyone, and you've got a musical and emotional masterpiece. Moving on to 'happiness', a song that I howl to at 2:30 in the morning. It's thought to be influenced by Fitzgerald's 'The Great Gatsby', because of the line 'all you want from me now, is the green light of forgiveness'. Over 5 minutes long, this song is definitely worth listening to, late at night when you want a good cry. 'Tolerate it' is arguably one of the saddest songs on 'evermore', in my opinion. Also influenced by a book, one of my favourites, 'Rebecca' by Daphne du Maurier, such a classic. It sheds light on a relationship, wherein one feels as though they're too much for their partner, where they feel their partner doesn't accept and embrace their love; they just tolerate it. Knowing that someone you love romantically, simply tolerates you, even when you could give up the world for them (it's a knife to the heart).

The lockdown was heavy on all of us, and Taylor Swift relieved us of that burden and transported us to a mythical world of willow trees, ivy houses, american dynasties, mad women, exiled partners, misty forests and dreams. This was the Renaissance of the contemporary age. It was so new and yet so familiar, as it reached deep into our souls and pulled out those thoughts and emotions we're too afraid to say out loud.

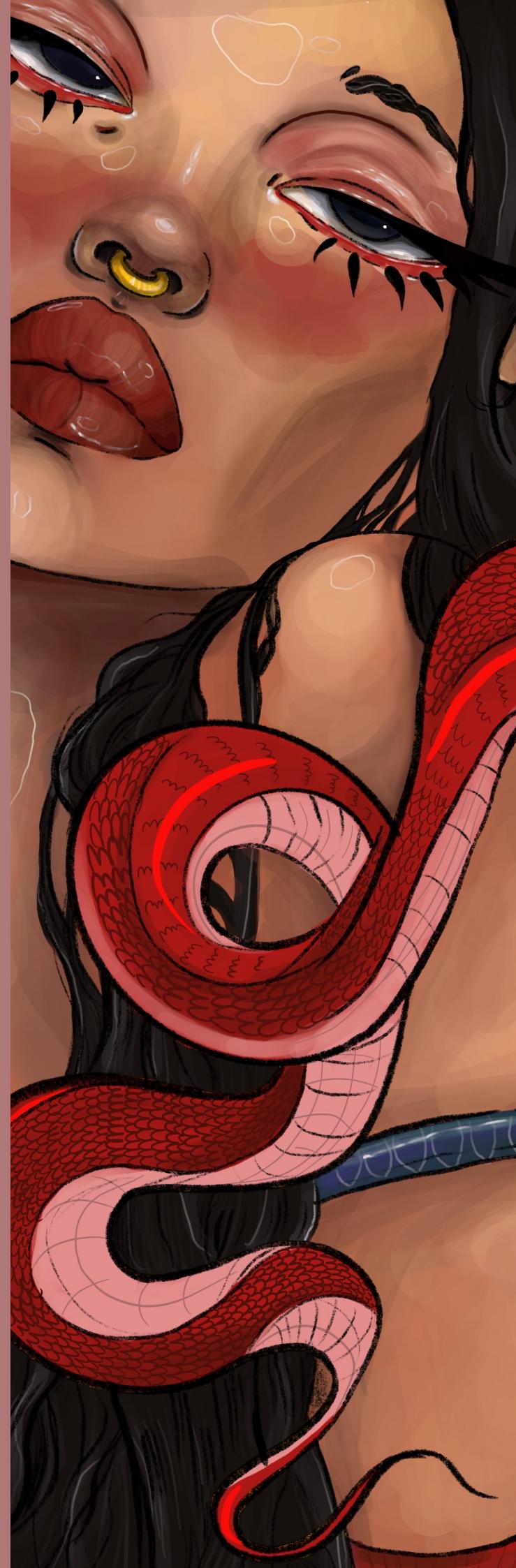
The Reincarnation of Disney

Written by: Vidushi Shukla
Edited by: Mohan Rajagopal

I smile as I watch the "Hot Dog Dance" years later and I realise how beautifully these characters have etched my heart. It was bliss to roll out of bed as early as possible and patrol around the house just waiting to repeat the magic words- "Meeska, Mooska, Mickey Mouse!" Gen-Z has done everything from counting down the days to summer with Phineas and Ferb to pretending to be doctors with Doc McStuffins! Maybe somewhere in between, we got drowned in our lives. As we grew from our childhood- immersed in teenage intimacy, assignments, exams and ambitions- we started to explore our brand new phase of life. Disney continued to give kids their ideal childhoods with pristine TV shows.

The Company's journey in the field was not always roses and skies or blush and sparkle. With every trace of Mickey's ears, Disney has had a constant reboot with regards to addressing the representation of minorities in their films and TV shows. Amidst the past mistakes with films containing racist comments and unintentional discrimination, Disney has taken responsibility for their blunders and has been explicating a positive change ever since.

The company has had to wander through some rocky and uncertain roads; it was not long ago that it was rightfully accused of the lacklustre conversion of ancient folklore into charming stories which distracted and took away from the original material. Consumers were furious about how most of the stories reimagined by the animators of Disney did not contain any real moral, value, or lesson. Furthermore, Disney's intention of conquering love often showed women as vulnerable to abusers. These lifelike animated movies lacked the representation of characters and the portrayal of diverse lifestyles and races, sometimes even containing several racist and sexist elements.





by shivangi singh

Despite these hindrances, the company maintained its traditional American values while adapting to the changing times of the present society, readjusting and modifying modern stories. Disney showed us a new and astounding narrative that is sure to have a special place in our hearts. Several classic stories were retold through the sensational movies produced by the company- bringing a smile to the faces of kids and grown-ups alike with spectacular and socially ethical themes. Characters like Moana, Princess Tiana, Kristoff and Mulan are examples of characters from diverse races and traditions. Our beloved Kristoff is breaking the stereotypical image of the perfect prince by transforming love into more than just non-consensual kisses, through respect, affection and support.

This impact of Disney's recreated stories has established considerable competition for home entertainment.

More than often, viewers also question Disney and its artistry. However, what they forget to see is that Disney was one of the few companies which had been set up during the advent of the world economic depression as a source of entertainment. The love and passion that Walt Disney poured into his work often go unnoticed along with the talent, skill, and artistry.'

At the end of the day, Disney Channel has not gone sour or lost its magic- it is Disney's legacy that has kept it ahead even after facing the impossible odds. This is a swaying incentive for someone to deep-dive back into their fondest memories and relish every bit of their favourite childhood characters because believe it or not, magic IS real. Plus, watching Simba grow against the reddish glow of the sun will never bore us.

Just as our favourite place likes to end its shows- "The Disney Channel wishes you a wonderful tomorrow..."

Truly 'Kafkaesque'?

Written by: Tirna Ray

Edited by: Pradyumn Nahata

Growing. Changing. Transforming. These are the glowing themes that Franz Kafka's 'Metamorphosis' highlights.

This creepy novella by Franz Kafka starts off with a rather unexpected beginning. Gregor Samsa, our MC (Main Character), wakes up as a veined, hard-shelled insect. This saddening story begins by demonstrating the determination that Samsa felt to continue with his human life by trying to get out of bed to go to work until he simply understands that it's not possible anymore.

Throughout the story, Gregor is a surprising character filled with personality. It's been speculated that Gregor was facing mental health problems as even though he'd woken up as a bug, a shocking change to any, the root cause of his sadness and his dejected mood was the gloomy weather alongside his inability to attend work.

Samsa's relationship with his work is toxic. He overworks himself regularly at a job he despises alongside a boss he resents. However, the burden and pressure that Gregor and his family have placed upon him to be the sole breadwinner and to help his family live comfortably, bars him from ever trying to contemplate leaving his work, let alone actually going through with the action. This displays how overworked and machine-like Samsa was treated when it came to financial situations and work.

Upon the family's discovery of Gregor's transformation, their primary feelings and thoughts are centred around disgust and/or shock at his transformation, and how their financial situation would be impacted due to Samsa's condition. The lack of familial support, love, and care would've contributed to and heightened Samsa's feelings of depression, pressure, worthlessness etc. Samsa's family decided to lock and keep him in his room as he served no purpose to them any longer, and eventually ended all sorts of communication and interaction with him due to tenants living in neighbouring rooms.

Grete, Gregor's sister, attempts to keep him as happy as he can be in his state by feeding him and clearing space for him, however, she eventually grows tired. The emotional stress of seeing her beloved brother in such a position and the burden of continuing to help him grows within her which eventually leads to her suggesting the decision of getting rid of Gregor to her parents.

Gregor's family does not need much convincing to agree upon the plan of eliminating him as he serves no purpose to them anymore. His transformation had supposedly made him worthless. They'd all taken on jobs and had a stable flow of income so they'd lost use for him. Taking care of him for him to serve no purpose was seen as futile and tiresome by the family therefore, they slowly and quietly pushed him towards his demise.

At the end of the novella, Grete and her parents all go out for a 'deserved' walk through the park as they ponder their daughter's newfound independence and her future marriage. An ideal happy ending.





'Metamorphosis' by Franz Kafka centres around Gregor Samsa, who throughout his entire life and specifically during this period, had been treated as if everything that went wrong was his fault. With the constant shifting of blame, ashamed looks, and eventually locking Gregor away and letting him slowly pass away in his room just as they'd found him, his family found peace. Peace within the removal of a tiresome and worthless extra.

Growing and changing are experiences. Experiences that everyone encounters repeatedly throughout their lives. Some drastically, some with more subtlety. However, it is absolutely crucial that we find the beauty in the little and big changes and learn to love and embrace them with everything we have. Embracing the new and improved versions of ourselves. Embracing renaissance, regeneration, and rebirth.

money
WORK

sankha bose

Renaissance of 'Coup Culture' in West Africa

Written by: Ananya Singh

Edited by: Anwesh Banerjee

Africa has been a hotbed for political transformations since the 1990s. With institutional changes such as the downfall of the apartheid system and the demise of several brutal dictatorships paving the way for the establishment of rule-of-law-based governance systems and constitutional governments. However, even with such strides of progress, certain issues still remain. For example, the pressing matter of the resurgence of Coups.

Coup d'état, also called coup is the sudden, violent overthrow of an existing government by a small group. While there isn't anything explicitly against Coups in International Law, they are usually met with international condemnation, sanctions or regional organisations intervention based on regional agreements. A study by US researchers identified over 200 coup attempts in Africa since the late 1950s. Sudan has had the most with 15 - five of them successful, the most recent was in 2019 with the removal of Omar al-Bashir. Nigeria, Burundi, Ghana and Sierra Leone have all been at the forefront of the history of coups in Africa, racking up over 35 attempts in the last few decades. In Africa's post-colonial history, coups have become a familiar reoccurrence. However, after Nigeria moved to civilian rule in 1999, there was a strong sense that the days of military coups were over. This belief was quickly disproved as there's been a noticeably higher than average number of coups this year compared with the previous two decades. For the third time in only five months, there were violent coups in Guinea, Mali, and Chad.

In Guinea, Mali, and Chad, the heads of state removed from office had enjoyed dubious legitimacy, often engaging in 'Constitutional Coups'- changing the constitution to eliminate term or age limits allowing the incumbent president to unconstitutionally extend his mandate. Heads of States abuse executive power to craft decrees allowing them to stay in power beyond their limited terms, and, in some cases, indefinitely. Furthermore, they utilise state force and violate human rights to eliminate any meaningful opposition to their rule. Presidents that have changed their countries' constitutions to eliminate the two-term limit include Presidents Gnassingbé (Togo), Museveni (Uganda), Déby (Chad), Biya (Cameroon), Kagame (Rwanda), the late Nkurunziza (Burundi), and el-Sisi (Egypt), just to name a few. A less-than-uncredible election ushered in the third term of President Alpha Condé in Guinea. After having been all but "president for life" in Chad, Idris Deby was killed by rebels, only to have been succeeded by his son through an extra-constitutional process. A 2012 coup against Mali's political strongman Amadou Touré triggered the current bout of instability. A coup was launched by Malian President Assimi Goita, less than a year after installing himself as interim vice president and removed the country's interim head of state.

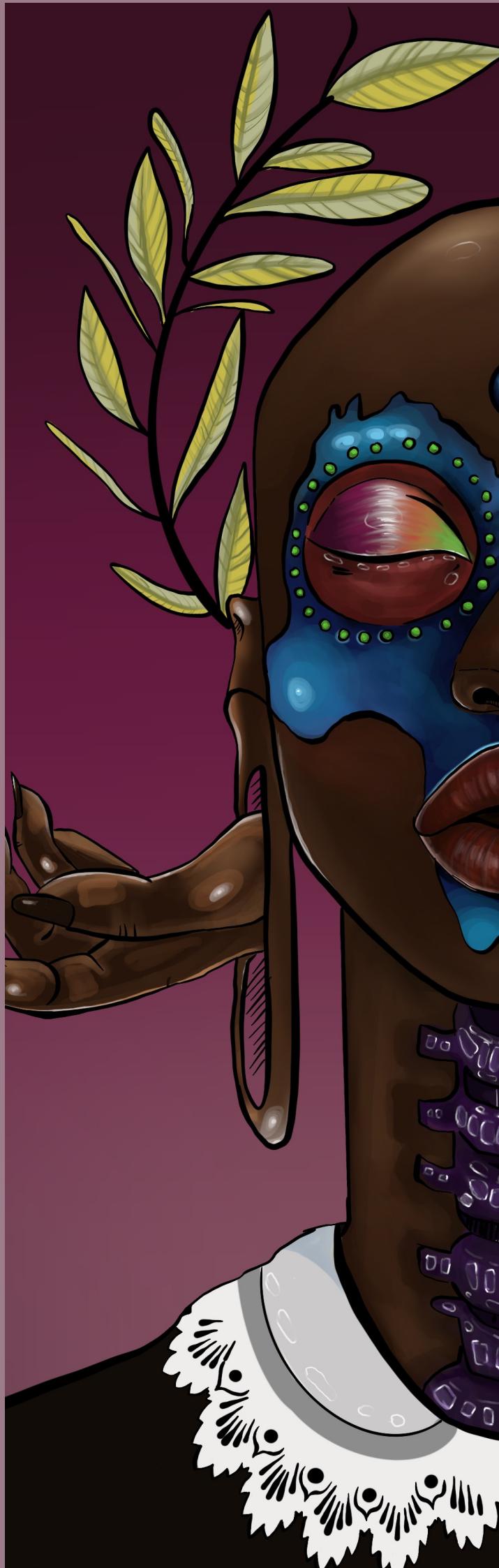


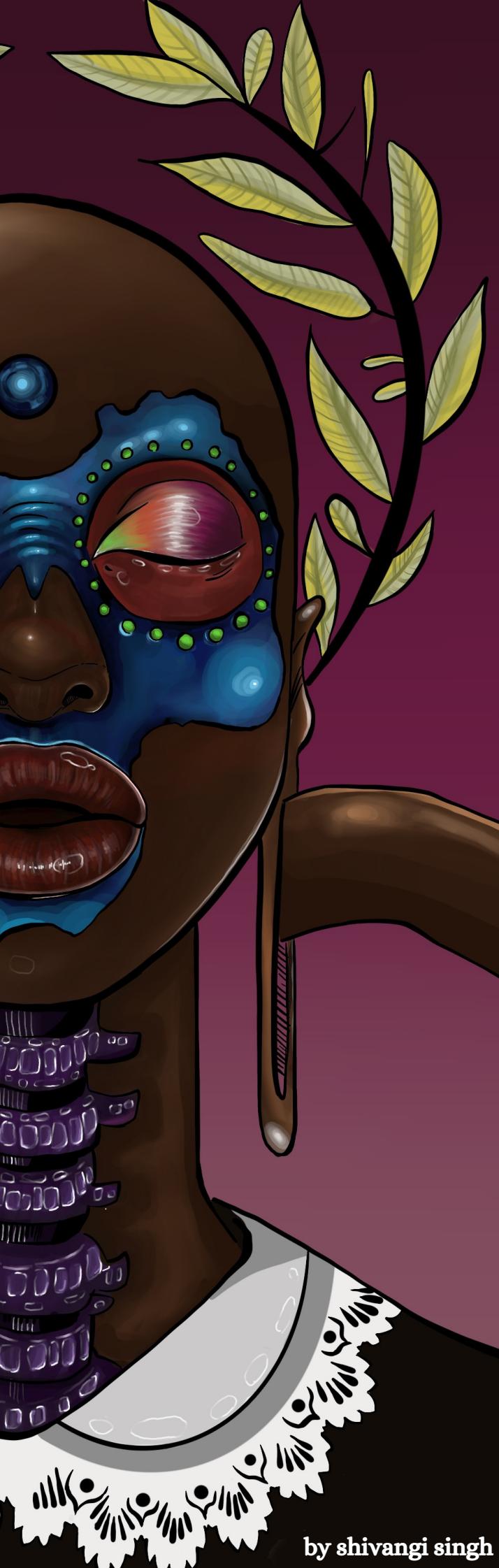
Recent coups have typically been the result of the reorganization of ruling cliques, without a great deal of social benefit or improvement for ordinary citizens. They are characterized by anti-corruption rhetoric and little change in behaviour by those newly in charge. Many African countries have experienced poverty and poor economic performance, which are common coup triggers.

To examine this phenomenon, we must review the conditions in Guinea that preceded the recent violent Coup-

French Guinea was part of French West Africa until 1958 when it became independent. In its 52-year history, Mr Condé was the first legitimately democratic president to assume office since the country gained independence in 1960. The current unrest in Guinea comes less than a year after he won a third term last November to widespread dismay. Guinée approved constitutional changes to allow its president to serve two more terms through a controversial referendum. The opposition boycotted it and more than 40 people died in violent protests before the vote. The opposition contesting Condé's legitimacy was repressed. Condé sparked further outrage after a bill was passed increasing his salary. In addition to Guinea's political upheaval, there are also deepening tensions in west Africa and worries that many countries are moving backwards on democratic gains, with third-term bids and attempts to amend constitutions quickly gaining momentum. Furthermore, Guinea has also faced several pervasive disease pandemics such as devastating outbreaks of Ebola and COVID-19 threatening the nation recently.

Coming to its economic state, the president had overseen a rise in economic growth yet Guinea remains highly unequal and impoverished. During Condé's regime, infrastructure to extract Guinea's extensive mineral resources improved immensely however failed to bring immediate financial benefits for most citizens, with 60% of the labour force still working in the agricultural sector. The economy in 2021 came battered as the COVID-19 pandemic loomed on the country. A month before the coup took place high increases in petrol prices were announced, new taxes and tax hikes were approved to balance the budget.





by shivangi singh

All of this caused strong public discontent in the nation and eventually led to the broadcasting of the coup on 5th September.

Doumbouya and the ruling junta, known as the National Rally and Development Committee (CNRD) stated- "We will no longer entrust politics to one man, we will entrust it to the people. There have been many deaths, injuries and tears for nothing....We are taking our destiny in our own hands" criticising the state of the country under the 83-year-old president. The CNRD detained Condé and other top officials, dissolved the government, and imposed a nightly curfew. It has pledged to form a transitional government soon and committed to "rewrite a constitution together." It ordered the release of political prisoners and announced an 18-month transition to democracy. President Condé remains in detention and the CNRD has refused to bow to regional pressure to release him.

International organisations, including the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN), joined in denouncing the attempt and calling for the release of president Condé. ECOWAS immediately suspended Guinea's membership, called for the President's unconditional release, and sent envoys to Conakry to attempt a "constitutional" resolution to the situation. The African Union announced that it has suspended Guinea from all its activities and decision-making bodies because of the coup. The U.S. State Department immediately condemned the coup, warned against "violence and any extra-constitutional measures," and noted they "could limit the ability of the United States and Guinea's other international partners to support the country.

200 year old technology returns with a bang!

Written by: Prithviraj Jhunjhunwala

Edited by: Mohan Rajagopal

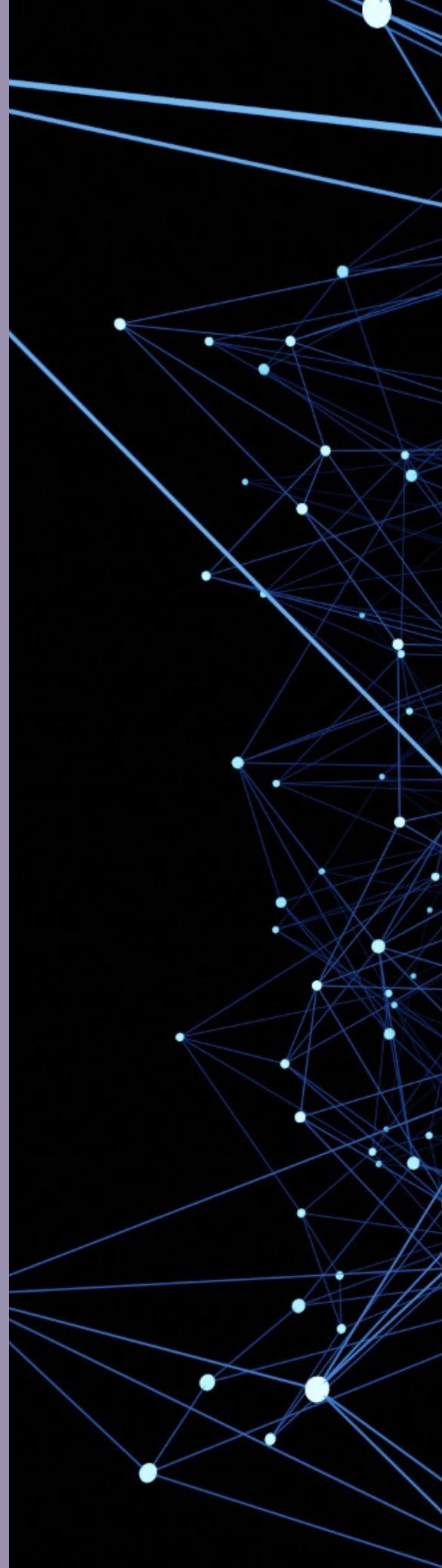
This pandemic has taught all countries that they need to become independent and self-sufficient. They have learnt that they need to progress themselves and move towards independence and reduce interdependence. This same reason has given birth to many movements, campaigns and 'revolutions' in countries. This has affected all fields, from farming or agriculture to technology and science.

Nowadays, transport has become essential in our lives for the same reason the need for transport vehicles has increased exponentially. Transport vehicles ranging from bikes, scooters, cars and all other electric vehicles require motors without which they are primarily non-functional. All electric vehicles need a high-powered motor which rotates at a minimum of 12,000 revolutions per minute (rpm). These motors are mostly built with rare, permanent earth metals such as neodymium, dysprosium, samarium, strontium, cobalt and so on. These are very expensive and almost all of its trade is controlled by China. This, again, increases a country's dependency on China; and since countries want to move away from dependence, they started research and development on alternatives.

Indian technological institutions and companies figured out an alternative which dates back two centuries. They proposed the use of simple and cheap Switched Reluctance Motors (SRM). These motors were first made in the early 19th century and were shelved as they were not easy to use. To understand why they are being reintroduced now, even though they are not easy to use, we have to first understand how the motor works.

A switched reluctance motor uses technology which is centred around, as the name suggests, 'reluctance'. Reluctance is the characteristic of a material to resist the flow of magnetic flux, which is similar to resistance or a current. This magnetic flux, in the form of invisible magnetic lines passing through a surface, prefers to travel through the path which has the least reluctance or resistance. The motor uses this principle and has two parts: a rotor and a stator. The rotor has alternating regions of high and low reluctance, and the stator has electromagnets. When electricity is supplied to these electromagnets, the rotor will rotate, giving us a motor.

This seems fairly simple, although when a current is supplied we get a torque - the turning force that creates the rotations. The more the current that is passed, the greater the torque.





The relationship between the current and torque depends on two factors: the rotor position and the current through the electromagnet. These factors cause the relationship of the current and torque to be non-linear, which means that if you double the current, the torque doesn't double; hence, you have to send the right amount of current in the electromagnetic winding to make it work perfectly, which is a difficult task. The current needs to be constantly monitored and controlled for the SRM to work.

Now this gives rise to the question: if it is a difficult task and needs to be monitored so closely, then why is it being reintroduced?

The only reason it is being reintroduced is because there have been developments, and now the SRM is reborn with better associated technologies to help the SRM function. Since we have better computing power and machine learning based algorithms, the current and voltage can be monitored by these algorithms. A 'digital twin' of the SRM can be created which can help observe and control the current with real time optimisation, enabling smooth operation and also providing the desired performance.

This advancement and rebirth of SRMs with algorithms helps us use this motor now. It is comparatively cheaper than the permanent magnet motors, as all it requires to be made is copper and steel. Steel costs around 100/- a kg and copper costs around 800/- a kg, whereas the rare permanent earth magnets cost around 6,000/- a kg. Hence, this feature also makes SRMs nearly 50% cheaper than the other motors.

These SRMs are reborn to serve the electric mobility revolution. Motors in electric vehicles heat up more, which has been a problem as demagnetisation occurs above 150 degrees Celcius causing the permanent magnet motors to malfunction, but since SRMs don't use permanent magnets they can withstand extreme temperatures. This also reduces the need for cooling systems as there is no fear of the motor malfunctioning due to high temperatures. We have spoken about the application of SRMs in electric vehicles with more importance, but once they are completely introduced and deemed efficient, the SRMs can replace any motor possible.

The rebirth and revival of SRMs can lead to a revolution in India and can change devices with motors largely. Work has already started with companies making cheaper electric scooters with the help of SRMs, and soon companies also plan on utilising SRMs in cars. Switched Resistance Motors are back, and if they grow as predicted, we might actually face a Renaissance in the field of electric vehicles.