

lotus zine

Volume 1



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**An anthology of South Asian LGBT+ art and literature
All proceeds go to Orinam, an all-volunteer collective of
LGBTQIA+ people in southern India.**

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the first volume of *Lotus Zine*. I am very excited to present you the product of nearly five months' worth of work!

This zine could not have been completed without the hard-working Committee, who earnestly volunteered their time and energy to this massive undertaking while engaged with school, work, and family life. So to the Committee—Athulya Kuruvilla, Chandran, Harshana S., Max D., Mysterixx, Vaishnavi, and Vya Siva—I want to say thank you. This zine would not be what it is without your many dedicated hours of research, feedback, and writing.

Next, I would like to acknowledge our many talented contributors. Your paintings, photography, and writing are not only the heart and spirit of the zine, but its very backbone. We are immensely and sincerely grateful that you chose to share them with us. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your time, effort, patience, and most of all commitment. We really could not have done it without you!

It is my hope that *Lotus Zine* allows the varied experiences of the South Asian LGBT community to be shared with the world. Whether these experiences embody pride of one's own identity, the alienation of being both LGBT+ and South Asian, the relationship between religion and sexuality, or analysis and criticism of social divisions within the South Asian LGBT+ community, we are a diverse and colorful people with stories that deserve to be told. We deserve to be seen. So, my last thanks is to you: the reader. Thank you for listening to South Asian LGBT+ stories, for seeing us.

Happy reading!



Ambika Nuggihalli

Lotus Zine Volume 1.

www.lotuszine.tumblr.com

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Cover art by Nabigal-Nayagam Haider Ali.

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table of contents

04	Ananya Singh tumblr: frogydrews	05	Vya Siva tumblr: lbpqdesi	06	Kamal tumblr: jlal
07	Hassan twitter: da2dlc	08	Athulya Kuruvilla twitter: svarnnam	12	Mino tumblr: minoqu
13	MizariOmi tumblr: mizariomiart	14	Nabigal-Nayagam Haider Ali twitter: ab_varaham	15	Danny Dineli insta: dannyartworks
16	Mohana Soman wordpress: softsundari	17	des1_res insta: des1_res	18	Mysterixx twitter: myster1xx
19	Miru twitter: _miruo	20	Ruwani insta: ruwaniart	21	Vaishnavi insta: drav.arts
24	Varshini Ravi insta: rix.vix	25	Meghna Menon insta: soulstuffjunkie	26	Chandran tumblr: chellamme
30	Apoorva insta: lynvaren	31	Sal insta: silly_artist	32	Nur insta: lowlandjazz
	Max D. _____		Harshana S. twitter: harshanas_		Ambika Nuggihalli tumblr: dyersimile

 denotes committee.
  denotes editor.
  denotes cover artist.



Is it selfish, mamma, not to choose?

between men & women

between family & freedom

to choose, instead, the truth

and hope for the love to follow?

What About *Maanam*^[1]

For as long as I could breathe, I've been watching Indian movies. Carefully eyeing the screen as I sat on my mother's lap, always asking questions about the plot, perhaps because I wasn't particularly fluent in Tamil or the physics didn't make sense. I gazed upon these forbidden scenes where the Hero and the Girl display affection, never so much as kissing, but tiptoeing around Love nonetheless. They are somewhat openly romancing one another, yet you're still not allowed to even think about It, not until after marriage.

Most if not all Indian movies are musical, with everyone breaking into songs out of the blue. It almost bothers you as much as the fight scene physics. They're chanting about Love again and all the ways they want to express it, because it's not exactly allowed on screen. You gaze upon the Girl swirling in her *dhavani*^[2], dancing with others like her. Except the staring doesn't stop at movies. It's that one time you look a little too long and a lot less subtly at a friend in the temple, convinced you just like her salwar kameez.

I'm back at the temple again, this time for a festival. We drink sharbat all day under the glistening sun, my bangles clinking to the tune of some Carnatic song. I fall in love with my people time and time again, waltzing around bare feet, keeping quiet; still something is missing. The very next day I'm at Pride with a matte LGBT bracelet. There is a moment of silence with raised fists and then it's cheering from the top of our lungs. This time around, I fall in love with love. I feel at home, but once more fragmented.

I always dreamt of a crimson red wedding, just like in the films. With the *nathaswarams*^[3] blaring century-old melodies and sweet fragrances unrolling as Arabian jasmynes spring in the air. Guests feast on vegetarian samosas or rolls. The fire crackles around us alongside performers dancing, as they did with my mother and hers. It would almost be as if we never left the motherland. Almost.

The nightmare begins when my parents don't show up to light the *nilavilakkus*^[4]. Who is to help with the *thaali*^[5], if not a cousin? If loving at all is a boulder to overcome in the heart of a brown family, I am petrified by the mountain mightier than the *Trikuta*^[6]. I'll have to climb to love who I want to. Maybe I won't get my red bridal saree, but I can try to settle for a rainbow one.

Our love is not Western. It has held up for a thousand years and will for thousands more. Lovers exchanged sweets far before the white man came in his boat and inked amnesia into our laws, altering our ancestors' lives, erasing the memory of my Gods' indiscriminate love.

I think there will be a day where we will see blockbusters with two husbands cooking together. Juggling turmeric and cumin, unafraid of sharing tender hugs and kisses, their love uncensored. Weddings scenes with two brides filled with as much joy and as many gossiping aunties as with straight ceremonies. Movies that can reflect not our dreams, but a reality, where nothing is amiss.

[1] "Reputation" in Tamil.

[2] A traditional dress worn mainly by Dravidian girls during their teenage years.

[3] A wind instrument used in Carnatic music.

[4] A traditional lamp used commonly Dravidian people during special occasions. It is lit by parents or elders at weddings.

[5] A necklace tied around one's neck to seal the marriage. Oftentimes, people would ask for help from someone to properly latch it onto their partner.

[6] A mountain believed to be the home of a goddess who fought off evil in Hindu mythology. It would be located in Ceylon.

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Lucid Lovers' Dreaming

Apathy, apathy, apathy –
my sweetest *praleabhanam*^[7] –
how parched I am for her:

She's the opposing force
to the verbalized emotion that cemented us in familiarity
on a cool November's midnight.

Apathy, apathy, apathy –
how I wish I could float along rushing waters,
with the aimlessness of lotus seeds
led astray in a warm August's wind.

Maybe I could land again,
come down to *bhumi*^[8] again.
Maybe I could root myself within her *Keralite*^[9] soils,
tangle my vital signs around stone and worm alike.

Yet I ache to consider –
Would spreading root once more mean ripping myself
from the sustenance I found
within every vibration you beat against my chest –
When you blessed me with another word
another laugh another paper trail
delivered through black mirrored glass?

Still I concur
within the private confines of my thought experiment -
redolent to the black-bordered squares of Rubik's-cubed mind games
I kept your Gemini intellect prisoner in -
Suppose I grow
into a back-arched banana tree,
offering myself as a plate for you?

Would you let me feed you again?

Would you let the blooming of my leaves care for you
in softness and grace –
in pain and green ripped edges again?

Will you ever look to me for stability and sure-footedness again?

Or did I fly too far off the sphere –
the round cylindrical love we cradled each other in -
The rainbow afterglow

[7] "Temptation" in Malayalam.

[8] "Earth" in Malayalam.

[9] Adj; all of which relates to the people, land, and culture of Kerala, a southern state in India.

of the bubble you blew around me as our lips met?

Am I no longer
the sturdy wooden bridge cut from auntie's *chakkakuru*^[10] trees or -
have you simply grown too still
in balance and poise
as my worth dwindles beneath your steps?

Ente sweetest *nirvikaratam*^[11],
my dearest apathy.
How she comes and goes,
settling deep into the cracks of my worn skin.

She leaves no remanence of nourishment behind -
just as the drought that raged and flared while you were birthed
left no mercy in its vigorous plight -
a waterless diaspora summer.

How I ached and parched after you -
Not even a single sweet drop
of sun-dried raisin *payasam* to drink
after she left behind her aftertaste.

She had settled with no roots,
disappeared for quite some time now;
I shut the door as she made her way out with your love for me.

Now little to nothing remains;
I lay still and imagine behind closed lids that you are near -
perhaps having a sweet lucid dream.

All that's left to keep the stillness company
are the questions laying on my tongue,
dancing behind closed lips.
The taste of them leave a soft sourness behind -
maybe a bite of bitter *naranna*^[12] pickle -

Are your dreams as sweet
as the *chaya*^[13] I ached to wake you with?
Are they as delicate
as the flutter-winged hummingbird
within your chest?

The questions lay on my bedside table,
as does a days-old mug of stale water and a half-split chocolate biscuit.

[10] "Jackfruit" in Malayalam; a fruit that grows on trees of sturdy, durable trunk.

[11] "My sweetest apathy" in Malayalam and English.

[12] "Lime" in Malayalam.

[13] "Tea" in Malayalam.

I wonder if love
can rot within a decaying body -
as it seeks to substitute the pleasure you leached from it.

All around my room your distant fingerprints remain,
I feel my body shiver
as it experiences you
everywhere,
in everything.

My mother told me the spirit of heaven lies within rolling hills
and the pebbles beneath our feet alike,
yet I never knew
loving the angels sent down from Christ
would follow the same script
as Him above.

I never knew of your permanence, your omnipotence.

Pakal after *pakal*^[14],
how they come and go.

My organs shiver, constrict, wrinkle,
they begin to drain themselves of life-blood;
The honey you left behind
in a claim of my self-ownership
drips from them.

I'm a mess a messy shame a spilled pile of leftover ghee -
I can't seem to surrender my home from your seat
at the Thanksgiving dinner table.

The apathy I await has yet to make known her presence,
So in her absence I rope myself into acquaintance
with whips of pain that beat
against the delicate skin making up the face
you once called your *thangam*^[15].

The whips introduce me to strikes on the cheek,
Ones that you'd never blow and yet
as their stings drip from my eyes,
they leave behind your signature.

I love you, so I bear with.

How could two loves share something so beautiful and disappear without my notice?

[14] "Day after day" in Malayalam and English.

[15] "Gold" in Tamil; used as a term of endearment.

I stare at the bubbles of adjectives before me,
I try and cement my familiarity to my own being
as I once did with you.
Yet the bond wanes and flutters –
like papers held back to back with sticky rice. –
I bubble as I'm told, 'circle what fits:'
I'm observant I'm analytical I'm quick witted ~~I'm yours~~ I'm cynical,
I'm pessimistic I'm a leech ~~with teeth as sharp as your betrayal,~~
[deep breaths take just one deep breath]
I'm your *kanmani*^[16] your *chellam*^[17] my heart it belongs to you,
[please, for me, for me, breathe for me]
my address - you were right - it should've
been closer to you.

A sharpness that sears bonds -
Welders cutting metal against stark grey corners met with bright orange -
They shield their face with stone helmets in humility, yet
I walked towards the *suryan*^[18]
blind in my awe of you.

Special thanks to Harshana, Vya, Chandran, and Max

[16] "Pupil" or "beloved" in Malayalam and Tamil; a term of endearment with the same connotation as "apple of one's eye."

[17] "Dear" in Tamil; a term of endearment.

[18] "Sun" in Malayalam and Tamil.







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beqaraar^[19]

Strewn bits of paper
now feel like they hold national secrets
I've written letters to you
On the palm of my hand
And in the way you made my spine curve

I wrote other letters
On the corner of my notebooks
In our whatsapp chat
Apologies seasoned with anxiety
But teeth set on edge because
I couldn't give in

You took a little chisel
And tap, tap, tapped
Till you touched the wrong nerve
Broke the wrong vein
And all of it came falling down

Now the cave-in
Has ruins sitting all pretty
In the dead-centre of my chest
A shrine once-loved
Is now closed for restoration

The phone lines are cut
And I've cut myself off more than I should have
I'm breathing more dust in the aftermath of goodbye.
The closing of any door is ironic;
You can't close what buries you.

I've been twisting in my sheets
And I wake up coughing at night
You've gifted me more bad habits than you had a right to.
But no matter what, I'll still drink from your chalice,
For thirst,
Spares,
None.

[19] "Restless" in Urdu.





dhruv-art



Apsara

You were there, watching over the soft, warm arms
In which I was carried home for the first time,
The air of the memory I try to conjure because
I was too young, eyes still closed, to remember anything,
Smells like the film of dust collected on top of an old photo,
Everything tinged the color of a faded polaroid.
Why now do I beg for you to rip that blanket off of me,
Leave me burning raw; what's the use of pressing palms
If all that sweet music, Carnatic hymns trembling from
The mouths of silver-haired ladies who sound like they
Have witnessed the entire history of the universe and then some,
Giant blood red *pottus* stickered on their foreheads
Like black holes, like the back of Krishna's mouth, reeling me in,
Were never meant for me to savor?

I grow up hearing the universe in song, watching the universe in dance,
The universe in you. There is so much space between us,
But you are the space, the cosmic dance, so I felt safe;
But now I feel smothered.
Your words of love, your stories of magic,
They used to make my heart swell, but now they cage it.
Dust collects
In cracks between my weathered feet,
Each one of your stories sound the same now, excuses,
Ornately crafted daggers for the very family who lovingly carried me home
To thrust into me in the name of what is holy and true.
Why does the incense smell rotten?

I first met her at the temple, does that absolve me of anything?
A small smile danced across her lips and
A wave of wind made her sunset-colored kurta flow,
And a year later I wrap myself in her dupatta
As she presses her lips against my stomach, exposed.
There is a statue in that corner of the room,
Natarajar^[20] moves poetry to life while standing metal and solitary,
An amazing feat I feel I am no longer allowed to admire.
It's strange how a room full of towering statues,
Ten feet of black stone, closing you up in a circle,
Can feel so, so alone.

A small lamp is not enough to lead me home.
But then the wave of wind, the one from so many years ago,
Comes whispering again and gently pushes against the flame.
She's here. She's here and she slowly pulls me in
With that dupatta, first at the neck

[20] A sculpture of the Hindu god Shiva in Tamil culture. It symbolizes the cycle of time and creation, destruction, and preservation of the universe through dance.

Then slowly sliding, sliding down and hitching
At the small of my back, lured into
Eternal cosmic dance; one day we will both be
Carved into a frieze, relief of relief,
We string together heavenly music,
Veena cords tied around her forearm to my elbow,
Taut and stable and steady, an axis for my love,
Like Mount Kailash on high, where the lord of dance himself
Looks down upon us and hears
Hymns trembling from the slight gaps between our mouths
Right before they collide.

The stone lives forever under a searing and loving sun,
A cool yet passionate moon, and my palms meet once again,
For a split second in repentance
Of what I should truly be forgiven for,
Because I was such a fool. Lord, you have given me the answer
Right in front of me, where my lips press into her in devotion,
Where my hands slide into hers in prayer. Thank you, divinity,
For letting me find love, letting me find patience,
For letting me find god in her.

[21] (On page 23) "நாம் நோய் அல்ல" means "we are not the disease" in Tamil.







How We Should Really Be Looking at Class in the SA LGBT Community

Finding and connecting with the South Asian LGBT community is one of the things that I am most grateful for in my life. I have shared tears and trauma with you all and lots of laughter. There is no greater joy in the universe, to me, than to emotionally bond over experiences, whether they are struggles or progress. The ability to share these distinctly human connections within a community is too special for words, and one of special importance to people who have suffered as much as we have.

Keeping these sentiments in mind, I have had many doubts and sleepless nights while writing this piece. There were many angles I could take, all of which would be seen as divisive and imposing by some demographic of people. But it has also become clear to me that ignoring intra-community issues is not the pathway to liberation for oppressed peoples. This may seem obvious to most of you, as members of the South Asian LGBT community who are subject to subordination by the white, cisgender, heteropatriarchal system. As such, you are very much familiar with the rhetoric of the oppressive system and demand change. I argue, however, that the weight of this oppression often misleads us into false cohesion and “keeping the peace” when there are many issues to be addressed.

This pretense of peace is especially common in the higher circles of the community, i.e. the influential, upper middleclass activists that represent us in the mainstream, whether on Twitter or powerful NGOs. While they are oppressed by white patriarchal and heteronormative institutions in many ways, they believe this entitles them to take the center stage in South Asian (SA) LGBT activism in both the diaspora and in the subcontinent, while completely disregarding their class privilege. Especially within the diaspora, proximity to whiteness (and accordingly, oppressive institutions) creates a sense of complacency and apathy towards any truly radical action. Nonetheless, subcontinental bourgeois activists are increasingly much the same as the global financial system continues to develop and the transnational ruling class matures.

But why isn't this phenomenon questioned? Why is it necessary to keep the peace with people that, despite lip service to the disadvantaged, don't actively work to change the face of our community, make resources accessible to the rest of us, nor fight for issues that they are shielded from by their privilege? More importantly, as I will explain later, why do they fall into the exact same pitfalls of the feminist or LGBT movements that they claim to repudiate—an institutionalized rejection of difference and rule of the oppressors?

These are questions that plague and divide several activist movements, but then again, we're not just an activist movement. We're a closely-knit community of individuals that have our own stories and share them with one another and who create uniquely deep and emotional bonds through our experiences. When we talk of the SA or LGBT communities by themselves, they alienate us for being LGBT and for being nonwhite, respectively. Every SA LGBT person I've talked to has experienced some level of discord whilst trying to maintain a precarious balancing act between these two communities. And that makes the intersection of those two identities even more important. The way I see it, the SA LGBT community has a duty, almost, to live up to that promise of a welcoming intersectional community, a safe haven.

This is not to say it is none of these things currently. Rather, because the SA LGBT community is so crucial to each and every individual's survival and indeed, functions on this very premise, we have to be open to self-criticism and thus, serve each other by being sympathetic to difference. Because, as Audre Lorde said, “It is not those differences

between us that separate us, rather our refusal to recognize [them].” By not doing so, we are doing ourselves a significant disservice by allowing our oppressors to maintain their position and in turn, status quo relations.

I was very interested in why the SA LGBT community, among many others, of course, refuses to recognize its wide internal difference. Again, Lorde had much wisdom to offer on the topic. She outlines the intrinsic connection between the capitalist profit economy and the institutionalized rejection of difference, or the pretense of homogeneity among an oppressed group. The profit economy, as such, requires oppressed peoples to be at the oppressors’ disposal. They are made to be trampled on in the interest of the oppressor, predisposing the members of the profit economy to approach difference with forcible isolation and denial in order to avoid this reality^[22]. For example, the upper class and more privileged members of the SA LGBT community may ally with the oppressors—the white heteropatriarchal capitalist structure—under the pretense of separating themselves from the members of the community that are not afforded the privilege to homogenize themselves with the norm that the power structure perpetuates and defend its respective interests.

Indeed, we can and should apply this analysis to the disconnect between the upper class leadership of our community and lower class individuals who feel their needs aren’t being addressed. The simplest explanation is that, due to the nature of the capitalist economy, the bourgeois activists’ class interests compel them towards association with our oppressors, perhaps not explicitly, but through insidious institutional repression of those members of the community who cannot do so.

For example, class differences are highly pronounced in access to education, and accordingly, the bourgeois members of the SA LGBT community continually exploit their adjacency to elitist higher educational institutions without fail. The most obvious example is of academics, whom, due to their credentials, are considered most knowledgeable in the historic avenues of the SA LGBT community, and thus most suitable for educating others. There is but one flaw here: academia itself.

Academia is not only rife with gatekeeping and discrimination but also fundamentally interested in upholding capitalist institutions. Universities under capitalism engage in the dissemination of knowledge not for the public good, but as a commodity to be capitalized upon. While they market themselves as institutions that value knowledge as a public good that work to make educative material free for all, this does not hold up to an analysis of student loan ship, copyrights, and other phenomena inherent to the academia under capitalism^[23]. For example, students that can pay full or differential tuition are increasingly preferred over disadvantaged students that are qualified but could not dream of paying full tuition. Moreover, universities selectively admit graduate students and hire faculty members in such a way that, firstly, ensures all published work and instruction is sanitized into the oppressive, capitalist framework that keeps anti-colonial and anti-capitalist discourse out of academia; secondly, those selected as such rigorously uphold the power structure and censor others who challenge it^[24]. Despite knowledge of such practices within SA LGBT activist circles, however, we continue to unquestionably accept flawed and false academic consensus about our issues.

Furthermore, in the larger context of SA LGBT people within white society, the concept of top-down change, or “upward mobility”, through higher education, is in-

[22] “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference.” *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, by Audre Lorde, Crossing Press, 1984, pp. 111–113.

[23] Slaughter, Sheila, and Gary Rhoades. *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy: Markets, State and Higher Education*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.

[24] Miheesuah, Devon Abbott, and Angela Cavender Wilson. *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*. University of Nebraska Press, 2004.

herently flawed. This extends to a wider belief in meritocracy throughout South Asian diaspora, reinforced by the model minority myth and bootstraps ideology. Due to the bourgeois nature of the leadership of the SA LGBT community, these accommodationist (and very much reactionary) streams of thought dominate. In turn, community activism reflects this in two ways: respectability politics and the withholding of economic resources from poor SA LGBT.

The problem of respectability politics is a difficult one to address, especially because its roots are so deep and internalized. It's historically been a way for individuals of oppressed groups to achieve upward mobility and advance through the obstacles that the power structure has placed in one's way. In order to do so, individuals typically internalize self-hating rhetoric to the extreme and combat stereotypes about themselves that arose as a result of their oppression. In other words, respectability is a tool used to fight against negative narratives about one's marginalization through embodying typically white bourgeois norms. Reform movements for marginalized groups have always exercised such tactics to gain social and economic capital, and the SA LGBT movement is no different.

The consequence is that the group of individuals that use respectability to their advantage reinforce racist, classist norms set by the oppressors, which further depresses the rest of the community; it is very much a form of in-group stratification. Furthermore, the individuals that promote respectability politics the most are the ones that necessitate them the least, because they are the closest to the power structure. The tendency of these individuals to have more economic capital means two things: one, they discard members who do not fit market needs, and denounce differences that are not respectable (such as one being working-class or of a lower caste); two, it frees them from the chains of respectability because their differentials from white, bourgeois normativity are significantly reduced through access to greater economic capital^[25]. Both factors are consequences of the neoliberal, capitalist economy. As it inherently requires the institutionalized rejection of difference, it both alienates members of the community whose differentials are most magnified and enables those with economic capital to push respectability politics onto the members who are not considered "respectable". The accumulation of further economic capital thereby frees them to carry on the legacies of their capital through exploitation and gatekeeping at the expense of, once again, the "non-respectable" members.

In the SA LGBT community, the class differential is, without a doubt, massive. I personally know, on one hand, a bourgeois lesbian who is set to inherit hundreds of thousands of dollars and going to attend one of the most elite universities in the world, and on the other, several homeless LGBT, especially trans people, who rely on charity from social media and LGBT organizations few and far between to survive each day. The latter is faced with a consistent dearth of resources economically, the lack of a support system, a dependence on private charity that can easily be compromised, as well as a lack of access to mental health resources. Because homelessness reinforces itself through mental illness and chronic poverty in a neoliberal economy, this perpetuates an endless cycle of intergenerational poverty. Poor LGBT are also targeted by homophobia and transphobia at disproportionate rates, with no access to legal litigation or even basic medical care after assault^[26]. Similarly, "coming out" is vastly different for each; even when upper class SA experience dire consequences such as being disowned, this is easily mitigated by the fact that they are materially able to support themselves due to an institutional sup-

[25] Pitcan, Mikaela, et al. "Performing a Vanilla Self: Respectability Politics, Social Class, and the Digital World." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, vol. 23, no. 3, 6 Apr. 2018, pp. 163-179.

[26] Woods, Jordan Blair. "LGBT Identity and Crime." *California Law Review*, 2018, pp. 123-193.

port system of capital. They have access to vast resources and accordingly, proximity to white supremacist institutions. This allows them to shield themselves from the effects of anti-LGBT and race-based discrimination.

For example, Manvendra Singh Gohil, a Maharashtrian prince who came out as gay recently, was “disowned” by the royal family, but legally could not be excluded from his inheritance according to India’s inheritance laws^[27]. While he experienced much backlash globally and at home for being gay, he was very much able to support himself financially in contrast to the homeless LGBT in Mumbai just a few blocks away from his palace. Recognizing his privilege, Gohil opened his palace to homeless LGBT nearby, but, once again, the problem is that this is neither common nor a comprehensive solution to classism against Maharashtrian LGBT, much less for the entire SA LGBT community. Reliance on private charity is simply not viable for poor SA LGBT everywhere; to survive in a capitalist economy, it is necessary that one owns capital.

As such, bourgeois SA LGBT from the diaspora and the subcontinent alike exploit their adjacency to power structures to accumulate greater capital and enter the transnational ruling class. This is not simply an issue on an individual scale that one can mitigate by donating more to charity or through other arbitrary and superficial actions for two reasons. First, the bourgeoisie as a class is characteristically designed to protect its capital and align with state apparatuses that aid them in doing so. More specifically, the global capitalist economy necessitates the conversion of national or local bourgeois classes into members of the transnational ruling class due to the restructuring of global capital through globalization^[28]. Second, the upward mobility of nonwhites is predicated on the exploitation of poor and destitute nonwhites, especially those in the Global South. In this way, bourgeois SA LGBT are fundamentally positioned to exploit the very people that they claim to support through charity and community actions in order to enter the transnational capitalist class. Therefore, the group that needs the support of a community the most is abandoned as those with capital reject and alienate those who do not and further perpetuate the accumulation of capital on a global scale.

The common thread in all these problems is, time and time again, bourgeois and privileged leadership prioritizing their class interests over the community. This is due to the development of class society towards neoliberal capitalism—it is a problem that cannot be remedied without class struggle or radical action. The refusal of the bourgeois members of our community to truly ally with its marginalized members, not through lip service but through the redistribution of resources and partaking in radical actions against our oppressors, is telling; they aim to become the oppressors.

Only through the overthrow of the capitalist economic system, and in turn, a radical restructuring of the leadership of the SA LGBT community, can we accomplish any true progress for poor SA LGBT. Private charity is but a temporary Band-Aid for a select few of the most marginalized members of our community; our emphasis as a community should instead be on eradicating the socioeconomic conditions that cause suffering in our community. To do so, we must first reject the white bourgeois ideologies that hinder us from radical action such as institutionalized rejection of difference and respectability politics. This must be number one on our agenda; if it is not, we doom ourselves to another eternity of oppression.

Special thanks to Vya, Max, and Athulya.

[27] Lakshya Trust. “About Manvendra Singh Gohil.” Welcome to Lakshya Trust, Lakshya Trust, 2011, www.lakshya-trust.com/who-we-are/about-manvendra-singh-gohil.

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