

Editorial

Amid the back and forth, while adapting how to readapt and learning how to unlearn, we are now living in a world which is three years into the pandemic. From the individual to the collective, we experienced an unprecedented newness that belonged to no one but quickly became the reality for all. A space to reflect is invaluable, to be able to negotiate the pause and play of reality and its impacts on our individual and social realms. To acknowledge, commemorate, and investigate the power of these wandering, meandering, and critical reflections, the editorial board chose 'Soliloquy' as the theme for the fifth volume of *Hybrid*.

Traditionally, a soliloquy is a character's internal monologue theatrically situated in a play to provide the audience with an insight into the character. As creative practitioners and researchers, we often find ourselves soliloquising in the form of personal contemplation and deliberation. As our minds grapple with our reflections, these soliloquies show us how far the stream of consciousness can stretch and where we can hold on to it. The idea of a soliloquy embraces the collective while still remaining individual. In our recent past, the collective experience of individual isolation became a unifying exploration of finding refuge in one's surroundings. It allowed the resurfacing of ideas, thoughts, and intentions that we had been holding on to, unarticulated, for too long. This volume explores various soliloquies of practice, medium, and methodology as each contributor shares their own version of process.

Zehra Nabi's inquisitive reflections delve into the soliloquies of a writer, situating writing as a craft and the writer as the craftsman and curator. Her essay explores Franz Kafka's wavering musings – both tame and wild – in his personal diaries, unveiling and expanding on the labour of writing. She embodies the struggles and despair of this labour not only for self-comfort as a writer, but also to critically reflect on the writer's processes.

Usman Ansari crafts an intimate narrative, situated strategically within the interdisciplinary overlaps of an architect's soliloquy and an artist's struggle to perceive the mundane architectural everyday as art. It is a series of soliloquies woven together to showcase the evolution of a preschooler into a trained architect who finds solace in 'as-found' objects on his project sites. He also reaches closely to his own body as a tool to reflect and interrogate his inhibitions around his artistic practices.

Sarah Ahmed interviews Arooj Aurangzeb to understand the personal and collective impact of a moment that went viral on social media. They stitch together the hope out of the helplessness

and messy power dynamics that Arooj experienced in the limelight, and offer an affirming vision of social change emanating from collective action that is undertaken with critical self-consciousness.

Priya Pinjani's piece explores her positionality as a Pakistani Hindu as she maps the sacred and profane aspects of the multiple urban identities of Hindus in Karachi. Her essay is a social and geographical mapping of anecdotes, expanding on the etched and evolving urban myths around minority lives in the context of the city.

We often question ourselves about how much of our soliloquies are meant for display. Are soliloquies, as internalised as they are, even meant to be shared with others? What is the relationship between the private and the public? Looking within and through a literal self-reflective lens, Noor Butt writes about women's selfies, history, and storytelling. Her essay makes us wonder if the selfie is the twenty-first century version of a soliloquy.

Zehra Jabeen Shah's essay hums the narratives of *sarangi* players as they share their deeply personal journeys and relationships with the musical instrument. She writes evocatively about the *sarangi* and the many webs of social, cultural, and spiritual meaning it is embedded in. Finally, Shamama Hasany shares a series of tender reflections and moments of closeness with those who have inspired her creative practice. Her writing weaves narratives of site, reminiscence, and resistance, channelled within her mind and body and becoming the methodology of her work.

As creative practitioners, there are often times where a soliloquy performed is a soliloquy heard. My soliloquies have undulated between practice and academia where they negotiate their overlaps and dichotomies. Reflecting back on the process, labour, and conversations that brought this volume to life, I am grateful to Sumaila Palla for introducing me to *Hybrid* and for pushing this architect into more academic spaces. The comfort and intellectual space I found within *Hybrid* has allowed me to explore a new lens as each of the pieces evolved and drew me closer to my love for writing and editing, that had been sidelined otherwise.

The editorial board would like to extend its gratitude to Kiran Ahmad for her design and layout, Sarwat Azeem for proofreading this volume, and Currim Suteria for working closely with us on Shamama's essay in the student section. Above all, no amount of applause and appreciation would be enough for Dr. Faiza Mushtaq and Sumbul Khan; their thoroughness and consistency have been the driving force behind this volume.

Maham Khurshid
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